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AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE FUNCTION OF MUSIC IN THE AMERICAN REFORM SYNAGOGUE

Stephen A. Hart

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for ordination

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Referee: Dr. Jonathan Sarna

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the two people without whom this day would have never arrived. Mendy, your perpetual understanding, sensitivity, patience and encouragement enabled me to finish this project despite moments of great despair. I always knew you were beside me, which gave me great strength when the going got tough. Your love and devotion during the past year pushed me forward, for which I am forever grateful.

Lani, my little sunshine: It is despite you yet because of you that this thesis has been completed. I could never work at home because of you, yet you made me forget the hard times with your smile and laughter. To hug and hold you was the highlight of my day.

Finally, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Jonathan Sarna, for his assistance and guidance in the preparation of this document.

DIGEST

Music has always played a central role in the life of the Jewish people. From its earliest references in the book of Genesis, to the evolution of a musical specialist--the Hazzan, to the introduction of choral singing in the synagogue, music has always stood at the forefront of Jewish cultural and religious life. As demonstrated in the introduction to this work, Jewish music is constantly evolving, being molded and shaped by its surroundings and environment.

When the pioneers of the Reform movement in this country undertook the task of bringing a sense of decorum to the Jewish worship service, one of their primary focuses was the role of music in the prayer service. The recorded history of the movement, as documented in synagogue minutes, debates within the Central Conference of American Rabbis, as well as the writings of prominent musicologists within the movement, is rich in controversy over the proper use of music in the worship experience. Utilizing these various resources, the goal of this thesis is to conduct an indepth historical analysis of the debate concerning the function of music in the Reform synagogue.

This is accomplished through an examination of three primary vehicles used for musical expression in the Reform Worship Service: the organ, the hymnal and the choir. Each

carries with it a rich historical tradition. There are those musicologists, for example, who trace the roots of the organ to the Temple in Jerusalem. The singing of hymns, or certainly the chanting of short refrains, can also be traced to the ancient Temple. The levitical choir also played a central role in the ancient service. Many of the early Reformers would attempt to justify their inclusion of these modes of expression in the worship service based on these historical precedents.

Two critical questions are raised by this study. The first addresses the theme of authenticity. To what extent does the introduction of the organ, hymnal, and choir into the synagogue service represent conscious modeling of dominant Christian culture, and to what extent does it reflect the quest for authentically Jewish modes of expression? The second deals with their direct impact upon the worship experience. What is the relationship between these three modes of expression and the ongoing "Participation vs. Performance" debate in the Reform worship service? The conclusion of this thesis attempts to utilize the historical data provided in previous chapters to shed light on these important concerns.

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Introduction

"The music of the Jews is vast in time and space. It encompasses at least three millennia, and its playground is much of the world. It draws from all available sources and fits many divergent styles."(1) Although the richest sources of Jewish music are fairly recent, namely since the time of Jewish emancipation, covering roughly the past 200 years, any historical survey would be incomplete without an examination of the roots of that tradition. In order to understand the role of music in the contemporary Reform synagogue, one must first turn to an historical analysis of the role of music in ancient Israelite tradition and trace its development through the Temple ritual, its function and purpose in the synagogue, and finally the impact of the Emancipation upon its growth.

This preliminary overview is based upon the assumption that as Eric Werner has argued, there is a discernible continuum in the history of Jewish music.(2) If one is to accept Dr. Werner's hypothesis of the continuity of Jewish music throughout the ages, then it is certainly possible to construct four large historical time frames, each dependent upon the period preceding it. This survey begins, therefore, with the Biblical epoch, to be followed by an analysis of the period immediately following the destruction of the Second Temple. I will then turn to an examination of the encounter

of the Jewish people with the culture of Europe (twelfth to seventeenth centuries), and finally to the impact of the Emancipation.

Biblical Origins

As with other ancient peoples, it is not possible to establish the beginnings of music and music making among the ancient Israelites. Musical notation did not come into existence until long after the Bible was written, and so we can get little or no idea of the kind of music produced, apart from the literary references in the Bible. All one can do is consider the various cultural influences that must have affected their music making, drawing on the available historical resources and the results of archeology, and deducting what one can from the descriptions and pictoral representations of instruments that have survived. The process must begin, therefore, with an analysis of these Biblical references.

Aron Rothmuller, in his book The Music of the Jews, provides some critical insights into the world of biblical music. His analysis begins with the earliest references to music:

> On examining the books of the Pentateuch for references to music, we find the first mention is Genesis 4:20-22, which tells us that יובל was 'the father of all such as handle the harp (כינור) and the pipe (עוגב).' It is very unlikely that Jabal was a musician that actually lived. It is much more probable that the word יובל is intended to convey the generalized conception of a musician.(3)

Rothmuller further notes:

> We have no description of either of the two instruments mentioned in connection with Jubal: the כִּנּוֹר and the עוּגָב. Usually כִּנּוֹר is translated as 'harp' or 'lyre' and עוּגָב as 'pipe' or 'flute'. The כִּנּוֹר, therefore, was a plucked-string instrument and the עוּגָב a wind, probably a wood-wind instrument, such as depicted in Egyptian representational art and, later, on Jewish coins in the second century C. E.(4)

In his analysis of the role of music in the Bible, Rothmuller points out that despite the detailed description of the sanctuary, the sacrifical system and other religious rituals, one cannot conclude that music played any role whatsoever in the religious services of that time. It is impossible to find one verse that makes reference to the musical accompaniment of the religious service. Exodus, chapters 25 to 31, for example, provide the reader with the details of the sanctuary, the priestly garments and the altar; Leviticus, chapters 1 and 2, give a detailed account of the sacrifical service; chapter 8 of Leviticus describes the consecration of Aaron and his sons. Yet one can still not uncover a single verse which would point to the possible role of music in the religious service.(5)

According to Rothmuller, "even the blasts on the shofar and chatzotzerah and the small golden bells on Aaron's vestments were of no musical significance."(6) Eric Werner points out that the bells on the robe of the high priest, and the sounding of the Shofar at the time of the New Moon and similar occasions, served the function of averting or turning

aside evil spirits.(7)

Rothmuller then goes on to reach some critical conclusions about ancient Israelite religious practice and its relationship to music. He makes the following observations:

> The blast of the 'trumpets' in Numbers, chapter 10, is clearly of profane origin; it was obviously introduced into religious practice from secular life. Thus, the chapter specifies that the trumpet was to be sounded for summoning the assembly and breaking up camp (v.2); for gathering together the congregation (v.7); for summons to war against enemies (v.9); and for heralding days of festivity, the feasts, and the days of the new moon (v.10). These are all secular activities, secular institutions of the Children of Israel. On the other hand, the ordinance that 'the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpet' (v. 8) indicates that this was an innovation, instituted by this special ordinance. From all of which it would seem that, according to the Pentateuch, our one available source, all the musical instruments then used by the cult were of secular origin, and borrowed by the Cult.(8)

This conclusion by Rothmuller has tremendous implications for the use of instruments in the Temple in Jerusalem and later synagogue worship service, for it grounds their use in Biblical tradition. By tracing the use of 'secular' instruments and music in a religious service to Biblical custom, Rothmuller foreshadows many of the issues that will be addressed in subsequent chapters of this work.

As for the musical accompaniment to the Temple service, one has to apply the same words that Ambros, the music historian, did to Egyptian music: ". . .could we listen to it for but one moment!"(9) From Idelsohn's analysis of the

role of music in the First Temple, we learn of numerous similarities between the orchestra of the Temple and the religious orchestra used in Egypt. He notes that the legend which states that when Solomon married Pharoah's daughter she brought with her a thousand varieties of musical instruments may indeed be based on some historical fact.(10)

The Book of Chronicles provides the most detailed description of the chorus and the orchestra as they existed during the time of David. As Israel Rabinovitch points out in his book Of Jewish Music, there are those scholars who find the descriptions of Chronicles exaggerated. Possibly written by a singer in the Second Temple, these detailed pictures of Temple music may indeed be more the result of one's imagination than of actual knowledge.(11) Despite whatever skeptical approach we may take to these books, they remain our major source of knowledge of this ancient period.

Rabbinic literature too, particularly the Mishnah, is replete with references to the vocal and instrumental accompaniment to the sacrificial cult of the Second Temple. The opinions expressed differ as to whether instrumental or vocal music played the predominant part, but the view that the instruments served chiefly to provide an accompaniment to the singing tends to prevail.(12) Sukkah 51 a, b gives us an impressive picture: "Men of piety and good deeds used to dance before them with lighted torches in their hands, and sing songs and praises. And Levites without number with harps, lyres, cymbals, and trumpets and other musical

instruments were there upon the fifteen steps leading down from the Court of the Israelites to the Court of the Women, corresponding to the fifteen songs of Ascents in the Psalms. It was upon these steps that the Levites stood with their instruments of music and sang their song." This description refers, of course, to the former musical practice in the Temple, which no longer existed at the time the passage was committed to writing.

Unfortunately, there are no descriptions of the tunes retained, nor is there any indication of scales and rhythm employed, such as the Greek philosophers and authors left us. In Israel music was seemingly taught and preserved in oral tradition only, as is the custom in the Orient to the present day. What we are left with, however, is the clear, uninterrupted message of the critical role of vocal and instrumental music in the spiritual life of the Jewish people.

The Destruction of the Temple and the Advent of the Synagogue

We have now reached a critical point in our analysis. At this juncture it must be determined: Is there a link in the chain of tradition following the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E.? Is the music of the synagogue to be considered a direct heir to the Temple worship experience, or do we have to assume a new untraditional beginning to Jewish music with the advent of

the synagogue?

Eric Werner joins most musicologists in concluding that there is a discernible continuum in the history of Jewish music, and therefore there is a direct correlation between the music of the Temple and that of the synagogue.(13) With the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, the Jewish religion and all its established customs, including singing, would have been in danger of being dissipated, had not the synagogue become that institution that succeeded in maintaining the tradition.

> Unlike the Temple, a synagogue could not be destroyed by an enemy. With the burning of the Temple, its entire sacrificial system was obliterated. The destruction of any number of synagogue buildings entailed no change in the established liturgy or mode of worship. The Jews assembled anywhere in public or private were the synagogue which could conduct regular services like that held in the largest and most gorgeous structure.(14)

How this musical link between the Temple service and synagogue worship was established is outlined in talmudic sources.

The Temple services were regularly attended by divisions of אנשי מעמד 'standing-men', from the various provinces of Palestine whose purpose it was to transplant to far off places the routine of the Temple liturgy in its authentic form. These men had a synagogue in the Temple area at their disposal, the so-called 'Hall of Stones', and the priests were entitled to conduct the services there, thus linking the rural communities with the tradition of the central

sanctuary. One of the numerous personalities who endeavored to teach the priestly music to the representatives of the synagogue was R. Joshua B. Hananya who regularly taught the the institutions and customs of the Temple. He was also a famous singer and used to go from the orchestra of the Temple to the 'Hall of Stones' in order to conduct the daily service.(15) As a disciple of Johannan Ben Zakkai, he assisted him in saving as much as possible of the Temple ritual that it might be rendered in the academy at Jamnia.(16) He and his contemporaries formed a strong link in the chain of tradition at a most critical time.

A crucial influence upon the development of Jewish music following the destruction of the Temple was the strict Rabbinic prohibition against any music in the synagogue as an expression of mourning for the loss of the Temple and the land. Eric Werner points out, however, that a certain animosity against all instrumental music existed well before the fall of the Temple. It seems that this emnity towards instrumental music was a defense against the musical and orgiastic mystery cults in which Mesopotamian Jews frequently participated.(17) Most significant is the Talmudic statement: "The apostasy of R. Elisha B. Abuyah was due to the Greek melodies (or to the Greek instruments that were always in his house)."(18) The primitive Christian community held the same view, as we know from apostolic and post-apostolic literature: instrumental music was thought unfit for religious services. The Christian sources are

quite outspoken in their condemnation of instrumental performances. Originally, only song was considered worthy of direct approach to the Divinity.(19)

Encounter of the Jewish People with the Culture of Europe

Jewish life between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries was unpredictable. The Jewish communities of Europe knew periods of peace and happiness, but far more often they had to suffer persecution. Aron Rothmuller offers us a glimpse of the musical components of a religious service during this time;

> The singing of psalms was an important component of the service, indeed all religious and other communal occasions. They occupied much of the time; in the Orient it is recorded that their rendering lasted more than an hour. Prayers for special occasions, or relating to the unhappy contemporary national history, were the most important innovations in the liturgy. These prayers and lamentations, usually in poetic form, and usually sung, varied from one community to another, since they were related to the experience of the community.(20)

It is important at this point to make note of the institution of the ghetto and its influence upon the music of the Jews that lived within its boundaries. Eric Werner, in his article "The Music of Post-Biblical Judaism," notes the following about the ghetto of the Middle Ages:

> The Fourth Lateran Council, under Pope Innocent III (1215),decided to segregate the Jews as radically as possible from their Christian fellow-citizens, placing them in ghettos that were closed at nightfall; social or professional interaction with

> the Christian community was virtually made impossible. It took about two generations before these decrees were fully implemented, but from about 1270 until the end of the fifteenth century these stern rules were faithfully carried out, and the Franciscan and Dominican monks did everything in their power to excite the Christians against Jewry. Under these circumstances, while every tradition was loyally preserved in the ghetto, there was no opportunity for development. The ghetto did not kill Judaism and its institutions, but it condemned them to stagnation and gradual deterioration. No wonder, then, we hear practically nothing of music from Jewish sources.(21)

Despite ghetto walls, crusades and other prohibitions, we do learn of a certain reciprocal relationship which persisted between Jew and Christian from the ninth down to the seventeenth century. We learn that "Jews used to study Christian liturgical books and sing from them."(22) In addition, "we hear that even in the fifteenth century Christians and even dukes with their courts used to attend services in the synagogue."(23)

One of the fundamental questions occupying the thoughts of scholars and Rabbis in the middle ages was whether art-music should take an essential place within Jewish worship or should be tolerated at all. One of the most forceful and determined defenders of the inclusion of art-music was Judah Leone da Modena, the chief Rabbi of the Republic of Venice. In 1605 he assembled a group of six to eight singers for the synagogue in Ferrara and wrote an extensive manifesto in defense of music. Because singing in the synagogue was usually confined, with a few exceptions, to soloists, this introduction of choral singing with some

pretensions to artistry, met with energetic opposition. Modena did manage to obtain the support of four other Italian Rabbis. Seeking to win additional adherents to his view, he distributed his manifesto to other Italian congregations. The practice of having double choirs, popular in Venice, was also introduced to the ghetto by Rabbi da Modena, and he himself composed a series of choral pieces in this style.

