

The background image shows the interior of a synagogue, characterized by a series of overlapping arches supported by columns. The architecture is illuminated with warm, golden light, creating a sense of depth and historical grandeur. The floor is made of stone tiles, and the walls are decorated with intricate carvings and patterns.

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

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## The issue of Non-Ashkenazic Traditions: Sephardic Dream Time

Jews have historically seen themselves as living somewhere between the perfection that was at the beginning and the perfection that will recur at the end of days. But one Jewish subgroup has recalibrated Eden forward in time to correspond with the 10th-to-12th centuries, and transposed it westward in space to Moorish Spain. Among that subgroup, called Sephardim, dreams endured until quite recently of again traversing the bleached-white plazas of Malaga, of re-entering flower-bedecked habitations in Cordoba, of once more inhaling the fragrance of Granada's orange blossoms, or of negotiating tenebrous stairways in the cobbled lanes of Gerona.

Descendants of Medieval Spanish Jewry were able to sustain this yearning for a return to the pre-Expulsion paradise of their forebears only by overlooking the periodic encroachment of religious persecution upon their accomplished ancestors' fabled garden. Throughout 900 years of Jewish settlement in the Iberian Peninsula, mistreatment by rulers of other faiths was the norm. At regular intervals during the early Christian period, the lengthy Islamic interregnum and the later Christian reconquest, Spanish—and later Portuguese—Jews faced exile or death if they refused to forsake Judaism. Those were their only options in the early 7th century under Visigothic kings, in the mid 12th century under fanatical Almohad princes, and again in the late 14th to late 15th centuries under militant Catholic monarchs.

That final stretch of unabated persecution reached a climax in the bloody riots of 1391, 1413 and 1456, after which most of Spain's once proud Jewish population was left destitute. There resulted a massive rush to abandon the faith rather than perish, perhaps half of the Sephardim officially embracing Christianity out of desperation. Of the so-called Conversos (converted ones), a small number continued to practice Judaism as best they could, in secret. But even for the valiant few who attempted to uphold both religions simultaneously—the new one openly, the old one clandestinely—such a perilous subterfuge could not succeed beyond a generation or two. Cut off from rabbinic texts or teaching, the covert Jews' only access to Mosaic Law would have been through the Bible, which was forbidden to laity under 16th-century Catholicism. The obsessive fear of being reported to the authorities by one's domestic servant over so innocuous a practice as laying out fresh table linen

on Friday nights became unbearable. Inevitably, the grandchildren of those who had submitted to baptism would break all connections with a reviled Jewish heritage which they were forced to mime, imperfectly at best, in terrified privacy, but never allowed to live publicly.

Moreover, the late Israeli historian Benzion Netanyahu disputed the cherished myth of Converso martyrdom on the altar of Judaism even prior to 1391. In uncovering the roots of Spanish-Catholic animosity toward Jews, he found more cause to label the majority of earlier converts as “conscious assimilationists who wished to merge with Christian society,” a goal in which they succeeded spectacularly right up to the mid-15th century. Their rapid ascent to the highest positions in Spanish society, including the royal court, incurred an almost insane jealousy on the part of clerics who had converted the New Christians to Catholicism. Among the incensed churchmen were a number of apostate Jews who now turned against their former coreligionists and—invoking the racist pretext *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) as bogus justification—raised a canard over the Conversos’ inherited guilt for the death of Jesus some 1400 years before. It then became a theological imperative for the Church to condemn New Christians en masse as secret Judaizers. Branded as Marranos (“swine”; derived from Arabic *mujarram* or “prohibited,” referring to the pork which former Jews ostentatiously ate to demonstrate their fealty), they were removed from their high estate and kept apart from Jews as well as from Old Christians.

Benjamin R. Gampel, another researcher into the pre-Expulsion period, portrays the Marranos as “an unassimilable avalanche... living in two worlds, lighting Shabbat candles while crossing themselves, fasting on Yom Kippur and observing Christmas, openly observing Lent while holding a Seder in secret.” This they would do in a sub-basement of their home. Yiddish poet Abraham Reisen (“Zog Maran,” *Epizodn fun mayn lebn*, 1929) put it best:

Tell me, Marrano, brother mine,  
Where have you set your Seder table?  
—Deep in a cave, in a chamber,  
—There I have set my Seder table.  
Tell me, Marrano, what will happen  
When they hear your voice?  
—When the tormentors find me,  
—I shall go down singing!

Yet those Sephardim who remained loyal Jews were less fortunate still, compelled to live in separate quarters of towns even as their means of livelihood were systematically removed. By 1478, as Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile prepared for accession to the thrones of their respective kingdoms,



many once-powerful Jewish communities had been completely decimated. Just as Spanish Jewry appeared to have sunk to its lowest estate, the royal heirs apparent approved the institution of a special Holy Office within the Church. It released an unrelenting Inquisition in areas formerly under Moorish control, to which the desperate Jewish population had fled. Inquisitor-General Tomás de Torquemada, himself partially of Jewish descent, suspected all Conversos of remaining in contact with their unconverted Jewish brethren, whom he categorically accused of trying in every manner to subvert the New Christians' holy Catholic faith. Between 1480 and 1492 he condemned to death over 13,000 Conversos and supervised the torture of another 20,000 into confession of their misdeeds and reacceptance by the Church.

Still not sated, Torquemada demanded a summary expulsion, the one sure way of avoiding further Judaizing. The King and Queen swiftly concurred. In their edict of March 31, 1492 they ordered that every last Jew depart from their kingdoms within four months, "never ever" to return (red-lettered in Spanish by the rarely used unconditional negative, *siempre jamas*). Given the prolonged reign of terror endured by those who had remained faithful, contends Sephardic scholar Jose Faur, "When 100,000 [some estimate as many as 250,000] Jews left in 1492, the question we should ask is not how come so many had converted during the previous century but rather, how come so many had remained loyal?" In all, Jews had constituted a mere ten percent of the population of 15th-century Spain, but their influence endured. Over a century after the Sephardim were expelled, Ladino (Judeo/Spanish) terminology would still be used to describe the hapless knight-errant, Don Quixote as *uno desmazalado* (someone who lacks *mazal*, Hebrew for "luck").

In 1497, the derogatory term Marrano took on an added meaning. To commemorate his betrothal to Ferdinand and Isabella's daughter, King Manoel I of Portugal entrapped the Jews of his kingdom—including many thousands who had fled from Spain—in Lisbon, on the pretext of allowing them to leave. Instead, he forcibly converted them at one stroke. Because Portuguese Jews did not accept Christianity of their own volition but through coercion (*fazer na marra* in Portuguese, hence Marrano), they would stubbornly guard their old traditions in private. It was just as well they did, for nine years after their forced conversion, systematic persecution climaxed with the Lisbon massacre in which 3,000 New Christians lost their lives.

In 1531 Manoel's successor, John III, instituted an Inquisitional tribunal, after which the Marranos' days in Portugal were numbered. By 1578 most of the self-designated *anusim* ("coerced" in Hebrew) had migrated to Holland, where the Inquisition followed them. It was not until Spain's Armada suffered decisive defeat by the English in 1588 that Catholic influence over the Netherlands was finally broken and the Portuguese-descended Marranos,

now Dutch nationalists, were able to reclaim a religious heritage they had never renounced.

In addition to the Netherlands, outcasts from Spain had meanwhile resettled eastward along the Mediterranean Basin where they joined already established Jewish communities. Sephardic exiles considered themselves a caste above the settled population in whose midst they were forced to live. Nor did the claim lack substance. Notable leaders of Sephardic Jewry's dream time—Hasdai ibn Shaprut, Samuel Hanagid, Halevi, Moses Maimonides, Moses Nachmanides, Hasdai Crescas, Isaac Abarbanel and many others—had served as physicians, ministers of state and financial advisers to kings. They also functioned as learned religious authorities to their own people, bequeathing to posterity entire libraries of Biblical exegesis grounded in neo-Greek philosophy, halakhic responsa based upon natural science, and a versified liturgy that rivaled the finest in Arabic poetry.

This issue is dedicated to the musical heritage of those legendary figures living in a hybrid culture (see graphic below), and to that of communities throughout North Africa, the Middle East and Asia Minor. JAL



*Commemoration plaque on a wall in the El Transito Synagogue in Toledo (1336). Jewish benefactors are recorded beneath the coat-of-arms of King Ferdinand III of Léon and Castile, who had reigned a century before. Some of the words are Arabic transliterated in Hebrew letters.*



# Music throughout the Jewish World

## The Song of the Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews

*by Edith Gerson-Kiwi*

### **Introduction**

The longevity of the styles of Mizrahi (Eastern) singing is self-evident. Even a non-musician feels its attraction and is taken by the originality of its sounds, which have—through all the changes and destructions wrought on our material world in the course of time—retained their purity. To hear singers from Yemen, Syria, Teheran or Baghdad, conjures up an impression of coming home to the cradle of all music. In these tunes of ancient times, beauty signifies nothing—but the soulfulness and force of its narration means everything. These are tones that hardly conform to a European system, moving between the normal steps of a tempered scale and outside the accepted norms of Western expectation, but they reveal humankind and its peculiarities as an ethnic expression.

### **Yemen**

The numerous Jewish communities of Yemen, now united on Israel's soil, look upon a past unusual not only in its historical events but also in its strong consistency of folk traditions. Jewish communities have lived among the South-Arabian tribes for about 2,500 years, nestled together in small villages or quarters of larger towns. Here they developed over time an uninterrupted community life, and it is no wonder if they preserved a treasure of musical folklore side-by-side with their folk arts and literature. Though there existed, periodically, connections with the centers of Jewish learning in Palestine or Egypt, the Yemenite Jews on the whole remained isolated from foreign influences and retained their ancient style of chanting, singing, dancing, clapping and drumming.

Legend has it that Jewish migration to Yemen started during the days of the Second Temple, but archeological and historical evidence dates back only to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century of the Common Era, some 500 years later. The community enjoyed a short period of independence during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, when

the Himyaric Royal House adopted the Jewish faith. With the death of the last Himyaric king—the Jew, Joseph Du Nuwas (d. 525)—and the growth of Islam with its many fanatical sects, uncounted sufferings for the Jews began which resulted only in strengthening their Jewish consciousness and Messianic faith. Their final return to Jerusalem began in 1881-82 and ended in 1949-50 with transfer of the entire population of Yemenite Jews including the far-away Hadramout-Habanim—almost 50,000 in all—to Israel.

The antiquity of this tribe, their absolute seclusion from the European sphere of influence, their natural inclination to music and their general devotion to the Muses, have in fact made them the prototype of a Jewish folk tradition. A relevant point in this connection is their Bible recitation which, as in other Eastern cults, takes the form of a documentary style with “graces” here and there as syntactical marks.

The image shows five staves of musical notation in a single system, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are written in a style characteristic of traditional Yemenite Jewish cantillation. Below the notes, the Hebrew text is written in a stylized, spaced-out font. The text is: Ua-yiq - ra Mo - she \_\_\_\_\_ lē - khol ziq -  
-ney Yis - ra - el ua - yo - met a - le - hem \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ mi - shē - khu \_\_\_\_\_ u - qē - hu  
la - khem tzon lē - mish - pă - ho - tey - khem wē - sha -  
- ha - tu ha - po - sah \_\_\_\_\_

Example 1. Yemenite Bible Reading (Exodus 12: 21)

This sort of chanting assured the interpretation of the Holy Scripture: its words were forever wrapped in music. Later on, Hebrew cantillation provided a key for understanding whenever the origins of early Christianity's mode of

singing Psalms or Lessons had to be traced. Jewish “Bible-reading” modes were probably the first points of contact between the two world religions.

In the Yemenite Jews’ religious domestic-tunes for celebrating the Sabbath and holy days, mostly from the pen of their great Baroque poet and Kabbalist, Mori Salim Shabazi (b. 1619), a mystic-meditative style predominates. The singing is antiphonal, alternating between two groups of singers and a precentor. The melody consists of short, slightly ornamented phrases.

(1st and 2nd group)

(2nd verse)

Ua-hiz - hi - - - - - ram - - - - - 'a-ley mitz-  
- woth - - - - - ua-hu - qim - - - - -

(1st group)

ua-ha - shab - - - bath - - - - -

(Tutti)

bă - to - kham hi gă - do - la - - - - -

Timbre, tone quality and performance: these three elements are more decisive for style than any possible musical notation. With Yemenite singers, what’s most striking are their thin-sounding falsetto registers, so reminiscent of the physically graceful and delicately formed South-Arabian mountain nomads with whom they share a tense and agile body-type that never ceases to perform dance-like movements during their singing. Thus, vocal sounds and bodily movements together are here necessary to form a complete musical picture.

Yemenite songs for women are a world apart. On account of the strict segregation of females in the Middle East, something of the remote past has remained in their singing, which is no longer present in the singing of males.

It is perceptible, first of all, in the odd and old-fashioned formality of the short melodic phrases with which they clothe their saga-like poems. The following is such an example: a song from Sana, Yemen's capital.

The image displays a musical score for a Yemenite Women's Song. It consists of several staves. The top staff is labeled 'Stanza-Scheme' and is written in a 7/4 time signature. Below it are two staves: 'Copper Plate' and 'Hand Drum', both in a 4/4 time signature. The 'Copper Plate' staff uses a rhythmic notation with vertical stems and flags. The 'Hand Drum' staff uses a rhythmic notation with vertical stems and dots. Below these are two more staves, one in 7/4 and one in 4/4, which appear to be a continuation or a different version of the melody and accompaniment.

### Example 3. Yemenite Women's Song (*Va ualdi ya mishenehe*)

Thanks to their highly developed traditional popular art, it has fallen to the Yemenites to exercise the most creative influence in Israel's musical life. By the 1960s their extremely attractive song motifs were being profusely adopted and elaborated in Israeli compositions. Yemenite dances with their exotic steps became, apart from their musical value, the model of new folk dancing, and their costumes, silversmith craft, carpet-making and weaving helped prepare the ground for a new start in Israeli handicrafts.

### Iraq—the Babylonian and Kurdish Jews

In addition to the Yemenites, we regard the Babylonian Jews as an outstanding cultural group. Since the days of the Babylonian exile (6<sup>th</sup> century BCE) an important Jewish colony existed there, known for its scholars, whose essential accomplishment was the interpretation of Bible and Mishnah texts in the monumental Babylonian Talmud.

In music, the work of Babylonia's medieval Masoretes, culminating in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, is of importance to Jew and non-Jew in terms of reading and understanding biblical texts. The Masoretes developed a system of accents or reading marks for Bible cantillation. No wonder that the Baghdadi community in Israel still possesses one of the best-developed musical liturgies. The following example gives the Babylonian form of Bible cantillation. Like Yemenite Example 1, this one is also from the Book of Exodus.

Ua - yiq - ra Mo-she \_\_\_\_\_ lě - khol ziq - ney

Yis - ra - el wă - yo - mer a - le - hem: mi - shě - khu

u - qě - hu la - khem tzon \_\_\_\_\_ lě - mish - pa -

- ho - te - khern u - sha - ha - tu ha - pa - sah.

Example 4. Baghdad—Bible Reading (Exodus 12: 21-22)

This logically phrased way of reading is reserved for the prose text of the Bible. In prayer, contrarily, a free cantorial melody with a broad outline is predominant, as this next example—a liturgical poem (*piyyut*) for Rosh Ha-Shanah—demonstrates.

Sho - ef kě - mo 'e - ved \_\_\_\_\_

Yish - af \_\_\_\_\_ lě - yad rab - bo \_\_\_\_\_

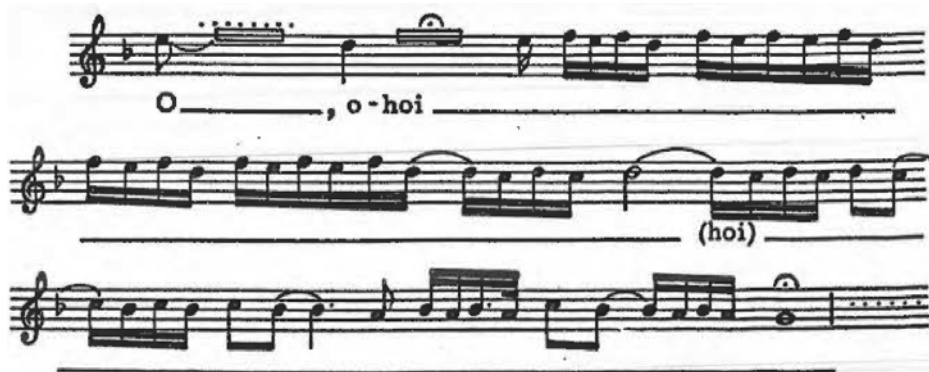
Has - dakh \_\_\_\_\_ pě - ros 'a - - - law \_\_\_\_\_

u - kra shě - tar \_\_\_\_\_ ho - - - vo.

Example 5. Baghdad—Rosh Hashanah *piyyut* (*Sho'ef kemo eved*)

A second group of the Iraqi-Babylonian tribes are represented by the Aramaic-speaking Jews of Kurdistan. In distinction from the learned Baghdadi group, they are part of the more primitive community made up mostly of mountain tribes, people of powerful physique and wild temperament, but hard-working. Their popular epic poems on biblical-historical-love-and-war themes are still sung in the traditional style of their ancient bards.

The melodies, each corresponding to a verse-line used in this connection, bear no resemblance to any recognized folksong. They are dramatic recitations richly executed, beginning with a surprisingly long wordless vocalize—as, for example—in the following Kurd song-saga told in the still very little-explored Kurmangi language.



Example 6. Kurdish-Jewish Epic (opening)

### Iran and Neighboring Countries

Besides Iraq and Yemen, Iran—along with Bukhara, Afghanistan and Dagh-estan—was a third Mizrahi cultural center. Iran contained an abundance of local traditions coming from Shiraz, Isphahan, Meshed, Teheran, Rast and so forth. Iranian Jews are latter-day descendants of the so-called Ten Lost Tribes of Israel's Northern Kingdom who were deported to Assur and Medea 135 years before the Southern Kingdom of Judea's exile to Babylon in 586 BCE. They thus conserved an earlier musico-liturgical tradition, different from the one that emerged later in Babylon, while developing their own forms of recitation that are unknown to most other Jewish communities. Responso-rial chanting of the Book of Esther is one of these traditions, still practiced by the Iranian Jews in Israel.



Cantor:

Ba-ya-mim ha-hem kě-she - - -vet

ha-me-lekh A-bash-ve - iosh al ki - se mal-khu-to

Congregation:

a - sher bě - Shu - shan ha - bi -

- ra bě - Shu - shan ha - bi - ra

Example 7. Meshed—Responsorial Chanting of Esther (1: 2)

Connection of the above Megillah reading done by the Jewish Marranos of Meshed, with recitation of the thousand-year-old Iranian national epic, the “Shahname” by the poet Firdousi, becomes evident.

A - ya shah-é mah-bub - e' kesh - var Go -

- sha zé kas gar na-tar - si bé - tars

az kho - da ke pish az to

sha-han fa - ra tin bo-dand ha-

- mé taj - da-ran - é "Kei-han" bo-dand

Example 8. Recitation of the Poet Firdousi’s Iranian National Epic (“Shahname”)

Within the Iranian fold, there still exist remnants of older, non-Semitic style that have become absorbed in the Jewish rites. As an example of assimilation of Iranian melodies into Jewish liturgical music, here is a song from the Iranian Haggadah.

Ki lō na - - eh ki lō ya - - - eh A -  
 - dir bīnru - - - khē-a ba - bur ka-ha-la - - -  
 - - khē-a gē-du - daw jo-mē-ru lō.

Example 9. Meshed—Song from the Haggadah (*Ki Lo Na'eh*)

And here is an example of Haggadah Psalm recitation from Holohma, Afghanistan; in its melodic contour very similar to the Iranian *Ki lo na'eh*, above.

Cantor:  
 Hal - lē - lu- ya hal - lē - lu 'av - de A - do - nay,  
 Congregation:  
 hal - lē - lu et shem A - do-nay Yē - hi shem A - do-nay  
 mē - bho-rakh me-'a- ta vē 'ad 'o-lam

Example 10. Holohma, Afghanistan—Haggadah Psalm Recitation (113:2)

Iranian culture also flourished in Bukhara, a most important center of Jewish folklore. Here, as in the case of Yemen, a high standard of aesthetic feeling is manifest in an abundance of folk art. Among their religious traditions the Bukharan Jews' nightly reading from the *Zohar* (mystical "Book of Splendor") gives a vivid impression of the strange sounds produced by the preferred voice in that region—a high-pitched tenor. It also conveys an intrinsic power and intensity of expression, typical of the community's devotional songs.

A deep gulf separates this mystic-contemplative singing from the primitive magic songs at Bukharan weddings by the women—the female minstrels of

the Middle east—who hold their own when compared with medieval entertainers. They dance, sing, improvise verses, execute wedding ceremonials and indulge in a bit of wizardry. Often their wedding songs are mere acclamations, and even incantations; their drumming is full of ravishing accents and polyrhythmic impulses. With them, wedding dances have not yet lost their functional purpose: courtship, purification, the “selling” of the self, the transfer of power.

### **The Spanish-Sephardi Jews: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Greece, Cochin**

The musical heritage of Western civilization from ancient Israel became evident through a great number of cultural contacts between the exiled Jewish people and its host countries. On this basis a variety of regional traditions developed which are not easily defined or even related to each other. To take one instance: the historians of Jewish sacred music are today confronted with a difficult question, namely, whether under the many layers of Diaspora styles there can still be discovered a common source pointing to the all-embracing cult music of the Second Temple. Whether or not such an archetype of Jewish melody still exists, the only way to attack the problem seems to be to learn more about the individual attitudes towards music within the many communities of the Diaspora. To implement this approach we focused on the main ethnic groups and let them speak for themselves.

First came the group of Jews from Middle Eastern countries—the *Mizrahim*. A second great family is that of the Spanish Jews—*Sefardim*. By this we understand those Jewish communities whose cultural center, at the height of the Islamic empire from the 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, was Spain (Hebrew: *Sefarad*). After their expulsion from Spain in 1492, the greater part of Sephardic refugees settled in countries along the three shores of the Mediterranean: Morocco, Egypt, Italy, Turkey, Syria and once again, Jerusalem.

These are the Sephardi Jews whose stronger culture simply overpowered that of the already-established Jewish communities of North Africa, the Balkans and the Levant. A smaller portion of Sephardim sought shelter in Portugal, but when the Inquisition spread its activities there, they were fled and established a new Jewish center in Amsterdam with dependencies in London, Hamburg and South America. Those who remained behind in Spain and Portugal were baptized by force and lived either as New Christians (Conversos) or secretly as Marranos (Portuguese: “swine”). In spite of their general assimilation to Catholicism, there still survive some vestiges of an ancient Jewish ritual, especially among the Portuguese, whose entire Jewish population was publicly baptized against their will in 1497.

In countries bordering the Mediterranean, local variants of the Sephardi tradition sprang up and spread all over the Near-Eastern countries, covering many of the older synagogal styles with a thick layer of Spanish-Sephardi chanting, as in the following Prophetic (Haftarah) reading from Morocco.

Wě - ha - me - lekh Da - wid za -  
 - qen ba - ya - mim wa - yě - kha -  
 - su - hu ba - bě - ga - dim wě -  
 lo yi - ham lo

Example 11. Haftarah Reading—Morocco (First Kings 1: 1)

Morocco, as the first stop of the great Sephardic retreat, has been sheltering a great number of Jewish communities of very different origin and outlook. Among them are descendants of the Jewish Berbers whose language, the “Shlihi,” is a mixture of Berber and Hebrew elements. They have been dwelling in isolated communities in the Moroccan interior, thereby preserving some of the most ancient pre-Islamic trends of Jewish folk life. Another group are the descendants of Spanish Jews who settled down in the cities along Morocco’s shores; they represent an educated group and have actually preserved in their home traditions some important elements of the pre-Columbian Iberian culture which has long disappeared in Spain itself. Not only did they perpetuate the Castilian language of the 15<sup>th</sup> century as “Judeo-Spanish,” but together with it, also the literature of those times with *Villancicos* (Christmas carols), Epics and *Romanceros*—with their inseparable musical forms of old. Here is one such Judeo-Spanish Romance, telling of an incestuous relationship between King David’s children—Amnon and Tamar (Second Samuel, chapter 13)—with their royal father’s apparent acquiescence!

Un hi - jo tie - ne el Rey Da - vid che per  
 nom - bre Ha - blor si lla - - - - ma,  
 na - - mo - - ro - se de Ta - mar aunt - que  
 e - ra - - a su prop - rie daj su prop - rie Her - ma - na.

Example 12. Morocco—Judeo-Spanish Romancero (Ortega #9; after *Il Samuel*, 13)

That is how the Sephardi Jews, especially those of Morocco, became carriers of fragments—elsewhere extinct— from late-medieval Spanish civilization. During Jewish resettlement all along the Mediterranean basin, remnants of Spanish lore were transplanted through the Balkans, Turkey, and back to Jerusalem. There, in the precincts of the Jewish Quarter, Hispanic songs found a safe shelter for the next four centuries. They are performed today as they were in the olden days, especially in the homes of Jews from the famous Jewish community of Salonica (Greece). Here is one of those historic *Romanceros*—*Arvoleras* (“Forest”)— as sung in the old Castilian language by a Sephardi woman living in Jerusalem’s Old City.

Ar-bo-le - ras ar - bi - le - ras a-man a-man, ar -  
 bo - le - ras tan - gen - til.

Example 13. Salonica/Jerusalem—Historic Romancero—*Arvoleras* (“Forest”)

No less dramatic is the history of Algerian Jewry. Its colonization started in pre-Roman times, in the wake of Phoenician seafarers who had opened a Mediterranean trade route between the eastern and western shores of Tyre and Carthage. When Jews fled Palestine during the 6<sup>th</sup>-century persecutory

reign of Justinian, they found shelter with Berber tribes in the Algerian interior, that country having already become a Roman province during the Second Temple era. Through long coexistence between Jews and the Berber fellahs (peasants) of Kabylia in Northeastern Algeria as well as Arab nomads of the Atlas Mountains a rare breed of cave-dwelling nomadic Berber-Jews emerged, evidence of whose existence was discovered in recent times. Some of them were resettled in the Lachish area of Israel, fine artisans and craftsmen, but especially carpet weavers. They brought with them their ancient beliefs and customs, including folk songs and dances.

As with Moroccan Jews, the Algerians boast several ethnic groups besides the old line of Berber-Jews there, communities that originated in the East-Arabian countries—Iraq and Yemen—and Egypt, closer to home, having migrated westwards after the Arab conquests. They brought with them the ancient Babylonian practice of religious law and chant, and the ensuing split among congregations was further deepened by the influx of Spanish Jews late in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Another variety of estranged “Jews” are the descendants of Moslem “Marranos” who were forcibly converted to Islam during the 12<sup>th</sup> century’s terror by the fanatic Almohad sect. There is good reason to assume that among the Arab nomads of the Kabyle regions (and elsewhere), a good percentage is of Jewish extraction. Not surprisingly, their music has preserved some roots of Jewish song. The Jews of the Atlas Mountains that range from Southwest Morocco to Northeast Tunisia may thus represent the best extant symbiosis of ancient musical styles.

Example 14. Atlas Mountains—Southern Morocco—Two Dance Tunes

Reaching the Tunisian shores, we encounter the little island of Djerba, believed to have been the home of the Lotus Eaters in Homer’s *Odyssey*. Here, among the Berber population, there used to live a small Jewish community who claimed to have arrived shortly after the Second Temple’s destruction. Two synagogues, quite old, attested to the unbroken tradition of their communal spiritual life. Their liturgical song—though not basically different from that of Tunisian Jews on the mainland—nevertheless show some peculiarities that can only be explained by the remoteness of the island-living that allowed

them to retain a singing style relatively free from more recent influences. Their strict adherence to voice alone as the exclusive musical vehicle for worship together with their abhorrence for song per se, point to an archaic notion of music making. For instance, they have no preconceived fixation on certain modes while chanting Bible; the same singer may apply several modes and/or intonations to a single verse, according to his inclination of the moment, bound by no system of established intervals. This leads us to believe that we may be uncovering some ancient roots of human music making when listening to the Djerba Jews. Here are two variants of the same verse.

The image shows a musical score for two variants of a Psalm verse. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has two staves: the top one is labeled '1st singer' and the bottom one '2nd singer'. The second system has four staves, with the first two on the left and the last two on the right, separated by a vertical dashed line. The lyrics are written below the notes in Hebrew characters with vowel points.

1st singer  
 Kī yū - dē - - - - 'a haš - šēm

2nd singer  
 kī - yō - dē - - - - 'a iš - šēm

de - rek šād - dī - qīm u de - rek  
 de - rek šād - dī - qīm wi - de - rek  
 re - ša - 'im tō - bed  
 ra - šā - 'im tō - bed.

Example 15. Tunis—Isle of Djerba—Psalms 1: 6 (after R. Lachmann, no. 5)

One of the most striking properties of pre-expulsion Sephardic song between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries was its adoption of the Arabic technique

of “guided” improvisation on certain melorhythmic Moorish (i.e., Arabic) patterns or *Makamat*. This went side-by-side with adaptation of measured Arabic poetry to the Hebrew language. During this rare period of peace and cultural exchange between subject Jew and regnant Moslem, the sacred music of the synagogue, hitherto jealously guarded, became gradually infused with the beauties of Arabic love songs. The Spanish school of Jewish poets—masters like Ibn Gabirol, Ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi—adopted not only metrical Arabic verse, but the intoxicating Andalusian melodies of Southern Spain. The Judeo-Arabic songs that resulted were not unlike Christian-Spanish Villancicos of the same period, mostly accompanied by a small ensemble of instruments: lute, flute, cymbals and drums.

Post-expulsion Sephardic Jews who had received their training in Judaic, Islamic and Roman-Christian thought represented an intellectual force under whose influence the musical liturgies of most Mizrahi communities were modified into a partly Spanish, partly Arabic style of singing which combined with the old synagogue prayer modes to form a new variety of richly ornamented melodies. This combined technique was then transplanted into poetic portions of the liturgy and Bible. *Piyyutim*, Psalms and biblical laudations like Moses’ Song at the Sea received popular song-like melodies like this one, performed by an Egyptian hazzan.

A - shi - ra l'A - do - nay ki ga - o ga -  
a sus wě-ro·khě - bo ra - ma ba -  
- yam: 'O - zi wě-zim-rat ya wa - yě -  
- hi li li - shu - 'a ze e - li wě-an-we - hu ....

Example 16. Sephardic—Egypt—Moses’ Song at the Sea (Exodus 15: 1-2)

From that point it was only a short step to Sephardic folk songs, sung in Ladino, the dialect spoken for centuries in Judeo-Spanish communities. The next example is a Ladino ceremonial song from the circumcision ritual of the Salonica community.



Ya vien'el pa - ri - - - do.  
Et-tra-hen - do en la ma - no

con los con - vi - ta - - - - dos,  
el pa - ri - do

gua - - - - po Fi - no fin' e flo -

- ri - - - - do to-do bien com - pli - - - - do

che vi - va el pa - ri - - - - do

Example 17. Salonica (Greek—Sephardic) Circumcision Song in Ladino

With this Greek Sephardic song we have reached the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean. Here, an independent school of Jewish poets took root in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, culminating in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Kabbalistic circle of Safed on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, with its master poet, Israel Najara. For his collections of 1587 and 1599 he provided a list of well-known melodies to which the poems could be sung, each tune potentially serving many texts, and some of them surviving in present-day hymns.

Strange traces of the Spanish style have been discovered among the far-flung Jewish communities of Cochin on the South-Indian coast of Malabar; emissaries of Spanish upbringing may have transmitted their native idiom of chant to these parts. This is seen in their cantillation for the first verse of the Torah.

Bě-re-shit ba-ra E-lo-him et ha-sha-ma-yim  
 we-et ha-a-retz wě-ha-a-retz hay-ta to-hu  
 wa-wo-hu wě-ḥo-shekh al pě-ney tě-hom wě-ru-  
 -aḥ E-lo-him mě-ra-ḥe-phet'al pě-ney ha-ma-yim.

Example 18. Cochín (Southwest India)—Torah Cantillation (Genesis 1: 1)

We have now arrived at the extreme Eastern end of Mizrahi-Sephardic traditions. At the opposite end—Western Europe—the Portuguese-Sephardic community of Amsterdam has flourished for well over four centuries. In their sacred music, the old Iberian style is still recognizable, though mixed with elements of Gregorian chant and rendered in a more rational intonation (albeit tinged with Middle Eastern nasality). Here is an example of Mizrahi-Sephardic chant for Purim, in its Westernized form.

Mi kha-mo-kha w' - - - eyn ka-mo-kha  
 Mi do-me lakh w' - eyn do-me lakh

Example 19. Spanish-Portuguese (Amsterdam)—Purim Hymn

Apart from the above-named Mizrahi communities, there are some rather forgotten Jewish outposts in the Far East, Middle East and Africa, for instance, the Bene Israel and Cochín Jews in India, the Samaritans, Karaites and Sabateans in Israel, and the Ethiopians in Africa. Among Indian Jews, we know of two communities:

- a) the **Bene Israel** in and around Mumbai (formerly Bombay), who probably stem from the Galilee which they left during the invasion of Antioch Epiphanees (175 BCE), settling on India's West coast near Konkan, in

complete isolation from the rest of Judaism. Thus, until recently they did not know of the post-(Babylonian)-Exilic holidays, including Hanukkah, which occurred a mere 10 years after their flight. On the other hand, they still retained some First Temple customs like the incense offering, apparently without knowing of the Second Temple's fall and subsequent cessation of the sacrificial rite. Over the centuries their song and chant adopted some particulars of Hindu song. More recent contact with their co-religionists in Israel has caused their liturgical music to partially assimilate some general characteristics of Mizrahi-Sephardic practice (e.g., Example 18).

- b) the almost-forgotten **Cochin** from Southwest India, who were transferred to Israel in 1954. They, too, had emigrated from the Middle East—centuries later, after Roman destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE—and settled in the Southwestern province of Malabar. They eventually gained political independence through a decree of 1020, and even developed a caste system similar to that of their Hindu neighbors. Their style of singing is reminiscent of the Malayalam culture—with recent assimilation of pan-Sephardic elements.

One of the most fascinating side-stories of Jewish history is that of the Black Jews, or **Falashas**, of Ethiopia. They belong to the Amharic tribes, have their own villages, their classes of priests, their altars where they sacrifice burnt offerings, and even a class of monks. Their holy Books are the Old Testament and an apocryphal “Book of Hymns” written in the old Giz language. The Talmud remained unknown to them, as did the post-Exilic holidays. Until modern times, Hebrew was unknown to them. They accompany their religious songs with drums and an iron gong—quite an unusual thing in Judaism. The modalities and voice-timbre of their singing bears a close association with East-African folklore.

Of the universally known ancient Jewish sects, the schismatic **Samaritan** movement is most interesting from the musical and folkloristic point of view. Their forms of chanting the Bible, their phonetization of Hebrew, their drawn-out melodic lines interrupted by magic calls—these and other particulars indicate that we are facing here a living antiquity not unlike the Cochin Jews. They still adhere to Temple-style incense burning and Paschal Lamb sacrifice. They also have 10 cantillation accent-signs for reading Bible, but their melodization and grouping of accents differs from any known Jewish system. Many magic beliefs and customs flesh out the picture of an archaic tradition.

The **Karaite** sect sprang up in Iraq during the 8<sup>th</sup> century as one of the schismatic branches of Babylonian Academies that rejected Talmudic Law and rabbinic authority. In the footsteps of Jewish wanderings during the

Middle Ages they spread southwards to Egypt and northwards through Constantinople to Poland and Lithuania. The musical liturgy of their Cairo colony in the 1960s revealed a noticeable likeness to the religious practice of Egyptian Jews.

The **Sabateans** (Subotniis) are a newer sect, a group of Russian proselytes that came into being around 1800 and spread like wildfire over entire districts. They were persecuted and banned to Siberia and the Caucasus by a decree of 1825, under Czar Alexander I. In the late-20<sup>th</sup> century some families of these fugitive Russian peasants found their way to Israel and settled in the Emek, founding a village of their own: *Kfar ha-horesh*. Recently, they left to join their brethren elsewhere. In the Psalms and hymns with which they honor the Sabbath—center of their belief—we hear preserved the ancient responsorial form of South-Russian folk choirs.

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# Sephardic Musical Repertoire

*By Susana Weich-Shahak*

In the common conception of Sephardic musical repertoire a misleading typology, or rather a disregard for typology, has led to attributing the common denomination of “romanza” to all Sephardic songs. Now, over 500 years after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, seems as good a time as any for examining the Sephardic musical heritage and defining its genres.

There are three main musico-poetic genres that constitute the Sephardic musical repertoire: romances, coplas and lyric songs. These genres can be determined by taking into consideration the following aspects: poetic and musical structure, textual content, musical performance and social function.

The **romance** is a narrative song. Its content usually derives from medieval epics and very often reflects the reality of medieval Spain, the Reconquista war between Christians and Moors, but it also includes tales based on heroic Carolingian events and even on biblical themes. The narrative of the romance generally centers around a dramatic situation and its characters are often knights and noble ladies, kings and queens. Obviously the themes (with the exception of those on biblical subjects) are non-Jewish. The poetic structure of the romance is a long series of verses (depending on the version and the memory of the informant), all assonantly rhymed. Each verse of the romance has usually 16 but may occasionally have 12 syllables, divided by a caesura into two isometric hemistiches of 8 (or 6) syllables each.

The music of the romance is clearly strophic, with one musical stanza repeated throughout the text and dividing the long series of verses into a strophic structure. Each musical stanza has generally four musical phrases (mainly in the formal ABCD structure, but at times also in AABC, AABB, ABCA etc.) which carry four hemistiches of the text (or only two, when there is a repetition of the text). This interaction between text and music, besides the other textual aspects described above, is a main trait in the definition of the romance.

The music of the romances varies greatly, depending on the area in which the Sephardic Jews lived during the five centuries of their second diaspora and the musical influences to which they were subjected. However, some melodies of the romances have been traced as far back as the written sources of polyphonic and instrumental works by Spanish musicians of the 15th and 16th century. The romances are performed, with few exceptions, as solo songs. They are mostly sung by women, with no instrumental accompaniment, and their most widespread function is that of lullabies (**Example 1**).

$\text{♩} = 152 - 132$

De Bur- gòs par- tió e- se rey — de Bur- gòs pa Sa - la - man- ca  
 y en mi- tad de a- quel ca- mi - no del cie- lo ca- ye u- na car- ta  
 To- mad là mis ca - ba- lle- ros to- mad- là bien y no - tad- la  
 pa- ra vos mi se - ñor rey — pa - ra vos e- ra man- da- da

Example 1. De Burgos partió ese rey, Alicia Bendayan (Tetuan), Ashkelon, July 4, 1983

The **coplas** are strophic poems with fixed metric schemes such as, among others, monorhymed tercets with or without caesura, structured strophes (four-lined strophes with an AAAX BBBX CCCX rhyme) or “purimic strophe” (nine-verse strophes, with long and short verses). The music is accordingly strophic, though not always in direct relation to the poetic structure. It reflects the influence and the ever-changing musical styles of their immediate milieu. Occasionally the strophes are acrostically ordered.

In any case, the texts of the coplas have a characteristic continuity of content and are clearly a Jewish creation which was widely documented in the 18th and 19th century, deeply bound to Jewish heritage (sources and history, events and concepts). Their social function is strongly linked with community life, in particular with Jewish Festivals and High Holidays. As such they are sung, mostly in group-singing, by both male and female members of the family, but are often led by a man, as the texts of these festive coplas are usually read from booklets specially printed for each occasion and mostly in old Hebrew characters with which few women were familiar (**Example 2**).

$\text{♩} = 140$

Ya cre- cen las hier- bas y dan de co- lor  
 y és- tè mi co- ra- zón vi- ve con do- lor,

Ya cre- cen las\_ hier- bàs y dan de a- ma- ri- llò  
 - y és - tè mi co- ra- zón vi- ve, de sus - pi- ro.

Example 2. *Ya crecen las hierbas*, Flora Bengio (Tetuan), Ashdod, Feb. 20, 1980

The **lyric songs** constitute a wide corpus, loosely defined as having a strophic structure both in text and music, very often with a refrain. The themes are mostly romantic and reflect the realm of emotions and feelings (love, despair, longing etc.). The most common poetic-musical structure is that of the quatrain, with alternate rhyme or, in the even verses, sung in a four-phrase musical stanza. These songs have no fixed order for the strophes, nor any continuity of content, except in the specifically serial songs which follow certain patterns, such as parallelism or accumulation.

In others, the poetic strophes may even wander from one song to another (Example 3).

♩ = tos  
 Em-pe - zár que - ro con - tar hechas del Dió Al - to,  
 con bai-les y sal - tos y con gran pla-çer, por-que Ha-mán el mam-zer  
 con bai-les y sal - tos y con gran pla-çer, por-que Ha-mán el mam-zer  
 con bai-les y sal - tos y con gran pla-çer, por-que Ha-mán el mam-zer  
 mos qui - só ma - tar - mos también a-te-mar - mos.

Example 3. *Empezar quero contar* (Purim)

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**Al-Ghriba Synagogue, Djerba, Tunisia**  
(bombed by terrorists in 2002)



# A Competition for the Office of Hazzan in the “Great” Portuguese Synagogue of Amsterdam in the 18th Century

By Israel Adler

The inauguration of this synagogue remains the most remarkable and sumptuous manifestation of the Jewish Portuguese community of Amsterdam in the 18th century. It was inaugurated on August 2, 1765, and few visitors of any note passed through the city without pausing to visit this edifice. A source of legitimate pride for the “Portuguese” Jews of Amsterdam and the entire world, it still presents the same majestic aspect in its original site on the Rapenburgerstraat. The date of the inauguration, which began on the eve of *Shabbat nahamu* (the Saturday following the mourning of the 9th of Av), became the principal local feast and is still commemorated today. Traces of the event can be found in collections of occasional poetry and also in musical manuscripts. Contemporary historians agree in recording that the event took place in the presence of the burgemeester (mayor), the aldermen and notables of the city, to the sounds of a choir and orchestra.

The description that we owe to David Franco Mendes<sup>1</sup> of the competitions held on the election of a new hazzan clearly demonstrate the considerable enthusiasm for music that prevailed in this community. They confirm the existence of an art music practice and at the same time constitute valuable sources that complement the notated manuscripts of which we have knowledge.

When the post of Hazzan became vacant, the candidates presented themselves to the communal authorities (the *ma'amad*),<sup>2</sup> who established the order of the competition. Each Saturday during the competition period a different postulant thus offered himself to the judgement of the community. The rivals, seeking to impress their audience, looked for unpublished poems which their friends, the local poets, were only too happy to provide. David Franco Mendes, for example, describes the competitions of 1742 and 1743.<sup>3</sup> The first is especially interesting because of several texts sung by various candidates, of which the music has survived. The second permits us to con-

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1 *Kol t'fillah, Memorias do estabelecimento a progresso dos judeos Portugueses e Espanhoes... de Amsterdam...*, Aeh, Ms. 49 A 8 (unpublished).

2 J. S. da Silva Rosa, *Geschiedenis der portugeesche Joden te Amsterdam*, 1927, p. 126.

3 *Kol t'fillah*, folios 64-66b; folios 114a-117.

firm the valuable information given elsewhere by Franco Mendes about this event during which works of art music were performed in an atmosphere of extraordinary joyfulness.

The competition of 1743 was held following the death of the Hazzan Samuel Rodrigues Mendes, one of the two singers of Abraham Caceres's cantata in 1738. One of the competitors, Daniel Pimentel, presented the chant *Solu larokheiv ba'aravot, eil...* Franco Mendes reveals the author of the text: Aaron da Costa Abendana, and a musical version of it has survived in two late 18th century manuscripts. The work of another, better known local poet, Joseph Siprut de Gabbai<sup>4</sup>—*Leil shaddai t'fillati*—which was performed on this occasion, also appears in these two manuscripts, under the name of Abraham Caceres, for two voices and *basso continuo*, and in another tonality and with different words. Caceres here evidently used another composition, taken from his 1738 cantata.

Description of the competition for the post of the deceased hazzan Joseph ben Isaac Sarfatim in 1772 occupies five large closely written pages in Franco Mendes's manuscript, *Memorias de estabelecimento*. We shall cite the information that reveals an art music practice. After giving details of the procedure, Franco Mendes names the seven competitors and notes the works sung by each of them. In some cases he adds a most important detail, as far as we are concerned: the names of the composers. Thus the third candidate, ben Joseph Piza, stipulated that *Os versos segt com muzika nova composta assim de Lidarti como de Creitzer* ("The verses are set to new music composed by Lidarti as well as Kreutzer").

The fourth competitor, Aaron ben Abraham Touro, sang a part of the Hallel (*Pit'hu li sha'arei tzedek*), also to music by Lidarti, and a new Kaddish composed by M. Mani. The fifth candidate, David ben Immanuel da Silva, sang "with a regular grace" and also "to new music." The names of the composers Lidarti and Mani often figure in the music manuscripts of this community, and Cristiano Giuseppe especially—although a gentile—seems at that time to have been its favorite composer. "Creitzer" (thus transliterated in Portuguese), whose name we have not found anywhere else in the Amsterdam Jewish sources, is perhaps one of the two brothers Kreutzer, more probably George Anton—known as a prolific composer—than his elder brother Adam, a horn and violin virtuoso, well known at that time in Amsterdam.<sup>5</sup>

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4 Silva Rosa, *ibid.*

5 D. F. Scheurler, *Het musiekleven in Nederland* (Gravenhage, 1909).

Franco Mendes<sup>6</sup> recounts that on the first evening of the fifth candidate's tests, which certainly took place partly after the close of the Sabbath to allow instrumental accompaniment,

there was an innumerable gathering of people; as many individuals of our nation [Portuguese Jews] as German [Ashkenazi Jews] and also Christians. Six guards barred the doors... On leaving the synagogue, the candidate was accompanied to his house, many people and children, both Portuguese and German, holding hands, forming cordons... with acclamations and cheers.

It was in fact this candidate—Immanuel da Silva—who gained the victory, but only after a passionate struggle between the partisans of the various competitors. Franco Mendes writes at length about the canvassing for votes, a passion that gripped the whole community during the weeks of the trials. The triumphal procession of the victor, who was accompanied by “flaming torches and an innumerable crowd, to the sound of trumpets, with rejoicing never yet seen,” was surpassed by the installation ceremony of da Silva in his new office:

In the afternoon he was accompanied to the synagogue by... an innumerable multitude both of our nation and of Germans, preceded by two trumpeters, two horns and two oboes. The great doors of the synagogue were opened, and it was invaded by Germans who knocked down the guards... sang their own airs, various Psalms and *Pizmonim*.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, this ruckus did not prevent the ceremony from proceeding in an atmosphere of “inexpressible joyfulness.”

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6 Cited in Scheurler, *Het musiekleven...*, pp. 204, 273, 309 and especially 323.

7 Liturgical poems featuring a repeating refrain.

## Leitmotifs in Sephardic High Holiday Liturgy

By Maxine R. Kanter

Over many centuries the Jews of Spain and Portugal—the original Sephardim—developed their own unique and very beautiful form of religious worship. Their services were enhanced by the addition of poetry for special occasions such as the major festivals (*Shalosh r'galim*) and the *Yamim nora'im* (High Holidays). Most of these poetic insertions are rhymed, metrical hymns (*piyyutim*) and were the products of great literary figures during the Golden Age of the Jews in Spain (c. 950-1150). Among these were Solomon ibn Gabriol, Judah Halevi and the two Ibn Ezras—Abraham and Moshe.

Following the Edict of Expulsion in 1492, Spanish Jews who did not accept conversion to Catholicism were faced not only with the loss of all their property, but virtual deportation as well. Many fled to nearby lands where they believed they would be safe and, perhaps, their exile would be temporary. Those who settled around the eastern Mediterranean basin (Turkey, Greece, Palestine, etc.), are known to us as Levantine Sephardim. They are remarkable in the Sephardic Diaspora in that they carried their language, liturgy, and customs with them and have maintained them uninterrupted until this day.

Other Sephardim, principally those who had crossed over from Spain into Portugal—only to discover five years later that the long and menacing arm of the Inquisition had pursued them even to that supposedly welcoming haven—escaped, if they were lucky, to France, Holland and other countries in Northern Europe, and eventually, the New World. This second group, often referred to by their contemporaries as “Portuguese merchants” because of their close identification with commercial enterprises, included many Marranos or “secret Jews” who were outwardly practicing Catholics. As a consequence, these crypto-Jews were not as steadfast or fortunate in being able to preserve their Jewish traditions. For the ex-Marranos, then, the forced change of identity necessitated more of a reintroduction than a return to mainstream Judaism. This accounts for the differences between the “Eastern” and “Western” Sephardim. In addition, the effects of acculturation in the various host countries of their dispersion played a significant role in shaping the two main branches of the Sephardic family.

As a general overview, however, both traditions of synagogue song share these common traits:

1. **Oral transmission.** Not until the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were the chants written down.<sup>1</sup> Continuity was assured by strict adherence to custom. However, in the event certain hymns or prayers had no traditional tune, the hazzan, not unlike the medieval bards or minnesingers, was permitted to select or invent one of his own.<sup>2</sup> This resulted in a large number of melodies for a few well-known hymns such as *Ein keiloheinu*, *Yigdal*, *Adon olam*, *L'khah dodi*, etc. Conversely, the extreme sanctity of the High Holidays, although embellished with *piyyutim*, is imbued with such somber soul-searching that it would discourage any attempts at entertainment or novelty on the part of the hazzan.
2. **Use of repetition.** Sephardic chants are often made up of short motivic figures which are linked together and repeated again and again—or varied somewhat—in order to fit the text. This method of musical composition corresponds generally to an Oriental style and probably dates from ancient, or at least, pre-Expulsion times. The disaffection and impatience with this body of music often expressed by non-Sephardim may be attributed to this monotonous type of musical construction, but it has a special quality and deep meaning for all Sephardic Jews.
3. **Absence of melancholy or mournful expression.** Despite the penitent or pleading nature of many of the liturgical texts, Sephardic music often reflects a joyful and vigorous character. Unlike that of the Ashkenazic Jews, Sephardic liturgy contains few laments and, in the rhymed and metrical pieces, the rhythms are strong and well-defined. Among the Western Sephardim, in particular, the tunes are frequently based on the scale patterns found in the music of Northern and Western Europe.
4. **Use of local popular or folk-tunes.** This practice is not limited exclusively to Sephardic music, but unquestionably, in the repertoires of the Ashkenazic and Christian communities as well. (Martin Luther is reputed to have asked, “Why should we leave all the good tunes for the devil?”) Many a German or Russian folksong has been transformed into a “traditional” synagogue melody, regardless of its origin or apparent suitability. Some of the early hazzanim, who were also liturgical poets (*payy'tanim*), cleverly constructed contrafacts, new poetic texts to fit a popular melody, imitating the meter, rhyme and phonetics of the original secular text. No doubt their congregations enjoyed singing the familiar and

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1 Idelsohn, Abraham Zvi, *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development*, New York, 1929:213. The first publication containing a significant number of musical items was *The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, harmonized by Emanuel Aguilar, preceded by a “Historical Essay on the Poets, Poetry and Melodies of the Sephardic Liturgy,” by the Reverend D[avid] A[aron] de Sola, London:Wessel and Co., 1857.

2 Ibid., p. 125.

well-loved melodies, but rabbinic literature of the time reveals a serious concern over the use of inappropriate secular songs.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, there exists no written documentation or musical evidence of the tunes that were adopted for synagogue use, although de Sola does mention in passing several examples of Spanish popular melodies by name.<sup>4</sup>

5. **Use of tune as a representative musical theme or “leitmotif.”** During an important holiday or season, one melody is typically heard often and carries the association of the special day(s). Thus, throughout the *Yamim nora'im* a melody closely related to a key poem or prayer will be adapted also for implementation elsewhere in the liturgy, under the rubric “Sing to the melody (*lahan*) of...” followed by the incipit of a well-known Hebrew or Arabic song. This instruction is to be found in many old manuscripts.<sup>5</sup> To this day, as we shall see, prayerbooks in the Sephardic rite carry these musical clues. (This was not only practical as a reminder to the congregation which melody to use; it also discouraged an ambitious [or forgetful?] hazzan from introducing a tune of his own choosing at this point in the service.)

## The Dutch and English tradition

An oral tradition of Western Sephardic synagogue music emerged most identifiably among the Portuguese Jews who settled in Holland after that country freed itself from Spain in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Their customs, the order of service, and the musical practices of the Amsterdam Synagogue and its slightly-younger sister congregation in London were originally the same. Even after minor differences developed they remained in very close contact, the Dutch community usually providing rabbis and hazzanim for both, as well as for eventual daughter congregations overseas. However, it was not until 1857, when a collection of liturgical tunes of the Spanish and Portuguese ritual was published, that a document containing substantial musical material became available and could then be circulated among the affiliated congregations in an effort to fix and preserve their repertoire.

This valuable cornerstone of Sephardic musical history, *The Ancient Melodies of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews* (mentioned earlier in footnote 1) consisted of melodies transcribed and harmonized by Emanuel Aguilar (1824-1904; **Figure 1**). Considering the facts known about Emanuel Aguilar—his

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3 Ibid., pp. 208–209.

4 De Sola, “Historical Essay,” op. cit., p. 13

5 The term *lahan* was borrowed from the Arabic; see Hanoach Avenary, s.v., “Music,” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1972, 12:595.

professional training in Germany, his conversion to Protestant Christianity, his systematic theoretical approach to piano playing—one is not surprised at the decidedly condescending tone this nineteenth-century conservatory trained musician assumes in preparing a work drawn from an oral and “traditional” source. In a prefatory note to *The Ancient Melodies* he apologizes for their imperfection, writing:

The Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews is entirely musical, every portion being either intoned, chanted, or sung in verses to the melodies of which this work is composed. The singular irregularities of rhythm which will be perceived in many of them, is, I think, attributable, in some instances, to their dating from a period anterior to the use of bars in music; in others, from their composers being unacquainted with musical notation.



Figure 1. Emanuel Aguilar, the first to transcribe and harmonize melodies of the Spanish and Portuguese rite

Having little knowledge or experience with Oriental music, from which to a considerable degree traditional Jewish music traces its source, Aguilar was plainly unaware that it is characteristically un-rhythmical. It was apparently unthinkable to him that music could exist without bar lines, as if musical *notation* was, in fact, music. He therefore perceived the “irregularities” of rhythm as

errors, or—even worse—as representative of an undeveloped musicality, rather than being typical of an older, more complex and sophisticated melodic art.

In an evident effort to modernize the musical portion of the Portuguese ritual, perhaps to bring it up to a par with the style of music of the developing Reform ritual which was patterning itself after the Protestant service, Aguilar did not render the melodies in their original and true monophonic character. Instead, he adds: “... for the most part, [they are] harmonized so as to be sung in parts, they are written in the manner I have thought most convenient for praying.”<sup>6</sup>

Of the seventy hymns notated, only one, *Shofeit kol ha-arets* (Illustration No. 2), is given without either a meter signature or an accompaniment. Tellingly, it is the only highly melismatic piece in the de Sola and Aguilar collection. We cannot help but wish that more of the melodies were given in this manner, since, undoubtedly, the desire for modern harmonies as well as the employment of nineteenth-century performance practices resulted in distortion and misunderstanding of both the rhythm and the modal quality of the melodies. One must look with suspicion at the nineteenth-century musicians and editors who, as it has been repeatedly demonstrated, altered sixth and seventh scale tones and adjusted cadences to correspond to the more customary major and minor modes. Undoubtedly their “improvements” also account for the imposition of strict duple or triple meters on melodies which were originally in free rhythm.

Fortunately for posterity, the selection of tunes and their placement in the liturgical order was undoubtedly made by David de Sola, hazzan from 1818 until his death in 1860 of *Sh'aar ha-shamayim*, the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation at Bevis Marks in London.

De Sola, born December 26, 1796 in Amsterdam, was the only son of Aaron and Sarah Namias Torres de Sola, highly educated and observant Jews who traced their family origins to pre-expulsion Spain and, later, to Holland and England. Although initially his knowledge of English was slight, he learned very quickly and soon mastered the language well enough to publish his first work, *The Blessings*, with an English translation in 1829. In the same year he preached the first English sermon ever heard in the Portuguese synagogue, religious discourses having been infrequent and invariably delivered in the Spanish or Portuguese languages.<sup>7</sup>

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6 Aguilar, “Prefatory Note” (see *Adonai b'kol shofar*, Illustration No. 2, for a specimen of Aguilar's style of notation and harmonization.)

7 The Iberian languages were still the vernaculars employed in the Sephardic community of London in the first half of the nineteenth century, and all of its writ-



In 1840 de Sola issued a prospectus for a new edition of the Sacred Scriptures with critical and explanatory notes. The first (and only) volume, containing also a brief history of former translations, appeared in 1844 and was considered to be a valuable literary production, being republished shortly afterwards in Germany. However, it is *The Ancient Melodies* that remains de Sola's greatest literary contribution, not only because of his collaboration in this first attempt at notating and authenticating the sacred music legacy of this branch of Jewry, but for the English translations of many of their hymns. Moreover, his "Historical Essay" which prefaces the collection,<sup>8</sup> represents a memorable early venture into the then uncharted waters of Jewish music scholarship.

In attempting to date the creation of the melodies given in his anthology, de Sola suggests three chronological divisions: 1) prior to the settlement of the Jews in Spain; 2) during their long sojourn on the Iberian Peninsula; and 3) "a later date" [i.e., after the Sephardic dispersion]. Although he states in his Preface that "very probably, many chants used on the Festival of the New Year and Day of Atonement [belong to the first category]," he seems to contradict himself by placing all of the twelve High Holiday tunes except one in the first category, even though most of them are of obvious later origin. He divides this "early" category into twelve examples, six for Rosh Hashanah and six for Yom Kippur.<sup>9</sup>

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ten records were kept in Portuguese.

8 The "Historical Essay" was, regrettably, omitted when the book reappeared as *Sephardi Melodies—Being the Traditional Liturgical Chant of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation*, London: Oxford University Press, in 1931. Part I is "The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews" by Emanuel Aguilar and the Rev. D.A. de Sola (1857). Part II consists of melodies harmonized by Elias Robert Jessurun, the Congregation's Choirmaster.

9 The hymn collection consists of six categories: "Morning Hymns," "Sabbath Melodies and Hymns," "for Feast of New Year and Day of Atonement," "Festival Hymns," "Elegies for the Ninth Day of Ab," and "Occasional Hymns." Nos. 26 to 36 are for the High Holidays. No. 70, *Raheim na alav*, ("Dirge for the Dead"), has also been included in this study since the melody is also used for Gabirol's *Elohim eili atah* ("Lord, You are my God") for the morning of the Day of Atonement, and is the tune de Sola regards as being "composed at a later date" ("Historical Essay," p. 16).

Ten out of the twelve texts for these melodies are *piyyutim*: *Ahot k'tannah*,<sup>10</sup> *Shofeit kol ha-arets*,<sup>11</sup> *Yah shimkha*, (**Example 3**),<sup>12</sup> *Eit sha'arei ratson*,<sup>13</sup> *Adonai b'kol shofar*,<sup>14</sup> *Sh'ma koli*,<sup>15</sup> *Anna b'korenu*,<sup>16</sup> *Yah sh'ma evyonekha*,<sup>17</sup> *Eil nora alilah*,<sup>18</sup> and *Elohim eili atah*.<sup>19</sup>

The pioneering Jewish ethnomusicologist Abraham Zvi Idelsohn presented a somewhat different dating for the ancient melodies: he suggests a Spanish hallmark for only twenty-three, compared with de Sola's total of forty-seven,<sup>20</sup> but no explanation is given. In fact, neither expert offers criteria or proof for his assessment. Nevertheless, it is impressive that, although they concur on only nineteen musical numbers, nine of them are from the repertoire for the High Holidays. That these scholars should be in agreement on nine out of

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10 "The Little Sister," by Abraham Gerondi; author's notation taken from Aguilar's transcription. All hymn notations given in musical examples are from *The Ancient Melodies* unless otherwise identified.

11 "Sovereign Judge of all the Earth," by an unknown poet. It was formerly attributed to Solomon ibn Gabirol, probably because of a name acrostic which reads *Sh'LoMoh HaZak* ("Solomon, be strong"), but none of the anthologies or biographies of Gabirol mention this poem. Example 2 is Aguilar's transcription, the only hymn tune given monophonically in the collection. Judging from the elaborate ornamentation and melismatic style of the piece, one can conclude that it was a great personal favorite of Hazzan de Sola's.

12 "O Lord, I would extol Thy name," by Yehudah ben Samuel Halevi, considered to be the greatest of all post-Biblical poets. There are more *piyyutim* in the Sephardic prayerbooks by Halevi than by any other author.

13 "When the gates of mercy are opened," by Judah ben Samuel Abbas.

14 "God has gone up amidst shouting," by an unknown *payy'tan* named "Jacob."

15 "Hear Thou my voice, O God" By Hai ben Sherira [Gaon], last of the great *geonim* of Babylonia

16 This hymn, written by David ben Eleazer ibn Paquda, is constructed without a true refrain. From its design it is obvious that the poet meant for it to be performed antiphonally (i.e. after every phrase the hazzan sings, the congregation responds with a short phrase of its own.) Inasmuch as it also does not appear as a "representative" theme for the High Holidays, it has been eliminated from this study.

17 "Lord, to Thy pitiful people," by Yehudah Halevi.

18 "God of Awe"—by Moses ibn Ezra—despite its position of importance in this religious observance, does not have a melodic relationship with any other text and therefore has been excluded.

19 "O God, my God art Thou," by Solomon ibn Gabirol shares its melody with *Raheim na alav*, and it is this text that de Sola and Aguilar used in *The Ancient Melodies*.

20 Idelsohn, op.cit., p. 515, no. 2.

twelve examples given in this classification should not surprise us and only serves to reinforce the theory that, because of the solemnity associated with *Yamim nora'im*, there is a greater tendency to honor and preserve the old tunes at that time.<sup>21</sup>

### Examining leitmotifs

It is also not unreasonable to speculate that these same tunes have become inseparable from the Sephardic High Holiday liturgy, where they are heard over and over again in the various services, because of their venerability. They are often adapted for *piyyutim* having refrains (*pizmonim*),<sup>22</sup> but they may also appear as settings for so-called Foundation-Prayer texts such as *Bar'khu*, *Kaddish*, *K'dushah*, during that penitential season. However, although it is certainly not usual for a melody associated with one event on the Jewish calendar to appear on any other occasion, it is extremely rare in the Sephardic tradition, especially during the *Yamim nora'im*.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, a number of tunes are featured often enough to qualify as true holiday leitmotifs. That is to say: 1) they are unquestionably very old; 2) they convey a strong and immediate reminder of the High Holy Day; and 3) they have multiple settings and are heard repeatedly.

### Evening service for Rosh Hashanah

The first *piyyut* sung in the evening service of Rosh Hashanah (first night only) is *Ahot k'tannah*<sup>24</sup> (**Example 1**), the hazzan usually repeating the last

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21 Ibid.; Idelsohn and de Sola agree that all the *piyyutim* except *Ahot k'tannah* are from the Spanish period. Idelsohn places it at a later date than does de Sola.

22 Avenary, "Music," *loc. cit.*, p. 595. Avenary traces the development of refrain types to the extensive use of foreign forms such as the *shir ezor* ("girdle song"), which was probably an ancestor of both the Spanish villancico and the French virelai. It is characterized by a certain order of rhymes and an unchanging refrain (*pizmon*) to be performed in chorus by the congregation.

23 In addition to *Raheim na alav* (already discussed) in the Musaf services for Rosh Hashanah, *Hay-yom harat olam* occurs three times, and is sung to a different melody each time. The melody for the third occurrence is borrowed from *L'shoni vonanta*, a poem that also appears in the Sephardic Passover liturgy (see below: Example 5, footnote 33).

