

*Journal of Synagogue Music* 

LITURGIES OF

# CELEBRATION

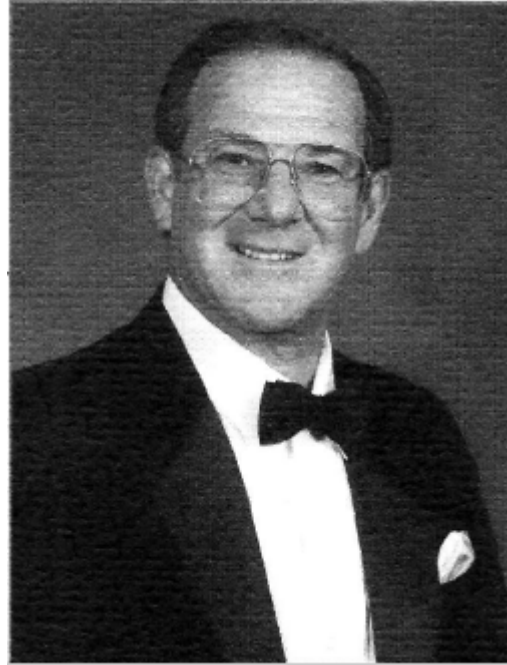


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## IN MEMORIAM – CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF SOLOMON MENDELSON (1933-2016)

**H**azzan Solomon Mendelson, who sang as a boy alto with Cantors Berele Chagy, Moishe Oysher, Leibele Waldman and Leib Glantz, went on to receive nine Solomon Schechter Awards for visionary programming at Congregation Beth Sholom in Long Beach, New York during a 45-year career there. Active in the Cantors Assembly even longer, he served it in virtually every capacity including: President, Programming Chair, and Editorial Board member of its Journal. Among the many lasting musical works that he commissioned were *Dialogue with Destiny* (the Sharansky trial), *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (Theresienstadt memorial) and *(Ever Since Babylon* (Quincentenary of the Expulsion from Spain). His article, “**The Birth of an Idea—Commissioning Music for Cantor and Trained Choir,**” appeared in the 2005 *Journal of Synagogue Music*. His memoir, “**Tales from the Choir Loft—a Former ‘Vimalei Boy’ Reminiscences,**” was featured in *JSM* 2012. He also conceived and helped compile the memorial list of almost 1500 European *hazzanim* who were murdered by the Nazis: *Ishei yisrael u-t’fillatam* (*JSM* 2011). His own words reveal the breadth and depth of his vision:



As with most Conservative congregations of the late 1960s and early 1970s we in Long Beach had a sprinkling of congregational melodies throughout the service. But they were disconnected, without any relationship to each other. Truth to tell, the people were not unhappy. They sang a great deal, but from my professional perspective as a hazzan, I felt something was missing.

The result: Max Wohlberg’s *Chemdat Shabbat*, which Sol commissioned – as an antiphonal, cooperative venture between hazzan and congregation – published by the Cantors Assembly in 1971. He later wrote:

My only specific request of Max was that he compose a new, contemporary setting of *M’chalkeil Chayim*. His previous version (*Shirei Zimrah*, NY: Bloch Publishing Co., 1947, no. 50A) was—and is—one of the most widely sung congregational melodies ever written. Yet he always considered it a concession to popular taste, intended for children. Max willingly obliged, creating what sounded like an American folk tune in the then popular spirit of Simon & Garfunkel (“Scarborough Fair,” from the film *The Graduate*, 1965).

**Unhurriedly**

M' chal- keil cha- yim b' - che - sed, m' cha- yei mei-tim b'-ra-cha-  
 mim ra- bin so meich nof- lim v' ro- fei cho- lim u-ma- tir a sur -  
 rim, um-ka yeim e- mu - na - to li shei nei a - far.  
 Mi cha mo - cha ba- al g'vu rot u - mi do - me lach  
 me-lech mei-mit um-cha - ye u-mats - mi-ach y' - shu - a.

Wohlberg's new setting references the *Magein avot* prayer mode and the Arabic modes *Bayat* and *Nawa*, expressing all three via the triple-meter framework of a hit song that had captured the American imagination at that time: an elevation from secular to sacred; and this minor miracle had been enabled by the foresight of Sol Mendelson!

He referred to himself as “a New Yorker who had heard the best. As one who had heard Sol’s own silver-toned alto voice frequently during its pre-adolescent prime, the Journal’s editor can attest to the fact that when it came to innate musicality cloaked in beauty of tone, his boyhood friend Sol was simply—the very best.

*We therefore dedicate this issue to celebrate the life of Solomon Mendelson, a paragon among cantors whose efforts helped Conservative Judaism move creatively from pulpit-centered to congregationally oriented worship in this country. [JAL]*



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**LITURGIES OF CELEBRATION**

**IN MEMORIAM—Solomon Mendelson (1933-2016) .....i**

**FROM THE EDITOR**

**Is Musical Celebration and Commemoration Considered “Religious”? .....4**

**SHABBAT**

**Concerning the Sabbath... and the *Hazzan***

An Historic Dissertation and Illustration .....6

“*The Hazzan Holding Up the Scroll*” (Bernard Picart, 1722) .....7

*V’sham’ru* (Richard M. Berlin, 2014).....8

**SUKKOT AND SIMHAT TORAH**

**When Our People Let Their Hair Down**

Moshe Kohn..... 14

“*Removing the Scrolls for Hakafot*” (Eva Samuel, 1930) .....17

*Hoshanot / Hakafot* (Chizuk Amuno tradition, Baltimore)..... 18

**THOUGHTS ON A RITE OF PASSAGE**

**For Girls** (Gleaned from many sources) .....19

“*The Kvatter About to Receive the Newborn*” (M. Oppenheim, 1867) .....19

**For Boys** (Gleaned from many sources) .....20

*B’rakhot livrit milah* (*Adonai malakh* and Study mode) .....21

**SIMHAT BAT**

Linda Holtzman .....22

*Eloheinu... l’simhat bat* (*Adonai malakh* and Study modes) .....23

*Birkat hay-yayin* (after Abba Weisgal) .....24

## **BAR / BAT MITSVAH**

### **Understanding Their Underlying Significance**

Gleaned from many sources.....	25
<b>Explaining Tallit and T'fillin to 7<sup>th</sup>-Grade Students</b>	
Iris Beth Weiner.....	26
“ <b>Bar Mitzvah</b> ” (Hermann Struck, 1940).....	27
<i>Y'simkha elohim</i> (for Boys; Sephardic; after Mazor and Atlas, 1975).....	27
<b>May God Bless You</b> (for Girls; after Pinchas Jassinowsky).....	28
<b>Coping with Learning Disorders in Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation</b>	
Scott Sokol.....	29

## **HATUNAH—A NARRATIVE WITH INCIDENTAL MUSIC**

“ <b>Three-tiered <u>Huppah</u>”</b> (Temma Gentles).....	30
<b>Choices for a Jewish Wedding</b>	
Gloria Goldreich; text interspersed with music).....	31
<i>Iti mi-l'vanon</i> (Nira Chen).....	32
<i>Simeini ka-hotam</i> (Arthur Yolkoff).....	34
<i>Ha-navah ba-banot</i> (Avitai Ne'eman).....	36
<i>Barukh ha-ba</i> (After Salamone Rossi).....	38
<i>V'eirastikh li</i> ( <i>Shir ha-shirim</i> cantillation).....	41
<b>Benediction</b> (Arthur Yolkoff).....	43

## **ROSH HODESH**

### **A Gift to Women**

Gleaned from many sources.....	44
<b>A Women's Circle Under the New Moon—with Rosh Hodesh Chant</b>	
Marge Eiseman.....	45

## **HANUKKAH**

### **Hag hab-banot, Reading God into History, Other Hanukkah Customs**

Jill Hammer, Neil Gillman, Rahel Musleah.....	47
<i>Birkot ha-neirot</i> (Pierre Pinchik).....	49
<b>“Jewpardy” Answers for Hanukkah</b>	
Gleaned from many sources.....	52
<i>Al han-nisim / Han-neirot hal-lalu</i> .....	54
<b>Three Traditional Hanukkah Songs</b> .....	55
“ <i>Ureinu</i> ” (Kaleigh Sisen, 2015).....	56

## **TU BISHVAT— GLEANED FROM MANY SOURCES**

<i>Rosh ha-shanah la-ilanot</i> .....	57
<i>P'ri eits hadar</i> .....	58
<i>Tikkun leil tu bishvat</i> .....	59
<i>Pakad'ta ha-arets</i> (after Ben Ish-Hai).....	60

## **PURIM – GLEANED FROM SEVERAL SOURCES**

<b>The Wandering Jew—“Ahasuerus,”</b> .....	61
<b>Purim Entertainment, Customs &amp; Blessings</b> .....	62
<i>Birkot ha-m’gillah</i> (Abba Weisgal).....	63
<b>Trope Detours within the Esther Cantillation</b> .....	64
<i>U-mord’khai yatsa</i> (Abba Weisgal).....	65
<i>Ki mord’khai hay-y’hudi</i> (Abba Weisgal).....	66

## **PESAH LORE—GLEANED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES**

<b>Purim and Pesah</b> .....	67
<i>Ha lah<sup>h</sup>ma anya</i> (Abba Weisgal).....	68
<b>How the Seder Ritual Evolved</b> .....	68
<i>Avadim hayyinu</i> (Abba Weisgal).....	69
<b>The Broken Cup Made Whole Again</b> .....	70
<i>Asher g’alanu</i> (Abba Weisgal) .....	71
<b>Haggadah Insights</b> .....	72
<b>Nirtsah and Concluding Hymns</b> .....	72
<i>Hasal siddur pesah</i> (Young Israel tune) .....	73

## **MAIL BOX**

### **Jewish Liturgical Music Celebrated in Leeds**

Malcolm Miller .....	74
<b>Re: “Jewish Elements in Leonard Bernstein’s Hashkiveinu” (JSM Sept. ‘15)</b>	
Marsha Bryan Edelman.....	75
<b>A Reasoned Response to Dr. Edelman</b>	
Ann Glazer Niren.....	76
<b>Reflections on the Avodah</b>	
Jennie Chabon.....	77
<b>Nowakowsky’s Ave Maria—A Mystery Solved</b>	
Charles Heller .....	78

## **REVIEWS**

### **Israel Goldstein’s Retrospective CD: *Great Synagogue Music***

Jacob Mendelson.....	79
<b>Nathan Ophir’s Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach: <i>Life, Mission, and Legacy</i></b>	
Shoshana Brown .....	81

## FROM THE EDITOR

### Is Musical Celebration Considered “Religious”?

Cantors are not alone in claiming that music comprises an integral part of Jewish observance, yet the subjects of “Music” and “Chant” do not appear in the following basic reference works on Religion: *The Perennial Dictionary of World Religions*, Keith Crim et al, eds. (1989); *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion*, Jonathan Smith, ed. (1995); and *Merriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of World Religions*, Wendy Doniger, ed. (1999).

Worse, in an age of popularization, even a reference work such as Gregg Stebben’s *Everything You Need to Know About Religion* (1999), designed for mass consumption, does not mention “Sacred Music.” Here are the authors of four standard academic textbooks on religion, who similarly avoid mention of “Music” or “Chant”: Robert S. Ellwood and Barbara A. McGraw (2005); David S. Noss (2003); Marty Pat Fisher (2002); and Mark R. Woodward (2001).

Why should this be so? Especially since the universally respected musicologist Bruno Nettl had seemingly justified the inclusion of music in religious studies with this definitive statement (*Excursions in Music 2001*, page 9):

In all societies, music is found in religious ritual—it is almost everywhere a part of sacred ceremonies—leading some scholars to suggest that perhaps music was actually invented for humans to have a special way of communicating with the supernatural.

It may have to do with today’s focus on written text, to the neglect of oral traditions, now that electronic reproduction has made the wisdom of past ages available to one and all at the touch of a keyboard. The exclusion of music from the study of religion might also be connected with the Kantian separation of aesthetics from religious experience 200 years ago, a philosophical dichotomy that has permeated the culture of society to this day.

In opposition to this bifurcation stands musicologist Guy S. Beck, who holds an additional degree in Religious Studies. In the Introduction to a book that he edited (*Sacred Sound: Experiencing Music in World Religions*, 2006), Professor Beck reminds us that the essence of religion lies not merely in a set of beliefs or doctrines embedded in Scripture:

It is really the power of the *oral form* of the scriptural texts that truly evokes emotional, intuitive, and memory-laden processes in the majority of religious practitioners... whether or not the semantic meaning of the text is understood... since song originates deeper in the human body than speech... it is the musical and tonal dimension of sound, rather than mere speech, that fully unites people.

Professor Beck marshals evidence from comparative religious studies by Rudolph Otto (*The Idea of the Holy*, 1923) and the phenomenology of religion (Gerardus van der

Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, 1938) to show that musical feeling is not drawn from ordinary human emotions but rather, from something transcendent and “wholly other”; and that music is the supreme expression of the holy, without which “there is hardly any worship.” Moreover, as Protestant theologians Paul Tillich (1959) and David B. Harned (1966) have argued, religion is the substance of culture—and culture is the form of religion. Therefore, Beck concludes, art can never be “irreligious.” Within the Roman Catholic tradition, Andrew Greely (1995) and Richard Viladesau (2000) have affirmed art as a form of expression well in accord with the theological view of culture. To all of these seminal modern thinkers, writes Beck, “the arts are theological by their very nature and not simply when they are explicitly religious... works of art convey the real presence of God.”

Whether for seeking blessing or asking forgiveness, for offering praise or begging protection, for inviting God into the present moment or recognizing God’s presence in historic events, whether for inducing a mood of contrition or of catharsis, of regret over the past or of hope for the future, whether striving for closeness to God or giving thanks for gifts received, whether praying for healing on behalf of the bedridden or for release of the cell-bound, whether partaking of communal food or communal ecstasy, whether reading directly from Scripture or expounding scriptural doctrine—appropriate music is the medium through which Torah, Testament, Quran, Veda, Adi Granth and Pali Canon<sup>1</sup> are still transmitted—employing a musical recitation known and practiced universally as a non-metrical chant, the musical cord that binds all religions.

The two issues that comprise this year’s JSM volume (41) follow the path that Guy Beck has laid out, with a selection of essays on the role that song plays in Jewish Life Cycle observances, and accompanying examples of sacred music that combine with sacred text to ritualize those moments. Such liturgies here run the gamut of Judaism’s religious calendar beginning with *Shabbat* and then *Sukkot*, the “season of our rejoicing” that concludes the High Holy Days—and end with *Yami nora’im*, the Penitential season that includes the annual Day of Judgement and Day of Atonement. Our March issue (Vol. 1) limits itself to **LITURGIES OF CELEBRATION** and runs through PESAH; the September issue (Vol. 2) will conclude celebratory liturgies and cover **LITURGIES OF COMMEMORATION** through TISH’AH B’AV. [JAL]

**A PEOPLE THAT CONVERTED DRY STATUTES INTO SONG WILL SURELY TURN THAT SONG INTO A LIVING TORAH!**

(Hayyim Nahman Bialik, Midrash on Psalm 119:54  
*Z’mirot hayyu li hukkekha--Your laws are my songs.*)

<sup>1</sup> The last three of these scriptures pertain to Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism.



# ***SHABBAT***

## **Concerning the Sabbath... and the *Hazzan***<sup>1</sup>

**T**he Jews never rise too early on Sabbath, the day they go to the synagogue. They repeat several Psalms and prayers in commendation of the Sabbath, which are intermixed with their Common Prayers...

In every synagogue there is a proper person appointed to sing<sup>2</sup> the prayers, who is called *Hazzan*...<sup>3</sup>

The grand ceremony of the Sabbath consists in showing the Scroll of Law to the people... The *Hazzan* performs this office (see **Figure 1**, page 2), and at the same time chants to the congregation:

**Behold the Law which Moses gave to the Children of Israel** (Deuteronomy 4:44)...

Then the *Hazzan* places the Scroll upon the Reading Desk and calls up seven of the congregation, each to read [or attend the *Hazzan*'s reading] one of the seven portions into which the Scripture Lesson of the Day is divided. After, the *Hazzan* lifts up the Scroll [a second time, and it is redressed]. Then they have a solemn benediction for the Sovereign under whose government they live, wherein they beseech Almighty God to keep the Sovereign in joy and peace; that all Royal undertakings may prosper, that the Sovereign's dominion may be increased and that the Sovereign may love his people, as it is written (Jeremiah 29:7):

Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives; and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof shall you have peace...

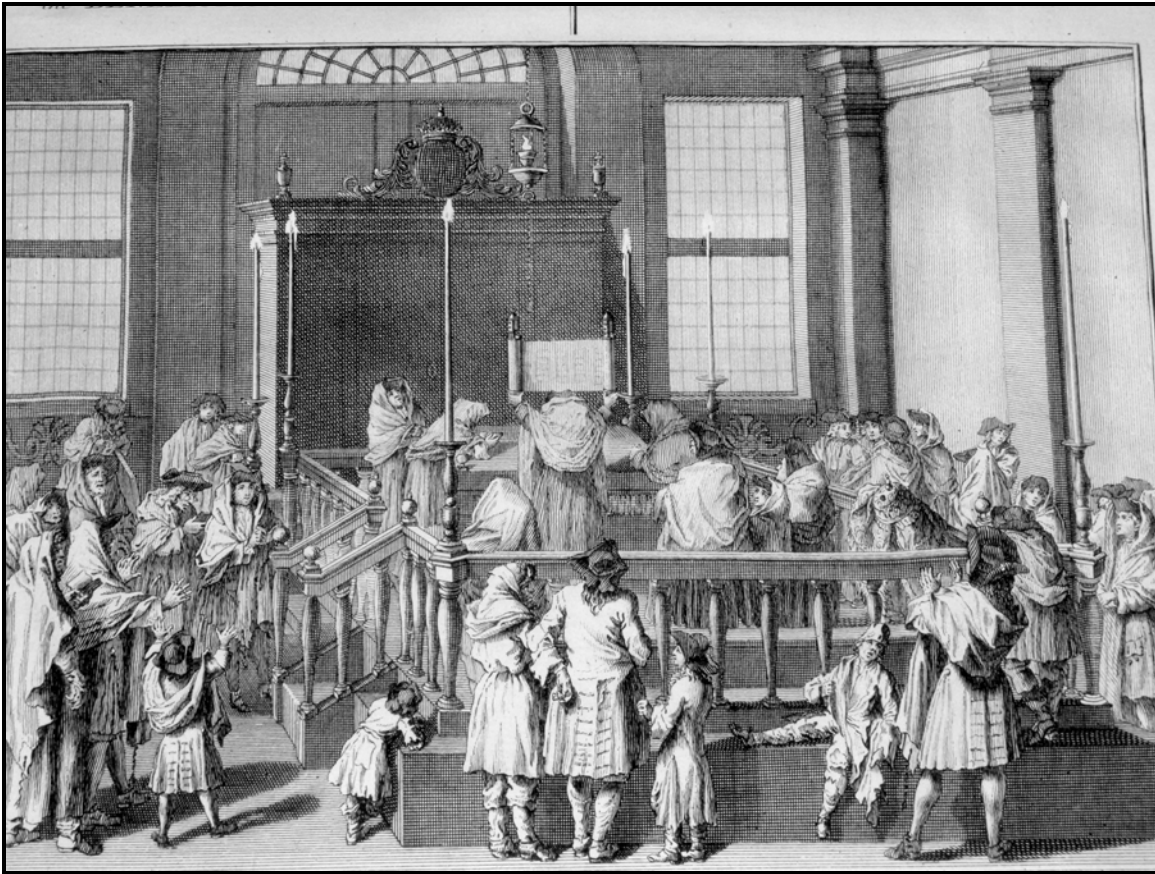
Lastly, they repeat another section called *Musaf*, that is to say, "Addition," which contains the words recited during the sacrifice that was performed in the Jerusalem Temple on the Sabbath, and therewith, the service concludes.

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<sup>1</sup> "An Historic Dissertation on Customs and Ceremonies of the Present Jews," Part III, Chap 3, p. 58:1-19; Part I, Chap. X, p. 35:6; (*The Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the Known World, Vol. I*, London: William Jackson, for Claude Du Bosc, 1728, translated from the French by a Gentleman, some time since of St. Johns College in Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> The Jews pronounce their prayers in such a tone as they may be said to sing them; for even when they read the text of the Bible, they properly sing.