The first known attempt on a broad basis to introduce harmony and choral music into the synagogue was made by Salamone Rossi, a protege of Rabbi da Modena. A descendent from an old and respected family, he, like no other Jewish musician of his period, enjoyed the sympathy and patronage of an art-loving and liberal-minded prince. Rossi directed the orchestra at the court of Duke Vicenzo. The prestige of Rossi as a composer, conductor and violinist was such that, in 1606, he was exempted from the obligation normally imposed upon Jews, to wear a yellow sign.(24)

What is of particular interest to this study is the fact that Rossi devoted his talents also to the synagogue. It became his aim to "glorify and beautify the songs of King David according to the rules of music."(25) This was accomplished through the writing of psalms and prayers for the synagogue service. These compositions gradually grew into a collection of thirty-three pieces, ranging from three to eight parts. At the suggestion of Rabbi da Modena, the collection was published in Venice in 1622 and was called "HaShirim Asher Lishlomo - The Songs of Solomon", a play on

the first verse of the Song of Songs. In his introduction to the work, written rather as an apology with the aim of winning over Rabbis who opposed the innovation, Rabbi da Modena states:

> I am convinced that from the moment of its appearance this work will spread the taste for good music in Israel, to praise the Lord. Among us people were to be found - of this there is no doubt - those who infallibly resist all progress and will also resist these songs which are beyond their understanding. I, therefore, consider it advisable to refer to the answer to a question put to me when I was still Rabbi at Ferrare; all the great scholars of Venice agreed with me. I demonstrated that there was nothing in the Talmud which can be cited against the introduction of choir-singing in our Temples; and that was sufficient to close the malevolent mouths of the opponents.(26)

Rossi's approach was completely European and certainly a great exception in his time. Most Jews continuing in the belief that their stay in exile was only temporary and that they would finally return to Zion, preserved the Oriental elements in their music although yielding at times to influences of the Western world. The French Revolution and the Emancipation, however, changed the outlook among less orthodox Jews and led to radical innovations in worship.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century a movement began amongst Jews in many parts of Europe which very quickly brought about great changes in their spiritual, intellectual and material affairs. It was a direct consequence of changes in their living conditions, especially in France, Germany, and Austria, in which countries they were given emancipation and granted either equality of legal rights or at least the

right of entry into the various professions, and the right to reside outside the ghettos or their special urban districts. The greater freedom this involved brought the progressive and wealthy Jews especially into closer social relations with their Christian neighbors.

A. Z. Idelsohn provides an excellent overview of some of the tensions involved in this movement towards reform:

> The Jewish movement for reform was a product of the general struggle in Europe for social emancipation, justice and freedom of thought. Although all 'traditional' institutions, social and individual, religious and secular were called into question, religion received the brunt of the attack. In the Church there arose opposition against the dead Latin language, unknown to the people, and an effort was made to substitute the vernacular of the respective country. Serious debates arose in the Church over the issue.(27)

Idelsohn then remarks on the relationship between this struggle and the role of music in the Church and synagogue:

> The progressives claimed that the old traditional songs did not appeal to them any longer, while the conservative elements denounced the reformers in that 'they started to intone the Mass in the brilliant style of the opera in order to cover the emptiness in their hearts, caused by lack of religiousity, and that they started using all kinds of effects to stimulate the senses.' The antagonism was so severe that several times it lead to a bloody riot, such as the incident in the Church of Ruedesheim in 1787. When new German songs were introduced into the service, against the opposition of the public, the Archduke sent soldiers and guns into the Church, causing the death of thirty people.(28)

This striving towards reform in the Christian Church was to have a tremendous impact upon similar movements within the synagogue. At the center of this struggle was the role of

music in the synagogue service.

The changes that occurred in Jewish music during the nineteenth century were so great that one could hardly have thought them possible of achievement in so short of time. The movement towards reform, (only later to become the Reform Movement) which started early in the century not only introduced elements of non-Jewish religious and secular music into German synagogal vocal music, but even attempted to refashion it as far as possible on the model of church music. Three reforms which were bound to have considerable effects on the style of the synagogue service were the introduction of the organ; the refashioning of traditional synagogue song along the lines of church singing, where possible in four-part choral style; and singing in the language of the country, e.g. German. Each of these innovations will be discussed in greater detail later in this analysis.

The reform movement of German and Austrian Jews and the resulting innovations in the synagogue soon exerted great influence on Judaism in the United States. The first Jewish settlers in the United States were predominately of Sephardic origin, that is, Jews from Spain and Portugal. During the nineteenth century, as more and more Jews with Ashkenazic tradition immigrated from Central and Eastern Europe, the Ashkenazic rite gradually became more prominent.

In these early years, however, the Jewish community experienced a lack of trained professionals. Ordained Rabbis and well-trained chazzanim were virtually non-existent.

Qualified individuals tended to stay in the old country, rather than endure the hardships of the new world. The result was that the newly established synagogues in America were for the most part led by untrained and unqualified professional leaders. These circumstances were to result in a lower standard of Jewish public worship.(29)

The first attempt towards reform was made in Charleston, South Carolina in 1824 in the organization of a "Reformed Society of Israelites", with the aim "not to overthrow but rebuild, not to destroy but to reform."(30) The "Reformed Society of Israelites" patterned their organization after the Hamburg Reform Temple, which came into existence just a few years earlier in 1817. Many of the new innovations, such as the introduction of the organ and English liturgy, was not accepted by the congregation until 1843. The Christian Church was to provide many of the congregations early hymns and tunes. Sometime later, hymns from the Hamburg Temple Songbook were translated into English.(31)

Of particular interest to this study are the influences that prompted the leaders of Congregation Beth Elohim to call for reforms in their worship service. Lou H. Silberman explores a number of possible sources of their thought and action. One of these was the influence of American Protestanism at the time. He states that such thinking as theirs

> was mediated to the Jewish community through events and institutions in American Protestantism. . .What happened in Charleston was derivative and its

proximate source is to be found within the context of Protestantism in Charleston in the years immediately preceding the founding of the Reformed Society.(32)

Silberman concludes:

It was this overwhelming and passionate belief in the curative and restorative powers of the new nation, this unbounded optimism in the spirit, the genius of America. . .which was a vital motivation in the thinking and actions of the Reformed Society of Israelites. It is only when this is understood, only when the events, the institutions, the struggles, the personalities, are seen within the context of the America scene, are set within the frame of the whole society, are viewed not as exotic occurrences unrelated to the larger movements but are recognized for what they are, the responses of the Jewish community to the unprecedented, often bewildering, always dynamic unfolding of a new nation, on a vast continent; it is only then. . .that the history of the Jews in the United States will come into its own.(33)

NOTES

(1) Johanna Spector, "On Jewish Music," Conservative Judaism, 21 (Fall, 1966), 57.

(2) Eric Werner, "The Music of Post Biblical Judaism," in Ancient and Oriental Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), I, 314-315.

(3) Aron Marko Rothmuller, The Music of the Jews (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1967), 25.

(4) Ibid.

(5) Ibid., 29

(6) Ibid.

(7) Eric Werner, From Generation to Generation (New York: American Conference of Cantors, 1960), 6.

(8) Rothmuller, 30.

(9) A. Z. Idelsohn, Jewish Music in its Historical Development (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 7.

(10) Idelsohn, 8.

(11) Israel Rabinovitch, Of Jewish Music (Montreal: The Book Center, 1952), 22.

(12) Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 50b; 51a; Ta'anit 27a; Arakhin 11a.

(13) Werner, From Generation to Generation, 75.

(14) Alfred Sendrey, Music in Ancient Israel (New York: Philosophical Library, 1969), 180-181.

(15) Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 11b.

(16) Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 53a.

(17) Eric Werner, "The Conflict Between Hellenism and Judaism in the Making of the Early Church," Hebrew Union College Annual, (1947), 419.

(18) Babylonian Talmud Chagigah 15b.

(19) Eric Werner, "The Conflict Between Hellenism. . .", 420.

(20) Rothmuller, 113.

(21) Eric Werner, "The Music of Post-Biblical. . .", 327.

(22) Idelsohn, 132.

(23) Ibid.

(24) Ibid. 197.

(25) Ibid., 198.

(26) Rothmuller, 118.

(27) Idelsohn, 233-4.

(28) Ibid.

(29) I. M. Wise, Reminiscences (Cincinnati, 1901), 21-23.

(30) Dr. Allan Tarshish, "The Charleston Organ Case," America Jewish Historical Quarterly, 54 (June, 1965), 415.

(31) Idelsohn, 320.

(32) Lou H. Silberman, "American Impact: Judaism in the United States in the Early Nineteenth Century," in Tradition and Change in Jewish Experience, ed. A. Leland Jamison, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University, 1978), 102-3.

(33) Ibid.

THE ROLE OF THE ORGAN

Any historical survey of the role of the organ in the American Reform synagogue should begin in antiquity. It was on the basis of historical precedent that the early reformers sought to justify the inclusion of the organ into the Jewish worship service. They accomplished this by attempting to demonstrate its use in the Second Temple and possibly even earlier.

The Ugav (עוגב), the only instrument that could possibly be interpreted as a primitive organ, is mentioned in Genesis 4:20-22:

> And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe.

Three other similar references to this instrument appear in the latter sections of the Bible.(1) Curt Sach believes that

> Ugav may be related to "Agab" "was in love." If this is true, the interpretation "flute" is indicated, as among wind instruments. Flutes were the most closely connected with love charm. Several translators have interpreted Ugav as pan-pipes. This is certainly incorrect; the first evidence of pan-pipes in the Near East are almost two thousand years later than the epoch described in the Genesis.(2)

Sachs concludes that the Ugav was probably a vertical flute, a term later including all pipes--even oboes and clarinets.

Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians states on the subject of the Ugav:

> Its name is derived from "Ogob" which means passionate love. This seems to indicate that it, like the halil (flute) could easily produce ecstasy and frenzy; therefore it was frowned upon by the priests, and we do not find it in the Temple orchestra. Yet a Rabbinic anecdote tells that the First Temple had employed an "Ugov" but "when it became defective it could not be mended."(3) This tale, however, is but a euphemism for the blunt fact that it was no longer considered "ritually clean" for devine worship.(4)

It was believed to be a reed pipe.

Herbert Fromm, in an article entitled "The Organ in Jewish Worship" states: "A primitive reed organ was already known in the First Temple by the Hebrew term "Ugav".(5)

However, the word is interpreted--flute, reed pipe, pan-pipes or primitive organ, we learn from the Babylonian Talmud Aruchin 10b that the Ugav was one of two instruments retained from the First Temple. We also learn from this same passage that after it had been damaged, it could no longer be repaired. As a result, the Magrepha, a more complicated type of instrument, was utilized.

Rabbi Phillip Sigal, in his article "The Organ and Jewish Worship: A Proposal," notes that "the Mishnah mentions a magrepha(6) and this according to its Talmudic description, seems to be similar to our organ, and reflects the usage of the Second Temple."(7) Despite such a definitive statement, the question of whether the organ was used in the Temple is by no means cut and dry.

Eric Werner makes the following comments on the subject of the magrepha:

> The organ was used regularly in the Second Temple and is called magrepha in talmudic literature. The tractate Arachin gives us a fairly good description of the magrepha. We learn that it was an instrument somewhat between a siren and a primitive organ with ten pipes. It seems that its sound was powerful enough to be heard far outside of Jerusalem proper. Just how this organ worked is not quite clear. We know that it could not be operated by water power, for the Greek water organ, hydraulis, is mentioned in the Talmud and its use in the Temple was strictly prohibited.
>
> All of these facts came to us from a time which rarely recorded the names of inventors, composers, or organizers. Thus, almost all Jewish musical contributions of this period are necessarily anonymous. However, they are not, for this reason, any less important. Quite the contrary! They must be considered the core of Jewish musical lore.(8)

Talmudic sources inform us that the magrepha was a very complex instrument, one which could be heard over a great distance. It was said to be capable of producing a thousand different tones, but many consider this to be an exaggeration.(9)

> The theologian, Johann Weiss, for example, calls the number of notes "ridiculous" and says this information is a "Talmudian childishness."(10)

However, it is a known fact that other organs of antiquity had as many as eighteen keys or slides, as they were called, and as many rows of pipes belonging to each. Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians states:

> The magrepha was a kind of primitive steam organ with ten pipes; probably more like a siren whose

> tones could be regulated. It was used in the Temple as a signal instrument. Its twin, the hydraulis (water organ) was expressly and strictly forbidden.(11)

Sachs analyzes a further Talmudic reference to the magrapha.(12)

> Rabbi Shimon ben Gamaliel said that no hydraulis was in the Temple; on the contrary, Rabbi Rabba ben Shila said, in the names of Rabbi Mathna and Rabbi Shmuel, there was a magrepha in the Temple. Who was right? Rabbi Shimon lived in the second century A.D., while Rabbi Rabba was two centuries earlier, though his authority, Rabbi Shmuel, had lived about the year 200 A.D. Rabbi Shimon, as the oldest of them is perhaps the most reliable. On the other hand, his information is meager, and it may be that the foreign term confused him.(13)

Sachs claims that it is risky to make a decision regarding the possibility of an organ in the Temple. Actually, he is of the opinion that the organ probably did not exist until the last period of the Third Temple at the end of Israel's national existence.