24 The descriptions of performance practices in the Dutch and English Sephardic congregations which follow are based primarily on the writer's observations, field work and interviews with community clergy.

stanza to the tune of *Shofeit kol ha-arets* (Example 2) and continuing with this melody for the first part of the *Kaddish le'ila* which is done on both evenings. At the congregational response *V'yishtabah v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam v'yitnasei*, the melody shifts to that of *Y'dei rashim*,<sup>25</sup> and that same melody is sung to *Bar'khu and Kaddish titkabbal* as well. In Amsterdam the tune is also used for *Yigdal*, which concludes the evening service.<sup>26</sup> On the second night of Rosh Hashanah the *Kaddish* is sung to the *Ahot* melody, inasmuch as that *piyyut* does not appear.

0 **Lento Sostenuto** (♩ = 69)

6 A - hot k' - tan - nah t' - fil - lo - te - ha, o - r' -  
 khah v' - o - nah t' - hil - lo - te - ha,  
 11 eil - na - r' - fa - na, eil na - r' - fa - na l' -  
 15 - ma - ha - lo - te - ha, tikh - leh sha -  
 19 nah v' - ki - l' - lo - te - ha

Example 1. *Ahot k'tannah*, as given in Aguilar.

**Lento (Senza Tempo)**

Sho - feit kol ha - a -  
 2 - - - - - rets v' - o - tah

25 *Y'dei rashim* ("Too feeble and poor"), Yehudah Halevi's *piyyut* for the first day of Rosh Hashanah, is set to the same melody as *Yah shimkha* (see Example 3).

26 In London and New York they sing *Yigdal* on the High Holidays to the tune of *Eit sha'arei ratson*.

3  
b'-mish - pat ya - a - mid.

4  
na - hay- yim va- he - - - - .

5  
sed al am a - ni tats - mid v'-et - t' -

6  
fil - lat ha - sha - - - - har bim -

7  
-kom o - lah ta - a mid,

8  
o - lat hab-bo - - - - ker

9  
a - sher l' - o - lat ha - ta - - - - mid.

Example 2. *Shofeit kol ha-arets*, as it appears in Aguilar's collection.

### Morning services for both days of Rosh Hashanah

In the *Shaharit* service for the first day, following the usual blessings and psalms, the hazzan begins the *pizmon*, *Elohai al t'dineini*,<sup>27</sup> to the tune of *Sh'ma koli*, followed by the entire *Shofeit kol ha-arets*. In the *Shaharit* service for the second day at this point, they sing *Adonai yom l'kha*,<sup>28</sup> to the tune of *Sh'ma koli*. In the first day's *Shaharit*, the *Hatsi-kaddish* prior to *Bar'khu* has as an introduction: Yehudah Halevi's *Y'dei rashim* ("The hands of the wicked"). On the second day, the introduction to *Hatsi-kaddish* prior to *Bar'khu* is Halevi's

27 "Judge me not, O my God," formerly attributed to Halevi, it is now believed to have been written by Isaac bar Levi ben mar Saul Alisani.

28 "Lord, this Day," written by Yehudah Halevi.

*pizmon*, *Yah shimkha* (**Example 3**).<sup>29</sup> Both poems—as one would expect—utilize the same tune, the holiday’s musical theme par excellence in Sephardic usage. Then the *Hatsi-kaddish* itself is sung to the tune of *Yah shimkha* as well.

**Andante Quasi Allegretto** (♩ - 108)

Yah shim- kha\_\_ a - ro - mim - kha v' tsid - ka - t' kha\_\_ lo\_\_ a-kha-seh.  
lo esh - al\_\_ v' - lo\_\_ a - na - seh,

5  
He - e - zan - ti\_\_ v' - he - e - man\_\_ ti, v' -  
v'eikh yo - meir y' - tsir\_\_ ho - mer e - lei yots - ro, v' -

7 REFRAIN *Piu lento*  
yish - ta - bah v' - yit - pa - ar v' - yit - ro - mam v' - yit - na - sei.

**Example 3.** *Yah shimkha* for the second day of Rosh Hashanah: music as given in Aguilar; words of the Refrain corrected in anticipation of *Hatsi-kaddish*, into which the *piyyut* leads.

After the repetition of the *Amidah* on the first day they sing *L'ma'ankha elohai*<sup>30</sup> to the same tune as *Adonai b'kol shofar*. It should be noted, however, that in some of the oldest prayerbooks, the imperative “*Lahan l'ma'ankha*” (sing [to] the melody of *L'ma'ankha* here) gives rise to the question: which of the two poems received the musical setting first? Depending on the answer, a second question might be: were the two poems, in fact, always sung to the identical melody?

On the second day—in place of *L'ma'ankha elohai*—they sing *Ya'aneh b'hor avot*<sup>31</sup> to the *L'ma'ankha adonai b'kol* melody. The next poetic piece, *Eit sha'arei ratson*<sup>32</sup> (**Example 4**), is sung by the entire congregation after the Haftarah

29 In the transcription of *Yah shimkha* that Aguilar gives in *The Ancient Melodies*, he has mistakenly substituted the refrain from *Y'dei rashim*, Halevi's hymn sung on the first day. The actual words (taken from the *Hatsi-kaddish* which follows) should be *Yishtabah v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam v'yitnasei* (“Praised be He and glorified, lifted and exalted”).

30 “For Thine own sake,” written by David ibn Pakuda (also known as Bakuda).

31 “For the merit of the fathers,” it is believed to have been written by Abraham ibn Ezra.

32 In addition to its Shaḥarit recitation in all Sephardic communities, this poem is sung in Amsterdam after the closing hymn *Yigdal* on the eve of Yom Kippur, and also during the Yom Kippur afternoon service in some communities of North Africa.

has been recited. An extended dramatic rendition of the sacrifice of Isaac (*Akeidah*), it is one of the high points in the Sephardic High Holiday service and is significant also for the role of women in its performance. Because of its subject matter—the near loss of a beloved child—the universal understanding and empathy for maternal grief often produces audible reactions from the women in the congregation, particularly those of Middle Eastern origin.

**Moderato** (♩ = 134)

Eit\_ sha - a-rei ra - tson l'-hi - pa - tei - ah, yom e - he-yeh kha -  
 5 pai l' eil\_ sho - tei - ah a - na \_\_\_\_\_ z' khor na\_ li b'-yom ho -  
 10 khei - ah. O - keid ve-ha-ne-e - kad ve-ha \_\_\_\_\_ miz - bei - ah. B' - a - ha rit\_ nu -  
 16 sah b' sof\_ ha-a - sa - rah, ha - bein a-sher no - lad l' - kha\_ mi - sa - rah, im  
 21 naf - sh'-kha\_ bo - ad m'od\_ nik - sha - rah, kum ha - a-lei-hu li l' o - lah\_  
 26 ba - rah, al har \_\_\_\_\_ a - sher\_ ka - vod l' kha - zo -  
 30 rei - ah, o - keid v'-ha - ne - e - kad v'-ha \_\_\_\_\_ miz - bei - ah.

**Example 4.** *Eit sha'arei ratson*, as given in Aguilar.

Unless Rosh Hashanah falls on the Sabbath (thus omitting the blowing of the shofar), all Sephardic congregations chant *Adonai b'kol shofar* (**Example 5**), before the first “sounding of the horn”<sup>33</sup> on the New Year.

5  
A - do - nai b' kol sho - far yash - mi - a y' - shu - ah l' -  
8  
ka - beits seh f' - zu - rah b' - vo - hez - yon y' -  
shu - ah, a - lah e - lo - him bit - ru - ah.

**Example 5.** *Adonai b'kol shofar*, as given in Aguilar.

In the *Musaf* service no *piyyutim* are specifically included, but the *Amidah* and the *K'dushah* in the repetition that follows Silent Devotion are both sung to the tune of *Ahot k'tannah* (on the second day, *Eit sha'arei ratson* may be substituted for *Ahot k'tannah*). After the *Malkhuyot* and its attendant blowing of the shofar, the congregation sings *Hay-yom harat olam* to the tune of *Shofeit kol ha-arets*. After the *Zikhronot* and its shofar blowing, *Hay-yom harat olam* is sung to the tune of *Adonai b'kol shofar*.

After the *Shofarot* section and its shofar blowing, *Hay-yom harat olam* is sung to the melody of *Lshoni vonanta* (**Example 6**), a poem borrowed from the liturgy of *Shalosh r'galim* (Three Pilgrimage Festivals) and therefore, a rarity during the High Holidays.

6  
L' - sho - ni vo - nan - ta e - lo - hai, va -  
9  
tiv - har b' - shi - rim she - sam -  
- ta b' fi - tov mi - mis - khar.

**Example 6.** *Lshoni vonanta*, as given in Aguilar for *Shalosh r'galim*.

If it is late enough in the day, some *s'lihot* (Penitential *piyyutim*) can be inserted, otherwise, *Ein keילוהינו* is sung to the tune of *Yah shimkha*—and the service concludes as it does on the Sabbath—except that the closing hymn is now heard to a leitmotif of the High Holidays.



## Evening service for Kippur

The first hymn for the eve of *Kippur* (Sephardic parlance omits the word “Yom”) is *Sh’ma koli*.<sup>34</sup> Aguilar gives only its refrain (**Example 7a**); *Sh’ma koli* #1).

Moderato (♩ = 84)

Sh' - ma ko - li a - sher\_\_ yish - ma, b' - kol - lot v' -

4  
ha - eil ha - m' - kab - beil ha - t' - fil - lot...

**Example 7a.** *Sh'ma koli* #1, as given in Aguilar.

*Sh'ma koli* # 2 is taken from Abraham Lopes Cardozo, “The Music of the Sephardim,” in *The World of the Sephardim* (Herzl Institute Pamphlet No. 15, New York: Herzl Press, 1960). The hymn is given here in its entirety (**Example 7b**).

Sh'ma\_\_\_\_\_ ko - li\_\_\_\_\_ a - sher\_\_yish-ma b' - ko-lot v'-ha-eil ha-

3  
m' - kab- beil\_ ha - t' - fil-lot. V' - ha - o-seh b' - li\_\_\_\_\_ hei - ker g' - do-lot.

**Example 7b.** *Sh'ma koli* #2, the entire tune, as given in Abraham Lopes Cardozo.

Later, after the *Kol Nidre* and other prayers, *V'hu rahum* is sung to the tune of *Shofeit kol ha-arets*, and *Bar'khu* is sung to the tune of *Yah shimkha*. The Arvit (Evening service, the Sephardic equivalent of Ashkenazic Ma'ariv) then proceeds as on Sabbath Eve. After the silent *T'fillah* (Sephardic equivalent of Ashkenazic *Amidah*), the *s'lihah* (penitential *piyyut*)—*Anna b'kor'einu*—is performed in its characteristic antiphonal manner<sup>35</sup> (**Example 8**).

34 “Hear my voice.” In some congregations, *L'kha eili t'shukati* (“For You, my God, is my desire”) by Abraham ibn Ezra is read before *Sh'ma koli*. The text is included in *Book of Prayers for the Day of Atonement*, published by the Union of Sephardic Congregations in New York, 1974. It is given in Hebrew with no English translation. Rabbi David de Sola Pool (a great grandson of the London *Sephardic Melodies*' Rev. David de Sola) was editor and translator of the New York series—including *Book of Prayer for the New Year*, 1948—and evidently also had the congregations of Eastern Sephardim in mind as potential customers for his new edition.

35 “When we call to You...”—by David ibn Pakuda—is part of all Sephardic rites

**Allegro** (♩ = 72)

HAZZAN KAHAL HAZZAN

An - na b'kor-ei - nu\_ l' - kol shav - ei - nu, a - do-nai sh' - ma - ah, an -

6 KAHAL HAZZAN

-na b'ra - ha - me - kha a - von bits - ei - nu, a - do-nai - s' - la - \_hah. D' - va - rim la -

11 KAHAL HAZZAN KAHAL

kah - ti sh' - ma a - do - nai v' - heit\_\_ bo yu - ham - ti s' - lah, a - do - nai. An -

16

-na b' - kor - ei - nu\_\_ l' - kol shav - ei - nu, a - do - nai sh' - ma - ah. An -

20

na b' - ra - ha - me - kha a - von bits - ei - nu, a - do - nai - s' - la - \_hah.

**Example 8.** *Anna b'kor'einu*, as given in Aguilar.

*Kaddish titkabbal* is then sung to the *Yah shimkha* tune, followed by the hymn, *Yigdal elohim hai*, that concludes every service (**Example 9**).<sup>36</sup>

Repeat first two lines for all verses until second half of last verse

4 Yig - dal e - lo - him hai\_\_ v' - yish - ta -

bah, nim - tsa v' - ein eit el\_\_ m' - tsi - u - to...

End of last verse:

...ba - rukh a - dei ad sheim\_\_ t' - hil - la - to.

**Example 9.** *Yigdal elohim hai*, melody attributed to E. R. Jessurun.

on the Eve of Kippur; the poet's full name appearing as an acrostic in the first word of every stanza. In its customary musical arrangement, the hazzan calls out every antecedent phrase, and the *kahal* (congregation) responds either with "hear, O Lord!" or "Pardon, O Lord!"

36 "Revere the Living God" was written by Daniel ben Yehudah of Rome. This melody, attributed to Elias R. Jessurun, does not appear in Part II of *Sephardi Melodies*.

## Morning services for Kippur

The first *piyyut* heard in the morning service of *Kippur* is *Adonai negd'kha kol ta'avati*<sup>37</sup> sung to the tune of *Sh'ma koli*. That is followed directly by *Elohim eili atah*, sung to the melody of *Raheim na alav* (**Example 10**),<sup>38</sup> the hymn introducing *Nishmat*.

Lento (♩ = 69)

Ra - heim na a - lav, eil e - lo - him hay - yim u -

5  
- me - lek h o - lam, ki mi - m' - kha m' - kor hay - yim.

**Example 10.** *Raheim na alav*, as given in Aguilar.

Then, *Shin'ananim sha'ananim*<sup>39</sup> is heard, to yet another setting of the *Yah shimkha* melody, and the *Kaddish* as in earlier services (i.e., to the tune of *Ahot k'tannah*, except for the Refrain: *Y'heih sh'meih rabba*, and *Bar'khu* to the tune of *Yah shimkha*). Following the Priestly Blessing, they sing *L'ma'ankha elohai*<sup>40</sup> to its traditional melody (**Example 11**), as it is also done on Rosh Hashanah.<sup>41</sup>

Allegretto (♩ = 88)

L'-ma - an kha e - lo - hai, r' - tseih am l' - kha sha - har l' hal - lot

37 “Before Thee, O lord, is all my desire” a poem by Yehudah Halevi; it does not have a refrain.

38 “Take pity on him,” sung as in No. 70 of *The Ancient Melodies*, *Raheim na alav*.

39 “Radiant angels of peace,” has an unchallenged authorship; ibn Gabirol’s name is given twice in a name acrostic: *Sh’lomoh hak-katan* (“Solomon the insignificant”).

40 “For Your sake, my God”; words (p. 296, attributed to David ben Pekuda) and music (p. 96, standard among Eastern Sephardim) appear in *Antología de Liturgia Judeo-Español*, Vol. II, *Yamim nora'im*, Isaac Levy, ed., Jerusalem: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1966.

41 *L'ma'ankha* is the only *piyyut* having a firm and long established place in the liturgy for both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It is included in all the old prayer books I was able to locate, including the first one known to have been printed in Spain, the *Mahzor l'yom ha-kippurim* (Puebla da Montalban: 1480), in the collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

9

pa - ne - kha b' - ma - a - mad ha - sha - har, a - do -

14

nai hak - shi - vah va - a - seih, al t' - a - har.

**Example 11.** *L'ma'ankha elohai*, as given in Aguilar.

Compared to the Ashkenazic and Italian rituals, the *Musaf* insertions or *piyyutim* in the Sephardic ritual are relatively few in number. *Bimromei erets*,<sup>42</sup> a hymn to introduce the *K'dushah*, is sung to the melody of *Adonai b'kol shofar* and later, that melody—or the one for *Ahot k'tannah*—is used as well for *Keter* (opening of the Sephardic *K'dushah* for *Musaf*).<sup>43</sup>

Several superb *piyyutim* in the *Avodah* section (the hazzan's re-enactment of the ancient Temple's Priestly Atonement ritual) of *Musaf* are no longer sung. However, the final poetic insertion in this service, *Shameim har tsiyon*,<sup>44</sup> is sung to the *L'ma'ankha adonai b'kol* melody in all Sephardic communities. After repetition of the *T'fillah*, the piyyut *Yisrael avadekha*,<sup>45</sup> sung to the *Yah shimkha* tune, introduces the *Musaf* Forgiveness (*S'lihot*) section, after which *Musaf* concludes with *Ein keילוהינו* and *Adon olam*, both sung to the *Yah shimkha* tune.

## Afternoon and Evening services on Kippur

In the *T'fillah* repetition during *Minhah* (the Afternoon service), the congregation sings *B'nei elyon*<sup>46</sup> to the tune of *Adonai b'kol shofar*—as an introduction to the *K'dushah*—which, in turn, is set to either the tune of *Et sha'arei ratsion* or that of *Ahot k'tannah*. The *pizmon*, *Yah sh'ma evyonekha*<sup>47</sup> (**Example 12**), with its own traditional melody, introduces a section of *s'lihot* with which

42 “In the heavenly heights,” once thought to have been written by Halevi, is now attributed to Joseph ibn Abitur. The second hymn which introduces the *K'dushah*, *Erets hitmot'tah* (“Earth quivered and quaked”), is a genuine work of Halevi's, but it is no longer sung in the service.

43 In *Shaharit* and *Minhah*, the Sephardic *K'dushah* opens with “*Nakdishakh v'na'aritsakh...*”

44 “The Mount of Zion deserted,” is a *piyyut* by ibn Gabirol.

45 “Israel, Thy servants” is a hymn of unknown authorship. The English congregations sing this to the *Adonai b'kol shofar* melody.

46 “Angels on high,” by an anonymous poet.

47 “God, hear Your bereft ones,” an anonymously written *piyyut*.

the *Minhah* service closes. (No doubt the appearance of the “new” tune at this point is a refreshing tonic to the ears of leitmotif-weary worshippers.)

Moderato (♩ = 116)

Yah sh' - ma ev - yo - ne - kha, ham - ha - lim pa - ne - kha, a -  
vi - nu, l' - va - ne - kha, al ta - a - leim oz - ne - kha...

**Example 12.** *Yah sh'ma evyonekha*, as given in Aguilar.

For the Neilah, or “closing” service—unique to this holiday alone—the symbolic closing of the gates of heaven is reflected in the much-loved *pizmon*, *Eil nora alilah*,<sup>48</sup> another example during this High Holiday season of a poetic piece having its own non-variable musical setting. This final stanza asks the archangels Michael and Gabriel to come—together with Elijah the prophet—and redeem Israel as God’s gates are closing (**Example 13**).

Hazzan Freely  
Mi kha-eil sar\_yis-ra -eil, ei-li -ya - hu v' - gav - ri - eil,  
6 ba - s' - ru na ha - g' - u - lah - bi - sh' at ha - n' - i - lah.  
11 Kahal Hazzan ad. lib.  
Eil no - ra a - li - lah, eil no - ra a - li - - - lah.

**Example 13.** Final stanza of *Eil nora alilah*, as given in Aguilar.

During the repetition of the silent *T'fillah* two poems by Abraham ibn Ezra introduce the *K'dushah*. The first of these, *Er'elim v'hashmalim*<sup>49</sup> is sung to the melody of *Adonai b'kol shofar*. The second poem—*Emet bisfarekha* (“The

48 “God of awe, God of might.” All Sephardic rituals have the Neilah service ushered in with the singing of this well-known hymn by Moshe ibn Ezra. Notwithstanding the proliferation of musical variants that have sprung up, a distinct prototype is evident in all of the tunes. It is of interest also that the hymn was retained in many far-flung congregations that eventually abandoned the Sephardic *minhag* (custom), such as Savannah, Curaçao, etc.

49 “Angels bright and angels strong.”

truth in Your [holy] books”), much shorter and more subdued in tone—is no longer sung.

As sunset approaches, the confessions are shortened, as are the numbers of *s’lihot*. The final *piyyut*, *Sheivet y’hudah*,<sup>50</sup> is a supplication pleading for God’s protection for his suffering people, and is recited only this once during *Kippur*.

In the event Havdalah takes place in the synagogue, rather than in the home (that is, if *Kippur* should occur on the Sabbath), the hymn *Ham-mavdil bein kodesh l’hol*<sup>51</sup> is sung, adapted to the melody used earlier in the day for *Yah sh’ma evyonekha*.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

Clearly, the musico-poetic liturgical traditions shared by the Dutch and English branches in the Sephardic Diaspora have remained strong and only slightly changed or eroded over the period of several centuries. Differences, when they do occur, seem to point mostly to a lessening of involvement in four-part choral performance, in favor of unison congregational singing at every opportunity, whether called for by the prayer’s poetic form or not. This phenomenon is certainly not peculiar to modern Jewish (or non-Jewish) communities alone. The custom of domestic music, personified by the image of a family group gathered around the piano, has all but vanished into the realm of history.

More than ever, congregations today wish to relieve the hazzan of much of the responsibility for the liturgy’s musical performance—even though the fulfilment of that sacred duty was the principal reason for his official appointment. In stark contrast to past practice, today’s community expects to be inspired and uplifted by its own spirited—if not necessarily beautiful—sing-

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50 “Still is Judah’s tribe,” is by the anonymous poet Shemaiah. In London, this is chanted very slowly, as befitting the mood of solemnity at the end of the long day.

51 “May He who makes a distinction between things sacred and profane,” it exists in two versions, both probably by the same poet, Isaac ben Judah ibn Ghayyat. In both, the refrain begins with the same words. One version is for Sabbath; the other variant is shorter, and was probably composed specifically for the *Neilah* service on *Kippur*. It has been the custom in Amsterdam to sing that version immediately preceding the reading of *Sheivet y’hudah*, the final *piyyut*.

52 This is the custom in Amsterdam, London, New York, Philadelphia, and Montreal. The only community that I have found to follow another tradition was that of the Comtat Venaissin in France, which sang *Ha-mavdil* to the melody *Eil nora alilah*. However, since that community is no longer viable, further inquiry into current practice is not possible.

ing, taste and religious insight. These last-mentioned elements apparently play no part in the present equation.

Having stated that, this writer still believes that, in some instances, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Perhaps it was the desire to fulfill the congregation's needs that prompted the original efflorescence of poetry and music which constitutes such a revered treasure among the Sephardim. But I also maintain that it is possible for all Jews to share this magnificent treasure. And so, perhaps in time, some of the lovely poetry and melodies discussed in the above pages will find their way into non-Sephardic synagogue venues, specifically those adhering to the Ashkenazic *minhag*—where if adopted— they will readily and immeasurably enhance the services.

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# On the Trail of Mizrahi Music

*By Johanna Spector*

## **Among the Yemenites**

On my first visit to the Najara Synagogue in Jerusalem, I found it to be a truly Oriental place. I was fascinated by the narrow streets leading to it, the dark courtyard, the open doors and windows allowing glimpses of little children, all with curly black *pei'ot*, playing and shouting in and around the synagogue. A rather steep narrow wooden staircase led to the synagogue on the second floor. The large anteroom was filled with lights streaming in from the many windows. Worshipers took off their shoes on entering or, if they lived nearby, came in soft slippers. Leaving their shoes at the front door, the men entered the synagogue in their stocking-feet. Most of them wore long, flowing, light-grey tunics, coming down to their ankles, and the traditional turban-like hat. Oriental carpets of all sizes covered the floor; around the walls were numerous multicolored cushions for seats.

When I visited the same synagogue six months later, I saw an entirely different picture. Few men wore the traditional garments, and not many took off their shoes before entering the holy place. Most of the men wore street clothes of modern cut, suits and hats. Except for a few who still preferred to sit cross-legged on the floor, everyone sat on the new benches which lined the walls—upholstered benches which were considerably lower than ordinary benches.

## **Rapidly Vanishing Traditions**

My prime interest, as a musicologist, is in the music of Oriental communities. Most of the musical and folkloristic material has never been recorded and is in danger of being lost forever. So long as the Oriental communities were not exposed to foreign influences in their native countries, their oral tradition was unspoiled. But Oriental-Jewish communities are uprooted today and they try to adjust to their old-new homeland, Israel, as quickly as possible. This means to many of them a complete break with the past, forgetting traditions and customs zealously preserved for hundreds of years.

I know a Kurdish hazzan who is proud of speaking Hebrew with an Ashkenazic accent. I know an entire Byzantine community that wished to change its ancient nusah to the Jerusalem Sephardic rite in order not to be “different.” I have met Upper Mesopotamians who introduce Turkish, Syrian, Persian



and Kurdish melodies into the service to please their congregations; and it is sad to note that there are almost no Persians preserving a pure tradition.

Even the Yemenites have changed. There are already synagogues where congregational singing is replaced by a hazzan, and there are congregants who do not take part in the service. The melodies are not so pure as they used to be; and sometimes it is only with difficulty that one recognizes a familiar tune.

### **In the Najara Synagogue**

On my first time visit to the Najara Synagogue, I was hurried off to the *Ezrat nashim*—the women's compartment behind thickly veiled wooden crossbars. I was the only woman there on a Friday night and the compartment had to be unlocked for me. I was also told not to leave it before all the men had gone, so that there would be no danger of my meeting them in the synagogue after the service.

Listening to the prayers, I had to admit to myself that I hardly followed the service. The Yemenite Ritual differs from the Ashkenazic and Sephardic *nus'ha'ot*, and the pronunciation of the Hebrew was unfamiliar to me. It struck me, however, that it resembled more the Ashkenazic pronunciation of the Jews in the diaspora than the Sephardic pronunciation used in Israel today. And it reminded me also of the theory that the Sephardic Hebrew pronunciation was not the original one of ancient Israel but was itself imported from exile, from Babylon. The Ashkenazic pronunciation, so goes the theory, is much closer to that of the original Hebrew.

The Yemenites claim to have preserved the traditions of Temple times. It is very likely that their Hebrew—with the differentiation between *khaf* and *het*, *alef* and *ayin*, *tav* and *tet*, *kamatz* and *patah*—is much closer to ancient Hebrew than any other Oriental or Occidental version.

As to the music, I marveled at the unusual rhythmical discipline of the entire congregation. It sounded almost like a trained choir. I was surprised to hear melodic phrases reminiscent of Northern-European music, of marches and dances, without the slightest Oriental flavor! If I had not been positive that the Yemenites had no contact whatsoever with European groups, I would have assumed that these melodies were taken over from Middle Europe. Other melodies I could not distinguish at all, although they were sung in strict rhythm. They sounded to my ear, which was still untrained for Oriental music, like unorganized cries and noise. After the service, when Prof. S. D. Goitein, head of the School of Oriental Studies at the Hebrew University, who

had taken me to the synagogue, asked me expectantly, “How did you like the *Yigdal*, wasn’t it beautiful?” I simply had to admit that I could not grasp the melody. There were not only too many simultaneous impressions; I had also not yet learned to listen to fragments of tunes.

Much later I recorded and transcribed this unique melody with many others, learned to sing and to play it and drew the attention of many musicians to its beauty. One of them even suggested that Bach could have used the *Yigdal* melody for the theme of one of his fugues, and whistled a similar tune from the Well Tempered Clavichord. The Yemenite has a wealth of fundamental ideas which, if properly exploited by composers, could open a new musical world.

Most of the prayers, psalms and songs were performed in chorus, everyone—children and adults alike—taking part. It was sincere and breath-taking prayer with no time for side conversation or even meditation. The Yemenite service is much shorter than an ordinary Ashkenazic and Sephardic service, but very intense.

When I went back the next morning at six o’clock, it was already the second *minyán*, since all the Orientals start their Shabbat early. I met many women sitting in their stocking-feet on cushions on the floor. All of them wore white woolen hand-made shawls which, like a nun’s veil, covered their foreheads, shoulders and more than half of their fragile bodies. Some of the faces were unforgettable—yellow and dry as parchment, reminiscent of desert-winds, broad stretches of sand, all indicating a hard life. Only the dark eyes were expressive. Most of the women are illiterate, but they know the prayers by heart, responding with “*Amen*” and words of praise in proper places. They are extremely quiet, and I never noticed a private conversation.

After this first experience in the Najara Synagogue, I started to visit Yemenite synagogues frequently. I knew that it was a hard job to become familiar with Yemenite liturgical music, which differs so much from that of other Oriental communities. I also believed that their tradition was the most original and ancient of them all and that a detailed knowledge of Yemenite customs, manner of singing and praying would give a sound basis for further studies. Yemenite Jews are the proudest and the purest in strain of all the Oriental communities. According to their own reports they always kept apart from Yemenite non-Jews and disliked their music.

### **In the Synagogue of Rav Yosef Gafah**

I found the purest and sincerest Yemenite tradition in a small private synagogue, that of Rav Yosef Gafah, (written Qafah), the grandson of the famous

chief rabbi of San'a, capital of Yemen, who had fought against Kabbalistic trends in the synagogue and who had succeeded in eliminating them from the services of his congregation. I obtained the hard-to-get prayer-books, and went to most of the services on Friday nights, Saturdays and Holidays.

There is nothing Oriental about the synagogue. It consists of one big room for the men and one small room for the women. Both rooms were white-washed, and in both, the electric bulbs were without lampshades. There were neither pillows nor carpets on the floor; and the congregants wore their best *Shabbat* suits like other "good" Jews of Jerusalem. The worshipers were sitting on crude wooden benches at crude wooden tables. They came in remarkably large numbers and brought their little children, as they used to do in Yemen. The senior rabbi, Rav Siri, was the only one who would not part with the old customs. He sat in the corner, cross-legged, without shoes and in the traditional attire of the Yemenite Jews, long tunic and turban-like hat, his prayer-shawl covering all of his head except for eyes and beard.

The old spirit of the pious Yemenites prevailed in this little synagogue more than in any other place I had seen, despite the "untraditional" environment. Children of the age of two were already brought to the synagogue, children of five were already instructed to take part in the service. The big leather *sid-durim* with Hebrew and Rashi script lay before the children, and the fathers pointed across the table to the passages which were being read at the moment. The education of the children never ceases. As a result, Yemenites can read the Hebrew text standing or sitting in any position and from any angle. This is necessary because there are never sufficient books, and some people have to read the text from the reverse side of the book.

As in the olden times, study is an important part of daily service, the House of Prayer also functioning as the House of Instruction. When being taught, the Talmud and Rav Isaac Aboab's encyclopedia of Talmudic *aggadah*, *M'norat ham-ma'or*, are chanted with melodies of their own. If somebody makes a mistake he is corrected immediately. Even on Shabbat the reader is interrupted if he happens to make a mistake in the reading of the Torah portion or the *Targum* (the Torah's 2<sup>nd</sup>-century translation by Onkelos). He has to repeat the sentence again. The Psalms are sung by the entire congregation, the melodies strongly resembling melodies of the Roman Catholic Church because of the frequent simultaneous singing of Fourth and Fifths. It was a wonderful experience to hear this natural and subconscious harmonizing, knowing that the Yemenite Jews were totally unfamiliar with church practices and could not have been influenced by them.

## In the Home of Rav Gafah

I visited the Rav to get information and advice as far as my work was concerned, and to look at his marvelous collection of manuscripts and rare books brought from Yemen. Many of the precious volumes had suffered during the long trip—mice had not only damaged the leather covers of the books but also partly eaten the pages! The library of Rav Gafah is a treasury—400 manuscripts and a few thousand rare books. On early Jewish notation alone, I found three manuscripts in Hebrew and Arabic—two of them never published. Together with the melodies from San'a, I recorded a great number of texts. The Sanaites are very proud of having been born there, and they look down on everybody who had the bad fortune to be born in a smaller town or in the villages of Yemen. San'a was to Yemenites what Paris is to Frenchmen. The Sanaites do not respect the musical or liturgical traditions of the villages, which differ considerable from their own.

After an early service on Simhat Torah—the service had started at 5:30 a.m., the first *minyán* at 4:30—Rav Gafah invited me to his home for breakfast. The sun shone brightly as we walked down the Street of the Steps (*Rehov ham-madregot*) which actually consists entirely of stairs. Walking up an outside staircase we entered the two-room apartment. The cleanliness of the Yemenites is famous, but here it was extraordinary. On each side of the sun-flooded room was a neatly made bed, in the middle of the room stood a table with an immaculately white tablecloth, and in the corner a wardrobe with original silver-filigree candlesticks, the only sign of Rav Gafah's craftsmanship as a silversmith. It is interesting to note that the Yemenites, as long as in Yemen, keep to the ancient rule, "Make not of the Torah a crown with which to aggrandize thyself, nor a spade wherewith to dig!" Neither the biblical Prophets nor the Talmudic sages accepted payment for their instruction. It was only toward the close of the Middle Ages, with the rise of new economic conditions, that Jewish teachers could no longer maintain the old rule of free teaching. The isolated Yemenites, however, continued the tradition and their rabbis learned a trade.

A *dayyan* (judge) in the Department of Religion, Rav Gafah spends all his free time studying Talmud, writing on many religious subjects and collecting material on the culture, living conditions, and folklore of the Yemenite Jews. He had published articles on the relationship between prayer texts cited by Maimonides in *Ha-yad ha-hazzkah* and the Yemenite tradition. On the wall facing the entrance hangs the picture of his revered grandfather-rabbi holding measuring instruments in his hands as a symbol of progressive thinking and mathematical and astronomical knowledge. Mrs. Gafah, an attractive little

woman, the ever-present scarf on her head, looked more like a young girl than like a mother of three growing children, the oldest of whom is 16 years old. She married her 14-year-old husband when she was eleven.

Breakfast was very unusual. First, everybody drank a big glass of wine and ate something very spicy and dark, with the flat Yemenite bread. I learned that the dark and spicy liquidy substance was called *hilbah* and is prepared in the following manner: it is ground and soaked in water for two or three hours. The water is poured away and the following ingredients added: *bisbas* (pepper), *kazzorah* (coriander), *fulful habb* (black pepper), *hail* (cardamom), salt, *kammun* (caraway), and garlic. The *hilbah*, originally white, becomes pitch black. The whole mixture is cooked and eaten daily with bread. People who are not accustomed to it cannot eat it because of its extremely sharp taste. Chicken soup with big pieces of chicken floating in it followed. The white disk-shaped bread was served warm. In appearance like the Arab *pitah*, it is prepared differently, and the Yemenites like it hot from the oven.

### **Recording Yemenite Songs**

The groups of volunteers who sang into my microphone proved to be very conscientious. They understood that I was seeking genuine tradition and not merely beautiful melodies. They realized that my work is, first and foremost, to record rapidly disappearing liturgical and folkloristic traditions. I recorded cantillations and chants as well as wedding songs. I started with the reading of the Torah, proceeded to the *N'vi'im* and *Ketuvim*, recorded the chanting of the *Mishnah and Gemara*, *Rashi and Rambam*, *M'norat ham-ma'or* and the *Zohar*, recorded all the prayers of weekdays, Sabbaths and Holidays, and closed with religious songs for the home, and folksongs.

I believe that of all Jewish music throughout the ages, Yemenite music is the least influenced by surrounding peoples and places. There are melodies which sound so primitive that they seem almost not human, and I found such melodies with the Samaritan and Kurdish Jews as well, exactly the same motifs, the same expression, and the same approach. They must have had a common source. The Yemenites are also the only group of Jews who to this day read the Torah with the original Aramaic *Targum*. They have three kinds of Torah cantillation: one read normally in the synagogue, a second read elaborately in the synagogue, and a third read by children while studying. The *Targum* is almost always done by a boy, in a high-pitched voice. At first hearing, I was fascinated by the beauty and strangeness of the sound.

My informers rehearsed every piece before recording it. They corrected each other and pointed out deviations and mistakes. I often met with as many as seven people together, all with beautiful voices, a little nasal, and all eager to transmit the genuine tradition. As a rule, Rav Gafah presided and directed the prayers and songs. Such sessions often took hours and were strenuous for all of us.

One night I recorded liturgies of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and *Ashmurot* (or *Bakkashot*, early-morning prayers sung before the Shaharit service proper). We were rehearsing one of the prayers called *Shevet yehudah*, when suddenly one of the men started singing a striking melody in a soft falsetto. He was immediately stopped by his fellow singers: "No, no, not that!" They seemed sorry that he had sung the tune. My curiosity was aroused: "Why not? Is it an unusual melody?" Reluctantly they told the story of the tune: it was sung only during severe drought in Yemen, (*Bimei hab-batsoret*), with all the people taking part in the prayers under a cloudless sky. Their conclusion was: "We are in Israel now, there will never be a need for such sad and desperate melodies."

They told me that even their Yom Kippur prayers had become more joyous since they emigrated to Israel. I explained to the singers how important this tune was for the preservation and study of old cultures, and they seemed to understand. "Do I have to cry too?" asked the main singer. "Yes," I said, "it should be as close to reality as possible. Try to forget this room and the present environment, visualize the dry fields and the desperate situation which calls for such a prayer." The recording is one of the finest I made, and when listening to the melody, one can not help but think of a wounded and helpless animal crying out in pain.

### **The Place of Music in Yemenite Jewish Culture**

On almost all the recordings I made, the music is performed by men. There are no instruments except drums, metal plates and empty tins. Men and women are never together. Even at an occasion like a wedding, they celebrate separately. A man is not permitted to address his own wife on a street. One of the folksongs tells the sad story of a Jewish girl who spoke to a man on a street. She was taken to prison by the police and the man had to marry her in order to save her from a very humiliating public punishment. The Jewish community had arranged for this wedding to the already married man, and they were divorced after a week. Everybody in town knew that neither man nor girl had any bad intention, but the non-Jewish government of Yemen is

very conservative and in such a case, Jews and non-Jews are punished alike. The case happened while Rav Gafah was still in Yemen, and he knew the girl who belonged to a respected family. The case was so singular among Jews, so sad and disgraceful, that people turned it into a folksong as a warning for future generations.

Apart from the songs of men there are so-called “women’s songs.” The men do not know them and do not sing them. They are exclusively in Arabic. There are children’s songs, love songs, wedding songs, songs for a young mother, songs picturing war and disaster, princesses and castles. The women sing the songs only among themselves, accompanying their singing on drums or copper plates on top of which they put several wedding rings. The rhythms, which are rather complicated and have a life of their own, supply a charming background to the melodies. Very colorful are the wedding songs retelling the different stages of the three-week ceremonies. There are songs sung while dressing the bride (the men have songs for dressing the bridegroom), while covering her hands and feet with red colors, songs as the bride goes to the house of the bridegroom, songs for eating sweets and fruit in the afternoons following the several ceremonies, songs for entertainment and responsorial singing by professional dancers and singers, etc. A decent woman should neither sing nor dance in public, since *professional* singing and dancing are looked down upon in Yemen.

If one wishes to study Yemenite Jewish music thoroughly one has to become familiar with the culture of Yemenite Jews. It is not sufficient to record and analyze only their music. We must also take an interest in the daily lives of the people and become acquainted with their history, their culture, their arts and crafts, their mentality and approach to life. Only then will we understand their music and folklore, which, primarily because they exist in oral tradition only, undergo many and rapid changes. Both have to be recorded and studied now that they’ve resettled in Israel, while there is still opportunity to observe them in their genuineness. If we wait too long it may be too late, and centuries of carefully preserved tradition will be lost forever.

### **Oriental Concert**

The Histadrut Hall on Straus Street in Jerusalem seated only 500, usually for basketball games, and was far too small for the many people who came to listen to the Oriental concert. Every seat was occupied and many people stood in the passages and corridors. The audience was predominantly Oriental. Only a few “Ashkenazim” were present—people especially interested in Oriental Jewish affairs, scholars and writers.

Yosef Ben Yisrael, a Bukharan Jew who had received part of his education in Israel, conducted the entire performance. He wore a rich Bukharan robe of golden brocade with green and red embroideries. When I asked him later whether this magnificent garment was a wedding costume, he said: "No, this is the coat of a well-to-do Bukharan Jew; it is quite common, and you can see it frequently on the streets of Bukhara."

All the performers wore their national costumes: from Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Bukhara, Persia, the Caucasus, India, Yemen and Morocco. They played their national instruments and performed folk dances. The Caucasians danced with handkerchiefs and knives, throwing them into the air and picking them up from the ground with their teeth; the Bukharans circled slowly around bridegroom and bride in the wedding dance indicating by graceful movements of the body, arms and hands that they were bringing gifts; the Uzbeks danced to the sole accompaniment of two drums; small Yemenite boys in long white-and-blue striped tunics, black little caps and long curly *pe'iot* danced to the simple sound of a large tin can, beaten by a similarly attired adult.

In front of me sat a Yemenite whom I knew from the synagogue. Myself hidden by the white curtain of the *ezrat nashim* (even in this overtly secular ambience), I had noticed his Henry VIII face and beard a long time ago. Had I met him somewhere in the street, I should not have believed him to be a Jew, so very "un-Jewish" did he appear! But he was a pious Yemenite, belonging to the most conservative Yemenite group in Jerusalem, and he would—I am sure—be very surprised to hear that he looks like a medieval Englishman!

I asked him a few questions about the Yemenite dance we just had seen, and he confirmed my suspicion that it was not genuine. The children were merely imitating and exaggerating a dance they had seen performed by adults. His daughter, a beautiful girl of seventeen, was also taking part in the concert; but, instead of singing folk tunes as expected, she was performing Bukharan, Persian and Israeli songs, and taking part in the Bukharan wedding dance, in which only two of the many participants were really Bukharans.

Only a few of the musical pieces were genuine and performed in their original beauty. The others had been rearranged to suit the taste of various Oriental groups, and at the same time to sound "modern" and pleasing to the Israeli ear. They represented a mixture of old and new, Oriental and Occidental, and had lost most of their natural charm. In this way a fine original Oriental melody is spoiled and forgotten before it becomes known and appreciated by the wider public, and before a real artist can pick it up and turn it into the foundation stone of a new and valuable composition.



The highlight of the evening was the Uzbekistan music performed on two drums. Out of another world, this music spoke a language of its own—fascinating, stimulating and extremely expressive. No melody at all—only beaten rhythms: at first calm and clear, simple and impressive, then becoming urgent, quick and complicated. I would almost call them “polyphonic” rhythms, independent of each other—like two voices of a fugue—using cross-rhythms and different metrical figures. They served as real inspiration to the dancer who, like the audience, did not seem to mind the absence of a melody and was fully entranced by the rhythmic dialogue of the drums.

The audience remained exceedingly quiet during this performance, rewarding the performers afterwards with stormy applause. Yet, except for this dance which captivated all the listeners equally, each Oriental group responded most to the music of its own country, paying little attention to the music of other countries. Throughout the concert one heard subdued talking and laughing which culminated in a fist fight in the middle of the concert. The participants were escorted from the hall by the police.

At the beginning and end of the concert all the musicians and dancers were assembled on the stage and, with Yosef Ben Yisrael conducting, played in unison—or rather—*tried* to play in unison. Of course, they had never before played together. These people came from different countries, different cultures, and the melodies had to be studied anew for the concert. Many had never seen nor heard the instruments of the other Oriental groups.

It was quite a sight to watch the faces and costumes and to see and hear the differently shaped violins, drums, tambourines, lutes, flutes, zither-like instruments, as Yosef Ben Yisrael in his golden flowing robe tried to keep them together, at least rhythmically. He could not help it if the music sounded heterophonic instead of unison, since every musician tried to adjust the melodies to his own ear, taste, and peculiarity of the instrument. Besides, it is very difficult to teach Orientals to play or even to sing in unison. This is a conception entirely unknown to them. Heterophony comes to them naturally, although to Westerners it seems more complicated than unison.

### **Rosh Hashanah in a Byzantine Synagogue**

It was pitch dark when I started out, but the dawn was wonderfully refreshing and with every minute it became brighter. No street noises at all when I left the house, and very few people. No buses or cars running, no hammering or drilling at the new buildings, no queues for ice, no shouting or excited talking. Only the beautiful colors of the ever-changing sky, with the mountains

in the distance; the white and yellow of the houses and the green of the trees in the gardens of Jerusalem. And birds were singing to usher in the new year.

It was a little after five o'clock in the morning when I directed my steps towards Jerusalem's Greek synagogue. It is the synagogue of Yanina (Ioanina) and has a very rare nusah, that of Byzantium. The congregation is already mixed, consisting of Greek, Turkish, Moroccan and other "Sephardic" members. The language spoken is Ladino, a 15<sup>th</sup>-century Castilian Spanish modified by Hebrew words, endings and prefixes. How ironic that Sephardic Jews should still prefer the Spanish language to any other, almost half a millennium after their ancestors' expulsion from Spain!

The synagogue is in the Persian quarter, one of the older sections in New Jerusalem, built by Moses Montefiore in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Every cluster of houses and courts is surrounded by thick walls. Each wall has a gate. In former times the gates were closed at night, thus transforming private homes with their courts and gardens into fortresses.

The Greek synagogue is, like many Oriental synagogues, on the second floor of a private house. You reach it by walking up a steep staircase which is not built into the house, but leads to the second floor from the outside.

The hazzan, who also serves as the *shammash*, was very pleased to see my friend—Dr. Y. Gumperts, noted philologist and physician—and myself so early in the morning, and he explained the embroideries and religious objects of the synagogue, most of them old. A beautiful hand-beaten silver lamp was hanging near the *Heikhal* (*aron ha-kodesh*) and we were informed that a member of the congregation had given it after recovering from a grave illness. A hand-woven and embroidered *parokhet* covered the *aron ha-kodesh*. Its colors were already faded and it was threadbare in places, but it was of rare craftsmanship, and of a style not customary any more in pattern and workmanship.

The hazzan of the synagogue clings fanatically to the Byzantine nusah brought from his native city of Yanina. He fights for the old tradition and does not want to yield to the demands of the congregation which would much rather introduce the standard Sephardic nusah of Jerusalem. This, unfortunately, is the case in many synagogues. All the Mizrahi Jews wish to be "up to date" and not "backward." The Sephardic rite in Jerusalem seems to many of them superior to their own ancient tradition, and the day is not distant when all the Sephardic synagogues will have a uniform nusah.

The Yanina nusah has a charm of its own. The Esther reading on Purim is quick and joyous, the *Havdalah* full of dignity and caress, the *Kiddush* re-

plete with holiness. There are still prayers said in Greek and not in Hebrew; and there are entire prayer books where only opening verses of prayers are in Hebrew—and the continuations in Greek. These books are rare today and in high demand by scholars. The Greek transliteration of Hebrew words, for instance, sheds light on the pronunciation of the Hebrew by Greek Jews, which leads to further studies and comparisons. Of further interest is the fact, that the Greek translation and transliteration are often done in “simple” and not literary Greek, and not by scholars but by laymen.

When the hazzan starts describing the service in his Yanina synagogue in all its splendor, a new world opens up. He makes you see the richly decorated grand synagogue with two staircases leading up to the Ark, heavy ceremonial objects, huge candelabras, tapestries and magnificent carpets, unique embroideries. He speaks of the wonderful voice of the hazzan who officiated in his Yanina synagogue, which dominated the prayers of the High Holidays and charmed the listeners and worshipers. And in his aged and cracked voice he sings the treasured and invaluable tunes which are already forgotten and belong to the past.

## **Baghdad**

The Baghdadi Jews in Jerusalem live by themselves and speak a dialect imported from a distant part of Arabia, one not known to the non-Jews of Baghdad. It is by no means an Arabic “Yiddish” or “Ladino,” i.e., Arabic with Hebrew words, prefixes and suffixes. Scholars claim it is very old, and preserved by the Baghdadi Jews in its original purity. Hebrew is strictly the holy language, used by Iraqi Jews only for praying and reading the Bible. All the folk tunes—and even religious songs—at home are in Arabic. I recorded a play in Arabic from Baghdad, featuring “Jewish matchmaking.” It was amusing to watch the acting of the five Iraqi Jews and to guess at the meaning by their gestures and their facial expressions! Interestingly, the role of the old woman-matchmaker was played by a man, who imitated her high-pitched and shrill voice perfectly. This was the first time the play was recorded or written down. The phonetic transcription was done by Dr. M. Bravman of the Hebrew University, an expert on Arabic in Iraq, who is presently in the United States.

According to the Jews of Baghdad their songs, although in Arabic, are neither known nor used by the Arab population. Musically, however, they are in conception, form and system within the Arabic sphere. An Ud (Arabic lute) player from Iraq informed me that most of the musicians in Iraq were Jews and that all the “orchestras” consisted of Jewish musicians. The latter

mingle freely with the Arab population and perform in the best of society, very often teaching the nobles of the country. The Ud player belonged to a family of musicians, and his father and grandfather had made their livelihood by performing and teaching. All of them were Ud and violin players and his father was in possession of a 230-year-old violin! Unlike the European violin which is played while held under the chin horizontally, the violin in Baghdad is played in the fashion of Tchermuk in Upper Mesopotamia—vertically, like a cello.

Folk songs and religious songs such as *Bakkashot* (see the following subsection) are sung in Arabic *makamat*. No “Jewishness” distinguishes them from Arabic songs. Once in Israel, Egyptian Jews absorbed the *makamat*-patterns even into the Torah reading, thus wiping out the last trace of their tradition! Luckily for my research, the Iraq Jews still used their ancient cantillation for the reading of the Torah and also for chanting a part of the prayers. As I asked one of my Iraqi musicians whether there existed “Jewish music” in Iraq, I watched his expression closely. And—how curious!—the same little smile appeared on his face that I had seen on the face of almost every Western musician to whom I had put a similar question. Half incredulous, half amused, he answered: “But of course there is none!” Iraq Jews played for non-Jews and were busy creating music which would please their employers. Why should they bother to create music of their own? Only Jews excluded from general musical practices and non-Jewish life—like the Yemenites—created a music of their own, hating the non-Jews and everything belonging to them, including their music.

### ***Tehillim* and *Bakkashot* at the Urfa and Tchermuk Synagogues**

If you want to hear *Bakkashot* on *Shabbat* morning you have to get up as early as one o'clock in the morning. True, that will be in the middle of the night, but it is worth while. First you go to the Tchermuk synagogue for *Tehillim*. It is a small place, but you find it easily at that time of night: the windows face the street and are brightly lighted; there are no curtains and you look straight into the synagogue which is on the ground floor. The singing and praying can already be heard from a distance.

You go in and sit down quietly. People welcome you with a smile and provide you with a steaming cup of tea—hot and sweet. Everybody takes a turn at reciting the Psalms. You hear many different pronunciations of Hebrew, and many different melodies. The voices are not always beautiful, the tunes not always clear; but the recitations fascinate you by their novelty. You will be

able to detect Kurds and Urfalis, Persians and Syrians from Halab (Aleppo), Egyptians and Turks solely by their pronunciation or by their tunes. But you will never encounter Yemenites; they keep to themselves and say their *Bakkashot*, which they call *Ashmurot*, starting with the month of Elul until the High Holidays.

You will ask yourself: why so many different Oriental groups in the synagogue of the Jews of Tchernuk? Since you can not expect that so early in the morning on *Shabbat*, enough people will come to each individual synagogue, worshipers assemble from the neighborhood synagogues in one place for *T'hillim*. After a few hours of Psalm recitation, the entire congregation walks over to the Urfa synagogue for *Bakkashot*. While *T'hillim* attract only a few worshipers—mainly scholars—the *Bakkashot* attract everybody. By five o'clock in the morning the synagogue is filled with worshipers, lovers of Oriental music and tourists. There are even women attending. It is a *mitsvah* to pray during Shabbat night, and a Persian woman whispered into my ear during the service: "Our King David used to pray and to play the harp on Shabbat night... it is a *mitsvah*, you understand, a *mitsvah*..."

It is real singing, a genuine Oriental concert. I recognize professional singing from Egypt and Syria. The men sit on benches lining the walls, everyone with a prayer book. There are five or six principal singers with good voices who lead the entire congregation. There is also a soloist who starts and who receives a "response" from the "choir," i.e., the other singers and the congregation. Some songs sound almost studied; and they are in a way, because they are repeated every week, and the singers have an audience which loves, appreciates and encourages this type of singing. The singers are proud of their fine voices and the knowledge of the tunes, and they do not refrain from interrupting and correcting each other in order to prove their superiority. They sometimes even start a new melody after the first verse was begun by the main singer—in a *different tune*—outshouting him, and thus forcing him to adopt their melody!

Otherwise, everything goes smoothly. Next to old melodies from the prayers and Torah reading, one hears folk motifs and street songs. Some of them are even carried over from recent movies featuring popular Arabic singers, and many *Bakkashot* are recited in Arabic *makamat*. Finally, there are European songs "redone" in Oriental fashion: transferring a major or minor tune into a *makam*.

Having spent two hours in the Tchernuk synagogue and another two hours in the Urfa synagogue, everyone heads towards their own synagogue for the

regular *Shabbat* morning prayers. Only the Urfalis remain for *Shaharit* in their own synagogue.

### **Mughrabi Synagogue**

In 1952, right at the Israeli-Jordanian border in Musrara, facing barbed wire and no-man's-land, stood the synagogue of the Mughrabis. Mughrabi is the Arabic term for the Hebrew *Ma'aravi*, meaning "Western." Mughrabi comprises countries like Tunis, Algiers, Morocco and the islands in this area. I have never seen as many young people in a synagogue as in this out-of-the-world place. The women were seated on the floor of a bombshelter, no other suitable place being available. The men sat on benches around the walls and stood near the entrance if they could find no seat.

A young red-haired Algerian sang the *L'kha dodi* as I had never heard it before; it was a pure Arabic tune, in a *makam* but strangely attractive. His voice was powerful, simple, and reminded one somehow of the Hasidic story of a man who could not pray, but played the cello instead! He was entirely absorbed by his tune and seemed completely remote.

An old Tunisian Jew across the room intoned the *Sh'ma*. The tune was taken from the *Shabbat* service, very much differing from the melody of the Algerian and much closer to Middle European synagogal practices. The young boy was in shabby working clothes— the old man from head to toe in black, reminding one with his beard and dignified attitude of a priest.

### **Jews from the Island of Djerba**

Far down in the "German Colony" of Jerusalem, quite out of the way, stands an old thick-walled Arab building in the midst of a neglected garden. One room on the ground floor is dedicated to the synagogue of the Jews from the island of Djerba. This little island lies near the Tunisian coast, and the Jews of Djerba claim to have lived there since the destruction of the second Temple, i.e., since the first century of the Common Era. They also tell proudly of a stone up to which Joab, David's general, penetrated with his army, and claim that this stone can still be seen in Djerba.

In 1948 the Jews of Djerba started coming to Israel, leaving hardly any Jews in their old homeland. Most of the Djerba Jews I have met, perform hard manual labor and are very poor. I should say that they are the poorest Oriental Jews I have encountered in Jerusalem. The Djerba Jews are of medium height and brown complexion, frequently with fine-cut faces and noble features. They

wear the white burnoose of the Berbers, and their language is a local form of Jewish Arabic. The burnoose, a loose-fitting cloaklike garment with a hood, was—as far as I have seen—made of crude material. The ones I remember seemed to have been made of sugar sacks.

Our guide, whom we had met on the street on his way to the Friday night prayer, showed us his quarters, which adjoined the holy place. Every room was occupied by an entire family, in each room were one or two iron beds—not sufficient for the many members of the family—and in rare cases included a table and wardrobe. Otherwise, nothing; no curtains, no tablecloth, the rooms bare, dark and cold. Our guide was still a young man, but his face looked haggard and old. He had many small children, and his wife had just returned from a seven-month cure at the mental hospital.

On weekdays you see the laborers often in tatters and their children bare-foot, but on *Shabbat* it is different; entering the synagogue they are dignified and look noble and almost majestic in their white burnooses which contrast so wonderfully with their dark skins. You have the feeling that they are real children of the desert, who come to pray after a long and exhausting week in sand, wind and heat.

One of the participants in the Friday night service was a blind old Jew, lean and tall, who could hardly walk and was almost carried into the synagogue. He had a beautiful face with straight and intelligent features over his long white beard. This man was said to be over 100 years old. He said the *Kad-dish* for the dead in a brittle, shaking voice, and was supported as he stood by younger members of the congregation.

The synagogue itself is a small room with no place for women. If the women wish to attend the service, they have to cluster outside the door. Entering the synagogue you face five wooden shrines of exquisitely carved woodwork, made by a Djerba Jew in a *ma'abarah* (transit camp for new arrivals). Each shrine contains a *sefer torah*, and all are taken out on Yom Kippur for a procession. It is an old custom in Djerba to take seven *sifrei torah* from seven separate shrines for the Yom Kippur procession; and the Djerba community of Jerusalem is eagerly awaiting the day when they will be able to build two additional shrines and add the two missing *sifrei torah*.

The reading of *Shir ha-shirim* preceding *Kabbalat shabbat* is beautiful. One person always starts in a loud voice, the others follow. I also marveled at the *Hashkiveinu*, which was said in the tune of *Shalosh regalim* instead of the ordinary Shabbat tune. I was later told that it had been done in honor of the visitors—a few tourists.

After the service, two *b'rit milah* ceremonies were announced, and all those present were invited. The night before the *b'rit milah*, festivities took place in the house of the young parents. Festivities started with women's songs. All the women sat cross-legged on the floor, singing one song after the other, inserting characteristic high trills, which can express joy, pride or simply emphasis on something important. They are hard to imitate and resemble powerful bird trills. The singing was frequently accompanied by rhythmic hand clapping. The men did not join the women but celebrated by themselves in another room.

After an hour of women's songs—all in the Arabic manner and with Arabic texts—the men started reading from the *Zohar*, one began and the others joined in. They sat on benches around a long table with alcoholic drinks, sweets, cookies, salted beans, *humus*, *tiras* (popcorn!) before them. After the reading, songs were sung to the accompaniment of a violin, which was this time held in the European fashion and played horizontally. The accompaniment consisted of the sung melody being repeated by all, but instead of sounding unison, it sounded heterophonic. While small sums for the synagogue were being donated, a special song was sung for every donor, and the wish uttered that his next child also might be a boy.

A hazzan and teacher from Tunis, who was present, was invited to sing. He complied with the *Kaddish* prayer. What a difference in treating the tune! It was the same manner of singing which is used throughout the Near East, but how much more culture, style and understanding in comparison with the almost primitive songs of the Djerba Jews. The Jews of Tunis proper lived on a higher cultural level, and this is reflected in their liturgy and music. The Djerba Jews were flattered that the Tunisian sang for them.

Two days later we went to Mount Zion for the *b'rit milah*. It was quite a walk up the steep mountain with its many irregular steps, and it happened to be very warm. We wondered how the newborn's mother could make it. There is no transportation up the mountain and she had to walk just like everyone else. Worse, there is no public transportation on Shabbat in Jerusalem, and the group had to walk from their far-away homes as well.

The *b'rit milah* took place in the cool thick-walled arch adjoining David's tomb—the holiest place of the Jews after the loss of the Western Wall. The Djerba Jews had not only brought up mother and child to this holy place, they had also brought food and drink for the participants and had stored baskets and dishes in the dark cool corner of the arch. Spices with a very strong perfume were distributed, prayers were sung and the women interpolated their high trills. The keeper of David's tomb stood admiringly at the side and said:



“It is the first *b’rit milah* on Mount Zion for as long as I can remember”—and he is quite old and half-deaf. Perhaps the first *b’rit milah* on Mount Zion in 2,000 years!

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# The Middle Eastern Roots of East European Hazzanut

By *Edward W. Berman*

## Jewish Settlement in Eastern Europe

Western European Jews migrating eastward following the Crusades in the 12th century and the Black Death in the 14th century met a population of Oriental Jews that had begun arriving soon after the Roman conquest of the Holy Land and the destruction of the Second Temple.<sup>1</sup> The German-speaking Westerners found Russian- and Polish-speaking Jews whose musical traditions derived from the Middle East. If these Jews were not linguistically Yiddish speakers, it follows that their Jewish practices stemmed not from the West but from the East, that is Byzantium, Persia, Babylonia and Palestine, with strong influences from Khazaria, not excluding non-Jewish influences from the greater Middle Eastern cultural sphere, such as the Tatar, Mongol, and Arabic, for Muslim penetration went deeply into Eastern Europe at this period, both by virtue of conquest and trade. It is from the latter sources, rather than indigenous Jewish ones, that the modes *Hijaz*, (*Ahavah Rabbah*) and *Nigriz* (Ukrainian-Dorian)<sup>2</sup> probably entered Jewish music, for we know that these modes were not employed by Jews who migrated into the Iberian peninsula and Western Europe after the Expulsion from Palestine, but who employed mainly the ancient *makamat Siga*, *Bayat*, *Nawa* and *Rehav*.<sup>3</sup>

On page 4 of his *Thesaurus*, Vol. V Idelsohn says: "With regard to [the] tonality, be it here noted that the *Hijaz*-scale is not found in the Moroccan synagogue song. We have already established a similar fact in the Yemenite, Babylonian, Persian, Italian and Portuguese Synagogue Song." (my translation from the German). Scales containing augmented seconds also existed in Indian *ragas*, in ancient Greece, in Turkey, Central Asia, and Persia, indeed in the entire Middle Eastern region and beyond.

Idelsohn states further that *Hijaz* and *Hijaz-Kar* "are very popular with the Turks, the Tartars and the Gypsies. They are, moreover, well known in the Near East, in Southern Europe and in the Balkans. In the Greek folk and church song these *makamat* occupy an important place."<sup>4</sup> In his *Jewish Music*, Idelsohn prescribes the range of this mode:

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1 Weinreich, Uriel, ed., *The Field of Yiddish* (New York: Linguistic Circle of New York Publications, Columbia University), 1954. "Dating the Origin of Yiddish Dialects," an article by Judah A. Joffe, p. 114.

2 See A. Z. Idelsohn, *Thesaurus*, Vol. V, "Songs of the Moroccan Jews," pp. 1-19, for the *makamat* used by the Jews who migrated into Iberia and Europe.

3 Idelsohn, *Thesaurus*, Vol. VII: xxiv.

4 Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, pp. 87-8, 6, "The fight of Elijah against the Phoenician

Proceeding geographically, we find that the Yemenite, Persian, Babylonian, Moroccan, Italian, Portuguese and Western German communities do not use this mode at all, while those communities which are living in environments that are or were predominantly Tartaric-Altaic use it very much: for example, in Egypt, in Palestine, in Syria, in Asia Minor, on the Balkan, in Hungary, Roumania, in Ukraine, and Volhynia. Going further north to Poland, Lithuania, and Northern Germany, we find that the usage of this mode diminishes gradually.

Idelsohn notes the *Hijaz* mode's absence in the Bible reading of Middle Eastern Jewish communities, as well as in their earliest *piyyutim*, composed between 800-1,000 C.E. He surmises that this mode was originally unknown to the Jewish people, and that it was probably adopted from the 13th century on, with the incursion of Mongolian and Tatarian tribes into Asia Minor, the Middle East and the Balkans. The Jews of these countries came to favor the mode, finding in it a real channel of expression to heighten their most intense pleas to God in the face of persecution. It spread as far north as Volhynia and the Ukraine, as seen in the written compositions of Eastern European *hazzanim* during the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>5</sup>

It is also quite possible that the so-called chromatic modes such as *Hijaz*, which employ the augmented-second interval, were indeed known to the Jews from earlier times, when they were still sovereign in the land of Israel, but that, because of their exciting sound, they were rejected by them from their liturgical Temple and synagogue song, as representative of the hated Phoenician cult of Baal. Idelsohn explains that the humanistic religious values of the Israelites were in diametric opposition to the brutal and morbid cult of the Phoenicians.<sup>6</sup> Both Jewish and non-Jewish sources confirm this basic conflict of values. Because a folk, especially in ancient times, always expressed its most cherished ideas through music, the musical heritage of the Phoenicians and the Israelites differed fundamentally. The former was frenzied and designed to arouse heated emotions, while the latter, like that of Egypt,<sup>7</sup> was

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Baal-and Ishtar-cult, which the Phoenician princess Jezebel introduced into Samaria, was one of the bitterest battles prophetic Israel fought.”

5 Ibid., “The biblical description of the barbarous manner of the Baal ‘worshippers: “they danced in halting wise about the altar ... they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with swords and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them” (I Kings 18: 26-28), finds its confirmation in the statement of Lucian that at the Spring festivity in honor of Ishtar the noisy and exciting music of the double-pipes, used so to stimulate the youths to a frenzied craze that they would emasculate themselves.