<sup>3</sup> The *Hazzan* answers to the role of Reader in other religions. The word *Hazzan* is to be met with in the works of St. Epiphanius. [Editor's note: *Massekhet sofrim*, a post-talmudic rabbinic treatise on synagogue practice, documents that by the 8th century C.E., the prayer-leading function of *sh'li'ah tsibbur* ("prayer-emissary of the congregation") had merged with the supervisory role of *Hazzan*, creating an office very similar to that of the modern Cantor; Hyman I. Sky, *The Development of the Office of Hazzan through the Talmudic Period*, unpublished dissertation at Dropsie University, Philadelphia, 1977: 172-175.]



Bernard Picart, "The Manner of the *Hazzan*'s holding up the Scroll of Law in sight of all the people, before they begin to read from it," 1722.

**THE FREE RHYTHM OF CHANTING FROM THE SCROLL OF LAW TELESCOPES MILLENNIA... SO THAT LISTENERS MAY FEEL THE WONDER... AS IF THE PROPHET IS STANDING BEFORE YOU FACE-TO-FACE.**

(After Steven C. Lorch, *The Convergence of Jewish and Western Thought..through Music*, 1977.)

# V'sham'ru

Arranged for the Bay Area Cantorial Association

Exodus 31: 16-17

Richard M. Berlin  
Shirei Rachmiel, 2014

♩ = 90

8

Ten. bim dim bim dim

Bar. dum bum dum

3

Solo V' sha ru v' - nei Yis - ra eil

Sop. bee dl ma ma bee dl ma ma

Alt. dee-dl di di dl dl pa pa dl dl pa pa

Ten. dee-dl di di bim dim ba ba bim di ma ma

Bar. bum dum dum bum da da bum bum da da

6

Solo et ha - shab - bat, la - a - sot et ha - shab -

Sop. bee dl ma ma bee - dl ma ma bee - dl ma

Alt. dl dl pa pa dl dl pa pa dee - dl pa

Ten. bim dim ba ba bim di ba ba bee bim ba

Bar. bum da da bum bum da da dum bum da

© Cantor Richard N. Berlin, 2014

Feel free to substitute other filler syllables as desired.

9

Solo  
bat l' - do - ro - tam b' - rit o - olam. (1) Bei -  
(2) Ki -

Sop.  
bee - dl ma bee - dl ma ma ma ma ma

Alt.  
dee - dl pa dee - dl pa pa pa pa pa

Ten.  
bee bim bim bee bim fa fa la la la

Bar.  
dum bum dum bum dum ba ba ra ra ra

12

Solo  
- ni u' - vein b' - nei yis - ra - eil ot hi l' - o -  
shei-shet ya - mim a - sah a - do - nai a - sah a - do -

Sop.  
bee - bi ma ma bee - bi ma ma bee - bi ma ma

Alt.  
dl di pa pa dl di pa pa dl di pa pa

Ten.  
bim dim fa fa bim dim fa fa bim dim fa fa

Bar.  
bum dum ba ba bum dum ba ba bum dum ba ba

15

Solo  
 man bei - ni u' - vein b' - nei yis - ra - eil ot  
 nai et ha - sha - ma - yim et ha - sha - ma - yim v' -

Sop.  
 bee - bi ma ma bee - bi ma ma bee - bi ma ma

Alt.  
 dl di pa pa dl di pa pa dl di pa pa

Ten.  
 bim dim fa fa bim dim fa fa bim dim fa fa

Bar.  
 bum dum ba ba bum dum ba ba bum dum ba ba

18

Solo  
 hi l' - - o - - lam. V' - sha -  
 et ha - - a - - rets,

Sop.  
 bee - bi ma ma dai

Alt.  
 dl di pa pa dai

Ten.  
 bim dim fa fa dai

Bar.  
 bum dum ba ba bum bum ba

20 2.

Solo  
rets. (3) u - va-yom hash' - vi-i u-va-yom hash' - vi-i sha - vat va - yi-na -

Sop.  
bee-dl bi bi ma bee - bi ma ma bee - bi ma ma bee - bi ma ma

Alt.  
di-dl di di pa dl di pa pa dl di pa pa dl di pa pa

Ten.  
fi - dl fi fi pa bim dim ba ba bim dim ba ba bim dim ba ba

Bar.  
dum fa bum dum fa fa bum dum fa fa bum dum fa fa

24

Solo  
fash u - va - yom hash - vi - i u - va - yom hash - vi sha -

Sop.  
bee - bi ma ma bee - bi ma ma bee - bi ma ma

Alt.  
dl di pa pa dl di pa pa dl di pa pa

Ten.  
bim dim ba ba bim dim ba ba bim dim ba ba

Bar.  
bum dum fa fa bum dum fa fa bum dum fa fa

27

## DUET

Solo  
vat va - yi - na - fash. V'-sha - m' ru v'-nei Yis - ra

Solo  
V'-sha - m' - ru v'-nei yis - ra -

Sop.  
bee - bi ma ma dai bee dl ma ma

Alt.  
dl di pa pa dai dl dl pa pa

Ten.  
bim dim bim dim dai bim dim ba ba

Bar.  
bum dum fa fa bum bum dai bum bum fa fa

30

Solo  
eil et ha - shab - bat, la - a -

Solo  
eil et ha - shab - bat, la - a -

Sop.  
bee dl ma ma bee dl ma ma bee - dl ma ma

Alt.  
dl dl pa pa dee - dl pa pa dee - dl pa pa

Ten.  
bim dim ba ba bim dim ba ba bim dim ba ba

Bar.  
bum bum fa fa bum bum fa fa bum bum fa fa

33

Solo  
sot et ha - shab - bat l' - do - ro - tam b' - rit o -

Solo  
sot et ha - shab - bat l' - do - ro - tam b' - rit o -

Sop.  
bee - dl ma bee - dl ma tam b' - rit

Alt.  
dee - dl pa dee - dl pa tam b' - rit

Ten.  
bee bim ba bee bee bim ba tm b' - rit

Bar.  
dum bum fa dum bum fa dum bum rit

36

Solo  
lam.

Solo  
lam.

Sop.  
b' - rit o - lam.

Alt.  
b' - rit o lam

Ten.  
b' - ri o - lam.

Bar.  
b' - ri o - lam.



## SUKKOT AND SIMHAT TORAH-- When Our People Let Their Hair Down

*By Moshe Kohn*

**S**ukkot—the Feast of Tabernacles, or Booths—is treated as the festival *par excellence* in the classic Jewish sources. And in the way Jews traditionally observe it. In connection with no other festival does the Torah emphasize the theme of joy as it does with Sukkot. It bids us three times to be joyous on Sukkot: “You shall rejoice before the Lord, your God, for seven days” (Leviticus 23:40) and “You shall rejoice on your festival... You shall be altogether joyous” (Deuteronomy 16: 13-15). In fact, the later biblical and post-biblical writings frequently refer to Sukkot not by this designation, but simply as “God’s feast” or just “the feast.”

There is another difference between the treatment of Sukkot and that of the other festivals. In the Pesah and Shavuot liturgies, there are several places where we speak of those festivals in terms of their historical aspects, referring to them respectively as “the season of our liberation” and “the season of the giving of our Torah.” In the equivalent places of the Sukkot liturgy we do not refer to the festival’s historic aspect, celebrating God’s having provided shelter for our ancestors during their 40-year sojourn in the wilderness on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land. Rather, we refer to it as “the season of our joy.”

We are all familiar with some features of the Sukkot rejoicing. There is the festive Sukkot-morning procession of Jews to the synagogue “armed” with the four-species bouquet of *lulav* (palm branch), *etrog* (citron), *aravot* (willow boughs) and *hadassim* (myrtle sprigs), and then the procession carrying this bouquet during the synagogue service. There are the festive meals inside the sukkah—in ancient *Erets yisrael* it was during the Sukkot observance immediately following a *sh’mittah* (Sabbatical) year that the king read the Torah aloud to the pilgrim throng in the Temple compound (see Deuteronomy 31: 10.).

It was at Sukkot time that king Solomon dedicated the First Temple in Jerusalem and staged a 14-day celebration in honor thereof, “and all Israel with him—a vast assembly from *L’vo hammat* to the Brook of Egypt” (I Kings 8; II Chronicles 5-7). This was the occasion of Solomon’s extraordinary prayer asking God to answer the pleas offered by Jews and non-Jews alike in the Temple.

In the time of the Return to Zion from the Babylonian Exile, Sukkot was the first festival the Jews celebrated after renewing the Covenant at the famous assembly at Jerusalem’s Water Gate. And “their joy was very great,” celebrating the festival in a manner that it “had not been celebrated since the days of Joshua” (Ezra 1: 1-4 and 2: 64; II Chronicles 36: 22-23; Nehemiah 8: 14-18).

Later, the first Hanukkah celebration apparently was really a delayed Sukkot celebration. After Judah the Maccabee had recaptured the Temple from the Syrian

Hellenes and cleansed and rededicated it on Kislev 25, the Jews celebrated “for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the feast of Sukkot, remembering how not long before, during Sukkot, they had been roving the mountains and caves like wild animals. Therefore, bearing wands wreathed with ivy and grape leaves, and tree-branches that flourished in that season, and palm fronds, they offered hymns of thanksgiving... they decreed that the whole Jewish nation should celebrate these days every year (II Maccabees 10).

Sukkot has a special place in biblical eschatology, too. In the Time-to-Come (we read in Zekhariah 14, which is the prophetic portion read during the Sukkot morning service), when all the world will acknowledge God as king. “The survivors of all the nations that attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, God of Hosts, and to celebrate the feast of Sukkot.” Hence the significance of Sukkot to certain Christian denominations, especially those who proudly call themselves Christian Zionists and make “Feast of Tabernacles” prayer pilgrimages to Jerusalem at this time.

In Second Temple times, the high point of the festivities was the *Simhat beit ha-sho'eivah*—“the celebration of the Place of the Water-Drawing.” The Talmud declares: “Until you have seen the *Simhat beit ha-sho'eivah*, you haven't seen a real celebration.” It then goes into considerable detail about the proceedings, including some of the event's carnival-like features (BT *Sukkah*, 51-53).

When the sun had set on the first day of Sukkot, huge oil candelabra were lit in the Women's Court of the Temple. “There was not a single courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illuminated by the light emanating from the Place of the Water-Drawing,” and it was possible to sift wheat kernels for bugs and dirt by this light. The “men of learning and pious action” then danced carrying flaming torches and singing songs of joy and praise. Meanwhile, the Levites played on harps, lyres, cymbals and trumpets and “countless instruments,” arrayed on the 15 stairs leading from the Court of the Israelites to the Women's Court, one for each of the 15 “Songs of Ascents” (Psalms 120-134).

At the head of the stairs stood two priests holding trumpets. The next morning after the cock crowed, they sounded the trumpets several times at intervals, proceeding all the while towards the East gate. Reaching the gate, they faced west and proclaimed: “When our ancestors stood at this point [referring to those who had engaged in idolatry in the Temple courts, as described in Ezekiel 8:16], they turned their backs to God's Sanctuary and faced eastward, worshiping the sun, whereas we—our eyes are upon God.” Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, head of the Sanhedrin, would dance juggling eight torches. Then he prostrated himself, letting his body down leaning only on his two thumbs, kiss the ground, and then push himself up again by his thumbs—“which no one else could do.”

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hananiah—a Sanhedrin member who also participated in the levitical choir—said: “During the *Simhat beit ha-sho'eivah* we did not sleep. The first morning hour we were busy with the *Tamid* (Daily) sacrifice; then we prayed the *Shaharit* (Morning) service; then we were busy with the *Musaf* (Additional) sacrifice; then the *Musaf* prayers; then to the eating and drinking; then the *Minhah* (Afternoon) prayers; and then to *Simhat beit ha-sho'eivah*.”

**I**n our own era, the Sukkot rejoicing culminates in the festivities held on Shmini Atseret (Eighth day of Solemn Assembly; Leviticus 23: 36; Numbers 29: 35), which is not part of Sukkot proper, though we refer to it as the last day of the festival.

The Simhat Torah rejoicing-with-the-Torah element of Shmini Atseret apparently dates back no earlier than the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and crystallized in the form that we know it only around the 14<sup>th</sup> century. (See Avraham Yaari's *History of Simhat Torah*, Mossad Ha-Rav Kook; and Abraham Goodman's *Sukkot Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society.) Of course, in *Erets yisrael* it is all a one-day celebration, whereas in the diaspora, Simhat Torah is traditionally celebrated the day after Shmini Atseret. And it is the Simhat Torah part of the celebration that recalls the "carnival" element of the classic *Simhat beit ha-sho'eivah*.

The Talmud already tells us about "the second day of Sh'mini Atseret," when the last two chapters of the Torah, Deuteronomy 33 and 34, were read in the synagogue (BT *Megillah* 31a). In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, when the present yearly cycle of reading the Torah was established for the entire world, the reading of these two chapters--which comprise the final weekly Torah reading (*sidrah*)--was assigned not to a Shabbat but to Simhat Torah. It was at this time that Sh'mini Atseret/Simhat Torah started to develop into the high festival it is today, adapting those "carnival" elements and even adding a near-orgiastic [sic] one: along with Purim, it is one of two days in the year when "men of learning and pious action" may get tipsy on hard liquor.

Completion of the Torah-reading cycle was--and is--celebrated not with relief at having it over and done with, but with joy at having been privileged to complete yet another cycle of reading and studying the holy word. To show that this is really so (that Satan shall have no cause to say to God: "see how happy the Jews are to be done with the Torah"), the practice was instituted in the 14<sup>th</sup> century--of following up the completion of Deuteronomy immediately with the reading of the first 34 verses of Genesis--telling the story of Creation. Soon afterwards there developed the custom of taking all the Torah scrolls out of the Ark at the Shmini Atseret/Simhat Torah evening and morning services and carrying them in in a minimum of seven processions around the synagogue accompanied by dancing and singing -- mainly songs celebrating our joy in being the people of the Torah and able to extol the Torah's virtues.

Many stories have been told about the role of Simhat Torah in bringing together Jews of the late and unlamented former Soviet Union. Less known is the role of Simhat Torah in the life of Jews in Hitler's ghettos and camps. Here is an extract from *The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (translated by Abraham Katsh). In his entry of October 25, 1940, Kaplan--a "national" rather than "observant" Jew, writes:

After a year of physical and mental tortures never equaled in history, darkness reigns in our souls. The holiday [Sukkot] was spent under the impress of the ghetto... But we have not shamed our eternal Torah... Everywhere [Simhat Torah] celebrations were organized, and every prayer group said the wine blessing. The Hasidim were even dancing, as is their pious custom... in chorus out in public... Some of them said in their ecstasy: "We are not afraid of the murderer! The devil with him!!"

Elie Wiesel--the Nobel Prize-winning survivor of Auschwitz--has written that he never understood the remark of the Gaon of Vilna to the effect that the most difficult Commandment of all is, "You shall rejoice on your festival." Wiesel continued:

In time, during the Shoah, I understood. Those Jews who were on their journey to the end of all hope managed to dance on Simhat Torah; the Jews who studied pages of Talmud, without a book in hand, as they carried heavy rocks on their shoulders; the Jews who sang Shabbat songs to themselves as they were being worked to death--they taught us how a Jew is supposed to celebrate in time of trouble. For them, the Commandment "Rejoice on your festival" was an impossible one to observe--but observe it they did (*Bamahaneh*, Rosh Hashanah, 1974).

*American-born Moshe Kohn made aliyah in the late 1950s, and served as Israel correspondent for the **National Jewish Post & Opinion** for over half a century. This article first appeared in that now-defunct periodical on October 17, 1992, and is reprinted here with the former publisher's kind permission.*



Eva Samuel, "Removing the Scrolls for Simhat Torah *Hakafot*," Woodcut, Essen, ca. 1930

# Hoshanot for Sukkot

Text: Sukkot Liturgy

Music: Abba Weisgal  
(*Shirei Hayyim Ve'Emunah*, 1950)

L'-ma-an a - mi - takh, l'-ma-an b' - ri - takh, l'-ma-an god - lakh v' - tif - ar-takh,  
 l'-ma - an da - takh, l'-ma - an ho - dakh, l'-ma - an vi - u - dakh, l'-ma - an zikh - rakh  
 l'-ma - an has - dakh, l'-ma - an tu - vakh, l'-ma-an yi - hu - dakh, l'-ma-an k' - vo - dakh,  
 l'-ma - an li - mu - dakh. (Repeat as needed to complete text)

# Hakafot for Simhat Torah

Text: Simhat Torah Liturgy

Music: Tradition of Chizuk  
Amuno Cong., Baltimore

Cantor Choir Cantor Choir  
 A - na a - do - nai ho - shi - a na. A - na a - do - nai hats - li - hah  
 ho - shi - a na. hats - li - hah  
 na. A - na a - do - nai, a - nei nu v' - yom kor - ci -  
 na a - nei nu v' - yom kor - ci -  
 nu.  
 nu.  
 (The Cantor's lead-ins change, but responses remain the same)

## THOUGHTS ON A RITE OF PASSAGE

**FOR GIRLS:** It remains a challenge for contemporary liturgists to come up with an alternative ceremony for girls that would equate with circumcision for boys. Emphasizing the rite's sacrificial component and the parents' active involvement in it could guide our formulation of *Simhat Bat* ceremonies for celebrating the birth of girls. A sacrifice-based model would recommend sensitivity to the importance of providing sacred space for this ritual, possibly encouraging the choice of a synagogue—or even a Minyan within it on a day when the Torah is read—so that the naming and celebratory ritual [see *SIMHAT BAT* subsection for one option] would have a sacred locus. This in turn might encourage choosing an other-than-arbitrary date, so that an imposed time frame—such as the first Torah reading after the birth or the mother's ritual confinement (traditionally, 14 days)—can shape the event as a sacred occasion. Finally, incorporating a pledge or charitable donation in the baby girl's name would link the celebration to the biblical notion of sacrifice imposing a cost on the offerer.



Moritz Daniel Oppenheim, "The *Kvatter* about to receive the newborn child," 1867:  
The *Sandek* sits upon *Kisei shel eilyahu* and the *mohel* tests his razor-sharp *izmeil*).

**FOR BOYS:** Anthropologist Riv-Ellen Prell asks: “What are the conditions that allow ritual to create public meaning? How is normative Judaism realized in the lives of men and women who are conscious or unconscious of those meanings?” She notes that, in the interests of balancing tradition with innovation, friends of hers made a number of additions to the *B’rit milah* ceremony. Yet, she concludes, “the ritual, particularly the act of circumcision, was so powerful that all the additions were in the end superfluous” when it came to allaying fears about the ceremony.

Documentary film-maker Dale Lieberman notes that circumcision’s sacrificial component is largely unacknowledged by *mohalim* and rabbis. Nor do published guides to Jewish practice highlight the pain of the child and his parents, but rather the joy and meaningfulness of the experience. Even Jewishly knowledgeable individuals feel relief at completion of the ritual’s ‘surgical’ part and arrival of the ceremony’s ‘naming’ part. The *b’rit* itself is too often described as ‘barbaric.’ Moreover, in a society whose majority believes that the sacrifice of Jesus made further sacrifice unnecessary, our fear is that *B’rit milah* with its requisite blood-letting might well be construed as a ritual act to satisfy the God of the Jews.

In writing about the phenomenon of sacrifice, anthropologist Edmund Leach describes a metaphysical, liminal space between another, holy world of existence and our world of temporal experience. A ritual such as sacrifice creates an intersection between these two worlds. Seen in this light, we can appreciate the specific way that a *B’rit milah* ceremony plays out: the mother brings the child through an audience, hands it over to males who have gathered to perform the ritual. They establish an altar upon the lap of the *Sandek*, and sanctify the event with wine and blessings. At its conclusion, the mother retreats with the child away from the sacred space, back through the audience. The infant then re-joins society in a new role, moving from the timelessness of ritual separation outside society, into the realm of social time.

Another anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss, reinforces the universality of Leach’s analysis: “Whether in Africa, America, Australia or Melanesia, the initiation rites follow the same pattern. First, the novices, taken from their parents, the sacrificial element of circumcision explicit are symbolically ‘killed.’ After this they are ‘reborn’ as members of the society.” Making the sacrificial element of circumcision explicit would legitimate and transform the mixed feelings of the parents. It would emphasize their role as active subjects, and show that the infant—a passive object—is not the honoree but rather an instrument through whom the parents and the community are enabled to demonstrate both their acknowledgement of God’s power and their ongoing connection with Jewish history and tradition.