Elliot Gertel, in an article entitled "The Organ Controversy Reconsidered", cites an eighteenth century traditional polemic against the use of the organ by David Deutsch.(14) Deutsch's argument cites the Jerusalem Talmud,(15) which notes that:

> Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish equated the <u>ugav</u> (possibly a primitive organ) with the <u>arbelos</u>, and that Rabbi Shimon ben Gamaliel asserted that the <u>arbelos</u> was not used in the Temple. Deutsch concludes from Talmudic evidence that the <u>halil</u> and not the <u>ugav</u> was used in the Temple. Yet even the <u>halil</u> was not used on the Sabbath because it was not regarded as a sacred instrument, like the <u>kinnor</u> and the <u>nevel</u> (Mishnah Sukkah 5:1). Deutsch therefore insists that since the ugav - the closest among ancient

> instruments to the modern organ - was never used in the Temple, it is impossible to speak of the "restoration" of the organ to synagogue worship.(16)

A final word on the historiography of the organ is provided by Dr. Herman Berlinski. He points out that the Talmudic authorities speculated from time to time about the nature of the Temple music.(17) They are not specific in their terminology regarding it. This is understandable when one realizes that the Levites who were in charge of the music in the Temple were secretive about their musical knowledge. Since in most cases the rabbis were not descendents of the Levites, many discrepancies could arise. Berlinski also refers to the probability of a magrepha in the Herodian Temple.

> The Talmudic references to the magrepha in the Temple refer only to the Last Temple which was renovated under Herod (37 B.C.E,. to the year 4 C.E.) and not to the Temple of King Solomon.(18)

According to Berlinski, King Herod was only half-Jewish, a fact which introduced pagenism into the Jewish ritual and helped contribute towards Hellenization. It is quite feasible that the magrepha was a gift from Herod's over-lords in Rome who supported him for he had extended favors to them.

Berlinski furthermore offers two interesting interpretations of the word "magrepha." First, it could have been a coal shovel that was used by the priests during the offering up of the animal sacrifices. These metal shovels may have obliterated the cries of the animal as they were

sacrificed.(19) The second interpretation was that it was a noise-generating instrument. It may have been used in the same manner as the coal shovel. Since the function of music in the Temple was primarily associated with the sacrifical rites, this interpretation is highly feasible. Even Rashi's exegesis to Arachin 10b bears out this two-fold understanding of the text: "but it seems that there were two magrefot, one for (raking) the altar-remnants and one for song/music."

The organ played no role in Jewish religious life until its introduction in Prague in 1594. Abraham Idelsohn notes that a Prague synagogue, built in 1594,

> "was equipped with an organ and a special orchestra organized to play and to accompany different songs including Lechoh dodi on Friday evening, which number was elaborated into a concert of more than an hour's length. The same concerts were held in almost all the nine synagogues of Prague, including the "Alt-Neu-Schul" in which a new portable organ, built by a Jewish builder Rabbi Maier Mahler, was installed in 1716. There is a report of instrumental music in the synagogues around the beginning of the eighteenth century in the communities of Nikolsburg, Offenbach, Furth, etc."(20)

Idelsohn notes two reasons for the rather strange phenomenon of employing elaborate instrumental music in the synagogue for the Friday evening service: (1) The Kabbalistic stress upon the importance of receiving the Sabbath with music, which began with Isaac Luria (1534-1572) and (2) the custom in the German Protestant Church to perform cantatas of instrumental and choral selections before the Sunday service.(21) Thus, both external and internal influences led

to the greeting of the Sabbath Bride with music.

Rabbi David Hoffman, outstanding nineteenth-century German Orthodox authority further elaborates on the role of the organ in the Prague synagogue. Gertel summarizes Hoffman's rationale as to why the Prague authorities would permit an organ:

> Hoffman does admit that the Prague rabbinite permitted in one synagogue the use of the organ for the accompaniment of Zemirot prior to the chanting of Psalm 93. (This would mean that the preliminary psalms and the L'cha Dodi were also accompanied by the organ!) The reason for such a concession to the use of the organ, as Hoffman understands it, is that since music was employed for the cheering of the bride and groom, how much more fitting was its use for the greeting of Bride Sabbath herself! Indeed, a Zemirah (Sabbath hymn), the words of which Hoffman sights at length, compares the quote Kabbalat Shabbat service to a wedding. The Prague authorities therefore declared instrumental music appropriate for the Inauguration of the Sabbath.(22)

A new era dawned in 1810 with the building of an organ in a synagogue in the German town of Seesen. Based upon the musical innovations of Rossi and his rabbinic sponsor, Leon Judah of Modena described in the introduction of this work, this reform was to characterize the beginning of an attempt to introduce innovation into the Jewish worship service.

Israel Jacobson (1768-1828), a rich and successful businessman, was to be the catalyst for innovation and reform. One of his first steps was to begin a boys' school in Seesen, which he did successfully in 1801. It was there that as a part of a children's service he began the singing of hymns most of which were taken from the Protestant church.

It was on the grounds of the boys' school that Jacobson established the first Reform Temple in Europe. He also installed an organ, and arranged the music and ritual personally.(23) He also had a bell installed, which would announce the commencement of prayer services. In addition to these innovations, Jacobson also instituted other reforms including a sermon in the vernacular, a confirmation ceremony for boys and girls, and the use of the church gown.(24)

The historian Heinrich Graetz described Jacobson's first service in the following manner:

> The dedication of his privately built and tastefully constructed little temple in Siesen was carried out with great pomp. The announcement of the event attracted many curiosity seekers, more Christians than Jews. There was tolling of church bells. The crowd of those present were surprised by sonorous peals of the organ. The organ was, in fact, the crowning glory of his temple edifice. . .(25)

The introduction of the organ in Seesen served as a catalyst for its inclusion in other communities. Jacob Herz Beer, the father of the composer Meyerbeer, in 1815 opened a Temple in his home in Berlin based on Jacobson's reforms. Solomon Heine, the uncle of the poet Heinrich Heine, donated an organ to the reform congregation in Hamburg in 1818. These early innovations were to pave the way for the inclusion of the organ as a standard fixture in nearly all Reform Congregations.

Of all the liturgical reforms introduced in Europe in the nineteenth century, none proved to be as devisive and controversial as the introduction of the organ. A violent

agitation both for and against its use arose; rabbis entering the tray on both sides, and a large amount of writing was devoted to discussing whether the organ and organ music in the service was permitted or forbidden by Jewish law. The fact that the Prague synagogue was reported to have an organ a hundred years before did not ease the task of those who wished to introduce it in Germany. The resulting Orgelstreit, (organ-battle), as it is known in German-Jewish history, went on for years, and even today is not entirely decided.

Although it is not the intent of this work to provide an analysis of the organ controversy from the point of view of Jewish law, it would be helpful at this juncture to note several of the arguments utilized by the proponents and opposers of the use of the organ.

In an attempt to ground their innovation in tradition and to justify its inclusion, the Reformers published in 1818 a collection of responsa entitled Nogah ha Tzedek ("The Splendor of Justice"). The Orthodox replied with a responsa collection of their own, called Eleh Divre Haberit ("These are the words of the covenant"). Basically, three objections have been raised according to Jewish law: (1) Playing the organ on the Sabbath, even by a non-Jew, is prohibited "work" - if not biblically forbidden, at least falling into the rabbinic category of shevut (occupation forbidden on Sabbath and festivals); (2) as a sign of mourning for the destruction of the Temple, music in general is prohibited; (3) the organ

is so closely associated with worship in Christian churches that it would be a case of the prohibited "imitation of gentile customs" (hukkot ha-goyim) to play it in the synagogue.(26) Of particular interest to this study is this third category; indeed whether the introduction of the organ into the synagogue represents a conscious modeling of dominant culture (חוקות הגויים) or whether it reflects a quest for an authentic Jewish mode of expression.

It is interesting to note that most polemics against the use of the organ invoke this issue at greater length than any other. Phillip Sigal, in his article "The Organ and Jewish Worship: A Proposal", dismisses hukkat ha-goyim as a rather weak argument against the use of the organ. He notes:

> In essence the organ is not an inherent aspect of Christian worship. It is unessential in the Church as it is in the Synagogue. American dissenting groups have broken away from parent churches because the parent churches installed an organ. Paradoxically, however, the Papal Chapel in Rome has no organ. The organ is, in reality, one of the many elements borrowed from the synagogue. When Jews employ it as worship they are not imitating Christian practice.(27)

Elliot Gertel, in his article, "The Organ Controversy Reconsidered" agrees with Sigal's conclusion. He writes:

> The proscription known as hukkot ha-goyim may, I believe, be dismissed as a rather weak argument against the use of the organ which today is associated not only with Church music, but is regarded as the concert instrument par excellence, and has enhanced synagogue music now for more than a century and a half. It has been said that the modern pipe organ is capable of producing more varied sounds than a true symphony orchestra.(28)

Gertel also summarizes the polemic of Samuel Krauss, a defender of the use of the organ. Gertel notes:

> Samuel Krauss observed that it was absurd of Orthodox scholars to accuse Reform leaders of adopting the organ because it was a Christian practice. After all, Abraham Geiger, the founder of German Reform Judaism was as fierce a polemicizer against Christianity as he was against Jewish Orthodoxy, and said that he would battle all blind attempts to oppose the Christians. He did advocate the use of the organ, however, because he felt that it was called for by good taste.(29)

One may also turn directly to the Responsa of Nogah Hatsedek for an halachic understanding of this issue. Rabbi Shem Tov notes that the objection of the Orthodox, which is based on Leviticus 18:3, "Neither shall you walk in their statues," is not a valid objection. Rabbi Alexander Guttman, in his book, The Struggle Over Reform in Rabbinic Literature, then notes the following:

> This injunction does not refer to everything done by the gentiles. Rather, it refers only to those statutes which are perplexing and lack reason. However, both vocal and instrumental music awaken the heart and make it rejoice; therefore it is permitted to play and listen to music at services.(30)

Samuel Rosenblatt, in response to Phillip Sigal's assertion that the use of the organ in synagogue services is not to be construed as an aping of the gentiles, writes:

> Who can accept this allegation? Anybody who has the slightest acquaintance with the history of the Jewish religious Reform movement in Germany knows that the reformers introduced the organ into the synagogue in conscious imitation of the practice of the church, Protestant as well as Catholic. The Church was the model for all innovations made by

> the initiation of the movement, Israel Jacobson. He did not even hesitate to replace time-honored prayers of Judaism with Protestant hymns.
>
> The circumstance that certain small and isolated Christian sects have no music in their divine service does not diminish by one iota the identification of the organ with the characteristic Christian mode of worship. The nineteenth century Jewish legal authorities of the old school, like Rabbis Moses Schreiber, Akiba Eger and others, were fully justified, therefore, in seeing the introduction of the organ as an aping of the ways of the gentiles.(31)

Many arguments can be found in nineteenth century orthodox literature in support of the organ as the ideal example of imitating the Gentiles. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch of Frankfurt, in his commentary to Leviticus 18:5 (that verse which prohibits the imitation of alien cults), clearly prohibits the use of the organ as a Gentile practice.(32)

One final argument against the use of the organ in the synagogue is provided by Rabbi David Hoffman, whose polemics against the organ have been referred to earlier in this chapter. Gertel makes note of Hoffman's objection:

> it is to be shunned because it is advocated by "apikorsim"-those who deny the fundamentals of Judaism. One should avoid the organ, even if it is not really a part of foreign cults, because its use is advocated by those who make breaches in the law by publicly advocating changes in the liturgy, by denying the coming of a personal Messiah, etc. To use the organ is to perpetrate a sin which can only lead to others. Hoffman further notes--and not without historical basis--that the organ is but one symbol of the denial of the importance of Jerusalem and of the need to mourn for it, since one plays music in the synagogue when it was to be associated only with the Temple. The organ was advocated for this reason by those who substituted the

Emancipation for the ancient prophetic visions.(33)

The organ: hukkot ha-goyim or an authentic Jewish expression remains an ongoing debate. In the conclusion of this work, once the hymnal and choir have been analyzed utilizing the same criteria, I will propose my own answer to this perplexing problem.

The use of the organ eventually received its official sanction at the Rabbinical Convention in Frankfurt in 1845. It is remarkable to note that, despite the controversial nature of this issue, "this question was decided in the affirmative by a unanimous vote without debate."(34)

One factor which allowed for a unanimous vote could have been the make up of the participants gathered for the Frankfurt Conference. Among those in attendance were several prominent figures in the genesis of the Reform movement: David Einhorn, Abraham Geiger, and Samuel Holdheim. Although the conservative side was represented, most of the rabbis in attendance were strong advocates of reform.(35) This strong "balance of power" in favor of reform undoubtedly had a strong impact upon the decisions made at the Conference.

The first organ inside a house of Jewish worship in America was built and officially accepted in the years 1840-41 by Congregation Kahal Kadish-Beth Elohim, in Charleston, South Carolina. The controversy about this innovation in Jewish worship preceding and even following this historical event, resulted in a deep schism in this congregation. The anti-organ minority or the

traditionalists, as I shall refer to them, brought their arguments even to the civil courts of Charleston. This became known as the "Charleston Organ Case."