6 Idelsohn believed that “some of the best human expressions in [Egyptian religious musical expression] were taken over by Israel and Greece” (*Jewish Music*, New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1948:5, 7).

7 Op. cit., p. 13.

serene and other-worldly. The Phoenicians employed shrill instruments like the *abub* (the *abobas*, *halil*, *aulos*, i.e., *pipe*), and percussion instruments such as drums and cymbals; the Israelites (during the Second Temple era) utilized strings and human voices, in order to create a serene and exalted sound that was worthy of glorifying the Almighty God, who commanded His people to love mercy, to do justly and speak the Truth.

Thus, mere geographical and ethnological consanguinity is often not sufficient cause for the establishment of similarity in musical or other cultural expressions where other values assert greater determining force and influence. The Jews generally avoided the *abub* in their Temple orchestra, and with it, the scales or modes to which it was tuned. It was not entirely omitted, but limited to twelve festal days and prohibited on the Shabbat during the period of the Second Temple. It was apparently not used in the First Temple at all. The Greeks debarred their pipe, the *aulos*, “from religious music and from the tragedy.”<sup>8</sup> We are told that “Olympus introduced it to Greece about 800 B.C.E. from Asia Minor, but the Greek philosophers opposed it because of its exciting sound and because it was tuned according to the four descending notes—D (½) C# (1½) B<sup>b</sup> (½) A—a tetrachord unfamiliar in Greece. On account of its strangeness (two half-steps and an augmented one) it was called ‘chromatic’; on account of its sadness, it was called ‘elegiac...’ This scale is the most outstanding one in the Tataric-Altaiic and Ukrainian songs, and is also of much importance in Jewish music.”<sup>9</sup>

Accordingly, we have some basis in fact for the conjecture that the mode *Hijaz*, though of ancient vintage in the Middle East, was at first rejected by the Jews from their liturgical song, but later admitted, after they had left *Erets Yisrael* in exile, when they had taken up residence in “*Erets k’na’an*,”<sup>10</sup> as the Slavic lands were later called by the Jews in the Middle Ages. The Jews had changed considerably, psychologically speaking, as well as politically. They were no longer that proud people, sovereign in their own land, who expressed their devotion to God with the great choruses and orchestras of the awesome Temple in Jerusalem, creating music of majestic, serene impersonality.

To be sure, they were a weak, oppressed minority, to whom personal lamentation was a familiar experience, and who chose a different kind of David-

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8 Ibid., p. 13; also, see *Thesaurus*, IX: xv-xvi for a paraphrase of the same information. Alexander J. Ellis gives identical measurements for these ancient Greek descending scales: 1. The tetrachord of Olympus: E to C# (36 cents), C# to C (70 cents), C to B (112 cents); 2. “Old Chromatic”: E to C# (316 cents), C# to C (70 cents), C to B (112 cents). “Über die Tonleitern Verschiedener Völker,” *Abhandlungen zur Vergleichenden Musik Wissenschaft*, 1922, Drie Masken Verlag, Munchen, p. 14.

9 Article, “Russia,” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 14: 433.

10 Max Margolis and Alexander Marx, *History of the Jewish People*, p. 525f.

champion to represent them in prayer before the Almighty, their *shaliah tsibbur*, later called the *hazzan*. Now, the popular Middle Eastern *makam Hijaz* expressed for them all the personal emotions that in earlier times in *Erets yisrael* they had no need to express. Still pious believers, they had need to express God's sovereignty differently. Still clinging to the serene and noble modes of their past, they added new modes to symbolize musically their new, physically precarious condition. Still rejecting the vile usage of *Hijaz* of the Baal worshipers, they exploited the emotional power of that mode so that it served noble, albeit intense, emotions. Thus, *Hijaz* served to maintain the Middle Eastern character of East European *hazzanut*.

The Jews of Palestine and Babylonia were already settled in southern Russia by the 1st century of the Common Era. In the 8th century, driven by persecutions of the Byzantine Church, Jews were settled northward of the Eastern Byzantine Empire, throughout the Crimea and the Caucasus, in large numbers. In the region between the Caucasus, the Volga and the Don, the Khazars established an independent kingdom in the 6th century. These were Caucasians mainly, with language and polity akin to those of the Huns and Turks. Bulan, their *Khakan* (king), became a convert to Judaism around 740, and during their ascendancy, "those in the immediate entourage of the princes and a substantial part of the people embraced Judaism."<sup>11</sup> According to Idelsohn, they had the augmented-second interval, and it spread with them into southern Russia and Hungary.<sup>12</sup>

In the 12th century the Jews of Poland were thrown into contact with their German brethren who arrived after fleeing the plunder and butchery of Crusaders.<sup>13</sup> The Tatars conquered Russia in 1240, and during the 15th century Jews arrived within the borders of the principality of Moscow from both the Tatar kingdom of Crimea and Poland-Lithuania,<sup>14</sup> musical expression manifesting a merger of western European and Middle Eastern features was established. Not only did East European Jews inherit a musical tradition from the Middle East, but the gentile population was also influenced by Middle Eastern musical expression via the Byzantine Empire, the Turkish occupation directly to the south and by the Tatar hordes with their center in the Crimea.<sup>15</sup>

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11 Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, p. 87. He reasons that the Khazars, being Tartars, probably used *makam hijaz*, and may have transmitted it to the Jews.

12 Margolis & Marx, p. 527.

13 *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 14: 434.

14 *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 13: 709ff.

15 "Idelsohn's old conjecture [concerning the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode, i.e., *makam Hijaz*] has proved to be correct: [it was] introduced from Turkey via Russia and Poland to the cultural orbit of the Ashkenazic region... He linked the mode to the racially [or linguistically] common origin of the Ugro-Altai family of languages,

To the north, in the regions due west of Poland and Belorussia, Jews who had migrated from their decimated communities along the Rhineland brought with them a more highly developed form of Ashkenazi culture. It was this Western Ashkenazi practice that influenced Eastern Ashkenazim, and not the other way around.<sup>16</sup> To add to the mix that eventually led to a flourishing Eastern European *hazzanut*, the Mongol and Tatar invaders may have been carriers of some of musical features present today in the Middle Eastern musical culture area, which influenced the music of countries in which they had been in contact over the centuries.<sup>17</sup>

Even the Russian language has shown the influence of the Tatars, from whose language came the names of oriental objects, including weapons, jewels, stuffs and garments, as well as certain terms concerned with government. This influence also affected the music of the Jews in these Eastern European countries, who were exposed to the music of their neighbors, thus helping to emphasize and reinforce the Middle Eastern aspect of their own music. For, while the Western Ashkenazim did not hear among their gentile neighbors in Germany or France Middle Eastern musical features, the Jews of Eastern Europe certainly did, and it tended to facilitate the retention of the Middle Eastern features within the Jews' own tradition. The result is the kind of *hazzanut* characteristic of that large area, with its mixture of Eastern and Western musical features.

The Central Asian modal structure does not deviate from the modal structure of the Middle East in general. Comparing the modes of the Tajik-Uzbek subculture with, for example, the contemporary practice of Arabic music in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Iraq, it becomes evident that the Central Asian "Ionian," for example, is nothing other than the Arabic *Rast*, "Dorian" is *Bayati*, "Phrygian" is *Siga*, "Mixolydian" is *Nawa*, "Aeolian" is *Ashiran Husseni*, while "major with a flattened second" is *Hijaz*, and "major with a flattened second and sixth" is *Hijaz kar*.

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which comprises the Hungarian, Estonian, Turkish, Finnish, Tartaric and Mongol tongues. He attributed its occurrence in the Arabic and Persian family of *makamat* to Turkish or Tartar importation, and assumed similar influence for the mode's importance in Armenia, Syria and Greek Orthodox Church chant." (Eric Werner, *A Voice Still Heard* (State College, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press), 1976.

16 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 19: 7150.56

17 Johanna Spector, "Musical Tradition and Innovation," *Central Asia*, Edward Allworth, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press), 1967: 454. Spector adds the comment that "the Russian conquerors tried to substitute European ecclesiastic modes in place of the original terminology of *makamat*."

## Comparison of Western and Middle Eastern Melody

The Middle Eastern Jews (and later, the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews as well) employed in their earliest chant the modal melodic forms, that is, the beginnings of *makamat*.<sup>18</sup> Since they preceded the Arabs in Palestine, and the modes (*Siga* and *Bayat*) they used for their earliest cantillation and prayer chants, in the Temple period, were employed before they had any contact with the Arabs, it follows that there must have been an original substrate musical culture common to all the Semitic-speaking groups. Perhaps it was also shared by adjacent peoples such as the Sumerians, Egyptians and Turkic peoples, whose descendants employed the Middle Eastern principles of the *makamat* microtonal melodic system.

All these peoples shared similar instruments; it is safe to assume that they shared common melodic practices as well. This common substratum exists as well in India, where the *ragas* manifest a similarity to the *makamat* and their scalar patterns. In later periods, the interchange of practices resulted in the complex musical forms of the modern Middle Eastern musical culture, which underlie the music of the various countries from North Africa in the west to Central Asia in the east, despite regional differences. These common elements are: “microtones, *makamat* (modes), homophony, improvisation, complex rhythm and meter, small ensembles and kinds of instruments.”<sup>19</sup> Music there is transmitted through an oral tradition, sometimes called “earmarks,” using a great many terms to indicate individual notes, modes, melodic structure, melody types, modulation, rhythmic structure and meter, often even tempo and mood.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, the Middle East employs not a written notation, but an oral one.<sup>21</sup>

In particular, music there is fond of non-harmonic cadential devices: intervallic patterns indicating beginning-middle-and-end of a line, ornamenta-

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18 *Makam* has four distinguishing marks: (1) the selection of constituent notes, (2) compass, (3) position of the important notes, (4) typical phrases. The word *makam* means “a recitation from a raised position.” The term is used in Syria and Turkey; in Algeria the word is *Sana’a*; in Tunis, *Taba*; in Egypt, *Naghma*” (Robert Lachmann, *Grove’s*, 3: 578, 1948, the article was written with A. H. Fox-Strangeways).

19 Spector, “Musical Tradition and Innovation,” 1967; 437.

20 *Ibid.*, specific references are in the notes. However, I have not attempted to provide a note for every specific feature mentioned in this article as characteristic of the music. Most of these can be found in Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, Chapter II, “Semitic-Oriental Song.”

21 Syrian Arabs and Jews are exceptions (Spector, private communication to the author).

tion and melisma, a quavering line rather than long-held tones, step-wise up and-down motion, with a fondness in certain *makamat* for a descending line, and a rather narrow range of a fourth or a fifth—especially in the classical or folk music—as distinguished from contemporary art music showing western influences. Conversely, there is an effort to avoid large intervals within a moving melodic line. The music is, in essence, vocal. Culturally, there is an exclusion of women in performance of religious music. There is the fondness for changing, mixing, and combining *makamat* by use of accidentals and combining tetrachords etc. of different *makamat*. Modern Arabic theory (as well as the classical) structures the longer musical forms (e.g., *taksim*) in terms of a given sequence of scalar patterns called *genres*.<sup>22</sup> (A free-flowing *taksim* will generally introduce the more rhythmically regular *makam* to follow.)

Although western melody employs some of these features, their combined usage in the Middle East to create a given melody or musical form serves to distinguish the one from the other world of music: Middle East from West.

European melody has both a modal and a harmonic development. The Greek modes influenced all of European music including most emphatically that of the Church, which also received an important impress from both Jewish and Arabic music.<sup>23</sup> Short motifs exist in Western melody, but are not characteristic of any of the modes used in the West. The leitmotif, for example, of the West serves a different function. In the Middle East, a given *makam* is characterized by one or more given motifs.<sup>24</sup> In western melody, “tunes and airs are for the most part constructively and definitely complete, and by following certain laws in the distribution of the phrases and the balance of the groups of rhythms, convey a total impression to the hearer in a way which”<sup>25</sup> involves the aspect of form.

Both in the East and West, the rhythm of a language may pass into a national music. Likewise, dance rhythms are found in both cultural areas; they are the “musical counterpart of the more dignified gestures and motions of

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22 Rodolphe D’Erlanger, *La Musique Arabe: ses Règles et leur Histoire* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner), Vol. V: 69-70. The Arabic word for both “genre” and “mode” is *Nagmah* (p. 69).

23 Farmer is of the view that Semitic music influenced the Greek: “It was from the Semitic East, probably, that the Greeks borrowed their modal system (and) the doctrine of the ethos ... *Sa’adya Gaon on the Influence of Music*, Henry George Farmer (London: Arthur Probsthain), 1943: 5.

24 Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, p. 24.

25 The above four citations are found in *Grove’s*, p. 667.



the body accompanying certain states of feeling, which, with the ancients and some medieval peoples, formed a beautiful element in dancing." A crucial distinction between Middle Eastern and European melody is the "very powerful influence" which "harmony and harmonic devices has had "in the distribution of the intervals which separate the successive sounds."<sup>26</sup> Although a given Middle Eastern melody may mimic or suggest an harmonic feeling, neither consciously nor unconsciously developed harmonic ideas played a part in Middle Eastern music (excluding possible modern practices of urban, westernized composers.)

Hubert M. Parry describes Western melody as dependent upon harmony, often as outlining the upper note of a chordal series, with the intervention of passing tones. This is most characteristic of hymn tunes.<sup>27</sup> In Middle Eastern melody the harmonic basis, as just described, is wholly lacking, or of accidental and unintentional occurrence. Thus, the idea of passing notes in Middle Eastern music is absent, as an harmonic device.<sup>28</sup>

The best source for an analysis of Arabic melody is given in a remarkable work by Baron Rodolphe D'Erlanger,<sup>29</sup> in six volumes, in French. Suffice to reiterate that Arabic melodies begin with a *taksim*,<sup>30</sup> a form of prelude. The similarities with some East European examples of *hazzanut* are striking, notably the presence of accidentals, movement from *makam* to *makam* by means of short motives or *genres* (*nadjamat*), embellishments and coloratura; free rhythms in religious song.

Curt Sachs gives an interesting analysis of Arabic scales and modes. The eight modes in Ali al-Isfahani's *Kitab al-aghani* are: (1) and (2) starting on the open string of the *Ud* and having respectively the minor and major third; (3) and (4) starting on the first fret and having respectively the minor and the major second; (5) and (6) starting respectively on the third frets of (1) and (2); (7) and (8) starting on the fourth fret and having respectively the minor and the major third. If we start from D, here are the eight modes:

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26 *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, V: 667. The thought here is completed by the text referring us to the article on "Form."

27 Loc. cit., p. 668.

28 Idem.

29 *La Musique Arabe*, op. cit., Vol. V, 1959.

30 Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc.), 1943: 289: "Drones are mostly used in the *taksim*, the improvised prelude of solo instruments before the ensemble sets in."

- 1) D E F G A B $\flat$  C (Phrygian conjunct)
- 2) D E F $\sharp$  G A B C (Lydian conjunct)
- 3) E F G A B D (Dorian conjunct)
- 4) E F $\sharp$  G A B C D (Phrygian conjunct)
- 5) F G A B $\flat$  C D E F (Lydian conjunct)
- 6) F $\sharp$  G A B C D E (Dorian conjunct)
- 7) G A B $\flat$  C D E F G (Phrygian conjunct)
- 8) G A B C D E F $\sharp$  G (Lydian conjunct)

With the countless possibilities of permutation and combination, an incredible number of modal scales was brought about: interchanging the places of semitones and of major and minor whole tones; putting a tetrachord atop pentachord, or perhaps vice versa: coupling “divisive”<sup>31</sup> and “up-and-down”<sup>32</sup> groups—all these operations provided scores and scores of scales which the Near and Middle East has known under common names such as *Agam*, or *Nahawand*, or *Awag*. It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that the intellectual processes of combining, permutating, and coupling were actually responsible for the motley diversity of Mohammedan music; in other words, that lifeless theory created living melody. Yet at first sight, these nearly one hundred scales seem chaotic in the confusing swarm of thirds, major and minor whole tones, three-quarter tones, and major and minor semi-tones.

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31 Loc. cit. p. 75. Division of a vibrating string by geometric progression as opposed to arithmetic: changing the principle of division from equipartition to that of proportionately increasing distances. Thus, stopping the string at one fifth of the string produced the major third and at one sixth, the minor third.

32 Loc. cit. p. 72. Refers to the tuning of a stringed instrument, first by tuning string one to the singer’s medium voice, the second string a fifth higher, the third a fourth backward (a second below the starting note) etc. Or, a fourth up, and a fifth back would achieve the second below the starting note, etc., a continual... cyclic, rising and falling.

But they easily fall into line.<sup>33</sup> There are four groups, the first follows the up-and-down principle; the second, the divisive principle; the third combines both principles in the same octave, and the fourth includes the augmented second, like *Higaz*, “the most popular of all Arabian scales.”<sup>34</sup> Sachs himself says that the theoretical division of the octave into twenty-four quarter tones by Mesaqa and el-Knoley “is more or less a theoretical fiction. ... Neither singers nor players have ever sacrificed the vital freedom of melody to any rigid system, be it quarter tones or three-quarter tones or even the simple ratios of natural scales.”<sup>35</sup>

Spector states in this regard: “Even the finest Arab musician has difficulties in playing the twenty-four quarter-tone scale chromatically, since it is never practiced in performance”; and she presents a table of measurements that corroborates this fact.<sup>36</sup>

D’Erlanger presents 119 *makamat* in volume five of his work, each with an extended scale ascending and descending, comprised of a sequence of *genres*, or short scalar patterns, seventeen in all, the definite combination of which, with variations, make up any given *makam*, according to the modern theories of Arabic musicologists of two schools of thought: the one of Cheikh Ali Derwiche, the other of Professor Alexandre Chalfoune.<sup>37</sup> D’Erlanger, a delegate to the Congress of Arabic Music held in Cairo in 1932, presented there a “list which described all the modes and rhythms from the tradition which still exists in the principle Arab states,” based upon “the scholarship of Cheikh Ali and the temper of the method of Professor Chaloun, who was intimate with the analytical methods of the ancient Arab theoreticians.” He tells us further: “All the modes and all the rhythms for which we established a list were the study of a special commission. Presided over by Paouf Yekta Bey, professor of the Conservatory of Istanbul and author of a study on Turkish music published in the Encyclopedia of Lavignac, this commission was composed of the best musicians of Cairo, including Mustapha Rida Bey, director of the Royal Institute of Arabic Music. The sanction of this court is a serious guarantee of the authenticity of our documentation. ...”<sup>38</sup>

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33 Loc. cit., p. 281f.

34 Loc. cit., p. 282.

35 Loc. cit., p. 284.

36 Spector, “Classical ‘Ud Music in Egypt with special Reference to *Makamat*,” *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, May 1970, p. 248f.

37 See D’Erlanger, Vol. V: xiv.

38 Idem. (my translations from the French original).

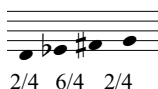
On page 278 of his list, D'Erlanger has No. 76, Mode (*makam*) *Hijazi*, one of the most important of the Arabic *makamat*, and very much employed in the liturgical music of the East European Jews, but not used in the same way as in the Arabic practice, as we see from D'Erlanger's analysis. The Jews use the genre *Hijaz*, followed by the genre *Busah-lik*, forming the scale that Idlesohn gives on page 87 of his *Jewish Music*: "The mode (*Ahavah Rabbah*) is based on the tetrachords



or their equivalent steps in other notes." The intervals correspond to those given by D'Erlanger for *Hijazi*, genres (ascending) one and two; for the latter, only one of its forms, that of *Busah-lik* with an intervallic pattern of 4/4, 2/4, 4/4, 4/4.



The former, genre *Hijazi*, has the intervallic pattern of 2/4, 6/4, 2/4.



The Arabic melodic movement describes a definite pattern, apparently followed fairly closely in actual of practice by knowledgeable musicians, judging by an examination of actual *taksim* (prelude), which he lists for each mode, in this case, that of *Hijazi*.

Generally speaking, the melody begins with the first ascending genre, proceeds to the second ascending genre to the 3rd and 4th, then moves through the descending set of genres to the conclusion. There are possible starting notes outside the starting genre, and similarly, the melody may pass through notes outside the final descending genre, serving as a kind of preparation for the ending, a form of monophonic cadence, utilizing a melodic schematic rather than a harmonic one, as in the West (e.g. where a sequence of chords determines the notes employable in a given cadence.)

The series of ascending genres are not necessarily the same ones found in the descending set, which makes for great variety in the overall scale of a mode and in the melodies utilizing it. Further variations come from occasional chromatic changes, and intervallic departures from the set of genres,

such as a note here and there higher or lower than the expected genre. The performer, in other words, has certain leeways in actual performance, befitting the improvisational nature of Arabic music.

The resulting melody has certain definite characteristics, that the knowledgeable performer and listener can recognize. For example, motifs in the genre *Rast*, with a finalis on G double-prime, and *Hijazi*, with a finalis on A double-prime, are characteristic of the *makam Hijazi*. These motifs can be very brief, even of two notes, to identify such a melody as belonging to a given *makam*. These movements through various genres are, in an other way of thinking, relatively brief modulations from one *makam* pattern to another, but the whole given the name of one *makam*. The Arabic theorists of old avoided this nomenclature problem by using the term *nagamah* (melody) for both the short motivic pattern (genre) and the longer total pattern (*makam*), a kind of pragmatic thought process, more concerned with the resultant melody than descriptive terminology.<sup>39</sup>

The Byzantine Empire, or the Eastern Roman Empire, began when Constantine the Great changed the name of Byzantium to Constantinople and made it his capital, in 330 C.E. Lang tells us plainly that “Byzantine music was church music.”<sup>40</sup> Its culture was Christian Greek, and its music was thus a continuation of the ancient pagan Greek system. However, it had a second, Hebrew, dimension: “... the origin and heritage of Christianity is an Oriental one, or more precisely, Hebrew; consequently the first Christian hymns and songs were taken from the Jewish liturgy or were direct imitations of it...”<sup>41</sup>

Although in later ages Jews scarcely were familiar, in a popular sense, with the music of the Byzantine church, nevertheless, living among gentiles who heard and practiced it, and whose own folk song was deeply imbued with its Middle East qualities, they may have been influenced in a positive way by living in their midst, with respect to their own musical creativity. As a result, their *hazzanut*, in these Eastern countries, retained its Middle Eastern elements, while those same elements withered in the West for lack of a favorable musical climate.<sup>42</sup>

The same kinds of factors that served to preserve, for the Jews, Middle Eastern musical elements in the Byzantine Empire, were at work during the

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39 See D'Erlanger, Vol. V: 69-70, for the ambiguity of the term “*Nagamah*.”

40 Paul Henry Lang, *Music in Western Civilization* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc.), 1997: 23.

41 Idem.

42 Op. cit., p. 24.

period of Ottoman Turkish ascendancy. The Turks occupied Eastern Europe as far north as the Roumanian province of Wallachia, Hungary, and most of what is today Yugoslavia, controlling the entire Balkan peninsula, including Greece, Albania and Bulgaria. The Jews of Hungary under the Turks were “under the supervision of the rabbis of Constantinople and Salonika. They settled in areas outside of Hungary, in Sophia (Bulgaria), Adrianople (European Turkey), and in Constantinople itself. Settlement went the other way, as well: Jews from Turkey settling in Budon (Budapest), Hungary contained both Ashkenazi and Sephardi congregations. During the 160-year Turkish rule that lasted until 1686, Middle Eastern musical influence probably intensified. We know that Adrianople became a center of Jewish music around this period “a choral society—*Maftirim*—was founded [there] in the 17th century” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 2: 311. Also see article “Adrianople,” Loc. Cit.: 309 ff.<sup>43</sup>

Idelsohn sums up his analysis of East European Jewish folk song thus: “It developed a style of its own, influenced by that in Slavic song which is Oriental. This accretion strengthened the Oriental foundation of the Jewish music.”<sup>44</sup> One cannot doubt that Idelsohn meant to include not only Jewish folk music, but also liturgical song, and specifically, *hazzanut*.

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43 *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 2: 311. Also see article “Adrianople,” Loc. Cit.: 309 ff. *Jewish Music*, p. 400.

44 *Jewish Music*, p. 400.

## Hazzanut in Iran a Generation Ago

Laurence D. Loeb

The Jews of Iran flourished for 2500 years under conditions which varied from difficult to impossible. In the late 1960s my wife Nomi and I were sent to Iran through the generosity of the Cantors Assembly, to try and unravel some of the broken threads of knowledge about this Jewish community, at the time the largest in Asia Minor. We took up residence in Shiraz, a city of about 200,000 located in the southwest of Iran. We found 8,000 to 10,000 Jews still living there. Although 12,000 had already made *aliyah* to *Eretz yisrael* by then, the natural population increase had somewhat offset emigration losses.

About half the Jews lived in a ghetto area called the Mahalleh. These people, often having eight or nine children per couple, tended to group in certain neighborhoods. Many of the families lived in a single room with little or no furniture, and raised their children on sun-baked mud floors. The other half of the community had recently escaped the Mahalleh, most of them belonging to the middle class. Although for the Jews of Shiraz economic conditions were precarious, their religious life was permeated with warmth and security. Shiraz was known among Iranian Jews as a pious, religiously-oriented community.

The Jewish school system was run by Otsar Hatorah. Many of the children, however, attended non-Jewish schools. Total school attendance among Jewish children was 100%, whereas it was only 45% among non-Jews. Many of the men spoke Hebrew, which they'd learned from daily repetition of *t'fillot*.

There were 14 functioning synagogues in Shiraz; 11 located in the Mahalleh and three outside. Those outside Mahalleh were new and quite nice: richly carpeted, and as far as the *sifrei torah* were concerned, expensively ornamented. A few of the older synagogues in the Mahalleh had been newly decorated. The others were mostly dilapidated.

Members of the Cantors Assembly might be interested to know that the roles of hazzan and *sh'li'ah tsibbur* were distinct in Iran, and the performance practice of each is worthy of discussion. The *hazzan* functioned as an administrator of the synagogue. He conformed to the old Mishnaic understanding of the term, which meant "overseer." The collection of money from the selling of *k'vodot* (*aliyot*, etc.) was his responsibility. He announced important events in the life of his congregation and took charge of making important decisions of the community leadership. In Shiraz the *hazzanim* had a committee of three who, since the Six Day War of 1967, had undertaken to raise money from all the congregations for Israel. Their efforts had resulted in substantial sums,

since even the poorest donated something. As far as I observed, the *hazzan* did not act as a *sh'li'ah tsibbur*, although I never discerned whether this was coincidental or intentional.

Before we discuss the *sh'li'ah tsibbur*, I'd like to explain the role of two other positions within the orbit of synagogue organization that I found particularly interesting.

### ***Shammash***

His area was the physical maintenance of the synagogue, including the turning on-and-off of electricity and keeping the building and courtyard clean. His duties included those of watchman. The *shammash* lived on the synagogue grounds with his family, and frequently was non-Jewish. The Jewish *shammash* was usually destitute and accepted such a position out of need rather than choice.

### ***Gabbai***

His function in the community was mainly extra-synagogal. He collected and distributed money for the poor. A part of this money was collected daily in the synagogue. He knew the needs of all the poor, and allocated funds accordingly. There were very few *gabbai'im* in Shiraz, and only one was trusted by all members of the community.

### ***Sh'li'ah tsibbur***

I found his role the most intriguing. Anyone could serve as *sh'li'ah tsibbur* and all were amateurs, i.e., none were paid for their services. Every *k'nisa* (synagogue) had several persons who served in this capacity. Outside the Mahalleh, most *sh'li'ehi tsibbur* were graduates of the *yeshivah*, and in great demand due to their superior command of Hebrew and ability to read Torah according to the *t'amim*. However, it was not always mandatory for the *sh'li'ah tsibbur* to be a *ba'al k'ri'ah*. Outside the Mahalleh, prayers were almost always recited entirely in Hebrew. Sometimes the *haftarah* was translated at sight into *judji* (Judeo-Persian).

It was inside the Mahalleh that the role of *sh'li'ah tsibbur* assumed its greatest import. The *sh'li'ah tsibbur* who served as my chief informant took considerable pride in his competence. "I'm the last *sh'li'ah tsibbur* in Shiraz who weeps while praying. On *Rosh ha-shanah* many women come to *k'nisa* only to hear me." I can attest that this was not merely boastful bragging; indeed, many men came there for the same reason (there were, however, other



*sh'lihei tsibbur* who wept during *t'fillah*). In many respects my informant was typical of most Iranian *sh'lihei tsibbur*. He was close to fifty years of age, had a wife and five children and lived in a small clean house at an extreme end of the Mahalleh. He was a poor man, who earned a living by working with his brother selling cloth, and part-time assisting a gold merchant. His father had been *sh'li'ah tsibbur* in the same *k'nisa* before him.

In the synagogue, poverty and misery provided wellsprings of *kavvanah* that permeated the *t'fillah* of the *sh'li'ah tsibbur*. On Monday, Thursday, *Shabbat* and *Yom tov*, and especially during *S'lihot*, his demeanor assumed a new dignity as he ascended the *bimah*. Like all *ba'alei t'fillah* in Shiraz, he was able to chant at a pace unequalled by Ashkenazic Jews. Since all *t'fillot* are through-recited out loud by the *sh'li'ah tsibbur* and the normal volume of prayer in Iran far exceeded anything I'd heard among Ashkenazim, there was a necessity for haste. Nevertheless, I found the art of Iranian *hazzanut* to be highly developed, although different in style from our own. The Persian *sh'li'ah tsibbur* can easily produce as many elaborate trills as any Ashkenazic or other Mizrahi *hazzan*, but this is usually not done. My impression was that (except for very few prayers) Persian synagogue music is substantially different from its surrounding art music or folk music.

The artistry of the Iranian *sh'li'ah tsibbur* lay in his choice and interpretation of *t'fillah*. There, for the first time, I saw *sh'lihei tsibbur* free to choose which prayers they wished to recite and how they wished to recite them. The *matbeia shel t'fillah* (statutory Order of Prayer) remained, but *piyyut* (liturgical poems) and *limmud* (study texts) of all kinds were spontaneously selected by the *sh'li'ah tsibbur*. Sometimes he introduced an old prayer not found in modern *siddurim*, but which may have existed in *kitvei yad* (manuscripts). Occasionally he was aided by a *samikh* (supporter) who stood by and alternated with him in chanting the *piyyutim*. Certainly, Western *hazzanim* with their regimented service suffer in comparison with their Persian counterparts who still retain the traditional prerogative of a *sh'li'ah tsibbur*: that of free choice in leading prayer.

The uniquely *creative* aspect of the Shirazi *sh'li'ah tsibbur* lay in his interpretation of *t'fillah*. The *sh'li'ah tsibbur* not only allows himself complete emotional involvement in his prayer—giving vent to joy, sorrow, contrition and awe—but he makes those prayers understandable even to the least educated man or woman present. He *translates at sight* from poetical Hebrew or Aramaic into the Judeo-Persian vernacular of the Mahalleh. In this personal, individualistic translation he elaborates and enlarges upon the text, examining and explaining it, though not in pedantic fashion.

These translations, as much as I understood them, were quite beautiful and represented a remarkable artistic achievement. For during them, the *sh'li'ah tsibbur* was either maintaining the basic rhythmic pulse (if the original Hebrew version had one), continuing the same melody (if it was a set one), or improvising within the mood and spirit of the liturgical words. He highlighted moments of tension by using *Sprechstimme* (speech/song), shouting, whispering barely audibly and voice masking. Indeed, few of the vocal dramatic techniques heard in western opera were lacking. Many in the congregation, both men and women, wept with the *sh'li'ah tsibbur*. His rendition was entirely motivated by the text; as the mood of the prayer narrative changed, a parallel transition was evident in the mood of the *sh'li'ah tsibbur*. He frequently alternated between Hebrew and Persian, using the latter to emphasize those aspects of the *t'fillah* which he considered most important and most pertinent to his congregation.

Although the *sh'li'ah tsibbur's* comprehension of Hebrew was clearly substantial, some of his older colleagues had studied very little Hebrew formally. From where did their mastery of Hebrew emanate? Perhaps the translation/interpretation process itself served as an important pedagogic mechanism, and possibly, a covert function of the *sh'li'ah tsibbur* (due to financial need) was that of teacher...

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# Grandeas and the Rest of Us: Sephardic and Ashkenazic Self-imagery through Ladino and Yiddish Folksong

By Joseph A. Levine

## A duality of approach in the two main branches of world Jewry

Rabbi Joseph Soloveichik contended that Judaism embraces the idea of two Messiahs at the end of days, one from the line of Joseph and one from the line of Judah. He traced this duality back to Genesis chapter 1 where Adam and Eve are told to interact with the world “and subdue it” (verse 28), and Genesis chapter 2 where Adam and Eve are left “naked” in the world (verse 25).<sup>1</sup> Soloveichik extended this bifurcation forward through history, as a co-existence of Jewish autonomy and Jewish submission.<sup>2</sup>

Descendants of Joseph—who had been viceroy of Egypt—were the Sephardim, who hailed from legendary centers of learning in Moorish Spain: *S’farad* in Hebrew. Following their expulsion after the late-15<sup>th</sup> century, they settled along all three shores of the Mediterranean. Like their accomplished forebears they exemplified an openness to the world around them, despite adversity.

In Northern Europe the line of Judah—which produced the royal house from which the Messiah, Son of David, would someday arise—looked askance at the cultures that surrounded them for the past 1,000 years. They took the name Ashkenazim from the Hebrew word for Germany—*Ashkenaz*—pivot-point for both eastward and westward Jewish migration in the face of recurring persecution. Confined in ghettos from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, they looked beyond a hopeless present—to the ultimate Redemption.<sup>3</sup>

Musicologist Eliyahu Schleifer tempers the severity of this cultural split somewhat, at least in the area of liturgical music.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Naomi Schaefer, “No, Not the Same: Different Faiths May Talk, They May Never Understand,” *The WST* website, December. 19, 2003.

2 David Hartman, *A Living Covenant: The Innovative Spirit in Traditional Judaism* (New York: The Free Press), 1985: 60.

3 Shlomo Riskin, “Dreaming Joseph’s Dreams and Reaching for the Stars,” *The Jewish Exponent*, November 29, 1991.

4 Eliyahu Schleifer, “Jewish Liturgical Music from the Bible to Hasidim,” *Sacred Sound and Sacred Change*, Lawrence A. Hoffman & Janet R. Walton, eds. (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press), 1991: 48-50.

We no longer can believe that some Jewish communities were so secluded that they never were influenced by others. The essence of the Jewish experience with history has been that Jews have moved like peddlers from community to community, carrying their musical merchandise with them.

Picking up the thread of Schleifer's thought, we now realize that synagogue song, whether in the Sephardic or Ashkenazic tradition, is inseparable from folk music of the various host countries with whose cultures they intermingled. That is why Sephardic *nusah ha-t'fillah* and Ashkenazic *nusah ha-t'fillah* resemble Sephardic and Ashkenazic folk song more closely than they do each other. The musical illustrations in article show that the key to understanding any underlying dichotomy in their prayer chant lies in the way Sephardim and Ashkenazim see themselves.

### **Are the two main branches that different in their approach?**

It's been said that the greatest distance between people is not space, but custom. During the past five centuries Sephardim have been asking the same questions as Ashkenazim. Have they come up with different answers? One of the ways any ethnic group defines itself is through its folk songs, particularly ones that describe the exploits of its heroes, those who came first. The way we envision our ancestors—through legend—is a good indicator of the way we see ourselves.

How many ancestors does it take to produce a Jewish family portrait? A hint from the Bible: the day before he died on the Plains of Moab, Moses challenged the people to accept God's covenant. He challenged every one of them, from "the one who chops your wood" to "the one who draws your water" (Deuteronomy 29: 10). The Midrash comments that these two occupations were singled out because they cover all generations of Jews, from first to last. Abraham was the first Jew, and he chopped wood (Genesis 22: 3) for an altar upon which he was about to sacrifice his beloved son at God's command. Elijah will ultimately be the last Jew, because when he reappears, an era will begin in which all flesh acknowledges God and there will no longer be a differentiation between Jew and non-Jew. Elijah ordered water drawn (First Kings 18: 34) for an altar from which God's fire would vanquish the wicked priests of Baal.<sup>5</sup> From the generations between Abraham and Elijah we can include Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David, and see whether God spoke differently to them in Ladino—as opposed to Yiddish—accents.

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5 Based on an article by Simeon J. Maslin, "Hewers of Wood, Drawers of Water, and We," *CCAR Journal*, fall 1975.

## Abraham

Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) ballads about the Patriarchs cover the complete cycle of life. Bulgarian Sephardim, for example, sing a circumcision song portraying the birth of *Abram avinu*. Typical of the concern that Sephardic communities had for the welfare of both newborn and mother during the week between birth and circumcision, this song spotlights *Abram's* mother. To prevent exposure to the evil eye, mother and child were never left alone, particularly on the night preceding the *B'rit*. Women who attended them kept themselves awake by singing Songs of Childbirth—*Cantigas de Parida*—such as *La mujer de terah* (Example 1).<sup>6</sup>

The wife of Terah was pregnant, each day she grew more pale;  
Not knowing what to do, she wandered the streets like a lost soul.  
She had pains, she wanted to give birth; but where? In a cave (*me'arah*)?  
Meanwhile the little fellow is studying and writing in the academy (*ishivah*);  
Signing the name: '*Abram avinu*'!

La mu - djer de Te - rach pre - ña - da sta - ba

5  
La mu - djer de Te - rach pre - ña - da sta - ba De

9  
di' - a en di' - a e - y'a se de - mu - da ba - de

13  
di' - a en di' - a e - y'a se de - mu - da - ba.

### Example 1. Bulgarian Sephardic Circumcision Song, *La mujer de terah*.

The fact is that Father Abraham could not have signed his name in the Yeshivah before he was born! Yet what's important here is the Sephardic self-image of a Jewish male. This circumcision song teaches that any son of *Abram avinu* is expected to engage in life-long study—beginning (as the Midrash tells it)—even in his mother's womb!

6 Susana Weich-Shahak, "Childbirth Songs among Sephardic Jews of Balkan Origin," *Orbis Musicae*, No. 8, 1982/1983.

Ashkenazic folk song paints a completely different picture of *Avrohom ovinu*. In the tiny villages of Russia and Poland, the saddest moment of the week was when *Shabbos* departed. Jews clung as desperately to the Sabbath as desperate children do to their mother's apron, delaying her until late at night.<sup>7</sup> The pious found comfort at their Rebbe's table. Mitnagdim, opposed to such dependence by Hasidim upon charismatic local leaders, instead implored the first Patriarch to act as their go-between with God, in a Yiddish, Hebrew and Ukranian song: *Abram, batka nash* (Example 2).<sup>8</sup>

Abraham, our dear father—why don't you go,

Why don't you pray that we be taken from here?

That God should wake us, that God should take us to our own land.

*mf*  
Ab-ram Ab - ram, Ab-ram Ab - ram, An-ram, Ab - ram, batch-ka nash! Tschem nie cho - dish,  
6  
tschem nie mo - lish, Bo\_\_\_ ga za - nas? Li - bo nas vy-pro-zy - tie  
11  
li - bo nas vyz - vo - ly - tie li - bo nas\_\_\_ vy - ku - pi - tye  
15  
l' - ar tsei - nu, l' - ar - tsei - nu nash - hu, Ab - ram, Ab - ram batch - ka - nash!

**Example 2.** *Yiddish/Hebrew/Ukranian plea to Abram, batchka nash* for intercession with God.

Yiddish novelist Sholom Asch (1880-1957) wrote that the Jews of Eastern Europe did not seek God; they already had him. Their prayers to him were accompanied by mystical melodies raised from the mundane level of a dance brought back by fishermen and peddlers from neighboring villages. In them could be heard the winds and snowstorms that had howled around them during their journeys, the songs they heard in fields as they passed, the splashing of streams into which they had let down their nets or washed their sheepskins.

7 Sholom Asch, *Salvation (Der t'hilim yid)* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons), 1934: 196.

8 "Abram, Batka Nash," *Jewish Folk Songs*, ed. Platon Brounoff (New York: Harris), n.d.

By way of contrast, the Sephardim who left Spain and Portugal and migrated to Holland and eventually England in the West, to North Africa, the Balkans, Greece, Turkey and Syria in the east, took their music with them—just as they took along the keys to the homes they were forced to abandon, assuming they would someday return. The tunes that we hear in Sephardic prayer resemble Spanish romantic ballads of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, lively *cantigas* that were originally sung to the accompaniment of a tambourine or *pandero*. When applied to liturgical texts, they were slowed down into stately hymns sung with care and precision by the entire congregation in western centers like Amsterdam and London, and with considerably more verve in more easterly communities like Salonika and Baghdad.

## Isaac

Typical of the Western Sephardic genre is *Eit sha'arei ratson* (“The Gates of Mercy”), a so-called *Akeidah* (*piyyut* about the Binding of Isaac; Genesis 22) that is sung by *hazzan* and *kahal* before the Shofar sounding on Rosh Hashanah morning, and in some communities during the various services of Yom Kippur as well. The poem is unknown among Ashkenazim, yet it represents a peak moment in the Sephardic rite, an experience that connects better with our past than all the history books ever written. As for the Patriarch Isaac, it is the only time he emerges from his relative obscurity and steps uncontested into the limelight of immortality. Each stanza opens with a fervent wish that the Gates of Mercy be opened on high at this propitious hour and that the beloved son, who was bound by his father upon the altar, be remembered by God (**Example 3**).<sup>9</sup>

Abraham prepares the wood and binds Isaac, his tears turning the day into night. The lad begs his father: “Tell Mother Sarah to turn her face away from the son born to her in old age, who gave himself up to the knife and the flame. Take my ashes and tell her: “This is what remains of Isaac, who was bound upon the altar.” As that passage was recited, a collective shudder would sweep through the women’s gallery. Up above, the angels plead before God’s Mercy Throne” “Let not the world be without its light!” The poem then climaxes confidently:

Then to Abraham, God relented, saying:

“Do not lay your hand upon the lad;

Return to your place in peace, for every year on this day

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9 “*Et Sha'arei Ratson*,” *Sephardi Melodies*, ed. Emanuel Aguilar & D.A. de Sola (London: Oxford University Press), 1931.

I shall show mercy to your descendants;  
 the sins of My people will be forgiven  
 In remembrance of the son who was bound upon the altar.”

A - mar l' av - ra - ham a - don sha - ma - yim, al tish - l' - ha yad el shlish u -  
 6 ra - yim. Shu - vah l' - sha - lom, mal - a - khei sha - ma - yim. Yom zeh z' - khut liv -  
 11 nei ye - ru - sha - la - yim. Bo - heit b' nei ya' - a -  
 15 kov a - ni - so - lei - ah. O - keid v' - ha - ne' e - kad v' ha - miz - bei - ah.

**Example 3.** Climax of a Sephardic Akeidah for the High Holidays: *Eit sha'arei ratson*.

Most societies that have produced tales concerning their founding fathers, were patriarchal.<sup>10</sup> In the Jewish people’s case, however, the supposedly “subordinate” roles played by biblical Matriarchs seem to undermine their husbands’ roles. In reality it was the Matriarchs who determined the course of events. This is especially true of Isaac. As a child he could not control his own destiny; his mother assured it by casting out his half-brother, Ishmael. Later, as a parent, his wife Rebecca orchestrated transfer of the birthright to their younger son Jacob, as opposed to her husband Isaac’s choice, Esau (*Eysov* in Yiddish).

Ashkenazic poet Itzik Manger (1901-1969) emphasized the weakness of Isaac’s image, capturing him not in his heroic youth but in his blind old age—as *Yitskhok ovinu*— and bringing the image closer to home: an Eastern European *shtetl*.

Father Isaac has eaten the midday Sabbath meal, recited Grace, and in his silken robe roams about the house, humming an earnest tune his father had sung to him. When he questions his two boys on the *Sedra* (weekly Torah portion), the elder one remains silent, as if no one were talking to him. Isaac’s hopes are dashed; *Eysov* has a clogged-up head. But the younger boy,

10 Jamake Highwater, remarks at a symposium: *What is Myth?* University of the Arts, Philadelphia, Sept. 15, 1991 (the writer’s notes).



Jacob (*Yaakevl in Yiddish*), cracks the *Sedra* like a speedy colt running over a highway! Mother *Rivke* listens proudly as she stands by the oven and piously envisions her reward in the World to Come. Her gaze falls tenderly upon the head of her young genius as through the quiet *Shabbos* afternoon is heard the buzzing of a big blue fly (**Example 4**):<sup>11</sup>



Yits-khok o - vi-nu in zay-dn kha - lat geyt i - ber der shtub a - rum un  
 5 brumt zikh tsu - a ni-gun-dl, a ni-gun-dl ernst un frum. tchi - ri -  
 10 bim bam, tchi-ri - bim bam ay ta - teh in hi - ml, her vi  
 14 in dem ni - gun tsi-tert frum dem hey-li - kn ta - tns trer.

**Example 4.** The Ashkenazic image of Isaac—*Yitskhok ovinu farhert zayne bonim*.

## Jacob

Our perception of the third Patriarch is interwoven not so much with brilliance as with Israel’s Redemption; in fact the two names—Jacob and Israel—usually appear together: *Darakh kokhav mi-ya’akov v’kam sheivet mi-yisrael* (“A star shall come forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel”).<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Sephardic congregations conclude every reading from Psalms with the verse: *B’shuv adonai sh’vut amo, ya-geil ya’akov yismah yisrael* (“When God brings back the captivity of His people, then Jacob shall rejoice, Israel shall be glad”).<sup>13</sup>

The Jerusalem Sephardic repertoire of Friday Night table *z’mirot* includes a mosaic of biblical quotes built around the shepherd *Ya’akov*. At the well he meets *Rahel* (Rachel), the girl for whom he will dutifully tend sheep over the

11 *Yitskhok ovinu farhert zayne bonim...*, words by Itzik Manger (*Khumesh lieder*), music by Israel Alter, arranged by S. Hylton Edwards, *Mayne lieder* (Johannesburg, 1957).

12 Numbers 24:17.

13 Psalms 14:7.

next twenty years. The *z'mirah*—*Y'didi ro'i m'kimi* (“My beloved, my shepherd, my redeemer”)—takes the traditional metaphor of Mother *Rahel* awaiting the return of her lost sheep and completely reverses it. She pleads with her husband, Jacob (**Example 5**):<sup>14</sup>

Gather the sheep whom you left unattended...

Bring them once more to their home...

Let *Rahel* return to her sheep!

... Shuv u - v' - nei mik - dash va - a - ri - eil, \_\_\_ ush' - lah m' - va -  
 7 seir l' yis-ra - eil \_\_\_ lei-mor ba l' -tsiy-yon go - eil, \_\_\_ ra-heil ba - ah im ha - tson.  
 17 \_\_\_ Lei - mor \_\_\_ ba l' -  
 20 tsiy - yon go - eil, \_\_\_ ra - heil ba - ah im ha - tson. \_\_\_

sudden stop  
 rit. // then deliberately

**Example 5.** Final verse of a Jerusalem Sephardic *z'mirah* about Jacob: *Y'didi ro'i m'kimi*.

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while the majority of Europe’s beleaguered Jews stayed put or emigrated to America, a few Russian Zionists who called themselves *Hov'vei tsiyon* (“Lovers of Zion”) began rebuilding the Land of Israel. Among the pioneers was Joel Engel (1868-1927), an outstanding—and outspoken—musician and composer. Coming as he did from an impoverished society where tiny communities could not afford permanent rabbis, he set his image of Jacob as a *maggidisher moshol* (itinerant preacher’s parable), a teaching tool with which Eastern Ashkenazim were very familiar.

*Ossó Boyker* (**Example 6**.)<sup>15</sup> concerns *Yankl* (Jacob, the Jewish everyman) as seen by the common masses. No longer a beloved shepherd, he himself is a lost sheep. Yankl sets out on his journey one dark Saturday night and falls asleep on the way. His journey allegorizes Jewish history, and his sleep—dur-

14 *Antología de Liturgia Judeo-Española*, ed. Isaac Levy, Vol. I (Jerusalem: Ministry of Education and Culture), 1964: 82, No. 83.

15 Joel Engel, Opus 24, No. 1 (Odessa, 1920), dedicated to Alexander Krein.

ing which a violent storm rages—symbolizes the tumultuous exile. At the song’s finale, *Yankl* finally awakens and demands of God: “How long will You let me sleep?” God answers him in the doom-laden words of the prophet Isaiah:<sup>16</sup> *Oso Boyker v’gam loyloh* (“Morning has come as well as night”)—i.e., the choice between Redemption and continued exile—“but you, Yankl, have slept through it all!”

...Gott, o Gott! biz vi lang, o Gott, vest du mir lo-z'n schlo - f'n? Un Gott hot ihm ge -  
 5 *ff* **Maestoso**  
 ent - fert: Os - so boy - ker v' - gam  
 9 *p*  
 loy - loh. Un du Yan - kl host far - scho - f'n!

**Example 6.** *Finale of an Ashkenazic parable about Jacob: Joel Engel’s Oso boyker.*

## Moses

We move beyond the Patriarchal Age, to the Time of Wandering in the Sinai Wilderness. Sephardim venerate *Moshe rabbeinu*—Moses our Teacher—as no other ancestral figure. In their pantheon of biblical folk heroes he is second only to the Creator: *Ein adir kadonai v’ein barukh k’ven amram* (“None so mighty as God and none so blessed as Amram’s son”<sup>17</sup>). To Sephardim, God’s Revelation on Mount Sinai was concomitant with Moses’s ascension to heaven. What happened next is depicted in the Ladino ballad *Alli en el midbar* (“There in the Wilderness”; **Example 7.**):<sup>18</sup>

The angels’ react to a mortal’s having entered their holy realm—  
 They want to burn him—as God burned the bush!

What does a man of flesh and blood seek in heaven?

Ah, but this noble man is Moses our Teacher—

16 Chapter 21, verse 12.

17 Amram being Moses’ father; Exodus 6:18.

18 Also known as *La cantiga de la ley* (“Ballad of the Law”), *Coplas Sefardies*, Vol. Xa, ed and arranged, Alberto Hemsí (Paris: self-published), 1973: 14-18.

Who went up to heaven and came back down again!

*p* **a tempo**

4  
8  
12

...Los mal - a - khim del cie - lo\_\_\_ tie - nen por el cie -  
lo, ba - sar v - dam qué bush - ca\_\_\_ en\_\_\_ el cie -  
lo? Y mi - rad, y mi-rad qué\_\_\_ si - ñor\_\_\_ es Mo - she\_\_\_ ra -  
bei - nu, qué su - bio y a-ba-sho a-los al - tos cie - los.

*allerg*

**Example 7.** The Sephardic view of Moses in *La cantiga de la ley*.

Ashkenazic folklore projects *Moyshe rabbeynu* on a much smaller screen, which might be historically more accurate for the following reason. If it is true that ancient civilization progressed from hunting to shepherding to farming, then Moses and the Israelites were still at the second of those three stages when the Exodus took place. As shepherds in the Land of Goshen (along the Northeastern branch of the Nile River Delta) they had not yet advanced to the higher level of Egypt, a society of farmers.

Be that as it may, the Sephardic image of Moses—and of itself—has always been aristocratic. Sephardim had a tradition of scholars who also served as ministers of state and financiers to kings; in a word: *Grandeess*, the line of Joseph. *The rest of us*, Judah’s Ashkenazic descendants, lived a more inward existence. We preferred staying at home amidst more modest pleasures. And so, our great-grandparents sang about an earthbound Moses, *someyakh b’khelko*—happy with his portion. He is satisfied with being a faithful servant. Even when crowned with glory as he receives the Tablets of the Covenant—*Shney lukhos habris*—Moses is standing on Mount Sinai, not in heaven.

And which commandment written on those tablets do Ashkenazim focus upon—out of all 613? Observance of the Sabbath is what they sing about in the Yiddish folksong *Yismach moyshe* (“On Shabbos, Moses rejoiced”; **Example 8.**):<sup>19</sup>

Shabbos was given only to Jews...

19 Samuel Gozinsky, *Yismach Moshe* (New York: H. Lefkowitz), 1928.

On that day every Jew must rejoice,  
 Eating and drinking only the very best,  
 That is what God has commanded.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four staves of music with corresponding lyrics in Yiddish. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The lyrics are: "...Der sha - bos iz ge - ge - b'n bloyz tsu die yi - den a - leyn". The second staff starts with a measure rest of 3 measures, indicated by a '3' below the staff. The lyrics are: "Azoy - iz in der toy - re g'shri - b'n der yid darf zikh sha - bos frey'n". The third staff begins with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte). The lyrics are: "Es - sen trin - ken dos bes - teh vos nor a ye - der far - mogt". The fourth staff begins with a measure rest of 7 measures, indicated by a '7' below the staff, followed by a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The lyrics are: "kley - der tro - gen di shen - steh a - zoy hot - gott on - ge - zogt." The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

**Example 8.** *The Ashkenazic image of why Moses rejoiced on Shabbos—Yismakh moyshe.*

## David

Once in their own land, Moses' people could finally progress to the level reached by Egyptian civilization, and beyond. They produced the original "Renaissance" type: David, a warrior and minstrel designated *N'im z'mirot yisrael*—"Sweet Singer of Israel." He was also its reigning monarch for forty years despite endless intrigues, political and otherwise. One wonders when he found time to compose 150 Psalms, or what he had to sing about! Among his other responsibilities, King David had eight wives. The second, Ahinoam, bore him his eldest son, Amnon. The fourth wife, Ma'akha, bore his third son, Avshalom along with a beautiful daughter, Tamar. Unfortunately, Amnon was smitten with Tamar, his half-sister.

And how does their father react to this illicit love? According to a folk legend of Sephardim from Morocco, when Amnon feigns sickness, David asks him what's wrong. He answers: "I am sick, O my Father, and cannot eat." The King suggests he try some freshly made breast-of-turkey stew (evidently the Moroccan Sephardic equivalent of chicken soup), to which Amnon replies: "I will eat it, O father, only if Tamar prepares it and serves it to me." The King naively grants Amnon's request and orders Tamar to comply.

Thus, as Second Samuel chapter 13 relates, young incest is unwittingly abetted by their father. When Tamar brings Amnon his royally prescribed main course he promptly seduces her and then has the temerity to throw her out of his room. Who should be passing by at that precise moment but her brother, Avshalom. He sees her, distraught, and demands to know what happened. Tamar tells him through her tears: “Your brother, Amnon, has dishonored me!” Avshalom swears to avenge her before the sun goes down, and he has Amnon killed. In doing so he incurs the King’s anger, flees, and spends the rest of his short life plotting to overthrow the throne.

The Ladino ballad, *Tamar y amnon* (‘Tamar and Amnon’; **Example 9**),<sup>20</sup> sets the scene:

**Andante**

Un hi - sho tie - ne el rey da - vid \_\_\_\_\_ qué por\_\_ nom - bre\_\_ am -  
 8 nón se ya - ma. Na - mo - ró se \_\_\_\_\_ de ta -  
 15 mar \_\_\_\_\_ aun - qué era su\_\_ pro - pi - a her - ma - na.

**Example 9.** Opening of the Moroccan Sephardic ballad—*Tamar y amnon*.

Ashkenazim prefer to see David’s cup as half-full rather than half-empty. And even if it doesn’t quite overflow, it’s still brimming enough to warrant preparing the mystical ‘Meal of the Anointed King’ following the Havdalah ceremony that separates Shabbat from weekday. Tradition holds that the Messianic era will begin on a Saturday night, and that the Messiah will be a descendant of David—*Moshiakh ben dovid*—as in the folk song, *Shnirele Perele*:

String of pearls, banner of gold, *Moshiakh ben dovid* waits to be told,  
 Holding a goblet in his right hand: “The time is ripe for return to the Land.”

“True and certain,” we all reply, “Let not *Moshiakh* pass us by.

If he comes by travel, our fears will unravel.

If he comes by riding, that means good tidings.

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20 Israel J. Katz, “The Enigma of the Antonio Bustelo Judeo-Spanish Ballad Tunes in Manuel Ortega’s *Los hebreos en marreco* (1919),” *Musica Judaica*, Vol. IV, 1981-82.

Let him come when he's ready; till then we Jews will hold steady.”

It reads like a children's ditty, yet its lyrics appear in the first Yiddish folk-song collection from Russia at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> Today, even knowledgeable Yiddishists are either unaware of it or put off by its simplistic rhyme scheme (*yoren-foren, rayten-tsayten, geyn-aynshteyn*). I trust that readers of this article will not be like tourists who, having heard of a famous restaurant for many years, are so overwhelmed when they arrive that they mistake the menu for the meal and end up eating cardboard. Dishes are made for eating, and songs are made for singing (**Example 10**).<sup>22</sup>

REFRAIN

5 Shni-re-le pe-re-le gil-de-ne fon, mo-shi-akh ben do-vid zits oy-bn-on,

9 halt-er a be-kher in rekh-t'n hant, makht er a bro-khoh i-ber di-gan-tse lant.

13 Oy, o-meyn ve-o-meyn dos iz vor, mo-shi-akh vet ku-m'n hayn ti-kn yor; **Fine**

Oy, o-meyn ve-o-meyn dos iz vor, mo-shi-akh vet ku-men hayn ti-kn yor.

VERSE

17 vet er ku-men tsu fo-r'n, ve-len zayn gu-teh yo-r'n, vet er ku-men tsu ray-t'n, ve-len zayn gu-teh

21 tsay-t'n, tsay-t'n, vet er ku-men tsu geyn, ve-len di yi-d'n in er-rets yis-ro-cyl ayn-shteyn. (To Refrain)

**Example 10.** Yiddish folk song about David's descendant—the Messiah—*Shnirele perele*.

21 “Shnirele Perele,” *Jewish Folk Songs in Russia*, Saul Ginsburg and Pesach Marek, editors (St. Petersburg: Voskhod) 1901

22 “Shnirele Perele,” on *Zai Gezunt—To Your Health*, recorded by the Mazeltones, Global Village CD 151.

## Elijah

By now readers may have noticed how much older and more subservient Ashkenazic heroes appear alongside their more youthful and self-reliant Sephardic counterparts. In Eastern European perception Abraham, the first Jew, could only *pray* for the redemption of his progeny. Isaac could only *anticipate* redemption through his son Jacob, who himself required a salvation that he never saw coming and therefore *missed*. Moses was content to serve as God's humble servant, and David remained a distant *antecedent* of the long-awaited Messiah.

Perhaps influenced by the sun-lit climate along Mediterranean shores, Sephardim were compiling a different sort of biblical family album. The precocious unborn Abraham already set a pattern for all future generations of heroes. Isaac, a mere lad, showed what self-sacrifice was all about. Jacob, a young shepherd, tended the entire flock of Israel. Moses, even in old age, aspired to ever-higher attainments, while David always played the role of monarch to the hilt.

This dichotomy persists through the last Jew alluded to in Deuteronomy: Elijah the drawer of water, who is also associated with *Motsa'ei shabbat* in the *z'mirot* sung at that time:

*B'motsa'ei yom m'nuhah, sh'lah tishbi l'ne'elah*

As the day of Contentment departs, let the Tishbite gladden our hearts.

The "Tishbite" is Elijah from the town of Tshav; he, along with the Archangel Gabriel is traditionally expected to herald the Messiah.

*Eliyahu y Gavriel nos vengan junto con el go'el*

Elijah and Gabriel will jointly accompany the Redeemer.

Sephardim sing a *cancion de cuna* (cradle song) which foretells the final *Motsa'ei shabbat* of history: *Esta noche es alevada* (This night will be luminous, and throughout it, every sleeping infant will be guarded by Elijah; **Example 11.**)<sup>23</sup>

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23 "Esta Noche es Alevada," *Coplas Sefardies*, Vol. Xa, Alberto Hemsí, ed. (Paris: self-published), 1973: 24-27.



Es - ta no - che es - a - la - va - da se en cen - der  
 4 lu - zes de - ma - zia - das, la cre - a - tu - ra se a guad - ra -  
 8 da con ei - li - ya - hu ha - na - vi, con ei - li -  
 13 ya - hu ha - na - vi con ei - li - ya - hu ha - na - vi.

**Example 11.** Ladino ‘cradle song’ about the ultimate *Motsa’ei shabbat*: *Esta noche es alevada*.

From that Sephardic vision of Elijah as Divine Guardian we come at last to the Ashkenazic image of *Eliyohu hanovi* (Elijah the Prophet) as Divine Messenger. The Yiddish poet Peretz Hirshbein (1880-1948) and composer Lazar Weiner (1897-1982) based a song upon the popular fable in which a poor Jew and his family are delivered from slavery through the Prophet’s intercession. In this typically Eastern European variation on that theme—*A maysele* (“A Tale”)—*Eliyohu* is definitely not the message, but simply the medium through which it arrives.

A pauper and his wife have two daughters and not a penny to marry them off. One Shabbos a guest appears, the couple take him in, sharing what they have. When he departs after *Havdoloh*, they realize it was *Eliyohu hanovi*, who has left behind a small fortune. Suddenly, nothing is sufficient for them, and they squander the riches. Their punishment quickly follows. The milk curdles, the wine sours, the coins of gold turn to lead; the couple are again—penniless; (**Example 12**).<sup>24</sup>

24 *A Maisele*, words by Peretz Hirshbein, music by Lazar Weiner, Vienna: Jibneh Verlag (1928); New York: Transcontinental music, 1953.

4 ...Ge - ku - men iz di groy - seh shtrof far dem kheyts dem  
 har - bn, oys - ge - ru - nen milkh un vayn, fun rend - lakh nor\_\_ a  
 8 shar - bn. Ge - ven a mol a yid\_\_ mit a yi - de - neh, kab - tso - nim - lakh groy - seh  
 12 vi\_\_ di velt; ho - bn zey - tekh - ter - lach tsvey ge - hat, nor\_\_ on a gro - shn gelt.

**Example 12.** An Ashkenazic tale of Elijah as Divine messenger: *A maysele*.

Perhaps because of the grinding poverty they had endured for so long, Ashkenazic Jews did not expect riches (at least not until they had been in America for over 100 years and their great-grandchildren comprised over a third of the *Fortune 500* List and over half of the *Art & Antiques Collectors* List). Until then, it seems that the Yiddish writer, Sholom Aleichem (the “Jewish Mark Twain,” 1859-1916) had been correct in calling their odyssey from the Old World to the New “a journey from rags–to rags.”

Nor did they really anticipate an imminent redemption that never arrived. Instead, they practiced the forbearance shown by their Yiddish-speaking biblical prototypes. Their folk songs seemed to be telling them: “Had delivery arrived, you would not have signed for it anyway.”

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# Jewish Music in the Italian Renaissance

By Joshua R. Jacobson

From the 14th through the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, central Italy was abloom with an efflorescence of new thinking in politics, philosophy and the arts. The prolific writers and artists of this period considered their work to be a reawakening from the slumber of the Dark Ages—a rebirth, a Renaissance, of the glories of the classical period.

The court of Mantua embodied the new spirit of royal luxury and artistic magnificence. At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the duchess Isabella D'Este Gonzaga brought many of the finest musicians of Italy to Mantua to compose and perform for the entertainment of the royal family.

Jews were not only tolerated in the enlightened duchy of Mantua, they were often allowed to intermingle freely with non-Jews. In this liberal atmosphere, Jews were affected to an exceptional degree by the prevailing literary, artistic and humanistic tendencies. In Renaissance Mantua, Jews achieved a remarkably successful synthesis between their ancestral Hebraic culture and that of their secular environment. Those who merited recognition in the general society as physicians, astronomers, playwrights, dancers, musicians and so on were, in many cases, loyal Jews, conversant with Hebrew and devoted to traditional scholarship.

Some of Mantua's most famous dancers and choreographers were Jews. Isabella's dancing instructor was the Jew, Guglielmo Ebreo Pesaro, author of one of the most important treatises on choreography written in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

For a 100-year period starting in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there was an active Jewish Theatre troupe in Mantua, known as the Università Israelitica. The citizens of Mantua were all aware of the Università's unusual schedule: on Fridays, performances would be held in the afternoon rather than in the evening, so as not to interfere with the *festa del sabbato*.

Throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century we find a series of Jewish vocalists and instrumentalists in the service of the dukes of Mantua, contributing greatly to the splendor of the court of the House of Gonzaga. But standing head and shoulders above all other Jewish musicians of the Renaissance period, and a considerable musical figure in any context, was Salomone Rossi—singer, violinist and composer at the court of Mantua from 1587 to 1628.