**GLEANED FROM:**

**Riv-Ellen Prell (“Reading the Covenant...” 1988);  
Dale Lieberman (“Bris Milah,” 1994);  
Edmund Leach (“The Logic of Sacrifice,” 1985);  
Claude Levi-Strauss (*The Savage Mind*, 1966).**

# B'rakhot livrit milah

Adonai malakh mode  
and Study Mode

Joseph A. Levine  
Synagogue Song in America

2001: 58

*mf* Joyfully and freely

Ba-rukht atah, a - do-nai e - lo - hei - nu me-lekh ha - o - lam, bo-rei p'-ri ha-ga - fen.

Ba - rukht atah, a - do - nai e - lo - hei - nu me - lekh ha - o - lam, a-sher kid-deish y' - did mi-be - ten, v' - hok bish'-ei-ro sam

v' - tse'-e'-tsa - av ha - tam b'-ot b' - rit ko - desh. Al kein,

bis'-khar zot, eil hai, hel - kei - nu tsu rei - nu

tsa-veh l'hatsil sh'ei - rei-nu mi-sha-hat, l'-ma'-an b'-ri - to a-sher

sam biv-sa-rei - nu. Ba - rukht a - tah, a - do - nai, ko -

reit ha - b' - rit.



# ***SIMHAT BAT***

## **A Sensual Awakening Ceremony**

*After Linda Holzman*

**T**he *Kvatterin* (Godmother) brings the Baby Girl into the room as all say:  
*B'rukhhah ha-ba'ah!* Blessed be she who comes in the name of God!

The *Kvatterin* hands the Baby Girl to the *Kvatter* (Godfather), who is seated on *Kisei shel Eiliyahu* (Chair of the Prophet, who symbolically witnesses every child's initiation into the Congregation of Israel). The **Mother/Partner** takes the Baby from the *Kvatter* and says:

My daughter, my child, you have been as dear to me as my own breath. May I hold you gently, now, with the love to keep you close and with the strength to let you grow.

**She** hands the Baby to the **Father/Partner**, who says:

My daughter, my child, a piece of my life is you. You have grown to life apart from me, but now I hold you close to my heart and cradle you in my arms with love.

**Both Parents** hold the Baby and say:

We have been blessed with the gift of new life. We have shared love and pain and joy in bringing our daughter into life, and have been privileged to participate in the marvel and beauty of creation. By the way in which we live, we aspire to teach our daughter to become a caring and loving person, and in her behalf, we make this donation to \_\_\_\_\_ . God of all generations, bless our daughter and bless us with the gift of health, so we may grow together loving Torah, pursuing justice, seeking peace and the betterment of all humankind.

**All respond:**

Amen.

**The officiant** then takes the Baby, and continues:

To mark this rite of passage, we now awaken each of our newborn's five senses, one by one. **First**, we welcome her into the family of Israel, with the **sound** of her own **name**, \_\_\_\_\_ bat \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .

Let her parents rejoice in her birth. As \_\_\_\_\_ has entered the world in purity, so may she continue through life, following the path of righteousness, learning, and deeds of loving kindness to all God's creatures.

**The officiant** chants *Eloheinu... l'simhat Bat*:

# Eloheinu....l'simhat bat

Adonai malakh mode  
and Study Mode

Joseph A. Levine  
Synagogue Song in America  
2001: 58

E-lo-heinu velohei avoteinu ve'imō - tei-nu, ka-yeim - et hayaldah hazot l'a - vi-ha u-l'-i mah,  
et hayaldah hazot l' - ho - rei - ha,  
v' - yi - ka-rei sh'mah b'yisra - eil: ( )  
bat ( ) v'-( ). Yis-mah ha'av beyotseit hala - tsav v'-ta-geil im - mah bifri vit -  
Yism'hu hahorim  
nah ka-ka - tuv: Yismah avikha v'i-me-kha, v'tageil yolad' - te - kha, v'-ne-e-mar:  
va - e-e-vor a - la - yikh va-er-eikh mit-bo-se - set b'-da - ma-yikh, va - o-mar-lakh, b'-da-  
ma-yikh hay - yi, va-o-mar-lakh b'damayikh hay-yi v'-ne-e-mar: Ho-du ladonai ki tov, ki l'o-lam - has - do;  
ALL JOIN IN:  
ho - du ladonai ki tov, ki l'o - lam - has - do.  
Zot hak-ta-nah g' - do-lah ti - h'-yeh, k' - sheim she - nikh - n' - sah lab-ri - ut,  
kein ti - ka - neis l' - to - rah u - l'-hu - pah  
ALL JOIN IN:  
u-l'-ma - a - sim to - vim, v'-no - mar: A - MEIN.

The officiant continues:

**Second**, we ask \_\_\_\_\_'s Aunt and Uncle, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, to awaken her sense of **sight** by lighting this **candle** in her honor.

**Third**, we invite \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to present \_\_\_\_\_ with her first **toy**, and thereby initiate her sense of **touch**.

**Fourth**, we ask \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to come forward and sensitize \_\_\_\_\_ to the beautiful **scent** of a freshly picked **flower**.

**Finally**, it is my privilege to pronounce the blessing over this cup of **wine**, and to let \_\_\_\_\_ **taste** the fruit of God's creation.

The officiant chants the *Borei p'ri hag-gafen* blessing while giving the newborn a taste of grape juice... songs like *Siman tov un mazal tov* or *Am yisrael hai* are appropriately sung here.

## *Birkat hay-yayin*

After Abba Weisgal  
*Emunat Abba*, 2006, #418

Legato

The musical score is written on three staves in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The melody is marked 'Legato'. The lyrics are: Ba - rukh a - tah, a - do - nai, e - lo - hei - nu me - lekh ha - o - lam, bo - - - rei p' - ri hag - ga - fen. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, a triplet of eighth notes, and dynamic markings 'dim.' and 'pp'.

# BAR / BAT MITZVAH

## Understanding Their Underlying Significance

### *Gleaned from Many Sources*

#### **BAR MITZVAH**

Mishnah *Avot* (5.21) and BT *Bava m'tsi'a* (96a) use the term Bar Mitzvah for one—of any age—who is subject to the Law. Solomon Schechter (*Studies in Judaism* 1911: 307) sees in this the influence of Roman emphasis on juristic concepts such as attaining one's majority status. Current understanding of Bar Mitzvah as a young person who assumes religious obligations first occurs in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (R. Menachem Tziyyoni, *Sefer tziyyoni* on Genesis 1: 15).

The Tanna Eliezer b. Simson (2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E.) ruled that a father was responsible for his son's actions until age 13, a view corroborated in Mishnah *Niddah* (5.6), BT *Kiddushin* (16b) and the 8<sup>th</sup>-century post-Talmudic *Massekhet sof'rim* (18:7). Thus, when a boy is first called to the Torah, his father recites the blessing, *Barukh she-p'tarani mei-onsho she-lazeh*:

Blessed be God Who has freed me from any punishment that would be due this youngster, were he of age.

In Eastern Europe, economic conditions dictated that a boy be called up to the Torah on a Monday or Thursday morning following his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. In Western Europe, the boy read *Maftir* and *Haftarah* on the Sabbath after. Rabbis of modern synagogues then speak to the celebrant and conclude with a benediction. A festive Kiddush for the congregation follows, plus a banquet as elaborate as a wedding feast, according to the *Magein avraham* commentary on *Shulhan arukh orah hayyim* (225: 2). The 16<sup>th</sup>-century exegete Solomon Luria reports, in his *Yam Shel Shlomo* (*Bava Kama* 7: 3), that celebrants were tutored to deliver a *d'rashah* (talmudic-style discourse) during the banquet. Today this occurs during worship, and Sephardim call it the *T'fillin D'rashah*. In Liberal synagogues the talk is more personal than learned (Zvi Kaplan, *Encyclopedia Judaica IV*, 1972: 243-246).

#### **BAT MITZVAH**

Formal ceremonial celebration of Bat Mitzvah is first mentioned in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Joseph Hayyim b. Eliyahu, *Ben Ish Hai*).<sup>1</sup> The founding rabbi of Reconstructionism, Mordechai M. Kaplan, introduced Bat Mitzvah to the United States when his daughter Judith turned 12 in 1920, at the Society for the Advancement of Judaism in New York. Bat Mitzvah was popularized by the Conservative movement as a means of equalizing

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<sup>1</sup> (1833-1909), Hakham who headed Baghdad's Yeshivah Bet Zilha after the death of its founder, Hakham Abdallah Somekh (1813-1889). His work, a blend of halakhah and kabbalah, became a standard code of law for Sephardic communities.

women's role in worship, states Rabbi Isaac Klein (*Jewish Religious Practice*, 1979: 152-153). At first it only marked the passage from Jewish girlhood to womanhood. But then the question arose, how could a girl be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah and then never have such an honor again? Conservatism was first to grapple with the problem and to initially evolve a ceremony for Friday night using select prophetic readings. During the 1960s it moved the celebration of Bat Mitzvah to Shabbat morning on the same basis as a Bar Mitzvah.

Reform followed suit in the 1970s. Orthodoxy's first step in the 1960s was to group all girls turning 12 during a given season into a Bat Mitzvah class with an end-of-year Sunday morning observance similar to Confirmation. The celebrants led responsive readings, delivered *Divrei torah* and participated in a cantata to mark the rite of passage. In recent decades Orthodox congregations have been allowing girls to celebrate their Bat Mitzvah individually, immediately after worship concludes on Shabbat morning or on Shabbat afternoon after *Minhah*. In either case, a seated Kiddush or *Shalosh s'udot* follows.

### **EXPLAINING TALLIT AND T'FILLIN TO 7<sup>TH</sup>-GRADE STUDENTS**

Maybe I have just been lucky. In all the years I was in the States I taught only one Bar/Bat Mitzvah student (a female) who would not wear *t'fillin*. She actually wanted to, but her parents forbade her. Here in Israel, parents are very anxious for their sons to lay *t'fillin*, and I find that the curiosity factor alone brings the girls in. Having an adult female as role model probably doesn't hurt, either. I have found that the following explanation on the use of *t'fillin* makes sense to students—apart from all the fine rules and laws we teach.

Prayer has three dimensions: intellectual; emotional; and physical. All the bowing, stepping back and forth, kissing, etc. reinforces what we are saying. Parents express what they feel by kissing or hugging a child. Friends communicate with each other through a smile or a handshake. So, too, do our body motions during prayer express not only our feelings, but our thoughts as well. What we wear while we pray also says something about the way we think of our prayer. The new “uniform” may not feel comfortable the first time, but with repeated use it becomes a part of the total prayer experience, the physical part.

I ask students what they wear when playing soccer (the national sport here). Why do you wear it? To prepare yourself for that particular activity. When you put on a *kippah*, *tallit* and *t'fillin* you are preparing for the activity of prayer. Once you are fully dressed there is no mistaking what you are about to do; you wouldn't, for instance, be tempted to kick around a soccer ball. And some days when you are dressed for soccer you might not feel like playing ball; but you hang in there and do your best for the sake of the team. It's the same with praying in a *minyan*; nine of our teammates are counting on us. And most important, God is on our side.

**Iris Beth Weiner**, hazzan at *K'hillat m'vakshei derekh* (Masorti)  
Jerusalem, Israel; HAZZANET posting, November 22, 2004.



Hermann Struck: *Bar Mitzvah*, 1940

## *Y'simkha elohim* (for Bar Mitzvah)

After Ladino folksong

*Otsar musicali shel eidot ha-s'fardim*  
Mazor & Atlas, eds., 1975: 274

Y' - sim - kha e - lo - him k' - ef - ra - yim v' - khim - na - sheh. A - do -  
 nai tsil - kha al yad y' - mi - ne - kha. Ki o - rekh ya - mim u - sh' - not hay -  
 yim v' - sha - lom yi - h' - yu l' - kha. A - do - nai yish - mor - kha mik - kol ra. Yish -  
 mor et naf - she - kha. V' - no - mar: A - MEIN.

\*ALL JOIN:

Spoken: "Mazal Tov! Mazal Tov!! Mazal Tov!!!"

# May God Bless You

## (for Bat Mitzvah)

Text: Sheldon Zimmerman  
ACC Manual, 2000

(Italicized names to be  
pronounced *b'ivrit*)

Music: After Pinchas Jassinowsky  
"The Vision of Isaiah," 1925

Simply Stated

May God bless you with the laugh-ter of *Sa - rah*, and the kind de - vo - tion of *Riv - kah*, may you be be-lov - ed as *Ra - heil*. May you be as gen-tle as *Lei-ah*, and as cour - ra - geous as *Di-nah*, as com - pas-sion-ate as *Na-o - mi*. May you be re-source-ful as *Mir-yam* as faith-ful as *Han - nah*, may God grant you all the hap - pi - ness of *Rut*.

Parlando, con moto

CONG. JOINS:

V' - khein y' - hi ra - tson, v' - no - mar: A - MEIN. <sup>3</sup>

Spoken: "Mazal Tov! Mazal Tov!! Mazal Tov!!!"

TOGETHERNESS OF THE OLD AND THE YOUNG IS THE KEY TO SURVIVAL, AS INDICATED BY THE REPLY MOSES GAVE TO PHARAOH WHEN ASKED WHO WOULD ACCOMPANY HIM INTO THE DESERT TO WORSHIP HIS GOD: "WE GO WITH BOTH OUR OLD AND OUR YOUNG." IF ONLY THE YOUNG WOULD SUSPEND JUDGEMENT, WHILE ALLOWING THE MELLOWNESS OF THE OLD TO TEMPER THEIR YOUTHFUL VIGOR.

(Dr. Samuel I. Spector, *Old Age and the Sages*, 1973.)

## **Coping with Learning Disorders in Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation**

**(Hazzanet, January 26, 2015)**

*By Scott Sokol*

**ODD** (which stands for Oppositional Defiance Disorder) is commonly comorbid with **AD/HD** (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder); roughly a third-or-more kids with ODD also have AD/HD. It's therefore important to be sure that their AD/HD symptoms are being managed either psycho-pharmacologically or psycho-therapeutically (preferably both). I certainly recommend patience but more generally, positivity is really important. Kids with ODD tend to have low self-esteem, often because of their learning disabilities and/or the stress that comes with attentional challenge. Positive reinforcement for small parts of task completion can be very helpful, and pointing out talents that may be related to task completion can go a long way towards buy-in.

Another important strategy is forced-choice reframing. Try to give choices (usually just two) to the child pertaining to your work together. For example, "do you want to start with your Haftarah today or should we perhaps begin with the Torah Blessings?" Such perceived control can be remarkably useful and will generally reduce ODD behaviors.

Because of the high comorbidity with AD/HD (which is really a disorder of arousal), you should try to provide activities that are stimulating as much as possible. One good way to do this is by relating your work to activities in which the child is already interested—inherent interest results in more self-arousal. Reinforce success and make a game out of it. Token reinforcement (working towards smaller rewards) can prove helpful, and I would ask parents about what reinforcers tend to work with the student.

The issue of Hebrew reading is a whole other discussion and the methods used have to take into account the child's specific reading impairment. Limited transliteration (e.g., written on top of words that have repeatedly been mis-read) is a useful strategy. However, you need to determine which transliteration scheme will work best with this child—which depends again on the nature of the reading impairment. The simplest way to accomplish this without a long evaluative process is to ask the student how he would write the target word in English letters so that he will remember it.

*Rav-Hazzan Scott Sokol, PhD, is a multi-professional: rabbi, cantor, educational leader and pediatric neuropsychologist, who has managed to work at all these jobs simultaneously. He is always up for a new challenge, loves to learn and loves to teach. He is the immediate past Editor in Chief for the Journal of Synagogue Music, and is currently Director of Education and Rav Beit HaSefer at the Metrowest Jewish Day School in Framingham, Massachusetts.*



**HATUNAH—A NARRATIVE WITH  
INCIDENTAL MUSIC**



**Three-tiered Huppah by Temme Gentles, Temple Emanu-El, Toronto**

## Choices for a Jewish Wedding<sup>1</sup>

*By Gloria Goldreich*

**M**y grandparents met for the first time only an hour before their wedding, and for seven days afterwards they joined their families and friends to perform the “Seven Blessings”—a series of prayers that conclude the traditional Jewish marriage service. My father and mother each fasted for 24 hours before wedding. Although they knew each other well before their marriage, having met in what my grandparents called “the American way” at a Young Israel discussion group, they did not see each other while they were fasting and during that time my father studied Talmud with his friends.

My elder sister was married in one of the few chapels in New York boasting a ceiling that opened so that the bride and groom might be joined together beneath the heavens according to the old custom, and my brother-in-law escorted her to the wedding. My other sister chose a modern Jewish center and asked my father if her brother-in-law’s gentile college roommate might be their best man. My father shrugged indifferently. It was, by that time, beyond him.

As my friends married I attended weddings in Ethical Culture “temples,” in Reform sanctuaries where the women wore hats but the men did not, and in huge “wedding parlors” where so many affairs were in progress that an official was especially designated to direct traffic. I sat through ceremonies in enormous synagogues that featured winding staircases, and in thickly carpeted hotels that kept wedding canopies covered with artificial flowers in steady storage. One of my college friends elected to be married in a hall with an unusual effect: after the rest of the processional had reached the platform up front, she was dropped in a kind of bird cage, to stand beside her husband in front of a rabbi who could not quite conceal his amazement.

My husband and I, after announcing our engagement, went through the usual social, intellectual and emotional gyrations about the kind of wedding we wanted. But as our thoughts and feelings crystallized, I realized with a painful honesty and with due apologies to our cynical friends, that I wanted a real wedding—what my eight-year-old niece calls a “wedding-wedding.”

We briefly examined the alternative—a quiet marriage in a rabbi’s study—followed by a dinner for the immediate family. It sounded too restrained, stark and sober to suit the merriness of our mood. The realization dawned that I did not want to be married in a smart little suit that I could wear afterwards. I wanted, as I suppose almost every engaged girl does, to be a bride...

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<sup>1</sup> The following memoir first appeared in *Hadassah Newsletter*, Spring 1965 under the title, “My Jewish Wedding,” and is reprinted here with permission. It is introduced by the above graphic and interspersed with examples of music for the corresponding parts of the the nuptial ceremony.

# Iti mi-l'vanon

TEXT: Song of Solomon 4:8

MUSIC: Nira Chen

Dm Gm Dm Gm Dm Gm Dm B $\flat$  Am7

4 Dm 1. Dm 2. Am Fine

6 Dm Am Dm C Dm Am B $\flat$  Gm C Dm Am Dm D.C. al Fine

**DID YOU EVER NOTICE HOW MUSIC SOUNDS DIFFERENT PLAYED OUTDOORS? A CELLO IN A GARDEN CEREMONY OR A FLUTE AT A SEASIDE WEDDING? THAT'S BECAUSE MUSIC WAS BORN IN THE OPEN AIR, IN THE BREAKS OF OCEAN WAVES AND THE WHISTLING OF WIND THROUGH THE TREES. IT TRAVELS IN ECHOES. IT RIDES THE BREEZE. IT WAS FORGED IN NATURE, RUGGED AND RAW.**

**(After Mitch Albom, *The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto*, 2015.)**

We assured each other earnestly that ours would not be a huge wedding or elaborate or too formal. We would maintain our perspective and preserve our dignity. We would invite just a small group of family and friends who would come to the synagogue and join us at a party afterwards. No more than 40 people, we asserted.

“Forty people!” my mother said incredulously. “There are 40 people in our immediate family alone.” And she proceeded to give me the names of cousins, aunts and uncles, second cousins, devoted friends of the family, old neighbors, current neighbors, all of whom had to be invited if we had “any kind of affair.”

I surrendered and wondered how to confront Shel with the news. His family, he had assured me, was very small. However, in an apologetic tone of voice he soon admitted that there were at least 40 people in his immediate family and a goodly number others who *had* to be invited. We both wondered timidly what might happen were they not invited, but decided not to investigate further.

Having committed ourselves, we faced the problem of where our “simple” wedding would take place. I wanted to be married in an Orthodox synagogue that also had catering facilities, a rather uncomplicated idea, I thought. I thought wrong. In the weeks that followed we discovered there are Orthodox synagogues with long aisles and Orthodox synagogues with short aisles; there are those who will not accommodate less than 300 guests (“for us it doesn’t pay,” one regretful synagogue director told me and I restrained myself from asking him whether the fulfillment of a mitzvah was designed to be remunerative) and those who by virtue of an agreement with the caterer will contract only with couples who want a “sit-down” dinner; there are those who insist on a “package deal”—chapel, cantor, rabbi and caterer—and those who shrug and insist that they are unconcerned about anything except renting the chapel.

At last we decided on an attractive synagogue, fashionable enough to make us both uneasy, and negotiated for a date. It had a short aisle, which meant--the synagogue director explained knowingly to us—that our guests would not get bored during the procession, a comforting bit of information. It was also a package deal of such overwhelming proportions that the only feature of the wedding not taken into consideration was the outfit of the wedding party.