The arguments, counter-arguments, the appeals and counter-appeals, and the final ruling in this case are of interest far beyond the scope of this study. Indeed, the "Charleston Organ Case" may be considered a milestone in the history, not only of American Jewry, but also in the history of religious freedom and liberty of America itself. It is for this reason that I am going into some details of this case.

Jews appeared in the area of Charleston in 1695. These Jews were by their origin from either Spain or England, Sephardim, who practiced a ritual quite different from the ritual of the Jews from eastern or central Europe. The Congregation K.K.B.E. was organized in Charleston in the year 1749. At that time the Jewish population in the city was 700 as compared to 550 in New York City, 450 in Philadelphia, 200 in Richmond, and 150 in Baltimore.(36) Charleston was then a leading port city in the United States. Jews were accepted easily into community life. They voted in an election in 1703, and, many of them fought in the Revolutionary War. For the first time in the history of the Western World, Jews participated actively and freely in every aspect of economical political, cultural and religious life. Charleston abounded with well-known Jewish writers, painters, teachers, lawyers, and physicians. The integration of Jews

into the dominant, Protestant society was quite evident.

To what extent the movement towards reform in this congregation was a product of a long tradition of religious liberalism and pluralism evident in Charleston, or a direct result of the move towards reform in Europe, or a possible synthesis of both of these positions, remains unclear. Charles Reznikoff, in his book The Jews of Charleston, has argued that "the movement in Charleston is native to the place." It had, according to Engelman, its "beginnings in the examination of the beliefs and traditions of the synagogue in the light of democratic thought and practice." Continuing this line of argument, the author states: "In Charleston, the Reform movement was inaugurated by a group of American Jewish intellectuals, cultured and worldly-wise, who were under the influence of the age (of which the American Declaration of Independence was another example)." That this had happened in Charleston was occasioned, according to the author, by the fact that "the city itself had a long tradition, preceding the Revolution, of religious liberalism and pluralism." It was the freedom of the American scene, the equality they possessed, that engendered "the desire to become in their worship more like their friendly non-Jewish neighbors - particularly the Protestants who were in the great majority."(37)

This interpretation stands against that of Barnett A. Elzas, who served as rabbi of Beth Elohim shortly after the turn of the century and is the first historian of the

Charleston movement. Elzas argues on the basis of a quotation in the original copy of the Memorial of the Reformed Society of Israelites presented in Charleston in 1825 that "the Charleston movement was not an indigenous movement, but was directly dependent upon the earlier movement that had taken place in Germany."(38) What is meant by "the earlier movement" here referred to is not entirely clear. The Constitution mentions "the reformation which has been recently adopted by our brethren in Holland, Germany, and Prussia."(39) This apparently refers to the founding of the congregation Adath Jesurun in Amsterdam in 1796, the Seesen Temple in Westphalia in 1810, the Beer Temple in Berlin in 1815, and the Hamburg Temple in 1818, and the liturgical reforms that were introduced.

Lou Silberman, whose article, "Judaism in the Early Nineteenth Century" is referred to in the introduction of this analysis, agrees entirely with the conclusion of Reznikoff," namely that "the movement in Charleston was native to the place."(40) He bases his conclusion not only upon the "long tradition, preceding the Revolution, of religious liberalism and pluralism" but also upon an article that appeared in the "North American Review" of July, 1826. This was a review and discussion of "The Constitution of the Reformed Society of Israelites for promoting True Principals of Judaism According to Its Purity and Spirit" and "Discourse before the Reformed Society of Israelites" by Isaac Harby, delivered on the first anniversary of the founding of the

Society, November 21, 1825. Although the review was unsigned, a later index indicates that it was written by Samuel Gilman, minister of the Second Independent Church of Charleston.(41) The key for Silberman was not to be found so much in Gilman's outright statement that the movement was indigenous to the American, indeed to the Charleston scene, but in the reviewer himself and the local history of the congregation he served as minister.(42)

Leon Jick, in his book The Americanization of the Synagogue, reaches a similar conclusion regarding the innovations proposed at Beth Elohim in Charleston. He notes:

> It would be an error to ascribe the changes in its ritual to influences imported from abroad. . . The Charleston experience demonstrates, however, that the erosion of traditional knowledge and the process of social integration combined to create an appetite for the Americanization of religious practice.(43)

I believe an accurate analysis would include a synthesis of these two positions. Both a knowledge of the beginnings of the Reform movement in Germany as well as the "Zeitgeist," the spirit of American thought and practice, would play a prominent role in the thinking of the Charleston reformers. It was under the influence of both of these ideals that forty-seven members of the Congregation wrote the following petition in the year 1824:

> We are seriously impressed with the belief that certain defects which are apparent in the present system of worship are the sole causes of the evils complained of. In pointing out these defects, however, your memorialists seek no other end then the future welfare and respectability of Judaism. As members of the great family of Israel, they

> As members of the great family of Israel, they cannot consent to place before their children examples which are only calculated to darken the mind, and withhold from the rising generation the more rational means of worshipping the true God... We wish not to overthrow, but to rebuild; we wish not to destroy, but to reform and revise the evils complained of; we wish not to abandon the institutions of Moses, but to observe and understand them. (44)

What actually was requested was that Hebrew prayers be translated into English, that the service be abridged, that the money offering during the service be abolished, and that there be an English sermon based on the Biblical portion of the week.(45) There was no request for an organ as yet. It was with this petition, however, that the Congregation divided itself into Reformers and Traditionalists.

At first the Traditionalists succeeded in defeating the Reformers by a variety of procedural and judicial maneuvers based primarily upon a rather rigid interpretation of the original character of the Congregation. However, the Reformers seeing that their petition was rejected, organized themselves into "The Reformed Society of Israelites" on January 26, 1825.(46)

The forty-four members of the society prepared a religious manifesto in which they spelled out the needs for a new ritual and the desirability of using instrumental music at their services. Their opponents did not fail to respond and the following document states their position clearly:

> They published a document in which was avowed their determination to discard what they termed 'the idle comments of the Rabbins' to abolish the offerings

> which they termed 'profane' and the Spanish-Portugese (Sephardic) rites of the Church (this term used by the traditionalists, not the reformers) which they called an 'insult': and to bring all religious faith to the test of human philosophy, declaring such faiths to be only 'the results of rational demonstration'. Proceeding step by step they actually changed the creeds of the Jewish people. In a ritual published by their authority in 1825 they set forth another form of creed in which they left out three of the fundamental articles of faith, which set forth the belief of the nation of the divine revelation of the scriptures; the promise and expectation of the Mesiah; and the resurrection of the dead. (47)

Despite their impressive beginnings, the Reformers in Charleston found themselves out-numbered, out maneuvered, and isolated. Only in the years between 1830 and 1840 was there a change in the American Jewish scene. Jews, in great number, had emigrated from Germany and brought with them the ideas and experiences of the earlier Jewish reform movement in Germany. With the arrival of the newcomers the Traditionalists sensed a renewed danger to their entrenched positions. Indeed they felt that they were in need of a spiritual head capable of defending them vigorously against the inroads of the Reformers. They believed to have found such a person in Rev. Gustavius Poznanski who originated from Poland and was hired in 1837 as Rabbi and Cantor to the Charleston Congregation. It was the hope of the Traditionalists that he would "fully execute his duties, according to those Rabbinical and Mosaical laws, which were deemed vital to the existence of the Congregation and who would also oppose innovations and change...(48) At first the

Rev. Poznanski seemed to satisfy the traditionalists, for he was offered a life-time contract a year after his arrival. In the year 1838 the original synagogue Beth Elohim was destroyed by fire and a new building was completed in 1840. In the meantime many members of this historical Congregation who were not direct descendents of the early founders, had been exposed to the ideas of the reformers. Indeed, even the appointed guardian of the tradition seemed to change his mind. So it was that on July 14, 1840, the following petition endorsed by Rabbi Poznanski and supported by thirty-eight members of the Congregation was submitted to the Board of Trustees requesting that the Board call a general meeting of the Congregation in order to consider the propriety of erection of an organ in the synagogue:

> We, the undersigned members of the Congregation K.K.B.E., feeling a deep interest in our religion, and anxious to embrace every laudable and sacred mode by which the rising generation may be made to conform to our holy worship, respectfully petition your body, to call a general meeting of the Congregation at the earliest and most convenient period you may deem proper to discuss the propriety of erecting an organ in the synagogue to assist the vocal part of the service. Your petitioners would be among the last to ask for innovations in respect to the usage and formula of the service. But your body is aware, that in this petition, there is nothing incompatible with the practice of our brethren where they continue strict conformists.
>
> It is a matter of notoriety that farther than a century back an organ was made part of the service in the city of Prague, the capital of Bohemia, and at a later period organs have been introduced in other parts of Germany and in the south of France. (49)

Even though a majority of the Board considered this petition

as being in violation of the constitution of the Congregation, a public meeting was nevertheless called. The following additional statement in favor of the organ was then made by two members of the Reformed Society and wholeheartedly endorsed by Rabbi Poznanski:

> Whereas, instrumental music, the universal language of the song. . .has been felt and cultivated by all nations. . .be it resolved as the determination of this Congregation that, as early as possible an organ shall be procured and erected in the new Synagogue to be purchased by voluntary contributions, and not drawn from Congregational funds.(50)

In spite of numerous attempts on the side of the Traditionalists to keep this motion from being voted upon, the motion reached the floor and was carried by a majority of 46 to 40.(51) The exact minutes of this particular meeting are not available. But it seems that the discussions must have followed along the same lines as similar discussions about this subject in Europe.(52)

The outvoted Traditionalists in Charleston did not accept their defeat. In their opinion the question of the organ was a constitutional matter and accordingly could become law in the Congregation only by an amendment to the Constitution itself, and such an amendment had to be accepted by a 3/4 majority of the whole congregation. They felt that their minority and civil rights had been violated and threatened to seek recourse by a proper appeal to the laws of the country. At first they shied away from this step and many of them became inactive in the Congregation. At the

Board meeting of February 21, 1841 the organ was officially accepted by the Congregation from the group which had financed and donated it, with the explicit agreement that it belonged to the Congregation as long as it was used for divine services in the Synagogue.(53) The deeply affected Traditionalists felt so outraged by what they considered the betrayal of Rev. Poznanski, that they began to spread rumors casting doubt on the legitimacy of his birth. The following document, which has very little to do with the organ in the synagogue, had to be procured and it appears in the minutes of the Congregation of September 26, 1841:

> We the undersigned, president of the Hebrew Congregation of the City of Storchnest, Poland (Stork Nest, sic. H.B.) do hereby certify that Mr. Joseph Poznanski, a resident of this city, married his wife Sarah, as a virtuous Jewish virgin, that this marriage took place according to the Jewish laws and with the usual ceremony and that he had by her the following legitimate children, namely, Gustavius, Leah, Rebecca, Frederika, Heiman, Hinde, and Gershen. We further certify that the said Joseph Poznanski has been a member of our Congregation not only since, but long before he married the said Sarah, his wife, and that up to this day he has been esteemed by all as a highly respectable gentleman and a pious Israelite. Strochnest, 29th of June, 1841. Signed by the Rabbi and Officers of the Congregation.

The Traditionalists were right in sensing that the organ now had become a visible and audible symbol of change. The remarkable Rev. Poznanski encouraged by his success with the organ felt that the time was ripe for many other changes. The Traditionalists were more and more outraged and on April 30, 1843 they called a meeting of their group stating that

the purpose of their meeting was "to stop the progress of the Reform in our Synagogue and prevent the destruction of our holy religion."(54) This led at first to a formidable intramural fight. Eventually this issue between the two groups was clearly and legally joined. The Charleston Organ Case was first argued before Judge D. L. Wardlaw in the Court of Common Pleas at Charleston, Spring Term, 1844:

> The defendants (the Traditionalists) offered testimony that the use of the organ in the synagogue was contrary to the practice of the Sephardim and to the practices of the Jews in London and Amsterdam; that by teaching that the Messiah was an 'ideality' and not a 'Person' and was not expected and by changes in the Maimonidean articles of faith, the Rev. Poznanski and those who sustained him had contradicted the fundamental law of the Congregation and the long established faith of the Jewish nation. The judge overruled this testimony as irrelevant before a court of law, and as likely to lead to tedious investigations of matters of faith unfit for decision of a civil tribune.(55)

So the Traditionalists lost their first case and consequently carried their appeal to the South Carolina Court of Appeals. It was kept there under consideration until the January term, 1846, when the decision of the Court of Appeals was delivered for the majority by Judge A. P. Butler. This decision itself reads like so many of the great liberal documents in the history of our country and deserves to be quoted here:

> It is almost impossible to reduce matters growing out of a difference of opinion to such a definite form as to subject them to juridicial cognizance.
>
> Speculative disputes must be left in some

measure to the arbitrament of opinion. To suppose that an uninterrupted harmony of sentiment can be preserved under the guarantee of written laws and constitutions, or by the application of judicial authority, would be to make a calculation that has been refuted by the history of all institutions, like that before us. Neither is it practicable to frame laws in such a way as to make them, by their arbitrary and controlling influence, preserve, in perpetuity, the primitive identity of social and religious institutions.

The granite promontory in the deep may stand firm and unchanged amidst the waves and storms that beat upon it, but human institutions cannot withstand the agitations of free, active and progressive opinion. Whilst laws are stationary, things are progressive. Any system of laws that should be made without the principle of expansibility, that would, in some measure accommodate them to the progression of events, have within the seeds of mischief and violence.