In Rossi we see the apex of Jewish participation in the Italian Renaissance. He was a gifted secular composer who collaborated with the late-Renaissance / early Baroque musical giants of the era, including Giovanni Gastoldi (1550-1622) and Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643). During the period of his employ-

ment at Mantua he wrote volumes of songs, dances and concert music for his Christian patrons who, in gratitude, exempted Salamone from wearing the stipulated Jewish badge of shame.

But at the same time, here is the Jewish composer who proudly appended to his name the word “Ebreo”—Salamone Rossi the Jew. He was descended from the illustrious Italian-Jewish family de Rossi (which is the Italian translation of the Hebrew family name, *Mei-ha’adumim*). This proud family, which included the famous and controversial Bible scholar, Azariyah de Rossi and a number of fine musicians, traced its ancestry back to the exiles from Jerusalem, carried away to Rome by the Emperor Titus in the year 70.

As a young man, Rossi made his reputation as a violinist. In 1587 he was hired by Duke Vincenzo as a resident musician at the court of Mantua. But, in addition to his performing, Rossi was also composing music for violins and voices. Like his colleague Monteverdi, Rossi also excelled in the composition of serious madrigals.

In the field of instrumental music, Rossi was a bold innovator. He was the first composer to apply to instrumental music the principles of monodic song, in which one melody dominates over secondary accompanying parts. His sonatas, among the first in the literature, provided for the development of an idiomatic and virtuosic violin technique.

Still, it is undoubtedly in the field of synagogue music that we find Rossi’s most daring innovations. Since the beginning of the last diaspora some 1950 years ago, Jews in Europe retained an ancient and exotic musical tradition. Instruments were banned from the synagogue as a sign of mourning for the destruction of the ancient Jerusalem Temple. New melodies of Gentile origin were considered a deviation from the pure near-Eastern tradition, and as such, were forbidden. Change was frowned upon; prayer tunes were kept in their original form, no harmonization was allowed.

By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the times were changing—from within. The northern Italian Jews of Mantua and Venice and Ferrara had developed a taste for *le nuove musiche*, the new music of the Renaissance (after the title of a 1602 song collection for solo voice and basso continuo by Giulio Caccini, summing up the principles of the Florentine Camerata musicians). They began to question why the music of their synagogues should continue to sound so old-fashioned. The times were also changing from without, the Counter-Reformation demanded enforcement of the laws that segregated the Jew from his neighbor. The first strictly segregated Jewish neighborhood was established in Venice in 1516. Named after the foundry located nearby, it was called the “Ghetto.” The enforced segregation in Mantua culminated in Duke Vincenzo’s establishment of a barricaded ghetto in 1612. Now, at the

peak of the renaissance, Italian Jews were forced to turn increasingly inward. Their appetites for *le nuove musiche* would have to be satisfied within the confines of their own community. The synagogue would provide the venue for this fine art.

In Padua and Ferrara there were synagogue choirs at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In Modena there was an organ, in Venice a complete orchestra. Flaunting the centuries-old tradition, these practices came under heavy criticism from many conservative members of the community. Rabbi Leone of Modena wrote about his experiences organizing a choir in Ferrara.

We have among us connoisseurs of the science of singing, six or eight knowledgeable persons of our community. We raise our voices on the festivals, and sing songs of praise in the synagogue to honor God with compositions of vocal harmony. A man stood up to chase us away, saying that it is not right to do so because it is forbidden to rejoice, and that the singing of hymns and praises in harmony is therefore also forbidden. Although the congregation clearly enjoyed our singing, this man rose against us and condemned us publicly, saying that we had sinned before God!

Yet, so strong was the Renaissance spirit that a number of enlightened rabbis defended the new musical practice in published responsa. Rabbi Leone's responsum was among them.

I do not see how anyone with a brain in his skull could cast any doubt on the propriety of praising God in song in the synagogue on special Sabbaths and festivals. Such music is as much a religious obligation as that which is performed to bring joy to bridegroom and bride—whom it is our duty to adorn and gladden with all manner of rejoicing. No intelligent person, no scholar ever thought of forbidding the use of the greatest possible beauty of voice in praising the Lord, blessed be He, nor the use of musical art which awakens the soul to His glory.

Most significantly, Rossi is the first Jew to compose, perform and publish polyphonic settings of the synagogue liturgy for mixed choir. In the preface to the publication of this synagogue music, Rossi acknowledged the spiritual inspiration for his art.

The Lord has been my strength and He has put new songs into my mouth. Inspired, I wove these into an arrangement of sweet sounds, and I designated these items for rejoicing on the holy festivals. I did not restrain my lips, but ever increased my striving to enhance the Psalms of David, King of Israel, until I set many of them and shaped them into proper harmonic form, so that they would have greater stature for discriminating ears.

In the year 1630 the city of Mantua was stormed by invading Austrian troops. The Jewish ghetto was ravished and its inhabitants fled the town.

The Renaissance was over for the Jewish community. Choral music was no longer heard in the synagogue. Salomone Rossi probably died in that year and was all but forgotten.

It was some 200 years later that Baron Edmond de Rothschild, on a trip to Italy, stumbled on a strange collection of old music books bearing the name *Salamone Rossi Ebreo*. On his return to France, intrigued by what he found, Rothschild handed over the collection to Samuel Naumbourg, cantor of the Great Synagogue (known as the Rothschild Shul) in Paris. In 1876, Cantor Naumbourg published the first modern edition of Rossi's music (title page of 1623 edition shown below). Once again the voice of one of the sweetest singers of Israel, Salamone Rossi Ebreo, was heard in the land.

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# Back to Life, Twice: The Revivals of Ladino Song in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Italy

by Francesco Spagnolo

## Introduction

In this article, I shall investigate how musical sources can be used to understand the historical development of cultural identity among the Jews of Italy. My argument focuses on what I define as two waves of “revival” that brought Ladino song to public attention in Italy, first in the 1920s, and again since the 1980s. Even though I will be using some musical examples to illustrate my sources, I am specifically interested in the intellectual discourse *about* Ladino song and Sephardic sources, and on how it reflects the attempt to construct Jewish cultural identity in Italy. As I will try to show, this discourse continues a debate about music, liturgy and “cultural authenticity” that dates back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The article will explore cultural motifs linking musical traditions with the life of the Italian Jewish communities, and trace the evolution of a cultural identity as these communities faced Emancipation, assimilation and the Holocaust in the last century.

With the expression “Italian musical traditions,” I am referring to a vast musical *corpus*, consisting of numerous distinct liturgical and para-liturgical traditions of various origins, continuously in contact with a broad range of influxes and in constant evolution over a long period of time, which was developed in the many Jewish communities of the Italian peninsula and the areas in which Jews originating from the peninsula came to live. The more we learn about these traditions, the less we can feel comfortable in classifying them according to the categories that are commonly used in Jewish cultural studies and in the study of Jewish ritual identities. It is true that the Jews in Italy originated from a host of Italian, Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities, and that at some level these distinctions are valid and valuable. However, the close cohabitation of small numbers of culturally rich Jews in the Italian ghettos produced, over the centuries, a typically Italian Jewish symbiosis based on a “ritual *koinè*” (Greek: common language).

For a long time, the Italian, Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews of Italy intermarried and shared resources—including their synagogues, texts and music. The question of cultural cohesion became a pressing matter on the eve of the Emancipation, a historical process that in the Italian peninsula lasted almost a century, and hit the communities in several waves, beginning with the French Revolution and culminating with the liberation of the

Jews of Rome from Vatican control in 1870. Guided both by the necessity to create a unified political representation before the new Italian State, and by the need to establish a cultural identity that could function outside the clearly defined boundaries of the ghettos, rabbis and community leaders began working towards unifying the ritual, and attempted to overcome the traditional textual (and musical) differences between the Italian, Sephardic and Ashkenazic Prayer Books.

The most active figure to undertake this task was Lelio Cantoni (Gazzuolo, Mantua 1801-Turin 1857), Piedmont's Rabbino Maggiore (Chief Rabbi) between 1834 and 1857. In a *responsum* about the confluence of the two rituals of Florence (Italian and Sephardic), published in 1847 but written in 1842, the rabbi openly acknowledged the possibility of liturgical modifications aimed at accommodating specific communal needs (Cantoni 1847), and thus paved the way to the suppression of the Italian ritual in that community. Ten years later, Rabbi Lelio Della Torre (Cuneo 1805-Padua 1871), who was a major figure in the Collegio Rabbinico of Padua since 1828, went even further:

May the expressions German, Levantine, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian or whatever other sort of Jews disappear at once: [they are] an anachronism that reminds of exiles, migrations, and of the wanderings and the erratic life of the outcasts. Let us take from each rite what is most adequate to the needs and the decorum of the liturgy, let us choose among the many hymns [*piyyutim*] those most appropriate for each holiday, so that all others will either stand [on their own merit] as literary monuments, or fall into oblivion if they do not possess anything that is of value to posterity.<sup>1</sup>

This position, soon echoed by others, found a perfect outlet in the introduction of the new sounds of choral music and instrumental accompaniments, often referred to as *musica sacra*, in the synagogue.<sup>2</sup> Within synagogue liturgy,

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1 Della Torre, *Prose israelitiche*, 1852: 24: "Cessi una volta, in un medesimo paese, il nome di Ebrei Tedeschi, Levantini, Spagnuoli, Portoghesi, Italiani o che so io: anacronismo che ricorda gli esilii, le emigrazioni e la vita errante e vagabonda de' proscritti. Si prenda da ogni rito quanto più si confà al bisogno e al decoro del culto; si scelgano fra i tanti inni i più acconci per ogni festa, e gli altri rimangano qual monumento letterario, o cadano nell'oblio se nulla hanno che li raccomandi alla posterità" (also in Servi, *EI XIV/1866*: 313-314).

2 The expression probably originated in Piedmont, where it is attested in the Jewish press since the early 1850s. See also *Pezzi vari [di] Musica Sacra, for Tenor and Bass*, by Bonajut Treves and Ezechiello Levi (of Vercelli, JNUL Mus. Coll. Vercelli 110); *Canto sacro Ebaico [sic] composto e dedicato dal Maestro Smolz al molto illustre Signore Salvatore Benedetto Artom* (JNUL Mus. Coll. Casale 9a); *Canti Sacridella Comunità Israelitica di Alessandria*. The same expression is also found in



modernity and tradition had to somehow coexist, and any attempt to change (or “innovate”) the ritual needed to take the “past” into account. Both textually and musically, the theme of “antiquity” was invoked as the main reason that could allow older elements to be incorporated into modernity.

Textual antiquity could be studied through literary documents, which generally suggested that the Italian *minhag* was to be used as a model for all, as in the pioneering works of Sh’muel David Luzzatto (Trieste 1800-Padua 1865), and especially in his *Mavo* to the *Italian Mahzor* published in Livorno in 1856. Establishing musical antiquity, however, posed a different set of problems. Traditional music was considered ubiquitous, because of its oral character, and its origin could not easily be verified. This difficulty was “solved” in two ways. First, antiquity was tied to the notion of the “Oriental” origins of Jewish music. Then, the musical traditions that could be considered Oriental became the object of fieldwork. (I have spoken elsewhere about this. To summarize: the Oriental theme was imported into the Italian Jewish discourse via Germany, but it acquired a life, and a *raison d’être* of its own, based precisely on the presence of many different living traditions in the Italian synagogues.)

In 1859, while defending the use of the organ in the synagogue (which, according to an argument already found in rabbinical literature since the late Renaissance, could help in restoring the grandeur of the Jewish Temple within the synagogue),<sup>3</sup> the Piedmontese rabbi and co-editor of the monthly *L’Educatore Israelita*, Esdra Pontremoli (Ivrea 1818-Vercelli 1888), illustrated the historical background of Jewish music. For him, the music of the Jews was an *Urmusik*, archetypical of all other musical expressions, and its ancient *grandeur* was still audible in present times, in the “music of the Orient.” Even though life in the Diaspora had eroded its authenticity and caused it to

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music manuscript sources from Livorno in the Birnbaum Collection: Musica sacra di Livorno ridotta da Moise Ventura (Mus. Add. 6); Shabbat. Musica sacra ridotta in chiave di Violino da Ernesto Ventura (Mus. Add. 7); Shirim le-y[amim] n[oraim] u-ley[om] t[ov]. Canti Sacri per i Giorni Penitenziali e Festivi raccolti da Ernesto Ventura (Mus. Add. 8); see Edwin Seroussi, “Livorno: A Crossroads in the History of Sephardic Religious Music,” in Elliot Horowitz—Moises Orfali (eds.), *The Mediterranean and the Jews: Society, Culture and Economy in Early Modern Times* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press), 2002:138-9.

3 On the use of the organ in Italian synagogues, see Meir Benayahu, “Da’at hakhmei italyah al ha-n’ginah b’ugav ba-t’fillah” [Italian rabbinical opinions on the playing of the organ in prayer], *Asufot. Annual for Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem), I (5747/1987-88): 265-318 (abbreviated version in *Et-mol*, XIII/1988: 14-16).

imitate local non-Jewish customs, the oriental flavor of synagogue song was still audible in some instances:

At a time when all the peoples of Europe did not yet have a sacred music, when the so called *canto fermo* was yet to be acquired by the ruling churches, we, aware of our ancestral excellence in song, already had in our temples both monophonic and choral singing. This music was appropriate to the times and the temples, subdued, grave, often somber, and one can find in it a reflection of what today can still be heard throughout the Orient, which our Italian ears cannot savor, but to Oriental ears it carries the same power that the *Ranz des Vaches* has to the Swiss. Little by little, though, this music started wearing the colors of the countries in which it was sung, and all over Germany it kept the learned and deep seriousness of the German mind, and in Italy it did not bear the influence of the Italian cheerfulness, but rather of the long and repeated persecutions, and in Spain it runs lively, full of sentiment and cheerfulness, and carries the traces of the grandeur of our Nation, of a more advanced civilization, of a people that is more portentous [than the others] because of its social condition, of a climate as lively as that of the Orient, and if not warmer, certainly more full of life, more free, and younger.<sup>4</sup>

In Rabbi Pontremoli's musical imagination (and philosophy of music) the "Orient" and its remote sounds were not only audible in the Ottoman lands (the inner reference to *makamat*, the modes of Arabic music, is quite clear in the passage quoted above), and in (Western) Sephardic music in general, but also in Italian Jewish music, which according to him had suffered the

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4 Esdra Pontremoli, "La musica istromentale e il culto", *L'Educatore Israelita*, VII/1859: 71-72: "Ma mentre i popoli tutti d'Europa non avevano ancora una musica sacra, mentre il così detto canto fermo non era ancor accolto nelle chiese regnanti, noi memori dell'antica nostra eccellenza nel canto, noi avevamo già nei nostri tempi, e i canti ad una voce sola, e i canti corali. Era musica qual s'addiceva ai tempi ed ai templi, sommessa, grave, per lo più mesta, ti ci trovi un riflesso della musica quale s'ode ancor oggidì in tutto l'Oriente, i nostri orecchi Italiani non la sanno gustare: ma per gli orientali ha tale potenza quanto il Ranz des-Vaches per gli Svizzeri. A poco, a poco però quella musica vestì il colorito dei paesi in cui si cantava, e in tutta l'Allemagna serbò quella gravità studiata e profonda propria dell'ingegno Tedesco, enell'Italia non si risentì del brio Italiano, bensì delle lunghe e ripetute persecuzioni, ma nelle Spagne corre vispa, piena di sentimento e di brio, e ti accenna alla grandezza della nostra Nazione, ad una civiltà più avanzata, ad un popolo più pomposo per social condizione, ad un clima al pari vivace dell'Oriente, e se non più caldo, un paese più vegeto, più libero, più giovane." (The reference to the Swiss *ranz des vaches* is taken from the works of Rossini and Meyerbeer, whose friendship was a much celebrated case of positive Jewish-Christian relations).

least influence from the neighboring environment because of segregation in the ghettos. Thus, traces of this music were still present in the older layers of the Italian tradition, which were therefore worthy of safekeeping. But, which “Italian tradition”?

A relatively easy case of “Orientalism,” and thus an excellent field for our ethnomusicological investigation, was presented by the Spanish-Portuguese tradition of Livorno. In the 1880s, the Florentine violinist virtuoso Federico Consolo (Florence 1841-1906)—son of the secretary of the Florence Jewish Community, who in 1884 abandoned a successful performing career because of an arm injury—began exploring Jewish music as a form of Orientalism, both as composer and as an ethnographer. In 1882, Consolo presented his new composition, *Fantasia orientale* (published by Ricordi in 1940)—a suite with evoking titles such as “Meeting of Arabs,” “Invocation and Prayer,” and “Final Dance”—to the Orchestral Society of Florence. The piece, introduced as an example of “Biblical music,” featured the *shofar* as part of the orchestra.

Ten years later, Consolo succeeded in publishing his major work, *Sefer shire yisrael—Libro dei canti di Israele—Antichi canti liturgici del rito degli ebrei spagnoli* (Florence, Tipografia Bratti & C., 1892). The musical content of this important volume (the only contemporary Italian source appearing in Idelsohn’s *Thesaurus*) has been described by Edwin Seroussi (2002), who also researched the background of Consolo’s informant, Cantor Moisè Ventura of Livorno. Seroussi notes how the music transcribed by Consolo is representative of both the Portuguese synagogue tradition (as found in Amsterdam, London, Paris and Hamburg), and of a host of Italian, Eastern Sephardic and Moroccan traditions, and that it also includes oral versions of art music compositions.

In the mind of its author, and of the academic and rabbinical authorities who endorsed the publication, this repertoire was indeed the most authentic available in Italy, epitomizing all the other Italian traditions, including those of the Italian and Ashkenazic communities. The preface to the collection, written by David Castelli (Livorno 1836 - Florence 1901), professor of Hebrew at the Royal Institute of Florence (and an alumnus of the Livornese Rabbinical School), took the debate on Orientalism and the unification of all Jewish rituals to a new level:

...In the synagogue, the Jews sing their prayers and different parts of the Old Testament. Who is the author, or who are the authors, of this music?... During the last decades... imitating other faiths, [they] had certain Psalms or hymns from their ritual set to music by this or that professional musician. [Unlike the newer compositions for the synagogue, these] songs,

of which the musical author remains unknown, [are] repeated from time immemorial from generation to generation... In a few more generations, will there still be among the Jews those who know how to repeat these religious songs entrusted until now only to memory? We do not know, and we do not wish to prophesize. Instead, we can state what is currently happening: the number of those who know how to repeat these songs according to the tradition is decreasing each day. It is thus important to save Jewish religious music from the danger of being lost. This truly useful task, which is important both for the arts and for history, has been overseen by Maestro Federico Consolo, who collected... the recitatives and the melodies of the Spanish Jewish ritual of the Jewish Community of Livorno, heard through the living voice [*viva voce*] of the first cantor of that Temple, Mr. Ventura.... The ritual of Livorno was preferred [to others], as one can say that the musical tradition of the Jewish Spanish rite was preserved here better than elsewhere. Consolo's work is the result of long years of study and meditation... As far as its historical importance is concerned, prominent musicians have put forth a very reasonable doubt: is this music truly ancient, truly traditional? What are the proofs, so to speak, of its nobility, of its ancient origins? Maestro Consolo studied the way in which these doubts can be addressed, and he believes that he found the solution in the relationship between the traditional Jewish songs and [the] *Taamim* [sic], or accents... Consolo preferred the rite of the Spanish Jews in the Synagogue of Livorno, as it is more varied than the chants of the Italian rite.

Castelli's words display a whole new character, which possibly appears here for the first time in this debate. The interest in the oral tradition expressed in his text is no longer just that of canonizing the past by offering only one version to the future generations (Della Torre), or of celebrating a musically defined Jewish "national" identity (Pontremoli). It is also that of creating a process that can ensure the future, the "life," or true tradition against the principal "danger" of modernity: oblivion. A key expression used here—*dalla viva voce*, or "from the living voice," [of the surviving informants]—belongs to a rhetoric that is strikingly similar to that of 20th-century cultural revivals.<sup>5</sup>

Around the time of the publication of Consolo's collection, several Italian Jewish musicians began transcribing the traditional melodies of the synagogues of their hometowns. Local manuscript collections were gathered in Piedmont (Alessandria and Casale Monferrato), in Gorizia, and in Rome. Only a few collections remained after the Holocaust, and are currently preserved in Italian and Israeli archival collections. Compared to what we know

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5 Cf. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Sounds of Sensibility," in *Judaism* 185 (Winter 1998): 52-54.

of these early researchers, Consolo's trajectory is somehow anomalous, as it is that of a successful music professional who "chose" to apply his expertise to a selected tradition, which was not that of his hometown. This, too, is a trait that recalls 20th-century revivalism.

The 19th-century sources examined above, albeit not directly connected to Ladino, constitute the cultural background that allowed for the revival of Ladino song to take place in Italy during the 20th century. Ladino did not really exist as a spoken language among Livornese Jews, who instead used Portuguese in their administrative documents and *badjito* as a vernacular, but also a *lingua franca* in commercial transactions. However, a few Ladino songs from Livorno are found in the oral repertoire of the community, as recorded in the 1950s by Leo Levi, alongside other Jewish songs, in Judeo-Italian, *badjito* and *lingua franca*.

From what I could understand, their persistence into the 20th century was most likely due to the ethnographic work of Guido Bedarida (Ancona 1900—Livorno 1962), and to the short-lived revival movement he generated in Livorno during the 1920s. Like Consolo, Bedarida was not a native of Livorno. His interest for the local tradition was based upon a similar quest for antiquity, authenticity and, ultimately, "rootedness," which Livornese Jewish culture still seemed to offer to the researcher before the Second World War (Bedarida 1956). His activity as communal activist (and as a Zionist), which aimed at resurrecting Ladino texts found in the collection of the community by having them performed by community members at social and religious gatherings, impacted the local oral tradition.

Bedarida found Ladino and *lingua franca* texts in 18th-century repertoires such as *Sova' semahot o sea el compendio de la alegria estampado a gloria de mordekhai yair mellul* (Livorno 1782), *Ora ve-simhah: quntras lepurim* by Mosheh Aharon Rahamim Piazza (Livorno 1786), and *Shalme simhah* by M. Y. Mellul (a supplement to *Sova' semahot* published in 1792). He then adapted these texts to melodies sung in the synagogue of Livorno. In some cases, Bedarida published these adaptations. One of these publications is *Un intermezzo di canzoni antiche da ascoltarsi quand'è Purim...—the script of "An Intermezzo of ancient songs to be listened to when it is Purim,' Composed by Eliezer ben David [pseudonym of Bedarida] for the merriment of the Distinguished Jews of our Nation, performed, sung and played by the Jewish Theater Company, on March 6, which is Shushan Purim in Livorno, MCMXVIII [1928] in the Hall of Via de' Lanzi."*<sup>6</sup>

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6 Un intermezzo di canzoni antiche da ascoltarsi quand'è Purim, Composto da Eliezer ben David. E ad allegrezza delli Sigg.ri Israeliti di questa nostra Nazione dalla

Published in the Italian Jewish studies journal, *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* as a *divertissement* (that even bears the marking, “Con licenza de’ Superiori,” as if it had been approved by the Censorship authority), the play became the way in which Ladino and other Jewish languages were resuscitated in modern day staged performances. In his brief preface, Bedarida related:

This *entremés*, or intermezzo in the Spanish custom, is written in Judeo-Livornese, the picturesque *badjito*, which is still alive today, and that mixes the Tuscan dialect with pure and corrupt words and sentences in Hebrew, and old Spanish and Portuguese nouns. The songs, which are partially included here, are all ancient. The ones that go back, I believe, to the 15th century, and that begin with *Ya se va la blanca nigra* [sic] and *Quiva quiera tomar consejo...*, were taken from the book by Ortega, *Los judios en Marruecos* [sic].<sup>7</sup> *Fate onore la bel Purim* is instead from Venice: I inserted the names of the tasty pastries baked in Livorno myself. Venetians and Livornese alike will certainly forgive me, a native of Ancona, for this contamination. The other songs (including the *Cantiga a la morisca* by Ishaak of Algier, which I decided to add in a complete version), which are for the most part unpublished, and some of which are still alive on the lips of our elders, are from Livorno, from the 18th century or before. They were suggested to me by the esteemed Rabbi Dr. Alfredo [Sabato] Toaff, whom I wish to thank once again.

All of the songs included in Bedarida’s play were recorded by Leo Levi, as performed by Elio Toaff (born 1915), the son of Alfredo, and later the Chief Rabbi of Rome (who welcomed Pope John Paul II into Rome’s synagogue in 1986). Five of the seven vernacular songs recorded by Levi are preceded by the Hebrew ones from which the melody was derived. The order in which the songs were taped in the recording session (which took place in Rome in 1954) is the same as the one in Bedarida’s publication. More than just a field recording, Levi’s session is the soundtrack of the 1920s revivalist play.<sup>8</sup>

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Compagnia del Teatro Ebraico recitato, cantato & suonato, addì 6 Marzo, ch’è Purim Sciuscian. In Livorno. M.CM.XXVIII. Nella Sala di Via de’ Lanzi. Con licenza de’ Superiori. Published in *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 3/1928: 271–302. (Via de’ Lanzi is a street in the city center of Livorno adjacent to the synagogue).

7 Manuel L. Ortega, *Los hebreos en Marruecos: Estudio histórico, político y social* (Madrid: Editorial Hispano Africana), 1919.

8 Order/Incipit of the songs: 1. *akh zeh hayom kiviti*—*Fate onore al bel purim*; 2. *adon hatsedakah*—*Es mitzvah de conbidar*; 3. *barekhu et adonai hamevorakh*—*Val viva, viva, nostro Burino, bevemo vino quanto poder*; 4. *Alevamos juntamente el gran Dio de Sion*; 5. *Ya se va la blanca niña*; 6. *shiharti et devirekh kumi ori ki va orekh*—*En estos dias de purim*; 7. *Kaddish (yitgadal veyitkadash)*—*ay a mi me llamaban hayyim chilibi*. [The copla, *ay a mi me llamaban...* appears as *Cantiga de Purim a la Levantina in Cantares y alevaciones... de Purim*, Livorno 1820].

Bedarida's revival, which took place at a time in which Jewish scholars began to show a systematic interest in the ethnography of Italian Jewry, was indeed short lived.<sup>9</sup> In 1938, the anti-Semitic laws put an end to Italian public Jewish life, and ethnographic research lost its field of investigation as Jews fled the country or were persecuted. While Bedarida continued to be an active figure within Italian Jewish life, the vital social and cultural context that had allowed his pre-War Sephardic revival to take place had vanished by 1945.

### **Music Examples: selections from Leo Levi's recordings of Elio Toaff.**

It took circa sixty years for Ladino songs to resurface within Italian Jewish culture. The new pioneers of this field are two women, Liliana Treves Alcalay and Miriam Meghnagi. Both Lybian-born, they have enjoyed a successful performing career since the late 1980s, and are considered leading authorities in the area of Jewish musical research in Italy.

The success of these performers is minimal when compared to that of another Sephardic Jew, Bulgarian-born Moni Ovadia (a native of Plodiv), who is one of the biggest stars of Italian music and theater since the mid-1990s. Ovadia, however, does not typically perform Ladino songs or other Sephardic-related genres, and has instead positioned himself as beacon of Yiddish song and Klezmer music.

What characterizes all of these performers is that their main source of inspiration is the international Jewish music revival. With the (marginal) exception of Meghnagi, they have not considered local musical sources, and instead draw on commercial recordings and printed publications from the United States and Israel to build their repertoires. Quite appropriately, the titles of their publications emphasize the themes of Diaspora and exile.

Liliana Treves Alcalay was born in Lybia to Italian Jewish parents, and moved to Italy after the Second World War. A Milanese homemaker, married to a man of Turkish origin, Treves Alcalay has authored several books, including three volumes called *Diaspora Songs* (1987-1987), and a recent book (with a CD insert) titled *Melodies of Exile: The historical and musical path of the Spanish and Marrano Jews* (2000, 213 pages, preface by Moni Ovadia). I will not talk much about Liliana, whom I know through family connections, except to say that she performs her repertoire in a "traditional/folk" style, accompanying herself with an acoustic guitar, and that her books are essentially a compilation of pre-existing sources (often in foreign languages), which are

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9 See the seminal article by Riccardo Bachi, "Ricerche folkloristiche e linguistiche degli Ebrei d'Italia," *Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, 2/1926: 24-29.

rarely acknowledged. Her publisher presents her online as someone who has “devoted herself to the research of the traditional songs of Diaspora communities, with the goal of preserving and propagating the ancient musical heritage of the Jewish people.”

Miriam Meghnagi, who recently performed at the University of Pennsylvania and at the Center for Jewish History in New York City, has contributed countless performances at home and abroad, one recording, and two entries in a very influential music encyclopedia. I met Miriam for the first time in 1985, when I was a student at the Milan Conservatory—taking my first steps in Jewish musical research—and she was beginning her performing career. Her album, *Shirat Miriam: Canto Esiliato—Songs in Exile* (which was recorded, quite appropriately, in Livorno in 1987),<sup>10</sup> is possibly the first CD of Jewish music produced in Italy. It includes fifteen tracks, among which are five Yiddish songs (among them, “Partizaner Lid “ and “Oy Dire Gelt,” after Ruth Rubin), three Ladino songs (“Morenika,” after Yehoram Gaon, “Los Bilbilikos Kantan,” and “Baruch Mordechai,” a *copla* for Purim), three Yemenite Jewish songs, one Hasidic and one Bukharan selection, and two Livornese songs.

The language of the CD liner notes, which give scant information on the sources of the selections, is very familiar to us: [Miriam Meghnagi], of Sephardic origins... has been conducting research on the Jewish ethnomusical heritage in archives and libraries for many years, uniting philological passion [with] the desire to rescue unpublished [and ancient] musical texts. Her vast repertoire touches on the entirety of Jewish and Mediterranean traditions, and is constantly enriched by fieldwork on orally transmitted music and texts, which would *otherwise fall into oblivion*. Meghnagi’s Livornese selections are equally familiar, as they are new versions (with guitar accompaniment) of two of the field recordings made by Leo Levi with Elio Toaff, and based on Bedarida’s work: a *Kaddish* (incipit *yitgadal v’yitkadash*) followed by a *copla* in Ladino, *Ay a mi me llamaban hayyim chilibi* and a *piyyut* for Purim, *Shiharti et devirech kumi ori ki va orech* (“I arrived early at Your sanctuary, for Your light had come”), followed by another *copla*, *En estos dos dias llamados el alegre purim* (“We call these two days ‘Joyous Purim’”).

Meghnagi’s liner notes do not credit sources. In their new incarnation, the two Livornese songs are presented as the result of new fieldwork, which unearthed these treasures of the Livornese tradition. In Meghnagi’s presentation, Livorno’s Italian-Sephardic tradition coexists with other Jewish musical traditions from the Jewish Diaspora/Exile: as a historical and archival finding,

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10 Issued in “Digital Natural Sound Recording” by Fonè (Italy), in February 1997.



## *Kaddish*

Livorno (Spanish-Portuguese)

Music: Traditional  
(Transcription, M. Meghnagi)

5 Yit - ga - dal\_\_\_ v' - yit-ka- dash\_\_\_ sh' - mei\_\_\_ rab - bah\_\_\_

8 b' - al - ma di - v' - ra\_\_\_ khir - u - tei\_\_\_ v' -yam - likh\_\_\_

mal - - - khu - - - - - tei.

## *Shiharti et devirekh*

Livorno (Spanish-Portuguese)

Music: Traditional  
(Transcription, M. Meghnagi)

shi - har - ti et d' - vi - rekh\_\_\_ ku - mi o - ri ki va - o - rekh\_\_\_

it is devoid of Jewish “life,” a life posthumously infused into it by the revivalist/researcher/performer.

### **Conclusion**

The foregoing briefly reviewed how Italian Jewish cultural identity has evolved since the 19th century, by examining its relationship to the Sephardic past. Originally seen as a usable musical practice that could infuse life into a tradition otherwise tarnished by the historical experience of the ghettos, Sephardic music became the source of a defined “Oriental” cultural identity. Its role later evolved, especially with Consolo’s work, into that of a much-needed cultural component, necessary in keeping the past “alive.” Under Bedarida’s direction, the living traditions of Livornese Jewry subsequently became the *locus* of a new musical culture based on old (and manipulated) sources. Finally, as seen through Meghnagi’s work, the Sephardic musical culture that reached the end of the 20th century is no longer part of a living culture. Instead, it is a distant and mysterious object, and the cultural identity of Italian Jews is currently defined as focused upon bringing this distant past back to life. After the Holocaust, the special aura that surrounds Jewish music is no longer due to its

purported Oriental character, but because it is a byproduct of survival. The mere existence of a musical document, and not its provenance, has become the reason why it is invaluable, and worthy of care and preservation. In turn, preservation has become the paramount task performed by contemporary Italian Jews.

*Francesco Spagnolo holds Doctoral degrees in Musicology and Philosophy from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the Università degli Studi in Milan, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Music from the Milan Conservatory. He was Executive Director of the American Sephardi Federation in New York, and is currently Curator and Head of Research at the Judah L. Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at the Bancroft Library, University of California in Berkeley. Dr. Spagnolo has authored over 50 articles, and hosted/produced innumerable radio, television and stage programs on three continents. This article is adapted from a paper he delivered before the **Association for Jewish Studies in Toronto, 2007.***



## Ever Since Babylon: Granada

*By Samuel Rosenbaum*

Ever since Babylon  
Jews have lived  
In one Diaspora after another.

Scattered over the  
Babylonian, Greek and Roman empires  
Galut became  
the bitter reality of the Jews.

They wept when they remembered Zion.  
Memories of their ancient homeland and the  
Holy Temple,  
stirred their deepest sentiments  
and filled their most poignant prayers.

With the same steadfastness that  
they manifested in their faith,  
they became the most skilled physicians,  
the ablest financiers and the most profound philosophers.

Their thirst for knowing and understanding the  
Universe  
led them to become  
learned astronomers, map makers and navigators;  
and their undying attachment

to the word  
the book  
and the law  
made them the chief interpreters  
and transmitters of  
Jewish and Arabic learning and culture  
to all of Europe.

During the thousand year Hispano-Judaic  
epoch, despite expulsions, massacres  
misery and degradation  
Spain was probably the  
safest place for Jews in all of Europe.

Under Moorish rule  
Jews rose to high places  
in the palaces of Spanish royalty and  
produced  
a brilliant chain  
of Hebrew poets, philosophers  
grammarians, translators, scientists and  
statesmen.

Even Jewish-Moorish architecture  
flourished.  
Some of the most beautiful churches in Spain  
are testimony to the days  
when they served as synagogues  
and resounded with the prayers  
of a proud and prosperous  
Jewish community.

With the Christian conquest of  
Moorish Spain,  
the sun began to set  
for the Jews.  
Thereafter, the struggle was to stay alive,  
to convert and live a dangerous lie, or to  
remain steadfast  
in their faith  
and go to the stake.

The blossoms of Jewish genius  
withered and died  
when Granada,  
the last Moorish stronghold,  
surrendered to Ferdinand and Isabella.  
The fate of the Sephardim  
was then sealed.

On January 2nd, 1492,  
Isabella and Ferdinand arrived in Granada  
to accept the Moorish surrender.  
As the cross and the royal flags  
fluttered over the towers of the Alhambra  
the knights of the royal court  
and the assembled throng sang  
"Te deum laudamus."

The Queen, completely overcome,  
fell to her knees and wept,  
vowing to dedicate herself  
to the task of cleansing Spain  
and its territories  
of all unconverted Moors and Jews

Three months to the day after the fall of Granada, Ferdinand and the Queen, urged on by the Grand Inquisitor, Tomas de Torquemada, assembled the court in the Alhambra palace. In addition to the nights and courtiers, the two most prominent Jewish advisors to the King and Queen, Don Isaac Abravanel and Don Abraham Señor, were invited.

A hush fell over the crowd as the King began to speak:  
“I shall come directly to the point!  
In conjunction with the Holy Office of the Inquisition,  
And after much thought and consultation,  
The Queen and I have decided  
To expel all Jews from our realm.”

No amount of pleading from Abravanel and Señor moved the royal pair. Finally, in a desperate attempt to avert the decree, Don Isaac spoke up once more:

Save us, O King! Why will you do this to us,  
your most devoted subjects?  
Why are we to be uprooted from this,  
our beloved country, and cast forth into an angry sea?  
Have we not upheld you in your darkest hour  
when you stood in the shadow of defeat by the Moors?

Have mercy upon us, Your Majesties.

We have done you no harm

And have been your  
Most faithful servants. Have mercy!  
Lay upon us every tribute: gold and silver  
And all that the children of Israel possess,  
These we shall willingly give to the fatherland.

The King and Queen remained silent, but as they glanced at one another it seemed that they might have been moved by Abravanel's plea. Seeing their indecision, Torquemada leaped forward. Tearing his crucifix from around his throat, he thrust it at Abravanel.

"Mercy? As you showed mercy to our Lord. so shall we show  
mercy to you."

Turning to the King and Queen he continued:

"Behold the crucified one whom Judas Iscariot sold for thirty pieces of silver. Your Majesties are about to sell him now for thirty thousand Jewish pieces of gold. Here he is, take him and sell him!"

"As for me, I shall resign my post. The guilt will not be on my head.  
You shall have to answer for your act to your God."

The bishop, transported by blind fury, his gaunt, lean figure shaking with emotion, stared at the royal pair for what seemed like an eternity. Then, throwing the crucifix at the Queen's feet, he stormed out of the room.

The court was stunned by the violent outburst. It was obvious that the rulers were torn between the offer of Abravanel and the threat of the Inquisitor.

Caught up by this sudden turn in events, the King adjourned court to reconsider the edict.

For the next two days the palace seethed with rumors while Ferdinand and Isabella argued: he for negotiations with the Jews, she for their complete and immediate expulsion.

On the third day the Court was reconvened. Again, the air was heavy with anticipation. A glance at the faces of the royal pair convinced Abravanel and Señor that Isabella had won and that the Jews, once again, had lost.

Finally, the King spoke:

“We have reached a decision! The edict of expulsion is irrevocable. It will stand!”

“Let the edict be read!”

*Don Ferdinand and Isabella, by the grace of God, King and Queen of Castile, Leon, Aragon and all the dominions of the crown, to the members of our royal house and court, to the Holy Orders and to all the people of the towns and cities of our territories, and to all Jews, men and women of whatever age:*

*Know you that in our dominions there are certain bad Christians that Judaize and commit apostasy against our holy Christian faith, much of it because of illicit communication between Jews and Christians.*



*The Jews secretly instruct Christian converts in their ceremonies and observances of their law. They circumcise their children and give them books of Jewish prayer and teaching, remind them of their fasts and festivals and teach them their history and their law.*

*Therefore, with the counsel and advice of the eminent men of our realm and persons knowledgeable of the tenets of our Supreme Council, and after much deliberation, it is agreed and resolved that Jews and Jewesses with their sons and daughters, their servants and their relatives, large and small, be ordered to leave our kingdom by the end of July, and that they dare not ever return to our land, not so much as to take one step on its soil.*

*Any Jew who does not comply with this edict, or any Christian who shall make any effort to protect any Jew from this edict will incur punishment by death and confiscation of all their belongings.*

*Given in this city of Granada on the thirty-first day of March in the year of our Lord 1492.*

*Signed: I, the King.*

*I, the Queen.*

*I, Juan de Colomoa, secretary of the King and Queen, which I have written by the order of their majesties.*

On the 2nd of August, 1492, which by a cruel caprice of fate corresponded to the 9th of Av on the Hebrew calendar, the day of mourning and fasting for the fall of Jerusalem, 300,000 Sephardic Jews were expelled from their native land.

Countless others, who would not forsake their faith, chose martyrdom and were burned at the stake. Even more chose to convert, vowing to continue practicing their faith in secret.

In having to decide between martyrdom and enforced conversion, they were presented with an impossible choice: fidelity to their faith and the *auto da fé*, or baptism and the cross. The Kingdom of Heaven or the hell of the Marrano.

The pious chose the rack and the flame; the others chose to live a lie in this life.

Who is to say which took the greater courage?

*The above is excerpted from an oratorio conceived and commissioned by Solomon Mendelson, past President and Program Chair of the Cantors Assembly, to commemorate the Quincentennial of Spanish Jewry's expulsion in 1492. Samuel Adler composed the music, and Samuel Rosenbaum—Hazzan at Rochester New York's Congregation Beth El, and Executive Vice-President of the Cantors Assembly—wrote the narration and lyrics. The work was premiered at **Congregation Beth Sholom of Long Beach, New York in 1992**, and has been performed continually in various North American cities, ever since.*



## Popular Tradition and Learned Knowledge: Sephardic and Ashkenazic Biblical Chant

By Hanoah Avenary

It is an old Jewish custom to read the Bible *b'kol u-vin'imah*—audibly and melodiously. Reading is governed by two basic principles: the division of the text into groups of words so as to bring out its approved meaning, and the expression of these word-groups in a meaningful way. Nowadays, every sentence of the Bible is clearly punctuated by the *ta'amei mikra* or written accents, while the related musical motifs are still passed down by oral tradition. The accents familiar to us from our printed Bibles are known as the “Tiberian Accents,” for they were fixed by the scholars of Tiberias in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and from there spread to communities throughout the world. Thus biblical cantillation is generally considered to be the musical rendering of the Tiberian system of accents.

However, there are many discrepancies and even contradictions between written accents and living melodic recitation. There is sometimes no relationship whatsoever between the written rules and their melodic interpretation.

The custom of “reading with chant” existed long before any attempt was made to reduce it to written signs or accents. It is already mentioned in the Talmud as an old and well-established usage; the teachers of the Mishnah made cantillation the official manner of reading the Bible. The division of the text into clauses was by then an established oral tradition, called *pisuk t'amim*. But up to the end of the Talmudic period (about the year 500 CE), there are no indications that written signs or accents of any kinds were used. The traditional *pisuk t'amim* was taught with the help of signs made by hand-and-finger movements (Cheironomy). This pre-literary art of reading was deeply rooted in the scrolls and in the public's affection.

In the latter half of the first millennium, scholars of the Masorah (accepted biblical tradition) began to record textual divisions for the purpose of cantillation. The Masoretic work involved an increasingly meticulous analysis of the wording, adding new degrees and sub-degrees of accents, until the whole text was interwoven with a network of reading-and-chanting signs.

The culminating development was the accent system of Aaron ben Asher in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. He succeeded in making his Tiberian system the dominant code; but his prescriptions clashed with the older, firmly established Bible chant. This historical friction—and not mere accident—was responsible for the contradictions existing between written accents and living cantillation.

As early as 600 years ago, and repeatedly down to our time, differences of this nature have been recorded in detail.

Shimon ben Tsemah Duran, exiled from Spain in 1391, described the biblical cantillation of the country of his birth. To summarize his detailed writings: Sephardic cantillation had only 16 musical motifs for 26 Tiberian accents. So, for example, the whole class of “Joining Accents” was represented by only one motif. A similar picture was later drawn by Kalonymos ben David, about 1500, who documented that the Sephardim in Italy had no more than six melodic phrases for 19 different accents. At about the same time, Elia Levita stated that the Ashkenazim allotted an individual musical motif to every accent, while the Sephardim made no distinction between the “joiners” and omitted many other types of accents.

This difference between Ashkenazic and Sephardic cantillation is proved by their musical notations from the year 1500 to 1700. In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Johann Reuchlin and Sebastian Muenster (two Humanists and students of the Hebrew language) respectively notated 23 and 25 musical motifs for 29 accents in Ashkenazic Pentateuch cantillation. As a contrast to this melodic richness, we learn from Bartollocius that the Bible chant of the Sephardim and Italian Jews of about 1693 had only from three to eight separate motifs. David de Pina recorded in 1699 that the Amsterdam Sephardim used only a few more.

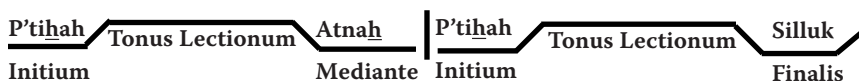
Despite its restrictive tendency in the audible interpretation of the written accents, Sephardic cantillation distinguished between some of the accents according to their position in the verse—even when this is not required by the Tiberian system. These special Sephardic features appear to be characteristics of the former Babylonian system of accentuation. The Ashkenazim, on the other hand, followed the prescriptions of Ben Asher’s system faithfully.


A glance at the history of the Masorah will provide the explanation. The Tiberian system pretended to render obsolete any other system of accentuation which had existed before. However, the memory of the earlier Bible melodies was never given up by the people. The remnants of ancient usages of chant can be related to the different Masoretic schools and their areas of influence. Jewish communities of Persia, Yemen, North Africa and Spain received


instruction from emissaries of the Babylonian school. As a consequence, they preserved the habits of Babylonian reading and absorbed the Tiberian notation only superficially. The Ashkenazic communities, on the other hand, always received their teachers, books and instruction from the Land of Israel. Through having first-hand instruction in the Tiberian manner of reading the Bible, they accepted Ben Asher's authority and rendered his system faithfully in singing. In Babylonia itself, learning declined over the course of time; the Bible chant in this region succumbed steadily to the influence of the Tiberian sages and reflected their accent-groups in an exemplary fashion.


Musical analysis of traditional Bible melodies will lead us to the very dawn of Jewish and Christian liturgical cantillation. In the Bible chant of the various Jewish communities, two basic principles of musical construction may be discerned.


1) The first type of cantillation follows the syntactic structure of the verse closely. Most biblical verses are composed of *two halves with a caesura between them*, and the melody is built according to the same pattern. The voice ascends to a "reading note," remains at this pitch, and closes the first half-verse—or "hemistich" (from the Greek, pronounced *hemmy-stick*)—with a cadence; it ascends again to a reading-note, and closes the verse with another cadence. This style may be called "Hemistich Chant." It makes use of only three musical cadences: *P'tihah*, *Atnah*, *Silluk*—or, to anticipate the terms of the ecclesiastical *Lectio* or Scripture reading—*Initium*, *Mediante*, *Finalis*. That is because the Hemistich Chant of Hebrew Bible cantillation has a clear stylistic parallel in the Roman Catholic Church. There, the Latin Psalms and scriptural *Lectiones* are read in a very similar manner. The three cadences: *Initium*, *Mediante* and *Finalis*—are equivalent to the Jewish *P'tihah*, *Atnah* and *Silluk*. The reading-note (*tav ha-k'riah* in modern Hebrew terminology) is called *Tonus Lectionum* in ecclesiastical parlance, and would be notated musically as a series of repeated notes or by a single elongated whole-note with an upright bar on either side. The Hemistich-Chant style is very common in reading the Psalms and the other two poetical books—Job and Proverbs; yet even the Pentateuch and Prophets are chanted in this manner by the Jews of Persia, Yemen and the Sephardim of Amsterdam (**Example 1**).




1 Ps. 81: 1 Iran  
  
 Har-ni-nu l'ei-lo-him u-zei - nu, ha-ri - u lei lo-hei ya - a - kov.

2 Ps. 1: 2 Ashkenaz  
  
 Ki im b'-to-rat a-do-nai hef-tso u - v'-to-ra-to yeh-geh yo-mam va - lai lah.

3 Ps. 19: 2 Morocco  
  
 Ha-sha-ma-yim m-sap-rim k'-vod eil, u-ma-a-sei ya-dav mag-gid ha - ra-ki - a.

4 Ps. 19: 2 Gregorian  
  
 Coe-li enarrant gloriam De-i, et opera manuum eius annunciat firmamen tum.

5 Gen. 1. 1 Italy, ca. 1650  
  
 B'-rei-shit ba-ra e-lo him et ha-sha-ma - yim v'-et ha - a - rets.

**Example 1. The Sephardic Hemistich-Chant style of cantillation.**

2) The second type of cantillation is composed of numerous *groups of notes* which, like the links of a chain, succeed each other to form a true melody. This style may be called “Grouped-Note Chant.” Any of these note-groups corresponds to one of the six usual combinations—or even parts of combinations—of “accents” (*tamim* or Yiddish: *trop*);, depending on the number of words in the biblical phrase. Each combination is named after its final *trope* (in bold):

1. *merkha—tipp’ha—merkha—sof-pasuk*,
2. *merkha—tipp’ha—munah—etnahta*,
3. *mahpakh—pashta—munah—katon*,
4. *munah—zarka—munah—segol*,
5. *munah l’garmei—munah—r’vi’a*,
6. *darga—merkha—t’vir*.

This type of cantillation is found in the majority of Jewish communities; it may be regarded as the congenial reproduction of the characteristic Tiberian

“fellowships” of accents (**Example 2**; with grouped notes separated by broken bar-lines, and hemistichs separated by solid bar-lines).

Genesis 1: 2 Ashkenaz

V' -ha - a - - rets hai - tah\_ to-hu va-vo - hu v' ho-shekh al p'-nei t'-hom, \_

2 Scale

v' ru-ah e-lo-him\_ m' ra-he- fet al p'-nei ha-ma-yim

3 Iraq

Mo-sheh av di\_ meit\_ v'-a-tah\_ kum\_ a-vor\_ et ha-yar-dein ha - zeh\_

4

a - tah v' - khol ha-am haz-zeh el ha - a - - rets a - sher\_ a - no - khi\_

5

no - tein\_ la-hem liv - nei yis - ra - el.

**Example 2. Grouped-Note Chant style of cantillation found in most communities.**

But why, one asks, are there two completely different styles (Hemistich and Grouped-Note) of Bible cantillation, despite the unifying written accents of Ben Asher? There is, again, an historical background to this divergence between literal system and musical tradition.

The complete parallelism of the Hebrew Hemistich Chant and the Ecclesiastical *Lectio* points to their origin in the same period and to a similar cultural setting. The early date of Jewish Hemistich chant can also be proved by another fact: the written accent-sign for *Atnah* (the half-cadence of this system) is identical in all Hebrew accent systems. It consists of an upward-pointing angle in the Babylonian, Palestinian and Tiberian accentuation. So it appears to have been the most ancient of all signs. It might once have been the only one, for its use alone is sufficient to punctuate a text for simple Hemistich chanting. All these features indicate a very early stylistic model. This may well have been the method of chanting the primitive *pisuk tamim* of the Talmudic period, and may have been borrowed by the early Church

at the same time. The faithful memory of the Jewish people has preserved it right until today by purely oral tradition.

The above-mentioned phenomena demonstrate the autonomy of Bible cantillation as both a learned and popular musical tradition.

*Hanoch Avenary served as a faculty member of Tel-Aviv University's Musicology Department from 1966 until his death in 1994. He studied Musicology at the universities of Leipzig, Munich, Frankfurt, and Königsburg, where he received his PhD in 1931. He was co-editor of *Orbis Musicae*, co-founder of *Hebrew Quarterly for Music*, President of the Israel Musicological Society, and Music Editor for the *Encyclopedia Judaica*. This article is adapted from a paper that Professor Avenary read at the **Second World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, 1957.***





## A Serbian Weekend set to a Sephardic Beat

June 27, 2009

Several years ago I had the unusual honor of being invited by the Chief Rabbi of Serbia, Isak Asiel (who some cantorial colleagues may know from Neve Schechter), to the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Synagogue Sukkat Shalom in Belgrade. Rabbi Kotel Da-Don of Zagreb, Croatia, was also there with his family. I left early Friday morning and returned late Monday night.

Sukkat Shalom is the only remaining synagogue in Belgrade, 90% of whose Jews were murdered in the Shoah. The synagogue survived only because it was used as a warehouse, the working ladies remained upstairs while the gentlemen clients used the sanctuary as one large drinking bar. The building stood empty and dilapidated until 2001, when Rabbi Asiel began to renovate it. There are now a few apartments upstairs, and a kitchen and small kosher restaurant in the basement. The rabbi serves as shochet for all of Serbia and some of its neighboring countries (he told me the only thing he doesn't do is *milah*). The synagogue had been Ashkenazi before the War, but is now Sephardi. Rabbi Asiel recently translated the Sephardic Siddur into Serbian, and Rabbi Da-Don has just brought out a Croatian edition of the Haggadah.

Today, about 2,000 Jews live in Belgrade, a city of two million. Aside from the synagogue, there is a Jewish Community Center with its own offices, library and a museum whose collection focuses on the history of Jews in the former Yugoslavia. Twelve streets in the old Jewish Quarter still bear Jewish names, and on one building is inscribed—in Hebrew and Serbian—*Oneg shabbat ug'milut chasadim*. A repairman was in the process of re-affixing a decorative Mogen David to its door as I passed by. The community enjoys good relations with the government and with other religious groups.

The two rabbis—together with two cantors—led services on Friday evening, Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon. They read Torah in Moroccan nusah and Haftarah in Egyptian nusah. During much of the *t'fillah*, two—and sometimes three—officiants stood together on the Bimah, singing together or taking turns singing, the melody passing from one to another even in the middle of a passage. Rabbi Asiel explained that the *makam* (mode) in which the liturgy is sung varies from week to week. His congregation uses half a dozen different *makamat*, with the cantor choosing one for Shaḥarit and one

for Musaf every Shabbat. Since each *makam* includes its own melodies, the congregation's repertoire covers half a dozen different sets of melodies for the Shabbat liturgy.

The Rabbi had organized a celebratory concert for Sunday evening, featuring Sephardic music from Israel, Sarajevo, Belgrade, Bulgaria, Greece, Morocco, Egypt and Turkey. It lasted two hours without an intermission, and almost all of the 850 seats in Kolarats Hall, one of the city's main concert venues, were occupied. Local musicians played the *oud* (short-necked, unfretted, double-stringed Iraqi/Syrian lute) violin and bass, with the *oud* player doubling as vocal soloist. The rabbi, who had studied for a year at the Sephardi cantorial school in Jerusalem, sang backup with one of the cantors. An Israeli musician played the *kanun* (Turkish zither), and two Indian musicians also participated. One played the entire concert on the *tabla* and other drums, while the other played two pieces on the *sitar* Indian long-necked zither.

The audience, which included many prominent Belgraders, represented a diverse cross-section of the city's population. Rabbi Asiel said that the concert was a first of its kind. In my estimation it had significantly enhanced the visibility and prestige of the Jewish community.

Daniel S. Katz

Weiden, Germany.

## **A Sephardic Community *S'lihot* Service in London** *September 11, 2012*

The Spanish & Portuguese Jews' Congregation of London has a long and distinguished history of choral music. Its first choir was instituted in the synagogue at Bevis Marks (consecrated 1701) in 1837, and quickly became an integral part of the Shabbat and Festival services. By the time its second synagogue was opened in Maida Vale (1897) the choir was considered so much a part of the fabric of services that purpose-built choir stalls were constructed behind the *teivah* (Ashkenazi: *bimah*) right in the centre of the synagogue, so that everyone in the congregation could see and hear the choir and its conductor.

Those more familiar with the Ashkenazic-style choral synagogue music might be surprised at the manner in which our choir participates in the services. All Sephardic traditions place a heavy emphasis on congregational

participation in the music-making, and the Spanish & Portuguese rite is no exception. At certain parts of the service—whether on weekdays or holy days—that which in Ashkenazi parlance might be termed the nusah actually consists of a congregational melody. It is not as though the hazzan has the option to substitute another melody of his own choosing, or to read through the text quickly instead; the appropriate melody will be sung at that point by the congregation.

Therefore, the main purpose of our choir is to support the congregational singing at those points, by setting a suitable key and tempo, leading the singing of the melodies, and adding suitable harmonization in order to beautify the service. Choral “showpieces” in the manner of Ashkenazi choirs are sung occasionally, but are very much the exception rather than the rule.

Readers will no doubt be aware of the declining state of “traditional” synagogue music in the UK and elsewhere, and how this may often be attributed to a lack of will and/or wherewithal on the part of synagogue officers and of congregations as a whole. However, I am pleased to say that the London Spanish & Portuguese congregation very much bucks this trend, and since being appointed its Director of Music in 2009, I have endeavoured to support the congregation’s high regard for its musical heritage both by the institution of new choral events and services, and by the re-institution of those events in which the choir historically participated, but which have been effectively chorally-defunct for some time now.

One recent example of a new initiative has been our institution of a choral midnight *S’lihot* service. While the congregation—in common with all Sephardim—recites *s’lihot* on weekday mornings throughout the month of Elul, the idea of having a musical “event” service for one of those days is something new to the London congregation, and perhaps there is an element of Ashkenazi conceit in the concept as well! Nonetheless, the wealth of beautiful traditional melodies we possess for the Penitential period well justifies the musical capital required for such a service, and in our case we have also tried to create a truly “pan-Sephardi” event by mixing the musical repertoires of Western and Eastern Sephardim, and inviting the participation of *hazzanim* from the Moroccan, Gibraltarian and Syrian/Yerushalmi traditions to sing alongside our own *hazzanim* and choir.

The first of these midnight *S’lihot* services was held in September 2011 at Lauderdale Road (our synagogue in Maida Vale), and was a great success, with over 300 congregants attending from across the Sephardi communities of London. The fruits of this labor may be heard at [www.spmusic.org](http://www.spmusic.org).

September 2012 witnessed a second successful midnight *S'lichot* service—this time held at Bevis Marks synagogue—and it is anticipated that this will now become an annual event.

The other significant new choral event which took place recently occurred on the morning of Tish'ah b'Av. This might perhaps strike readers as an incongruous occasion upon which to hold a musical event, until it is realized that the choir fulfilled on that day exactly the same function as it does for all other services—that of leading the congregation in the singing of the traditional melodies. In the case of the Fast of Av, the necessity for musical assistance in this regard was perhaps more urgent than on any other liturgical occasion, due to the attenuated state of the congregation's knowledge of the melodies for this day—ironically the one day of the year possessing perhaps a greater number of varied and beautiful melodies than any other. The fact that these melodies are so little-known can no doubt be attributed to the relatively poor attendance at synagogue on the Fast as compared to other more festive days, and this has been a progressive trend over the last few decades. This year, however, saw a much greater attendance than usual on the morning of the Fast of Av, and the congregation was guided in the singing of the *Kinot* by a small choir of volunteer congregants. In the merit of the communal lamentation in which we engaged on that day, we hope that this will be the last occasion upon which these melodies are sung in an atmosphere of mourning, and that next year we shall be singing other, more joyous melodies in Jerusalem on that date.

Meanwhile, on a happier note, I am pleased to report that the Tishrei Festival season this year (2012) will see the re-institution of the traditional choral participation in the service on the morning of Hoshana Rabbah, something not done in London for nearly two decades. When taken together with the large number of regular services in which the choir already participates—including every Shabbat and Festival morning-and-evening service—and other events such as the special annual services held on the anniversaries of the opening of each of our synagogues, the future for traditional Spanish & Portuguese synagogue music in London looks bright.

Eliot Alderman  
London, UK

## From the Yizkor Book of Staszow, Poland

December 27, 2012

Only a handful survived the initial German assault on the Jews of Staszow (pronounced *Stashov*) in June 1941 and the final ghetto liquidation a year later, among them the cantor Reb Yerachmiel, whose niggun for *Yom kippur koton* is given below. He made *aliyah* after the war and finished his days in Jerusalem at age 83. According to fellow survivor Moshe Rotenberg, who wrote the entry “Musicians, Cantors and Music Lovers” for Straszow’s Yizkor Book (Tel Aviv, 1962), there was also a Hasidic *ba’al t’filoh* in town, Yisroel Weitzman, known as Yisroelkele Khazn, whose multi-hued voice and rippling coloratura reminded locals of Zavel Kwartin. Worshipers appeared to be hypnotized by his davening, even during a ‘simple’ Weekday Shaharit, not to mention a *Hallel* on Festivals or Rosh Hodesh.

Shortly before the Shoah, Yisroelkele was no longer heard in Staszow’s Hasidic neighborhood, having been summoned by the Kuzmirer Rebbe, Rav Leybele of Zamostz, and then by a ‘higher Court’ in Cracow itself! The provincial capitol’s Hasidim were just as taken by him, and for good reason. He possessed not only a wonderfully sweet voice, but a number of admirable character traits: he would see to it that a sizeable group of his fellow Hasidim were brought along to Cracow on the High Holidays to form a choir of ‘tone-holders’ or *tzuhalters*. He was courteous to everyone he met, had a deep familiarity with the Talmud, impressive speaking prowess and great writing ability. Finally, he was inordinately good-looking, with a pair of coal- black eyes that captivated one and all. He perished along with the rest of Staszow’s Jewish life and civilization during that ill-fated year of Nazi ‘racial cleansing’.

Helen Winkler

Toronto

# Niggun to Introduce *Karuts mei-homer*

Words: Liturgy for  
*Yom Kippur Katan*  
(Eve of Rosh Hodesh)

Music: Reb Yerachmiel Khazn,  
Staszow, Poland

**Largo, and vary volume on repeats**

(Filler syllables of one's choice...)

**Moderato**



## The Uniqueness of Sephardic Prayer Melodies

*Gleaned from various sources*

History has shown that Sephardic traditions, particularly the unique liturgical melodies, do not disappear without a fight. The earliest ones in America were brought by Sephardim from their established communities in Amsterdam and London. These were immediately accepted by the first three Jewish congregations founded in this country: New York, Newport and Philadelphia. The New York and Philadelphia congregations, still thriving as active synagogues, continue to sing them to this day.

The Spanish/Portuguese rite has traditionally prohibited the changing of prayer melodies, which are considered sacred. Reverend A. Lopes Cardozo,<sup>1</sup> a former *hazzan* at New York's Shearith Israel, attests that it and its sister congregations in London, Curaçao, Surinam and Philadelphia have maintained "a common musical language with subtle regional variations," for over 350 years. At the service celebrating Shearith Israel's tercentenary in 1954, its rabbi, David de Sola Pool stated:

If [founders] Asser Levy and Abraham de Lucena of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, or Hazzan [who also functioned as Rabbi] Gershom Mendes Seixas of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, were to come back to our synagogue today, they would at once feel themselves at home. The services would sing out in familiar words and chants in our stately synagogue just as they did in their first little gatherings or in the cherished synagogue which was dedicated in 1730.

Many of the Sephardic melodies can be dated as "18<sup>th</sup> century" because of their innate style or because 19<sup>th</sup>-century transcriptions indicate they are "Traditional." Other melodies were added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century via Dutch settlements in Central and South America, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century via immigration from Syrian and later North African communities.

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1 A. Lopes Cardozo, *Sephardic Songs of Praise* (New York: Tara Publications), 1987: x.

Sephardic tunes generally show a great regard for text, especially the non-rhythmic ones, and their construction is hexatonic rather than octavic. “Climaxes” on the upper octave that we find in today’s Sephardic melodies are added by Ashkenazic arrangers, since Middle Eastern melos does not need climaxes. Absolute art (i.e., art for its own sake) is a Western development, whereas art in the Middle or Far East is subordinate to an idea or philosophy.<sup>2</sup> The *idée fixe* of Spanish-Portuguese Sephardim is set forth in Psalm 29:2: “Worship God in the beauty of holiness.” This is seen particularly in their treatment of Thanksgiving psalms (universally known as *Hallel*).

### Hallel tunes

Just before the Torah service, special prayers are recited on some half-dozen occasions during the year when Shabbat happens to coincide with Rosh Hodesh or any of the three Pilgrimage festivals, or when it falls on Hanukkah. This special liturgical section is named *Hallel* (praise) after the six Thanksgiving Psalms (113-118) that it encompasses. Expectations formerly ran high on such occasions, especially in the United States following World War II, when Ashkenazic cantors would outdo themselves with at least one ambitious setting of a Hallel Psalm text. What is more, some Modern Orthodox synagogues at that time would in fact encourage the assemblage to be seated in the midst of Hallel<sup>3</sup> which is always recited standing—whenever a cantor and choir embarked on one of those lengthy musical arrangements. This was evidently not intended as an isolated divergence from Orthodox worship practice, but to avoid the greater infraction of *tirha d’tsibbura* (“overburdening the congregation”).

More recently, as familiarity with the Sephardic *Hallel* repertoire increased, other prayer rites have been borrowing from it. For it is truly unique; its tunes at their effulgent best conveying a sense of serene and joyful well-being. True, the *niggunim* that Hasidim typically sing at festive gatherings might also lend themselves to performance in synagogues of other persuasions, but not as easily. If the tunes happen to be of the lively *simhah-niggun* variety—joyously sung and sometimes danced as well—they would require more time (and space) in which to generate a frenzied climax than the amount available in less demonstrative traditions. Alternatively, if highly introspective *dveikut-*

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2 Siegfried Landau, in a lecture on “Sephardic Music” at the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, October 11, 1956.