We selected a date, signed a contract and made honeymoon arrangements. We moved too soon. One afternoon the phone rang and heavy voice with accent informed me that on the line was “Meyerson the Caterer.” It seemed that on the date we had selected he was catering three other affairs. Therefore, he was moving our date head two weeks in order to be able at that time to “give us maximum consideration,” an affair with class, we should live and be well and be happy because he wanted only good for us, “Amen.” “Amen,” I said in defeat, and we stoically altered our plans, accepting Meyerson as the current director of our destinies.

# Simeini ka-hotam

TEXT: Song of Solomon 8:6-8

MUSIC: Arthur Yolkoff

The musical score is written in a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). It consists of four systems of music, each with a voice line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are provided in both Hebrew and English.

**System 1:** Chords: F, F7, Bb6, Bbm6, F, Bbmaj7. Lyrics: Simeini ka-hotam al li-be-kha, ka-hotam al zrothine. Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine.

**System 2:** Chords: Bb6, C, Dm, Am, Dm, Bbm. Lyrics: e-kha. Ki a-zah love kha-ma-vet a-ha-vah, ka-and arm. For love is strong as death, and

**System 3:** Chords: F, F+, Dm, Bb6, C11 (1st ending), C, C11 (2nd ending), C7, F. Lyrics: shah-khi-sh'ol kin-ah; ki a-ah. jeal-ou-sy cruel as the grave; for grave. To Coda

**System 4:** Chords: F, Fmaj7, Am, Dm, Bb, Bb6, F. Lyrics: Si-meini ka-hotam, si-meini ka-hotam al li-be-kha. Oh, set me as a seal, oh, set me as a seal up-on thy heart.

We then met with Mr. Meyerson, a pinkly balding little man. He was not a happy man, and we made him even sadder. We wanted a buffet supper. It would, I thought, eliminate much of the usual formality and I carried with me memories of previously attended affairs with soup grown cold and main dishes inedible as the couple bobbed up and down between courses to dance. Mr. Meyerson did not understand this.

“A buffet supper?” he asked incredulously. “People will think you are cheap. Do you want people to think you are cheap?” He turned accusingly to my mother who looked at me helplessly.

“Frankly, I don’t care,” I said. “We want lots of food both hot and cold—hors d’oeuvres and champagne.”

“From hors d’oeuvres you can’t make a meal,” Mr. Meyerson’s depression was now descending into melancholy. He patted his rather ample stomach, indicating that he himself never made a meal from hors d’oeuvres. “You want people should go away hungry?”

“No,” I said, “but we will not have a sit-down dinner.”

It was one of the few battles I won. Mr. Meyerson sighed deeply (he had a bad ulcer, he told us) and pulled out his menus. “It will cost just as much,” he told us. “You would not be saving a dime.”

“That’s all right,” my mother assured him, whereupon he produced a menu that could easily solve the famine problem of all India and much of Pakistan, ranging from a cold smorgasbord to a hot table with every variety of fish, meat and fowl.

The next step was ordering the flowers. Mr. Meyerson informed me that he worked only with one florist who was a genius, who understood flowers, brides and what was elegant and what was not. “Elegant” and “classy” were Mr. Meyerson’s favorite adjectives.

“Mazeltov,” said the florist, a sparkling, dark little man, when we introduced ourselves. “You think I’m Jewish, I bet. Well, I speak a very good Yiddish because I do an exclusive business for Jewish weddings. Say anything to me in Yiddish—I bet I’ll understand.”

I declined the challenge and suggested we abandon linguistics and discuss the flowers.

“What about the *khuppah*?”<sup>2</sup> asked Mr. Scarlatti (he was not about to abandon his original challenge)...

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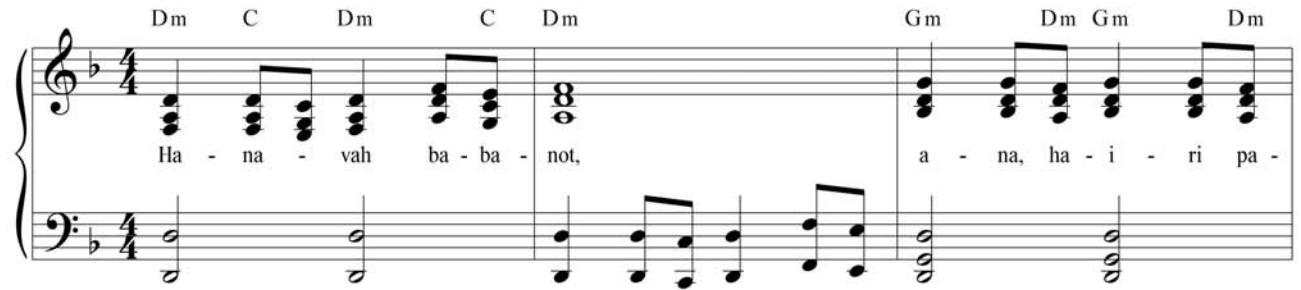
<sup>2</sup> Editor’s note: In Reconstructionist circles, relatives and friends of a just-engaged couple create a decorative quilt that will later serve as a wedding canopy. Each square tells its own story of the celebrants’ individual childhood or of a hope for their future life together. Lovingly hand-drawn or embroidered over a period of many months, the collective messages will ultimately provide a virtual lifetime of loving reminiscences.

# Ha-navah ba-banot

WORDS & MUSIC: Avitai Ne'eman, 1953

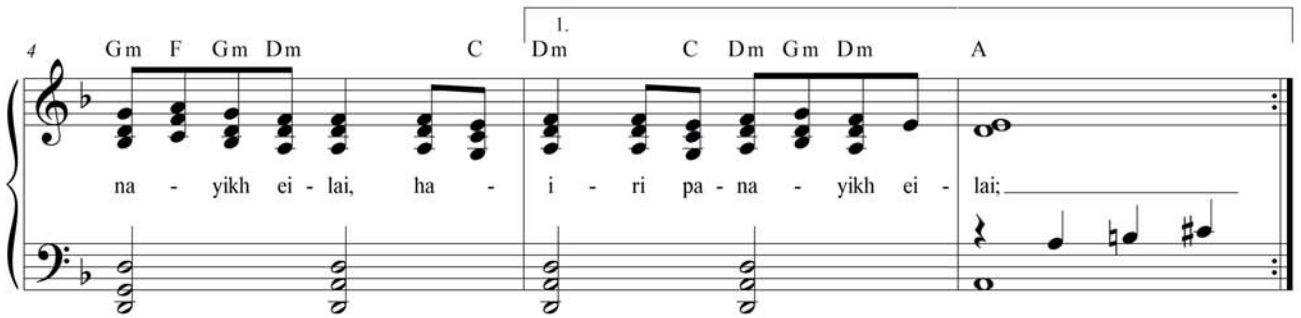
PIANO: Arthur Yolkoff, 1958

Dm C Dm C Dm Gm Dm Gm Dm



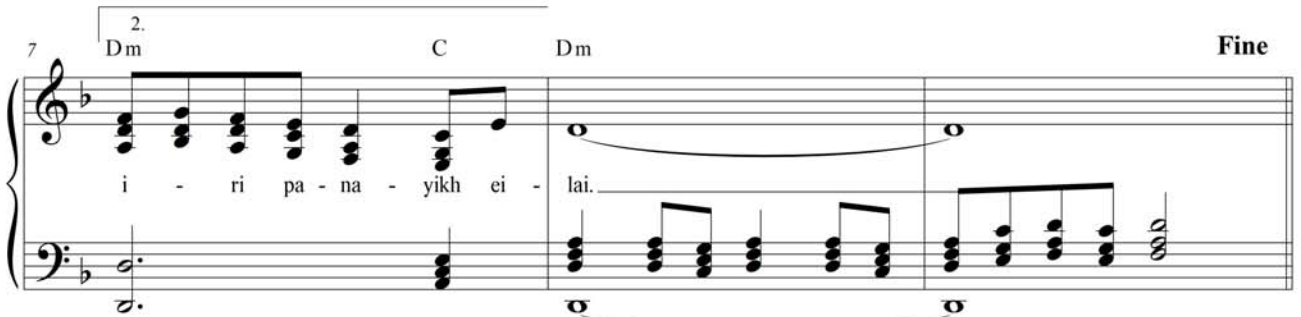
Ha - na - vah ba - ba - not, a - na, ha - i - ri pa -

4 Gm F Gm Dm C 1. Dm C Dm Gm Dm A



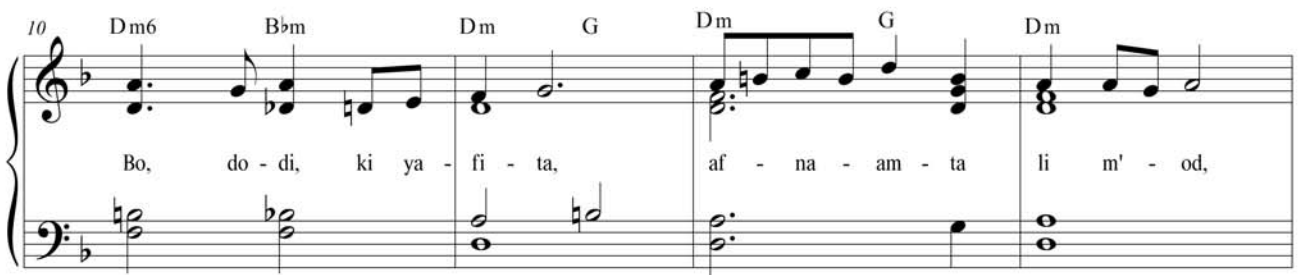
na - yikh ei - lai, ha - i - ri pa - na - yikh ei - lai;

7 2. Dm C Dm Fine



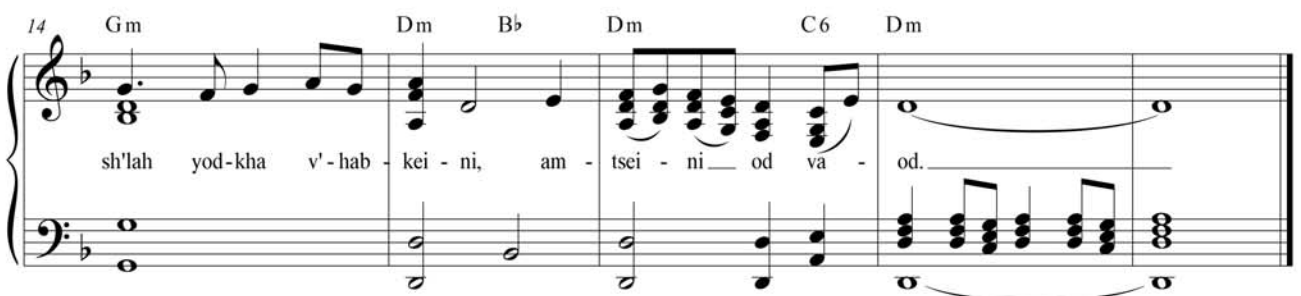
i - ri pa - na - yikh ei - lai. Fine

10 Dm6 Bbm Dm G Dm G Dm



Bo, do - di, ki ya - fi - ta, af - na - am - ta li m' - od,

14 Gm Dm Bb Dm C6 Dm



sh'lah yod-kha v' - hab - kei - ni, am - tsei - ni - od va - od.

I shot back, “what about it?” My adventures with Mr. Meyerson had made me wary.

“For \$300 [in 1965 prices] you can be married under the Garden of Eden. For \$200 I can make you nice blue-and-white flowers in the shape of a Jewish star. Very nice. Very elegant.”

“Very classy?” I asked.

“Just the word I was looking for!” he beamed.

I explained that I preferred the velvet canopy the synagogue supplied, and he lost his beam. His face fell even further when we discussed my bridal bouquet and I told him I would use the family bridal Bible simply covered with white orchids.

“About the table arrangements,” he said, I have something to which even you won’t say no. I used it for a big affair at the Waldorf and it made the bride so happy I almost cried.” His large dark Sicilian eyes filled.

“Don’t say no until you see it,” my mother cautioned.

We followed him to the back where a sample wedding table had been arranged, the centerpiece of which was a bird cage covered with white rose buds and tiny purple orchids. In the cage two sullen love birds glared hostilely at each other.

Mr. Meyerson and I agreed that a huge Jewish star of chopped liver that played “Hatikvah” every time a guest took a smear was not classy, but he was disappointed when I vetoed a swan carved from ice that spewed champagne and when I declined to order matchbooks that stated “A Perfect Match—Sheldon and Gloria.” He was placated, however, when I told him I was not worried about the expense but about discouraging lung cancer.

One triumphant evening he announced the dessert. Molds shaped like fruit by culinary sculptors and filled with ice cream that of course contained no milk but would fool everyone. Mr. Meyerson giggled. He had clearly surpassed himself. In fact, he now became my key general, calling upon me to report on the progress of the campaign and to ask for advice on strategy. He precipitated his phone conversations by giving his full rank.

“Hello—is this the bride speaking? Here is Meyerson the Caterer.”

His tactics and ideas were varied but his ultimate aim was victory in the form of an affair that achieved “class.” Strictly kosher, of course, but with class.

“You know what I got for you special? A kind of pike—you make it pink and curl it, it should look like shrimp—and I use the same sauce seafood restaurants do. No one will know it’s not shrimp. We also have a new kind of meat that looks just like spare ribs, I’m making for a girl in Larchmont—to Barnard she went and is marrying a doctor—an



all-Chinese food wedding—but strictly kosher...

I let my mother place the order with Mr. Scarlatti for centerpieces, bridesmaids' bouquets--and gladioli for the Bimah—which he insisted we could not do without: “Do you want God to be embarrassed?”

## Barukh ha-ba

After Salomone Rossi  
"L'mi ehpots la'asot y'kar"

Ha-shirim asher lishlomo  
Venice, 1623

Andante

Gm D Gm F Bb Eb Ab Bb Eb

Ba - rukh ha - ba <sup>3</sup> be - sheim a - do - nai, bei - rakh -

Bb C7 F Bb Eb F Cm G C F7 Bb F Bb F <sup>3</sup>

nu - kheim mi - beit a - do nai. Bo - u nish ta - ha -

Bb Eb F Bb Gm Dm Eb Bb Gm F Gm

veh ne-nikh-ra - ah, niv-r' - kha lif-nei a-do - nai o-sei -

Eb Cm D7 Gm D Bb F Bb Eb

- - - nu. Mi a - dir al ha - kol, -

Ab <sup>3</sup> F Bb Eb Bb C7 F Bb Eb F Cm

mi ba - rukh al ha - kol, mi ga - dol al ha - kol ye - va - reikh he - ha - rei

Bb F6 F7 Bb

tan im v' - ha - kal lah. -

im ha - ha - hu - vim.

**F**or music, Mr. Meyerson recommended us to Marvin King, who was “A genius, brilliant and who knows what a musician’s place is.” This we understood to mean that Mr. King acknowledged the caterer to be the Supreme Being on the night of the affair.

Marvin—he asked me to call him Marvin on the phone—insisted upon a personal meeting at my apartment at which we would sign the contract and discuss the music. He danced in, in a narrowly cut suit and a bright plaid vest and looked around my room. There were several Israeli landscapes, and books and journals on Jewish topics were fairly prominent.

“You’re interested in Judaism, I see,” he said.

I nodded and he leaned forward in my orange canvas sling chair.

“My name used to be Klein,” he said in a low tone, glancing nervously over his shoulder, “I can play Horas, Israeli dances, everything.”

I congratulated him on his versatility and told him we would want “everything.”

“I sing in Yiddish, Hebrew and English. Which do you want?”

“All three,” I said.

He brightened. “For you I’ll play the ‘Song of Songs’ on the recorder when you come down the aisle. Only ‘Dodi Li’ because it’s a short aisle. Do you want continuous or non-continuous? It’s \$300 for four hours continuous and \$250 for non-continuous.”

He explained that non-continuous meant the musicians rested 15 minutes of each hour, which even my non-mathematical intelligence knew meant we lost a full hour out of the four.

“Continuous,” I sighed.

“Fine. And of course the musicians partake of the food?”

“Of course,” I answered, not daring to ask how they could play continuously if they were eating.

Marvin King was pleased. “For you I’ll play 15 minutes extra,” he said and looked around my apartment again before he left.

“I played for a Bohemian once before.” We shook hands and smiled at each other with deep sympathy.

But there was little time to worry about the music. There were fittings, meetings with the photographer who was chagrined that I would not allow photographs during the ceremony and appalled when I told him that we could dispense with an album in full color.

“No movies?” he exclaimed incredulously. “People will think you’re cheap.”

“Good,” I said.

The days immediately preceding the wedding presented their own problems. There were cousins who would not be coming because they had learned there were other cousins who had not been invited. There was a similar group who took umbrage because another group *had* been invited. My wedding gown was lost at the cleaners and of course, found. My niece, who was to be flower girl, developed a bad cold and recovered just in time.

Mr. Meyerson, whose intensity increased as the battle drew nearer, called several times a day to consult about the color of the tablecloths, the distribution of skullcaps and to remind us that it was our responsibility to provide custom-packaged cigars, cigarettes and Grace after Meals booklets. Marvin King called to tell us his pianist was ill and then again to tell that he was better.

**IN THE TWO TRADITIONAL MUSICS—SACRED AND PROFANE—FLOWING PARALLEL TOWARDS US SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME, ONE HAS REMAINED AMORPHOUS RHYTHMICALLY, THE OTHER OF PRECISE SCANSION. THINK OF GREGORIAN CHANT; THEN THE CALL OF COTTON BAILERS.**

**(After Ned Rorem, Interview in *Opera News*, March 12, 1983.)**

# V'eirastikh li

TEXT: Hosea 2:21-22

MUSIC: *Shir ha-shirim* cantillation

Voice

V' - ei - ras-tikh li - l' - o - lam. V' - ei - ras-tikh li b' -

Piano

6

tse - dek u - v' - mish - pat u - v' - he - sed uv' - ra - ha - mim.

Pno.

10

V' - ei - ras-tikh li - be - e - mu - nah v' - ya - da - at et a - do - nai.

Pno.

I said mournfully to Shel on the phone, the morning of the wedding, “it can’t possibly be worth it,” but once I was dressed I knew it would be worth it.

“You look like a bride-bride,” my niece exclaimed.

The rabbi came in and asked me gently to remove my pearls and any other jewelry.

“It is symbolic that your groom claims you for yourself alone,” he explained, and suddenly I knew that the hectic activity of the weeks before the wedding had little to do with the wedding itself.

Shel came in to cover my face with the bridal veil as so many bridegrooms had done before him, and I felt the strength of a heritage that will not deny itself and a tradition that survives by virtue of its beauty and meaning.

I walked down the aisle to ‘Dodi Li,’ moved by the music and the wonder of the moment as Shel and I turned towards each other. I still remember with joy the wildness of the Horas we danced and the excitement of the traditional dances during which Shel and I were lifted above the circle as we sat in chairs.

I remember our friends’ laughter and our families’ happiness and our own tumultuous excitement. Then it was over and we sat among the men of our new larger family singing the Grace after Meals and the Seven Blessings.

Mr. Meyerson kissed me before we left.

“That was a wonderful affair,” he said, and I realized with great regret that I had never gotten to taste the pike that looked just like shrimp.

**MUSIC IS WHAT FEELINGS SOUND LIKE.**

**(Anonymous)**

# Benediction

(Instrumental or Choral Responses)

Text: Numbers 6:24-26

Arthur Yolkoff

Cantor

Y'-va re - kh'-kha a-do - nai v'-yish-m' re - kha;

Response

Am EmAm C Bm

KEIN Y'-HI RA - TSON.

KEIN Y'-HI - RA - TSON.

Cantor

Ya-eir a-do - nai pa - nav ei-le-kha vi-khu - ne-ka;

Response

G D Em7A m6 D

KEIN Y'-HI - RA - TSON.

KEIN Y' - HI RA - TSON.

Cantor

Yi - sa a - do - nai pa - nav ei - le - kha v'-ya seim l'-kha

Response

sha - lom

KEIN Y' - HI RA - TSON.

KEIN Y' - HI RA - TSON.

G Am7 B

*p* *f*

# ROSH HODESH

## A Gift to Women

### *Gleaned from many sources*

**T**he moon is associated with feminism in every language, including Hebrew: *l'vanah*. A monthly service for sanctifying the New Moon includes the following prayer.

May it be Your will, O God, to readjust the deficiency of the moon, so that it may no longer be reduced in size. May its light again be like the light of the sun as it was at the time of creation, when the Bible referred to it as one of 'The Two Great Lights.'