When the Spartan law giver gave his countrymen laws, with an injunction never to change them, he was a great violator of the law himself. For all laws, however, wise, cannot be subjected to Procrustean limitations. Cesant Ratione lex (when reason ceases, the law ceases), is a profound and philisophical principle of the law. These remarks are more particularly true, in reference to matters of taste and form.

Let the oldest member of any civil or religious corporation, look back and see, if he can, in any instance, trace the original identity of his institution, throughout its entire history. Those who now, in the case before us, insist with most earnestness on severe observance of ancient rites and forms, would hardly recognize or understand the same, as they were practiced by their remote ancestors who founded the Synagogue. The Minhog (sic!) Sephardim was a ritual of Spanish origin--and although it may still exist in different countries, yet how differently is it observed. If two Jewish congregations, one from Poland, and the other from Spain, were to be brought together, whilst professing to be governed by the same rituals, they would probably find themselves unable to understand each other in their observances of them.

Language itself, is continually undergoing changes; clumsy expressions of rude language will give way to modern refinement. There are those in every church who would be shocked at the change of expression in respect to the tablets or books that contain the prayers and the more solemn forms of

religious rituals. At this time, there are many who oppose any change of style in the editions of the Bible. The parties before us who are opposed to reform, contend that dangerous changes have been made in the form of their worship, particularly as it respects the introduction of instrumental music. It is not pretended but that the organ, the instrument complained of, was introduced by the constituted authorities; but the ground taken is, that this authority has been exercised to do that which is against the provision of the charter, which guarantees that the Minhog Sephardim should be ritual of the Congregation. I suppose might be admitted, that in its origin such a ritual was practiced without the aid of instrumental accompaniment but to suppose that the exact kind of music that was to be used in all future time, had been fixed and agreed upon by the Jewish worshippers who obtained this charter, would be to attribute to them an impracticable undertaking.

That such music was not used, is certain but that it might not, in the progress of human events, be adopted, would be an attempt to anticipate the decisions of posterity, on matters that must be affected by the progress of art, and the general tone of society--whcih could not be controlled by arbitrary limitations.

As this was a subject that could not be well reached, much less continually controlled, by the judgement of this court we think the judge below very properly excluded all evidence in relation to it.(56)

This document is a remarkable example of the evolution of liberal thought in our country, and as such is quite distinguished from court decisions made in Europe in similar cases. In monarchistic Europe such cases were almost without exception decided in favor of the Traditionalist and the organ was permitted only when the Traditionalists themselves desisted from court action against their co-religionists of reform persuasion. Thus the Charleston Organ Case opened the doors of many Synagogues in America to the organ.

The next reference to the use of an organ in a Jewish worship service is in Har Sinai Congregation in Baltimore. The Rev. C. A. Rubenstein notes in his history of Har Sinai Congregation:

> This congregation has the distinction of being the only congregation in the country that was founded upon the principles of Jewish Reform, remaining consistently Reform for 3/4 of a century.(57)

The other two congregations, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation and Ohav Shalom both started as Orthodox and gradually evolved into Reform congregations. Unfortunately, the earlier records of Har Sinai Congregation have been lost. We do know that the founding of Har Sinai was in the form of a protest against the strict Orthodoxy of Rabbi Abraham Rice, the Rabbi of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. He was a strict Orthodox Jew, and very rigid in his conformity to ritualism. It was in fear of the coming of a Jewish hierarchy in their midst that certain men in the community decided to break away and form a new congregation.

The first service of Har Sinai took place during the High Holidays of 1842. This congregation had difficulty in having services in accordance with traditional usage since the other two congregations would not lend them a Torah scroll. A parlor organ was installed in the hall, and the Hamburg prayer book and hymn book were utilized. We may learn a few interesting points from the description of the dedication services when in 1849 the congregation moved to High Street. "The American and Commercial Daily Advertiser"

of Saturday, September 8, 1849 described it as follows:

> The services were conducted in Hebrew, German, and English. They were opened with a German prayer . . . Then followed an appropriate hymn, also in German, by the choir, with organ accompaniment, the whole led by Professor Klautcheck, of the Steyermarkische Band. (An Austrian military band) At the close of the sermon a Hymn in English; commencing with the words "how holy is this place," was sung in excellent style by the choir. . .Then followed the usual evening service of the Sabbath and the ceremonies were concluded with a hymn by the choir. . .The performance of the choir was highly creditable and added much to the interest and beauty of the services."

It is apparent from the sources available that the organ was introduced into Har Sinai Congregation without opposition. This is undoubtedly due to its unique status as a Reform congregation from its inception. It did not have to face, therefore, the "Traditionalists" within its ranks which would oppose the organ a priori as was the case in Charleston.

Three years later, in 1845, the Emanu-El Congregation of New York, at present the largest congregation in this country, was organized by a number of young men whose purpose may be gathered from the following words:

> We fully recognize the necessity of a complete reform of the Jewish service, as at present conducted in the local German congregations; we have, therefore, formed ourselves into a society which we have called "Cultus-Verein," and have resolved to provide ourselves with such means and to seek such instruction and information as shall enable us to conduct, in a congregation to be formed from our society, such a service as, freed from abuses tolerates hitherto, shall arouse and quicken devotion, and thus uplift the head to God.(58)

The congregation was the direct outgrowth of the "Cultus-Verein." It's first service was conducted on the eve of Passover in 1845 in a room in a private house. Upon the procurement of a permanent house of worship by the congregation in October, 1847, the reform of the service became an immediate concern. It was at this time that the organ was introduced. Myer Stern, in his history of Temple Emanu-El, recordss the following:

> The possession of the new place of worship awakened new energy and raised fresh desires for improvements in the divine service. An organ was bought to accompany the choir; the triennial cycle of the reading of the Law, memorial service on the Day of Atonement, the annual confirmation of boys and girls were gradually introduced . . .(59)

He further states:

> In this new building an organ had been placed which was used in the service, and an organist was engaged at a compensation of $100 per annum.(60)

No reference is made to any controversy over the introduction of the organ. This is undoubtedly attributable to the religious background of those members of the "Cultus Verein," as described by Stern:

> In the fourth decade of the present century there came to this country a number of Israelites from Germany, who seem to have been drawn together here by the liberal views which they held concerning religious affairs. They did not connect themselves with any of the existing Congregations already organized, for in their homes in Europe they had acquired a broader view of the requirements of other religions than obtained among their brethren here.(61)

The fourth congregation in this country to install an organ as part of its worship service was Anshe Emeth Congregation of Albany, New York in 1851. Isaac M. Wise, then the Rabbi of the Congregation, recordss the following regarding the use of the organ in his Reminiscenses:

> An important question soon arose as to whether it was permissible to use the organ on Yom Kippur, since we had a number of honorable members who had conscientious scruples. Our amiable friend, Maier Freund, was looked upon as the representative of that sentiment, and he was asked, "Maier, have you heard what they intend to do now? They intend to use the organ even on Yom Kippur." Our Maier answered in great astonishment, "If the organ is not to be played on Yom Kippur, our holiest day, of what use is it?" That was enough for us. The organ was heard on Yom Kippur, accompanying the songs of Sulzer and Naumburg. There was no protest or dissent.(61)

With the knowledge that Anshe Emeth had been formed by the friends and supporters of Rabbi Wise when he had been forcibly removed from his pulpit over the issue of reform a year earlier, it is not surprising to note that the organ was introduced with little or no protest in his congregation.

In August, 1853, Rabbi Wise received an invitation from Bene Yeshurun Congregation in Cincinnati to be its rabbi. Wise resigned his position in Albany and assumed the rabbinic leadership of Bene Yeshurun in 1854. The selection of Rabbi Wise appeared contrary to everything that the congregation had stood for only a few years earlier. They had just recently been under the strict Orthodoxy of Henry Rosenfeld and now they elected unanimously a man who had been called in many periodicals a heretic and a thorn in the side of

American Jews. This appears as a strange incident indeed. Dr. Heller states in his history of the congregation that "The marriage of the two, of Isaac M. Wise and K. K. Bene Yeshurun was happy and fruitful. Both gave, he as the leader, they as his people, his disciples, his helpers."(63)

Soon after his arrival, Wise instituted several reforms, including the organization of a choir, which will be addressed in further detail in the final chapter of this analysis. After the organization of the choir, the desire for an organ was expressed. Rabbi Wise recounts the deliberations over the organ in his Reminiscences:

> We began to consider ways and means as to how this could be satisfied without strife or contest. Mr. Jacob L. Miller was president of the congregation. He and the whole Board were unanimous. The only drawback lay in the circumstance that there was no room in the synagogue for an organ. Fortunately a large Bimah stood in the center of the building. The space to the east as far as the Aron Haqqodesh and to the west as far as the door was empty. Thus the middle of the synagogue was almost unoccupied, and upstairs in the western gallery there was a large room over the vestibule which was separated from the main building by a wall. "If we remove this wall we will gain about sixty seats for the women, and in a second gallery above this there will be ample room for an organ and the choir; further, if we remove the Bimah, and place the pulpit and the reading-desk near the Aron Haqqodesh, we will gain about sixty seats for the men in the center." This was our plan. The organ and the alterations in the building would cost from $10,000 to $12,000. The new seats which we would gain would bring in that sum. The Board resolved to lay this play before a congregational meeting, which was called for Purim evening.
>
> The undertaking met with some opposition on the part of such as objected to the expense, although they did not advance any objection on the score of principle. This objection could be met easily. On Purim morning I preached on the old custom of Sh'loach Manoth, and announced that I

would come myself to receive my presents. Jacob L. Miller and I spent the morning from nine to twelve o'clock in visiting members of the congregation, with the purpose of having them advance the money, which was to be repaid within three years without interest. By twelve o'clock twelve thousand dollars had been subscribed, and we had not called on all. The wind was taken out of the opposition's sails when at the meeting in the evening the plan, the money to carry it out, and the project of selling sufficient seats to repay the loan were submitted. The suggestion of the Board was concurred in without further parley, and the alterations in the synagogue were begun immediately after Passover.(64)

Wise was not content with the installation of an organ in Bene Yeshurun. Despite being introduced without great opposition, Wise found it necessary to defend publicly the use of the organ in the Jewish worship service. In a lengthy article in the American Israelite of May 18, 1855 entitled "An Organ in the Synagogue," Wise addresses the critics of the organ who consider it to be "unjewish" and against the Talmud. He notes: "that an organ adds materially to the solemnity of divine service, makes an edifying impression in the heart, and is, as it was formally, a Jewish instrument." Addressing the concern of "imitation of the gentiles" (חוקת הגוים), Wise writes: "If the organ ever had been חוקת הגוים, it is no longer so, after having been introduced in so many synagogues abroad, and in four American ones." He then goes on to summarize the previously analyzed halachic points which in his view support the introduction of an organ to Jewish worship. He concludes with the following exclamation: "The harp of Judah was silent for centuries; but now let it tune again in praise of the Rock of Israel;

let it tune again on their free soil, and invite the nations to render praise with us to the Eternal Father of the Universe, the Ruler of the nations, the Lord of all creation."

These five congregations were to set the stage for the unanimous acceptance of the organ in the Reform Movement in the United States. In the next several years, organs would appear at Bene Israel Congregation in Cincinnati, Keneseth Israel Congregation in Philadelphia, and Chicago Sinai Congregation. The organ had established itself as a distinctive element of the Reform worship experience which continues until today.

NOTES

Chapter One - Organ

(1) See Job 21:22, Job 30:31, Psalms 150:4.

(2) Curt Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1940), p. 105.

(3) Babylonian Talmud Aruchin 10b.

(4) Groves, Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. by Eric Bloom, Vol. IV (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954), p. 619.

(5) Herbert Fromm, On Jewish Music (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1978), p. 63.

(6) Tamid 5:6.

(7) Phillip Sigal, "The Organ and Jewish Worship," Conservative Judaism, Vol. 17 (Spring-Summer 1963), p. 94.

(8) Eric Werner, "Jewish Music," in The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion, ed. Louis Finkelstein, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society), III, pp.192-3.

(9) Babylonian Talmud, Aruchin 10b.

(10) Sachs, p. 124.

(11) Groves, p. 624.

(12) Aruchin 10b.

(13) Sachs, p. 124.

(14) Elliot B. Gertel, "The Organ Controversy Reconsidered," Journal of Synagogue Music, Vol. 8 (January 1978), p. 13.

(15) Sukkah 5:6.

(16) Gertel, 13.

(17) Herman Berlinski, "The Organ in the Synagogue," American Guild of Organists, Vol. 2 (April 1968), p. 28.

(18) Ibid.

(19) Tamid 3:8, 5:6, 2:1.

(20) A. Z. Idelsohn, Jewish Music in its Historical Development (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), p. 205.

(21) Ibid., pp. 205-6. It should be noted with this explanation that the laws of Shabbat do not technically begin until the recitation of the Barechu and Maariv in the evening service. During Kabbalat Shabbat (before the Barechu), the laws of Shabbat are not in affect and therefore the playing of an organ would be permitted.

(22) Gertel, 18.

(23) Idelsohn, 235.

(24) Ibid., 236.

(25) Samuel Rosenblatt, "The Organ and Jewish Worship: A Reply," Conservative Judaism, Vol. 17 (Spring-Summer 1963), 110.

(26) Alexander Guttmann, The Struggle Over Reform in Rabbinic Literature (New York: The World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1977), pp 19-31.

(27) Sigal, p. 102.

(28) Gertel, pp. 21-22.

(29) Ibid.

(30) Guttmann, p. 20.

(31) Rosenblatt, p. 110.

(32) See The Pentateuch, translated and explained by Samson Raphael Hirsch, London 1958, rendered into English by Isaac Levy.