3 For example, Orthodox Temple Beth El of Borough Park, Brooklyn, NY, through the mid-1950s.



niggunim were featured, they would leave little impression on the current up-tempo world of modern Jewish worship. Synagogue practice always mirrors its larger environment—in our case a planet tilting precipitously toward Hard Rock—which cannot easily adjust its axis to show a softer underside. Sephardic *Hallel* melodies seem to orbit the equator of that cultural dilemma; as radiant hymns of praise they never go out of fashion.

Psalm 118:1, *Hodu ladonai* “Give thanks to the Lord for He is good” will highlight the clear-cut differences between Hasidic and Sephardic *Hallel* styles. When Hasidim stemming from Modzitz—near Lublin in Central Poland—sing the Psalm, they do so to a rather fast-paced tune. Swaying and dipping, they punctuate every break in the melody with interjections set to the filler syllables (*bi-dee bi-dee bom*) preferred by their particular dynasty. Hasidic *Hallel* niggunim thus tend toward the isotonic: explosions of energy without resistance (**Example 1**).<sup>4</sup>

**Allegro**

ya-ba bam bam, ya-ba bam, ho - du la-do - nai ki \_\_\_\_\_ tov, ki l' - o -

8 lam ki l' - o - lam ḥas - do; do. \_\_\_\_\_ ya-ba-ba bam bam bam, ya-ba-ba-ba bam;

14 yo-mar na yis - ra - el, ya - ba - ba - ba bam bam, ya - ba - ba - ba bam, yim - ru na yir - eo \_\_\_\_\_ a - do - nai,

18 ki l' - o - lam ḥas - do; ki l' - o - lam ḥas - do.

**Dal segno**  
**al Fine**      **Fine**

**Example 1.** “Isotonic” Modzitzer Hasidic setting of *Hodu ladonai* (Psalm 118:1).

By way of contrast, worshippers who follow the Amsterdam/London Sephardic *Minhag* render *Hodu ladonai* in a sustained and well-balanced manner

4 Melody from the Modzister dynasty, arr. H. Rothgarber, *Songs of the Chasidim*, Velvel Pasternak, ed. (New York: Tara Publications), 1968, no. 120.

best understood as isometric, an equality of opposing forces held in tension until released (**Example 2**).<sup>5</sup>

**Andante**

Ho - du la-do- nai ki tov ki l'-o-  
 lam has- do Yo - mar- na yis - ra -  
 el ki l'-o- lam has- do

**D.C al Fine**

**Example 2.** “Isometric” Amsterdam/London Sephardic setting of *Hodu ladonai*.

The sedate performance style of Sephardic Thanksgiving Psalms is grounded in the power of praise words to concretize what they proclaim. In studying Navajo Indian prayer, University of Colorado anthropologist Sam Gill determined that in order for such words to bear a potentially transcendent meaning, they must use what he terms performative language. Not only that, but they should be sung to a melody which wraps them in an aura of solemn grace, so that their message becomes charged with unmistakable meaning.<sup>6</sup> In this respect Sephardic *Hallel* recitation is extremely effective, especially when an utterance such as *va-anahnu n’-varekh yah* “we bless the Lord” (Psalm 115: 18) is immediately converted into the action it describes: *Halleluyah* “Praise the Lord!”

The group-singing style of Sephardic congregations at times resembles loosely measured chant, which allows worshippers the split second needed to make a connection between word and deed. Its lack of rigorously metered rhythm transposes it into a timeless, otherworldly dimension where syllables seem to float semi-detached from the words they form. At other times, during passages clearly defined by an imposed meter, the deliberate rate of enunciation is so tightly controlled that listeners experience the same net effect: they feel themselves disembodied, an aggregation of minute particles and waves flowing through the quantum soup that comprises our universe.

5 Melody from David Aaron de Sola, *Sephardi Melodies*, arr. Emanuel Aguilar (1857), Elias R. Jessurun, ed. (London: Oxford University Press), 1931, no. 43.

6 Sam Gill, *Sacred Words* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press), 1981.

The stateliness of Sephardic tunes may be because the synagogues where they originated were laid out with an eye toward accommodating an elaborately ceremonial ritual. Where Ashkenazim fill the synagogue floor space completely with seating, Sephardim used to leave an entire central area bare, flanked by facing rows of benches along either side. This allowed room for impressive processions bearing the Torah scroll twice every Shabbat, that proceeded from the Ark (*heikhal*) along the length of the bare central area before ascending the marble stairs of a reading platform (*teivah*) at the opposite end. The process repeated in reverse direction when the scroll was returned to the *teivah*. Everyone in both processions remained fully visible from every vantage point as they proceeded. Under those conditions worshippers—equally visible—had no choice but to remain in place, refrain from conversation and sing the sustained hymn tunes in stately and dignified fashion.<sup>7</sup>

Numerous contemporary synagogue goers have no patience for such ultra-protracted rendering of the processional tunes. Yet those who do submit to its discipline are rewarded with a sense of inner peace and fulfillment as through few other means. This might explain why melodies from the Sephardic repertoire are routinely played as processions accompanying non-Sephardic marriage rites. Family and friends who gather to celebrate nuptials are tied to one another by common descent and aspiration, and are in no hurry to relinquish even one joyous moment from the occasion. The sustained fervor of anthems like the Amsterdam/London *Hodu ladonai* gives voice to the wedding party's shared sense of group consciousness and helps transform the union of bride and groom into a galactic event.

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7 The open floor plan and stately processions are still in evidence at Congregation Mikveh Israel on Independence Mall in Philadelphia.

## ***K'riat ha-torah* in the Maroka'i Community of Brooklyn: Negotiating New Boundaries of Diaspora Identity**

by *Samuel R. Thomas*

The way cantillation is practiced in Brooklyn's Maroka'i community reflects the process of ethnicization that has been defining and communicating boundaries of a pan-Maroka'i ethnic identity. The codification of specific melodic motives is a result of a transnational impulse to define communal identity in diaspora. Audio recordings and the Internet, two important means for inscribing and sharing an otherwise oral tradition, have been catalysts for this ethnicization. However, what is most important to ethnicization is that community members reiterate these motives every day in synagogue practice, and transmit them to the next generation locally through tutoring and classes. Cantillation practices dominate the Maroka'i layer of diaspora consciousness.

Processional and *bimah* songs are two important additional types of musical expression during *K'riat ha-torah*. Processional songs are liturgical pieces. While the liturgical texts are the same as those used in most Sephardi communities, the melodies continue to resound as distinctively Maroka'i. *Bimah* songs are short songs, for which sometimes only an incipit is performed. The repertoire is wide-ranging and includes a number of modern compositions. Whereas the specifics of *t'amim* practice in the Maroka'i community emphasizes a pan-Maroka'i ethnic identity, a direct result of emigration and diaspora, *bimah* and processional songs are used to iterate a hybridized ethnic identity that emphasizes both Maroka'i and Sephardi layers of diaspora consciousness. The use of certain *bimah* songs also indicates the symbiotic relationship that exists between Brooklyn's Maroka'im and members of other local Sephardi communities. While the chief concern of this article is to show that the musical practices found in *K'riat ha-torah* in Brooklyn's Maroka'i community are vital for constructing a layered diaspora consciousness—and primarily Maroka'i and Sephardi layers—there is necessary contextual information on *K'riat ha-torah* that also shows a consciousness of the Yerushalmi (Levantine Sephardi) diaspora.

In Maroka'i synagogues, as soon as the *k'riah* begins, silence is essential. I have been struck by the meticulous nature of the practice of silence when visiting Maroka'i synagogues in France, Israel, and Morocco. Conversations or even whispers during the *k'riah* will prompt stern glances and outright silencing at Brooklyn's Netivot Israel synagogue. Chatting between recitations is considered acceptable, especially if the time is used to discuss the current parashah (portion). On my many visits to other synagogues, I have never observed the same attention to decorum during *k'riah* as in Maroka'i synagogues.

In the Teivah (*Aron ha-kodesh*) of Sephardi synagogues it is common to find an additional scroll containing haftarot (prophetic writings, selected excerpts from which are read after the Torah reading). This scroll is also handwritten on parchment, and its case is similar to but much smaller than a Torah case. Each Haftarah usually corresponds to a particular theme or moment in the Torah text read on that occasion. Whereas a Torah scroll is a necessity for a congregation, a haftarat scroll is a luxury, and many congregations simply rely on a printed book.



Figure 1: Iraqi Torah (CJA)



Figure 2: Torah scrolls at Netivot Israel synagogue

Most Sephardi congregations have a designated *ba'al k'riah*. His primary job is to chant the Torah audibly and according to the *minhag* (customary style) of the community. He must be intimately familiar with the Torah text, including anomalies in the pronunciation of certain words and versification.

He must also be familiar with the community's *minhagim* (customs) as they relate to melodic and linguistic approaches to cantillating the text. According to Amram Abesoror, the *ba'al k'riah* at Hesed l'Avraham synagogue, a Maroka'i *ba'al k'riah* can use *tsiltsulim* (ornamentations; embellishments) only if they add to the cantillation and do not distract the listener from the text or render the cantillation in an unfamiliar style (A. Abesoror, July 14, 2010). The purpose of a designated *ba'al k'riah* is to perform the Scripture reading clearly and in a manner familiar to community members.

There are occasions when someone besides a designated *ba'al k'riah* may perform Torah cantillation. In the event of a Bar Mitzvah, the honoree will usually perform part or all of the parashah as a rite of passage. On the anniversary of a Bar Mitzvah, that person may wish to cantillate an *aliyah* as a commemoration of this important life-cycle event. Similarly, if a distinguished person in the community joins the *ba'al k'riah* at the *bimah* and is learned in the text and cantillation, he may want to perform. At Netivot Israel synagogue, when visitors come to the community from other parts of the Maroka'i diaspora, they are often offered an opportunity to perform part of the *k'riah*. These guest performances confirm for community members that the cantillation tradition they use in Brooklyn is shared worldwide (R' G. Bouskila, May 10, 2008). In contrast, if a guest is unfamiliar with the community's style of cantillation, as in the case of a visitor from another Jewish ethnic community, he will usually demur from performing the *k'riah*. As Albert Abitbol responded when I asked him why a particularly distinguished individual did not perform his own *k'riah*, "he's a fuzz-fuzz [slang term for Ashkenazi]. He can't do it like us, so he just goes up [to the Torah] and listens" (p.c., A. Abitbol, May 30, 2009)<sup>1</sup>. Community members would not have been pleased with such a change to the cantillation. Furthermore, in the case of an Ashkenazi visitor to a Maroka'i synagogue, the pronunciation of the Hebrew would also be different. This would surely exacerbate the unfamiliar nature of such a *k'riah*. Thus, while there are occasions for others to perform *k'riah*, a designated *ba'al k'riah* remains preferable.

According to R' Ovadia Yosef, a leading voice in the contemporary Sephardi diaspora, Sephardim must make a special effort on *Shabbat zakhir* to hear the *k'riah* according to a Sephardi *minhag*. R' Yosef insists that because there is a special commandment from the Torah to remember the story of Amalek's attack on the Israelites in the desert (Devarim 25), not hearing this

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1 It was already clear to me that this individual was not Maroka'i because when he blessed the Torah, he sang the blessing in the Ashkenazi style. Therefore, when I saw that he did not perform his own *k'riah*, I asked Albert whether he was allowed to.

parashah in a familiar *k'riah* can be problematic. R' Eli Mansour, a popular rabbinic authority in Brooklyn's Sephardi community, adds that "every person should ensure to hear the reading from somebody who reads according to his own family tradition"<sup>2</sup>

Specifically addressing Sephardi students who attend Ashkenazi yeshivot, however, R' Yosef adds that "the Sephardi accent is the authentic one. Their [meaning: Ashkenazim] accent is wrong. They are stubborn and don't want to change."<sup>3</sup> This challenging statement by R' Yosef was made in support of R' Meir Mazuz, an important rabbinic figure in the Maroka'i diaspora community, who rebutted a claim made by a leading Ashkenazi rabbi in Israel that Sephardim do not pronounce God's name correctly. According to this Ashkenazi authority, Sephardim have been remiss for some time in failing to carry out the halakhah to hear *Parashat zakhor*. While insisting that any approach is acceptable, R' Mansour adds his voice to this linguistic argument by contending that the modern Sephardi pronunciation of God's name is more historically accurate. To support his argument, he references well-known Sephardi poets Shlomo Ibn Gabirol (the eleventh century) and Yehuda Halevi (the twelfth century):

Rabbi Shelomo Ibn Gabirol, in his rhyming *Az'harot* hymn, writes, "Anokhi adonai, k'ratikha b'sinai." He clearly intended for Hashem's [God's] Name to rhyme with "Sinai," even though the final vowel in Hashem's name is a *Kamats*, and the final vowel of "Sinai" is a *Patah*. This proves that he pronounced the two vowels identically. Similarly, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi wrote in the "Mi kamokha v'ein kamokha" hymn which we sing on *Shabbat Zakhor*, "Bimei horpi mi-kadmonai, bi dibeir ru'ah adonai." The word "mi-kadmonai"—which ends with the *Patah* sound—is used to rhyme with Hashem's name. Likewise, in the famous "Tsur mi-shelo" hymn which we sing on Shabbat, the word "emunai"—which ends with a Patah vowel—is used to rhyme with Hashem's name ("Tsur mi-shelo akhalnu bar'khu emunai, savanu v'hotarnu kidvar adonai"). These and other examples

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2 Eli Mansour, "Purim-Shabbat Zachor Pronunciation," Daily Halacha, March 18, 2011. *The Daily Halacha* is an email listserv generated and distributed by Syrian Rabbi Eli Mansour, covering a wide range of topics related to *halakhah* (Jewish law) and *minhag* (custom). He often cites rabbis with differing perspectives before explaining why a particular perspective is appropriate for the Sephardi community.

3 Alpert, Yair, "Chacham Ovadiah: Sefardim Should Make Their Own Parshas Zachor, Ashkenazi Havarah is Wrong," *Matzav.com*, March 18, 2011, <http://matzav.com/chacham-ovadiah-sefardim-should-make-their-own-parshas-zachor-ashkenazi-havarah-is-wrong-2>

clearly testify to an ancient Sephardic tradition to pronounce the *Kamats* as a *Patah*<sup>4</sup>.

While Shlomo Man<sup>5</sup> and the halakhic authorities he cites seem to be satisfied with correct grammatical pronunciation, privileging syntax above all else, these Sephardi rabbinic authorities clearly insist that followers also recognize the importance of aural elements in *k'riah*—Hebrew phonetics and cantillation. While it seems that their argument is related more to *minhag* than to halakhah, at some point *minhag* and halakhah can become intertwined and indistinguishable. Halakhah is often touted as more important than *minhag*, but in this case boundary building according to *minhag* is given greater importance as an expression of specific Jewish ethnicities, promoting a strong boundary between Sephardim and Ashkenazim.

A subsection of Man's chapter, "Changes in the Melody of *K'riat ha-torah*," focuses on parsing differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi *minhagim*, specifically with regard to melodic approaches to the cantillation of certain passages of Torah on special occasions. While Man does not make specific reference to "Sephardi," he uses the phrase, "There are places where..." and regularly references the *Mishnah b'rurah*—a text citing differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi *minhagim*—to suggest deviations from the normative (Ashkenazi) approach (Man 1991:155-158). Despite efforts to codify *halakhot* related to the *ba'al k'riah*, there is clearly room for *minhag* to prevail as an acceptable and indeed crucial marker of differences in Jewish ethnicity.

In most Sephardi synagogues, one *aliyah*—usually the sixth—is repeated to accommodate additional *olim*. If someone returned from a trip the previous week, he can come to the Torah for *birkhat ha-gomeil* (blessing for deliverance from danger).<sup>6</sup> In Sephardi synagogues it is common for more *aliyot* to be inserted as a means to honor more than the requisite number of individuals. For example, if visitors come to the synagogue for a special occasion (a Bar Mitzvah, a baby naming, or an upcoming wedding) or if someone needs to say *Birkhat ha-gomeil*, it is common to add *aliyot*. In Maroka'i synagogues the opening three verses of the sixth *aliyah* are reread; these three verses can serve for multiple *aliyot*, and be reread many times back-to-back. In other Sephardi synagogues the insertion of additional *aliyot* is carried out by further segmenting the second *aliyah*; instead of the *aliyah* for *levi* being completely

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4 *Ibid.*

5 *Zot ha-torah: Hilkhotei k'riat ha-torah* (Zikhron Ya'akov: K'far Binyamin), 1991.

6 *Birkhat ha-gomeil* is a blessing of thanks for safekeeping, recited on Shabbat upon one's safe return from a trip or any harrowing experience (such as surgery or an attack).



read as usual, it will be truncated to make room for additional *aliyot*, thus preventing any duplication of the text.

R' Eli Mansour explains that the number of *olim* from each category—Kohen/Levi, Yisrael—culminates with eight *aliyot* for each group by week's end.<sup>7</sup> On Shabbat, the Kohanim and Leviyim receive one *aliyah* each during the *K'riat ha-torah* of Shaḥarit (morning service) and Minḥah (afternoon service); Yisrael receives five *aliyot* during Shaḥarit and one during Minḥah. During Shaḥarit on Mondays and Thursdays, the only other occasion in a regular week for *K'riat ha-torah*, each group receives one *aliyah*. Thus Kohen/Levi and Yisrael each have eight *aliyot* per week. According to R' Mansour, this practice was instituted in Jewish tradition as a means to ensure equitable distribution among different segments of the community. He again blurs the line between custom and law, elevating *minhag* to the status of halakhah by emphasizing that customs like this should not be taken lightly:

These insights underscore the importance of the traditional customs we observe. Even after viewing just a small glimpse of some of the profundity underlying our customs, we immediately recognize their significance and deep meaning. We must therefore cherish them and carefully observe them, and never belittle them or consider their observance unimportant.<sup>8</sup>

Upon approaching the Torah, a Sephardi *oleh* will greet those already on the *bimah*: *Ha-shem imakhem* (May God be with you).<sup>9</sup> The congregation then responds: *Y'varekh'kha ha-shem* (May God bless you). In Maroka'i

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7 Eli Mansour, "Customs Observed by One Who is Called to the Torah," *Daily Halacha*, January 10, 2010.

8 *Ibid.*

9 This practice is thought to originate in the biblical *Book of Ruth*, where Boaz (Ruth's husband) exchanges these greetings with his field workers (Ruth 2:4). According to R' Eliyahu Biton, the Maroka'i *minhag* is to bow when saying this and to refrain from saying *Maranan* (Gentlemen) before the *Ba'al k'riah* begins (Biton, *Darkhei avoteinu*, 2006). In Sephardi synagogues in Brooklyn, I have never witnessed these details being followed. In Maroka'i synagogues, the practice of proclaiming *Ha-shem imakhem* is noticeably less popular, but congregants do respond when it is said. The absence of these practices in Brooklyn may be due to the time spent in Ashkenazic yeshivot by a great portion of the Maroka'i Jews, especially the rabbis, since the congregation follows the rabbi. *Ha-shem imakhem* is never said in Ashkenazi synagogues. In fact, while I was attending an Ashkenazi synagogue, a Yemenite acquaintance commented to me before he ascended the *bimah* for an *aliyah*, that the congregation would not know how to respond when he said *Ha-shem imakhem*, "because they are Ashkenazi!" He was correct. The congregation remained silent, save for two or three of us Sephardim in the room.

and other Sephardi synagogues, blessings pronounced by the *oleh* before and after the *k'riah* are often barely audible to congregants, even those sitting nearby.

During the entirety of *k'riah*, one or two individuals (not *olim*) stand on either side of the Torah, usually the *gabbai* (synagogue manager) and the *somekh* (assistant to cantor). In Sephardi synagogues only a *somekh* is necessary, though most Sephardi communities also have both. The *gabbai* is a layman caretaker of the synagogue whose duties generally include being a point person for all sorts of organizational activities in the community. However, for *K'riat ha-torah* he usually has the honor of picking the *olim*. Of course, on a special occasion such as a Bar Mitzvah or the Shabbat before a bridegroom's wedding, he will make sure that these individuals have *aliyot* first before doling out the remainder to others in the community. In Maroka'i synagogues, at the beginning of *K'riat ha-torah*, before the Torah is removed from the *aron*, it is customary for the *gabbai* to stand with the rabbi and auction *aliyot* to potential *olim* in exchange for promises of future charitable contributions. After each auction, the rabbi blesses the winner and implores the gathered to respond with a hearty *amen!* During each *aliyah*, the *gabbai* takes his place to the right of the Torah, following the text in a printed book.

A *somekh* (assister) stands to the left of the Torah. His role is more important to the *ba'al k'riah* than that of the *gabbai*. Following along in a printed book, he uses hand gestures to cue specific *t'amim*, signaling to the *ba'al k'riah* the different ways the text should be intoned. These cues signify grammatical clauses, the ending of verses, syllabic emphases, or certain types of melodic markings. He also provides correct Hebrew pronunciations when necessary. Today, with the ubiquity of printed copies of the Torah text, most congregants are eager to help out with this duty. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the *somekh* to help the *ba'al k'riah* perform his duty as well as possible.

In most Sephardi synagogues, when an *oleh* descends from his *aliyah* on the *bimah*, it is customary to shake or even kiss the rabbi's hand. Maroka'i rabbis are very careful not to allow congregants to actually kiss their hand, pulling it away just as they get close. It was explained to me that this is a gesture of humility, as the rabbi does not want to be treated like a haughty king (p.c., R' Gad Bouskila, May 10, 2008). Instead, the rabbi will place his hand on the congregant's head and give a short parting blessing.

## *T'amim*

My informants have always put the melodic motives in the foreground of any discussions about *t'amim*. In Brooklyn's Maroka'i community, the *t'amim* function as a prescriptive musical notation system for a clear set of melodic motives. As Abesror explains, "I've been exposed to all the styles—Ashkenazi, Mitsri (Egyptian), Yerushalmi (Levantine Sephardi). They are all beautiful. But we [Maroka'im] pronounce each *ta'am* more. We try to be very clear" (p.c., A. Abesror, July 14, 2010). The *t'amim* motives are conceptualized, taught and learned, and ultimately practiced as part of the process of ethnicization in the Maroka'i diaspora community. Performing the *t'amim* properly, by expressing the melodic motives in a clearly recognizable way, is of the utmost concern in the community. The musical expression given to each of the *t'amim* is the most important aspect of practice that distinguishes Maroka'im from many other Jewish ethnic groups, including other Sephardi groups.

Maroka'im divide the 24 *t'amim* symbols into 19 specific melodic motives. Certain combinations of *t'amim* are often presented together since they often appear together in the texts. However, sometimes these combinations are broken up or spread out over multiple words, in which case the melodic motives will be truncated or extended, respectively. In **Figure 3**, the name for each *ta'am* or common combination of *t'amim* appears as a transliteration of the Hebrew appears below the staff. The corresponding melodic motif appears in the staff notation. The figure ends with a tone row of six pitches. This cannot rightfully be considered a mode or hexatonic scale, as there is no centralizing of the tonic as a resolution point for the melodic motives. It is interesting to note that this tone row does not correspond to any particular *tab'* (*makam*-like mode) found in the Maroka'i classical Ala-Andalusit genre. However, a correlation can be drawn between how the two systems, *t'amim* tone row and Ala-Andalusit *tubū'* (plural), are practiced. Both systems skip certain notes or treat them as only passing tones as a common way of approaching melodic construction. In Figure 3, these passing tones are notated as filled-in note heads in the tone row at the bottom of the staff notation.

Zar - ka \_\_\_\_\_ Ma-kaf sho-far ho-leikh se-gol-ta Pa zeir Ga - dol \_\_\_\_\_

Tal - sha \_\_\_\_\_ Til - sha \_\_\_\_\_ Az-la gei- reish\_ Pa seik\_

R' - vi - a Sh'-nei gei-r'- shin \_\_\_\_\_

Dar ga \_\_\_\_\_ T'- vir \_\_\_\_\_ Ma-a-rikhTar-kha\_ At-nah Sho-far m' hu pakhKad- ma \_\_\_\_\_

T'-rei kad- min \_\_\_\_\_ Za-keif\_ ka-ton Za keif ga- dol \_\_\_\_\_ Shal she - let

T'-rei ta'a- mei \_\_\_\_\_ Y'-tiv Sof pa-suk

Figure 3: Amram Abesror, Recorded July 14, 2010

A number of specialist informants in the community have verified that these melodic motives are in fact accepted as standard in Maroka'i *t'amim* practice. Dan Bouskila, an excellent and very precise *ba'al k'riah* at Netivot Israel synagogue, R' Kakon, a professional hazzan, R' Avraham Amar of the Sephardic Home, and R' Gad Bouskila have all corroborated that Maroka'im use this repertoire of melodic motives for the *t'amim*.

### Motivic Development and Variations in Performance

Some variation is expected in the performance of *t'amim* motives. Abesror explains that one type of variation, *tsiltsul* (decoration, ornamentation), is intentionally applied to *t'amim*. If a *ba'al k'riah* expresses the *t'amim* motives clearly, then *tsiltsul* will be welcomed and appreciated as beautification, not distraction.

The basic *t'amim* are the basic [sic]. You can say a *Zarka* this way [motions a variation]. It is always the same. You can hear the *Zarka*. No matter how good the hazzan (cantor), you can still hear the *Zarka*... [sings two variations of *Zarka*] ... Some people [*ba'alei k'riah*] would go on, make it fancier. But you will always feel the *Zarka* (p.c., A. Abesror, July 14, 2010).

These melodic variations should not be viewed as corruptions of the core melodic motives, but rather as motivic developments. In R' Kakon's performance of the *t'amim* (Figure 4), it is apparent that little variation exists.

The figure shows a musical score for a performance of *t'amim*. It consists of seven staves of music, each with a line of Hebrew lyrics underneath. The music is written in a single melodic line on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are:
   
Staff 1: Zar - ka \_\_\_\_\_ Ma - kaf Sho - far ho - leikh\_ se - gol - ta
   
Staff 2: Pa - zeir Ga - dol \_\_\_\_\_ Tal - sha \_\_\_\_\_
   
Staff 3: Az - la Gei - reish Pa - seik\_ Ra - vi <sup>3</sup> - - - a
   
Staff 4: Sh'nei gei - r' - shin \_\_\_\_\_ Dar ga\_ T' - vir \_\_\_\_\_
   
Staff 5: Ma - a - rikh\_ tar - ha\_ At - nah Sho - far m' - hu - pakh\_ Kad - ma\_
   
Staff 6: T' - rei ka - d' - min\_ Za - keif\_ ka - ton Za - keif ga - dol\_
   
Staff 7: Y' - tiv Sof\_ pa suk

Figure 4: R' Michael Kakon, Recorded November 17, 2004

From a closer examination of the performance of three separate *t'amim* motives, by three different people in the community: *Zarka*, *Azla geireish*, and *Darga T'vir*, will become clear that the integrity of the melodic motives is still intact, and that *tsitsulim* such as the appoggiatura employed by R' Bouskila at the conclusion of *T'vir* should not be heard as disruptive to the overall clarity

of the motif. We can also see from **Figure 5** that the performers approach other melodic elements with a concern for keeping the motif clear. The melodic range of the respective motives, the intervallic relationships between tones, and the origination and resolution tones of each melodic motif (with the exception of leading tones or grace notes) are consistent. For example, in every performance of *Zarka*, the origination tone is E, and after the melody ascends, the resolution tone is B. Another important feature of Maroka'i *t'amim* practice is the approach to the *tab'*. As shown in figure 5, the tone G is skipped. Each of the performances in Figure 5, with *tsitsulim* or without, respects this approach to melodic construction. As Abesror emphasizes, no matter how a performer executes the *t'amim*, one must be able to clearly hear and identify the melodic motives. It should be apparent that there are indeed clear melodic motives in Maroka'i practice for each of the *t'amim*.

R. Avraham Amar                      Amram Abesror                      R. Gad Bouskila

Zar - ka                      Zar - ka                      Zar - ka

Az - la    gei - reish                      Az - la    ge - reish                      Az - la    gei - reish

Dar-ga    t'-vir                      Dar-ga    T'-vir                      Dar-ga    T'-vir

Figure 5: Three expositions of *t'amim*

Rhythmic variations are also bound to appear in different expositions of a motif. After all, most cantillation is performed without a regular pulse. For the *t'amim* motives to remain identifiable, the intra-rhythmic relationships between notes, and specifically the relationship between long and short durations, must be kept relatively intact. For instance, in *Darga T'vir*, the first half of the motif has notes of short duration, while the D, E, F# at the conclusion of the motif must be longer. A durational emphasis on certain notes is also used in characterizing certain *t'amim* motives. For example, in the *t'amim*-combination *Darga T'vir*, the D, E, and F# must be of equal duration. This is also the case for the *ta'am*: *Azla geireish*, where the duration of the last two notes of the motif: E and F#, must be the same and must be as long as, if not longer than, any preceding tones in the motif. Similarly, the duration of the E at the opening of the *Zarka* is as long as any note in the motif. Both R' Amar

and R' Bouskila repeat the E, adding a durational emphasis and making it the longest tone in the motif. Thus, even without an agreed upon or regulated pulse, rhythmic aspects still play an important role in these performances. Each performer has a clear approach to rhythm, so that the *t'amim* motives have consistency and are recognizable.

It is one thing to perform the *t'amim* motives as a learning exercise. However, the actuality of applying *t'amim* to the sacred texts returns us to the question of whether the integrity of a melodic motif can be respected during cantillation, which is very logogenic and where performance is governed by the need to adapt to changing text. The text exerts a general effect on the performance of motives because a variable number of syllables may need to be expressed during a given *ta'am*. Maroka'im resolve this problem by repeating one note to include all the syllables. For instance, in performing the opening verses of *Parashat va-yetsei* (*B'reishit* 28:10-32:3), R' Kakon sings two different passages that use a *m'habbeir* (conjunctive) *ta'am*: *Ma'arikh Tarhah atnah*. He demonstrates and explains how the melodic motif is kept intact despite variations in the number of notes. For example, to execute the word *mi-b'eir* (*ibid.* 28:10), Kakon repeats the D before resolving to the two E's. In another verse (*ibid.*, 28:12) with the *ta'am*: *Ma'arikh Tarhah atnah*, he repeats notes in two places, accommodating the phrase, *magia ha-shamaimah*. He insists, "See, this is still *Ma'arikh tarhah atnah*. You hear it is the same" (p.c., R' Michael Kakon, February 20, 2005). In both examples, the integrity of the melodic motif for *Ma'arikh Tarhah atnah* is respected by reiterating less crucial tones in the melodic motif (**Figure 6**).

*Ma'arikh Tarhah atnah*

Ma - a - rikh tar - ha At - nah

*B'reishit 28: 10*

Va - yei - tsei Ya'a - kov mi - b' - eir sha - va

*B'reishit 28: 12*

V' - ro - sho ma - gi - a ha - sha - mai - mah

Figure 6: R' Michael Kakon, Recorded February 20, 2005

Kakon also makes sure that the intra-rhythmic integrity and the melodic structure of the motif remains intact by bringing the important points in the melodic motif together with the points where the *t'amim* symbols appear in the text (Figure 7). Additionally, he treats the *t'amim* symbols like accents, adding an emphasis on these tones.

*B'reishit*  
28: 10 Ma - a - rikh tar - ha\_\_\_\_\_ At - nah

Va - yei - tsei\_\_ ya'a - kov mi - b' - eir sha - va

*B'reishit*  
28: 10 Sof pa - suk\_ *B'reishit*  
28: 11 Shofarm'hu-pakh kad - ma

va - yei-lekh ha - ra-nah va - ya - len sham\_\_

*B'reishit*  
28: 11 Ma - a - rikh\_\_\_\_\_

va - yish - kav\_\_\_\_\_

Figure 7: R' Michael Kakon, Recorded February 20, 2005

The correlation of melodic and rhythmic elements in each performer's exposition of the *t'amim* shows that clear melodic motives are indeed a part of Maroka'i *t'amim* practice. The performance by R' Kakon is evidence that when *t'amim* are applied to text in cantillation, and melodic motives must be fit to the text, each *ta'am* remains recognizable. This approach to *t'amim* practice is part of the ethos of the Maroka'i community. The notion that *t'amim* motives must be clear is perpetuated throughout the diasporic community, practiced in synagogues on a regular basis, and promoted as an important emblem of Maroka'i identity.

**Comparison with Syrian Jewish Approach to Cantillation**

The Syrian style of Torah cantillation uses a different tone row and range, and does not adhere to specific melodic motives. Syrian *ba'alei k'riah* in Brooklyn have a restricted conceptualization of melody during *k'riah*, using only the *Sikah* trichord (Figure 8) in a modal fashion (Ya'ar 1996; Kligman 2009: 140).<sup>10</sup> As confirmed by R' Joseph Dweck, "The *k'riah* is totally in *makam*

10 Avishai Ya'ar, *The Cantillation of the Bible: the Aleppo Tradition* (unpublished PhD dissertation, City University of New York); *Maqam and Liturgy: Ritual, Music*



*Sikah*" (p.c., November 5, 2009). The Syrian approach to creating melody in cantillation centers mostly on adhering to this specific tone row.

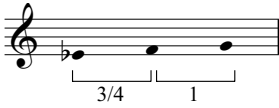


Figure 8: *Makam Sikah*

Although three tones do not allow for as much melodic sophistication as the Maroka'i practice, where the tone row is more expanded, there are moments when the *ba'al k'riah* may try to make a melodic differentiation for more obscure *t'amim*, though this practice is not standardized (p.c., Charlie Tobias, January 13, 2012).<sup>11</sup> *Sof pasuk*, the *ta'am* for concluding a line of text, is marked by a resolution to the tonic and by a pause, but these are the only specific melodic cues. Such an approach does not obscure the basic meaning of the text, since the *t'amim* are still used to describe syntactical information. But as shown above, the Maroka'i practice of being meticulous with specific melodic motives can add another dimension to the syntactical information, thus potentially deepening the listener's experience of the text.

*K'riah* in Maroka'i synagogues is performed at a slower pace than in Syrian synagogues, perhaps because Maroka'im are more concerned about the reproduction of specific melodic motives. When asked about Syrian cantillation, R' Dweck remarked, "We just move quickly through the *t'amim*" (p.c., R' Joseph Dweck, November 5, 2009). When asked why, Tobias answered, "We [Syrians] don't have time to waste. We just get it done" (p.c., Charlie Tobias, January 13, 2012).

Syrian Hebrew pronunciation differs slightly from Maroka'i pronunciation as well, particularly the Hebrew letters *Ayin* and *Het*. One can hear similar differences in the spoken vernaculars of Modern Standard Arabic in these countries. Most people in Brooklyn's Sephardi community, including Maroka'im, speak Modern Hebrew. However, in Maroka'i communities the linguistic register of *K'riat ha-torah* is distinguished from spoken Hebrew by emphasizing a Maroka'i Hebrew dialect. The Maroka'i practice of switching the linguistic register through dialect is another facet of the community's approach to language that distinguishes it from the practices of other communities. Today, with an influx of new Israeli *hazzanim* trained in the Yerushalmi style finding employment in Syrian synagogues in Brooklyn, one can hear a more

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and *Aesthetics of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn* (Detroit: Wayne State University).

11 Charlie Tobias is one of the *ba'alei k'riah* at Shaarei Tzion synagogue, a large and important synagogue in Brooklyn's Syrian community.

Iraqi pronunciation of the *Ayin* and *Het*, usually during worship services. However, it remains rare during *K'riat ha-torah*. Most *ba'lei k'riah* still come from Brooklyn's community.

### **Aesthetic Features**

Several informants have suggested to me that beautification of the Torah performance is vital: "That is why Maroka'i is the most beautiful *k'riah*... because we care about the sound, too, for the Torah" (p.c., A. Abitbol, May 30, 2009). Although this concept of *hiddur mitsvah* (beautification of the commandment being performed) extends to other practices in Jewish life, it moves to the foreground in *K'riat ha-torah*. The *ba'al k'riah* and listeners are engaging with a particular notion of their Jewish identity—that for Maroka'im—the text must be rendered as musically as possible for the beautification of the Torah reading.

Two preferred stylistic features that characterize the vocal approach of a *ba'al k'riah* are a nasal tone and a striving for the higher register. Together, these two stylistic features add to the beauty and clarity of the *k'riah*. Clarity is of vital concern; for Maroka'im, the *ba'al k'riah* must produce the proper aesthetic features if he is to be regarded as a master of Torah cantillation. Dan Bouskila, the longtime *ba'al k'riah* of Netivot Israel synagogue until 2010, is known for his ability to produce the proper vocal aesthetics. As Jacob Torjman once commented, "Dan was the best! Unbelievable at *k'riah*" (p.c., Jacob Torjman, April 28, 2012). When pushed to explain, Torjman added that Bouskila delivered the *t'amim* very clearly and was pleasant to listen to. Having often witnessed Bouskila's *k'riah*, I can confirm that his choice of register and his particularly nasal approach to sound production were always very apparent.

### ***T'amim* Practice as a Boundary Builder for Maroka'im**

To see how crucial *t'amim* practice is to the diasporic consciousness of the Maroka'i community, one must recognize that the codification of the melodic motives has resulted from an impulse to develop an ethnic expression accepted by the transnational community as a symbol of identity. *T'amim* practice in Brooklyn is indicative of this impulse and the resultant pan-Maroka'i ethnic identity, a key component in the definition and communication of a specifically Maroka'i layer of diaspora consciousness. Little regard is given today to the regional differences that existed just over a century ago. People do not speak of Fez, Meknes, Marrakesh, or Rabat styles of *t'amim* practice. Instead, most community members simply speak only of a general "Maroka'i" style.

In *The Cantillations and the Melodies of the Jews of Tangier*, Morocco (1993), Ramon Tasat maintains that there is a persistent distinction in the *t'amim* practices of the communities of Tangiers and Casablanca. He suggests that because of the proximity of Tangiers to Spain, a Spanish or more authentically Sephardi style of *t'amim* practice survived there during the centuries after the expulsion from Spain. According to Tasat, a unique aspect of socialization in Tangiers—the fact that the community was comprised almost exclusively of Spanish exiles—helped to protect the community's traditions from change or from assimilating established styles from other parts of Morocco.

Casablanca, however, served as a metropole for migrants from different parts of the country before the mass emigrations of the 1950s and 1960s. One cannot speak of a specifically Casablancon style of *t'amim*, for this cosmopolitan center's Jewish community was quite diverse. For the same reason, this exit point served as a crucible for the early development of a pan-Maroka'i identity. The "Casablanca" style that Tasat refers to is most likely the result of the assimilation of different regional styles into a pan-Maroka'i style. The *t'amim* became an important tool for early ethnicization. The practice of *t'amim* is now central for transmitting to subsequent generations a characterization of a single, larger community identity. Once removed from the homeland, a consciousness of a larger homeland along the modern nation-state borders of Morocco began to emerge.

In support of Tasat's thesis, community members in Brooklyn have at times suggested a distinction between "Spanish" and "French" Morocco, though usually as an example of an anomaly with regard to what is now considered normative. For instance, R' Dahan pointed out that the vocal register of renowned Hazzan R' Haim Louk and the delicate nature of his vocalizations are evidence of the prominence and perseverance of Spanish features in Louk's performance practice (p.c., R' Chaim Dahan, April 4, 2005). Since Louk was born and raised in Casablanca and was a student of the great R' David Bouzaglo, Dahan's remark supports the notion that any cultural division between Spanish and French in the Jewish community of Morocco has dissipated in favor of a pan-Marokai identity in diaspora.

R' Bouskila was born and raised in Casablanca, but his father and extended family were from the Dra'a Valley southeast of Marrakesh. R' Kakon is from Marrakesh. R' Amar is from Casablanca. Amram Abesror is from Meknes, in central Morocco just west of Fez. Discussions about *t'amim* with these gentlemen show that a pan-Maroka'i identity has emerged in practice as a result of diasporic migration. Again, this migration began within Morocco before mass emigration. However, the fostering of a boundary for communal

identity became imperative following emigration from the modern nation-state and the community's dispersal.

Even when performance anomalies present themselves, community members dismiss differences in favor of the accepted norm. For instance, one Shabbat an elder of Netivot Israel, Mr. Chetrit, performed the *k'riah* of his own *aliyah*. Mr. Chetrit, advanced in years, is from the *shleuh* or mountainous village area in central Morocco. While his performance of the *t'amim* was rendered similarly to the standard Moroccan style, he was less concerned with the clarity of each motif, and he truncated the melodic range of motives at times. His pronunciation of the Hebrew differed slightly, with some guttural sounds accentuated even more than usual. His approach was distinctive enough to provoke a strong reaction around the room. Mumbblings exploded after he completed his *aliyah*—along with smiles. The imaginations of many of those present seemed to be tantalized by a hearkening back to a disparate Maroka'i community that predated the formalized Maroka'i *t'amim*-style that we hear today. But when I asked Albert Abitbol what he thought, he just remarked that this was an “old school” way of performing the *k'riah* (p.c., A. Abitbol, May 30, 2009), and no longer the normative way of performing the *t'amim*.

This reaction to a no-longer practiced performance of *t'amim* in the Maroka'i community is indicative of the need to construct a diasporic ethnic identity offering an agreed upon way, tradition, or *minhag* for belonging to the group. The experience of living in a diaspora demands ethnicization. Codification of the melodic motives of Maroka'i *t'amim* represents a necessary communal impulse for dealing with the unprecedented engagement between Jewish ethnic practices from disparate backgrounds. Never before had an entire ethnic Jewish community come into such close contact with so many other ethnic Jewish communities. The reshuffling of Jewish population groups in the last century and the density of Jewish resettlement in Israel and New York have changed the landscape of the community, and never before has the means to develop and sustain transnational ties been so accessible to so many community members. There are now many recordings of *t'amim*, circulated primarily on the Internet on websites such as YouTube or Maroka'i diaspora websites such as dafina.net. But even before the 1990s, tapes were made and children were taught a recorded oral tradition. Yet one must keep in mind that electronic means of recording and consuming are forbidden when the congregation gathers to perform *t'amim* publicly during *K'riat ha-torah*. Consciousness is therefore very important, as individuals draw upon what is embedded in themselves and the community to ensure that what is performed and transmitted is accepted as indicative of Maroka'i identity.

## Processional and *Bimah* Songs

There are a number of additional musical expressions during the *K'riat ha-torah* service that serve to characterize diaspora consciousness in Maroka'i identity in Brooklyn. Before and after *k'riah*, there is processional liturgy for carrying the Torah from the *aron* to the *bimah*, where it can be read, and then returned to the *aron*. When *olim* ascend the *bimah* for an *aliyah*, there are well-known para-liturgical songs—*piyyutim* and *pizmonim*—that are sung aloud by members of the congregation. While the songs for the processional liturgy are distinctly Maroka'i, the *bimah* songs used by *Maroka'im* in Brooklyn show the community's familiarity with a wider repertoire that includes melodies from Morocco, from neighboring Syrian communities, and from the Sephardi-Mizrahi fusion popular music style in Israel known as *Musikah mizrahit*. Like the *t'amim*, melodies for processional songs tend to reinforce a distinctively pan-Maroka'i ethnic identity boundary. However, the *bimah* songs show the interactivity between the Maroka'i and Sephardi boundaries of identity, promoting the integration of multiple layers of diaspora consciousness.

## Processional Liturgical Songs

Liturgical texts used for opening the *aron* and proceeding to the *bimah* are standard in most Sephardi synagogues. On Shabbat and festivals, the liturgy commences with the singing of the prayer *Atah har'eita la-da'at* (Unto you it was shown).<sup>12</sup> Maroka'im then add the verse, *Ki mi-tsiyyon tetsei torah* (from Zion came forth the Torah, and the word of God from Jerusalem). This liturgy is performed to a Maroka'i melody (**Figure 9**). Subsequently, an Aramaic prayer, *B'rikh sh'mei d'marei al'ma* (Blessed be the name of the Master of the World), is read aloud; this prayer is also included in Ashkenazi liturgies. As the Torah begins to make its way through the congregation, the Sephardi liturgy continues with the singing of *Ashrei ha-am* (Joyous are the people).<sup>13</sup> Again, this is a Maroka'i melody (**Figure 10**). In Brooklyn, although the Syrian melodies for this liturgy are well known (Kligman 2009:139) even by the *Maroka'im*, they are never sung by Maroka'i congregations, and only on occasion in mixed-Sephardi synagogues.

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12 *D'varim* 4: 35.

13 *Zohar*, "Va-yak'heil," (12: 225).

*Atah hareita*

A - tah har - ei - ta la - da - at\_ ki a - do - nai hu\_ ha - e - lo - him\_

ki mi - tsi - yontei - tsei to - rah u - d' - var a - do - nai mi - ru - sha - la - yim.

*Ashrei ha-am*

Ash-rei ha-am she - ka - kha lo\_ ash - rei ha-am she - a - do - nai e - lo - hav.

Ga - d' - lu la - do - nai i - ti\_ u' - n - ro - m' - mah\_ sh' - mo yah\_ - dav.

Figure 9: Opening Processional Melodies

Once the Torah arrives on the *bimah*, Maroka'im open its case and lift it so all can see the written text. This is called *hagbahah* (elevation), during which male members of the congregation raise the *tsitsit* of their *tallit*, and women their open hands in honor of the Torah. Together, the congregation recites aloud the last portion of processional liturgy before *k'riah*. This piece of liturgy, *V'zot ha-torah* (This the Torah),<sup>14</sup> is sung to *hagbahah* in Ashkenazi communities a bit later, just after *Maftir* has been read from the Torah. Other Sephardim in Brooklyn have the practice of carrying an open Torah during the processional and raising it just before placing it on the *bimah*, thereby alleviating the need for a special moment for *hagbahah*. The Maroka'i practice seems to be an integration of the two prevailing customs.

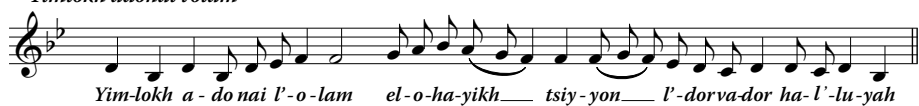
After *k'riah* is completed, a few additional blessings—for the congregation, the Israeli and American armed forces and for the new month (the Shabbat before it occurs), are pronounced from the *bimah* by the hazzan or rabbi. In Sephardi communities, the return processional begins with the singing of a short liturgical piece: *Yimlokh adonai lolam, elohayikh tsiyyon l'dor va-dor, halleluyah* (God will reign forever, your Sovereign, O Zion, for all generations, Halleluyah!).<sup>15</sup> In Maroka'i synagogues, the honor of singing these verses is always given to a young boy or boys. Again, although the Syrian melody is well known in Brooklyn (Kligman 2009:142), a specifically Maroka'i melody is preferred in the Maroka'i synagogue. The individual who had earlier carried the Torah from the *aron* begins to carry it from the *bimah* through the

14 *D'varim* 4: 44.

15 *Tehillim* 146: 10.

congregation once more, as all sing *Mizmor l'david* (Psalm 29). Though this is the standard text used for the return processional in all Jewish communities, the melody is specifically Maroka'i (Figure 10).

*Yimlokh adonai l'olam*



Yim-lokh a - do nai l' - o - lam el - o - ha - yikh \_\_\_ tsiy - yon \_\_\_ l' - dorva - dor ha - l' - lu - yah

*Mizmor l'david*



1. Miz - mor l' - da - vid ha - vu la - do - nai \_\_\_ ka - vod va - oz ha - vu \_\_\_ la do nai  
 2. b' - nei ei - lim ha - vu la do - nai \_\_\_

k' - vod sh' - mo hish ta - ha - vu la - do - nai b' - had - rat \_\_\_ ko - desh

Figure 10: Return Processional Melodies

The processional liturgy differs in Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities, although there are moments where the texts are the same. There is more similarity among the liturgies of Sephardi communities, but the melodies used in the Maroka'i community are distinct. We can deduce from these musical expressions that a consciousness of the Sephardi and Maroka'i layers of diaspora identity is ever-present.

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# The Provenance, Dating, Allusions, and Variants of *U-n'taneh tokef* and Its Relationship to Romanos's *Kontakion*<sup>1</sup>

By John H. Planer

## Introduction

*U-n'taneh tokef* is an anonymous *piyyut* recited in Ashkenazic Judaism during the *Musaf* service of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in both the Eastern and Western rites.<sup>2</sup> It is a *silluk*, a *piyyut* preceding and leading into the recitation of the *K'dushah*,<sup>3</sup> which relates the defining story of the *Yamim nora'im*: each year God judges our lives and records our destinies in the Book of Life; our merciful, forgiving God exhorts us to *t'shuvah*, *t'fillah* and *ts'dakah*. Its themes are (1) judgment—we are accountable for our actions; (2) responsibility—we alone can choose to change our behavior; and (3) mortality—we will die, and hence our lives are precious gifts.

In 1950 Eric Werner compared the *piyyut* to a *kontakion* (a liturgical poem in the Eastern Orthodox Church) by Romanos and to the Gregorian sequence *Dies Irae*<sup>4</sup> of the Roman Catholic Church; he argued that the Greek and Latin poems were based upon *U-n'taneh tokef*.<sup>5</sup> Werner cited a fragment from the Cairo *genizah* containing this text; he quoted Menachem Zulay, who dated the fragment from the late eighth century and who affirmed that *U-n'taneh tokef* was written in Palestine during the Byzantine period. Most studies of *U-n'taneh tokef* cite Werner's article. Although *U-n'taneh tokef* is an anonymous poem, scholars generally date it between the third and sixth centuries, and some attribute it to Yannai, an early *payy'tan*. This study analyzes the

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1 I am deeply grateful to Rabbi Richard Sarason for his insightful comments and corrections.

2 It is *piyyut* 451 in Israel Davidson, *Thesaurus of Medieval Hebrew Poetry*, vol. 2 (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1929), 199-200.

3 It lies within the *k'rovah*—the cycle of *piyyutim* recited during the *Amidah*—beginning **אָפֶּד מֵאֵי**.

4 The *Dies irae* is a chant of the Requiem Mass. The lines are in trochaic tetrameter; each strophe contains three lines, all of which rhyme: aaa bbb ccc etc. The text describes the Last Judgment. Sequences, like *piyyutim* and *kontakia*, were medieval accretions to the liturgy. The Council of Trent eliminated most sequences from the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church.

5 Eric Werner, "Hebrew and Oriental Christian Metrical Hymns: A Comparison" *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. 23, part 2 (1950-51), 397-432. Also Eric Werner, *The Sacred Bridge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 252-55.



structure and style of *U-n'taneh tokef*, its textual variants, and its allusions. On the basis of this information, it then examines its dating, its provenance, and the attribution to Yannai. A careful examination of Werner's comparisons with Romanos's *kontakion*, its scriptural sources, and dissimilarities between the two poems then permits reconsideration of the relationship of *U-n'taneh tokef* to Romanos's *kontakion*. Finally it reviews the legend of Rabbi Amnon and the *piyyut's* popularity in Ashkenazic Judaism.

## Structure and Style

The text of *U-n'taneh tokef* which appears below follows Daniel Goldschmidt's critical edition of the *piyyutim* of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.<sup>6</sup> Identifying the end of the *piyyut* is difficult, for it elides smoothly with the text of the *K'dushah*, which follows.<sup>7</sup> In most printed *mahzorim* the *piyyut* is presented as if it were prose, unlike later *piyyutim* such as *Ha-ohetz b'yad, Melekh elyon* and *Adonai melekh adonai malakh*, whose formats on the page reflect their poetic structures. But *U-n'taneh tokef* is poetry—as are other early *piyyutim* printed as if they were prose. Daniel Goldschmidt published the text as paired versicles, but at times that layout obscures the form. The text below makes the parallelism and the rhymes visually evident. Words in brackets are absent in many manuscripts or in some Ashkenazic rites, as specified in Goldschmidt's excellent critical commentary.

- |                 |                    |                        |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------|
|                 | כי הוא נורא ואים   | 1. ונתנה תקף קדשת היום |
| ותשב עליו באמת: | ויכון בהסד פסאד    | 2. ובו תנשא מלכותך     |
|                 | ומוכיח ויודע ועד   | 3. אמת כי אתה הוא דין  |
|                 | [וסופר ומונה]      | 4. וכותב וחיתם         |
|                 | ותפתח ספר הזכרונות | 5. ותזכר כל הנשכחות    |
|                 | וחיתם יד כל אדם בו | 6. וימאליו יקרא        |

6 [Ernst] Daniel Goldschmidt, *Mahzor la-yamim ha-nora'im*, vol. I (Jerusalem: Koren, 1970), pp.169-72. מחזור לימים הנוראים, כרך א': ראש השנה.

7 Neil Gillman notes the ambiguity about where the *piyyut* ends and suggests that it concludes at *u-sh'meinu karata vishmekha* (colon 43a in the text below). He argues that the section *Ein kitsbah* (lines 40-43a) is an integral part of the *piyyut* because it refers to colon 13a: *v'tahtokh kitsbah l'khol b'riyah*. "Reading the Liturgy through the Spectacles of Theology: "The Case of U-n'taneh Tokef," *Journal of Synagogue Music*, 33 (Fall 2008), 48, 55.

7. ובשופר גדול יתקע וקול דממה [זקה] ישמע  
 8. ומלאכים יחפזון וחייל ורעדה יאחזון  
 9. ויאמרו הנה יום־הדין לפקד על־צבא־מרום בדין כִּי־לֹא־יִזְכּוּ בְּעֵינֶיךָ בְּדִין:

10. וְכָל־בְּאֵי־עוֹלָם יַעֲבֹרֹן לְפָנֶיךָ בְּבִי־מְרוֹן: [כבנומרון] [νούμερον]  
 11. כְּבִקְרַת רוּעָה עָדְרוּ מַעֲבִיר צֹאנֹו תַחַת־שִׁבְטֹו  
 12. כִּן־תַּעֲבִיר וְתִסְפֹר וְתִמְנָה וְתַפְקֹד נַפְשׁ כָּל־חַי וְתַפְקֹד נַפְשׁ כָּל־חַי  
 13. וְתַחַתְךָ קִצְבָה לְכָל־בְּרִי וְתַכְתֵּב אֶת־גְּזֵר דִּינָם:

14. בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתְּבוּן וּבָיוֹם [צום] כְּפֹר יִחַתְמוּן  
 15. כְּמָה יַעֲבֹרֹן וְכֵמָה יִבְרֹאוּן

16. מִי יִחִיָּהּ וּמִי יָמוּת  
 17. מִי בְקִצּוֹ וּמִי לֹא־בְקִצּוֹ  
 18. מִי בְמִיָּם וּמִי בְאֵשׁ  
 19. מִי בְחֶרֶב וּמִי בְחַיָּה (בְּרַעַב)  
 20. [מִי בְרַעַב וּמִי בְצָמָא]  
 21. מִי בְרַעַשׁ וּמִי בְמַגָּפָה  
 22. [מִי בְחַנִּיקָה וּמִי בְסַקִּילָה]  
 23. מִי יִנוּחַ וּמִי יִנוּעַ  
 24. מִי יִשְׁקִיט וּמִי יִטָּרֵף  
 25. מִי יִשְׁלוּ וּמִי יִחֲסֹר  
 26. מִי יָרוּם וּמִי יִשְׁפַל  
 27. מִי יַעֲשִׂיר וּמִי יַעֲנִי:  
 28. וְתִשׁוּבָה וְתַפְלָה וְצַדִּיקָה מַעֲבִירִין אֶת־רַע הַגְּזֵרָה:

29. כִּי כְשִׁמָּךְ כֵּן תִּהְיֶיךָ  
 30. קִשָּׁה לְכַעֹס וְנוֹחַ לְרַצוֹת  
 31. כִּי לֹא תַחַפֵּץ בְּמוֹת הַמֵּת כִּי אִם בְּשׁוּבוֹ מִדְּרָכֹו וְחַיָּה  
 32. וְעַד יוֹם מוֹתֹו תִּחַכֶּה־לוֹ אִם יָשׁוּב מִיַּד תִּקְבְּלוּ  
 33. [אַמֶּת] כִּי אִמָּה הוּא יוֹצֵרִם וְיוֹדֵעַ יֵצֵר כִּי הֵם בְּשָׂר וְדָם.

34. אָדָם יְסוּדוֹ מַעֲפָר וְסוּפוֹ לְעָפָר  
 35. בְּנַפְשׁוֹ יִבִּיא לְחַמוֹ מִשׁוּל כְּתָרִס הַנֶּשֶׁבֶר  
 36. כְּחִצִּיר יָבֵשׁ וְכִצְיִן נוֹבֵל

	וּכְעֵנָן כְּלָהּ	37. כְּצֵל עֹבֵר
וּבְחֵלוֹם יַעֲוֶה:	וּכְאֲבֹק פֹּרֶחַ	38. וּבְרוּחַ נוֹשֶׁבֶת
	אֵל חַי וְקַיִם:	39. וְאַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ
	וְאִין קִץ לְאַרְבֵּי יָמֶיךָ	40. אִין קְצֵבָה לְשִׁנוּתֶיךָ
	וְאִין פְּרוּשׁ לְעֵילוֹם שְׁמֶךָ.	41. וְאִין שְׁעוֹר לְמִרְכָּבוֹת כְּבוֹדֶךָ
	(וְאִין לְפָרֵשׁ עֵילוֹם שְׁמֶךָ)	(וְאִין לְשַׁעַר מִרְכָּבוֹת כְּבוֹדֶךָ)
	וְאַתָּה נֹאֵה לְשְׁמֶךָ	42. שְׁמֶךָ נֹאֵה לָךְ
	עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ	43. וּשְׁמַנּוּ קִרְאָתְךָ בְּשְׁמֶךָ
	עַל מִקְדָּוִשֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ	44. וְקִדְשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ
	הַנִּבְעָרִים וְהַנִּקְדָּשׁ]	45. [בְּעֵבוֹר כְּבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ

*U-n'taneh tokef* comprises the following sections:

<u>Section</u>	<u>Lines</u>	<u>Themes</u>
<i>U-n'taneh tokef</i>	1-6	The day is powerful, holy, awesome, fearful. God reigns, judges, writes, and seals our fates God remembers and opens the Book of Remembrances The imprint of everyone's hand seals her/his fate.
<i>U-v'shofar gadol</i>	7-13	The Great Shofar sounds but a silent voice speaks. Terrified angels tremble—they are judged, their fates are sealed. All creation (sheep) passes under God's staff in judgment.
<i>B'rosh ha-shanah</i>	14-28	Rosh Hashanah inscribes destiny; Yom Kippur seals it. a list of modes of dying a list of destinies—many as opposites: life-death, rich-poor Repentance, Prayer, Righteousness can affect God's decree.
<i>Ki k'shimkha</i>	29-33	God is merciful—slow to anger and quick to forgive. God doesn't want sinners to die; God welcomes repentance.
<i>Adam y'sodo</i>	34-39	Humans come from dust and return to dust. Life is ephemeral: we shatter, wither, fade, disperse, pass away. But God is eternal.

God's name is awesome and holy.

The *piyyut*, as we know it, is effective poetry and theology.<sup>8</sup> It moves from God as sovereign Judge who holds all creation accountable for conduct, to a list of fates—ways of death and destinies in life—to God as welcoming repentance, and recognition of life's ephemeralness. The poem melds well the themes of kingship, judgment—*middat ha-din*, and compassion—*middat ha-rahhamim*. The biblical metaphors relating to the transitory nature of life are moving, and the *piyyut* forces us to confront our mortality. In so doing we are challenged to consider what has true value and hence to use our time wisely.

Goldschmidt notes that the *piyyut* is unrhymed,<sup>9</sup> but many lines do indeed rhyme. Compared with later *piyyutim*, the rhymes of *U-n'taneh tokef* are inconsistent; they do not afford a unifying strophic structure. Nevertheless the rhymes group lines together.<sup>10</sup> Such irregular recurrence of rhyme, used as a poetic device, characterizes the style of many early *piyyutim*.

The poetry does not fit a consistent meter, but the balanced phrases are clearly rhythmic, and the cadences are varied. Although many lines have seven or eight syllables—Werner called the *piyyut* isosyllabic—the number of syllables too is inconsistent. Werner also claimed that the prologue is in a different meter than the remainder, but my reading does not support that assertion. Nor do the words **וְתִשׁוּבָה וְתַפְלָה וְצַדִּיקָה מִעֲבִירֶיךָ אֵת רֵעַ הַגִּזְרָה:** constitute a refrain—a recurrent verse which unifies, especially in strophic forms. *U-n'taneh tokef* is not a *pizmon*—a *piyyut* with a recurrent refrain.

Like other early *piyyutim* and the *Kaddish*, *U-n'taneh tokef* piles up parts of speech—sometimes in climactic order.<sup>11</sup> God is *dayyan*, *mokhiah*, *yodei'a*, *va'eid*; He writes, seals, records, counts, remembers. The listing of fates in the *B'rosh ha-shanah* section is similar. In some sections alliteration links cola. For example, cola 3b through 6b begin with the *vav* conjunction, and the effect of linking independent clauses builds to the emphatic cadence in colon 6b: Each person's hand seals his/her fate. Lines 18-22 begin with *mi b-* and

8 Gillman, "Reading the Liturgy," 46-57. A collection of excellent essays is *Who by Fire, Who by Water: Unetaneh Tokef*, Lawrence A. Hoffman, ed. (Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2010).

9 Goldschmidt, *Mahzor* I, 169.

10 Rhyme is evident in the bi-cola of lines 1, 2ab, 5, 7, 8, 9abc, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33abc, 34, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 46.

11 For example, in *Ya'aleh v'yavo* the *payy'tan* progresses through eight imperfect verbs as our recognizance [*zikhronenu*] approaches God's Presence: **יעלה ויבא יגיע וראה ורצה ישמע יפקד ויזכר וזכרונו.**

the second colon begins *u-mi b-*; lines 23-begin *mi u- / mi y'*. In the similes for our mortality, lines 36-38, each colon begins with a *kaf*.

In nearly every verse parallelism is prominent. And several sections conclude a verse with an emphatic third colon. For example, colon 2c concludes the first section about God's throne—it unites God's awesome nature and God's kingship as God mounts the throne of judgment. Line 9c is also climactic—none is innocent before God—and the triple rhyme of that verse is emphatic. Lines 33 and 38 also are tri-colonic. In many lines words are repeated for emphasis: *emet* in lines 2 and 3; *din* in line 9; *yotsram / yitsram* in line 33, *afar* in 34.

The *piyyut* as we know it may be a composite work. The *B'rosh ha-shanah* section is more a list than exposition and development of ideas. It differs significantly from the surrounding paragraphs: its parallel phrases are short and staccato—a series of short, two-word phrases. One section begins **מי יי** and the following section begins **מי ב**. This is unlike the surrounding sections. It also contains far fewer biblical and rabbinic allusions than the other paragraphs, though it may be modeled after the parallelism of Hannah's poem in I Samuel 2—the *haftarah* for the first day of Rosh Hashanah—as Herman Kieval noted.<sup>12</sup> Verses 6-7 read:

:הָהָהּ מִמִּית וּמִתְּיָהּ מוֹרִיד שְׂאוֹל וְעֵל: <sup>6</sup>  
:יְהִי מוֹרִישׁ וּמַעֲשֵׂיר מְשַׁפֵּיל אֶת־מְרוֹמָם: <sup>7</sup>

Another possible source for the lists of deaths and destinies could be the Time Poem at the beginning of the third chapter of Kohelet. While we cannot ascertain whether or not the *B'rosh ha-shanah* section is an interpolation or not, its presence nonetheless enhances the impact of the *piyyut*. The very specificity of ways of dying—and fulfillment or distress—concretize accountability—either God's judgment or the worshipers' self-evaluation of their lives.

The *Ein kitsbah* section emphasizes God's name—a motif absent in previous sections—and transitions to the themes of the *K'dushah*. Gillman is correct that the words *kitsbah* and *keits* recall colon 13a. To me, this section sounds like a different chronological stratum, but I cannot marshal strong evidence to that effect.