This alludes to a Midrash (Gen. 1:16) in which the moon approached God and asked why there was one creator but two heavenly luminaries. As punishment, God greatly diminished the moon's light but promised to restore it in the World to Come (**Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews***). The moon's waning and reappearance each month became a symbol of hope and renewal to Jewish women. The Talmud (BT *Sanhedrin* 42a) understands blessing the moon as greeting God's exiled feminine presence--the *Sh'khinah*—and Kabbalism treats the moon's renewal as a symbol of the return to perfection in the Age of Redemption (**Joseph Hertz, *Daily Prayer Book***).

Jewish tradition awards Rosh Hodesh as a special celebration to women, whose forebears refused to contribute their jewelry towards forging the golden calf in the wilderness (**Bialik & Ravnitzky, *Book of Legends***). In ancient Israel, women were relieved of all workaday chores on Rosh Hodesh (2 Kings 4:23). Today, women observe it through workshops dedicated to Torah study and discussion, as well as through the creation of rituals for events heretofore unmarked in Judaism, like the end of a relationship or a miscarriage. If Rosh Hodesh should coincide with Christmas, a women's group might spend the day preparing and serving meals at a homeless shelter. Already in 1976 feminist Arlene Agus wrote, "Rosh Hodesh became a room of one's own... a room that did not require leaving our homes within Judaism" (quoted by **Rahel Musleah, "Our Judaism/Ourselves," *Hadassah*, June/July 2002**).

Many Jewish women regard their monthly meeting as a spiritual homecoming whose joyous possibilities are limited only by their creative imaginations. Rosh Hodesh has touched the lives of women who were very far from Judaism, because no designated manner of observing the day was ever set forth. Women can therefore look at it with fresh eyes and work out their own mode of celebration. The environment is safe enough to avoid making any participant feel she doesn't belong due to lack of knowledge (**Susan Berrin, *Celebrating the New Moon***). In her source book for year-round women's rituals (*Miriam's Well*), **Penina Adelman** describes how a few women in Philadelphia first conceived of inviting female ancestors into the Sukkah along with the traditional male guests—*Ushpizin*—back in 1978. The excitement they felt at expressing themselves creatively through their Jewish heritage, especially the telling of stories about women they'd never studied, led to the formation of a Modern Orthodox Rosh Hodesh group.

## A Women's Circle Under the New Moon

*By Marge Eiseman*

I turn my head, look into the eyes of the woman on my left, and say, “Hineini”—I am here, present and ready to be part of this sacred gathering. She nods, turns to the woman on her left, looks into her eyes and says, “Hineini,” and so we move around our circle, centering ourselves, calming ourselves, creating holy time. “Hineinu!” we cry to God. “We are all here.”

In the center of our circle we've draped an extraordinary hand-painted round tallit over a table. On it glows a multicolored round candle. We hold hands, sing our “Rosh Hodesh Chant” over and over again, standing still—then again as we circle to the left, to the right, and then curl inward and upward, forming an arc. We bless the new moon and thank the Source of All Life for allowing us to reach this new Hebrew month. After a few moments of sharing our recent trials and triumphs, we begin the month's program.

At the Rosh Hodesh Havurah of Congregation Sinai in Milwaukee, WI, we are living testimony to the power of Jewish women. We create, sing, play, teach, learn, and support one another—all in the framework of celebrating an ancient Jewish holiday and of marking the new moon not only as the beginning or “head” of a new month in the lunar-based Jewish calendar, but as a day of rest for women. It's a biblical commandment to observe and celebrate the new moon. In fact, Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen of Congregation Beth El-Kesher Israel in New Haven, CT, asserts that the very first Mitzvah the Jewish people were given had to do with observing Rosh Hodesh.

In biblical and early Talmudic times before people depended on astronomical calculations to set the calendar, Rosh Hodesh was announced with great fanfare. Two reputable witnesses came to testify before the Sanhedrin (High Tribunal) gathered in Jerusalem, that they had sighted the appearance of the New Moon. If their testimony was accepted, the Sanhedrin then proclaimed and sanctified the beginning of the new month. Women prepared and ate festive meals, lit candles, and studied sacred texts in honor of the new moon<sup>1</sup>.

Today, Rosh Hodesh is observed in synagogue with recitation of Hallel, a special reading from the Torah, and a Musaf service. Modern women are sanctifying the wonders of nature along with the passage of time represented by the phases of the moon, by performing old and new rituals, writing new midrashim, creating new songs and rediscovering their ancestors.

*Marge Eiseman, a teacher, mother and songwriter, was formerly co-publisher of **Jewish Heartland** magazine. This excerpt is reprinted with her permission from an article in *Reform Judaism*, Winter 2000.*

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<sup>1</sup> This procedure for fixing the date of the New Moon is recorded in Mishna Rosh Hashanah (2:5-7), and explicated further in Abraham Millgram, *Jewish Worship* (JPS 1971: 262-266).



# Rosh Hodesh Chant

(For Women's R"H Circle)

WORDS AND MUSIC: Marge Eiseman, 2004

♩ = 108  
*mf*  
 1-2 This is the light of Rosh Ho - desh, It shines when the moon is dark.  
*mp*  
 3-4 *f*  
*ff*

5 This is the light of Rosh Ho - desh, we kin - dle it from our spark.

9 This is the light of Rosh Ho - desh, It links us to our past.

13 This is the light of Rosh Ho - desh, Our le - ga - cy that we hold fast;  
**Last time,  
 Go To Coda**

17 *molto rit.*  
 le - ga - cy that we hold fast!

- 1 mezzo forte then
- 2 mezzo piano
- 3 forte, then
- 4 sing in harmony fortississimo

# HANUKKAH

## ***Hag ha-banot*--The Festival of the Daughters**

As an apocryphal book of the Bible, the Book of Judith holds exactly the same status as the Books of Maccabees, which tell the story of Hanukkah. Judith is a Jewish woman who single-handedly saves her people by killing an enemy general (Holofernes, captain-in-chief of the 180,000-strong Assyrian army). Jewish tradition (without much historical basis but because of the similarities in the two stories) associates this victory with the Maccabean revolt. Judith, frequently depicted on medieval menorahs, as one of Hanukkah's most proactive female heroes. More than that, Judith represents the heroism of women throughout Jewish history.

In North African countries, the seventh night of Hanukkah--Judith's night of triumph--was set aside as *Hag ha-banot*, the Festival of the daughters. *Hag ha-banot* falls on the new moon of the Hebrew month *Tevet*, which is the sixth or seventh night of Hanukkah (Hanukkah being the only Jewish holiday that straddles two months: *Tevet* and *Sh'vat*). In countries such as Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco, a variety of customs surrounded *Hag ha-banot*. One tradition was that women would come to the synagogue, touch the Torah, and pray for the health of their daughters. Mother would give their daughters gifts, and husbands would bring gifts to their wives. Girls who had been fighting were expected to reconcile on *Hag ha-banot*. Women old and young would join in dancing. There might have been a feast held in honor of Judith, where participants ate cheese to commemorate Judith's subterfuge (in the story, Judith feeds the enemy general salty cheese to encourage his drinking of wine so that she can kill him once he has passed out). As an alternative, women would carry away food from a ritual meal of scholars and give it to their daughters as protection from harm. Another custom was to pass down inheritances on *Hag ha-banot*.

**(Excerpted from an Internet *D'var Torah* by Rabbi Jill Hammer, Director of Tel Shemesh, a web resource for those seeking to integrate Jewish faith with earth-based ways of living.)**

## **Reading God into History**

Hanukkah is post-biblical. Nowhere in the Torah are we commanded to observe this eight-day festival or to light candles each night. Events leading up to the Maccabean victory are narrated in the Apocryphal Books of Maccabees I and II, and only hinted at in the Book of Daniel (31: 28-34). Post-Talmudic sources later wrote God into the Hanukkah story. The prayer *Al han-nisim* ("For the miracles... You performed for our ancestors at this season") is first mentioned in *Masekhet Sof"rim* (20, 8) and *Sh'iltot d'rav aha gaon* (on parashat *Va-yishlah*), both mentions dating from the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The prayer's place within *Hoda'ah*--the 18<sup>th</sup> blessing of the the Weekday Amidah--was fixed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Joseph Caro in his *Shulhan arukh* (*Orah hayyim*, 882:1).

In other words, the rabbis of geonic and medieval times read political events through the lens of biblical historiography. They were not forced to do so, but they chose

to, and that choice was momentous. It established the continuity of God's redemptive work on behalf of Israel beyond the Bible to our own day. The characteristic Jewish way of reading history puts God's hand--however hidden--into the picture.

*Historiyah* is the modern Hebrew word for history. Even though it's officially spelled with a *tet*, Rav Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of pre-state Israel, wrote it with a *tav*. By doing so, he created two other Hebrew words: *hesteir* and *Yah*, meaning "the hiding of God." If history is an account of events propelled by God, the rabbinically ordained Hanukkah candles literally shed light on God's--and our--role in those events.

The word *mazal* (luck) is spelled mem-zayin-lamed. A Hasidic teaching interprets its three letters as standing for *makom* (place), *z'man* (time) and *limmud* (learning). One must be in the right place in order to have luck. But that is not enough. Individuals who with God's help are in the right spot at the right moment must know, through their learning, how to take advantage of the opportunity. Hanukkah teaches us that in order for Divine miracles to occur in history, God needs the human initiative of very special partners, without whom nothing very special will occur.

(After Neil Gillman, "Reading God into History," *The Jewish Week*, 12/3/99; and Shlomo Riskin, "The Essence of Mazal," *The Jewish Week*, 12/22/2000.)

## Other Hanukkah Customs

Additional folk usages that have sprung up around this festival are worth noting. Taking their cue from *Rosh hodesh* (the new month celebration), another semi-holiday on which women traditionally are free from workaday obligations, women do no work while the Hanukkah candles are burning. Whenever this custom is mentioned, someone invariably says: "No wonder the candles are so small!" Using oil and wicks would make the lights burn longer.

Among Judeo-Spanish Sephardim in days gone by, the Sabbath of Hanukkah was known as *Shabbat halbashah*, when the poor were clothed by the community. During the week people brought clothing to the synagogue--to be distributed on *Rosh hodesh tevet*--an unambiguous, genderless custom we can all adopt.

(Excerpted from Rachel Musleah, "The Women of Hanukka," *Hadassah*, December 2002.)

**THE REAL MIRACLE OF HANUKKAH IS NOT THAT A SINGLE CRUSE OF OIL LASTED EIGHT DAYS. IT IS RATHER THAT WE STILL LIGHT CANDLES FOR EIGHT DAYS TO COMMEMORATE THE EVENT, AND THAT THE JEWISH PEOPLE'S CELEBRATION OF THEIR ANCESTORS' VICTORY OVER GREEK PAGANISM STANDS A GOOD CHANCE OF LASTING EIGHT MILLENNIA!**

(*Gesher--a Bridge Home*, Internet site for Hanukkah.)

# Birkot ha-neirot

Pierre Pinchik  
*The Repertoire of Hazzan Pinchik, I*

New York: Cantors Assembly,  
1964:23

**Moderato**

Voice

1. Ba - rukh a - tah, a - do - nai, e - lo -

Piano

*mf*

5

Voice

hei - nu me - lekh ha - o - lam, a - sher kid' - sha - nu b' - mits - vo - tav

Pno.

8

Voice

v' - tsi - va - nu l' - had - lik neir shel ha - nuk - kah. 2. Ba -

Pno.

11

ruk h a - tah, a - do - nai, \_\_\_\_\_ e - lo - hei nu me - lekh ha - o - lam, \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

14

she - a - sah ni - sim laa - vo - tei - nu ba - ya - mim ha - heim, \_\_\_\_\_ ba -

Pno.

17

ya - mim ha - heim baz - man ha - zeh. 3. Ba - rukh a - tah, a - do - nai, \_\_\_\_\_ e - lo -

Pno.

21

hei - nu me-lekh ha - o - lam, she - he - he - ya - nu v' -

Pno.

24

ki - ma - nu v' - hi - gi - a - nu laz - man ha - zeh.

*rit.*

Pno.

HAZZAN PINCHIK KEPT WORSHIPERS ON THE EDGE OF THEIR SEATS BY SELECTIVELY THWARTING THEIR EXPECTATIONS. WHENEVER SOMEONE ATTEMPTED TO TOUCH THE TORAH'S MANTLE WITH THEIR *SIDDUR* WHEN HE CARRIED IT FROM THE ARK TO THE CENTRALLY LOCATED READING PLATFORM, HE WOULD SHROUD THE SCROLL WITH HIS OVERSIZED *TALLIT*--'PROTECTING IT FROM ALL HARM'—AS IN MARC CHAGALL'S ICONIC PAINTING, "RABBI WITH RED TORAH."

(Eyewitness report from a Shabbat Morning service at the Stone Avenue Talmud Torah, Brownsville, Brooklyn, 1957.)

## ANSWERS FOR HANUKKAH 'Jewpardy' Quiz

1. Mattathias the High Priest's call--*Mi ladonai eilai!* means:
2. Missing ingredient in the song *Kemach, Kemach*--for making Latkes:
3. Total number of candles, including the *Shammash*, kindled throughout Hanukkah:
4. The missing word in this song phrase: "So every girl and boy will know that \_\_\_\_\_ is here" (hint: see page titled "3 Traditional Songs").
5. Mattathias and Santa Claus have the following in common:
6. Any of the three "Action" words contained in the 1<sup>st</sup> night's blessings over Hanukkah candles:
7. The following statement is either true or false: When the Maccabees regained access to the desecrated Temple, they found many cruses of oil:
8. The Judeans who adapted Greek ways were called Hellenizers. Their pious opponents who fought for the preservation of Judaism were called this:
9. During the time when Hanukkah candles burn, we play games for this reason:
10. This is the Hebrew word for *dreydl*:
11. The last name of King Antiochus:
12. The Hanukkah candles should be lit at this time:
13. As you face them, Hanukkah candles are placed in this direction:
14. As you face them, Hanukkah candles are lit in this direction:
15. After Antiochus prohibited the study of Torah, rabbis would go out into the forest with their students, taking along the ancient equivalent of dice, for this reason:
16. Aside from Torah study, Antiochus prohibited this basic Jewish observance:
17. Another holiday on which it is appropriate to recite appropriate *Al han-nissim*:
18. The prayer where this appears: "You delivered the strong into hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few:"
19. Judah's first act after defeating the Greeks and recapturing Jerusalem:
20. The word "Maccabee" means this:
21. In Hebrew, its four consonants stand for this:
22. The numerical sum of the Hebrew letters on the *dreydl*:
23. The special single cruse of oil had this in common with kosher food items:
24. A legend that the "Menorah lighted during the first Hanukkah had been improvised from eight *spears*," teaches this lesson about waiting for miracles:
25. The way we would call Judah or any of his brothers to the Torah:
26. This Jewish mother displayed extraordinary courage and self-sacrifice at the very start of the Maccabean struggle:
27. She had this many sons:
28. The missing part of this statement contrasts Judaism and Hellenism: "According to the Jews, God created humans in His own image; the Greeks created Gods....."
29. Either of 2 hymns that are sung after lighting the Hanukkah candles:
30. The order of lighting candles when Hanukkah falls on Friday night:
31. The order of lighting candles when Hanukkah falls on Saturday night (in the synagogue):
32. The Maccabean attitude towards fighting on Shabbat:
33. A prayer inserted on Hanukkah in both *Amidah* and *Birkat ha-mazon*:
34. "Hanukkah" means:
35. Hanukkah begins in this Hebrew month:
36. Hanukkah ends in this Hebrew month:

**QUESTIONS FOR HANUKKAH Quiz**  
(Beginning with--“What is...?” or “What are...?”)

- 1) “Whoever is for God—follow me!”
- 2) Potatoes
- 3) 44
- 4) Hanukkah
- 5) Beard
- 6) Kindle, Performed, Sustained
- 7) True
- 8) Hasidim
- 9) Working by the candles’ light is prohibited
- 10) *S’vivon*
- 11) Epiphanes (“the Glorious”)
- 12) 30 minutes (or later) after sunset
- 13) Starting on the right
- 14) Starting on the left
- 15) To pretend they were gambling (if discovered by the Greek ‘Mitsvah’ Police)
- 16) B’rit Milah
- 17) Purim or Yom Ha-atsma’ut
- 18) *Masarta gibborim b’yad hallashim, v’rabbim b’yad m’attim*—“Bimei Mattityahu”
- 19) Purified the Temple
- 20) Hammer
- 21) Mi Khamokha Ba-eilim Adonai (using the letter ‘Yad’)
- 22) 358
- 23) *Hekhsheir*
- 24) Our freedom must be fought for
- 25) “Ya-amod \_\_\_\_ ben Matityahu Ha-kohein”
- 26) Hannah
- 27) 7
- 28) In *their own* image
- 29) Maoz Tsur, Ha-neirot Hallalu
- 30) Hanukkah first (*Orah hayyim* 681:2)
- 31) Hanukkah first (*Kitsur shulhan arukh* 139:18)
- 32) Permitted (saving lives takes precedence)
- 33) Al Ha-nissim
- 34) Khanu Khaf-Heih (“They encamped as an army on the 25<sup>th</sup>”)
- 35) Kislev
- 36) Tevet



# *Al han-nissim*

(After a Hasidic Z'mirah)

Abba Yosef Weisgal  
*Shirei Hayyim Ve-Emunah*, 1950

After a Hasidic z'mirah:  
*Elohim yis'adeinu*

*Allegro vivace*  
*mp*

Al han - nis - sim, v' - al ha - pur - kan, v' - al ha-g' - vu-rot, v' -  
 al ha - t' - shu-ot, v' - al ha-mil - ha - mot, she-a - si - ta la-a-vo-tei - nu ba - ya -  
 mim ha - heim baz - z' - man ha - zeh.

# *Han-neirot hal-lalu*

Words: Liturgy for Erev hanukkah

Music: A. W. Binder  
*Manginoth Shireynu*,  
 ed. M. Nathanson, 1939:72

Han - nei - rot hal - la - lu a - nah - nu mad - li - kin, al han - nis - sim v' -  
 al ha - t' - shu - ot v' - al ha - nif - la - ot, she - a - si - ta la - a - vo - tei - nu  
 al y' - dei ko - ha - ne - kha,  
 ko - ha - ne - kha ha - k' - do - shim. V' - khol shmo - nat y' - mei ha - nu - kah,  
 ha - nei - rot hal - la - lu ko - desh hem. V' - ein la - nu r' - shut l' - hish -  
 ta - meish ba - hem, e - la lir - o - tam bil - vad. K' -  
 dei l' - ho - dot l' - shim - kha v' - al nif - l' - o - te - kha.  
 al nis - se - kha v' - al y' - shu - o - te - kha

# Three Traditional Hanukkah Songs

## 1. *Mi zeh hidlik*

Allegretto (Start with Refrain)

(Melody) Mi zeh hid - lik nei - rot da - kim ka - ko - kha - vim - ba - rom?  
See how the can - dles bright - ly glow a - round this time of year;

Yod' im - gam ti - no - kot ra - kim - ki ha - nuk - kah - ha -  
so ev' - ry girl and boy will know that Ha - nuk - kah - is

Refrain  
yom. here!  
La la la la la la la, la la la la la la  
(Melody)  
*f*

Ha - nuk - kah ha - yom!  
Ha - nuk - kah is here!

## 2. I'd like to be....

Musical score for "I'd like to be...." in G major, 4/4 time. The melody is on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are: "I'd like to be a Mac-ca-bee, so strong and brave and bold; and fight and win each fight I'm in... but I am on-ly six years old!"

Chords: G, C, G, D, Am, rit. D, Em, C, D7, G.

## 3. Hail to the Maccabees

Musical score for "Hail to the Maccabees" in G major, 4/4 time. The melody is on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are: "Hail to the Mac-ca-bees, Ju-dea-a re-joi-ces, the night and the day a-round lift up your voi-ces. Lift up your voi-ces, lift up your voi-ces, the night and the day a-round lift up your voi-ces." (Note: The original image contains a typo "ces." which has been corrected to "ces.")

Chords: Em, C, G, B, Em, G, Bm, G, G, D, B7, Em.