(33) Gertel, p. 20.

(34) David Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1931), p. 182.

(35) Ibid., pp. 163-4.

(36) Dr. Allan Tarshish, "The Charleston Organ Case," American Jewish Historical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 4 (June, 1965), p. 411.

(37) Charles Reznikoff and Uriah Z. Engelman, The Jews of Charleston (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1950), pp 123-4.

(38) Barnett A. Elzas, "New Material on the First Reform Movement in America," American Hebrew, 7 December 1906, Vol. 80, No. 5, p. IV.

(39) Ibid.

(40) Lou H. Silberman, "American Impact: Judaism in the United States in the Early Nineteenth Century," in Tradition and Change in Jewish Experience, ed. A. Leland Jamison, (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1978), p. 93.

(41) L. C. Moise, Biography of Isaac Harby (Macon, GA: C.C.A.R., 1931), p. 38.

(42) For a full discussion of this issue see Silberman's article in Note #40.

(43) Leon A. Jick, The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870 (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1976), p. 86.

(44) Tarshish, p. 415.

(45) Barnett A. Elzas, The Jews of South Carolina (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Co., 1905), pp. 147-165.

(46) Moise, pp. 60-72.

(47) Tarshish, p. 417.

(48) Ibid., p. 420.

(49) Tarshish, p. 421.

(50) Ibid., p. 422.

(51) Ibid.

(52) See pp. 25-35 in this chapter; also Guttmann, The Struggle Over Reform in Rabbinic Literature, pp. 19-31.

(53) Tarshish, p. 431.

(54) Ibid., p. 435.

(55) Ibid., p. 439.

(56) Barnett A. Elzas, The Organ in the Synagogue (Charleston, South Carolina, 190-), 3-8.

(57) Rev. C. A. Rubenstein, History of Har Sinai Congregation of the City of Baltimore (Baltimore: Kohn and Pollack, Inc., 1918), 1. Rubenstein is obviously unaware of the founding of Anshe Emeth Congregation in Albany by I. M. Wise in 1851.

(58) Philipson, 335.

(59) Myer Stern, The Rise and Progress of Reform Judaism (New York: Myer Stern, 1895), 28.

(60) Ibid., 30.

(61) Ibid., 13.

(62) Isaac M. Wise, Reminiscences (Cincinnati, Leo Wise and Co., 1901), 213.

(63) James G. Heller, As Yesterday When It Is Past - A History of Isaac M. Wise Temple K. K. B'nai Yeshurun 1842-1942 (Cincinnati: Isaac M. Wise Temple, 1942), 74.

(64) I. M. Wise, 281-282.

THE ROLE OF THE HYMNAL

Just as with our analysis of the organ, we must in order to fully comprehend the role of the hymnal in the American Reform Synagogue begin with an historical examination of the roots of Jewish hymnology.

One of our major sources of information regarding public singing in the ancient Temple is the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sotah 30b. From this description and analysis of collective singing, we learn that three methods of responsive singing were employed. Idelsohn provides the following summary of this material:

> In form A the leader intoned the first half verse, where upon the congregation repeated it. Then the leader sang each succeeding half-line, the congregation always repeating the same first half-line which thus became a refrain throughout the entire song. This was the form in which Adults used to sing the "Hallel" (ps. 113-118), and, according to Rabbi Akibah, this form was also employed for the Song of Sea (Exodus 15). In form B the leader sang a half-line at a time, and the congregation repeated what it had last sung. This Rabbi Eliazar said - was the form in which the children used to be instructed at school. Form C was responsive in the real sense, i.e., the leader would sing the whole first line, where upon the congregation would respond with the second line of the verse. This was the form, as Rabbi Nehemiah explained, in which the Shema was recited in public. . .(1)

In addition to these responsive modes, unison and solo forms were also utilized.(2) References to antiphonal singing may

be found in the Bible(3) as well as in the Mishnah.(4)

After the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., with the subsequent abolishment of sacrificial services and the abandonment of a priestly class, Judaism entrusted its liturgical music to lay men. Under the leadership of the precentor, or חזן שליח ציבור, the prayer-modes remained as a rule unrhythmical, and in the form of unison or responsive singing.

In addition, great emphasis was put upon congregational singing in unison "in one tone, with one mouth and in one tune."(5)

With the passage of time, the liturgy of the synagogue became standardized and preserved by memory to ensure that it would not be forgotten. It became a difficult task, however, for the חזן שליח ציבור to memorize all of the prayers in their proper order. In order to aid the precentor, he was assigned two assistants or "tomechim". Soon it became the norm for at least one assistant to accompany the precentor at all times.(6) The "tomechim" not only served as professional prompters, but soon became musical assistants as well. They assisted the חזן שליח ציבור in singing all the prayers. Despite the committment of prayers to writing in the 7th Century, the "tomechim" continued to play an important role in the prayer service of the synagogue. Idelsohn considers these assistants to be the "nucleus of the synagogal choir-singers" that were to emerge in later centuries.(7)

A. W. Binder, in his article entitled "A History of

American Jewish Hymnody," he then goes on to discuss what he believes to be the genesis of Jewish hymnody:

> Justinian's religious persecution of the Jewish people during the fifth century, when he forbode every kind of Biblical exegesis or Talmudic interpretation offered in the synagogue, led to the development of a literature of new prayers and poetry. Through this medium the poets would in obscure and sometimes difficult language aim to deceive their Byzantine oppressors by interpreting the significance of special Sabbath and holidays, and various parts of the Bible and Talmud. This new poetry eventually became part of the liturgy.(8)

Such poetic embellishments were technically known as "piyutim" (singular: piyut). Those who composed "piyutim" were referred to as "paytanim." The effect of the "piyut" upon the worship service of the synagogue was two-fold.

According to Idelsohn's analysis,

> the Piyut, in the first place, silenced the people in the synagogue and prevented them from actually participating in public worship, since it was unintelligable to them both in text and chant. Thus instead of drawing the people to the synagogue, as it was hoped, these boring innovations either kept them away from it, or provoked such restlessness that the congregants began to talk during the service, and frequently left the house of worship during the precentor's embellishment of the piyutim. (9)

Idelsohn then goes on to give several illustrations of the effect the introduction of the "piyut" had upon the worship service.(10)

The "piyut" also had a second profound impact upon the synagogue. Not only did the "piyut" and its melody bring about tremendous change in the characteristics of the music

of the synagogue, but also in its main functionary -- the precentor. The volunteer precentor was to be replaced by a permanent professional - the hazan. Idelsohn notes: "Thus the "Piyut" gave birth to the institution of Hazanuth, changing the fundamental meaning of the word 'hazan'--superintendent, officer, beadle--to singer, cantor, precentor."(11) The musical portions of the Service were now almost entirely taken over by the professional precentor--the hazan. Opportunities for active participation in the singing were all but lost. The congregation, in need of self-expression, would often sing along with the solo renditions of the Hazan.

W. O. E. Oesterley, in his book The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy points out many of the common elements of the synagogue and the early Church. He notes that in addition to the psalms and other elements of Jewish ritual, the early Church also utilized a precentor in its worship service.(12)

As had developed in the synagogue, the recitation without accompaniment of the precentor was to become one of the focal points of the service. In addition, short responsive phrases such as Amen and Hallelujah were also utilized by the early Church. As in the synagogue, the Church also had a reador (lektor) and a singer (cantor). The reader read the Scriptures from an elevated stand, a practice already in existence in the Synagogue. In the evolution of the Church, however, the choir was to replace the precentor

and any solo singing by choral and antiphonal song. Whereas the role of the precentor of the Church has diminished or disappeared altogether, the precentor has maintained his centrality in the Synagogue Service.(13)

Despite the dominance of the hazan in the synagogue in the Middle Ages, several hymns were composed which are still the most popular hymns in the Jewish liturgy, and are sung at Jewish services to this very day. Adon Olam (The Lord of All) is noted by A. W. Binder to be the work of an unknown Spanish poet of the 12th Century.(14) Alfred Sendrey believes it was written in the 11th Century by Solomon Gaberol.(15)

One of the most fascinating liturgical hymns is "Yigdal Elohim Hai," based on Maimonides Articles of Faith and written by Daniel Ben Judah of Rome in the early 14th century. A. W. Binder provides the following historical background to this famous work:

> This was the hymn which was set to music by the English cantor Leon Singer after he was engaged as cantor of the Duke's Palace Synagogue in London. Thomas Olivers, a Welshman and a Wesleyan minister, once heard this tune at a synagogue service. He became enraptured with it and resolved to have it sung in Christian congregations. For this purpose he wrote the hymn "The God of Abraham Praise," which is sung to the tune of Yigdal, which he named "Leni" after Leon Singers first name. It was published in 1772 and became so popular that it had to be published in eight editions in two years. It reached its thirtieth edition in 1799.(16)

The third liturgical hymn which has maintained its popularity through the ages is "En Kelohenu." This product of the Middle Ages, the tune of which was composed by Julius

Freudenthal in 1841, maintains the common German melodic line, characteristic of German Christian hymnody of the 18th century.(17)

Because the "paytanim" were also often precentors or "hazzanim" they frequently had to compose melodies or adopt an already existing tune to their new creations. In the latter case they frequently used popular secular tunes of the day. Thus Ibin Ezra, at the beginning of the twelfth century, tells us that his co-religionists adopted secular Moorish melodies for chanting hymns in the synagogue.(18) Alfasi, also, in the eleventh century, complains of the use of secular Arab music in the synagogue.(19) It was also very common at this time to compose a Hebrew poem whose first line would act as a homonym with the first line of some popular Spanish song. Binder provides the following example of such a phenomenon, referred to technically as a contrafactum:

> One poet composed a hymn to the melody of the Spanish song Muerame mi Alma Ai Muerame," with the similar sounding words in Hebrew - "M'romi al mah am rav homah." Others used the sound of "Senora" for "Sham Norah" (the Awe-inspiring Name).(20)

According to Francis L. Cohen's overview of synagogue music, this same technique would be utilized in the early days of the Reformation, when hymns were composed by changing a few sounds of existing national and love-songs. For example, "a certain man had lost his wife," became, to the same tune when sung in worship, "A certain man had lost Gods' grace."(21)

This practice was to the great distaste of the rabbis, and was occasionally censored by them. But the disputed tunes often won out.

The sixteenth century introduced what Rabbi Jacob Singer referred to as the "period of decadent Hazzanuth."(22) Complaints against hazzanim increased, with accusations of serious offenses being made. Idelsohn notes that the situation became so severe that Rabbi Solomon ben Addereth had to try to settle quarrels that developed in communities regarding hazzanim. Rabbi M. Mintz had to go so far as to create a code of conduct for the hazzan.(23) It became a frequent practice with Ashkenazim as well as Sephardim, to adopt melodies foreign to the synagogue, and to liberally reproduce there the folk song of the country. Many hazzanim would themselves compose melodies for the service, but these would be influenced rather by the popular music of the day than by the Jewish spirit of the older tunes. This situation was of particular concern to Rabbi Jacob Molln (called the Maharil), who died in 1427. In response to this situation, he suggested that the "nusach ha-tefillah," the musical tradition of each community, be carefully guarded, so that no hazan could introduce new tunes foreign to Jewish tradition.(24)

The emergence of Reform Judaism in the wake of the Emancipation was to have a dramatic impact upon the role of music in the synagogue. The demand on the part of the early Reform rabbinic leadership for congregational singing as part

of its service was soon voiced. The musical response to this new situation will now be explored.

Herbert Fromm, in his article entitled "Jewish Hymnology - Its Past, Its Future" notes some important historical comparisons between the emergence of Reform and Luther's Reformation in the beginning of the 16th century. As the "founder of congregational hymn singing,"(25) Luther was a master at creating new church melodies and liturgy. Fromm then provides these additional observations:

> The new material, needed in quick order, he took from Gregorian chants, sequences, old and contemporary folk songs. The later texts were translated into German, the secular German texts transformed into sacred poetry. The task of translation, simplification, adoption of established melodies to new words, and above all, the creation of a new church poetry and new tunes--all this was undertaken by Luther and his helpers in a storm of creative energy. . .(26)

Fromm then goes on to analyze the poverty of the musical creations of the Reform movement as opposed to the monumental musical achievements of Luther's Reformation. How is one to account for the "musical blandness of our Jewish hymnology?"(27)

Fromm, by his choice of words obviously disappointed with the present status of Reform Jewish hymnology, finds the answer in the distinction to be drawn between Reform and Reformation:

> A reformator, such as Luther, became the maker of a political revolution that began with spoken words and pamphlets but finally spread to the battlefields of the Thirty Years' War. Such a folk

> movement made music and hymns quite naturally spring up in its wake, without the self-conscious and often articical efforts that marked the musical beginnings of our Jewish reformers. Compared with the course of Luther's Reformation, our Reform was only something like a sectarian secession, a housecleaning, as it were. Judaism was not split into two, as was Christianity. . .Seen in this light we perceive the reason for the musical blandness of our Jewish hymnology which is a by-product of the Jewish Reform movement and as such not older than just a little more than one hundred years.(28)

Although separated in time and chronologically, the distinctions Fromm draws between the Reformation and the emergence of Reform Judaism are critical to an unbiased understanding of Reform Jewish hymnology. As will be pointed out in the remainder of this chapter, the cultural influences upon future generations would determine the direction of Reform hymnology.

American-Jewish hymnody and the movement towards the creation of a hymnal has its immediate roots in the innovations and reforms introduced in Germany in the 19th century. It is necessary, therefore, to provide a brief survey of these developments in order to understand the foundations of American-Jewish-hymnody and the function of the hymnal in America.