We cannot date *U-n'taneh tokef* with specificity, for it is anonymous. Menachem Zulay dated the *genizah* fragment in London from the late eighth century and wrote to Werner, "There is no doubt whatsoever that the **ותננה תוקף** originated in Palestine during the Byzantine rule"<sup>13</sup>—that is 330-638 CE. That dating has

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12 Herman Kieval, *The High Holy Days: A Commentary on the Prayerbook of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*, vol. I (New York: The Burning Bush Press, 1959), 143.

13 Werner, "Hebrew and Oriental Christian Metrical Hymns: A Comparison," 425.

met with general agreement. Joseph Yahalom attributes the *piyyut* to Yannai,<sup>14</sup> an early *payy'tan* who lived in Palestine probably in the first half of the seventh century. Early *piyyutim* were largely, if not exclusively, Palestinian rather than Babylonian, for Babylonian rabbis, with few exceptions, opposed the inclusion of *piyyutim* as substitutes or even additions to the established liturgical prayers. Thus the provenance in Palestine is uncontested. But the attribution to Yannai and the date of the seventh century are debatable.

*U-n'taneh tokef* resembles many anonymous *piyyutim* from the second through the sixth centuries found in the *siddur* and *mahzor*. Comparison of *U-n'taneh tokef* with *Barukh she-amar*, *Ya-aleh v'yavo*, *Aleinu l'shabei'ah*, *M'lokh al kol ha-olam*, *Ribbon kol ha-olamim*, and *U-v'khein tein pahd'kha* reveal strong parallels. These too are poems, although they are printed as prose. They share similar stylistic features—and they may date as early as the *Tanna'im* or the *Amora'im*—third, fourth, or fifth centuries. The *piyyutim* of Yose ben Yose, Yannai, and Kallir all show greater interest in acrostics, strophic structures, consistent rhymes and repetition of words as a refrain or organizing element—features absent in *U-n'taneh tokef*.<sup>15</sup> The emphatic, climactic unrhymed colon at ends of sections suggest an early date of composition as do the flexible form in which the verse, rather than the stanza, is the organizing unit.

Characteristics of these early anonymous *piyyutim* include: (1) Acrostics using the alphabet or names are rare—perhaps non-existent. (2) The forms are non-strophic, for the verse itself is the structural unit. (3) The forms have no refrains. (4) *Piyyutim* with litany characteristics are infrequent, though occasionally some have a short refrain at the end of each verse, similar to the biblical model *Ki l'olam hasdo* in Psalm 136. Occasionally the same opening word begins several successive verses, similar to Psalm 118:2-12. (5) Parallelism is a structural element, but it is flexible. Parallelism may occur within a verse, within two adjacent verses, and within more than two verses, sometimes creating parallel units of four, six, or more verses. This parallelism may be broken by one or more intervening verses which are not parallel with their surrounding verses. In some poems, a series of verses developing the same topic or idea have several parallel verses; that section then concludes with a single, climactic/emphatic, cadential verse. (6) The poets rhyme intermittently, for rhyme is a literary device but not a structural element, as in later *piyyutim*. (7) The poetry is often rhythmic, but not metric. (8) Lines

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14 Yosef [also Joseph]Yahalom, "Who Shall Be the Author, and Who Shall Not," *Haaretz*, 6 September 2002.

15 P/F Mirsky, *Shirat Yose ben yose v'yannai* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, nd).

vary in length—generally two to six words and seven to twelve syllables. The syllable-count can vary—even in parallel verses—as does the number of primary accents. (9) Some poems show climactic progressions of nouns, verbs, and/or participles. (10) The repetition of words or their roots in adjacent and non-adjacent verses is common. (11) Some early *piyyutim* have introductions and/or conclusions—as do some Psalms and the *kontakia* of the Byzantine Church.

On stylistic grounds, *U-n'taneh tokef* probably originated during the third or fourth centuries, as Naphtali Wieder has suggested.<sup>16</sup>

### Evidence of Palestinian origin

Early *piyyutim*—from both the anonymous and named periods—originated in Palestine rather than Babylonia. The stylistic elements cited above also suggest Palestinian origin. Internal evidence within *U-n'taneh tokef*, however, confirms its Palestinian origin.

1. *U-n'taneh tokef* contains an unusual phrase: וְכָל בְּאֵי עוֹלָם יַעֲבְרוּן לְפָנֶיךָ כְּבָנֵי מְרוֹן. It occurs in Mishnah *Rosh ha-shanah* 1:2: “At four times of the year the world is judged...at the New Year all who enter the world pass before Him *kivnei maron*.” The Mishnah was compiled in Palestine and completed around 200 CE. Two or three centuries later, in Babylonia, the rabbis of the Gemara were puzzled by the phrase. In b. *Rosh hashanah* 18a the question is raised: “What does *kivnei maron* mean?” Three explanations are given: “Here [in Babylonia] they translated it “like lambs”; Reish Lakish [a Palestinian] said “like the high places of Beit Maron; Rav Yehudah said in the name of Samuel: like warriors of the House of David.” The wording is interesting: הִבָּא תַרְגִּימוּ כְּבָנֵי אִמְרָנָא. The word *targimu* indicates that a foreign word or phrase has been translated; had the word/phrase been common in Hebrew or Aramaic, no translation would have been necessary. In his study of *U-n'taneh tokef*, Eric Werner noted “a Byzantine word actually occurring in the Hebrew text,” but he did not identify it or elaborate.<sup>17</sup> Naphtali Wieder

16 Wieder suggests that *U-n'taneh tokef* “seems certainly to antedate the rise of the artistic piyyut, as may be inferred from the simplicity of its style which is devoid of the artistic devices of the payy’anic productions.” N[aphtali] Wieder “A Controversial Mishnaic and Liturgical Expression,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 18 (1967), 3. The same article is published in Hebrew in Wieder’s collected essays: נַפְתָּלִי וִידֵר, הַתְּגַבְשׁוֹת נוֹסַח הַתְּפִילָה בַּמִּזְרָח וּבַמְעֵרָב *The Formation of the Jewish Liturgy in the East and West*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1998).

17 Werner, “Hebrew and Oriental Christian Metrical Hymns: A Comparison,” 427.

documented that the words כבני מרון were originally one word—כבנומרון—a Greek word meaning “troops.”<sup>18</sup> Thus Samuel’s understanding that the term referred to an army was correct—albeit not necessarily David’s. The *genizah* fragments in London and New York both have a clear *vav* (*holem vav*) rather than a *yud*.<sup>19</sup>

2. The *piyyut* contains allusions or quotations from the Mishnah, *Sifrei d’varim*, *B’reishit rabbah*, and the Jerusalem Talmud—all of which are Palestinian. There is no quotation from the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>20</sup>

3. The three terms וְתִשׁוּבָה וְתִפְלָה וְצִדְקָה come from the Jerusalem Talmud rather than the Babylonian Talmud. The latter (b. *Rosh ha-shanah* 16b) cites Rabbi Yitzhak, who said that *four* things can tear up a decree of judgment for a person: צִדְקָה צַעֲקָה שִׁינוּי הַשֵּׁם וְשִׁינוּי מַעֲשֵׂה —charity, crying out, changing one’s name, and changing one’s deeds. The texts from the Palestinian Talmud (*Ta’aniyot* 2:1, 65b) and *B’reishit rabbah* (*Lekh l’kha*, 44:12)<sup>21</sup> all cite the *three* actions mentioned in the *piyyut*. All these Palestinian texts were compiled in the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>22</sup>

4. The Cairo *genizah* was a storehouse of extensive Palestinian writings. At least three fragments containing *U-n’taneh tokef* were found there.

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18 Wieder “A Controversial Mishnaic and Liturgical Expression,” pp 1-7. The Talmud contains many Greek and Latin words. Samuel Krauss, *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, 2 vols. (Reprint of Berlin: S. Calvary, 1898-99 edition at Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964).

19 David Golinkin, in his blog *Balashon*, cites manuscripts of Mishnah *Rosh ha-shanah* which have orthography similar to *kiv’numeron*: the Kaufmann manuscript (facsimile edition 1929) has *kivno meron* with vowels; *kivnu maron* appears in the 1523-24 edition of the Palestinian Talmud; the Vienna manuscript of Tosefta *Rosh ha-shanah* reads *numeron*; and a *genizah* fragment of Mishnah *Rosh ha-shanah* has *kiv-numeron*. <<[www.balashon.com/2006/09/kivnei-maron.html](http://www.balashon.com/2006/09/kivnei-maron.html)>> See also Golinkin, “Like Sheep or Like Soldiers?: Solving a Mahzor Mystery,” in *Insight Israel* 5:1 (September 2004), online at <<[www.schechter.edu/insightIsrael.aspx?ID=18](http://www.schechter.edu/insightIsrael.aspx?ID=18)>>.

20 Goldschmidt, *Mahzor I*, 171n.

21 ed. Theodor-Albeck, 434.

22 Goldschmidt cites these sources in his critical notes to this verse. In an excellent analysis of *U-n’taneh tokef* and the legend of Rabbi Amnon, David Golinkin cites these sources and succinctly lists nine factors which suggest that the legend of Rabbi Amnon could not have occurred as Rabbi Isaac ben Moses of Vienna (c1180-1250) described it in his treatise *Or zarua*. David Golinkin, “Do ‘Repentance, Prayer and Tzedakah Avert the Severe Decree?’” *Insight Israel* 6:1 (September 2005), available online at [www.schechter.edu/insightIsrael.aspx?ID=19](http://www.schechter.edu/insightIsrael.aspx?ID=19).



5. The *genizah* fragment of *U-n'taneh tokef* in the Jewish Theological Seminary has Palestinian rather than Tiberian or Babylonian pointing.

The evidence supporting an early date of composition in Palestine is decisive; the story of Rabbi Amnon related by Rabbi Isaac Moses of Vienna is legendary.

## Textual Allusions and References

*U-n'taneh tokef* is rich in biblical allusions.<sup>23</sup>

<u>Source/Chapter:</u>	<u>Verse</u>	<u>Line Text</u>
<b>Torah</b>		
Numbers 24:7	2a	You exalt your kingdom
Genesis 3:19	34ab	man's origin is dust and his end is dust
<b>Prophets</b>		
Habakuk 1:7	1b	awesome and fearful
Isaiah 16:5	2c	sit upon a throne in truth
Isaiah 27:13	7a	great shofar is blown
1 Kings 19:12	7b	silent, small voice
Isaiah 24:21	9b	to muster all the flock in judgment
Ezekiel 34:12	11a	as a shepherd tends his flock
Jeremiah 33:13	12a	thus cause to pass and number and count
1 Samuel 2:6 <sup>24</sup>	16ab	who will pass away and who will be created
Ezekiel 5:7	19ab	who by sword and who by wild beast
1 Samuel 2:7	26-27	who will be rich, who poor; who debased, who exalted
Ezekiel 18:32	31a	for You do not desire death of the dead one
Ezekiel 18:23	31b	rather that he turn from his path and live
Isaiah 40:7	36b	like a flower that fades

23 Goldschmidt lists many of these in his critical apparatus; some are cited by Joel M. Hoffman, *Who by Fire*, 33-48; a few additional references I have added.

24 This allusion is to Hannah's song—the *haftarah* for the first day of Rosh Hashanah. This reading is attested in the Babylonian tradition (b. *Megillah* 31a) but the Palestinian (*Tosefta Megillah* 3:6) mentions only the Torah pericopes for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This *Haftarah* is unattested in Palestinian sources; it may or may not have been read.

Isaiah 40:7	38a	like a wind that blows
Isaiah 5:24	38b	like the dust that flies
Isaiah 22:18	41a	chariots of Your glory

## Writings

Esther 6:1	5b	open the book of remembered things
Job 37:7	6b	sealed therein the hand of every person
Job 4:16	7b	silent voice is heard
Psalms 48:7	8b	whirl, and terror seizes them
Job 15:5	9c	for they are not pure in Your eyes in judgment
Job 12:10	12b	breath of all life
Psalms 66:12	18ab	who by water and who by fire
Psalms 49:17	27a	who will become rich
2 Chron 7:14	28ab	Repentance, prayer, righteousness avert the stern decree
Psalms 48:11	29ab	For as Your name, so is Your praise
Lamentations 5:9	35a	by his breath/spirit he brings his bread
Psalms 103:15	36a	like the grass that withers
Psalms 103:15	36b	like a flower that fades
Job 14:2	36b	like a flower that fades
Psalms 144:4	37a	like a shadow that passes
Job 7:9	37b	like a cloud that dissipates
Job 20:8	38c	like a dream that flies off
Psalms 102:28	39a-40a	You are He, and your years have no end

## Other

<i>Pirkei avot</i> 4:28/29	3ab	judge, reprover, knower, and witness
Mishnah <i>Ta'anit</i> 2:4	5a	and You remember all the forgotten things
<i>Sifrei d'varim</i>	6b	sealed there the hand of every living person
Mishnah <i>Rosh hash.</i> 1:2	10ab	all coming into the world they will be passed through
B & J Talmud: <i>Rosh ha-shanah</i>	13b	You write the decree of their judgment
B & J Talmud: <i>Rosh ha-shanah</i>	14ab	Rosh Hashanah it is written— on Yom Kippur sealed
<i>Pirkei avot</i> 5:21	15a	How many will pass away

<i>B'reishit rabbah</i> 44:12 <sup>25</sup>	28ab	Repentance, prayer, righteousness avert the stern decree, citing 2 Chron 7:14
<i>Pirkei avot</i> 5:11	30ab	
<i>Pirkei d'rabbi eliezer</i> 43	32ab	if he repents, <i>immediate</i> welcome (מיד) (MS Vienna 60a) <sup>26</sup>
<i>Shaharit yotseir</i> <sup>27</sup>	39ab	You are king—living and enduring God

The vocabulary of *U-n'taneh tokef* is fairly simple and direct—like that of other early, anonymous liturgical poetry—and strikingly different from the sophisticated, erudite vocabulary, and often strained grammar, of later *piyyutim*. The allusions, though, are erudite, and probably some delighted in identifying these references. Allusions are far fewer in the *B'rosh ha-shanah* section. There are few references to Torah, but many from the Prophets and Writings. Prominent among the prophets are Ezekiel and Isaiah; the two references to I Samuel link *U-n'taneh tokef* to the Rosh Hashanah Haftarah reading. Allusions to the Writings draw heavily on the Psalms, which is not surprising, but also from Job, which is. Perhaps the parallels with Job's testing and tribulations found strong resonance in a liturgical poem about mortality, sin, and repentance.

*U-n'taneh tokef* anticipates some motifs in the *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* which follow: the *piyyut* refers to God's kingship in colon 2a, remembrance in 5ab, and the shofar in 7a. Some verses resemble closely phrases in the *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* texts. For example, in the *Zikhronot*, the phrases in its opening paragraph, *Atah zokheir*—איזו לחרב ואיזו לשלום, איזו לרעב ואיזו להזכירם לחיים ולמות לשבע—resemble lines 16, 19, and 20. The *Shofarot* section

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25 R. Judah said in R. Eleazar's name: Three things nullify a decree [of evil], viz. prayer, righteousness, and repentance. And the three are enumerated in one verse: "If my people, upon whom My Name is called, shall humble themselves, and pray" (II Chron. 7:14)—here you have prayer; "and seek my face" (ib.) alludes to righteousness, as you read, 'I shall behold, Thy face is righteousness' (Ps. 17:15); 'and turn from their evil ways' denotes repentance ר' יהודה בשם ר"א אמר שלשה דברים מבטלים גזרות רעות ואלו הם תשובה ומעשים טובים כתרם בפני הפורענות. *Pirkei avot* 4:13 identifies repentance and good deeds as a shield against punishment: תפלה וצדקה ותשובה.

26 "Repentance and good deeds are a shield against punishment [*Pirkei avot* 4:13] Rabbi Ishmael said: If repentance had not been created, the world would not stand. But since repentance has been created, the right hand of the Holy One, blessed be He, is stretched forth to receive the penitent every day, and He says, Repent, ye children of men." *Pirkei d'rabbi eliezer*, trans. by Gerald Friedlander (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1916), 337. In the *N'ilah* service, after *Ashamnu*, the reference to God's extended hand is explicit: אתה נתן יד לפושעים וימינך פשוטה לקבל שבים.

27 *Yotseir* text in *Shaharit* beginning למלך אל חי וקים. לאל ברוך

cites the prophetic proof-text of Isaiah 27:13—יתקע בשופר גדול—and those three words occur in line seven.<sup>28</sup>

*B'reshit rabbah* is roughly contemporary with the Palestinian Talmud—fourth century. *Sifrei d'varim* dates from the third century. These references suggest a date for *U-n'taneh tokef* in the fourth century, at the earliest.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately neither dating by stylistic grounds nor dating by textual allusions can be decisive. As Heinemann notes in his study of *Hoshanot*, some *payy'tanim* composed their poetry in deliberately archaic styles.<sup>30</sup> And what appears to be an allusion in a *piyyut* to a well-known work such as *Pirkei avot* may be deceptive, for the poem could be the earlier work. Heinemann warns that many common phrases recur in different liturgical contexts and that it is difficult to claim that one is original and that others are subsequent or derivative.<sup>31</sup>

### Textual variants of *U-n'taneh tokef*

We are fortunate to have Daniel Goldschmidt's critical edition of the Ashkenazic *piyyutim* for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, including *U-n'taneh tokef*. Goldschmidt's critical apparatus cites not only the different Ashkenazic rites containing individual *piyyutim* and textual variants found among different manuscripts but also the liturgical allusions. *U-n'taneh tokef* is found in the main Ashkenazic [א] rites: Polish [פ], French [צ] and Roman [ר]—the Hebrew *sigla* Goldschmidt used to classify his primary manuscripts. The *piyyut* is less common in other manuscripts. Included among the diverse *mahzorim* Goldschmidt examined are

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28 Elbogen argued that the entire text of *Atah zokheir* was written by Rav or his followers and suggested that since all three introductory sections share similar stylistic characteristics, "it would not be too daring to suppose that the three introductions are all from his hand." Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. by Raymond Scheindlin (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1993), 119-20. Joseph Heinemann's addendum does not deny the possibility of Rav's authorship but cautions that the attribution to Rav is uncertain. Heinemann suggests that the pure Hebrew of the texts suggests origin in Palestine rather than Babylonia and perhaps dates to tannaitic times.

29 While Goldschmidt cites *Pirkei d'rabbi eliezer* 43 as a parallel to line 24—[the hour of] his death You wait; if he repents, You accept him immediately—this is a much later text, and the parallels he cited are not close.

30 Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1977), Chapter 6, "Piyyut-Forms of Temple Origin."

31 Heinemann, Chapter Two: "The Development of Prayers and the Problem of the 'Original' Text," 37-76.

many fragments from the Cairo *genizah*, including the fragment of *U-n'taneh tokef* from the British Library which Zulay and Werner cited. Three fragments from the Cairo *genizah* contain *U-n'taneh tokef*:

**London:** British Library, Oriental 5557 G, folios 67b-68b—plates of this manuscript were published in Richard I. Breslauer's dissertation in Lucerne, 2001.<sup>32</sup> This fragment Zulay dated from the late eighth century.<sup>33</sup> Goldschmidt's *siglum* for this fragment is  $\aleph$ . It contains lines 1-28b.

**Cambridge:** University Library Taylor-Schechter 8/6. Goldschmidt's *siglum* is  $\aleph^7$ . It contains lines 2c through 34b.

**New York:** Jewish Theological Seminary ENA 2131.6; it is not included in Goldschmidt's study.<sup>34</sup> It is, however, available online in digitized format from the Friedberg Genizah Project. The text extends from *tokef* (1a) with many intervening gaps through 12c. The text immediately following the word *tokef* is not clearly related to *U-n'taneh tokef* as we know it.

These *genizah* texts are fragmentary, and they do not merit Werner's statement that the London manuscript "differs considerably from the now accepted recension of the current prayer books."<sup>35</sup> Many of the variants are minor: addition or omission of a *vav*-conjunction, full or abbreviated orthography, imperfect or perfect tenses, and variant orderings of parallel words or phrases. The more significant variants appear below:

<u>Colon Goldschmidt Critical Text</u>	<u>Genizah Fragments and Other Variants</u>
1a -----	ונתנה תוקף קדושת היום כנגד שלוש תקיעות היום... L
1b כי הוא יום	יום may be absent L
2a ובו תנשא	ובם תנשא L
2a תנשא	יתנשא or תתנשא L,NY
3a אמת כי אתה הוא דיין	כי אתה הוא דיין אמת L,C,NY
3a -----	some MSS omit אמת or הוא
3-5 ומוכיח ויודע ועד... כל הנשכחות	ותזכור כל הנשכחות ומוכיח ויודע ועד L,C
6b וחותרם יד כל אדם בו	וביד כל אדם יחתום L
7a ובשופר	ושופר
7b דקה	absent in some MSS, incl. NY and L

reproduction of the three pages of the London fragment.  
33 Werner, "Hebrew and Oriental Christian Metrical Hymns: A Comparison," 425.

34 Cited in Joseph Yahalom, *Palestinian Vocalized Piyyut Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 53.

35 425.

36 This variant identifies Hoshanah Rabah as the day on which the decree is sealed; the reference alludes to a medieval belief that the Days of Repentance extended through Sukkot.

9a	יום הדין	יום דין	L,C,NY
10a	באי עולם	באי העולם	L,C
10a	יעברון	עוברים	
10b	לפניך כבני מרון	כבני מרון לפניך or כבנומרון לפניך	L,NY
11b	מעביר	ומעביר	
13a	לכל בריה	בריותיך or לכל בריות or לכל הבריות	L
13b	ותכתוב את גזר דינם	missing in L	
14a	בראש	ובראש	
14a	יכתבון	יכתב or יזכרון or ישפטון	
14b	וביום צום כפור	וביום הושענה <sup>36</sup>	
14b	ייהתמון	ייהתם	L
15a	יעברון	יעבורון	L
17b	ומי לא	מי לא	L
18ab	מי במים ומי באש	מי באש ומי במים	
19a	בחרב	בדבר	
19b	בחיה	במלחמה	
22ab	מי בחניקה ומי בסקילה	missing in many MSS	
24a	ישקט	ישקוט	
26a	ירום	ירים	
26b	ישפל	יושפל	
27ab	מי יעשיר ומי יעני	מי יעני ומי יעשיר	L
28b	מעבירין	מעבירים	
28b	את	missing	
31a	כי לא	ולא	C
31b	כי אם בשובו מדרכו	מדרכו הרעה or מחטאתו or מדרכיו or כי אם בחטאו ימות	
31b	והיה	והי	
32a	ועד	עד	C
32a	תחכה	תקוה	
32b	אם	ואם	
32b	מיד	כי	
32b	תקבלו	or missing	C
33a	אמת	תרצה	C
33a	כי אתה	missing in many MSS	
33b	וידוע	ואתה יודע	
34a	יסודו מעפר	מעפר נברא	C
35b	כחרס	לחרס	
36a	כחציר יבש	missing	
36b	וכציץ נובל	missing	
36	-----	כצל עובר כציץ נובל	
37a	כצל	וכצל	
38ab	וכרוח נושבת וכאבק פורה	וכאבק פורה וכרוח נושבת or וכחלום יעוף וכאבק פורה	
39a	הוא	missing	
39b	אל	missing	
40a	אין	ואין	
40a	קצה	שעור or קצה or קץ	
41a	ואין שעור	ואין משער or ואין קצה	
		ואין לשער מרכבות...ואין לפרש עילום	

42a	שמך נאה לך	ונאה אתה or נאה לך שמך
43b	עשה למען שמך	missing
44a	וקדש	קדש
45-47	בעבוד כבוד שמך הנערץ והנקדש	missing in some MSS

Most of these variants are minor, though a few are interesting. The *genizah* fragment from London begins (1a): “And we shall declare the power, the sanctity of today, corresponding to (*k’neged*) the three shofar blasts today.” *U-n’taneh tokef* precedes the *K’dushah*, which in turn precedes the *T’kiata*. This reference suggests that the *piyyut* does intentionally refer to the *malkhuyot*, *zikhronot*, and *shofarot*, as suggested above.

Colon 2a: the plural *bam* is curious. *Bo* clearly refers to *yom*: “and on it [that day] Your sovereignty is exalted.” Perhaps the plural—“on them”—refers the two days of Rosh Hashanah. If so, the plural does not agree with the singular form noun and pronoun in cola 1a-b. The use of the singular *bo* may well attest to the *piyyut*’s origin in Palestine, where Rosh Hashanah was celebrated for only one day. Or perhaps *bam* refers to both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—but that is not clear from context, and the pronoun still does not agree with the antecedents.

Colon 7b: the word *dakkah* is absent in many manuscripts. 1 Kings 19:12 contains both *d’mamah* and *dakkah*; Job 4:16 mentions only *d’mamah*. Perhaps *dakkah* is a later addition to harmonize with I Kings, but *dakkah* is clearly written in the *genizah* fragment from London and in manuscripts following the eastern Ashkenazic rite (*minhag Polin*).<sup>37</sup> Had the poet of *U-n’taneh tokef* balanced cola by word-or-syllable count, we would have stronger evidence that *dakkah* was a later addition, which modified the original two three-word cola. But while many verses do have equal number of words in both halves, not all are so balanced.

Colon 10b: the words *kiv’nei maron* was originally the Hebrew *Kiv*—attached to the Greek word *noumeron*, meaning “troops.” That phrase/word suggests the *piyyut*’s Palestinian origin; the word is discussed above.

Colon 14a: the alternate words for *yikateivun* are intriguing and suggest differing traditions: on Rosh Hashanah decrees are judged or recalled. Perhaps the problem was explaining how written—but not sealed—decrees could later be unwritten.

Colon 14b: one word is singular, and the other plural. At issue is whether the book or the decrees are sealed.

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37 Goldschmidt, *Mahzor* I, 169, n7 and 53 (גג).

Colon 19a: the text contrasts the death by sword and by beast, contrasting homicide with predation. The word *dever*—“plague, pestilence”—anticipates and replicates *mageifah* in colon 21b.

Colon 19b: the replacement of *hayyah*—“wild beast”—by *milhamah*—“war”—is intriguing. It occurs in the Roman rite—Goldschmidt’s 7; “sword” is metonymous, “warfare” is explicit.

Line 22 is absent in many manuscripts. The references to stoning and strangling are to Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 7:1, as two of the four types of execution. These references may date from an early form of the *piyyut*, later dropped as no longer applicable, for it is difficult to understand them as later additions in Northern Europe.

Colon 26a: the variant ירום is *hif'il*—to lift up or to be high—or it could be an Aramaism, where the form is indeed passive. The *hof'al*—be lifted up—would be ירם, a well-attested form: Psalms 13:3, 27:6, and 61:3 and elsewhere. The *hif'il* too is attested in Tanakh and the Psalms, but it often is transitive.

Colon 31b: the variants concretize the metaphor of the path of life; the gain in clarity is offset by the loss of a perfectly-clear metaphor.

Colon 32a: both verbs—to wait for and to hope for—convey similar meanings.

Colon 32b: the verb *tirtseh* suggests God’s pleasure at human repentance. The verb in this form is attested four times in Tanakh.

Colon 34a: the variant unnecessarily clarifies man’s origin from dust and loses the word play between *y'sodo*—“foundation, origin”—and *sofo*—“end.”

Most of these variants are minor. While interesting, they do not fundamentally alter either the structure or the meaning of *U-n'taneh tokef*.

### ***U-n'taneh tokef, Romanos's Kontakion, and Tomas de Celano's Dies Irae***

Eric Werner’s study of Near Eastern hymnography compares *U-n'taneh tokef* with a *kontakion*—a liturgical metrical poem for the Byzantine Church—by Romanos on the *Parousia* (the second coming of Jesus—not the resurrection) and with Tommaso de Celano’s sequence *Dies Irae*, for the Requiem Mass of the Roman Catholic Church. Werner concluded that the motifs “demonstrate the Jewish-apocalyptic source [*U-n'taneh tokef*] of both Romanos’s hymn



and the *Dies irae*.”<sup>38</sup> The following chart reproduces Werner’s comparisons of the three poems.<sup>39</sup>

*Unetaneh Tokef* &  
British Museum  
MS G 5557 Or  
(Cairo Genizah)

**Hymn of Romanos**  
upon the Reappearance  
of Jesus<sup>40</sup>

*Dies Irae* Sequence

וחיל ורעד יאחזון	everything trembles	Quantus tremor est futurus
ותפתח את ספר הזכרונות	books are opened	Liber scriptus proferetur
ותזכור כל הנשכחות	hidden things are made public	In quo totum continetur Quidquid latet adparebit
ומלאכים יחפזון	angels are dragged before the throne	
כי אתה הוא דין אמת	angels cry “Glory to Thee, most just Judge”	
ובשופר גדול יתקע	upon the sound of the trumpet	Tuba mirum spargens sonum Per sepulchra regionum
כי לא יזון [לפניך]	Nobody is pure before Thee	Quem patronum rogaturus Cum vix iustus sit securus
כבקרת רועה עדרו	Like a shepherd he will save	Inter oves locum praesta Et ab hoedis me sequest
וכל באי העולם יעברון כבנומרון לפניך	They all will bow before Thee	

38 Werner, “Hebrew and Oriental Christian Metrical Hymns: A Comparison,” 427.

39 Werner, “Hebrew and Oriental Christian Metrical Hymns: A Comparison,” 426-27.

40 Werner identified the *kontakion* as a “Hymn of Romanos upon the Reappearance of Christ.” Romanos wrote six *kontakia* on the resurrection of Jesus. Werner refers to the *Deuteros Parousia—the Second Coming of Jesus at the Last Judgment*.

<p>[ותשובה [ותפלה וצדקה]  מעבירי] ן את [רע]  [הגזרח]</p>	<p>Therefore: penitence  and prayer will save you</p>	<p>Preces meae non sunt dignae  Sed tu bonus fac benigne  Donum fac remissionis  Ante dies rationis</p>
	<p>The injury of the sin  we may heal through  the remedy of remorse</p>	<p>Ingemisco, tanquam reus:  Culpa rubet vultus meus:  Supplicanti parce, Deus</p>

These parallels are indeed striking, and Werner noted that “the resemblance is obvious.” Werner cited Zulay’s date “during the Byzantine rule”—between 330 and 638 CE. Romanos lived in the sixth century and flourished between 536 and 556 ce.<sup>41</sup> Tommaso de Celano lived 1190-1260. Tommaso’s *Dies irae*, therefore, lies far distant from the two earlier poems. That Romanos was born Jewish<sup>42</sup> strengthens Werner’s argument that the *piyyut* influenced the *kontakion* for it suggests possible contact. If, as suggested above, *U-n’taneh tokef* dates from the third or fourth century rather than the fifth or sixth, the *piyyut* would pre-date the *kontakion* and Werner’s argument that the Synagogue influenced the Church would be reinforced. Both poems are liturgical—associated with particular celebrations: *U-n’taneh tokef* for Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur and the *kontakion* for the Sunday in Carnival week.<sup>43</sup> The *piyyut* directly precedes the *K’dushah*, which contains the three-fold statement of God’s sanctity, and the *kontakion* also refers to angels singing the three-fold doxology.<sup>44</sup>

The *piyyut* and *kontakion* are similar in other ways as well. Both poems were composed by individuals; we know the names of early Christian poets, but the earliest Jewish *payy’tanim* are anonymous. Both poems develop the themes of the liturgical service for specific holy days. Just as *kontakia* served as sermons, so the *piyyutim* originally were optional replacements for standard prayers. The growth of the poetic accretions in both traditions eventually lead to pruning or excising them.

These striking resemblances are deceptive. The passages which Werner cites do indeed appear in the *kontakion*, but their sources are primarily from

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41 Majorie Carpenter, trans. and annotator, *Kontakia of Romaos, Byzantine Melodist, Vol. I: On the Person of Christ* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1970), xiv.

42 A hymn on Romanos by Alexander Eumorphopoulos contains the phrase “from the Hebrew race.” Scholars have noted semiticisms in Romanos’s works and Jewish forms of names. Carpenter, *Kontakia I*, xiv, n6.

43 Carpenter, *Kontakia I*, 369.

44 Strophe 16.

Greek Scriptures. The chart below gives the Greek text from a critical edition by Karl Krumbacher,<sup>45</sup> my translation, and the biblical sources for the motifs.

**Romanos *Kontakion* On the Second Coming—Της Δευτέρας παρουσίας: Parallels with *U-n'taneh tokef* ונתנה תקף**

<u>Motif</u>	<u>Strophe/s</u>	<u>Lines</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Sources</u>
angels tremble	15	325	ὄν τρέμουσιν ἄγγελοι angels tremble/shake	2 Peter 2:4 Jude 1:6
	16	341-43	Χερουβειμ καὶ Σεραφεὶμ δὲ μετὰ τρόμου λειτουργοῦσι καὶ δοξολογοῦσι Cherubim and Seraphim with trembling serve/minister and glorify/praise <sup>46</sup>	Isaiah 6:2-3 cf Psalm 2:11
books opened	Prooimion	6	καὶ βίβλοι διανοίγονται and books are opened	Rev 22:12; 3:5 Rev 13:8, 21:7
hidden things are revealed	Prooimion	7	καὶ τὰ κρυπτὰ δημοσιεύονται and the hidden made public	Romans 2:16 I Cor 4:5, 14:25
	1	26-27	ἀληθείας ἐλεγχούσης truth is exposed	
angels dragged before God's throne	16	331-34	ἀγγέλων πάντων τὰ τάγματα καὶ τῶν ἀρχαγγέλων ἀνυμνοῦντα προτρέχουσι πρὸ τοῦ θρόνου σου, κύριε. angels of all ranks and the archangels run before, sing praises before Your throne, Lord.	Matt 25:31

45 Karl Krumbacher, "Studien zu Romanos," *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und der historischen Classe der k. bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*, II (München: Verlag der k. Akademie, 1898), 163-83.

46 Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, 2nd ed. revised and enlarged (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 187-88.

[no mention of dragging]

angels cry “Glory 3 to Thee, most just Judge”		74-75	Δόξα σοι / κριτὰ δικαιοῦτατε Glory to You /Just Judge	Romans 2:16, 3:6
sound of the trumpet	17	351	ἐνηχούσης τῆς σάλπιγγος the trumpet sounds	cf Cor 15:52 1 Thess 4:16 Matt 24:31 Rev 8:6
no one is pure before God	1	23-25	τότε ἀρνεῖσθαι / τὰς ἁμαρτίας / οὐδεὶς οὐκ ἐξισχύσει then deny / the sins / none is able	Job 4:17
like a shepherd he will save	11	226	ὡς ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς ἡμῶν as our good shepherd [the <i>evil one</i> is the shepherd]	Psalm 23 Isaiah 40:11 John 10:2, 11-14
all will bow before Thee	18	375	προσκυνοῦντες τὸν ὕψιστον righteous kneel before Most High	
penitence and prayer save	22	469-73	Εἶθε ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ / τὸν τῆς μετανοίας / καρπὸν ἐπεδειξάμεθα / κἂν εὖρομεν ἔλεος / καὶ χάριν καὶ ἄφεσιν Would that in Your world the fruit of repentance we might show and find mercy and grace and remission/forgiveness	James 5:15 Matt 3:8-11, Mark 1:4 Luke 15:7 Acts 13:24, 26:20
	23	485-89	καὶ γὰρ τὸ τραῦμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας φαρμάκῳ μετανοίας ἰατρεύσομεν συντόμως, ἐάν ᾖρα βουλευτῶμεν. and since the wound of sin by the remedy of repentance	

we heal quickly,  
if indeed we are willing.

sin healed	24	510	δὸς καιρὸν μοι μετανοίας	Luke 5:32, 24:47
through remorse			give me time for repentance	Acts 5:31

Not all of Werner's parallels are good. While Romanos's poem mentions angels singing before God's throne, the angels are not dragged there—nor does God judge them.<sup>47</sup> The reference to God as a shepherd, while common to Judaism and Christianity, is not apt in Romanos's *kontakion*, for the shepherd is not God but rather the Antichrist, disguised as a shepherd to lead his followers astray.

Both the *piyyut* and the *kontakion* develop the theme of divine judgment, but the contexts differ greatly. Romanos's poem opens with God on the throne of judgment and terror among those to be judged. Romanos relates that Jesus was not originally separated from God the Father. After Jesus's ascension, Jews regret piercing him. John the Baptist, Elijah, and Malachai foretell Jesus's arrival; John the Evangelist cites Elijah and Enoch. Daniel relates that the Antichrist will come: born of an impure woman, he will deceive people, and they will worship him. The lawless will exult and deny God. For three and a half years there will be false miracles; the Antichrist will assume the form of angels and demons flying through the air. There will be drought, famine, earthquakes, persecution, exile. People will die; children will die before their parents. Then Jesus will return in glory, tombs will open, the dead arise. The Antichrist will be chained and cast into fire. Everyone then will be immortal: the impious, gathered to Jesus's left, will be punished eternally; the righteous, on the right, will enjoy God's kingdom. Therefore, the poet concludes, one should avoid sin and repent, for Jesus is the all-holy savior. Romanos's theol-

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47 Hananel Mack notes that the theme of God judging angels occurs in Isaiah 24:21 and finds echoes elsewhere in Tanakh, citing Psalm 82:1. That theme is elaborated in the Targum of Job 1:6 and 2:1, which freely elaborates on the biblical text. Hananel Mack, "Day of Judgment for Angels Too," *Ha-arets*, 29 September 2003. The targum of Job pre-dates Saadia Gaon (882-942), but we cannot date it with greater precision. "The Targum of Job," trans. by Céline Mangan in *The Aramaic Bible*, vol. 15 (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 5-8. Mayer I. Gruber cites Job 4:18 as another instance of God judging angels. "Tur-Sinai's Job in Jewish Liturgy" *Review of Rabbinic Judaism*, 6:1 (2003), 93. Gruber cites Kallir's *piyyut*, *Enosh eikh yiszdak* (Musaf, Yom Kippur) and Meshullam ben Kalonymos's *piyyut*, *Enosh mah yizkeh* (Shaharit, Yom Kippur) as containing the concept that even heavenly beings are not pure in God's sight—echoes of Job 4:18.

ogy and his poem have little to do with *U-n'taneh tokef*. Although Romanos may have been born a Jew, his theology is Christian and his comments about Jews are unflattering—if not derogatory.

While both poems concern divine judgment, the theological differences are vast.

<u><i>U-n'taneh tokef</i></u>	<u>Romanos's <i>kontakion</i></u>
annual judgment	Last Judgment
judgment of life or death	eternal judgment: heaven or hell
non-eschatological	eschatological—end of days
judgment of mortal destiny	non-mortal concerns
no reference to resurrection	resurrection of the dead
no mention of Antichrist	Antichrist deceives people calamities precede the <i>Parousia</i>

The structures of both poems also differ greatly. The *kontakion* is strophic: an introductory section, the *prooimion*, precedes twenty-four stanzas, each with the same number of lines; while numbers of syllables per line differ, each line has the same number of syllables as in the corresponding line of the first strophe; each strophe ends with a refrain; the verses form an acrostic—Του ταπεινού Ρωμανού το επος—The Poem of the Humble Romanos. *U-n'taneh tokef* has no acrostic; there is no refrain, the form is not strophic. The first section of *U-n'taneh tokef* is not an introductory stanza, for it is an integral part of the *piyyut*. The worlds of Romanos's *kontakion* and of *U-n'taneh tokef* are distant from each other. At issue is whether the resemblances cited reflect direct influence—transmission—or whether they arise as polygenesis from a common pool of themes and motifs.

The similarities Werner noted do not reveal direct or indirect influences, but rather are parallel themes in Christian eschatology originating in the Greek Scriptures. Motifs of angels, judgment, fear, trumpet/shofar blowing, and repentance are common to both Jewish and Christian traditions and far predate both liturgical poems. The *Dies irae* clearly draws upon these Christian sources—not *U-n'taneh tokef*. In the third to the seventh centuries both Jews and Christians wrote liturgical poetry; in reference to accountability to God and judgment, both drew upon Scripture and the folklore common to both traditions. Werner often assumed direct influence between the Synagogue and the Church—a sacred bridge—when polygenesis was more probable. For example, when melodies resemble one another, Werner often suggested such influence, even when the texts and liturgical functions were dissimilar. Yet melodic similarities are unavoidable when only seven or eight pitches are primary and most melodies move by step or small leap.

On the basis of style, *U-n'taneh tokef* is probably the earlier poem—perhaps by one or two hundred years. Both poems treat similar biblical images and folklore in different poetic forms and in greatly different theological contexts. Evidence for direct influence between the *piyyut* and the *kontakion* is lacking.

### Adoption.

*U-n'taneh tokef* is not included in the *Seder* of Rav Amram, nor in the *Siddur* of Saadia Gaon. It is most prominent in the Ashkenazic rites and is optional or omitted in Sephardic and Oriental rites. The legend of Rabbi Amnon's creation of the *piyyut* exists in various forms. The texts of the legend are reproduced in Breslauer's monograph, and David Golinkin assembles strong evidence that the legend is fiction rather than fact.<sup>48</sup> The story is told in *Or Zarua* by Rabbi Isaac ben Moses of Vienna (c1180-1250), who copied it from a manuscript by Rabbi Ephraim bar Jacob of Bonn (1132-1197). Rabbi Ephraim claimed that Rabbi Amnon appeared in a dream to Rabbi Kalonymos ben Meshullam ben Kalonymos ben Moshe ben Kalonymus of Mainz, who was martyred in 1096 or 1100.<sup>49</sup> Rabbi Amnon "commanded that he [Rabbi Kalonymos] disseminate it [*U-n'taneh tokef*] throughout the Exile as a memorial to him, and the Gaon did so."<sup>50</sup> The story, therefore, comes to us third-hand; aside from this legend, we have no historical record that Rabbi Amnon of Mainz ever existed. The text does suggest, though, that Rabbi Kalonymos disseminated the *piyyut* in the second half of the eleventh century.

The Kalonymos family lived in Italy and settled in Germany—Mainz and Speyer; they also composed *piyyutim*, some of which are in contemporary Ashkenazic *mahzorim*. Kalonymos probably popularized the Palestinian *piyyut*. He died during the first Crusade, which decimated Jewish communities;

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48 Golinkin, "Do 'Repentance, Prayer, and Charity Avert the Stern Decree'?", in *Insight Israel* 6:1 (September 2005), online at [www.schechter.edu/insight/Israel.asp?ID=19](http://www.schechter.edu/insight/Israel.asp?ID=19) includes a translation by Ivan Marcus of the text of the earliest version of the Rabbi Amnon narrative; the Marcus translation originally appeared in Zvia Ben-Yosef Ginor, ed. *Essays on Hebrew Literature in Honor of Avraham Holtz* (New York, 2003), 35-37 and was based upon manuscripts from Amsterdam and Frankfurt. Elizabeth Hollender traces the legend and its renaissance and nineteenth-century variants in "Narrative Kreativität in Ashkenaz: Die Erzählung(en) über Amnon von Mainz," *Im Gespräch* 11 (2005): 32-47.

49 Golinkin, "Do 'Repentance, Prayer, and Charity Avert the Stern Decree'?"

50 Translation of the Amnon legend by Ivan Marcus, in Zvia Ben-Yosef Ginor, ed. *Essays on Hebrew Literature in Honor of Avraham Holtz* (New York, 2003), 36-37, quoted by Golinkin in "Do 'Repentance, Prayer, and Charity Avert the Stern Decree'?"

subsequent blood libels, desecration of the host libels, the Black Death, and numerous expulsions could account for the *piyyut*'s popularity in Ashkenaz. The legend links *U-n'taneh tokef*, a *piyyut* about divine judgment recited on Rosh Hashanah, with a martyrdom in the Rhineland. The poem affirms God's justice, a comforting thought for the persecuted; it underscores the fragility of life; it urges repentance and ethical behavior; it stresses God's mercy. The legend of Rabbi Amnon's martyrdom was an archetype for the persecuted.

Shlomo Eidelberg cites a story of a Rabbi Amnon and nine others who were martyred in southern Italy, and a tale of the martyrdom of Kalonymos the Parnas. Eidelberg thereby suggested that the legend of Amnon of Mainz might have been founded on an historical event. Ivan Marcus argues that the Palestinian *piyyut* represents the oldest stratum, to which the south Italian stories of the ten martyrs and Rabbi Amnon were grafted; this in turn was transformed by the *midrash* of ten martyrs by Rabbi Ishmael. Marcus argues that what distinguishes the legend of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz from earlier tales of martyrdom is Amnon's doubt—his momentary consideration of the very possibility of conversion; this doubt reflected the reality of Ashkenazic Jews during and after the persecutions of the First Crusade.<sup>51</sup>

Joseph Yahalom cites the original ending of Kallir's *piyyut* cycle *Mi lo yir'a'akha melekh* in which angels of destruction and accusers compare humans to broken pottery, dry straw, a passing shadow, and wind-driven dust; in the late Byzantine period when Kallir wrote the *piyyut*—a time of Jewish suffering—the text promised judgment upon the nations. Kallir's *piyyut* was well-known in France. Yahalom argues that the German Jews of the Rhine Valley followed French practice by adopting Kallir's *piyyut* but changed the ending in order to retain *U-n'taneh tokef*. The legend of Rabbi Amnon thereby justified retention of an old text—*U-n'taneh tokef*.<sup>52</sup>

It is difficult to prove or disprove Yahalom's explanation, for supporting evidence is not extant. Despite interesting parallels with Kallir's *piyyut*, *U-*

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51 Ivan Marcus, "Une communauté pieuse et la doute: mourir pour la Sanctification du Nom (Qiddouch ha-Chem) en Achkenaz (Europe du Nord), et l'histoire de rabbi Amnon de Mayence," *Annales histoire, sciences sociales* 49:5 (September, 1994): 1031-47 and "Kiddush ha-shem in Ashkenaz and the Story of R. Amnon of Mainz" (in Hebrew), in Isaiah Gafni and Aviezer Ravitski, eds., *K'dushat ha-ḥayyim v'heiruf ha-nefesh* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar I'toldot Yisrael, 1992), 131-47. See also Jeremy Cohen, "Between Martyrdom and Apostasy: Doubt and Self-Definition in Twelfth-Century Ashkanaz," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29:3 (Fall 1999), 431-71 and Jeremy Cohen, "The Mentality of the Medieval Jewish Apostate: Peter Alfonsi, Hermann of Cologne, and Pablo Christiani" in Todd M. Endelman, ed. *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1987, 20-47.

52 Yahalom, "Who Shall Be the Author and Who Shall Not?"



*n'taneh tokef* is a *silluk* which leads into the *K'dushah* of *Musaf* and precedes the shofar liturgy, whereas the *piyyut Mi lo yira'akha* is in *Shaharit* of Yom Kippur. We do not know how the Palestinian *piyyut* whose style seems to predate Kallir arrived in Europe. Perhaps it came with the Kalonymos family, for the legend relates that Rabbi Amnon appeared in a dream to Rabbi Meshullam ben Kalonymos and taught him the *piyyut* and charged him to disseminate it, which he did.

## Conclusion

*U-n'taneh tokef* probably originated in the third or fourth century, for it has close parallels with other anonymous Jewish liturgical poems from the same period. It differs significantly from the styles of Yannai, Yose ben Yose, and Kallir. The *piyyut* is clearly of Palestinian origin, as the Greek term *noumenon*, the fragments in the Cairo *genizah*, and the fragment with Palestinian pointing suggest. The poem is sensitive to rhyme, repetition, rhythm, and parallelism. Textual variants exist, but most are relatively minor. The sections *B'rosh hashanah* and *Ein kitsbah* may be later additions, but hard evidence to support that is lacking. The legend of its creation by Rabbi Amnon of Mainz is fictive, but transmission by the Kalonymos family is likely. Its popularity in Ashkenaz—as attested by its adoption—may have occurred because of persecution. The development of *piyyutim* in Judaism has parallels in Christianity: Romanos in the Byzantine Church, Ephrem in the Syriac Church, Ambrose in the Western Church. But these similarities are general, not specific: there is no evidence for direct borrowing or interchange. Christian poets alluded to the Greek Scriptures, which often use motifs similar to those in Judaism. The differences in style, organization, context, and context are great, though both traditions draw upon shared folklore and some shared biblical texts.

Finally *U-n'taneh tokef* is a poignant poem. In powerful imagery it presents the main themes of the *Yamim nora'im*: God's sovereignty, annual judgment of all living beings, God's dual attributes of judgment and mercy, human mortality, personal responsibility for behavior, and metaphors of the ephemerality of human life. Ultimately, the poem is beautiful, sensitive and deeply moving.

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**וּבְכֵן לַךְ תַּעֲלֶה קְדוּשָׁה, כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ.**  
**וַיִּנְתְּנָה תוֹקֵף קְדוּשַׁת הַיּוֹם / כִּי הוּא נוֹרָא וְאִים**  
**וְבוּ תִנְשֵׂא מַלְכוּתְךָ / וַיִּכּוֹן בְּחֶסֶד בְּסֶאֶךְ**  
**וַתִּשָּׁב עָלָיו בְּאֵמֶת / אֵמֶת כִּי אַתָּה הוּא דִין**  
**וּמוֹכִיחַ וַיִּוְדַע וְעַד / וְכוֹתֵב וְחוֹתֵם וְסוֹפֵר וּמוֹנֵה**  
**וְתִזְכֹּר כָּל הַנְּשֻׁכָּחוֹת / וְתַפְתַּח אֶת סֵפֶר הַזְּכוּרוֹת** 5  
**וּמֵאֱלֹהֵי יִקְרָא / וְחוֹתֵם יָד כָּל אָדָם בּוֹ**  
**וּבִשְׁוֹפֵר גָּדוֹל יִתְקַע / וְקוֹל דְּמָמָה דָּקָה יִשְׁמַע**  
**וּמֵלֵאבִים יִחְפוּזוֹן / וְחִיל וְרַעְדָה יֵאֲחֹזוֹן**  
**וַיֵּאמְרוּ הִנֵּה יוֹם הַדִּין / לִפְקוֹד עַל צְבֵא מְרוֹם בְּדִין**  
**כִּי לֹא יִזְכּוּ בַעֲיֵינְךָ בְּדִין / וְכָל בָּאֵי עוֹלָם יַעֲבֹרוּן לִפְנֵיךָ בְּבִינֵיךָ** 10

ונתנה תוקף. לפי הרמב"ם מוסב החלק הראשון על יום הדין שלעתיד לבא (עי' שם), ומכאן  
 וכל באי עולם עובר המחבר לר"ה של כל השנה, מה שאינו מתקבל על הדעת. ויותר נראה  
 מתאר את סדר ר"ה של כל השנה בשמים בתמונת יום הדין הסופי שבמקרא, בלי שיש מקור  
 באגדה ידועה.

1 ונתנה תוקף קדושת היום, ר"ל נספר קדושת ר"ה. ובקטע הגניזה הוא ממשך: כנגד  
 תקיעות היום, לפי הרעיון הידוע. כי הוא ר"ל היום. נורא ואיום לשון ח  
 א ד. 2 ובו תנשא מלכותך כמד' כד ז. ויכון בחסד כסאך 3 ותשב עליו באמת  
 ישע' טז ה והוכן בחסד כסא וישב עליו באמת. אמת כי אתה הוא דיין ומוכיח ויודע  
 כמאמר חז"ל (אבות ד' כ"ב) לידע להודיע ולהודיע שהוא... הוא הדיין והוא עד הוא בעל דין  
 5 ותזכור כל הנשכחות ע"פ נוסח הברכה הנשנית במשנה (תענית ב' ד') זוכר הנשם  
 ותפתח את ספר הזכרונות (ל' אסתר ו א) ע"פ מאמר חז"ל ירו' ר"ה א' ג' דף נ"ז א'  
 פיניקיות הם... 6 ומאליו יקרא מעצמו נקרא. וחותם יד כל אדם בו ע"ש איוב לז ז וז  
 חז"ל (ספרי דברים ש"ז, ועוד) שהחוטא בעצמו חותם (בשעת פטירתו מן העולם, והפי'  
 העבירו כלל זה לר"ה) על מעשיו. 7 ובשופר גדול יתקע ע"ש והיה כיום שהוא יתקע ב'  
 גדול, ישע' כג יג, וקול דממה דקה ישמע ע"ש איוב ד טז דממה וקול אשמע. 8 ומלא  
 יחפוזון איוב ד יח הן בעבדיו לא יאמינן ובמלאכיו ישימ תהלה. וחיל ורעדה יאחוזון (הלשון  
 תהלי' מה ז רעדה אחותם שם תיל כולדה, והיה צ"ל יאחו אותם). 9 ויאמרו הנה יום ה

*U-n'taneh tokef*—with Goldschmidt's commentary—*Mahzor l'yom kippur*  
 (Jerusalem: Koren), 2000: 355.

# ***Hasidism and Mitnagdim* in the Russian Empire: the (mis)use of Jewish music in Polish–Lithuanian Russia**

*By Stephen P. K. Muir*

## **Music and the Politics of Religious Power**

The title of the recent conference ‘Music and Power,’ where the ideas that follow were first muted, typically engenders discussions of political censorship, theatrical politics, musical propaganda, and similar such things.<sup>1</sup> However, in this article I address the topic from a different perspective, namely how music and power interact when different identities—in this case religious identities—collide. There have been few times in the modern era when music and religious dogma have not come into conflict in some manner, often reflecting a deeper power struggle over religious and political identities. The place of music within Islam, for example, is fraught with controversy, even if the common perception that music is forbidden to Muslims is, broadly speaking, inaccurate and exaggerated.<sup>2</sup> For some composers, such as William Byrd (1540–1623) in Tudor England, music was a means of expressing a deeply-held religious identity (a crypto-Catholic one for much of Byrd’s life) otherwise forbidden by the prevailing religious and political powers. For others, such as the reforming synagogue composers of the nineteenth century (figures like Louis Lewandowski (1821–94), music was one agency in forging a new religious identity, openly challenging the status quo, and both reflecting and helping shape the contemporary cultural milieu. In most instances, opposing musical identities come into direct confrontation, mirroring the wider social and political conflicts that threaten underlying religious identities.

Such was the case with the intra-communal battle for supremacy that played out among the Eastern Ashkenazi Jews of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. After the three partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793 and 1795, the territory that was once the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth had been divided between the surrounding powers of Prussia, Russia and Austria; for large numbers of Jews, at times treated with some tolerance in the Commonwealth, this brought great suffering and confinement to the Pale of Settlement initially established by order of Empress Catherine II of Russia

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1 Havighurst Center for Post-Soviet Studies, Miami University, Oxford Ohio, 28 February–2 March 2013.

2 For measured assessments of music in Islam see, for example, Lois Ibsen al-Faruqi, ‘Music, Musicians and Muslim Law,’ *Asian Music* 17.1 (1985), 3–36; Amnon Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam: A Socio-Cultural Study* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995).

in 1791.<sup>3</sup> Amidst this political turmoil emerged two principal sub-branches of Judaism. On one hand, under the magnetic leadership of Israel ben Eliezer (1698–1760), a new charismatic branch of mystical Judaism, *Hasidism* [literally ‘piety’, ‘loving-kindness’], began to make headway, initially in the southern part of the former Commonwealth.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the so-called *Litvaks*—Jews who traced their roots back to the former lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, by then absorbed into the Russian partition—fiercely defended what they saw as a more traditional Judaism.<sup>5</sup> The most celebrated of these Lithuanian *Mitnagdim* [literally ‘opponents’ to Hasidism] was Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman (1720–97), commonly known as the Vilna [Vilnius] Gaon.<sup>6</sup> So great was the opposition of the *Mitnagdim* towards their Hasidic rivals that by the end of the 18th century they would denounce Hasidic leaders to the Russian government as politically subversive and heretical, though something of a rapprochement was reached during the nineteenth century in common opposition to the Reformist Jewish *Haskalah* [enlightenment], whose most prominent advocate was the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86).

In this article I examine the musical manifestations of this struggle for power between competing religious identities, focussing on the music of prayer and religious learning. A brief contextual outline of Jewish life and music in the period leading up to the rise of Hasidism provides a backdrop against which to view the development of Hasidic religious and musical practices, and to address a number of questions: How was music employed in the spread of Hasidism and the development of Hasidic identities, and what role did it play in broadening the power base of its leaders, the *Tzaddikim* [‘righteous ones’]? What was the consequent musical impact of *Mitnagdic* attempts to hold onto what they considered the ‘traditional’ Jewish identity? And how did the Jew-

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3 For a general introduction to the Pale and its development, see Richard Pipes, ‘Catherine II and the Jews: The Origins of the Pale of Settlement,’ *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 5 (1975), 3-20.

4 Israel ben Eliezer is commonly referred to by the term ‘Baal Shem Tov’ or its contraction ‘Besht’, meaning ‘Master of the [Divine] Name.’

5 The opposite of *Litvak* is *Galitzianer* (both Yiddish), though the term is less commonly encountered today than *Litvak*. Both can be used to denote broader religious and cultural features and adherences, and do not always automatically have purely geographical connotations. The non-Jewish corollary is *Litvish*, denoting a Lithuanian Gentile. For a discussion of the origins and connotations of the term *Litvak*, see Dovid Katz, *Seven Kingdoms of the Litvaks* (Vilnius: Vilnius Yiddish Institute; Lithuanian Ministry of Culture International Cultural Program Center, 2009).

6 ‘Gaon’ is variously translated as ‘pride,’ ‘splendour’ and ‘genius’. The original Geonim were distinguished Jewish scholars, primarily based in Babylonia and Baghdad during the sixth to eleventh centuries (see Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* (New Haven CT; London: Yale University Press, 1997)). The term’s application to Elijah ben Shlomo Zalman is thus a mark of the highest respect and honour.

ish identity politics of the day shape Jewish musical phenomena within this Russian Imperial context? Finally, I conclude with a brief assessment of how other recent research suggests that these conflicts have surprising musical consequences in a variety of contexts even today.

### **Jewish society in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth**

Whilst a comprehensive survey of the development of Jewish society in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth is clearly beyond the scope of this article, a broad and necessarily simplified picture of the period leading up to the appearance of Hasidism is helpful to frame the developments, both musical and societal, that were to follow.<sup>7</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century the Jewish population of Poland–Lithuania had been swelled by eastward migrations of Jews fleeing persecution primarily in Germany and Bohemia, from ‘just a few tens of thousands’ around the year 1500 to approximately 750,000 by 1764.<sup>8</sup> Initially, Jews found themselves far more secure in the region than they had in western Europe, largely owing to the *privilegia* [charters] issued to them granting essential rights of habitation, occupation and security, even if these were motivated by pure economic self-interest on the part of the Polish and Lithuanian monarchy and magnates, and not generally by philanthropic sentiments or grand notions of tolerance. From the mid-1500s, Jews had attained a relatively high level of communal autonomy, with a system of administrative *Kehillot* [literally ‘communities’] overseeing nearly every aspect of life, alongside (and very often intricately intertwined with) a powerful rabbinate that controlled all religious activities and education. What Jacob Katz describes as ‘super-*kehillah* organisations’ also emerged in the sixteenth century,<sup>9</sup> the most prominent of which were the *Va’ad arba aratzot* [Council of the Four Lands] in Poland and the *Va’ad medinat lita* [Council of the Lithuanian Land] in Lithuania. Between them, these organisations were responsible for communal administration, and on occasions for liaising between *kehillah* and civic authority. As Adam Teller informs us, more than half of the Jewish population lived on private estates,

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7 Unless otherwise stated, information from this section is gleaned from Allan Nadler, ‘The Practice of Judaism in Eastern Europe,’ in Jacob Neusner, Alan Avery-Peck and William Scott Green (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of Judaism*, vol. 1 (first edn., Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 2000), 213–224.

8 Shaul Stampfer, ‘Jewish Population Patterns in Pre-partition Lithuania,’ in Adam Teller (ed.), *Studies in the History of the Jews in Old Poland in Honour of Jacob Goldberg* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1998), 190.

9 Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), 122–134.

where they fell under the authority of the local non-Jewish nobility as well as the *kehillah*; in order to ensure a regular supply of tax revenue from Jewish tenants, ‘the local [Jewish] community and its officials became more and more part of the estate administration.’<sup>10</sup>

Despite this level of localised administrative cooperation, on a day-to-day basis Jewish society was almost completely cut off from its surroundings, ‘excluded from general European learning and culture [and] virtually untouched by outside, non-Rabbinic influences,’ as Nadler summarises.<sup>11</sup> This led to a focus on, and level of, Talmudic scholarship and cultural achievement quite unparalleled in the Jewish world of the day, based around the *yeshivot* [religious seminaries];<sup>12</sup> the Lublin and Kraków *yeshivot* became world centres for rabbinical scholarship, Lublin being known as the ‘Jerusalem of Poland,’ a title later mirrored in the nineteenth century by Vilna as the ‘Jerusalem of Lithuania.’ The term ‘Golden Age’ has often been ascribed to this period, and even if this is a slight exaggeration, scholars nevertheless speak of ‘eight or nine decades of material prosperity and relative security experienced by Polish Jews’ and ‘the appearance of a galaxy of sparkling intellectual figures [...] who among others produced enduring contributions to the canon of high culture.’<sup>13</sup>

There was, however, still significant hostility towards Jews, especially from the church, often in tension with the economically-driven leniency of civil authorities and landowners. Anti-Jewish hostility came to a head from 1648 during the Khmelnytsky Uprising that ultimately became a Ukrainian Cossack war of independence against Poland.<sup>14</sup> Statistics vary among historians, but all agree that over a period of nearly twenty years whole Jewish communities were routed and massacred, Katz speaking of ‘the slaughter of tens of

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10 Adam Teller, ‘Radziwiłł, Rabinowicz, and the Rabbi of Świerz: The Magnates’ Attitude to Jewish Regional Autonomy in the 18th Century,’ in Teller (ed.), *Studies in the History of the Jews in Old Poland*, 247.

11 Nadler, ‘The Practice of Judaism in Eastern Europe’, 215, col. 2.

12 Talmudic scholarship involves the interpretation of the Talmud, the oral law and commentaries thereon, second only to the Torah, recorded in writing from around the year 200. It was created in two versions, translations of which can be found in Jacob Neusner (ed.) *The Jerusalem Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, 28 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), and Jacob Neusner (ed.), *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, 22 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010).

13 Gershon David Hundert, *Jews in Poland–Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century: A Genealogy of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 11.

14 See Zenon Kohut, ‘The Khmelnytsky Uprising, the image of Jews, and the shaping of Ukrainian historical memory’, *Jewish History* 17.2 (2003), 141–163.

thousands.<sup>15</sup> In the period following these upheavals, communities recovered remarkably quickly, though the great Jewish institutions of learning in Poland never quite regained their former eminence and broad influence. The result was a stark division between an aristocratic and wealthy elite comprising the most important rabbis and members of the *kehillot*, who pursued the tradition of Talmudic scholarship, but remained distant from the mass of Jews whose beliefs were ‘dominated by a variety of primitive folk-beliefs and superstitions.’<sup>16</sup> Fuelled by the successive hope and disappointment of a series of false Messiahs, particularly Sabbatai Zevi (1626–76) and Jacob Frank (1726–91),<sup>17</sup> this population was particularly susceptible to the lure of the new mystical brand of Judaism already on the rise, Hasidism.

### **Jewish music in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth**

In the context outlined above, music played an important if little documented role. As James Loeffler has observed, ‘for a society that placed enormous value on recording and analyzing religious laws, rituals, stories and customs, traditional Ashkenazi Jews devoted remarkably little time to documenting their own music.’<sup>18</sup> But we know that since biblical times, music has been central to Jewish prayer, learning and synagogue ritual to some degree or another. In simplified terms, Jewish liturgical music is generally divided into three main categories.<sup>19</sup> *Nusah* describes traditionally un-notated modes around which the prayer leader—sometimes but not always the *Hazzan* (cantor)—improvises the majority of prayers in services. In addition, related modes were used in the process of Talmudic study.<sup>20</sup> *Leyning* is the term given to the highly-skilled execution of quite complex melodic formulae indicated by neume-like symbols within the text, used for the cantillation of the Torah

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15 Katz, *Tradition and Crisis*, 214. Shaul Stampfer estimates casualties at around 18,000–20,000 (‘What Actually Happened to the Jews of Ukraine in 1648?’ *Jewish History* 17.2 (2003), 165–178).