"Ureinu," by Kaleigh Sislen, 2015

## TU BISHVAT—GLEANED FROM MANY SOURCES

### *Rosh ha-shanah la-ilanot*

*Hamishah-asar bishvat*, designated in the Talmud (BT, *Rosh ha-shanah* 1a) as “The Trees’ New Year,” was a nature festival in ancient Israel. Judean farmers had to know when it occurred in order to reckon how much tithes of the past year’s fruit to offer towards upkeep of the Temple and of the poor (Ibid. 14a). Rav Hai Gaon (*T’shuvot ha-g’onim*, ed. Harkavy: 199) derives Tu Bishvat’s initiation of an annual arboreal cycle from an Arab agricultural tradition. In the month of Sh’vat, God throws down three burning coals to warm the earth. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month a coal falls to warm the air, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> a second coal heats the water so it can begin to enter the trees, hence their “New Year.” On the 21<sup>st</sup> a third coal warms the soil, and plant growth commences.

Even in exile, Jews found a way to connect with the ancient homeland on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat, no matter how different the climate or seasons of their host countries. If Middle Eastern fruits weren’t accessible, they celebrated with available varieties that could theoretically grow in the Land of Israel, like various carob pods (*bokser* in Yiddish). Since Tu Bishvat was observed as a semi-festival that kept alive the hope for an eventual national redemption, devotional fasting was prohibited, as well as recitation of petitionary supplications such as are found in the *Tahanun* service (*Shulhan arukh orah hayyim*: 572:131.6).

The 16<sup>th</sup>-century Kabbalists of Safed constructed a liturgy for the night preceding Tu Bishvat—similar to *Tikkun leil shavu’ot*—consisting of excerpts from the Bible, Talmud and Zohar, that concerned themselves with fruit and trees (Yaakov Vainstein, *The Cycle of the Jewish Year*, 1953: 110). In between recitation of these excerpts the Kabbalists would consume at least 15 different courses of fruits: olives, dates, grapes, figs, oranges lemons, citrons, apples, bananas, nuts, pears, pomegranates, etc.

18<sup>th</sup>-century Hasidim in Eastern Europe prayed that the *etrogim* of *Erets yisra’el* grow in beauty and perfection for the coming Sukkot festival. In modern Israel, Tu Bishvat has become *Hag ha-n’ti’ot* (“The Holiday of Planting”), in fulfillment of the biblical injunction (Leviticus 19: 23):

*V’khi tavo’u el ha-arets u-n’tatem kol eits ma’akhal*

After entering the land, you shall plant fruit-bearing trees of every variety.

This biblical injunction prefigures a custom that prevailed in Judea during the Talmudic era—*n’ti’ah shel simhah*—“joyous planting.” After the birth of a boy, parents would plant a cedar sapling; after the birth of a girl, they would plant a cypress sapling. At the time of marriage, branches of those grown trees were used as poles to support the wedding *huppah* (BT, *Gittin* 57a).

In 1901 the founding of *Keren kayemet l’yisra’el* (The Jewish National Fund) infused Tu Bishvat with new meaning as successive waves of *olim* (pioneers) repopulated the Land of Israel. In Poland alone, between the two World Wars, 6,800 students of the Jewish Culture Schools raised 6,100 zlotys for tree planting. This was at a time when an

eighth of those students could not afford to pay for tuition or clothing (Solomon Goldman, “*An alt-nayer yomtov*,” *Yiddish Forward*, 2/1/02). Somehow they managed to contribute. Today’s students in Israel—sponsored by the J. N. F.—accompany their planting of saplings with song, dance and recitations from the Bible and modern Hebrew poetry. The planting lasts for a month, when the season of heavy rainfall comes to an end.

By the 1980s all these ideas fused with Environmentalist activism in the United States to produce the Tu Bishvat Seder. Its ideology stems from several biblical verses, among them:

**Deuteronomy 20: 19**—“The human is as a tree of the field” (i.e., each dependent upon the other, and both products of God’s creation. Without trees the land is a desert, without humans the world is just as barren. This passage therefore forbids the cutting down of trees that bear fruit, even in wartime, and only non-fruit-bearing trees were used to fuel the Temple sacrificial offerings). From this verse the rabbis derived the principle of *bal tash-hit* (“do not destroy”—BT, *Kiddushin* 32a; Maimonides, *Mishneih torah--hilkhot m’lakhim* 6:8,10).

**Isaiah 41: 19**—“I will plant cedars in the wilderness, acacias and myrtles and oleasters, I will set cypresses in the desert, box trees and elms as well” (today every one of these species thrives in formerly arid areas of *Erets yisrael*).

**Psalms 72:16**—“May abundant grain grow in the land, to the very tops of mountains; may crops ripple like the forests of Lebanon, and city folk flourish like country grass” (anyone who has visited Jerusalem recently can attest to the realization of this dream).

Finally, there is the parable of Yotam, lone surviving son of Gideon, the biblical judge who successfully repelled a Midianite invasion of *Erets yisrael* (Judges 9: 1-15). Yotam's half-brother, Avimelekh, had slaughtered all of Gideon’s other sons so that he might become the first king of Israel. In the midst of the crowning ceremony, Yotam stood on Mount G’rizim and reminded the people what Avimelekh had done, warning them of his further evil intentions. He compared anyone who had assisted Avimelekh in his bloody work to “the trees who went out in search of a king to rule over them.” The trees went to the olive, the fig and the grapevine, but all three refused to leave their productive work to rule over others. Finally the trees approached the *atad* (thornbush), who accepted on one condition: that the trees all agree to come live under his shadow.

Yotam’s point: the *atad*’s roots spread out over a very wide area, draining all nutrients from the surrounding soil. Anything that grew in its shadow would quickly die! The parable underscores the intimacy that the people at whom it was directed had with every type of tree and bush growing in the Land of Israel.

### ***P’ri eits hadar***

Sephardim have created a manual by this name—(“Fruit of the Goodly Tree”; Leviticus 23: 40)—which is recited at night on the eve of Tu Bishvat. It includes poetic lines by Judah Kalai, written in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) and intended for chanting as each of several fruit varieties is about to be eaten.

God increase our worldly goods,  
    guard us early and late,  
And multiply our bliss like seeds  
    of POMEGRANATE.

For our redeemer do we wait  
    the long night through,  
To bring a dawn as roseate  
    as APPLE's hue.

Sin, like a stubborn shell and hard,  
    is wrapped around our soul,  
Lord, break the husk and let the NUT  
    come out whole!

God, may our children  
    for food never cry,  
And let our tormentors shrivel up  
    like CAROBS dry.

Behold, from hour to hour we await  
    the dayspring yet to be,  
While all our hearts are dark and black  
    as MULBERRY!

In Jewish traditional lore, each of the fruits possesses its own symbolic meaning:

1. The POMEGRANATE connotes possession of abundant wealth, as in the traditional encomium: *malei mitsvot ka-rimmon* ("overflowing with good deeds like a Pomegranate").
2. The roseate APPLE stands for the glowing splendor of God, for does not Israel say of God in the Song of Songs (2: 3): "As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved"?
3. The NUT represents Israel, since nuts are of three kinds: hard, medium and soft, and thereby symbolize the three different types of character to be found among Jews!
4. The MULBERRY, a silkworm's primary food source, is paired in the Talmud with the Pomegranate, as being typical of fruits that are not meant to be pressed, even though they are full of juice (BT *Shabbat* 144a).
5. Lastly, the humble CAROB is the mark of lowly fare, and therefore betokens the humility which is a necessary element of penitence.

### ***Tikkun leil tu bishvat***

It is customary to sit up late at night on the eve of Tu Bishvat, singing biblical verses that mention trees, fruits or the earth's fertility. Here is a currently typical example:

# Pakad'ta ha-arets

Text: Psalm 65:10-14

Music: Ben Ish-Hai, after  
Az y'rannein, Piyyut for Tu bishvat

Lively, with pronounced rhythm

Pa-ka-d' - ta ha - a-rets va - t' - sho-k' - ke - ha, rab - bat tash -  
re - nah, pe-leg e-lo-him ma-lei ma - yim, ta - khin d'ga - nam ki khein t'-khi-  
ne - ha. T'-la - me - ha rav - veih, na - heit g'-du - de - ha, bir - vi - vim t'-mo-g' - gen -  
nah; tsim - hah t'-va-reikh. It - tar - ta sh' - nat to - va - te - kha, u-ma-ga-  
le - kha yir - a - fun da-shen. Yir - a - fu n' - ot - mid - bar,  
v' - gil g' - va - ot tah - gor - nah. Lav -  
shu kha - rim ha - tson, va - a - ma - kim ya-at - fu var; yit-ro - a -  
u, af ya - shi - ru; yit - ro - a - u, af ya - shi - ru.

**Psalms 65: 10-14**—You take care of the earth and irrigate it, You enrich it greatly; with the channel of God--full of water--You provide grain for men, for so You prepare it... Saturating its furrows, leveling its ridges, You soften it with showers; You bless its growth... You crown the year with Your bounty; fatness is distilled in Your paths... The pasturelands distill it; the hills are girded with joy...The meadows are clothed with flocks, the valleys mantled with grain; they raise a shout, they break into song.

## PURIM—GLEANED FROM SEVERAL SOURCES

### The Wandering Jew—“Ahasuerus”

**H**ayim Maccoby (*The Sacred Executioner*, 1982: 166) elaborates on “the Jewish shoemaker” Ahasuerus who, according to Christian tradition, worked in Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion:

In its most amiable form the legend concerns...Christ, carrying his cross...stopped for a rest outside the cobbler’s shop, but Ahasuerus drove him on with harsh words—or with a push. Christ said to him, ‘I go, and you will wait for me until I return.’ Ahasuerus was thus condemned to live until the Second Coming of Christ.

Elsewhere, Maccoby notes (*Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 1992: 12, 57): “The legend of the Wandering Jew... has sometimes coalesced with the legend of Judas Iscariot [who]... in one possible way of handling the topic of Judas’s story subsequent to his betrayal of Jesus... is banished and wanders—like Cain, through the world—a marked man, bearing the guilt of his betrayal.”

Maccoby further posits (*Ibid.* pages 72, 74) that the “anonymous disciple who at the Last Supper had... asked the question, ‘Lord, who is it that will betray you?’ is intended to be none other than John, son of Zebedee, the purported author of this Gospel (John 21: 20-24). [When] Jesus appeared after the Resurrection, to Peter and the other disciples, Peter caught sight of the anonymous disciple [and] asked, ‘Lord, what will happen to him?’ [And] Jesus said, ‘If it should be my will that he wait until I come, what is it to you?’ It is this same disciple who attests what has here been written. It is in fact he who wrote it, and we know this testimony is true... This legend underwent a curious transmutation in later history. Instead of a faithful disciple living on in tranquility until the return of Jesus, the concept arose of the Wandering Jew, who would live on in suffering, repentance and expiation of his sins until released by Jesus’s return. This derivation is supported by the nomenclature: the name given at first to the Wandering Jew was John. Only later was it changed in northern areas to Ahasuerus, and in Spain it remained Juan.”

Salo Baron (*A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 11, 1967: 177-182) recounts the first sighting of this individual in Italy: “An astrologer, Guido Bonatti, reported that such a man, here named Johannes *Buttadeus* [‘Assailant of God’], had visited Forli in 1267.” By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, “He began to be identified... not with a Jerusalemite Jew, but... with an unconverted eastern Jew still alive in modern times. This new version appeared in a short story entitled *Kurze Erzaehlung von einem Juden aus Jerusalem mit Namen Ahasversus* (Leiden, 1602), which quickly became a best seller... It described how in 1542, Paulus von Eitzen, later bishop of Schleswig, had noticed in a Hamburg church a very tall, barefoot stranger with hair hanging down to his shoulders, who, seemingly aged about 50, impressed all onlookers with his unusual behavior and attire.”



Baron wonders whether “the name had some connection with the Oriental patron of seafarers, Al-Khadir, known in Europe as Al-Khisir... The name of Ahasuerus was quite early replaced by that of the Wandering—or Eternal—Jew, apparently first employed in an English ballad antedating the Jewish resettlement under Cromwell [circa 1650]. Its anti-Jewish animus is well expressed in its exhortatory refrain: ‘Repent, therefore, O England, / repent while you have space; / And do not – like the wicked Jews – / despise God’s proffered grace.’ Moreover, this Wandering Jew was soon turned into an ardent adherent of Antichrist, whose appearance in the East had supposedly attracted a large Jewish following.” Aside from a spurious 1623 incident in Ypres, “the anonymously published *Historisch Nachricht von dem ewigen Juden* [Frankfurt, 1723] listed additional sightings in Armenia, Naumburg, Saxony, etc.... From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when Goethe wrote his unfinished poem on the Wandering Jew until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, no less than 640 works in various languages on this theme had seen the light of day,” and sightings reported even in the United States, in Pennsylvania and Utah.

## Purim Entertainment, Customs and Blessings

**A**s for the thespian connection, Yvonne Glickson (*Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1972, vol. 16: 261) posits that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, 'Ahasuerus,' then a cant name for Jew through the familiarity it achieved in Purim plays, “became the most common appellation for the Wandering Jew in literature.” At the same time, adds Chone Shmeruk (*Ibid.* vol. 13: 1402), “The story of the Book of Esther [is] popularly known as the *Akhashverosh-shpil*... The oldest surviving text of this type [is] a manuscript of 1697... A similar version [Frankfurt, 1708]... appears in J. J. Schudt, *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*, vol. 3, 1714: 202-225.”

It is hard to find a Western culture in whose art, music and dramaturgy the story of Esther does not figure: Dutch (Rembrandt), French (Racine), German (Händel), Austrian (Grillpartzer), Spain (Godinez and Delgado). The *Purimshpielen* exerted a particularly important influence on European theatre. The first of these so-called Ahasuerus plays was published in Frankfurt am Main in 1708. In Jewish communities, the *Purimshpielers* wended their way through narrow ghetto streets, masked and costumed as Megillah characters. The plays were staged in homes large enough to accommodate them, generally belonging to wealthier members of the community. When the once-a-year actors finished, they bowed, their “curtain” lines invariably suggesting monetary payment over and above the food they had consumed prior to the performance (After Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars*, 1977):

Today is Purim--tomorrow, no more,  
Give us a penny--and show us the door!

The custom of *klap'n* (hitting) Haman has deep roots. Jews in Babylonia carved Haman-likenesses out of wood, first beating them on the ground and finally throwing them into a bonfire while singing and dancing. Shaking *greggers* (noise-makers) and stamping one’s feet grew from the earlier custom, with the approval of rabbinic authorities like Judah Mintz in post-Renaissance Italy, and Moses Isserles in 16<sup>th</sup>-century

Poland. Purim merrymaking humanized the otherwise distant biblical prototypes, some of whom—like Queen Vashti—never uttered a word in the Book of Esther. Twentieth-century Yiddish poet Itzik Manger brought them all to life for audiences all over the world, Jew and Gentile alike, in a series of related poems that tell the Purim story through the eyes of poor tailors in an East European *shtetl*. Interwoven with a brilliant score by Israeli composer Dov Seltzer, the hilarious musical *The Megilla of Itzik Manger* toured widely during the 1970s as a felicitous combination of *Purimshpiel* and *Commedia dell'Arte*. More recently, the tale has been given a feminist spin—in synagogues—where women wave purple flags whenever mention is made of *either* queen, Vashti or Esther, during the Megillah reading (after Heschel Klepfish, “Purim Breaks out of the Jewish Quarter,” *Forverts*, February 26, 1993).

The same blessing chant that introduces Megillah reading on Purim is used for introducing Shofar sounding on Rosh Hashanah. All Israelites—men, women and children—are obliged to hear both the Megillah read and the Shofar sounded, since the entire Jewish people experienced salvation in *Shushan* and Revelation at Sinai (Esther 9: 26-28; Exodus 19: 16).

## *Birkot ha-m'gillah*

Abba Yosef Weisgal  
Purim Eve Service  
Baltimore, 1960

Transcribed by: Joseph Levine  
*Emunat Abba*, 2006

### BEFORE THE READING

With solemnity

1. Ba - rukh a - tah, a-do - nai e-lo - hei - nu, me - lekh ha-o-  
lam, a-sher kid-d' - sha - nu b'-mits-vo-tav v'-tsiv-va - nu al mik-  
ra m'-gil-lah. 2. Ba rukh a - tah, a-do - nai e-lo-  
hei - nu me - lekh ha-o - lam, she-a - sah nis-sim la-a-vo - tei - nu bay - ya-mim ha-  
heim baz - z'-man haz - zeh. 3. Ba - rukh a-tah, a-do-nai e-lo-

hei - nu me-lekh ha-o - lam, she - he - he - ya - nu ve - kiy - y' - ma -  
 nu v'-hig-gi-a - nu laz - z' - man haz-zeh.

AFTER THE READING

Ba-ruk h a - tah, a - do - nai e - lo - hei - nu, me - lekh - ha - o - lam, ha -  
 rav et - ri - vei - nu, v'-had-dan et di - nei - nu, v'-han - no - keim et nik - ma - tei - nu, v'-ham - shal -  
 leim g' - mul l' - khol oi - vei naf - shei - nu, v' - ha - nif - ra la - nu mi - tsa - rei - nu. Ba -  
 rukh a - tah, a - do - nai, ha - nif - ra l' - am -  
 mo yis - ra - el mik - kol tsa - rei - hem, ha - eil ham - mo - shi - a.

**Trope Detours within the Esther Cantillation**

The Purim Eve service openly invites high jinks: officiants and worshipers sporting all sorts of outlandish costumes, and ritually condoned noisemaking to obliterate every mention of Haman’s name. To keep the masquerade and accompanying tumult from turning into farce, *hazzanim*—whose duties historically included Torah and Megillah reading—indulged their vocational passion for playing musical guessing games with the congregation. They dotted the Esther cantillation with a number of nuanced references to other liturgical occasions. For example, they chanted, “And the decree [to destroy all Jews, young and old alike] was given in Shushan... And Mordekhai tore his clothes, crying loudly and bitterly” (3: 15-4: 1) to neume motifs associated with the megillah of *Eikhah* that is read on Tishah B’Av.

They also exploited dramatic possibilities that lay imbedded within the Megillah text, bending the ongoing musical mode towards rhetorical ends, using vocal means that ranged from semi-spoken *parlando* in confrontational passages—Haman, confronted with Mordekhai’s defiance (5: 9) to bravura *declamato* when the villain is exposed (7: 6, 9) to aria-like *fantasia* at the hero’s public acclamation—Mordekhai, sent forth in regal array by the king (8: 15-16).

Once the tables have turned and the Jews are permitted to defend themselves against their enemies (8: 15-16), Mordekhai’s role in saving their lives (as well as the king’s—against two plotters) is finally recognized: *U-mord'khai yatsa... bi-l'vush malkhut... La-y'hudim haitah orah v'simhah...* (“And Mordekhai went forth... in royal apparel... The Jews enjoyed light and gladness...”). Weisgal sang this text in a sun-bathed timbre usually reserved for Musaf K'dusha: *K'vodo malei olam* (“God’s Glory Fills the Earth...”), with an apocalyptic fervor that might herald the Messianic Age. And then, just as suddenly as the ongoing trop pattern had disappeared, it resumes: *U-v'khol m'dinah u-m'dinah...* (And in every province and city...”). The blissful detour is over, back to the nitty-gritty of the plot’s denouement.

## *U-mord'khai yatsa*

Text: Esther 8:15-16

Music: Abba Yosef Weisgal

Majestically

U - mord - d' - khai — ya - tsa mi - lif - nei — ham - me — lekḥ bi - l' - vush — mal - khut t' -  
 khe - i - let va ḥur — va - a - te - ret za - hav g' - do - lah, v' - takh - rikḥ bṭṭs v' - arg - ga - man, — v' - ha -  
 ir — shu - shan tsa - ha - lah v' - sa - mei - ḥah. \* Lai - hu -  
 dim hai - tah — o - rah v' - sim - ḥah v' - sa - son vi - kar. U - v' - khol m' - di - nah u - m' - di - nah...

\*Reader waits for congregation

The Megillah's final verse (**10:3**) leaves no doubt about its hero's place in history:

*Ki mordekhai ha-y'hudi...ratsui l'rov ehav,  
doreish tov l'amo v'doveir shalom l'khol zar'o*

For Mordekhai the Jew... was acclaimed by the multitudes of his brethren whose welfare he sought, thereby assuring peace for all of his descendants.

The music to which this closing verse is sung—based on the traditional Megillah trop but refined into a classic expression of that ancient chant—elevates the moment to the rhapsodic level of an epiphany!