The first successful attempt towards organized Reform in Europe was made by Israel Jacobson. In conjunction with the creation of a boy's school in Cassel in 1808, Jacobson introduced as part of a children's service the singing of hymns, the majority of which he borrowed from the Protestant church. "To these tunes he set Hebrew texts, and printed a

collection of chorales with the notes running from right to left."(29) (Appendix A) This hymnal contained 26 German and 4 Hebrew hymns to be sung according to 17 Church tunes. After Jacobson's reform, Idelsohn notes the appearance of several new hymnals:

> Following Jacobson's reform, several other German "chorale" books for Israelite were compiled, such as the Songster for Israelites in Suertemberg in 1836, in four parts, arranged for all Sabbaths and festivals of the year. In each hymn the contents of the weekly portion of the Pentateuch, or the underlying idea of the Festival, was expressed. The music was entirely Christian. Another collection was published by Joseph Johlson in Frankfurt for the Jewish educational institution "Philantropin." This Israelitish Songbook, published in 1840 (second edition in 1842), contains among its 102 melodies many popular Protestant chorales, such as No. 16a, introduced by Jacobson in his songbook printed in 1810. This "chorale" J. S. Bach, for example, utilized four times in his St. Matthew and in Christmas Oratorio, etc.(30)

Jacobson's innovations and reforms were to serve as the basis of the "Temple Verein," which was founded in Hamburg in 1817 by Israel Edward Kley. Kley possessed a collection of hymns utilized in the Temple founded by Jacob Beer in Berlin. These were to become the focal point of his German Songbook Religious Songs for Israelites which he brought to Hamburg in 1818. It should be noted that the collection was to become one of the primary sources for the famous Hamburg Hymnal published in 1845.(31)

The Hamburg Hymnal was to serve as the model for many songbooks developed in the United States. Many of its melodies were to be incorporated into hymnals used by Reform

congregations. Amongst these was The Sabbath Service and Miscellaneous Prayers Adopted for the Reform Society of Israelites, the earliest Reform Prayer Book printed in the country, (1830) (32) which also contained twenty-eight hymns drawn from the Hamburg hymnal.(33)

The singing of hymns, first in German and later in English, were in turn to become an important feature of the American Reform synagogue.

Hymns Written for the Service of the Hebrew Congregation Beth Elohim, the first synagogue hymnal in the United States, was published in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1842. This hymnal contained no music, only hymn texts. Most of its contents were composed by Penina Moise (1797-1880), a very talented poetess who wrote hymns for the congregation instead of borrowing songs from the Protestant church or German Reform temples. Eleven of her creations still appear in the third edition of the Union Hymnal.(34)

Although Isaac Mayer Wise was a rabbi and not a musician, he was knowledgeable on the subject of hymnology in the United States. Concerning the Charleston congregation he wrote in 1868:

> He the author knows of but one English hymn book, written and compiled for the synagogue; it is that of the Hebrew congregation of Charleston, S.C., of which he possesses the second edition. The German synagogue has several hymn books, like the Hamburg collection, the Johlsohn's, the Wartemburg and the Berlin, as also Leopold Stein's productions and collections. . . (35)

The Committee on Synagogue Music of the Central

Conference of American Rabbis (C.C.A.R.), in their report to the Conference in 1914 which provided an overview of American Jewish Hymnology, made the following critical remarks concerning the Charleston collection:

> The first attempt made in the United States to produce a Jewish Hymnal was the so-called Charleston collection, which appeared more than seventy years ago, and of which Miss Penina Moise was the author of all the hymns except a few that had been written at her request by several of her friends. Miss Moise had real poetic power, and strong religious feeling, but the value of her hymns for congregational use was impaired by her occasional carelessness in regard to the regularity of the meter and by her tendency, constantly manifested, to indulge in didactic moralizing. Making all allowances, we must accord to her a high place of honor in Jewish Hymnology.(36)

This work was to be the forerunner of numerous collections of individual hymnals and songbooks. They appeared in all sizes, each drawing from many sources, Jewish and non-Jewish, for hymns. "The musical settings, however, were generally done by Christian musicians or were adopted from German and English hymnal music."(37) Despite the diversity in approach, the common denominator to all of these attempts was clear: to initiate further involvement on the part of the congregation in the musical responses of the worship service. Rev. Joseph Leucht expressed this need in his article "Congregational Participation in Public Worship":

> What we need is the participation of the congregation itself in the choral part of the service, and means must be devised by which the whole congregation shall become cooperative in public worship.(38)

With the introduction of the mixed choir (to be addressed in detail in Chapter 3) and the organ into the Reform service, the rabbinic leadership, as evidenced by the words of Rev. Leucht, sensed a drastic change in the role of the congregation in the Reform worship service. Rev. Leucht goes on to point out:

> They are not participants, but recipients. Reform has trained the congregation into a lethargic state of indifferent listening to all that is taking place. . .(39)

The introduction of the hymnal was a response to this expressed need to further involve the individual congregant in the worship experience.

By 1868 Temple Emanuel of New York City had published a collection of hymns for Reform worship. "There were only forty hymns in the Temple Emanuel collection, thirty-six of them being translations from the German mode by James K. Gutheim and Felix Adler. The English renderings of the former, though vigorous, were anything but accurate or smooth."(40)

During this same year of 1868 Isaac M. Wise also published a collection of hymns entitled Hymns, Psalms, and Prayers in English and German. This work was intended to serve as a companion volume to Wise's other liturgical creation, Minhag America. In his introduction to his hymnal, Wise speaks of the ongoing need for new and original hymns to be incorporated into synagogue songbooks. He states:

> For us, in America, as far as the English language is spoken, it is especially necessary that gifted sons and daughters of Israel should adorn the temple with original hymns, as we are quite poor in this species of literature. The author hopes to give a fresh impulse to Hebrew genius, to enhance our sacred literature in the language of our country. He wishes heartily, that hereafter, rabbinical conferences or synods may decide on the worthiness of poetical productions, to be incorporated into our synagogal volumes; in absence thereof he can only submit his humble productions to the choice of the congregations and their respective ministers.(41)

Wise's hymnal was soon to become so highly regarded that it was utilized as the basis of the Union Hymnal, the first attempt at one unified hymnal to be utilized by all Reform congregations.

The production of private hymnals continued. Adolph Huebsch, rabbi of Temple Ahavas Chesed in New York City, in 1873 issued his own hymnal, which included many of his own original creations. These works were in German, and many were borrowed from Christian sources.

"The Union of American Hebrew Congregations offered a cash prize in the year 1877 for a Jewish hymn book, but the offer failed to induce competition, and the prize was never awarded."(42) Simon Hecht of Evansville, Indiana, the only contestant for the announced award, in 1878 compiled a hymnal entitled Jewish Hymns for Sabbath Schools and Families. Out of forty-two hymns, most of which were in English, the rest were German and original compositions of Hecht. Included in this hymnal were also tunes that had been adapted from Mozart and Mendelssohn.(43)

In 1876 Otto Loeb published a hymnal in Chicago entitled Hymnen Fuer Sabbath Und Festage. It was a multi-purpose book that could be utilized in the synagogue, home or school. It contains hymns taken from the Temple Emanu-El hymnal as well as musical creations of Rabbis Benjamin Szold and Marcus Jastrow. Although many of the melodies were of traditional origin, a strong German musical influence is also noted.(44)

In Rochester in 1880 a new hymnal appeared. Edited by Dr. Max Landsberg, then Rabbi of Temple B'rith Kodesh, this collection utilized what had become a common practice in hymn singing. Each page was cut in half, with the music appearing at the top and the words at the bottom. This enabled one to match the music of one page with the text of another. Its contents include both English and German hymns as well as several traditional holiday melodies.

In the preface to the hymnal the editor described his attempt to involve the congregation in the worship service:

> The manner in which modern Jewish services are conducted would seem to indicate that all praise and prayer was delegated to the minister and choir, depriving the congregation of all participation in the same. As a natural consequence, of whatever character the services might be under such a state of things, the same must of necessity be monotonous and uninteresting. We have long since realized this fact, and felt the necessity of taking some steps towards remedying it. We, therefore, concluded that a hymn book more ample than those in use was wanted, which, put into the hand of our congregation, would induce them to take an active part in the services.(45)

The most popular and widely accepted hymnal prior to the compilation of the Union Hymnal in 1897 was one written by

Rabbi Isaac S. Moses of New York's Central Synagogue in 1894.(46)

This hymnal featured 250 hymns in English, four Hebrew hymns and responses in both Hebrew and English for Sabbaths and holidays. In addition, solos, anthems, and seven special children's services were included.(47) Rabbi Moses also included "many tunes adapted from Mozart, Schumann, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Rossini, etc. . .The general impression of the music is decidedly German, though a few Jewish modes and tunes were inserted."(48)

Of particular interest to this study are the comments expressed by the author in the preface to his seventh edition. They reflect a growing concern over the "Jewishness" of existing collections of hymns.

> The improvement of this book will not be found not only in the larger number of hymns but chiefly in its "Jewishness." It is eminently proper that hymn-books intended for Jewish worship should be Jewish in character, and that the hymns of prayer should be the product of Jewish authors. An exception to this rule may be made to hymns that are versifications of psalms or of any other portions of the Hebrew Bible. A collection of fine poems and melodies called from the hymnals of different churches or no place in the Synagogue. Has the Jewish genius produced nothing of value that we must need go begging at the doors of every denomination?(49)

Cantor Moritz Goldstein of the Mound Street Temple in Cincinnati, in the preface to his hymnal published in 1895, echoed similar concerns regarding music in the Reform synagogue:

> Our Temple music has become a curious conglomeration of selections from masses and operas often unsuited to the purposes of religious worship.(50)

Goldstein wished to "recollect the treasures which others had thrown aside."(51) He accomplished this by drawing from the works of Sulzer and Lewandowski, the unrivalled composers of Jewish music in Europe. He also included many of his own compositions.

In a critical evaluation of late 19th century Jewish hymnology in the United States, A. Z. Idelsohn expresses similar concerns:

> In pouring out the water from the tub they carelessly threw away the child, too. They omitted the Hebrew chant in all its various forms, eliminated the recitative which is an important element in it, removed the tune for the reading of the law despite its great originality, and introduced instead a German or Anglo-Saxon hymnal melody which is foreign to the Jewish spirit. More than that, they employ Christian melodies for Jewish prayers; in other words, they endeavor to express through a Christian medium the Jew's religious thoughts and feelings toward God. Is there anything more absurd than this? Is it enough if we merely substitute God for Jesus in a Christian hymn? Does the difference between Judaism and Christianity lie in the name only?(52)

The Creation of the Union Hymnal

Despite the urgency of a discussion of the present status of music in the Reform synagogue, from 1890 to 1892 there was relatively little discussion of music amongst the Reform rabbinical leaders who had founded the Central Conference of American Rabbis in July of 1889. The 1890 and

1891 yearbooks of the C.C.A.R. reflected, in those few references which there were to music, an overall concern with music as dealt with earlier in European Reform Jewish convocations. In a collection of the resolutions of past "Reform" Conferences included in the 1890 C.C.A.R. Yearbook, reference is made to the fact that the Frankfurt Conference of 1845 had "heartily endorsed organ usage as well as Jewish or non-Jewish organists on the Sabbath."(53)

In 1892 the recommendation was made for the first time, "that the hymn-book published by the Reverend Dr. Wise be adopted as the Union Hymn Book and that in the new revised edition of same a choice of selection of other hymnals be added."(54) Dr. Kaufman Kohler then suggested this substitute amendment:

> Whereas, the Jewish Synagogue in America is sadly in need of a hymn-book that shall at once be Jewish in word and music; be it therefore resolved that the hymn-book by the Rev. Dr. I. M. Wise be adopted as the hymn-book of the American Reform Congregations and a committee of five be appointed to revise and add such selections of other hymns to it as they may see fit. Resolved, that the Cantor's Association of America be requested to furnish appropriate music for the same.(55)

A vigorous discussion then followed on the present status of synagogue music and Jewish hymnology. The remarks of the participants shed a great deal of light upon the state of Reform Jewish worship at the end of the 19th century. Rabbi Adolph Gutman, who was to serve as the secretary for the Pittsburgh Conference in 1885, noted in the ensuing discussion:

> You will agree with me that the Jewish synagogue is indeed sadly in need of Jewish music. We can indeed say we sing, but our music is not the out growth of Jewish production. We sing Methodist music and Presbyterian and Catholic. I may say that my congregation may not be a praying congregation, but my congregation is a singing congregation. And, I can see the time when hymnology, when singing in the Jewish synagogue, will bring life and new spirit to our congregations.(56)

The Rev. Dr. Harris then added these comments:

> I feel with the previous speakers that the hymn-book is perhaps more important for our work than the prayerbook, partly because the prayerbook is written and we have only to revise the old prayerbook, and the hymn-book is not. I believe I voice the sentiment of every minister, whether progressive or not, that the need of congregational singing is the need of the hour.(57)

The remainder of the remarks of present were to echo similar sentiments, namely, the need for a return to authentic Jewish sources for our music and the necessity to involve the congregation in the choral portions of the worship service.

Throughout the next five years the Hymnal Committee, working along with the Cantors' Association gathered hymns for the new Union Hymnal. These hymns were taken from "existing Hymn-Books in present use in Jewish congregations, as well as from translations of Psalms and other Biblical passages, put in meter and hymn-form by non-Jewish writers."(58) The goal of the rabbis was to enable a degree of musical standardization with the Reform synagogue and also to allow for greater congregational participation in the musical portions of the service.