16 Nadler, ‘The Practice of Judaism in Eastern Europe,’ 217, col. 1.

17 See Matt Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Pawel Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

18 James Loeffler, *The Most Musical Nation: Jews and Culture in the late Russian Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

19 For a more comprehensive introduction to the music of Jewish worship, see Jeffrey Summit, *The Lord’s Song in a Strange Land: Music and Identity in Contemporary Jewish Worship* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), especially 23–32 (‘An Introduction to Jewish Worship’).

20 See Sholom Kalib, *The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue*, vol. 1, *Introduction: History and Definition* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 43–49.

and other books of the Hebrew bible. The final category includes composed music of varying types that has become popularly or traditionally associated with particular prayers and passages in the *siddur* (prayer book) and other texts. These include *misinai* tunes [literally, though rather misleadingly, ‘from Sinai’] mostly linked with festival prayers, the cantorial and choral music of the nineteenth century by such composers as Salomon Sulzer (1804–90) of Vienna and Louis Lewandowski (1821–94) of Berlin, and *niggunim* [literally ‘melodies’] generally linked to the Hasidic tradition, which will be further discussed later in the article.

The central figure around which most of this synagogue musical activity focussed was the Hazzan, an office that began to emerge in its current form around the year 600.<sup>21</sup> Hazzanim were (and are) more than just singers; rather, they were often the true spiritual leaders of a community, the Rabbi being more of an authority in Jewish legal matters than spiritual ones. But *Hazzanim* occupied somewhat contradictory positions in society, often poor and mistrusted because of their necessarily nomadic lifestyles, and with exceptions sitting at the bottom of social strata. Recounting the early life of the great Ukrainian Hazzan Zavel Kwartin (1874–1953), Mark Slobin reports that

these men [*Hazzanim*] were based in a town but assembled a group of *meshoyrerim* (“choirboys”) and toured the provinces to make a living, because their home synagogue provided minimal support. [...] Despite the great praise showered on a local Hazzan he was very low on the social scale. The fact that he was dependent upon handouts seems to have played a part in this evaluation.<sup>22</sup>

Mistrust was also engendered by the feeling among some in Jewish communities that ‘the sensuality of the voice [should not] take precedence over the understanding of sacred text.’<sup>23</sup> Yaffa Eliach informs us that ‘because many *Hazzanim* were given to showmanship and self-display, the Council [of the Four Lands] made a point of restricting the number of prayers the Hazzan could chant during Sabbath services.’<sup>24</sup> The prominent liturgical scholar Lawrence Hoffman summarises this ambivalence:

At its best, *Hazzanut* [the art of the Hazzan] expresses sublimely religious sensitivity, even if the style is suspected of deteriorating into a display

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21 Mark Slobin, *Chosen Voices: The Story of the American Cantorate* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 5.

22 Ibid., 14–15.

23 Ibid., 8.

24 Yaffa Eliach, *‘There Once was a World’: A Nine-Hundred-Year Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1998), 139, col. 1.



of cantorial vanity and of opening the back door through which foreign melodies may infiltrate sacred worship. Severe criticisms of *Hazzanut* abound in the rabbinic literature of many countries and various periods from the ninth century to this day.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, some *Hazzanim* attained the status of near-celebrity, as Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, doyen of Jewish musical research, explains:

The Hazzan—artist of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Eastern Europe [...] reached the highest degree as artist, casting from himself all those tasks associated with his office which drew him down to the station of beadle and servitor of the community.<sup>26</sup>

By the period under consideration here, then, the main protagonist in synagogue musical activities occupied a somewhat contradictory position. And while the larger synagogues of the major urban centres described above could afford to employ professional musicians of considerable expertise, the less wealthy rural communities generally lacked such resources, and either lacked a Hazzan completely, or else relied upon itinerant Hazzanim to provide occasional musical contributions.

### **Hasidism, music and the propagation of power**

The rise of Hasidism has been discussed and debated at length in the scholarly literature, and there is neither space nor purpose in providing extensive detail here.<sup>27</sup> In brief, a combination of factors led to the spread of the movement. Hanoch Avenary asserts that 'disastrous persecutions were often followed by a withdrawal of the Jews into an inner life beyond grim reality [...] the unbearable suppression of the Russian diaspora gave birth to Hasidism.'<sup>28</sup> Whilst important, however, Russian imperialism was not the only factor,

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25 Eliyahu Schleifer, 'Jewish Liturgical Music from the Bible to Hasidism', in Lawrence Hoffman and Janet Walton (eds), *Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian Experience*, Two Liturgical Traditions, vol. 3 (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 29.

26 Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development* (New York: Dover Publications, 1992; first published New York: Schocken Books, 1929), 181.

27 For the English reader, notable contributions on Hasidism (among very many) appear in Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland from the Earliest Times until the Present Day*, trans. Israel Friedlaender (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1916–20); Katz, *Tradition and Crisis*, especially pp. 213–274; Bezalel Safran (ed.), *Hasidism: Continuity or Innovation* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988); Ada Rapoport-Albert (ed.), *Hasidism Reappraised* (London: Littman Library, 1996); Immanuel Etkes, *The Besht: Magician, Mystic, and Leader*, trans. Saadya Sternberg (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2004).

28 Hanoch Avenary, 'The Hasidic Nigun: Ethos and Melos of a Folk Liturgy,' *Journal of Synagogue Music* 34 (2009), 48.

and the broader political, religious and social disturbances described above together rendered large parts of the Jewish population predisposed to a less scholarly, more evangelical and mystically-oriented type of Judaism, particularly in the impoverished rural *shtetls* of the southern Commonwealth. In truth, the Judaism that preceded Hasidism already had a strong mystical element, in particular relating to the sixteenth-century Kabbalistic doctrines of Isaac Luria,<sup>29</sup> but Hasidism placed far greater value on the individual's ecstatic experience, emphasising 'emotion and devotion in the observance of the commandments rather than piling up heaps of regulations on them.'<sup>30</sup> These factors, combined with the power vacuum created by external political interventions such as the abolition of the Council of the Four Lands in 1764, made Hasidism both a religious and a socio-political phenomenon—a 'double revolution.'<sup>31</sup>

Although he was not the first to advocate the Hasidic approach to Judaism, from around 1740 Israel ben Eliezer established a small but highly dedicated following, based in the Ukrainian town of Mezhebozh.<sup>32</sup> His influence spread with phenomenal speed, as Adam Teller explains:

It is widely agreed that at the death of the Baal Shem Tov (who is often still regarded as the founder of the movement) in 1760, his circle numbered no more than a few dozen initiates, but by the 1820s, the movement had become dominant in the Jewish society of large swathes of eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine and Galicia.<sup>33</sup>

Teller's article relates how, starting with Israel ben Eliezer's personal followers, early Hasidic leaders (*Tzaddikim*) used a variety of means in which to propagate their message, notably employing emissaries who 'moved out of [their] immediate sphere to found their own courts throughout Ukraine and Poland generally.'<sup>34</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, Hasidic Judaism

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29 For an overview of Kabbalah, see Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); also Lawrence Fine, Aron Rodrigue and Steven J. Zipperstein (eds), *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

30 Immanuel Etkes, *The Gaon of Vilna: The Man and his Image*, trans. Jeffrey M. Green (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 74.

31 *Ibid.*, 75–76.

32 For a comprehensive account, see Immanuel Etkes, *The Besht*.

33 Adam Teller, 'Hasidism and the Challenge of Geography: The Polish Background to the Spread of the Hasidic Movement,' *AJS Review* 30.1 (2006), 1.

34 *Ibid.*, 11.

had been widely adopted in a ‘widespread network’ across Ukraine, Galicia, central Poland, Belorussia, and parts of Lithuania.<sup>35</sup>

The spread of Hasidism was almost entirely a function of the charismatic appeal of the *Tzaddikim* and their promise of a more immediately appealing, emotionally-charged religious experience. *Tzaddikim* were perceived as the ‘intermediary between the individual Hasid and God,’<sup>36</sup> and developed almost cult followings. Their family descendents in turn inherited the position of *Rebbe* [master, teacher], leading to Hasidic dynasties with distinctive identities, usually named after their founder’s town of origin.<sup>37</sup> Inevitably, the power of these figures soon became more than purely religious, and took on a social and even economic basis, as David Assaf’s reveals:

Given the competition that often governed relations between neighbouring Hasidic courts, the *Tzaddik*’s ability to extract more funds from his followers, to enhance the visible wealth and opulence and improve its ‘services’ were seen as evidence of the *Tzaddik*’s greatness on a spiritual level, increasing his prestige in the eyes of both his own Hasidim and his colleagues.<sup>38</sup>

By and large, religious music for its own sake was viewed with ambivalence as an art form by the older rabbinical tradition, even if *Hazzanut* was extremely popular among individual Jews. Hasidism, on the contrary, valued music above almost all other forms of expression,<sup>39</sup> even to the extent that whilst the hierarchical worship structure implicit in a *Hazzan*–congregation arrangement is not traditionally associated with Hasidism, many later *Tzaddikim* in fact employed a *Hazzan*, ‘an accomplished cantor/composer steeped in the secrets of musical art.’<sup>40</sup> One anecdotal account even suggests a broader attraction to such ‘forbidden fruits’:

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35 Ibid., 11. Resistance to Hasidism in Lithuania is discussed further below.

36 Ibid., 1.

37 One can therefore speak of, for example, the Karliner Hasidim, Lubavitch Hasidim, Chernobyl Hasidim, and many others.

38 David Assaf, ‘“Money for Household Expenses”: Economic Aspects of the Hasidic Courts,’ in Teller (ed.), *Studies in the History of the Jews in Old Poland*, 26.

39 See Moshe Idel, ‘Conceptualization of Music in Jewish Mysticism’, in *Enchanting Powers: Music in the World’s Religions*, ed. by Lawrence E. Sullivan (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions; Harvard University Press, 1997), 160. For recent detailed investigations of Hasidic music, see (among many others) Ellen Koskoff, *Music in Lubavitcher Life* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Abigail Wood, ‘Stepping across the Divide: Hasidic Music in Today’s Yiddish Canon’, *Ethnomusicology* 51.2 (2007), 205–237; the entire 2009 volume of *The Journal of Synagogue Music*.

40 Akiva Zimmermann, ‘Point/Counterpoint: 1) The Hasidic World’s Attitude towards

Mitnagdic Litvaks [...] have enjoyed Hazzanut at least for the last two centuries [...] Zavel Kwartin made it clear that the 'naughty' temptation for the ultra-Orthodox to listen to Hazzanut was not uncommon [...] They chose Maariv (evening) services when it was dark so no-one would see them going in.<sup>41</sup>

On one level, musical ostentatiousness was congruent with the display of wealth and impressiveness that Assaf describes above, contributing to the movement's exciting and appealing image, as he explains further:

There are numerous accounts of [the arrival of a Tzaddik in some remote settlement]: The entire colourful cortège was accompanied with music played by a full band. The ordinary Jew of the time was unused to such spectacles, and the emotional impact left by such visits was translated into a tremendous popular admiration for the Tzaddikim and the rapid spread of Hasidism.<sup>42</sup>

But I propose that the power and influence of the *Tzaddikim* and Hasidic identity were propagated and consolidated through another more subtle and intimate musical agency—through the genre of the niggun. This form of (usually) textless melody, vocalised to sounds such as 'lai lai' or 'dai da dum', was one of the significant innovations of Hasidism. Avenary provides the succinct explanation that 'the Hasidic niggun is most often sung without words, in short filler syllables interrupted by exclamations of joy or grief: it aims to express the unexpressible, to give voice to that which is too intimate to be uttered.'<sup>43</sup>

No single niggun can be considered representative in form, style or content, since they encompass emotions ranging from the mournful to the elated; nevertheless, by way of illustration for those less familiar with the subject, Example 1 gives one of Avenary's printed examples, in this case a niggun by Rabbi Michal of Zlotchov, one of Israel ben Eliezer's immediate circle.

Moshe Idel's assessment of music's place within the mystical tradition speaks of the 'transitive power of music, related to its energetic quality.'<sup>44</sup> For the Jewish mystical tradition, he argues, music is not simply enjoyable,

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Hazzanut," *Journal of Synagogue Music* 34 (2009), 148.

41 David Prager, "The Hasidified World of Hazzanut Seen through the Eyes of an Analytical Cantorholic," *Journal of Synagogue Music* 34 (2009), 105. Kwartin was a Russian-born Hazzan who achieved enormous fame (and consequently wealth) throughout Europe and America in the early twentieth century (see Slobin, *Chosen Voices*, pp. 13–21).

42 Assaf, "Money for Household Expenses," 35–36.

43 Avenary, 'The Hasidic Nigun,' 49.

44 Idel, 'Conceptualization of Music in Jewish Mysticism,' 160.

but ‘also implies the possibility of transmitting power from the source to the object.’<sup>45</sup> Expanding upon this, Idel remarks that

Music is seen [in many Jewish mystical texts] as influential. [...] the power of music is more closely connected to an energetic sense that, by either descending or ascending, exercises different influences on the respective realms.<sup>46</sup>

But this power exchange can surely work, on a more physical and less esoteric basis, in another direction—from human to human. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1772–1810), a great-grandson of Israel ben Eliezer and a famously musical Tzaddik, was of the opinion that ‘music [has] a great deal of importance as a real, rather than [a purely] metaphoric, tool or medium for spiritual transformation’<sup>47</sup> and that music ‘brings a person nearer to serving the Almighty and to the joyful experience of aspiring to ecstatic fulfilment.’<sup>48</sup>

Example 1: Niggun by Rabbi Michal of Zlotchov (1721?–1781)<sup>49</sup>

Eliyahu Schleifer informs us that of the different classes of niggunim that exist, ‘the highest [class] melodies are those created by the *Tzaddikim*, Hasidic

45 Ibid., 160.

46 Ibid., 185.

47 Chani Haran Smith, ‘Music as Spiritual Process in the Teachings of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav,’ *Journal of Synagogue Music* 34 (2009), 16.

48 Amnon Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 77.

49 Music example taken from Avenary, ‘The Hasidic Nigun,’ 50.



Example 1: Niggun by Rabbi Michal of Zlotchov (1721?–1781), Continued

leaders and saints.<sup>50</sup> The identification of a Tzaddik with a particular niggun is recognised elsewhere. Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog describe how ‘each dynasty and therefore each Tzaddik has a special *derekh* [manner], a special way of dealing with God and with the Hassidim, and this *derekh* is

expressed in prayers, melodies, teachings, everyday behaviour.<sup>51</sup> They continue with a colourful description of joyous occasions in a Hasidic court:

Frequent celebrations mark the life at the court, always accompanied by drinking and often by dancing. [...] The more [the Hasidim] drink the more joyful and happy they are, for great is their Rebbeh. They are drunk partly from alcohol and partly from their love and devotion. They begin to dance and sing, the ‘Rebbeh’s niggun,’ the special melody of the Rebbeh composed either by or for him.<sup>52</sup>

The *Tzaddikim* encourage the dissemination of their melodies among the Jews who attended their court for the High Holy Days and beyond. According to Schleifer ‘different melodies and difference performance practices developed under the various Hasidic dynasties,’<sup>53</sup> echoing Idelsohn’s earlier account:

Almost every ‘court’ had its original style in music, its preferred mode, or at least a special tune, expressing the individuality and train of thought of the ‘reigning’ Tzaddik. [...] The songs were first rendered at the public meals of the ‘court,’ The Hassidim present would memorize them and carry them into their homes, teaching them to the pious ones until the tunes became widely known.<sup>54</sup>

Thus the communicative and evangelical power of the Tzaddik resides, in part at least, in his distinctive niggun and its ability to communicate with and inspire potential followers. New adherents to the Hasidic way, drawn to its freshly direct and immanent nature, must surely have been attracted also

50 Schleifer, ‘Jewish Liturgical Music from the Bible to Hasidism,’ 47.

51 Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life is with People: The Culture of the Shtetl* (New York: Schocken Books, International Universities Press Inc., 1952), 169.

52 Ibid., 175-176.

53 Schleifer, ‘Jewish Liturgical Music from the Bible to Hasidism,’ 48.

54 Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, 415–416.

to its radical musical approach; what better way, then, for a Tzaddik and his emissaries to perpetuate and embed his power than through popularizing his unique niggunim, alongside tales of mystical wonders such as healing and other miracles ascribed to the Hasidic leaders. Thus, a movement that forged a radical new identity in Judaism, within a context of religious and political turmoil, spawned a new musical form that became both a distinctive musical identifier for the movement (and, indeed, for an individual Tzaddik), and a key agency in the spread of the movement's power and influence.

### Mitnagdic reactions

The reaction of non-Hasidic Jewish leaders in Poland–Lithuania was slow to begin with, but was extreme and vehement when it came.<sup>55</sup> Like the developments described above, it involved agencies both within and without the Jewish community, and had a bearing on Jewish musical phenomena, though of a less overtly dramatic nature than Hasidism.

The centre of opposition to Hasidism was in Vilna, where Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman (the Vilna Gaon) organised a concerted effort to expunge Hasidism from Jewry. His famous letter of 1796, circulated to communities around Belorussia and Podolia in response to rumours that his opposition towards Hasidism had softened in semi-retirement, makes his views unequivocally clear:

In the Torah of Moses they have established a new covenant, working out their evil schemes with the masses in the House of the Lord [...] interpreting the Torah falsely while claiming that their way is precious in the eyes of God [...] They call themselves Hasidim—that is an abomination! How they have deceived this generation [...].<sup>56</sup>

Emmauel Etkes, leading biographer of the Vilna Gaon, explains that prior to 1772 the opponents to Hasidism expressed themselves merely through

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55 Detailed considerations of Mitnagdism and its proponents (often drawing upon the collection of primary sources published in Mordecai Wilensky, *Hasidim u-mitnagdim: l'tol'dot ha-pulmus beineiheim*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1970)) can be found in Allan Nadler, *The Faith of the Mithnagdim: Rabbinic Responses to Hasidic Rapture*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997); Jacob Hisdai, 'The Origins of the Conflict between Hasidim and Mitnagdim,' in Bezalel Safran (ed.), *Hasidism: Continuity or Innovation* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988), 27–46; Etkes, *The Gaon of Vilna*; Ada Rapoport-Albert, 'Let the Old Make Way for the New': *Studies on Hasidism and Its Opponents, Haskalah and the Musar Movement* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 2009); Arie Morgenstern, *The Gaon of Vilna and his Messianic Vision*, trans. Naftali Greenwood (Jerusalem and Springfield NJ: Gefen Publishing House, Ltd, 2012).

56 Quoted in Nadler, *The Faith of the Mithnagdim*, 11.

'criticism or mockery',<sup>57</sup> but when Hasidim tried to infiltrate the Vilna Jewish community in 1772, 'the rabbis in Lithuania were aroused to go to war.'<sup>58</sup> Etkes continues by describing the extreme nature of the reaction, including the treatment of one Rabbi Issar, who had been tempted into the Hasidic fold:

They struck him with a rubber whip in the *kahal* room before the welcoming of the Sabbath. And then they burned [Hasidic] writings before the pillory [...] And afterwards they banned [excommunicated] him. And all that week he sat in prison in the jail of the citadel that they call 'Schloss'. And on the Sabbath night he was held in the *kahal* room.<sup>59</sup>

The aim of the Mitnagdim during this period was quite simply to eradicate Hasidism entirely; compromise was not an option initially, though it came later to some degree (and especially after the Vilna Gaon's death in 1799) in the wake of the perceived common threat of the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment).<sup>60</sup> Eventually the conflict drew in the civil Russian authorities, as Dubnow reports:

Among the contemplated means of warfare was included the plan of informing against the leaders of the sect to the Russian Government. It did not take long for the disgraceful scheme to be put into action. Soon the Prosecutor-General in St. Petersburg, Lopukhin, received a denunciation directing his attention 'to the political misdeeds perpetrated by the chief of the Karliner [Hasidic] sect, Zalman Borukhevich,' and his fellow-workers on Lithuania. Under the influence of the denunciation, Lopukhin, acting in the name of the Tzar, ordered the local gubernatorial administration, early in the fall of 1798, to arrest Zalman, the head of the sect, in the townlet of Lozno.<sup>61</sup>

But the political wind ultimately blew against the Mitnagdim with a series of Russian decrees, following the Partitions, that prevented them from placing the *herem* [ban] on Hasidim,<sup>62</sup> and although in his 1804 Jewish Constitution, Alexander I sustained and even redoubled restrictions on land-owning, expulsions from villages, and 'preserved precisely those structure of Jewish life which, in the first place, prevented the integration of Jews into Russian

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57 Etkes, *The Gaon of Vilna*, 79.

58 Ibid., 75.

59 See Ibid., 89, quoting from article six of the polemic anthology *Z'mir aritsim v'harvot tsurim* [The Pruning Hook of Tyrants and Swords of Flint] (Alkesnitz, 1772).

60 The most comprehensive modern assessment of the Haskalah is Shmuel Feiner's *The Jewish Enlightenment*, trans. Chaya Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

61 Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, 375–376.

62 See David Fishman, *Russia's First Modern Jews: The Jews of Shklov* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1995), 18–21.



society,<sup>63</sup> the Constitution nevertheless ‘bestowed upon the Hasidim the right of segregating themselves in separate synagogues within the communities.’<sup>64</sup> Even Zalman Borukhevich, previously arrested by the Russian authorities, was eventually considered ‘politically dependable.’<sup>65</sup>

The immediate musical consequences of this reaction are difficult to establish, but it is reasonable to assume that they were insignificant, if not non-existent. After all, the whole thrust of the Mitnagdic strategy was to maintain the status quo, in opposition to what they saw as the extravagant and un-Jewish excesses of Hasidic theology and worship style. One should not assume that Mitnagdim were totally opposed to music itself; indeed, the Vilna Gaon is recorded as having considered a knowledge of secular music theory to be vital to the deeper understanding of Torah cantillation and other aspects of Torah study.<sup>66</sup> Instead, the objection was to the form in which Hasidim were perceived to use music irreverently in emotional outpourings of personal ecstasy, rather than for the rational, scholarly appreciation of Torah and Talmud.

The broader cultural outcome of the truce arrived at between Hasidim and Mitnagdim in mutual defiance of the Haskalah, was that Polish–Lithuanian Jewry was divided between an almost exclusively Hasidic Poland and a largely Mitnagdic Lithuania, or more accurately, a Lithuania containing significant pockets of Hasidism, but dominated by Mitnagdic institutions and rabbis. The true glory of nineteenth-century Lithuanian Jewry was the yeshiva tradition, established first in 1803 by Chayyim of Volozhin (1749–1821), a student of the Vilna Gaon,<sup>67</sup> and then emulated all around the land.<sup>68</sup> By the 1840s, Vilna had a Jewish population of around 30,000, and was characterised by its ‘large number of “confraternities” for Torah study that populated its study houses, the *yeshivot* that attracted talented young men from both within the

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63 Eric Haberer, *Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 7.

64 Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, 356.

65 Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, 356.

66 Etkes, *The Gaon of Vilna*, 55.

67 Gil S. Perl, *The Pillar of Volozhin: Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin and the World of 19th Century Lithuanian Torah Scholarship*, Studies in Orthodox Judaism (Brighton MA: Academic Studies Press, 2012), 9.

68 For a comprehensive assessment of the Lithuanian yeshiva tradition, see Shaul Stampfer, *Lithuanian Yeshivas of the Nineteenth Century: Creating a Tradition of Learning*, trans. Lindsey Taylor-Gutharz (Oxford; Portland OR: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012).

city and outside, as well as the large number of outstanding Torah scholars who resided there.<sup>69</sup>

A full account of this tradition is unnecessary to the present discussion, but one distinctive aspect of it is worth highlighting as a final point of focus, even if the current state of research on the topic does not permit a full assessment of its musical implications: this is the Musar [moral conduct, ethical behaviour] movement established within the yeshiva tradition by Rabbi Yisrael Lipkin Salanter (1810–83). Salanter's Musar advocated careful study of ethical behaviour, particularly in business and commerce; its students were schooled particularly in self-discipline and restraint, and thorough consideration of the consequences of actions. But what is interesting for our discussion are the glimpses of a distinctive quasi-musical tradition within Musar, a musical stamp of identity, as Stampfer implies:

The Musar curriculum included lectures on ethical issues and analytical study of Musar texts. In an effort to drive home the moral teaching, students used to repeat choice maxims over and over in the *beit midrash* [house of learning], sometimes shouting them out and weeping as they did so.<sup>70</sup>

Whilst this does not promise much initially, other scholars comment on the aspect of 'repeating choice maxims over and over' as an almost musical exploit. Benjamin Brown, a noted scholar of the Musar movement, considers that

the Musar Movement did not introduce music of its own; but it adopted a kind of tune, not very melodic but more similar to weeping, in Musar learning sessions and the *Shmussen* [Musar homilies]. It seems that this type of 'music' varied: fervent musarists (Novardok) used a more fervent and loud tune, while moderate musarists (Slobodka, Telz) used a more placid tune.<sup>71</sup>

Dovid Katz also hints that there is a distinctive musical aspect to Musar practice, stating in the midst of a summary of Litvak Jewish society during the nineteenth century that 'to the west [of Lithuania], the Litvak soul rang with the sad chant of the *Musernik*.<sup>72</sup> Im-

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69 Immanuel Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement: Seeking the Torah of Truth*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1993), 79.

70 Stampfer, *Lithuanian Yeshivas of the Nineteenth Century*, 267–268.

71 Benjamin Brown (Hebrew University, Jerusalem; study group 'The Jewish Musar Movement: Theory, Practice, and Contemporary Contexts,' Van Leer Jerusalem Institute), personal communication, 5 January 2013 (quoted by kind permission).

72 Dovid Katz, *Seven Kingdoms of the Litvaks*, 27.

manuel Etkes concurs, stating that

Musar study *be-hitpa'anut* [study in a state of emotional excitement, rather than intellectual study] was performed aloud, the power of the voice, the special melody, and the rhythm all serving to arouse the emotions. Interestingly, the special melody, unlike the traditional one used for Talmud study, was characterized by sadness and broken-heartedness, mingled with groans and at times even with outbursts of tears.

Paradoxically, this practice implies a heightened emotionality that might be considered distasteful to Mitnagdim, but Geoffrey Claussen advises that Musar chant was undertaken in 'an atmosphere that was marked by deep self-control at the same time that it was emotionally charged.'<sup>73</sup> Salanter, explains Claussen, 'recognized that music can affect one's inner life more deeply than many other modes of study and communication.'<sup>74</sup> Citing Jewish neurologist Israel Isidor Elyashev (1873–1924), who studied with Salanter's foremost student Simcha Zissel Ziv Broida (1824–98), Claussen presents a vivid account of Musar chanting:

And amidst all the disorder, quiet sobbing would erupt, wavering amidst the shadows. The air was saturated with sighs and wails, the sound of drumming with a middle finger, the sound of a fist beating the heart, voices and echoes wailing [...].<sup>75</sup>

Here, as well as being a tool for imprinting important passages of text on the memory, music, or at least what appears to have been considered a form of musical utterance, can also be seen as a distinct marker of identity, since this tradition was seemingly unique to Musar learning. Again, the power of a Musar teacher is communicated via a number of channels, but one of the most potent must surely have been through this quasi-musical chant tradition.

### Conclusions, contemporary resonances

Music and power interact in multiple realms. Political repression and censorship, and their impact upon composers, performers and audiences, provide fruitful ground for research. But the aftershocks of those power politics ripple through all levels of society, majority or minority, and have serious implications for the assertion and defence of particular identities, ethnic, religious or otherwise. Just as socio-political events find their way into the *bylina* texts of the Russian folk tradition,<sup>76</sup> similarly they bear down on minority

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73 Geoffrey Claussen, 'Rabbi Simḥah Zissel Ziv: The Moral Vision of a 19th Century Musar Master,' Ph.D. Thesis (Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2011), 44.

74 Geoffrey Claussen, 'The Practice of Musar,' *Conservative Judaism* 63.2 (2012), 9.

75 Geoffrey Claussen, 'Rabbi Simḥah Zissel Ziv, 44.

76 See, for example, the tales of Tsar Ivan the Terrible and other historical figures as

communities, and when those communities are already experiencing deep internal conflicts, they are ripe for change. Music operates in dual roles, as both an agent and a barometer of such change.

This article has explored this dual role of music in the struggle between two opposing Jewish identities in the Russian-dominated Poland–Lithuania region of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Increased political repression and social segregation in the lead-up to the partitioning of the Commonwealth coincided with, and in some respects contributed to, the socio-religious convulsions manifest in the breakup of cohesive Jewish institutions and successive waves of Messianic fervour and disillusionment. These factors, combined, rendered a large proportion of the Jewish population susceptible to influence. In this febrile context, Hasidism was able to spread rapidly; the *Tzaddikim* and their followers availed themselves of any means available for this purpose, and music, particularly in the form of the *niggunim* ascribed to particular *Tzaddikim*, was one of the potent media via which the power and influence of the *Tzaddik* was both spread and consolidated. The subsequent, ultimately ineffective opposition of the *Mitnagdim* resulted musically in a little-documented but highly charged manner of chanting within the *Musar* movement. Whilst this tradition is clearly in need of further research from a musical perspective (it has been researched quite extensively from other angles), it represents a distinctive marker of identity for a movement that placed itself at the polar extreme to Hasidism, even if subsequent generations were reconciled.

I will finish with a brief account of recent ethnographic research that demonstrates how such music–power interactions in the past continue to resonate (though devoid of their more antagonistic aspects) through Jewish communities today, but with rather surprising results.<sup>77</sup> For various reasons, South Africa’s Jews are predominantly of Litvak origin, and, even more specifically, hail mostly from the Kovno [Kaunas] region, coincidentally where Yisrael Salanter founded a yeshiva (the ‘Kovno Kollel’) dedicated to the study of *Musar*.<sup>78</sup> The country’s modern Jewish community is acutely aware of this

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reinterpreted in the *bylina* tradition, in James Bailey and Tatyana Ivanova (ed. and trans.), *an Anthology of Russian Folk Epics* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 357ff.

77 See Stephen Muir, ‘From the *Shtetl* to the Gardens and Beyond: Identity and Symbolic Geography in Cape Town’s Synagogue Choirs,’ in Simone Krüger and Ruxandra Trandafoiu (eds), *The Globalization of Musics in Transit: Music Migration and Tourism* (New York: Routledge, forthcoming, due 10 September 2013).

78 See Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, 268ff. For an understanding of South African Jewish history and social dynamics, see (among others) Stephen Cohen, ‘The Historical Background,’ In Marcus Arkin (ed.), *South African Jewry: A Contemporary Survey*

cultural and geographical heritage, and some sections of it proudly speak of the east European, Lithuanian roots of some of their synagogue music.<sup>79</sup> And yet the music ascribed to such roots is unmistakably (and paradoxically) Hasidic in flavour, though often in the shape of the neo-Hasidic music of Shlomo Carlebach (1925–94), who almost single-handedly reinvented the sound-world of Jewish religious music in the 20th century.<sup>80</sup> This demonstrates the musical and emotional potency embodied in the simple contours of the Hasidic niggun, at least as reconceived by Carlebach: ‘the Hasidic and the Lithuanian—historically polar opposites on the scale of Jewish Orthodoxy—have merged into a re-imagined symbolic Lithuanian geography resituated in a broader, more generically East-European musical locus.’<sup>81</sup> Originally a symbol of a new and radical identity, the genre has become appropriated as a marker of Lithuanian identity. Just as it was in Russian Poland–Lithuania, music continues to be used, and from their individual, personal perspective some might say *misused*, in the continual effort to assert distinctive identities within the context of complex power politics.

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(Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1984), 1-22; Milton Shain and Richard Mendelsohn (eds) *Memories, Realities and Dreams: Aspects of the South African Jewish Experience* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2002); Gideon Shimoni, *Community and Conscience: the Jews in Apartheid South Africa* (Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press, 2003).

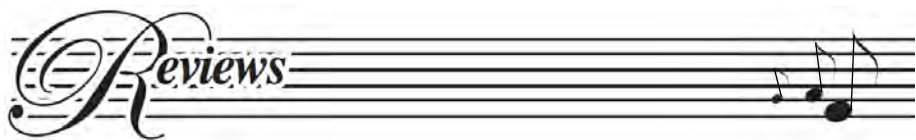
79 Much of the music used in the synagogues involved in the cited study came from the stock of Hazzan–choir compositions common to many Orthodox communities around the world, predominantly (and perhaps ironically) the German Reform music of Louis Lewandowski simply performed by men instead of a mixed choir.

80 For a succinct overview of Carlebach’s achievements and legacy, see Marsha Bryan Edelman, *Discovering Jewish Music* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2007), 141–147.

81 Stephen Muir, ‘From the *Shtetl* to the Gardens and Beyond’.



*“A Polish and a German Jew,”* from K. Lang,  
*Die Hanshaltung der menschen*, Leipzig, 1808.



***Kamti Lehallel—I Rise in Praise—The Musical Tradition of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish Communities of Amsterdam, London and New York.***

**A two-CD set performed by Hazzan Daniel Halfon, with choral and instrumental ensemble conducted by Azi Schwartz, with an accompanying brochure of commentary by Edwin Seroussi; issued by Beth Hatefutsoth BTR0701.**

*Reviewed by Charles Heller*

When we see that the recordings before us have been produced by Beth Hatefutsoth together with the Hebrew University, we know we are in for a special treat. This is not just more synagogue music. Here are 50 prayer settings that represent the beautiful melodic heritage of the Spanish-Portuguese tradition, passing through the hands of masters from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, covering Shabbat, Shalosh Regalim and the High Holidays.

These two CDs unite musicians and styles from the Spanish-Portuguese and Ashkenazi worlds—a demonstration of that interpenetration of cultures that was productive for so long, which began in Georgian London around the time when Joseph Grobstock took a short cut from the Great Synagogue (later to be bombed in the Blitz of 1940) to Bevis Marks (once described as “the acknowledged parent shrine of British Jewry,” still with us after 300 years) and bumped into Manasseh Azevedo da Costa, Israel Zangwill’s King of Schnorrers. The most famous result of this clash of cultures was the creation of Fish-and-Chips, but that is another story...

Much of this beautiful repertoire is the remains, preserved by oral tradition, of what originally constituted art music, composed by trained, often non-Jewish, composers. Eric Werner once described this genre as “descendent material” (*absinkendes Kulturgut*)—derivative and inferior to its original. To bring its original qualities back to life, it should ideally be performed with proper *bel canto* technique. What does that signify? Among cantors, “bel canto” is often merely a term to use in jokes, as in the well-known jingle created by the late Cantor Edward Fogel about his late cousin:

Louis Danto  
Of Toronto  
Will sing *bel canto*—  
Pronto!

Briefly summarized, *bel canto* aims to give the voice the quality of a violin or other instrument, the singer applying equal pressure and attack throughout the range to produce a seamless whole. Without proper technique, even a deceptively simple melody such as De Sola's *Adon Olam* becomes a set of hurdles (I have heard many seasoned cantors fail in the attempt). Danto himself called *bel canto* "the lost art." His technique can be heard applied to the Spanish-Portuguese repertoire on the acclaimed CD *I Heard a Voice from Heaven* (<http://faujsa.fau.edu/jsa/>).

Raymond Goldstein, associate conductor of the Jerusalem Great Synagogue Choir, has given us arrangements in a wide range of styles to suit the varied types of melody, from Verdi (particularly appropriate for Rabbi Benjamin Artom's setting of *Havu*—imagine how Mario del Monaco would have delivered it!) to John Rutter, although to my Anglo-Jewish ears the 19<sup>th</sup>-century pieces have about them more of the American barbershop than the Victorian sunset glow of the English tradition. Goldstein's setting of the Rosh Hashanah *piyyut* *Ahot k'tanah* with its medieval aura, suggests a performance in the echoing halls of a castle in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Catalonia when Ramban stopped by. However, it might not have been out of place to also make use of one or two of the harmonizations that were done with good taste in the past, such as the *Odekha* melody as arranged by Jacob Hadida.

These CDs are particularly welcome because of the wealth of background information provided in the lavishly produced accompanying book, based on the invaluable research of Professors Israel Adler and Edwin Seroussi. But this book demands some practice on the part of the reader—you will need up to four fingers in different pages (many of them unnumbered) at the same time to ferret out the required information.

British-born Hazzan Daniel Halfon, whose commanding baritone voice has been heard by Sephardic congregations in Amsterdam, London and New York, has served the Yad Ha-Rav Nisim Synagogue in Jerusalem for over twenty years. He brings his considerable experience with the Spanish-Portuguese repertoire and tradition to these recordings, accompanied by fine instrumentalists and singers. As they say in my Portuguese neighborhood, *Pelo canto se conhece o pássaro, e pela obra o homem* ("The sparrow is known by his song, a man is known by his works"). With so much ersatz liturgical



music being produced today, it is a breath of fresh air to hear the real thing. Every cantor should get acquainted with this material.

*Charles Heller is the award-winning author of **What To Listen For in Jewish Music** ([www.ecanthuspress.com](http://www.ecanthuspress.com)). A selection of his compositions can be explored through the website of the Canadian Music Centre ([www.musiccentre.ca](http://www.musiccentre.ca)).*

## ***Italian-Jewish Musical Traditions—a CD from the Leo Levi connection (1954-1961)***

The Jewish Music Research Center, Hebrew University, 2001

*Reviewed by Gerard Ederly*

When asked to review this CD I expected to listen, analyze and critique the music based on the performative elements of each piece. However, an initial audit convinced me that the approach needed to be more historical, ethno-musicological and cultural. This music was not so much about the performance style or musical execution but about its content. It is about the need to preserve an oral tradition layered with myriad influences, Jewish migrations, diasporas and cultural assimilations.

To begin with, the title, “Italian Jewish Musical Traditions,” is misleading. The selections are all liturgical and all in Hebrew, except for a few Passover and Purim songs sung in local Jewish dialects. All of the pieces are sung by men, except for *Tzur mishelo achalnu* (Track #5) and *Haleluyah*, (Track #41) which are sung by women. This is quite significant and reveals an essential aspect of how Jewish Oral Traditions have been transmitted across generations, not just in Italy, but also in all the lands where Jews have settled throughout history. Men have always been the keepers and transmitters of each community’s religious traditions, by composing and performing liturgical poems (*piyyutim*) meant to enhance public prayer, and quasi-liturgical hymns (*z’mirot*) intended to be sung at table during Sabbath and Festival meals.

Women, on the other hand, were responsible for preserving a secular musical repertoire. It included: Romanzas about passionate and erotic love; Romancers which conveyed epic tales whose melodies served primarily as mnemonic devices to remember the numerous verses; life-cycle songs (Coplas) that celebrated birth (Paridas) and death (Endechas). All of this music

was sung without instrumental accompaniment, except for possible hand clapping or a small *tof* or *bendir* (frame drum).

*Piyyutim* allowed for the incorporation of secular melodies into the liturgy, as demonstrated by most of the selections on *Italian Jewish Musical Traditions*. It is clear, as the accompanying informative CD booklet states, that this music is “borrowed from or shaped after music of non-Jewish origins, such as Italian folk music, operatic arias, recitatives and vocal styles and military marches or patriotic hymns.” The boundaries between secular and liturgical realms have always been very permeable in various oral traditions, especially so in Jewish tradition which continually interacted with different host cultures.

The use of secular melodies in the liturgy is particularly strong in the Sephardic oral tradition. Even Maimonides (*T’shuvot*, vol. II: 468, no. 254) made a halakhic point of sanctioning the insertion of liturgical poetry before the *hatimah* of a *b’rakhah*, so long as its intention is to increase the worshipers’ *kavvanah*, and that it not be performed more musically than the statutory prayers. The practice has persisted to this day and, in the view of this writer, continues to enrich the experience of Sephardic synagogue prayer. Thus the 16th-century Spanish halakhic authority Rabbi Yehudah Alharizi (*Tahkemoni*, Constantinople, 1578) concluded that *piyyut* was the closest extant replacement for the Levites’ Song in the Temple, and God cherishes it as much as sacrifice.

A word about The Golden Age of Spanish Jewry (900-1200) which is one of the most intriguing and fertile templates the world has ever known for exploring the intercultural mix that was central to the Sephardic experience. After the Expulsion of 1492, this pan-ethnic approach spread to all the lands of the Diaspora, including nearby Italy. Sephardic Music is truly World Music—as it encompasses so many styles, languages and cultural influences. Perhaps no other culture has been able to synthesize so many diverse influences with such amazing results. The Sephardim were cosmopolitan, deeply involved in all the social, political and artistic endeavors of their time and place. They enriched the local cultures and were enriched by them.

Moreover, while the Jewish cultural tapestry was infinitely varied, the common thread binding every far-flung community was always their religion and their sacred language. Despite the predominance of many vernaculars, Hebrew remained the common language of prayer to all and served to unite the disparate communities in much the same way that a single beautiful melody is able to serve both sacred and secular texts. Cultural boundaries disappeared, allowing other aesthetic influences into the confined world of local communities permitting local traditions to venture abroad.

In the melodies that appear throughout “Italian Jewish Musical Traditions” one hears the influence of *maqamat* (plural of *maqam*) and synagogue prayer modes, but also of musical styles ranging from Italian song (*Lekhah dodi*), operatic arias and recitatives (*Kol berue*, *Hallel*, *Amen shem nora*), *piyyutim* (*Yigdal*), *Z’mirot* (*Tzur mishelo*), to Sephardi and Ashkenazi standards (*Ahot qetannah* and *Ma’oz tzur*). Many of them include a short melodic fragment of five or six notes used to make the liturgy accessible to lay listeners. The hazzan either embellishes the melody while extending its range, or sings a more intricate and technically demanding vocal line. These musical devices are self-evidently intended to evoke an emotional response appropriate to the particular prayer text.

This CD exemplifies the fact that sacred as well as secular oral traditions remain fluid, constantly adapting and redefining themselves by becoming relevant to current cultural preferences and creative insights. Tapping into contemporary sensibilities at any point in history keeps the heritage alive. At the same time, one must also tip one’s hat to the past. This invaluable collection does just that by documenting a beautiful and multi-faceted liturgical and folk tradition. I highly recommend it.

*A musical folklorist, singer and guitarist, Gerard Edery commands a remarkable range of ethnic folk styles and traditions from around the world. He sings in fifteen languages and speaks four fluently. His special brand of world music fusion prizes authenticity and an appreciation for how disparate cultures overlap, parallel and often borrow from one another. He founded Sepharad Records in 1991, which has released 14 CDs and a Sephardic Songbook on the label. A recipient of the Sephardic Musical Heritage Award, Gerard invites readers to visit his website <<[www.gerardedery.com](http://www.gerardedery.com)>> for complete discography, videos and program information.*

## ***Judean-Caribbean Currents: Music of the Mikvè Israel- Emanuel Synagogue in Curaçao***

**Reviewed by Judith Naimark**

The Island of Curaçao in the former Netherlands Antilles, off the western coast of Venezuela, boasts the oldest Jewish congregation in the Western Hemisphere. Starting with the founding of an official settlement by Portuguese Jews from Amsterdam in 1651, the Sephardim of Curaçao were once

the wealthiest Jewish community in the Americas. Their synagogue, or “Snoa” (Portuguese contraction of Spanish “Esnoga”), Mikvé Israel, now The United Netherlands-Portuguese Congregation Mikvé Israel-Emanuel Synagogue, was established in 1654. Its floor is still covered with sand to remind congregants of how their Marrano ancestors on the Iberian Peninsula muffled the sound of footsteps in makeshift places of worship so as not to arouse the suspicion of those who would denounce them to the Inquisition as secret ‘Judaizers.’

The unique and singular music of this congregation is showcased by Hazan Gideon Y. Zelermyer and Pianist/Arranger Raymond Goldstein in this 2009 CD, a joint production of The Center for Research on Dutch Jewry and The Jewish Music Research Centre of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The recording comprises Volume 22 of The Anthology of Music Traditions in Israel, edited by Edwin Seroussi in collaboration with Yuval Shaked. Zelermyer, while studying at the Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute, told faculty member Goldstein about the music of his Curaçaoan mother’s home congregation. Contacts were made with the above-mentioned organizations and additional funding was provided by the Zelermyer family and private donors from the congregation, among others. Research in the music archives began in 2000. Selections from the archives of part-books, solo parts, full scores and organ music were arranged by Raymond Goldstein for voice and piano and recorded in the sanctuary of Shaare Zion Congregation in Montreal. Three tracks of choral music with organ accompaniment were recorded subsequently in Jerusalem.

This is not the first presentation of the music of Mikvé Israel-Emanuel to the general public. Cantor Norman P. Swerling, *z”l*, who served the congregation from 1964 to 1967, published the anthology and CD *Romemu-Exalt: The Music of the Sephardic Jews of Curaçao* in 1997. That compilation presented the music in regular use at the Snoa. Essays by clergy and members portrayed vividly for the reader the life and activities of the congregation.

The scope of the present project is quite different. Zelermyer and Goldstein plumbed the music archives, revealing both the evolution of the congregation’s music and the complex history of this Jewish community. Goldstein’s arrangements of the selected pieces transform them from mere historical interest to the realm of performable, either on the bimah or concert stage.

Edwin Seroussi’s extensive notes to the CD give us valuable historical background. The congregation engaged its clergy for over 200 years from its mother community in Amsterdam. By 1864, during a 41-year period without rabbinic leadership, calls for modernization resulted in a liberal faction splitting off to form Temple Emanuel, which looked instead toward the great

Reform congregation of New York City for inspiration. Pipe organs were installed, first at Emanuel, then 2 years later at Mikvé Israel, though organists had to be non-Jews. Children's choirs and mixed choirs were formed, with the women choristers seated separately.

Musical influences included not only the Spanish-Portuguese tradition and the Protestant ethos of the organists but the dramatic sweep of Grand Opera—also heard in the compositions of the French synagogue composer Samuel Naumbourg—and the rhythms of popular dance, as the Jewish community was active in local culture, regularly hosting salons and balls. In the synagogue pieces of Sebastien Diaz Peña, the Venezuelan composer who spent ten years exiled in Curaçao, Seroussi even detects influences of the American Creole composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk and the Polish genius Frédéric Chopin. Member families also produced important musicians; the names Maduro, Naar and Capriles are represented among the archive manuscripts.

Added to these are the contributions of the Ashkenazic cantors who came to the reunited congregation Mikvé Israel-Emanuel, the result of a merger 100 years after the split. These cantors brought in repertoire from the great Ashkenazic composers such as Lewandowski, and standard Spanish-Portuguese hymns such as *Bendigamos*, and contributed original material as well.

As evidence of the extent to which the Sephardim of Curaçao invest their pride and identity in music, Seroussi reproduces and translates from Spanish an enthusiastic report of the gala concert *L'Chayim Korsow*, which was part of the community's 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in April, 2001. (This reviewer participated in that concert at the invitation of Cantor Swerling, who was then emeritus at Congregation Beth Shalom, Wilmington, DE.) Since Seroussi presents the report without correction, let us clarify here that the cantorial delegation involved was from The American Conference of Cantors, *not* the Cantors Assembly, and that the visiting cantor from Aruba was ACC member Irving Spenadel, Spiritual Leader at the time of Beth Israel Synagogue-Israelitische Gemeente. The reader will easily discern that the person listed first as "Ben Steiner" and later as Dr. Ben Steinberg—the renowned Canadian composer who organized and conducted the concert—are one and the same.

Zelermeyer and Goldstein selected for recording primarily those ceremonial sections of liturgy for which settings were most often composed—the Torah Service, opening and closing hymns such as *Yigdal*, *Ein keiloheinu* and *Adon olam*, and pieces used regularly for processions in all kinds of ceremonies. Multiple settings of a text are placed in adjacent tracks; there are 2 settings each of *Romemu*, *Mi khamokha* and *Tehillat* (end of Ps 145), 3 of *Ein keiloheinu* and 5 of *Adon olam*. Only *Romemu-Gad'lu* no. 3, *Mizmor*

*l'david* no.2 (pieces having been numbered in the archives), *Barukh ha-ba* and *Bendigamos* from among the piano/vocal selections and the three choral tracks overlap Swerling's anthology.

Seroussi tells us that "the most dominant among all the musical styles here represented is that of Italian Opera." The Western ear will surely hear echoes of Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi in the CD selections. (Perhaps, since most of the extant files came from the Reform-affiliated Emanuel, Classical European dominance is to be expected.) To that list, we may add Mozart, Schubert and a touch of Beethoven. He comments on the high vocal standard which *hazzanim*, soloists and choristers alike had to meet. Zelermyer delivers on all accounts, with vocalism that is elegant and lyrical throughout, regaling the listener with a number of gorgeous pianissimi. Goldstein's masterful accompaniments—a few overly-simple I-V-I introductions aside (perhaps preserved from the originals?)—realize every bit of expressive potential in the music. He lifts it to a level perhaps not as high as that of these great composers, but within respectable range of them.

The CD opens strongly with an unidentified triple-meter *Yigdal*. Goldstein gives it the feel of a Schubertian volkslied, alternating a galliardic robustness with a flowing laendler accompaniment. This is followed by the jaunty *Romemu-Gadelu no.1* of Capriles, with its 19<sup>th</sup> century chromatic flourishes.

The most complex pieces in the collection are those attributed to Christiaan Ulder (the name is transcribed in Seroussi's notes as Ulden), organist at Mikvé Israel from the 1866 installation of the organ until his death in 1895. His *Romemu-Gad'lu no. 3* (Track 3), still in the Snoa repertoire, packs an array of operatic devices into less than 3 minutes of music. A typical march-like opening is followed, at the text *Torah tsivah lanu moshe*, by a section switching to  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter and 3-measure phrases. A Verdian trip into the Neapolitan 6<sup>th</sup> is followed at *Adonai y'vareikh* by a rocking rhythm, possibly derived from local dance. His two settings of *Adon olam* (Tracks 9 & 10) feature other such operatic gestures as cavatina, cabaletta and cadenza.

The simple and plaintive *Eits hayyim hi* (Track 4) and Maduro *Adon olam* (Track 12) contrast beautifully with what came before. Even greater contrast is provided by the *Ein keiloheinu* of Pavel Slavensky, who served in Curaçao 1971-1975. Seroussi tells us that this Czech-born son of a Belzer Hasid had been the first permanent Cantor of Detroit's Adat Shalom Synagogue, moving on to Temple Sholom in Chicago in 1949. He gives us a multi-section Volhynian tune of the sort we wouldn't expect to hear for this text even in a typical Ashkenazic synagogue. Goldstein's accompaniment turns it into artsong.

The two selections of standard Sephardic repertoire, the De Sola *Adon olam* (Track 13) and *Bendigamos* (Track 14) are, once again, transported by Goldstein's arrangements; the flowing accompaniment, key changes and 20<sup>th</sup>-century harmonies of the interlude preceding the last verse of *Adon olam* are especially effective. We hear native dance rhythms in the two Peña pieces, as well as in *Tehillat* (Track 15). An unidentified *Veshamru* is clearly Ashkenazic, with an opening section that will evoke several well-known melodies, hazzanic cadenza and word-painting recitative. This piece does not hang together as well as many in the collection but still provides interesting listening.

Beyond musical interest, the CD gives Ashkenazic listeners an opportunity to become acquainted with the fuller Sephardic versions of some liturgical texts. These appear in all the hymns—*Yigdal*, *Ein keiloheinu* and *Adon olam*, as well as in the Torah service processions.

Zelermeyer and Goldstein have brought forth a felicitous addition to the World Jewish Music literature. If Goldstein's arrangements have been faithfully transcribed in the companion score, the set will be well worth purchasing for cantorial libraries. Both CD and score may be obtained online at [www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il](http://www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il).

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**Interior of the Mikvè Israel-Emanuel Synagogue,  
Curaçao, showing footstep-muffling sand floor**



**David Muallem's *The Maqām Book: A Doorway to Arab Scales and Modes*,  
Translated by Yoram Arnon, 233 pages with accompanying CD.  
K'far Sava: Or-Tav Music Publications, 2010.**

*Reviewed by Mark Kligman*

Learning about Middle Eastern music is a significant challenge if you do not know the tradition. The musical system contains a complex network of scales (known as *māqamāt*, singular is *maqām*), rhythms and genres. The Western ear may find it intriguing and interesting but nonetheless difficult to learn and understand. David Muallem's textbook *The Maqām Book: Doorway to Arab Scales and Modes* is an important contribution for the interested musician to learn about the most fundamental aspect of the Middle Eastern Arab musical system: the *māqamāt*. Muallem is an Iraqi Jew who lived and worked in Israel for many years. Well versed in Western and Middle Eastern musical systems his textbook truly offers the Western musician a hands on approach to understand and learn the *māqamāt*. *The Maqām Book* is informative, provides a background on the tradition, and frequently refers to academic research.

*The Maqām Book* is clearly written, and ideal for a Western musician. The book is in three parts. Part I provides a foundation on Western European scales. Part II presents concepts on *māqamāt* and Arabic music. Part III "Arabic *Māqamāt* and their Scales" is a methodical presentation of 48 *māqamāt* noting specific details of the scalar definitions and features with clear musical diagrams. The accompanying CD provides a *Taqsim*, a musical improvisation, for each *maqām* played on a *qanun*, a trapezoid shaped zither. Readers are thus able to read about and listen to the *māqamāt*, enabling them to better understand their musical qualities.

In Part II, important concepts regarding a *maqām* are presented. Each *maqām* has a specific Arabic name. One unique feature of Arab music is that each note has a name. For example the note 'C1' is known as *Rast* and 'C2' is known as *Mahur*. Arab musicians refer to these names when describing the music. The net result is that some *maqamat* start on the name of the note. *Rast* is the name of a *maqām* that begins on the note *Rast*. Muallem explains this concept and provides a chart of the names of notes from G1 to G3 including the quarter notes that do not appear in Western music (see Figure 6.8 on page 62). These notes that do not appear in Western music are referred to as quartertones. The specific designations of the quarter-flat and quarter-sharp notes are at the heart of defining a *maqām*. *Rast* for example

begins on C then goes to a D and then an E quarter-flat followed by an F. The E quarter-flat is the exact midpoint between D and F. Muallem provides a clear diagram on pages 58-59 to help the reader visualize this concept. Western theory uses the term tetrachord to refer to the four lower notes that define a scale. In Arab music *Adjnas* is the unit of 3, 4 or 5 notes that define a *maqām*. This too is effectively explained on page 76 (figure 8.11) and is later used in the Part III to aid the reader to understand the main features of a *maqām*.

Also in Part II other musical features used throughout the text are explained. Intonation, non-octave duplication, transposition and reposition are concepts that instrumentalists learn in order to situate a *maqām* on the *ud*, *qanun* or *nay* [flute] thus making the playing of *maqām* kinetic. These concepts presented in Part II are explained for each of the 48 *māqamāt* presented in Part III. The reader can look at the scalar definition of a *maqām* and learn the essential aspects of transposition, reposition. Arab theorists differ on the total number of complete *māqamāt*, estimates varying from 50 to several hundred. Muallem has a practical approach looking at the common characteristics of the *māqamāt* to show the relationship between them.

*The Maqām Book* is a not just for the beginner. It starts with an understanding of scales and then moves on to features and phrases. Many advance concepts like modulation and comparisons to Turkish *maqām* practices are discussed.

One concern about the organization of this textbook is that the first section on European scales is quite long. It is only half-way through the book, on page 101, that the reader learns the specifics about *māqamāt*. Parts I and II are relevant and useful but these sections make up half of the contents. The pages are large and the print is small, there is a great deal of information on every page.

Readers interested in the practice of *maqām* in Jewish traditions should consult two recent studies: Kay Kaufman Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance Among Syrian Jews* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1998), and Mark Kligman, *Maqām and Liturgy: Ritual Music and Aesthetics of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn* (Detroit: Wayne State University press, 2009). Shelemay looks at the practice of Arab music among Syrian Jews in the *piyyut* tradition of the community known as *pizmonim*. Kligman investigates the use of *maqām* in the Sabbath morning music, looking at its use and function.

*The Maqām Book* opens a doorway into Arab music, provides an effective understanding of its musical practice, and lets the interested musician begin to engage this rich tradition.

*Dr. Mark Kligman, a professor of Musicology at Hebrew Union College in New York, specializes in liturgical traditions of Middle Eastern Jewish communities. His expertise extends to historical trends in Ashkenazic and Sephardic musical traditions, and contemporary Jewish musical practice since 1970. Among titles of recently published articles are: “Liturgical Practice of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn,” “Recent Trends in American Jewish Music,” and “Music in the Middle East.” His article, “Klezmer and Hazzanut” appeared in the **FALL 2005 JSM**.*

## **Shmuel Barzilai’s *Chassidic Ecstasy in Music***

*Reviewed by Shoshana Brown*

This is a fertile time in the history of music for cultures everywhere. Thanks to the Internet (especially YouTube) we *hazzanim* live in a global village where musical sub-cultures are borrowing from and melding with others to create a tapestry of musical “fusions”: Jewish gospel, klezmer-bluegrass; jazz-cantorial; Sephardi-Mizrahi-Ashkenazi mixes; and kaleidoscopic variations of Yiddish, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Ladino, African, Indian and Latin American traditions, to name but a few. (To count the number of musical traditions that have been commingled just by Israel’s pop superstar Idan Raichel is truly dizzying!).

What a feast of possibilities lie before us to help *t’fillot* come alive, to lift *daveners* to new spiritual heights, to touch them and enchant them with new-old sounds from all over the world! For the most part, I don’t believe any cantorial schools have quite caught up with this explosion of “world-roots-fusion” creativity which is taking place with such fervor in Jewish music today. During my own cantorial training (in the Cantorial Ordination Program of ALEPH: the Alliance for Jewish Renewal), we were required to take a seminar on Sephardic music (with the accomplished Sephardi hazzan Ramon Tasat), and trained in workshops on the various uses of the Hasidic *niggun* (given by the program’s director, Hazzan Jack Kessler). But for the rest, we students

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1 Available from Peter Lang, *Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main), 2009.

were expected to “go out and learn!” So I went—and am still learning—happily, a life-long project.

In the course of this self-educational program, I have found myself drawn again and again to the music of Bratslav. From Rav Nachman’s “Niggun” (so lovingly performed on Hazzan Richard Kaplan’s *Life of the Worlds* CD)<sup>2</sup> to the haunting renditions of “Sab’einu,” “Yom Shabbaton” and “D’ror Yikra” recorded by Alon Michael (with the piano accompaniment of Michael Edelson)<sup>3</sup> to the more conventionally “hasidic”-sounding *freilekhs* tunes sung by an all-male Bratslaver choir,<sup>4</sup> I kept finding something distinctive, soul-tugging, about the tunes emanating out of the Bratslav tradition.

Then I began to wonder: were all of these tunes composed by Rav Nachman himself? Could he read and write music? Did he have a “music transcriber,” or “court composer”? Do all these tunes go back to the years when Nachman was alive, or are some of them attributable to the Bratslaver Hasidim of today? So I searched the Internet for information on the music of Bratslav, and about Hasidic music in general. That search led me to acquire the volume under review.

Hazzan Shmuel Barzilai, as we are informed on the book’s back cover, is a seventh-generation Jerusalemite, a graduate of the Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute, and has served as the Chief Cantor of the Jewish Community of Vienna, Austria, since 1992. It is evident throughout that Barzilai has *yikhus* and is fully steeped in his subject matter. He brings together an enormous amount of information—an especially rich compendium of both primary- and secondary-source quotations about Hasidism and its relationship to music—which will be invaluable to anyone planning to teach a workshop on the subject.

The author’s many quotations from hard-to-find articles by Abraham Zvi Idelsohn and Meir Shimon Geshuri (1930s through 1950s) are very welcome, and readers will return to these sources again and again as basic references. Yet on a personal level, I am at the same time disappointed, for neither these nor other sources that Barzilai brings address what it is about Bratslaver music that makes it stand out. (Elsewhere in the book he does tackle this kind of question with regard to the music of Chabad, but even there the treatment is superficial.) Who composed the melodies? What relationship do the Bratslaver tunes actually have to Rav Nachman himself? How do Bratslaver melodies differ from those of other Hasidic sects—and how do those differences cor-

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2 2003; reviewed in the *Journal of Synagogue Music*, vol 35, Fall 2010.

3 On their CD, *Meditations of the Heart*, Vol. 1, 2005.

4 Available through the Breslov Research Institute.

respond to the varied ideologies and spiritual practices of those groups? These issues hardly arise, and they are surely never answered.

Barzilai simply doesn't dig deeply enough, analyze (musically or emotionally), or apply any critical or historical scholarship to his subject matter. He is instead a great *collector* of informational tidbits and felicitous quotes *about* Hasidism and music; and he has done a fair job of organizing it in a useful way. But despite the book's title, he never delves into what "Chassidic Ecstasy" is, or why this kind of music, rather than some other kind, might be more likely to lead us to it.

The book's most original part is Chapter 14, consisting of interviews that the author conducted with eight different rabbis and/or experts in the field of Hasidic and other Jewish music. I found particularly interesting the interviews with Israel Katzover, "a journalist and author who for many years served as a senior producer for the radio station Kol Israel"; and Yaakov Mazor, who holds a position at the Jewish Music Research Center at the Hebrew University. According to the author, Mr. Mazor is "one of the greatest contemporary researchers of Jewish and Chassidic music."

Even here, where Hazzan Barzilai might have asked questions of greater analytical or scholarly import, he limited the interview to a popular radio-style level exemplified by the following two examples (emphasis is my own): "Would you prefer to listen to a **chazzan** in your synagogue, or would you prefer a Chassidic synagogue?" and "What is your opinion regarding Shlomo Carlebach?" I do credit the author for having asked both Katzover and Mazor about how women fit into the musical aspect of Hasidism, and I found Katzover's answer particularly intriguing. He said that relatively recently, "women who wished to express their vocal abilities in Chasidic music...established choirs and bands which perform for women. Currently there are women's choirs, bands, composers and even orchestras where musically talented women can perform at functions for other women. It's still a fairly new but already established process and is innovative." At the risk of belaboring this point I must interject that one would like to know more, but typically, that is as far as the book delves into the matter. And alas, I am not likely to find one of these groups on YouTube, since they would not want to expose themselves to the possibility of men hearing their voices!

I still don't know what it is—in a technical sense—that makes Chabad music distinguishable from Modzitz, and Modzitz from Bratslav (although I *feel* it instinctually). Perhaps that scholarship is still in the making. Nevertheless, for anyone who has fallen under the spell of a *freylekhs* niggun, a Hasidic waltz, a

table-banging *tish* niggun or the depth of a *d'veikut* niggun, Shmuel Barzilai's *Chassidic Ecstasy in Music* will prove a valuable volume to have on one's shelf.

*Hazzan Shoshana Brown and her husband, Rabbi Mark Elber, serve as joint Spiritual Leaders for Congregation Beth El of Fall River, MA. In 2011, she led a choir singing "Songs of Yearning and Celebration," including the songs of Bratslav, and her own arrangements of Tehillim set to Celtic-Appalachian ballad music, at the ALEPH Biennial Kallah. A frequent contributor, her review of Joey Weisenberg's "Building Singing Communities" appeared in the 2012 issue of JSM.*

### *Va'ani t'fillati: siddur yisraeli.*

**The Masorti Movement and the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel (Tel Aviv, Miskal–Yedioth Ahronoth Books and Chemed Books, 2009).**

*Reviewed by Geoffrey Goldberg*

When I last visited Jerusalem in November 2010, in the center of Steimatzky's Book Store at the Givat Ram Campus of the Hebrew University, among the piles of recently published books, was one of *Va'ani Tefillati: An Israeli Siddur* (hereafter VT). Unlike the earlier edition of the Israeli Masorti prayer book which most Israelis probably never set eyes upon, this new edition is aimed not just at the relatively small number of Israelis who attend *Masorti* synagogues, but the Israeli public at large, both those who describe themselves as *masorti*—non-Orthodox Jews who have a respect for Jewish tradition and practices—and secular Israelis seeking a Jewish spiritual path. This edition, published by *Yediot Aharonot*, is as Israeli as Amoz Oz or A. B. Yehoshua.

At the back of the *siddur*, the Introduction of the late Simhah Roth, editor of the First Edition, has been retained. It describes the *siddur* as having four basic characteristics: it is traditional, Israeli-Zionist, pluralistic and innovative (*hadshani*).