## *Ki mord'khai hay-y'hudi*

Text: Esther 10:3

Music: Abba Yosef Weisgal

Rhapsodic

Ki mord - d'-khai hay-y'-hu - di \_\_\_\_\_ mish - neh lam-me-kekh a - hash - vei - rosh \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ v'-ga - dol lay - y'hu - dim \_\_\_\_\_ v' ra-tsui l' - rov e-hav, \_\_\_\_\_  
do-reish tov l'-am - mo, v'-do - veir sha-lom l' - khol zar - o. \_\_\_\_\_

ONE OF THE AMAZING THINGS ABOUT THE SHOAH IS HOW JEWS USED HUMOR TO REASSERT THEIR HUMAN VALUES. IN AUSCHWITZ, A BAND OF SLOWLY FREEZING JEWISH PRISONERS WAS BEING MARCHED UP-AND-DOWN IN THE DEPTHS OF WINTER. THEIR GUARD HAD THEM MAINTAIN MILITARY PRECISION AS THEY CROSSED THE MUDDY PATHS THAT PASSED FOR STREETS IN THE DEATH CAMP. TAUNTINGLY, HE ORDERED THEM TO CALL OUT EACH LOCATION AFTER HIM. THEY REACHED THE FIRST PATH AND THE GUARD CALLED OUT, “GOERING STRASSE!” THE PRISONERS ANSWERED, “GOERING STRASSE!” AT THE NEXT CROSSING THE GUARD SHOUTED, “GOEBBELS ALLEE!” THE PRISONERS ECHOED, “GOEBBELS ALLEE!” THEY ARRIVED AT THE OPEN PLACE WHERE ROLL CALL WAS HELD AND THE GUARD YELLED, “HITLER PLATZ!” (PRONOUNCED *PLOTS* IN GERMAN, BUT IN YIDDISH ALSO MEANING ‘DROP DEAD’). THE PRISONERS RESPONDED, “AMEN!”

(After Irving Greenberg, “Faith and Laughter,” *Hadassah*, March 1993.)

## PESAH LORE—GLEANED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

### Purim and Pesah

**W**hy does Pesah follow so quickly on the heels of Purim, only four weeks apart? Other holidays allow at least seven weeks between them: Sukkot and Hanukkah; Pesah and Shavuot; and the High Holidays occur three months after Shavuot. The connection between Purim and Pesah goes back over two millennia, to Southwestern Mesopotamia and a place called *Susa*--"City of Lillies." We have always referred to it as *Shushan*, the Persian metropolis of our Megillah. In fact, we now believe it was *on their way to it* that Judeans, exiled by the Babylonian King Nebukhadnezzar, first held a primitive Passover, "retelling" 100 years before their descendants would settle in Susa and the Megillah story would transpire. In 570 BCE, Babylonia was captured by the Persian Emperor Cyrus, and it was under one of his successors, Ahasuerus, that Purim deliverance occurred, in the twelfth year of his reign.

When the Judean exiles had first arrived in Babylonia during Nebukhadnezzar's reign, they were led to various ruined sites and ordered to rebuild them. This stirred up collective folk memories of their ancestors' exile in the Nile Delta 1,000 years earlier. There, the Hebrew slaves had also been forced to build cities: Pitom, and Raamses. Here in the Tigris and Euphrates valley, once again without land, and for the first time without Temple, they might easily have abandoned the Paschal observance along with its discontinued offering. After all, once before the national festival had fallen into neglect—for 400 years following the period of Judges—and had not been revived until shortly before the Babylonian conquest, by King Josiah.

Our imagined scenario is as follows. To raise the people's spirits as they camped amid the ruins of Babylonia, their leader, Kish, the grandfather of Mordekhai, raised the flap of his tent on the night of the 14th of Nissan so that everyone might see him eating matzot. The homeless rabble reacted in the Aramaic vernacular of their new surroundings: *Ha lah<sub>h</sub>ma anya*--"this is the same 'bread of affliction' our enslaved forebears ate in the land of *their* exile!" It made them realize that the status of free men, granted to the Israelites upon their exodus from Egypt, was also *their* inheritance. Even the more enlightened regime of Persia, which was about to engulf the exiles' Babylonian taskmasters, could neither give nor deny them freedom; it was already theirs, for all times and in all places.

During the next 100 years, the former Judeans would leave their refugee camps and settle in *Shushan*, the capitol. As they assimilated into Persian culture, a new generation of leaders arose to remind them of who--and what--they still were. Mordekhai, whose name derived from the Babylonian god Marduk, became Prime Minister. His orphaned niece Esther, named after the Babylonian goddess Ashtar, was elevated to the Persian throne. The two of them inspired their co-religionists to forever after uphold the feast of Purim on its appointed day, the 14th of Adar. If Purim came to commemorate our people's survival as an exiled minority, how could Pesah, which marks Israel's inception as a nation, ever be forgotten?

Matsah, the *lahma anya* which jogged our ancestors' memory in the days of Kish and his grandchildren Mordekhai and Esther, still moves us to act as Jews. Half a millennium later, after the Second Temple fell to Roman legions, the invocation *Ha lahma anya* was placed as an archeological landmark at the head of our then-emerging Haggadah. Two thousand years later it prompts even sophisticated American Jews into retelling the tale in our generation *as if we were there*. We open our door as a sign of hospitality ("let all who are hungry enter and eat"), but also as a reminder of Kish, who opened the flap of his tent in a Babylonian ruin some 2600 years ago (BT, *Sh'vuot* 39b).

## *Ha lahma anya*

Abba Yosef Weisgal

Transcribed by Joseph Levine,  
*Emunat Abba*, 2006

Solemnly  
*mf*

Ha lah - ma an-ya di a - kha - lu av-ha-ta - na b'-ar - a d'-mits-  
ra - yim. Kol dikh-fin yei - tei v'-yei-khul, kol dits-rikh yei - tei v'-yif-sah.  
Ha-sha-ta ha - kha, la-sha-nah hab-ba - ah b'-ar - a d'-yis-ra-eil. Ha-sha-ta av -  
dei, la-shan-nah hab - ba - ah b'-nei ho - rin.

### How the Seder Ritual Evolved

The Haggadah came into being no later than 200 CE, the time of the Mishnah's compilation. We know this because Mishnah 10 in tractate *P'sahim* presents a detailed description of the Seder. An earlier order of the Seder ritual—as it was still evolving during the period from 70 CE, when the Temple fell, until 200—is preserved in the Tosefta. The Tosefta, a companion Tannaic collection to the Mishnah, edited by R. Hiyyah and R. Ohaya, contains most of the Seder elements enumerated in the Mishnaic account, but enumerates them in a different order. *Matsah*, *Karpas* and *Haroset* appear **after** *Hallel* part I, but **still before** *Shulhan Oreikh*. *Hors D'Oeuvres* in the form of sweetbreads (a calf's thymus, probably roasted), open the Haggadah. Then come the

questions and answers, but no *Maggid!* Instead, the Tosefta Seder lists a **study session** that lasted through the night, but no *Bareikh* (Grace). As time passed, the Tosefta's study session was moved to an earlier spot, possibly to accommodate children's participation, where it became what we know as "retelling the story" (*Haggadah*). Here is one style of nusah for the Haggadah chant:

## *Avadim hayyinu*

Abba Yosef Weisgal

Transcribed by Joseph Levine  
*Emunat Abba*, 2006

Andante con moto

A - va - dim hay - yin - nu l' - far - oh b' - mits - ra - yim vay - yo - tsi - ei - nu a - do - nai e - lo - hei - nu mi -  
sham b' - yad ha - za - kah u' - viz - ro - a n' - tu - yah. V' - il - lu lo ho - tsi hak - ka -  
dosh ba - rukh hu et a - vo - tei - nu mim - mits - ra - yim, ha - rei a - nu u - va -  
nei - nu, u - v' - nei va - nei - nu, m' - shu - ba - dim hay - yi - nu l' - far - oh b' - mits - ra - yim.  
Va - a - fi - lu kul - la - nu ha - kha - mim, kul - la - nu n' - vo - nim, kul - la - nu z' - kei nim, kul -  
la - nu yo - d' - im et ha - to - rah mits - vah a - lei - nu l' - sap - peir bi - tsi - at mits - ra - yim.  
V' - khol ha - mar - beh l' - sap - peir bi - tsi - at mits - ra - yim ha - rei zeh m' - shu - bah.



## The Broken Cup Made Whole Again

**B**ack in the 1930s an Indian chief, head of the Diggs tribe in California, explained the native American cultural meaning of the “cup” to Anthropologist Ruth Benedict (*Patterns of Culture*, 1934:19). In the beginning, God gave to every people a cup, a cup of clay. And from this cup they drank their life. They all dipped in the Great Water, but their cups were different and so, too, were their lives. Now (the chief went on to say), our cup is broken, our ceremonies have passed away.

On Passover, when our cup is made whole again, we drink from it not once, not twice nor even thrice, but four times to remember our past. We also fill a fifth cup, to anticipate our future. This is in fulfillment of the verse in Psalm 116: 13,

*Kos y'shu'ot esa u-v'sheim adonai ekra*  
I lift the cup of salvation and call upon God.

This is what our ancestors did when the Holy temple stood in Jerusalem; they brought drink-offerings in gratitude for God's bounty.

When Israel lived as a nation in its own land, every Israelite ‘drank his own life’ (*L'hayyim!*). Once exiled, all of our people's cups were broken. Our tribe looked for signs of salvation in the Hebrew Bible, particularly in the Book of Exodus, chapter 6 (verses 6-8), where God had promised an earlier enslaved generation to *bring* them out of Egyptian exile, to *release* them from bondage, to *redeem* them with an outstretched arm, and to *take* them as His people.

These four pledges had been fulfilled. The fifth—to *gather* them into the Promised Land—would take a little longer, the length of an exile that began in 70 CE. And so, for over 70 generations our tribe met in small groups every year and drank its national past four times from a cup temporarily made whole again. A fifth cup, hoping for the eventual return of scattered world Jewry en masse to Zion, is set aside, not to be drunk until the Messianic age. So long as we Jews continue to gather as families and perform the Passover Seder re-enacting our national deliverance, the cup that God gave us in the beginning remains whole and we can drink our ethnic life and carry out our religious ceremonies. And that is why this night is different from all other nights of the year.

Here is a second style of nusah, particularly for the more exultant portions of Haggadah chanting, on Seder night:

# Asher g'alanu

Abba Yosef Weisgal

Transcribed by Joseph Levine

Emunat Abba, 2006

With sonority  
*mf*

Ba - rukh a - tah, a - do - nai e - lo - hei - nu me - lekh ha - o - lam a -  
sher g' - a - la - nu v' - ga - al et a - vo - tei - nu mim - mits - ra - yim v' - hig - gi -  
a - nu hal - lai - lah ha - zeh, le - e - khol bo ma - tsah u - ma - ror. Kein, a - do - nai e - lo -  
hei - nu, vei - lo - hei a - vo - tei - nu, yag - gi - ei - nu l' - mo - a - dim v' - lir - ga - lim a - hei - rim ha - ba -  
im lik - kra - tei - nu l' - sha - lom, s' - mei - him b' - vin - yan i - re - kha, v' - sa -  
sim ba - a - vo - da - te - kha. V' - naz - kir l' - kha sham et haz - va - him v' - et  
— ha - p' - sa - him, a - sher hig - gi - u dam - mam al kir miz - ba - ha - kha l' - ra -  
tson v' - nod - deh l' - kha shir kha - dash al g' - u - la - tei - nu v' - al p' - dut naf - shei - nu.  
Ba - rukh, a - tah a - do - nai ga - al yis - ra - cil.

## Haggadah Insights

Rabbi Judith Hauptman has shown that the Seder originally opened with ‘sweetbreads’ (“How Old Is the Haggadah?” *Judaism*, Winter 2002). In time, these were replaced by matsah, lettuce and *haroset*, and *Birkat ha-mazon* was added after the meal. Also, a study session that originally initiated the Seder was evidently replaced by rabbinic storytelling in order to differentiate the Jewish understanding of Passover—a redemption yet to come—from the Christian claim of a redemption already in place.

Three thousand separate editions of the Haggadah have been published over the centuries. The first to be edited by a woman, Rachel Rabinovitch, appeared in 1982, and was the first to use "Adonai" in its English translation. This practice has since been adopted by subsequent editors of *siddurim* and *mahzorim* as well (Rabbi Robert Layman, Torah Study Luncheon, Philadelphia, March 23, 1999).

Over the course of centuries, states Rabbi Morris Silverman (*Passover Haggadah*, 1967:44), our people were accused of using the blood of Christians in baking unleavened bread. Despite assurances by popes and emperors that these charges were without foundation, ignorant masses used them as a pretext for massacring defenseless families in their homes and for looting their possessions. The Jews did not—could not—retaliate against the inhumanities inflicted upon them. At the Seder, however, they vented their hurt and indignation by reciting aloud the Psalmist’s vengeful cry to God (79:6-7):

*Sh’fokh hamat’kha al hag-goyim asher lo y’da’ukha...*

Pour out Your anger against those who do not acknowledge You...  
For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his dwelling place!

## Nirtsah and concluding hymns

With *Hasal siddur pesah*, the final strophes of a long piyyut by Rabbi Joseph Bonfils (France, 11<sup>th</sup> century), old *Haggadot* concluded the Seder. The four hymns that conclude proceedings nowadays were added in the 15<sup>th</sup>-and-16<sup>th</sup> centuries: *Addir hu*, *Addir bimlukhah*, *Ehad mi yodei’a* and *Had gadya*. Lyrics for the last named (first printed in a Prague Haggadah of 1590) have varied in language from an Aramaic that nicely balances the Haggadah’s opening invocation, *Ha lahma anya*, to the vernacular tongues of innumerable Jewish communities. The melodies to which they are sung are similarly borrowed, transformed and fixed in both regional and familial traditions. The song *Had gadya* is mentioned in such literary classics as Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (1605-1615) and Heinrich Heine’s *The Rabbi of Bacharach* (1840). Its underlying message: a divinely guided chain of effect ultimately ensures that those who destroy—will themselves be destroyed (after *Pirkei Avot* 2:7).

# Hasal siddur pesah

Text: Haggadah, *Nirtza*

Music: Folk tune for Regalim  
piyyut: *Yah eili v'goali*

Heard at Young Israel of Elkins Park, PA

1. Ha-sal sid-dur pe - sah k'hil - kha - to, k'-khol mish - pa - to  
2. Ka'asher za - khi - nu l'sad-deir o - to kein niz - keh

v'-huk - ka - to; Zakh sho-khein m' - o - nah, ko-meim k' - hal a -  
la'a - so - to.

dat mi - ma - nah b'ka - rov na - neil nit - ei - kha-nah. 1. B' - ka - rov  
2. p' - duy - yim

1. na - heil, na - heil nit - ei khan-nah;  
l'tsiy - yon; 2. l' - tsi-yon b' - rin - nah.

THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE SITS AT A TABLE AND READS FROM A QUEER BOOK CALLED *HAGGADAH*. ITS CONTENT IS A MARVELOUS MIXTURE OF AGE-OLD LEGENDS, MIRACLES OF THE EXODUS, CURIOUS DISCUSSIONS, PRAYERS AND FESTIVE SONGS. THE MASTER READS THIS BOOK WITH A TRADITIONAL OLD CHANT. AGAIN AND AGAIN THE OTHERS JOIN HIM IN CHORUS. THE MELODY IS FEARFULLY HEARTY; IT LULLS AND SOOTHES, AND AT THE SAME TIME IT ROUSES AND CALLS, SO THAT EVEN THOSE AMONG THEM WHO HAVE LONG SINCE TURNED FROM THE FAITH OF THEIR FOREBEARS AND SEEK STRANGE JOYS AND FOREIGN HONORS, ARE TOUCHED WHEN HEARING THE WELL-REMEMBERED CHANTS OF *PESAH* ...

(Heinrich Heine, *The Rabbi of Bacharach* , 1824.)

## MAIL BOX

### Jewish Liturgical Music Celebrated in Leeds

August 18, 2015

Two exultant celebrations of Jewish life and prayer rang out in Leeds for the week from June 16th to June 23rd 2015: an *International Conference on Jewish Liturgical Music*, and the *10<sup>th</sup> Annual European Cantors Convention*. The event was jointly convened and directed by Geraldine Auerbach, MBE for the European Cantor's Association's academic wing, and Dr. Stephen Muir, Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Leeds. It was part of a three-year international project "Performing the Jewish Archive," focused not only on music of the synagogue—but also on music lost during the Holocaust and Jewish migrations--spearheaded by Dr Muir. His own recent rediscoveries of synagogue music by 20<sup>th</sup>-century Polish and Russian cantors--From Spektor, David Ajsenstadt and David Novakovsky amongst others--were performed in a superb choral concert by the Clothworkers' Consort of Leeds with Israeli soprano (now based in Berlin) Mimi Sheffer, alongside Jewish music by Salomone di Rossi, Kurt Weill and Aaron Copland.

Three outstanding keynote presentations by distinguished experts in their field shed new light on core topics. Professor Eliyahu Schleifer (Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem) presented a lecture demonstrating how synagogue tunes relate to ancient chants in "Unearthing Layers of Jewish Liturgical Music," and also a presentation interpreting the mystical meanings of "Kabbalat Shabbat" in a lecture-recital illustrated by Mimi Sheffer. Professor Jeffrey Summit (Tufts University, Boston) shed fresh light on the significance of cantillation in contemporary Jewish communities, and its impact on the shaping of Jewish identity, the topic of his forthcoming book (for Oxford University Press). Professor Mark Kligman (who holds the Micky Katz endowed Chair of Jewish Music at UCLA) offered fascinating insight into the liturgical practices of the Syrian-Jewish Aleppo and Damascus congregations in New York, the topic of an award winning book.

Current concerns in research were addressed in another fascinating panel on "Jewish Musical Archives: Preserving the Tradition and Ensuring Access for the Future," in which Dr Gila Flam, Director of the Sound Archives of the Israel National and University Library, and Bret Werb, Music curator at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC, participated. They underlined the valuable role of archives and the benefits and possibilities of digitization, with a plea for increased interaction amongst all archives worldwide. The fruits of the foregoing research will hopefully soon be published in *Musica Judaica*, Journal of the American Society for Jewish Music, and the Cantors Assembly's *Journal of Synagogue Music*. A special book on the subjects will be developed in future conferences in the USA, Europe and Israel.

Theoretical Ideas expressed in the conference--the importance of balancing traditional nusach (cantorial chant) with innovation--came to life in the ensuing *10<sup>th</sup> Annual European Cantors Convention*, which was held at the United Hebrew Congregation in Leeds. The convention program was organised by Hirsh Cashdan, working with Cantors Alby Chait, Anthony Gilbert and Yossi Saunders of Leeds. They were supported by the ECA team of Alex Klein ECA Convenor (Manchester), Geraldine Auerbach and Barbara Rosenberg.

Connecting the two events was a splendid cantorial Shabbat hosted by the Leeds Jewish Community, including a special appearance by Cantor Elli Jaffe, Choirmaster of the Great Synagogue, Jerusalem, who inspired congregations with his stirring performances of cantorial classics by Rosenblatt and Glantz. Aspiring cantors alongside more experienced ones from Budapest, Prague, Toronto, New York, Tel-Aviv, Leeds, Manchester and London, gathered to learn from Professors Schleifer and Kligman, who participated in the distinguished faculty alongside Cantors Eliyahu Greenblatt and Elli Jaffe from Israel. The convention as a whole demonstrated the continuing vigour of current cantorial art—as well as its adaptability to modern life.

*Dr. Malcolm Miller*  
London, UK

### **Re: “Jewish Elements in Leonard Bernstein’s *Hashkiveinu*”**

**(JSM Sept. ‘15)**

August 31, 2015

I was drawn to this article, but distressed to find in it a reference to my 2003 book, *Discovering Jewish Music*, which completely misrepresents what I had written. The Journal article’s author, Dr. Ann Niren Glazer, writes: “Very few of the works [commissioned by Cantor David Putterman for the Park Avenue Synagogue] have been performed in concerts; they were designed to be presented in the synagogue” (note 6).

She attributes that assessment to my book, page 176. In fact, on that page, the only piece I am referring to is the Bernstein *Hashkiveinu*, not the other ‘works’ commissioned by Cantor Putterman. My point was exactly *opposite* to the one that Ann Niren makes: most of the composers for Putterman’s commissions—including Leonard Bernstein—really “pushed the envelope” for what synagogue goers were willing to accept in 1945. *That* is why their performances have been few--either on the concert stage or in the synagogue.

I was not making any reference on page 176 to anything except the Bernstein *Hashkiveinu*. Here is the way I described it:

*...an impressive work—at times melodious and haunting, at other times dramatic and demanding—it is Bernstein’s only work “for the synagogue.” Since its premiere, its rare performances have been primarily for the concert stage.*

Ironically, in misinterpreting my comment pertaining to the Bernstein—and extending that to the majority of Putterman’s commissions—Dr. Niren has inadvertently shed new light on the reason these compositions have rarely been performed anywhere. For that, she deserves our sincere commendation.

*Dr. Marsha Bryan Edelman*  
Philadelphia, PA

## **A Reasoned Response to Dr. Edelman**

September 4, 2015

I am thankful for the opportunity to respond to Dr. Edelman’s comments regarding my article on Leonard Bernstein’s *Hashkiveinu*. In re-reading both my article and Dr. Edelman’s timeless book, *Discovering Jewish Music*, I realize that I have made a few inadvertent errors in wording. She is correct in stating that Bernstein’s *Hashkiveinu* was intended for the synagogue as part of the Park Avenue commissioning process, but that most of its performances have taken place in concert. I did not mean to state otherwise, nor did I mean to ascribe to Dr. Edelman the notion that this idea extended to other works commissioned by the Park Avenue Synagogue. My intent was to stress that these pieces, with a few exceptions, have not realized widespread exposure as new music. Moreover, as I expressed in my footnote 8, Cantor Putterman’s goal for the project was

... to encourage many composers to write for the Synagogue who otherwise may never have done so, and to contribute to the mainstream of contemporary music... (Putterman, ed., *Synagogue Music by Contemporary Composers* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1951, v.)).

While both of these ambitions *were* realized—composers who normally might not have written synagogue music did so, and they did compose new music—sadly, much of this repertoire remains unknown or underappreciated today. This last statement is the crux of the point I originally attempted to make. Once again, I am sorry to have misquoted and offended Dr. Edelman in the process. I have the highest regard for her research and ironically, my own research on Bernstein has benefitted, in part, because of one of her conference presentations. I pride myself on careful investigation and I appreciate the chance to correct my mistake.

*Dr. Ann Glazer Niren*  
New Albany, IN

## Subject: Reflections on the *Avodah*

December 7, 2015

**Y**om Kippur is my favorite day of the Jewish year. Allow me to paint a liturgical picture for you. As a Conservative cantor serving a Reform congregation, my dream for many years has been to invite congregants onto the Bimah during the *Avodah* service to join me in a full prostration before the Ark. I believe that bringing prayer into your body adds an incredibly powerful layer of meaning to worship. It is one thing to offer a modest nod of the head while praying—a hint of supplication. It is something else to give yourself over completely, to offer your entire body—your whole being-- and lay it down before the Ark.

The *Avodah* text tells us that when the people stood in the Temple court and heard the High Priest utter God's sacred name from the Holy of Holies, they were so overcome that they fell to the ground in awe. How often do we, as American Jews, witness people being willing to fall on their face for what they believe in? For years, I have prostrated by myself at this point in the service, even though the liturgy describes the entire assemblage prostrating themselves as one. And for years I have longed to be joined by my congregation in prostration. So this year, the Rabbi and I decided to invite people to join us in the ritual act, either on the Bimah or in the aisles. In all honesty, I didn't think anyone would take that step. I never imagined that our congregants had it in them to brave a sanctuary full of searching souls and lay it all down on the ground.

How wrong I was. As the Rabbi and I turned to the Ark, we paused to allow people—anyone—to accept the challenge. And then, out of the corner of my eye I saw one person, then two, then several more, step up onto the Bimah and take their place beside us. I'm not sure if I have ever felt a stronger sense of community than I did at the moment I bent my knees and lowered myself to the ground, with congregants on either side of me. As my forehead touched the ground, I held back tears--as a piece of ancient loneliness disappeared from within me.

*Cantor Jennie Chabon*  
Walnut Creek, CA

**[Editor's note]:** Cantor Jennie Cabon's retelling of her transformative *Avodah* experience echoes a JSM 2007 MAIL BOX piece from American cellist Arthur Bergen, who dropped into the Great Synagogue of Paris during *Yamim nora'im* of that year, to see what remained of the noble French tradition, excerpts of which he had heard on a 1939 recording directed by Leon Algazi. Here is the pertinent part of what he wrote: "The congregation consisted mostly of old timers, and 90% didn't daven at all... As if to compensate, at the Great *Aleinu* of the Musaf Amidah repetition, almost all of the remaining 10% fell *kor'im!* That alone convinced me there is a Jewish heart still beating in these beleaguered co-religionists of ours, many of whom now walk to shul wearing black baseball caps instead of yarmulkes, in hopes of escaping recognition as Jews by mischief-bound Muslims."



## Subject: Nowakowsky's *Ave Maria*--A Mystery Solved

December 27, 2015

**D**avid Nowakowsky (1849-1921) was the leading composer of synagogue music of his generation. His vast legacy of manuscripts was literally buried in the upheavals of the Russian Revolution and World War II, eventually ending up in New York. Thanks to the efforts of Cantor David Lefkowitz of Park Avenue Synagogue, these manuscripts have been meticulously cataloged and placed in the YIVO archives. But one of the pieces is a curiosity: catalog item #229a, listed as "*Ave Maria*." What was Nowakowsky doing writing an *Ave Maria*? When I first came across this reference, my mind turned to the use of church music in the synagogue in general, particularly Mozart's celebrated *Ave Verum Corpus* as re-arranged by Raymond Goldstein and now in the repertoire of the Great Synagogue, Jerusalem--to the words of Musaf *Kedushah*—if I recall correctly.

At the invitation of Cantor Ron Graner and with thanks to Leo Greenbaum, Acquisitions Archivist at YIVO, I recently had the opportunity to look at the Nowakowsky score, which turns out to be an arrangement for violin and organ of the second movement, *Orchestral Suite #3* by J. S. Bach--better known as "*Air on the G String*." At the top is written, "Arranged for violin – J.S. Bach" and the words "**Awe Maria** (sic)," which are actually crossed out. It appears a copyist at first mistook this piece for *Ave Maria* (perhaps thinking of **Gounod's** *Ave Maria* which is based on the First Prelude in C from Bach's 48 Preludes and Fugues) and then realized his mistake and crossed out the title.

*Charles Heller*  
Toronto, Canada

EXILE IS WHEN YOU KNOW THE PRAYERS,  
BUT HAVE FORGOTTEN THE MELODIES.  
(Anonymous synagogue-goer.)

## REVIEWS

### Israel Goldstein's Retrospective CD: *Great Synagogue Music*

*Reviewed by Jacob Mendelson*

Recently, I remembered why I had become a Hazzan. Going through Shabbat after Shabbat in a quick time-saving drone, with maybe an ethnic sound bite here and there, I needed such a reminder of exactly what I was *supposed* to be doing. This jolt of memory happened away from the Bimah, while I played a CD by Israel Goldstein entitled: *Great Synagogue Music*. No big production values. No echo effects added. Just Iz, with a piano, in mostly live cuts from his long career.

Track #1 was **Tomachti Y'seidosai** ("We place our trust in Gods mercy") from the Neilah service, set by Moshe Ganchoff and accompanied by the ever remarkable Danny Gildar. The last time I had experienced such a reaction was back in the 1980s while driving along the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway with my teacher, Hazzan Moshe Ganchoff in the passenger seat, listening to an 8-track recording of David Roitman. We both started to cry, and I had to pull off the side of the road to avoid a collision.

You see, during the interval between those two epiphanies I had forgotten that great *hazzanut* is **the** most expressive music of which I am aware, and when that level of *hazzanut* is rendered by an immortal like Roitman, it can be nothing short of devastating. Israel Goldstein's rendition of Ganchoff's "Tomachti Y'seidosai" was so rich with pathos, perfect timing and pristine vocalism that it hurt! On his retrospective disc are also a number of rarely heard compositions by Anglo-Jewry's most celebrated synagogue composer and choir master, Samuel Alman, pieces which Iz had sung in his father Jacob's choir as a boy alto growing up in 1940s London.

**Ribono shel Olom** ("Master of the Universe"; #2) by the the renowned heroic tenor Hazzan Israel Alter, from the *Yom kippur katan* service on the Eve of Rosh Hodesh, displays a solid and fearless reading—in a very high tessitura. This chestnut has been sung by many outstanding *hazzanim*, from the Koussevitzky brothers until today. **Chatsi Kaddish** ("Half-Kaddish for Festivals"; #3) is a grand setting by Samuel Alman, with a bravura piano accompaniment played majestically by Joyce Rosenzweig.

Within #4, Alman's **Lo Omus** ("I shall not die, but live") from the Festival Hallel, one can hear snippets of the *Tal* and *Geshem* (prayers for Dew and Rain on Pesah and Sukkot, respectively). The setting comprises a tone poem in miniature, thickly arranged in Wagnerian style and played capably by Aya Schleifer: Goldstein's singing of it left me breathless. **Al Eileh** ("I lament the ruined Temple"; #5) by Alman features wordpainting such as the descending minor scale on the phrase *Eini yordu mayim* ("My eyes gush forth tears").

In #6, **Modim** (We acknowledge You, our God") by Israel Alter, accompanied by the brilliant organist Allen Sever, Iz manages the cruel tessitura handily—and lives to tell the tale. The music's challenges go a long way in explaining why Alter lost his

formidable voice in mid-career. The same composer's **V'al Y'dei from Zichronot** ("It is written by Your Prophets"; #7) is one of his most successful settings, and Yosef Yankelev's violin adornment of the *Ha-vein yakkir li* ("Is not Ephrayim my precious son?") passage within it is alone worth the price of this CD.

Tracks #8 through #11 feature Alman's settings of verses from Pirkei Avot ("Sayings of the Fathers"). They are short and pungent musical gems that Iz performed beautifully before a live audience in Israel. **Oz Bahaloch Yirmiyahu** ("When the Prophet Jeremiah visited ancestral graves"; #12) is found among the poetic eulogies (*Kinnot*) sung on the black Fast of Tishah B'av. Iz Goldstein sings this lengthy recitative by Zeidel Rovner with heightened emotion, to a piano accompaniment that he arranged, climaxing the lamentation's impact at its finale through a tearful falsetto effect.

The memorial prayer **Eil Molei Rachamim** ("Merciful God": #13), composed by Alman, was sung at his funeral in 1947. To any listener who works regularly with piano accompaniment, I would recommend this setting as a model. Alman's **Gott fun Avrohom** ("God of Abraham"; #14) is dedicated to the composer's mother. Goldstein sings this poetic text that precedes the *Havdalah* prayer marking the Sabbath's departure, in a *parlando* (semi-spoken) style that is distinguished by exemplary Yiddish diction.

Finally, **Zochreinu B'zikoron Tov** ("Remember us for good"; #15) by the learned cantor/composer of Czestochova, Poland—Abraham Ber Birnbaum—Israel Goldstein gives us an object lesson in what *Amanut ha-hazzanut* ("The Cantorial Art"; title of Birnbaum's 1908 collection) is all about. Perfect timing. Glorious vocalism totally suited to the mood of the liturgical moment. The man takes this paragon of 20<sup>th</sup>-century synagogue composition and 'hazzanifies' it—that is to say—he chants its words as if he's making them up on the spot; a virtual act of creation! Iz Goldstein. A singer. A *zoger*, i.e., a Messenger of the congregation's collective prayer who also 'tells' you something fresh as he's delivering it. In one colloquial word—a **khaz'n!**

The album is available at The Sacred Music Press Book Store: 212 824-2297.

*A past President of the Cantors Assembly, Jacob Mendelson is Hazzan Emeritus at Temple Israel Center, White Plains, NY. In his retirement, he is taking his one-man show "The Cantor's Couch"—book by Mark Bieler, original music by Jonathan Comisar—all across the country and beyond. He is also in the midst of shooting a sequel to the highly successful documentary film "A CANTOR'S TALE," and recently celebrated the release of his second CD set, "YONTEF!—a musical retrospective on the Days of Awe.*

**Natan Ophir's *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach: Life, Mission, and Legacy*—Urim Publications, 2014, 493 pages**  
*Reviewed by Shoshana Brown*

I don't think I have a good voice. I think my voice is just good enough to inspire people to sing with me. If I would have a *gevaldig* voice like, say, Moshe Koussevitzky, then nobody would want to sing with me, because then they'll think they don't want to miss my voice, but my voice is just good enough to make them want to sing.

(Shlomo Carlebach, as quoted by Elli Wolgelenter,  
*The Jerusalem Post*, April 20, 1995).

**N**atan Ophir's book is number 4 in Urim Publications' "Modern Jewish Lives" series (preceded by the *lives* of Rabbi Shlomo Goren, Rabbi Haim David Halevy, and Nehama Leibowitz). It is a long, somewhat rambling book, exhaustive in details of "Reb Shlomo's" travels, political actions, concerts, ordinations conferred, life-cycle ceremonies performed (and for whom), testimonials from individuals whose lives he touched and transformed...there is probably more information here than most people, except perhaps Shlomo's most ardent admirers, have an appetite for. That being said, the book stands as a *matseivah* to the memory of Rabbi Carlebach, whose life's work, especially as a singer, *davener*, and composer of Hasidic-inspired melodies for prayer must indeed be remembered and honored.

From the moment that Reb Shlomo learned to play the guitar (in the mid to late 1950s) and began composing and singing--in venues as varied as synagogues, *yeshivot*, college campuses, Jewish hotels, country clubs, at private parties and in nightclubs such as the Village Gate--he began to attract followers and admirers. Not all of these admirers were Jewish, and some of them, while Jewish, were ardent secularists. In the early 60s one of Shlomo's albums was reviewed thus by Robert Shelton, of the *The New York Times*:

A great deal of enchanting melody with a distinctive Chasidic joy and lilt. Enthusiastic and affectionate response from the audience. He has the people with him and he can ask for no more. (p. 97).

From Rabbi Moshe Waldoks, who had been a *yeshiva bokhur* touched by Reb Shlomo, we hear a more profound response:

Reb Shlomo Carlebach was important because he gave us permission to sing after the Shoah. I was a 10-year old boy when he came to my yeshiva in Brooklyn, the Yeshiva of Eastern Parkway, in the late 1950s. The Shoah was still very raw and it was Shlomo who taught us to sing in renewed joyous Hasidic melody. (Rabbi Moshe Waldoks, p. 82).

Ophir's book is filled to overflowing with loving testimonies from such admirers and indeed, *hasidim* of Carlebach. But for quite a long time, Reb Shlomo had almost as many detractors as he did admirers, both from the *frum* world, which took umbrage at Shlomo's encouragement of women's singing, at his "hugging" everyone of both genders, with his performing and *davening* with mixed groups – and from the keepers of

the flames of traditional Reform and Conservative synagogue music. Recently I attended a celebration in honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brian Mayer as the Cantor at Conservative Temple Emanu-El in Providence, RI. In this celebration's program, Cantor Mayer writes of his relatively newfound appreciation of Carlebach in his later years at this mainstream congregation, after years of shunning his melodies:

As a cantorial student, I was taught not to use Carlebach's tunes; my teachers considered them too simplistic. They lacked the sophistication of the authentic Hasidic compositions, some of which are like melodic symphonies. But about 13 years ago...I spent a weekend in New York City, checking out B'nai Jeshurun, then considered the "hottest synagogue on the East Coast," and the Carlebach *Shul*.... At both synagogues, which used essentially the same repertoire of Carlebach tunes, the services were full of energy and life.

I realized that Carlebach's tunes were, indeed, based on musical and rhythmic traditions. Carlebach combined three elements in his music: Hasidic dance rhythms, the musical scales and motifs of the traditional Eastern European synagogue, and his own "neo-Hasidic" musical motifs. In other words, Carlebach's tunes have a Hasidic flavor and are simplistic in comparison to genuine Hasidic compositions. But because of their dance rhythms and their tuneful simplicity, these melodies were easily accessible and user friendly, which led to increased congregational participation. So, I embraced them... (Program for "The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration for Cantor Dr. Brian Mayer: The Concert," Temple Emanu-El, Providence, RI, May 18, 2014.)

Because of the widespread adoption of Carlebach's melodies, and his influence overall in almost all quarters of the mainstream Jewish world, Natan Ophir's biography will prove of interest to many Jews--particularly cantors--especially since the only previous book-length study of Carlebach's life (Aryeh Coopersmith's *Holy Beggars*, 2011) is more of a memoir of the author's dealings with Carlebach than a true biography of his subject. However, the spectrum of Rabbi Carlebach's life, lore, his travels, holy stories, songs, and his politics—which ranged from free-love hippy communities to the black-hat and West Bank settler world—are dizzying to try and pin down. One simply cannot do it. Instead, Ophir chronicles Shlomo's travels, concerts, ceremonies performed, etc., with a minimum of analysis. While this may serve to record the facts, at times it can make for dull reading.

But just as you are about to put the book down in boredom, you encounter an anecdote that makes the reading experience unforgettable. Here is my personal favorite from among these stories:

Sometime around the end of 1980, Shlomo was invited to the Neve Tirza Women's Prison in Ramleh. He was accompanied by his *chevra*, mostly from the Moshav. Upon arriving, Shlomo realized that only Jewish prisoners were in the audience, and insisted on inviting the Arab prisoners, fifteen of whom then arrived. Shlomo asked a woman who was jailed for having placed a bomb in a Jerusalem supermarket to translate his stories about the Ishbitzer Rebbe into Arabic. By the end of the concert, Arabs, Jews, prisoners and guards were all dancing together. Nechama Yasskin (Silver) who was part of the entourage recalls:

The Arab women didn't want to come. So Shlomo went to visit them in their cells. Somehow he convinced the head terrorist, and the others followed. Thereafter, in prison, whenever she would see Shlomo performing on TV, she would exclaim to her fellow inmates that Shlomo was her rebbe (p.246; the recollection of Nechama Yasskin is footnoted as told via "personal communication," Oct. 22, 2012.)

Ophir's concluding chapter includes testimonies from a diverse cast of characters (including an "Afro-American in Riverside Park"); he also looks into the accusations of Carlebach's alleged sexual improprieties (the results are inconclusive). The book comes complete with a "timeline" of Carlebach's life, an exhaustive bibliography, discography, index of Carlebach songs, notes which lead you to websites where you can watch specific musical appearances, and a list of all the internet sites accessed by the author.

Natan Ophir's book, then, is important for today's Jewish world. So many of us have come to embrace "Reb Shlomo's" music without knowing who he was. And indeed, it is still difficult to pin down the "real Shlomo." As Ophir puts it:

The multi-faceted story and, in particular, the micro-histories related in this book lead to one conclusion—the Carlebach legacy spells a different message to diverse communities...If we highlight the most salient point of Reb Shlomo's innovative legacy, it would probably be that he was a pioneer. He did outreach to the unaffiliated before the term *baal teshuva* was even used. He retold legends in a way that made Hasidic teachings such as Breslov, Ishbitz, and Piacezno sound existentially relevant to the twentieth century. He was the first rabbi to perform with a guitar. But often, he was just too far ahead of his time...[T]o be labeled a "Dancing Rabbi" in the 1960s was far from normative for an Orthodox Chabad rabbi, yet today, one can find unabashedly proud expressions of such activity. (pp. 437-438).

Whatever one may feel about Rabbi Carlebach's politics, whether the diverse company he kept, or his chameleon-like qualities, it is crystal clear that he was filled with *love*—not only for all Israel and even for Israel's enemies—for all of humanity! That is probably why his music has made inroads to almost all factions of the Jewish world: as human beings, we are all lifted higher by his "simplistic" melodies. He bequeathed to humanity divine-yet-accessible melodies to help us all reach a higher plane; melodies to help melt our prejudices and heal our souls. Most of us in the cantorial profession believe that *tikkun olam* is integrally linked to our singing and *davening*: *song* provides people's souls the nourishment they need to do God's work. Today, as we have become increasingly aware of the need to heal the very planet itself, Shlomo's melodies are indispensable. On a personal note, I am grateful for the exhaustive work that Natan Ophir put into this much-needed biography of God's song-vessel in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Hazzan Shoshana Brown is a frequent contributor to the Journal of Synagogue Music. She and her husband Mark Elber serve Temple Beth El in Fall River, MA, as Cantor and Rabbi, respectively. Her most recent article, "Notes from a Workshop: Adapting an Existent Psalm Tune to Newly Created Words," appeared in the Journal's March 2014 issue.*

# Journal of Synagogue Music

OUR SEPTEMBER 2016 ISSUE— *CELEBRATION AND COMMEMORATION*  
WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES:

- Lag Baomer—the Scholars' Holiday
- Shavuot and Jewish Folk Art
- Musical Memorials of the Holocaust
- Prayers of the *Hevra kadisha*
- An Exemplary Eulogy
- The Four Questions of a Mourner
- Two Redemptive Anthems for Tishah B'Av
- Rashi on the *Diabolus in Musica*



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