#### **1. Traditional**

Any Jew familiar with the basic structure and masoretic wording of Jewish prayer will recognize that VT is a traditional *siddur* that includes the statutory prayers, in both form and content, for Weekday Services (*t'midim*

*k'sidram*), for Shabbat (*hemdat yamim*), for the Pilgrim Festivals and Rosh Hodesh (*mo'adim l'simḥah*). It also contains prayers and blessings connected with home observances (*b'shivtekha b'veitekha*), the Jewish life cycle (*Ma'agal ha-hayyim*) as well as *Pirkei avot* and the Torah readings for Weekdays and special occasions.

Nevertheless, VT does not shy away from theological difficulties, and proudly embraces the theology and halakhic approach of the Israeli Masorti Movement. Textual variants and alternatives abound. Roth's justification for them finds support in a Responsum of Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef explaining the existence of liturgical differences between Jewish rites of the various *eidot*. Yosef draws upon a metaphor of R. Isaac Luria, "In Heaven there are twelve windows for each of the twelve tribes, and in each tribe, its prayer rises through its own particular gate." "The Masorti Movement," says Roth, now has its own "special window in Heaven for the acceptance of its prayer."

VT leads the user gently into the world of traditional Jewish prayer. He or she soon learns to differentiate between core prayers and those that are secondary, what is obligatory, what is less so. Each section and sub-section of the *siddur* is prefaced by an introduction of historical, halakhic and practical content. The introduction to the *P'sukei d'zimrah* emphasizes, "Here quality is more important than quantity." In the margins of every page are liturgical annotations, names of prayers and blessings and source references of words and phrases. The choreography of Jewish prayer is given close attention. All these additions make VT a dynamic learning experience for its users. Some of the annotations are rather surprising. We are informed, for example, that "There are those who maintain that an individual does not recite *K'dushat yotseir*" (p. 38). The editors should have quoted the source (*Shulhan arukh, orah hayyim*, 59:3). In the *G'ulah* benediction the phrase ויכסו מים צריהם, אחד מהם לא נותר is written in lighter print, by the side of which is the note, "There are some people who do not recite the words in grey." The editors clearly recognize that recitation of these words, in which the Egyptians are engulfed, raises moral difficulties for some.

In VT, the traditional and the innovative complement each other, for the latter makes possible the continuance and the relevance of the former. We see this in the handling of the *korbanot* (sacrifices), which is dealt with boldly and honestly. The religious and theological issues are addressed extensively in Roth's *Introduction* and the introduction to the *Musaf* Service for Shabbat and Rosh Hodesh. Accordingly, in the *Musaf* for Rosh Hodesh, *Atah yatsarta* is abbreviated, and the ensuing portions are optional. One new option is the recitation of the universalistic verses from Isaiah (2: 2 and 4),

והיה באחרית הימים, נכון יהיה בראש ההרים...לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד זבח ומנחה לא הפצת... עולה, followed by excerpts from Psalms (2:7 and 8), מלחמה וחטאה לא שאלת וכו'.

For those with moral objections to excessively particularistic texts, alternative readings are provided. Some of these are located in *Eilu v'eilu*, a section devoted to alternative readings. The indiscriminate condemnation of Greece/Syria in the traditional wording of *Al ha-nisim* for Hanukkah is modified by changing מלכות יונית to מלכות יון הרשעה, and the vengeance expressed in נקמת את נקמתם removed. One must presume the line of thinking of VT to be: "When Jews no longer had political and military power such sentiments had few practical consequences, but now that we live in the State of Israel, they do." In all services of VT there is an alternate reading for some of the particularistic opening words of *Aleinu* which reads כי כל העמים ילכו איש בשם אלהיו ואנחנו נלך בשם ה' אלהינו (Micah 4:5).

My only criticism concerning the traditional character of VT is that the *t'amim* are lacking for *K'ri'at sh'ma*. Surely the editors are aware that according to many rabbinic authorities recital of the *Sh'ma* according to *trope* is highly desirable and this is actually the practice in many Masorti synagogues. I hope this unfortunate omission will be corrected in future printings.

## 2. Israeli-Zionist

This quality of the *siddur* is particularly evident. An entire section, entitled *Erets, erets, erets*, is devoted to the special needs of the Israeli Jew. It includes prayers for *Yom ha-zikaron l'shoah v'ligvurah*, *Yom ha-zikaron l'hayyalei tsahal*, *Yom ha-atzma'ut* and *Yom y'rushalayim*.

A similar spirit infuses the entire *siddur*. Among various *Mi she-beirakh* prayers in the Torah Service is one upon being enlisted to serve in the Israel Defense Forces. Since women also serve in the IDF the blessing begins מי שברך לוחמנו יהושע, דוד ויהודה המכבי, דבורה, יעל ויהודית, הוא יברך את וכו'. Another *Mi she-beirakh* is for new immigrants and here the *mitsvah of aliyah* is connected to the Biblical call of Abraham, לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך. A newly written Blessing for the State and the Armed Forces of the IDF has been provided for Shabbat and Festival services which concludes with the words וישבו איש תחת גפנו ותחת תאנתו ואין מחריד, כי פי ה' דבר (Micah 4:4) followed by ופרש סכת שלומך על כל יושבי תבל ארצך..... The *T'fillah lishlom ha-m'dinah*, written by former Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog (with the help of S. Y. Agnon), has been retained but relocated to the *Eilu v'eilu* section. The reality of the triumph of Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel has made



necessary an emendation of the second blessing following the Haftarah. Since the traditional text presumes that Zion has not been redeemed and still needs God's comfort, VT has boldly changed the phrase with the words *נפש עלובה* (the "humbled spirit"), to now read *ועד לעולם* and *ותשכון בה לעולם ועד*.

In the *Ahavah rabbah* blessing before the *Sh'ma*, the pre-concluding portion has been emended from *והביאנו לשלום מארבע כנפות הארץ ותוליכנו קוממיות לארצינו* to *והבא עלינו ברכה ושלום מארבע כנפות הארץ ותוליכנו קוממיות בארצנו*. The first phrase, as Roth explains in the *Introduction*, is merely the nusah of *eidot hamizrah*. But since *kibbutz galuyot* is no longer a theme of prime concern to Israel, by altering one letter in the second phrase (*l'artseinu* to *b'artseinu*), "the prayer becomes a supplication for the values of righteousness and pride in [the conduct of] public life in the State of Israel."

Relevant to life in Israel, where water is such a precious commodity, is a short section of prayers, all taken from rabbinic sources, entitled, *Bizman batsoret* ("for times of draught"), and a special *modim* when rain does eventually fall. Particularly moving, and unfortunately only too necessary, is a short subsection headed, *Lo iyra ra*, for situations when Israel finds itself in a state of national emergency. A prayer composed by Rabbi Michael Graetz, for personal and national healing draws upon *Al eileh ani bokhiyah*, a *kinah* from *Tisha B'av*: *על אלה אני בוכיה, עיני עיני ירדה מים. על חיילי ישראל שנרצחו יחדו, על אהבתינו את אלהי ישראל שנרצחו יחדו, על חבש נא את עצבותינו אם ובתה שנספו ברגע. הרופא לשוברי לב ומחבש לעצבותם.*

The primacy of ethical values in Israeli private and public life is particularly emphasized in several of the texts selected for Torah study after *Birkhot ha-torah* in the early part of the *shaharit* service. While I personally regretted the omission of Isaac Luria's reframed *V'ahavta l'rei'akha kamokha*, I welcomed the incorporation of such biblical texts as Leviticus Chap. 19, Deuteronomy Chap. 5 (relating to the gift of living in the Land) and the Decalogue, traditionally hidden away at the end of the *shaharit* service. Rabbinic texts selected are ones that emphasize the moral and ethical responsibilities of living in the Israel and need for mutual respect in a society that is, unfortunately, all too divided.

Despite the unequivocal Israeli-Zionist character of VT, it remains almost exclusively an Ashkenazic prayer book. No attempt was made to fuse rites or select the best available texts. Nevertheless, some liturgical alternatives, reflecting the nusah of other rites and *eidot*, have been included. These include the *K'dushah* according to *nusah sefarad* and *nusah eidot hamizrah*. Hence, in the *musaf k'dushah* on Shabbat, *כתר יתנו לך* is included alongside *נעריצך*. Similarly, different versions of *Kaddish yatom* are offered, most notably the Lurianic version that includes the words *ויצמח פרקנה ויקרב משיחה*. A Hebrew

translation of the *Kaddish* is also provided.<sup>5</sup> Other Aramaic prayers have also been translated into Hebrew, such as *B'rikh sh'meih*, *Eiruv tavshilin* and *B'dikat hameits*.

It should be noted that where the forms of the *Kaddish* include *oseih shalom*, the opportunity is given for including *ועל כל יושבי תבל*, not a modern invention, but as VT points out, based on Isaiah 18:3.

The user will also find several additional gestures towards incorporating the nusah of the Sephardim and *eidot ha-mizrah*. For example, *Ein keiloheinu* concludes not with *אתה הוא שהקטירו* but with *אתה תקום תרחם ציון*, כי עת להננה כי בא מועד. Further, in accordance with Sephardic and *eidot ha-mizrah* practice, *Ein keiloheinu* is included (as an option) at the conclusion of the Weekday *Shaharit* service. Another updated text is *Y'had'sheihu* when announcing the New Month, which includes the appropriate phrase *ולגשמים בעתם* during the winter months (but not the parallel phrase *ולטללי ברכה* for the summer) according to *eidot ha-mizrah*. The Shabbat Day *Kiddush* is prefaced by the (optional) *Im tashiv* (Isaiah 53). However, the *Kiddush* for Yom Tov Day does not include *Eileh mo'adei adonai*, as is the usual Sephardic-and-*eidot ha-mizrah* practice. On the other hand, there is a uniform nusah for the blessing over wine, *borei p'ri ha-gefen* (*segol* instead of *kamats*).

### 3. Egalitarian

VT provides the option for complete egalitarianism. The *imahot* in the *Avot* blessing of the *Amidah* are placed side by side with the traditional version, and not on a different page as in *Siddur Sim Shalom*. Additionally, provision for inclusion of the *imahot* is provided elsewhere, such as in *Ahavah rabbah*, the *G'ulah* blessing before the *Amidah* and *Modim*, to name just a few instances. An egalitarian *Atah ehad* from the *Minhah* service for Shabbat is also included in the *Eilu v'eilu* section.

Gil Nativ's refashioning of *Z'khor av nimshakh aharekha*, the *piyyut* of *T'fillat ha-geshem*, is surely an outstanding example of liturgical creativity. With poetic artistry, he has rewritten the third and fourth lines of each four-line strophe and altered the refrains accordingly. Thus, in the fifth strophe, after mention of Moses being drawn from the waters of the Nile, the revised text now also refers to Miriam and reads *סוף ים שמע אחותו* עונה שיר על המים, עלתה בזכותה במדבר באר מים. Inclusivity is unmistak-

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5 The translation is remarkably close to the Hebrew *kaddish* of *Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship* (West London Synagogue of British Jews, 1841, 1<sup>st</sup> edition).

able in the explanations for laying tefillin, where the illustrations of the *shel-rosh* are of a woman.

#### 4. Innovative

The innovative character of VT hardly warrants separate discussion since it is clearly evident throughout our review thus far. Nevertheless, three further examples of liturgical creativity deserve mention.

The first is a small gem in the *Eilu v'eilu* section: an appropriate text to be recited by mourners or those observing a *yahrzeit* when no *minyan* is present. In many American communities a Psalm is substituted, usually the overworked Ps. 23. The editors of VT have produced a more creative solution, providing a new text to be recited by the individuals concerned, as in this version for a male:

אל אלהי הרוחות, אשר בידך נפשות החיים והמתים, פני היום וברחמים אל תפלתי  
לזכור יקירי. זכר נא את כל החסד והטוב שעשה בעולם החיים. תן לו מנוחה נכונה תחת  
כנפי השכינה, וצרור בצרור החיים את נשמתו. יתגדל יתגקדש שמה רבה. עשה שלום, וכו'.

A second innovation is the inclusion of alternatives to *Elohai n'tsor*, the private meditation after the Silent *Amidah*, and originally just one of several meditations quoted in BT *B'rakhot*. These alternatives are short poems written by Israeli poets. Following each *Amidah* a different poem is included. I have to admit, some are not easy reading, at least for non-experts in Modern Hebrew poetry like myself. Nevertheless, I have attempted the following translation of a poem for Rosh Hodesh, להתפלל, למדני אלהי ברך והתפלל, by Leah Goldberg (p. 186).

Teach me, my God, to bless and pray  
For the secret of a withered leaf, for the brightness of a ripe fruit,  
For this freedom: to see, to feel, to breathe, to know, to hope, to fail.  
Teach my lips blessing and song of praise  
For the renewal<sup>6</sup> of your time, morning and night,  
Lest my day be a day like yesterday,  
Lest my day be for me a routine.

A third innovation, *T'fillah l'nehag* ("Prayer for a driver"; p. 228), is most timely, particularly for a country with an exceedingly high vehicular death rate. This, too, I have translated:

God of our ancestors, God of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca,  
Jacob, Rachel and Leah, enable me to peacefully reach my destination,  
and bring me back peacefully to my home. Enable me to understand

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6 Hebrew, בהתחדש.

that every person is created in Your image, that a person who sustains a single soul is as if he/she sustains a whole world. Grant me the wisdom to understand that there is nothing more precious than a human life—no time or money, not honor or vengeance. Help me to drive with care, to keep [a safe] distance; to drive with courtesy, give the right of way; to drive with alertness, to stop in time. Give me the power to have control over my impulses, the drive of envy and competition, of hate and covetousness. Let there not be a mishap because of me, and may I not encounter a mishap. May we only serve You in truth and increase the holiness of life in the world. May this be Your will, Amen.

To the above four characteristics of this *siddur*, a fifth should be added. VT is very user-friendly (*kal l'shimush*). What distinguishes this edition from the First Edition more than anything else is its light weight. It can be carried around with ease anywhere and anywhere, literally, *b'shivt'kha b'veitekha u-v'lekht'kha va-derekh*. Its compactness has necessitated reducing the font sizes of the print, especially in the introductions and annotations, but this slight inconvenience more than compensates for the bulkiness of the earlier edition. Moreover, VT is most attractive to the eye. The orange-colored cover is matched by use of the same color for the dividers between the various sections, titles, the highlighting of names of prayers, the first words or key words of a prayer, alphabetic acrostics, the *K'dushah* in the repetition of the *Amidah*, the division of *aliyot*, etc. This *siddur* adds *hiddur mitsvah* to the experience of prayer.

Writing a review demands objectivity and impartiality. This has not been easy, for it must be obvious to the reader that I have fallen in love with this new prayer book. Sometime in the future the challenge of producing a parallel High Holy Day *mahzor* will have to be undertaken, and when it is, I hope every effort will be taken to incorporate the best of the *piyyut* traditions of Sephardic Jewry and *eidot ha-mizrah*, in order to draw upon their rich musical traditions. For now, the editors of VT are to be congratulated and deserve only praise for producing such a wonderful *siddur*, one both *yashan* and *hadash*, for the twenty-first century Israeli.

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*Yuval, Musica Judaica, Jewish Culture and History and AJS Review (Journal of the Association for Jewish Studies). His "Aspects of Congregational Song in the German Synagogue..." appeared in the Fall 2005 JSM.*

**Stuart Joel Hecht's *Transposing Broadway: Jews, Assimilation and the American Musical*, 2011, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 240 pp.**

*Reviewed by Robert S. Scherr*

From the 1910's on, America's Broadway musical was developed primarily by Jews. Reflecting their own adjustments to American life, and that of their increasingly Jewish audience, these artists shaped the musical into a form that illustrated their concerns, promoted their values, and, above all, provided a setting for the ongoing discussion of how outsiders might gain access to America and its "Dream" of acceptance and success (pg. 1).

So posits Stuart Hecht, professor of Theater at Boston College, as he introduces us to the unique role played by Jews in the evolution of the Broadway musical. Broadway was a path through which Jews, whether behind the scenes, on the stage or in the audience, transposed themselves into the American mainstream. Hecht concludes that while Broadway did not lead social change in twentieth-century America, it reflected social changes in the wider society.

Some composers, lyricists, and performers found their way to Broadway as a pathway out of the tenements and into the bright light of mainstream America. Some musicians/composers moved from the music of the synagogue, klezmer, and/or Yiddish theatre to the popular stages of Broadway to become popular stars. The Broadway Theatre was a means of social mobility for immigrants or the children of immigrants, on both sides of the footlights. In the twentieth century, as society opened and Jews became acculturated/assimilated into American life, they turned from the ethnicity of Yiddish Theatre downtown, to the brighter lights of Broadway in midtown.

Hecht points to the example of Jerry Herman whose career reflected changing American sensibilities. Herman began by writing musical revues in the 1950s, then in 1961, He wrote *Milk and Honey*, a story of romance wound around the founding of the State of Israel. The success of that show led to *Hello Dolly!* and *Mame*, establishing Herman as a mainstream lyricist

and composer. In 1983, *La Cage Aux Folles* was a daring departure from the conventional subjects of Broadway 'book' musicals, but because Herman already wore the mantle of success, his radical new subject brought rave acclaim.

Stuart Hecht is himself a dramaturge, freely offering analyses of Broadway productions through that lens.

The musical's ascension corresponded to the emergence of New York City's Jewish audience. In America since colonial days, Jews did not assert their ethnicity until the late nineteenth century... As the twentieth century progressed... children [of immigrants] grew assimilated, rejecting Yiddish theatre for non-ethnic American entertainments... becoming an increasingly large proportion of New York's theatre-going audience (p. 33).

The 'book' musicals of themed twentieth-century productions reflected the growing power of ethnic diversity in America. As Hecht observes, "the genteel elite's political power slowly gave way to machine politicians and ward bosses, whose power was based upon the newly arrived immigrant populations" (p. 34). By way of proof he cites Rogers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*—a powerful story about conflicting interests of social groups (the farmers and the cowboys) and the urban setting of *West Side Story*, where emotions and violence exploded into violent ethnic conflict. Social justice, not just love, was fair game for entertainment. So were sophisticated dramaturgical techniques. In *Oklahoma!* songs functioned much like Shakespearian soliloquies, and its composer, Richard Rogers, had already brought ballet to the Broadway stage. In *On Your Toes* (1936), he featured the dance number "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue," choreographed by George Balanchine. In *Oklahoma!*, Agnes DeMille created an organic type of choreography where characters broke into dance just as they might break into song to advance the plot. These were not the kitschy dances of Vaudeville, but rather elegant movements inspired by the norms of classical choreography. As ethnic groups, including Jews, had found high social standing, so the Broadway musical no longer served merely as entertainment for newcomers, but rather as an artistic multi-media presentation for the broad spectrum of rising second-and-third generation New York Americans.

Hecht's volume is thoroughly footnoted, and the Bibliography will send scholars happily exploring available sources to further their appreciation of the meaning of Broadway Theatre as a unique creation of American artistic expression. Every chapter tells an essential story, guiding the reader to an appreciation not only of historical development but also the wonder of each age. In "The Melting-Pot Paradigm of Irving Berlin," Hecht uses his subject as

the model of a Russian immigrant whose music became the essential expression of America. Irving Berlin was the consummate dressed-up actor. As the composer of *Top Hat*, *White Tie, and Tails*, *Easter Parade*, and *Puttin' on the Ritz*, Berlin demonstrated that the right clothes could enable one to fit into America. Hecht points out, "back in Russia a man was measured by birth, not by ability; in America, Israel Beline could reinvent himself, become 'Irving Berlin' and rising as high as his talent and ambition could take him (p. 58)." As Jerome Kern once proclaimed: "Irving Berlin has *no place* in American music. **He *is* American music**" (p. 42).

The age of Irving Berlin is followed by a chapter which Hecht titles *How To Succeed*. Organized chronologically, this chapter—the beating heart of the book—relates the concerns of Broadway's predominantly Jewish composers, lyricists, librettists, producers, directors to relate to an increasingly Jewish audience in New York that responded to stories of moving up the social ladder. Accordingly they produced shows from the first quarter of the century that celebrate street smarts as key to success, shows that later depicted how the pressures to assimilate manifested itself in a variety of improving work settings...into mainstream America's work life (p. 62).

*Show Boat*, based on Jewish author Edna Ferber's novel, and *Funny Girl*, tell stories of multiculturalism with Jewish sensibilities. Both heroines marry for love, but marry gamblers who perhaps offer the promise of wealth not as an end in itself, but as a way to "fit in" to American life and gain distance from their impoverished origins. Was the American Dream available to everyone? *The Music Man*, *My Fair Lady*, *Funny Girl* and *Guys and Dolls* all test the premise of *pluck-and-luck* to live that longed-for life.

Hecht unpacks *Ragtime* as a study in transitions. The musical, based on E. L. Doctorow's 1975 novel, is set in the early 1900s amidst a world in flux. It is a story of characters who all transform themselves. In the musical, as life moves from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the play uses a series of cultural shifts to redefine identities. Every character is an immigrant who has to find a new identity. Hecht links *Ragtime* with Harold Prince's *Parade*, both appearing in 1998. Whereas *Ragtime* portrays and suggests optimistic rewards for assimilating (at least for immigrants), *Parade* harshly depicts a key instance of the failures, the pitfalls of assimilation, a case where the American Dream turned into a nightmare (p. 152).

Readers will find a rewarding treat in Hecht's last two chapters, titled *Fiddler's Children* and *Lovable Monsters*, elegant stories told about Jerome Robbins and Mel Brooks. And what follows, *Why the Producer Matters*, adds a most fitting epilogue to this enlightening study. These unseen giants of

the theatre, whose best work was accomplished behind the scenes, need no introduction. Nonetheless, their careers as summarized by Professor Hecht will provide readers with a satisfying dessert to the sumptuous meal that he lays out for them throughout *Transposing Broadway*.

I must take issue with two suggestions that Hecht makes about the origins of Jewish music. 1) At the beginning of the book, he notes the musical influences of traditional Jewish music as heard in the synagogue. In explaining that sacred words are an essential aspect of both prayer and study, Hecht refers to the logogenic nature of prayer *melodies* as “nusach”(p. 10, my italics). In fact, the term nusach refers to the modes—age-old patterns of melo-rhythmic figurations associated with particular sets of prayers when recited at specific times. 2) Nor do I hold with Hecht’s simplistic differentiation between major and minor keys:

Major keys are more about narrative than emotion; minor keys are more about emotion than narrative...Major keys rouse us to battle; minor keys allow us to weep (p. 10).

Seen overall, both these points represent no more than technical ripples upon the surface of a carefully researched study.

Hecht’s work is both thorough and entertaining. If *the play’s the thing*, then like the stage director he is, Hecht brings just the right amount of light and sound to bear upon the scene, illuminating the actors and projecting their lines, immersing us in the work of legendary composers, lyricists, choreographers and producers—each geniuses of the Broadway stage in their own fields. To open the pages of this book is to raise the curtain on an intriguing tale delightfully presented; and when it’s over, to leave the reader calling for its author to take a bow!

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## The CD—*Rabbi Isaac Algazi Singing Ottoman-Turkish and Ottoman-Jewish Music*

Notes by Edwin Seroussi

Reviewed by Alberto Mizrahi

### HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Izak Algazi Efendi (Izmir 1889–Montevideo 1950; “Efendi”: honorary title for a respected master), was arguably the last and certainly most famous Sephardic Jewish hazzan, singer, poet, teacher (of both Jewish music and text and Turkish music), published writer and journalist, intellectual, and social activist of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. At a time of immense conflict and dramatic change amidst the death throes of the 700-year-old Ottoman Empire, Algazi was involved in building bridges between the Jewish community and the “New Turks,” led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who were establishing a Turkish Republic.

A social activist, Algazi publicly espoused that Jews become a vital part of the general community in which they lived. He was once invited by Atatürk to sing Turkish music in Istanbul’s Dolmabahçe Palace, and at the same time advised him on Turkish history and even translation of the Koran into Turkish. The son and grandson of *hazzanim* who were highly acclaimed in their own day, Algazi possessed one of the greatest voices of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jewish or otherwise. Granted, its timbre may have been worlds away from what the Western ear was accustomed to hearing. Yet at every listening it never ceases to amaze me with its power, contrasted with a mellifluous and ephemeral *voix mixte*.

In a literal translation from its Turkish original, the CD is entitled: “Rabbi Isaac Algazi, from Turkey—singing Ottoman-Turkish and Ottoman-Jewish music,” a bit awkward, but an accurate description. Twenty-four recordings are presented in this collection, mostly from 1925–1929, all of them demonstrating the fluidity with which he manipulates the various prayer modes—*makamat* in Sephardic and Mizrahi terminology—to produce a seemingly effortless yet ringing sound. Readers of this review are no doubt familiar with usage of *maqam* as a parallel of Ashkenazic *ta’amei ha-mikrah*—and by extension—*nusah* *ha-t’fillah*. *Makamat* are also the crucible from which all Ottoman music is fashioned, one of the reasons for Algazi’s equal renown as a singer of Turkish music.

The art of the non-Ashkenazic hazzan has historically included a facility in the usage of both *makamat* and vocal ornamentation when interpreting

words of liturgy, para-liturgical hymns (search under “*Maftirim*” on the web or, better yet, read the brilliant dissertation by Edwin Seroussi in the booklet that accompanies this CD)<sup>7</sup>, and even Ladino folk songs and liturgy. Over the centuries 600 Ottoman *makamat* have been identified by scholars, of which only 20 or so still remain in popular use. As a hazzan who in his youth thought that *dreydlakh* (Yiddish:vocal “roulades”) were the be-all and end-all of *hazzanut*, I learned quickly that they are not simply ornaments pasted on to the nusah, but an integral part of the prayer modes themselves.

Another characteristic of Middle Eastern *hazzanut*—a preference for nasality—is endemic to the Eastern European style as well. In Algazi’s singing this, combined with a perfectly unforced head-voice technique that is unrivaled in its flexibility, recalls the fluidity of his Ukrainian-born contemporary Dovid Roitman (1870-1941), and almost channels the dizzying intricacy of an older Polish-born colleague—the “dreydlakh King”—Yekhiel Alter Karniol (1855-1929). In essence, Algazi’s voice smoothly moves between registers with nary a seam showing. His ability to slide from the lowest notes to the highest is a lesson in vocal technique. At the same time, his wailing motifs starting at very high notes and going straight back into the song without a moment’s “pushing,” will remain an unattainable ideal for those of us who cannot do it half as well. In effortlessly producing the ethereal trills and slides that ornament even simple Ottoman folksongs, Algazi shows that he was not only a master of this style—but that he lived it! He must have created a dream-like atmosphere in a synagogue service. But we can still learn much from what Algazi has left us on this CD alone.

The music is split into twelve Turkish Songs, eight Liturgical pieces in Hebrew except for one in Judeo-Spanish, and four secular songs in Judeo-Spanish. As a cautionary note, may I suggest you listen to the *Kiddush l’shavuot* first (Track 13). That piece paints a portrait of Izak Algazi the Hazzan! Then go back to the Ottoman material, paying attention to the technique that never fails him, no matter what he is singing. Here are my impressions of almost every track, that illustrate what I mean:

## TURKISH SONGS

### 1. A *gazel* in *makam Hijaz*

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7 Edwin Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem*—*The Life and Music of Rabbi Isaac Algazi from Turkey* (Jerusalem: Institute for Jewish Music), 1989, is the most complete history of this famous hazzan; *Maftirim* was a 17th-century Sephardic society.

A Greek-style *amane* vocalise (similar to the Arabic *mawwal* or *layali*), sung as an introduction to a composed song. Each *makam* in this section will be prefaced by a *gazel* that is freely improvised on vowel sounds. In the Middle East, non-rhythmic improvisation in a *makam* is valued as the highest form of musicianship. Rhythmic song was considered lower class.<sup>8</sup> Algazi expertly builds the *makam* from the bottom up with Turkish words for which there is unfortunately no translation. The consummate singer is in his element here: trills, upward soaring scales all in the mode we know as *Ahavah rabbah*.

### 3. Song in *makam Hijaz*

In what must have been a popular tune, the payoff comes at the end with Algazi's voice flexing into the sky—and we are yet to hear his stratosphere.

### 4. A *gazel* in *makam Bayati*

Here we are treated to a full palate of Algazi's vocal prowess, although we will hear more exciting things as we enter the Jewish liturgy. I find the constant trilling both impressive and annoying, which may be a personal quirk. Additionally, I wish the CD had begun with Jewish liturgical selections and ended with the lighter Turkish pieces. But I understand that this recording was produced with a Turkish audience in mind; Professor Seroussi's notes are offered in both Turkish and English!

### 6. Song in *makam Hussein*

This is a perfect example of the difficulty that Western listeners encounter in trying to discern the difference between various *makamat*. There is no question that the *Hussein* mode differs from those that preceded it. And we subliminally acknowledge that each mode will include discernibly different motifs. But, unless we have been listening to this music for a very long time, we will not readily pick up the subtleties! On the other hand, the *taksim* or instrumental improvisation at the end of this song is quite energetic.

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8 It would seem that the improvised vocalism of the *gazel* was almost wiped out in the middle of the 20th century due to the drive toward removing the old usages of the Ottoman Empire and embracing the new. Since then, it has been slowly returning. A number of performers still embrace the style, but it will be a long time before someone of Algazi's calibre rises to do it justice. In this regard, it is very much like *hazzanut*. Most modern-day *hazzanim* did not grow up listening to the greats of the 20th century. We continue to hear great voices, but authenticity of style is often lacking. Moreover, an appreciative public in the form of worshipers who demand the old style seems to have vanished—except at the occasional concert.

### 7. *Gazel in makam Muhayyer*

Here we have a *makam* that begins high and goes even higher. Prepare to be amazed by Algazi's long-held notes in the upper realms of human vocal capability. Along with that unexpected bonus, you may find (as I did) that this mode is much more interesting musically than some others featured.

### 8. *Song in makam Hijaz*

It seems Algazi has only been warming up with the previous songs. Here we hear him sing only above the staff. Transposed to a more universally accessible pitch, I believe it might make a nice *Hatsi-kaddish*. I like this piece! As if to compensate for the paucity of modes, this track introduces a fresh accompanying instrument alongside the ever-present *oud* or pear-shaped lute. I believe it is a *ney* (a violin-like instrument played vertically on one's knee).

### 9. *Gazel in makam Shefkevza*

Listening to one song after another in rapid succession, it may seem as if we are hearing the same one over and over.<sup>9</sup> Not to despair. In this case, I would wager that, not only have most of us never heard of this *makam*, but the performance style is so distinct as to demand a second hearing. The accompaniment is on a zither-like *tanbour*.

### 11. *Vocal composition in makam Acemasiran*

I would recommend that readers try and identify the nusah of this song, and email their answers to me ([amizrahi@ansheemet.org](mailto:amizrahi@ansheemet.org)). This song will also reveal that Algazi had no bottom tones to speak of, not that anyone really cared. In his place, many singers would have taken the easy way out by letting the accompaniment fill in when they couldn't quite reach a note. But not Algazi Effendi! Nor would he push his instrument to get there. His mantra: "no pushing."

## LITURGICAL: HEBREW AND JUDEO-SPANISH

### 13. *Kiddush V'shavuot*

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9 Take a moment to imagine having to internalize and memorize not only all of these various makamat, but the stylistic changes entailed in rendering each of them—with the songs in at least three languages—and being able to sing them seamlessly.

This sanctification of the Festival gives us an idea of how Algazi “davened.” According to Seroussi, this is the first composition on the CD in which he modulates from *makam* to *makam* (at *Va-titen lanu...*), clearly showing his mastery of *nusah ha-t’fillah* as it functions in the Sephardic and Mizrahi world.<sup>10</sup>

#### 14. *Yishlah miha-shamayim*

“May God send from heaven.” A fascinating peek into the singing of the previously mentioned “maftirim” choir, this *piyyut* or religious poem is sung by men in close tonal proximity to each other (meant to be unison)—keeping in mind there is no harmony in this music—ever. Seroussi notes that this particular melody may have been of Turkish origin and greatly resembles the music of the Sufis.

#### 15. *Avinu malkeinu*

I find this rendition of a familiar setting to be fantastic. Algazi’s vocalism is over the top, his fantastic coloratura is spot perfect, and I find myself wanting the piece to go on and on. It’s the same way I felt about *Kiddush l’shavuot*.

#### 16. *Adonai shamati shim’akha yareiti*

“O God, I have heard of You and was afraid.” As does *Hin’ni* in the Ashkenazic tradition, this *r’shut* or petition asks God for “permission” to approach and pray on behalf of the congregation. It is delivered in simple conversational style without histrionics, although with its share of trills.

#### 17. *Ohilah la’eil*

Algazi enunciates the words of this *r’shut*—“I pray that I may enter God’s Presence”—in the Ottoman accent he uses throughout these recordings. The Hebrew sounds totally different to the non-Turkish listener. A musically difficult composition, Algazi handles *Ohilah la-eil* as if it were child’s play; beautiful to hear..

#### 18. *Hay-yom harat olam*

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10 Under the *Makam* system, one is instructed on which note to begin and end, as well as which notes to emphasize when ascending and which notes to emphasize when descending. Performers must also know and be able to use all the motives and moves in every *makam*. To outsiders, this may appear overly restrictive. Yet, it is necessary if one is to improvise convincingly within the given parameters while finding one’s way between modulations from *makam* to *makam*. Meeting this challenge is what drives Sephardic and Mizrahi *hazzanim* to lift the words of prayer ever higher.

In this prayer—“Today the world is born anew”—interjected between series of Shofar blasts during the Musaf service of Rosh Hashanah, Algazi follows the phrasing of *makam Siga*. In it, I believe he hits the highest notes of any on the recording. Do not try this at home.

### 19. **Es razon de alabar**

A liturgical “Ketubah” between God and Israel, sung in *makam Siga* on Shavuot, “It is a Reason to Exalt” affords us the closest approximation of how Algazi would recite text. It reminds me of how my father and his Sephardic guests would chant “Abastava a nos” (*Dayyeinu* in Judeo-Español) during our Passover Seder.

### 20. **Y’tsav ha-eil (“May God uphold”)**

This *r’shut* by Yehuda Halevy is chanted on Yom Kippur afternoon either during or just before Minhah, in *makam Husseini*. It is sung here mainly in the upper portions of Algazi’s range, with not a hint of effort.

## SECULAR: JUDEO-SPANISH

### 21. **Ay mancebo, ay... (“Oh, young fellow, Oh!”)...**

This selection, originating in Izmir, is still sung today. But Algazi renders it in a style almost never heard in contemporary performance of Ladino/Judeo-Spanish repertoire. The biggest surprise for me was a little improvisation with which he ended the song, a kind of longing sigh.

### 22. **Quien conocio mi mancevez (“Who knew my youth?”).**

Seroussi characterizes this type of ballad as a *Sarki* or metrically structured art song performed in Turkish cafes. One can imagine glasses of *raki* (anise-flavored spirit) being served as the singer gently relates his troubles to the men who frequented these establishments—to the exclusion of women—as is common in the Middle east.

### 23. **Cantica de ajugar (“Song of the Bridal Trousseau”)**

This folksong is based on true life. The wedding and its attendant preparations receive much attention in Sephardic music. An appealing example of the style in *makam Bayati*, it was sung as the bride’s dowry was presented to the groom’s family just prior to the nuptial ceremony.

### 24. **Reina de la gracia (“Queen of Beauty”)**

There are numerous settings of these words among Sephardim, this one being relatively recent. Composed by Alazraki of Izmir (ca. 1800), Seroussi calls it a “modern love song,” no doubt in view of the fact that Sephardic lovers in Turkey have been singing other versions to their sweethearts uninterruptedly for over 500 years.

## PRIME YEARS AND BEYOND

Algazi moved from the rich cultural environment of Izmir to more cosmopolitan Istanbul in 1923, initially as hazzan of Neveh Shalom Synagogue, and later as music director of the extremely active Italian Synagogue. His ten years in Istanbul were his most productive ones. Although there is no evidence that he performed concerts (it would not have been proper for a *sh’li’ah tsibbur*), his many public activities, appearances in private home musicales, recordings and association with the intellectual elite of both Jewish and Turkish circles, brought him fame throughout Turkey. To this day, a mention of Algazi Effendi will bring knowing smiles or even an old 78-rpm platter of his to be played. I write this from personal experience in the Izmir *suk*, as well as visits to the Chief Rabbi’s home in Istanbul.

By the early 1930s Ataturk’s policies shifted radically towards favoritism only for Turks; for all his fame, Algazi could not gain admittance to the Radio company’s Board of Directors. He then made the fateful decision to emigrate. He spent three years in Paris (1933-1935), serving its Sephardic community and continuing his social initiatives. Much as he tried, despite being accepted into the highest reaches of the general society, he had made no inroads with the established body of composers and performers within the Jewish community.

In 1935 he accepted an invitation to lead High Holy Day services in Montevideo, Uruguay. Afterward, the congregation, made up largely of émigrés from Izmir, offered him a permanent position. He was accepted as their leader in communal affairs, and was able to give occasional recitals throughout South America. He died in 1950, but his musical life and creativity had expired shortly after his arrival in a country whose cultural taste neither appreciated his vocal approach nor understood his genius in performing Turkish music.

I, for one, will never forget him. I urge you to pick up this CD or just listen to it on YouTube. Just about every piece that is on the recording can be searched on the Internet under his name: Izak Algazi Efendi. These precious clips comprise perhaps the most eloquent tribute to his memory.

*Hazzan Alberto Mizrahi serves the historic Anshe Emet Synagogue, Chicago. His career has taken him around the world in venues from opera and symphony to synagogue and recital hall. To this Greek-born grandson of Turkish ancestry, the subject and music of Izak Algazi Efendi provided a genetic link with his professional life. Alberto's latest recordings include Sephardic and Ashkenazic folk songs (**My World**) and jazz renditions of Hanukkah and Seder songs with Trio Globo (**Matzah to Menorah**).*

*A review of his 1995 release, **Chants Mystiques**, which features rare Jewish chants arranged and conducted by Matthew Lazar, had this to say: "Mizrahi's powerful and flexible tenor is up to the challenge of shaping and reshaping the ancient melismatic music in a haunting and revealing manner. I was initially struck by the richness of his voice and the intensity of the falsetto on 'Respondemos,' a Sephardic-Ladino piece from the High Holy Day repertoire... which added to the mystical element" (Reckless DC Music, Whitneyville, CT. For further information consult Website: [www.albertomizrahi.com](http://www.albertomizrahi.com)*



Isaak Algazi Effendi (1889-1950)



# In Memoriam

Macy Nulman (1923-2011)



Cantor Nulman served several synagogues in Brooklyn before joining the faculty of the American Theater Wing, which instituted a cantorial training program for returning veterans after World War II. He began his affiliation with Yeshiva University's Music Department in 1961 as an instructor on *Hazzanut* and *Nusah ha-t'fillah*. He was appointed Assistant Director of the newly founded Cantorial Training Institute from 1954-1966, and named its Director from 1966-1984 when it reorganized as the academically accredited Belz School of Jewish Music. In 1960 he and Professor Karl Adler, head of Yeshiva's Music Department, co-founded the Cantorial Council of America.

The author of numerous scholarly articles on Jewish liturgy, he published several notable books, including *The Concise Encyclopedia of Jewish Music*, *Concepts of Jewish Music and Prayer*, *The Wedding Service*, *Chant for Sabbath, Festivals and High Holy Days*, *Encyclopedia of Sayings of the Jewish People* and the award-winning *Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer*. He also served as founding editor for the *Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy* for over 30 years.

Yet, beyond his musical and scholarly credentials lies the simple fact of Macy Nulman's *being there* for the American Orthodox cantorate when its Reform and Conservative counterparts had already institutionalized themselves as official wings of their respective national movements. Had he not stepped into the breach at that critical moment and persevered in the face of his own academic institution's endemic disdain for anything other than textual study of Talmud and Scripture (in that order) as *bittul z'man* (waste of time) and *bittul torah* (negation of Torah), who knows how long it would have taken for the following generation to catch up—if ever?

Ecclesiastes (4:12) tells us: "A threefold cord is not quickly broken." Yeshiva University's fledgling cantorial school, prodded by Nulman's vision and energy, supplied the vital third strand that helped forge the bonding of institutions dedicated to training professional American cantors across the denominational board. It has since learned to bend with periodic socio-religious stresses—but not to break.

When all is said and done, Macy Nulman's lasting contribution to *hazzanut* rests equally upon skills at organization and at imparting to novices the essence of davening at the *amud*. His chant for *Sh'ma koleinu*—from the *S'lihot* section of the Yom Kippur liturgy, morning and evening—stands alongside those of Rapaport and Alter (among other Golden Age exemplars) as a paragon of the Eastern-Ashkenazic style that still persists in Traditionalist-minded Ashkenazic synagogues everywhere.

## Sh'ma koleinu

Words: *S'lihot* Liturgy

Music: Macy Nulman  
Yeshiva University, 1953

① Sh' - ma ko - lei - nu, a - do - nai e - lo - hei - nu hus\_ v'ra - heim, v' -  
 ra\_ heim\_ a - lei - nu hus\_ v'ra - heim\_ a - lei - nu, v - ka - beil b' -

rah - mim, b' - ra - ha - mim u - v' - ra tson, v' - ka - bel b' -

ra - - ha - mim v' - ka - beil\_ b' - ra - ha - mim

u - v' - ra - tson. et t' - fi - la - tei - - nu.

② Ha - shi - vei - nu, ha - shi - vei - nu a - do - nai\_ ei - le -

- kha\_ v' - na - - shu - vah,

ha - 3 deish ya - mei - nu, ha - deish ya - mei - nu k' - ke - dem.

31 *Gm*  
  
 ③ Al, \_\_\_\_\_ al tash - li - khei - nu,

34  
  
 al \_\_\_\_\_ tash - li - khei - nu, al \_\_\_\_\_ tash - li - khei - nu,

37  
  
 mil - fa - ne - kha \_\_\_\_\_ v' - ru - ah \_\_\_\_\_ kod - sh' kha al ti -

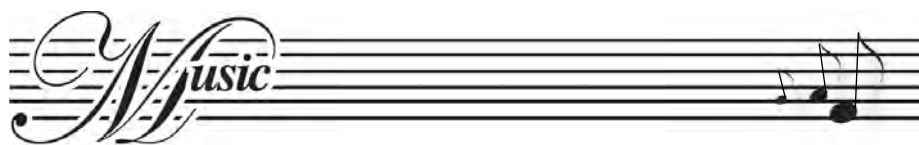
40 *Gm*  
  
 kah, \_\_\_\_\_ al ti - kah mi - me - nu

42 *Cm*, *G*  
  
 ④ Al, \_\_\_\_\_ al \_\_\_\_\_ tash - li - khei - nu, l' - eit, \_\_\_\_\_ l - eit \_\_\_\_\_ zik - nah, l' -

46 *f* *F* *C*  
  
 eit \_\_\_\_\_ zik - nah, l' eit \_\_\_\_\_ zik - nah al, \_\_\_\_\_ al, \_\_\_\_\_ al tash - li - khei - nu kikh - lot \_\_\_\_\_ ko

50 *pp*  
  
 hei - nu, kikh - lot \_\_\_\_\_ ko - hei - nu, kikh lot \_\_\_\_\_ ko - hei - nu

53 *f* *Fm* *p* *C* *mf* *Fm* *C*  
  
 al, \_\_\_\_\_ al, \_\_\_\_\_ al ta - az - vei - nu!



# Annual Cycle of *Hatsi-kaddish* Settings in Sephardic Usage, plus the *Shokhein ad* Section for Sabbaths and Festivals

## 1. Weekday

*Chants Traditionnels Hébraïques,*  
Maurice Benharoche, ed.  
Biarritz, 1961

1 Yit-gad - dal v'yit-kad-dash sh'-meih rab-ba\_\_\_ a - mein b' - al - ma

2 di v' - ra - khir - u - tei v' - yam-likh mal - khu - tei b' - hay - yei -

3 khon u - v' - yo - mei - khon uv' - hay - yei d' - khol beit yis - ra - el,

4 ba - a - ga - la u - viz-man ka - riv v' - im - ru a - mein; a - mein. Y' -

5 hei sh'-mei rab - ba m' - va - rakh l' - a - lam ul' - al' - mei al - ma - ya;

6 yit - ba-rakh v-yish-ta - bah, v'yit-pa-ar, v'yit-ro-mam, v'yit-na-sei v'yit-ha-

(Continued →)

7 dar v'-yit- a- leh, v'-yit-hal-lal sh' - meih d'-ku-d'-sha b'-rikh- hu; b' -rikh- hu

8 l' - ei - la min kol bir - kha - ta v' - shi - ra - ta tush - b' - ha -

9 ta v' ne - he - ma - ta da - a - mi - ran b' - al - ma v' - im - ru a - mein; a - mein.

## 2. *Shaharit l'shabbat*

Aleppo (Syria)

after A. Z. Idelsohn  
*Thesaurus IV*, no. 32.

1 Yit - gad - dal\_\_\_ v' - - yit - kad - dash\_\_\_

2 sh'mei\_\_\_ rab - ba\_\_\_ a - mein\_\_\_ b' - al - ma\_\_\_

3 di v' - ra\_\_\_ khir - u - tei\_\_\_ v' - yam - likh - mal - khu - tei\_\_\_

4 b' - hay - yei - khon uv' - yo - mei - khon uv' - hay - yei d' - khol beit yis - ra - el

(Continued →)

5 ba - a - ga - la \_\_\_\_\_ u - viz - man ka - riv v' im - ru \_\_\_\_\_ a - mein;

6 **Congregation**  
a mein. \_\_\_\_\_ y' - hei sh' - meih rab - ba \_\_\_\_\_ m' - va - rakh

7 l' - a - lam ul' - al - mei al - ma - ya. yit - ba - rakh v' - yish - ta - bah \_\_\_\_\_

8 v' \_\_\_\_\_ yit - pa - ar \_\_\_\_\_ v' - yit - ro - mam \_\_\_\_\_

9 v' - yit - na - sei \_\_\_\_\_ v' - yit - ha - dar v' - yit - a - leh v' - yit - hal -

10 **Congregation**  
lal \_\_\_\_\_ sh' - meih d' - ku - d' - sha b' rikh hu; b' - rikh \_\_\_\_\_ hu \_\_\_\_\_

11 l' - ei - la min kol bir - kha - ta \_\_\_\_\_ v' - shi - ra - ta tush - b' - ha - ta \_\_\_\_\_ v' - ne - he -

12 ma - ta \_\_\_\_\_ da - a - mi - ran \_\_\_\_\_ b' - al - ma \_\_\_\_\_

13 **Congregation**  
v' - im - ru a - mein; \_\_\_\_\_ a - mein. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Musaf l'shabbat

Spanish-Portuguese (New York)

L. Kramer & O. Guttman  
Kol Sh'eirit Yisrael, 1942: 41

Congregation

1. Yit - gad- dal\_\_\_ v'-yit-kad-dash sh'-meih rab- ba\_\_\_ a - mein  
 2. b' - al - ma di - vra khir - u - tei\_\_\_ v' yam likh\_\_\_ mal - khu - tei  
 3. b'hay - yei- khon\_\_\_ uv'-yo-mei- khon\_\_\_ uv'-hay yei\_\_\_ d'- khol beit yis-ra-el

5

Congregation

4. ba - a - ga - la u - viz-man ka-riv v' - im - ru a-mein; a-mein.

9

5. Y'-hei sh' meih rab-ba m' - va - rakh l'-a-lam u - l' - al - mei al - ma - ya

13

6. Yit - ba - rakh v' yish-ta - bahr v' yit-pa-ar v' - yit-ro-mam v' yit-na-sei v' - yi - ha - dar

17

Congregation

7. v'-yit-a - leh v' - yit - ha - lal sh' - meih d'-ku-d'-sha b'rikh hu; b' - rikh\_\_\_ hu,

21

8. l' - ei - la min kol bir-kha-ta v' - shi - ra - ta\_\_\_ tush-b' - ha - ta

25

Congregation

- v'-ne-he- ma - ta da-a - mi - ran b' - al-ma v'-im-ru a - mein; a - mein.



## 4. Special *Shabbatot*

London/Gibraltar

*Kamti Lehallel*  
2007, CD 1: 4

**Andante** Congregation

Yit - gad-dal v' - yit-kad-dash sh' - meih rab ba a - mein b'al - ma di v'ra-khir

6 u - tei v'yam - likh mal-khu - tei, b'hay yei khon uv'yo - mei - khon uv'hay -

11 yei d' khol beit yis-ra - eil, ba - a - ga - la u-viz-man ka -

16 - riv v'im - ru: a - mein. Y' Congregation

21 hei sh'- mei rab - ba m'-va - rakh l'-a-lam ul - al - mei al - ma - ya. Yit-ba -

25 rakh v-yish - ta - bah v'yit-pa - ar v'yit-ro - mam v' - yit - na - sei v' -

29 yit - ha-dar v'-yit-a - leh v' - yit-hal-lal sh'meih d'-kud'-sha b' - rikh hu; b'rikh hu, l'-ei - Cong

33 la min kol bir - kha - ta v'-shi-ra - ta tush - b' - ha - ta v'-ne-he -

37 ma - ta da - a - mi - ran b' - al - ma, v' - im - ru: a - mein. Cong

## 5. Shalosh r'galim

Italian Rite

Daniel Halfon,  
Kamti Lehallel, 2007, CD 2: 11

Joyfully

Yit - gad - dal \_\_\_\_\_ v' - yit - kad - dash \_\_\_\_\_ sh'-meih \_\_\_\_\_

6 **Congregation**  
rab - ba, a - - mein \_\_\_\_\_ b' - al - ma \_\_\_\_\_ di - v'

11  
ra \_\_\_\_\_ khir - u - tei \_\_\_\_\_ v' - yam - lkh \_\_\_\_\_ mal - khu - tei

17  
b'-hay-yei-khon uv' - yo - mei khon\_ uv' - hay-yei d' khol beit yis - ra - el ba - a - ga - la u - viz

22 **Congregation**  
man ka - riv \_\_\_\_\_ v' - im - ru: a - mein. y' - hei - sh' - mei \_\_\_\_\_ rab - ba \_\_\_\_\_

27 **Cantor**  
m - va - rakh\_ l' - a - lam \_\_\_\_\_ ul' - al - mei al - ma - ya, yit - ba -

32  
rakh v' - yish - ta - bah \_\_\_\_\_ v' - yit pa - ar v' - yit - ro - mam v' - yit - na -

38  
- sei \_\_\_\_\_ v' - yit - ha - dar v' - yit - a - leh \_\_\_\_\_ v' -

43 **Congregation**  
yit - hal - lal \_\_\_\_\_ sh' - meih \_\_\_\_\_ d' - kud' - sha brikh hu; b' - rikh \_\_\_\_\_

48  
hu \_\_\_\_\_ l' - ei - la \_\_\_\_\_ min \_\_\_\_\_ kol\_ bir - kha - ta \_\_\_\_\_

(Continued →)

53

v' - shi - ra - ta tush - b' - ha - ta -

59

v' - ne - he - ma - ta da - a - mi - ran b' - al -

62

ma v' - im - ru: a - mein.

## 6. Yamim nora'im (Evening)

Balkans  
(Idelsohn *Thesaurus IV*, no. 220)

*Liturgie Sephardie*  
E. Abinun & J. Papo,  
O. Camhy, ed., 1959: 12

**Andante**

Yit - gad - dal v' - yit - kad - dash sh'meih rab -

6

ba A - mein b' - al - ma di v' - ra khir -

12

u - tei v' - yam - likh mal - khu - tei b' - hay - yei -

18

khon uv' - yo - mei - khon uv' - hay - yei d' - khol beit

23

yis - ra - eil ba - a - ga - la u - viz - man ka -

(Continued →)

28 Congregation

- riv \_\_\_\_\_ v' - i - m' ru: a - mein. y' - hei sh'meih\_

34

rab - ba m' - va - rakh \_\_\_\_\_ l' - a - lam\_ u - l' - al - mei \_\_\_\_\_

39

al - ma - ya Yit - ba - rakh v' - yish - ta - bah v' - yit - pa - ar v' - yit - ro -

44

mam \_\_\_\_\_ v' - yit - na - sei \_\_\_\_\_ v' - yit - ha - dar \_\_\_\_\_ v' - yit - a -

50

- leh \_\_\_\_\_ v' - yit - hal - lal \_\_\_\_\_ sh'meih d' - kud' - sha b' - rikh hu; \_

55 Congregation

b' rikh \_\_\_\_\_ hu l' - ei - la ul' - ei - la min kol bir -

60

kha - ta \_\_\_\_\_ v' - shir - ra - ta \_\_\_\_\_ tush - b' - ha - ta \_\_\_\_\_

65

v' - ne - he - ma - ta \_\_\_\_\_ da - a - mi - ran b' - al - ma \_\_\_\_\_

69 Congregation

v' - - i - m' - ru: a - - mein.



## 8. Yamim nora'im (Musaf)

Amsterdam/London/New York

Idelsohn *Kamti Lehallel*, CD 2007, 1: 19

**Adagio** Cong.

Yit-gad-dal v'yit-kad-dash sh'meih rab-ba a-mein  
 b'al-ma di v'ra-khir-u-tei v'yam-likh mal-khu-tei  
 b'hay-yei-khon u-v'yo-meikhon u-v'hay-yei d'khol-beit yis-ra-eil  
 ba-a-ga-la u-viz-man ka-riv v'im-ru a-mein; a-mein.  
 y'hei sh'mei rab-ba m'va-rakh l'a-lam ul-al-mei-al-ma-ya  
 yit-ba-rakh v'yish-ta-bah v'yit-pa-ar v'yit-ro-mam  
 v'yit-ha-dar v'yit-a-leh v'yit-hal-

(Continued →)

33 Cong.  
 la - sh' - meih d' - kud - sha b' - rikh hu; b' - rikh

36 **Tempo primo** Cong.  
 hu l' - ei - la min kol bir - kha - ta v' - shi - ra - ta tush - b' -

39 Cong.  
 ha - ta v' - ne - he - ma - ta da - a - mi -

41 Cong.  
 ran b' - al ma v' - im - ru a - mein; a - mein.

## 9. Birth

Amsterdam/New York

*Antología del la Liturgia Judeo-Español*  
 vol. X, Isaac Levy ed., 1980, no. 154

Congregation  
 Yit - gad - dal v' - yit - kad - dash sh' - meih rab - ba a - mein. b' - al -

10 Congregation  
 - ma di v' - ra khir - u - tei v' - yam - likh mal - khu - tei b' - hay - yei khon -

19 Congregation  
 uv' - yo - mei khon uv' - hay - yei d' - khol beit yis - ra - el ba - a - gal - la u - viz - man ka -

28 Congregation  
 riv v' - im - ru a - mein; a - mein. y' - hei sh' - meih rab - ba m' - va - rakh

(Continued →)

37



l' - a - lam ul'-al-mei al - ma-ya yit- ba - rakh\_\_\_ v'yish-ta- bah\_\_\_ v' - yit- pa -

47



-ar v' - yit - ro - mam\_\_\_ v' - yit - na - sei\_\_\_ v'-yit- ha - dar v'yit-a - leh\_\_\_ v -

55

Congregation



-yit-hal - lal sh'meih d'-kud sha\_ b' - rikh hu; b' - rikh\_\_\_ hu l' - ei - la\_\_\_min

62



kol bir-kha - ta\_\_\_ v' - shi - ra - ta\_\_\_ tush - b'-ha - ta v' - ne-he- ma -

69

Congregation



- ta\_\_\_ da-a-mi-ran b'-al - ma\_\_\_ v'im - ru a - mein; a - - - mein.

## Where Sephardic and Ashkenazic Traditions Intersect:

### 10. Eve of *Rosh ha-shanah* / *I'lanot*

(Ashkenazim) (Sephardim)

After:

SEPHARDIM OF CONSTANTINOPLE — and —  
 (Isaac Levy, *Antología de Liturgia Judeo-Española*  
 vol. IV, 1969: 23)

ASHKENAZIM OF VENICE  
 (Benedetto Marcello,  
*Estro Poetico-armonico*  
 1724-27: Hebrew Chant #10)

Congregation



Yit - gad - dal v' - yit - kad-dash sh'- meih\_\_\_ rab - ba a - mein

(Continued →)



9  

 b' - al - ma di - v' - ra khir - u - tei v - ya - m' - likh mal - khu-

18  

 tei b' - hay - yei khon u - v' - yo - mei - khon uv - hay - yei d' -

27  

 khol beit yis - ra - el ba - a - ga - la u - viz - man ka - riv v' - im - ru a -

35  

 Congregation  
 mein; a - mein. y' - hei sh - mei rab - ba m' - va - rakh l' - a - lam u - l' -

44  

 Cantor  
 al - mei al - ma - - ya yit - ba - rakh v' - yish - ta -

53  

 bah v' - yit - pa - ar v' - yit - ro - mam v' - yit - na - sei v' - yit - ha - dar v' -

62  

 Congregation  
 yit - a - leh v' - yit - hal - lal sh' - meih d' - kud' - sha b'rikh hu; b'rikh hu l' -

71  

 -ei - la ul' - ei - la min kol bir - kha - ta v' shi - ra - ta tush - b' - ha - ta v' - ne - he - ma -  
 (ei - la)

78  

 Congregation  
 ta da - a - mi - ran b' - al - ma v' - im - ru a - mein; a - mein. *rit.*

## *Shokhein ad* Section

### When Moroccan Sephardic tradition met that of Amsterdam-London in a Philadelphia synagogue<sup>1</sup>

Sephardim of Middle Eastern, Levantine or North African derivation who join established Western Sephardic synagogues in North America must adjust to the prevailing practice. It is much less animated than they would prefer; Sephardic *hazzanim* trained in London—current seat of the World Sephardi Federation—are reserved almost to the level of inertia, and their stoic self-containment is contagious. Only in the unlikely event that one of their own is asked to lead prayer do Eastern Sephardim show signs of life at a



Jo Amar (1930-2009)

Spanish/Portuguese service. On one such occasion, the father of a Bar Mitzvah celebrant invited Moroccan-born Hazzan Jo Amar to officiate in Philadelphia's Mikveh Israel Synagogue. The family had emigrated from Iraq in the late 1970s, and of necessity joined the only Sephardic congregation in the area. After nearly two decades they were celebrating the last child's religious coming-of-age, to which several hundred guests had flown in from all over Europe and Israel.

The visitors' spoken Hebrew was impeccable, unlike their demeanor in synagogue. Some of the men at first refused to wear prayer shawls, but when persuaded by the *parnas* (president) they sullenly flipped the silken Tallit over their head upside-down and inside-out. A few of the women carried shopping bags full of hard candies into the sanctuary. But instead of lobbing the wrapped sweets gently for children to retrieve, they fired them like musket shot at everyone called to the Torah. When requested to desist until all honorees had descended from the *teivah*, the ladies promptly redoubled their salvo.

Hazzan Amar opened the *Shokhein ad* section (musical transcription follows), an exalted prelude to the *Shaharit* service proper, as he customarily does, singing from the heart and with a magnificent native musicality. The Easterners joined in loudly and clearly, since his chant, which was based

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1 Excerpted from Joseph A. Levine, *Rise and Be Seated, The Ups and Downs of Jewish Worship* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc.), 2001:195-196).

upon an earlier recording, combined Ashkenazic hazzanic elements in an effort to synthesize Polish davening with Moroccan *t'fillah*.<sup>2</sup> Mikveh Israel regulars seemed to appreciate this generous display of vocal fervor but politely demurred at every cue that was not exactly in sync with their own unvarying custom. They finally came alive during the Torah recessional, conducted by the *rav* of Mikveh Israel, Albert E. Gabbai. Then it was the guests' turn to maintain silence and gape as the Torah bearer, *rav*, *parnas* and trustees filed toward the *heikhal* (Bimah at the opposite end of the sanctuary from the Holy Ark) at an incredibly deliberate rate of one half -step every five seconds. The accompanying hymn-*Mizmor L'david* (Ascribe Glory to God; Psalm29)- perfectly matched this slow -motion advance in its languid tempo, while giving the home team a chance to demonstrate some of the exquisite forbearance that characterizes Spanish/Portuguese *t'fillah*. Compared to Ashkenazic-or even Eastern Sephardic-workshop it seems so maddeningly cautious that Israeli scholar Hanoach Avenary felt compelled to issue the following caveat about it:

Traditional Amsterdam-Sephardic song as it is intoned... today makes a deep but somewhat strange impression on the listener. One is tempted to say that it is Oriental music misunderstood ... and nevertheless performed in a naive faithfulness.<sup>3</sup>

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2 After *Jo Amar with the Epstein Brothers Orchestra* (Greater Recording LP, 1959, track 3).

3. Hanoach Avenary, *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem:Keter, 1972), Vol. 12, sv, MUSIC: "Consolidation of the Oriental Style": 625.

## 11. Shokhein ad Section

Shaharit for  
Shabbat and Festivals

After Moroccan-born Jo Amar  
(with the Epstein Bros. Orchestra,  
Greater Recording LP, 1959, Track 3.)

### Shokhein ad

**Cantor** *s*

Sho-khein ad ma-rom v'-ka-dosh sh'-mo.

**Choir**

Sho-khein ad ma-rom v'-kad-dosh sh'-mo

**Rhythmically**

B' - fi y' - sha - rim ti - t' - hal - lal u - v' div - rei tsa - di -

kim tit - ba - rakh u - vil - shon ha - si - dim ti - t' - ro - mam

*rit.*

u - v' - ke - rev k' - do - shim ti - t' - ka - dash.

**Choir**

U - v' - mak - ha - lot riv - vot am - kha beit yis - ra - el

*3*

(Continued →)

## *U-v'mak'halot*



She - kein ho-vat hol hay' tsu-rim l'-fa-ne-kha a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu vei-lo-hei a-vo-tei-



nu l'-



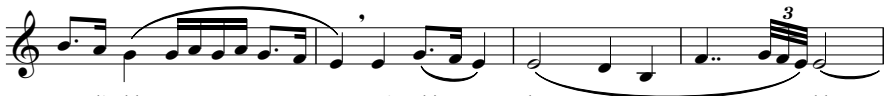
ho-dot l'-hal-leil l'-sha-bei-ah l' - fa-eir l'-ro- meim. l'-ha-deir l'-va-reikh l'-a-



lei u - l' - ka leis al kol div- rei - shi -



- rot v-tish-b'-hot, da - vid ben yi - shai



av - d' - kha m' - shi - he - kha.

Choir

Yish-ta - bah shim - kha la - ad mal - kei - nu

(Continued →)

## Yishtabah

B' - ra - khot v - ho - da - ot mei - a - tah v' - ad o - lam. Ba - rukh a - tah a - do -

nai, eil me - lekh ga - dol ba - ti - sh' - ba - hot

eil ha - ho - da - ot a - don ha nif - la - ot ha - bo -

heir b' - shi - rei - zim - rah, me - lekh

eil, hei ha - o - la - mim.

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. It contains the lyrics 'B' - ra - khot v - ho - da - ot mei - a - tah v' - ad o - lam. Ba - rukh a - tah a - do -'. The second staff continues the vocal line with lyrics 'nai, eil me - lekh ga - dol ba - ti - sh' - ba - hot'. The third staff continues with 'eil ha - ho - da - ot a - don ha nif - la - ot ha - bo -'. The fourth staff continues with 'heir b' - shi - rei - zim - rah, me - lekh'. The fifth staff concludes with 'eil, hei ha - o - la - mim.' and ends with a double bar line. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.



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The logo for the Journal of Synagogue Music features the title in a large, elegant, black cursive font. The text is set against a background of a musical staff with five horizontal lines. To the right of the title, there are three musical notes: a quarter note, an eighth note, and a sixteenth note, all in black. The overall design is artistic and musical in theme.

# Journal of Synagogue Music

Our Fall 2014 issue will feature

## *Tehillim*

with articles that examine the Book of Psalms from literary, structural, ritual, musical, liturgical, communal and psychological perspectives, among others:

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- **Psalmodic-style Prayer Chant**
- **Using *Tehillim* Melodies in Private Worship**
- **Sing-along Psalms**
- **How David's Psalms Have Come Full Circle**

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The logo features the word "CANTORS" in a white, sans-serif font at the top. Below it is a stylized graphic consisting of a dark blue, five-pointed star with a white, flowing, ribbon-like shape that loops through the center. At the bottom, the word "ASSEMBLY" is written in the same white, sans-serif font.