> These tunes are so simple as to enable the congregation to join in the singing, and so replete with traditional melodies and reminiscences as to lend our service a peculiar Jewish character.(59)

By 1896 it was apparent, however, that the above goal of a Jewish and traditional hymnal was not to be realized. Instead, the Hymnal Committee reported "that the larger portion of the melodies has been selected and adopted from classical melodies have been utilized which were found suitable for the purpose."(60) Indeed, of the approximately 150 items in the first edition of the Union Hymnal only 16 were traced to any traditional source. The tunes for well over 100 items in the first edition were "adaptations of German, English, and French Christian composers."(61)

What changed the rabbis' minds? Why was their goal never reached? The debate is not given in the text of the 1876 Conference Yearbook and hence the details cannot be known. We are only told that the manuscript of the hymnal was entrusted to Dr. Gottheil, who in addition to reviewing the work "made a new selection of about one hundred hymns, the majority of which are taken from non-Jewish authors, and not covering a sufficiently large range of subjects necessary for Jewish worship."(62)

The tremendous differences between the final product and the plans of the Conference to create a "traditional" hymn-book are striking. While evidence gleaned from the deliberations of the C.C.A.R. is insufficient to totally explain this sudden change, it seems likely that the

corrections and suggestions of Dr. Gottheil to the final manuscript had a tremendous impact upon its outcome. The C.C.A.R. Yearbook of 1896 notes:

> Upon inspecting them we discovered that many of the original hymns had been withdrawn, and replaced by others for which new music had to be provided.

Because "congregations anxiously awaited the publication of the hymnal, and confidently expected its appearance in the fall,"(63) there was no longer sufficient time to distribute the manuscript to the Conference as originally planned. Over the opposition of Dr. Wise, a committee of three was appointed to supervise the printing and distribution of the hymnal.(64) It appears, therefore, that the recommendations of Dr. Gottheil and the lack of time available to properly review the final manuscript were major factors in determining the contents of the hymnal.

The Union Hymnal was at the press ready to be printed as of the 1897 Central Conference Convention. In a little more than nine months almost the entire first edition consisting of five thousand copies had been sold.(65) The new hymnal had been well received by the Reform congregations.

> The book has already found a place in quite a number of the largest and most prominent congregations inn the country, . . . With a little exertion on the part of the members of the Conference every member of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations could be induced to adopt the hymnal.(66)

Hymnal sales increased when the Conference in 1902 pledged that the book would not soon be revised, and in that way

assured the congregations that they might now safely invest in what was to be for several years the official Reform Jewish Hymnal.(67) The 1904 Conference added to the general acclaim for the 1897 Union Hymnal by explaining that:

> . . .the growing popularity of the Hymnal, has already added materially in the uniformity of the song service of the American Synagogue.(68)

Despite the popularity of the Hymnal with congregants and the general acclaim which the book received from the Reform rabbinical leaders, the 1906 Conference was the first to hear the call for a major revision of the 1897 Union Hymnal. The reasons for such a revision were presented as follows:

> Your committee upon examination of the Hymnal found many satisfactory features therein, yet also quite a number of texts and tunes that should not be found in a Jewish hymnal. There should be a decided improvement in the numbering of the hymns and in the index arrangement of the book and several sets of musical responses for the Hebrew prayers. . .Religious song is the language of God repeated in the sacred thoughts of man. Whether expressed in major or minor key, in lamentation or halleluyah refrain, the hymns of Judah shall awaken the loyal response in the hearts of the Judeans. A Jewish hymnal should by its hymns unite the hearts of the parents with the children, by it stirring sentiments of righteousness and godliness help the Jew to guard the way that leads to God. The first function then of the hymnal is to instill in the youth the spirit of awakening Jewish life, and a love of Jewish ceremony.(69)

In addition, the Reformers set out to recapture a degree of congregational participation which they felt had been lost in the Reform service. "If in the Sabbath school, the hymnal is to awaken sentiment; in the congregation it is to recall

and keep alive the Jewish spirit which can find fitting expression only in song and prayer."(70) Once again the Central Conference intended to produce a new hymnal which would be distinctly Jewish in spirit, in that it would include the traditional Jewish music and hymns "that are inspired by the great historic moments in Jewish life, Biblical and Post-Biblical, soul-stirring psalms, versifications of prophetic ideas and ideals that mark the universal aspiration of man and sing of the divine promptings of the Jewish spirit and faith in God."(71)

The rabbis also sought to include in their new hymnal the "love of country" theme by including patriotic and nationalistic hymns so as to "evoke the civic virtues and patriotic devotion of the Jew to his native and adopted country, especially to America whose ideals and principles are so beautifully attuned to our religion of righteousness, justice, freedom, equality, and fraternity."(72) The new hymnal would also include the finest hymns drawn from the various hymnals published either in Europe or America so as to assure a new hymnal which would be "sound in religious thought inspiring in Jewish sentiment and beautiful in the harmony."(73)

Thus for these reasons and more the Hymnal Revision Committee of the C.C.A.R. recommended a revision be made of the 1897 Union Hymnal. The new hymnal would feature clearer print, better and clearer indexes, larger pages, more hymns, and simplified services for Sabbaths, holidays, historic and

patriotic occasions.(74) This report by the Committee was adopted by the Central Conference Convention and hence a new Union Hymnal was definitely to be written and published.

From 1907 to 1914 when the revised Union Hymnal first appeared the committee reported about every other year, at the Conference Convention, as to their progress. Once again they enlisted the aid of the Cantor's Association of America and established a committee of nine Conference members to work on the new hymnal. The rabbis of the Central Conference were requested to send in their suggestions of those hymns which, in their opinion, were most suitable, technically and theologically, to be included in the new hymn-book.

An attempt to increase the Jewish content of the Union Hymnal is apparent in the 1914 second edition. Of the 226 items in the second edition, more than 140, however, still make use of tunes derived from non-Jewish services--several of them adopted from Church Hymnals. "Some melodies are popular in all Churches, such as No. 97, which was first introduced into the Reform Temple by Jacobson."(75) Of the 40 traditional tunes listed as such, Idelsohn has shown that only 16 actually derive from traditional services.(76) In his authoritative text, Jewish Music, he has moreover contended that several of the melodies that actually deserve to be called traditional were so mutilated in the 1914 edition as to be valueless for any student bent on learning the original character of the music. Idelsohn concludes his critique of the 1914 edition by noting:

> Neither traditional modes nor motives of Jewish folk song have been utilized. The style of the hymns is that of the Protestant hymn, both in its melodic line and in its harmonization in four-part choruses. This procedure adopted also by the other Hymnals is detrimental for congregational unison singing as well as for an appropriate instrumental accompaniment. It leaves a dull and choppy impression.(77)

Already at the Buffalo Conference in 1917, a committee recommended a revision of the 1914 edition, though it had been in use for only three years. At that convention of 1917, the Committee on Synagogue Music presented an elaborate report, submitting an analysis of the hymn-book from a musical standpoint, and making suggestions as to which hymns should be retained or eliminated. During the ten years that followed, many efforts were made to subject the hymn-book to a complete revision. Not until the C.C.A.R. Conference of 1930, however, was a revised manuscript of the Hymnal made available. At this Conference, the goals of the 3rd edition of the Union Hymnal were articulated:

> (1) To stimulate congregational singing. (2) To inspire Jewish devotion. (3) To revive the values of Jewish melody. (4) To make use of much of our neglected Jewish poetry. (5) To stimulate the writing of contemporary Jewish poetry. (6) To exclude, so far as possible, non-Jewish music and poetry. (7) To provoke in the children of our religious schools a love for Jewish poetry and song. (8) To encourage in the religious schools an earnest study of Jewish music and finally (9) To give to our American Jewish congregations such singable Jewish music as will make the worshiper feel at home in any synagogue of America. The

> attention of this Conference has been called to the fact heretofore that none of the great sources of strength in the Protestant Church was its familiar hymns which were known from one end of the land to the other, and all of this gives us to submit to the Conference a hymn-book which we hope will become a precious possession of the American Synagogue, and to unite and solidify our Jewish congregations by a common knowledge of many favorite and worthwhile hymns.(78)

The specific additions and deletions are outlined in the 1930 Conference Yearbook. Of particular interest to this study was an examination of the term "hymnal" and its appropriateness for a Jewish collection of songs. After an etymological analysis of the word, the following recommendation is made:

> It seems to the Committee that the Biblical point of view ought to be revived in naming our manual of singing. We recommend to the Conference that "Union Hymnal" be used as principle title, but that "Songs and Prayers for Jewish Worship" be used as a subtitle. This title we believe not alone to be more Jewish, but also more descriptive of the contents. . .

Despite the fact that the third edition attempted to include more Jewish components, the list of composers still included such men as Isaac Watts, William Couper, Robert Grant, Christopher Wordsworth and many others who were major contributors to Protestant hymnology. The tunes as well as the texts in the third edition were often taken directly from the Protestant church. Robert Stevenson, in his book Patterns of Protestant Church Music provides the following examples:

> Examples of borrowings include Bach's setting of a Georg Neumark Chorale; Handel's tune now associated with Nahum Tate's Christmas hymn, "While Shepards Watched Their Flock by Night"; Hayden's tune now associated with "O Worship the King"; Felice de Giardini's tune "Trinity", now associated with "Come, Thou Almighty King"; William Croft's tune "St. Anne", now associated with "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past."(79)

The influence of Protestant hymnology, therefore, is easily identifiable in this third edition.

At the same time, however, there are certainly more recognizable Jewish features in the third edition than there were in second and certainly in the first. Stevenson points out that:

> The third edition printed 267 English hymns in the main section (Part I): of these 267 approximately 50, or one-fifth of the total, are hymns founded on traditional synagogal chants.(80)

Another important addition to the third edition was a significant number of entirely new hymns. In his analysis of the Union Hymnal, Stevenson notes that of these new creations, a majority were written by Jewish composers or taken from Jewish sources. Christian sources were almost entirely avoided.(81)

After its publication in 1932, there is little or no discussion of the Union Hymnal at the annual C.C.A.R. Conferences. The next reference to the hymnal is in 1934 when the Committee on Synagogue Music notes in their report:

> It is the recommendation of the Committee that the Conference devise ways and means not only for the popularization of the Hymn Book, but also for the stimulation of song and an appreciation of hymn

music in our congregational life.(82)

In 1938, the Committee recommends to the Conference that "a continuing study of the Union Hymnal should be undertaken."(83) In order to accomplish this aim, it was suggested that a questionnaire be sent to the members of the Conference regarding the use of the Hymnal.

The results of the questionnaire were presented to the Conference in 1942. According to a system devised by Dr. Werner, the following results are noted:

> Our hymns of Part I (267 in total) are classified as follows: (1) excellent, which consists of eight hymns; (2) good, which consists of forty-four hymns; (3) satisfactory, forty-nine; and (4) useable, seventy-four - which gives us a total of 175 hymns to be retained. It finds 92 marked for elimination. The second part of the Hymnal consists of 21 excellent hymns, 21 good, 18 satisfactory, and 13 useable, with no eliminations.(84)

From this information, the dissatisfaction with the Hymnal, or at least large sections of it, are certainly discernable. This is also supported by the fact that the sales of the Hymnal were disappointing, as reported at the 1943 Conference:

> We regret to state that our publications have not been selling as well as we had anticipated. The reasons may be varied and the blame has been widely distributed.(85)

By 1944, interest is already expressed in a possible revision of the hymnal. It is noted in the report of the Committee on Synagogue Music:

> For an eventual revision, it would be well to collect new hymn texts and tunes. The cumulative efforts will make the task of the editors of the Hymnal easier and the results more satisfactory, in the future.(86)

At this Conference there is also a call for congregational singing which need not be limited to hymns alone. The need for the singing of "authentic" Jewish songs by volunteer adult or junior choirs is expressed. Noting the existence of Jewish folk songs of Jewish origin and Zimirot, the Committee issues a strong statement on behalf of authenticity:

> There is no need to continue the policy of borrowing tunes on the assumption that we are cultural beggars and imitators of our berths. We should sing our own songs with dignity, and we must strive to make these songs beautiful.(87)

In 1945 and 46, the call for a revision of the Hymnal is voiced once again. In the 1946 Yearbook of the C.C.A.R. it is noted:

> The Hymnal calls for revision, but the proper utilization of the available material is more urgent. Unfortunately too little use is made of our hymns and the fault is less with the material than with apathy and incompetence.

By 1950, the emphasis of the Synagogue Music Committee of the C.C.A.R. shifted to the creation of a Children's Hymn Book. Throughout the 1950's the discussions of this committee centered around the compilation of such a Hymnal-Songster for young people. Ten years in the making,

the 1960 Conference Yearbook announces the release of the Union Songster. The 1960 Yearbook provides the details of the creation of this work. Again, the recommendation is made:

> Your committee, however, strongly urges that the Conference proved to the creation of a new edition of the Union Hymnal that will enhance adult worship.(88)

By 1964, a formal recommendation was made by the Committee on Synagogue Music:

> We urge the Conference to take the necessary action which will enable the Committee on Synagogue Music to progress towards a revision of the Union Hymnal.(89)

Conference Yearbooks throughout the remainder of the 1960's contain reports of various attempts to create a song book for the adult congregation. The 1965 Yearbook notes:

> . . .the Conference authorizes the preparation of a song book for adult congregational use during religious services. . . .The songbook is intended to be not merely another hymnal. The committee's goal is to raise the musical standards of our congregations. This is to be accomplished in two ways: (1) by encouraging the participation of the congregation in the musical portions of the worship, and (2) by educating the music specialist (cantor, choir, and choir director) with respect to musical sources through explanatory sections and bibliographies.

The 1968 and 69 Conference Yearbooks speak of the creation of "a small booklet of hymns and responses for use in the pew, and a larger edition for the choir loft."(90) By 1970, we once again hear of the new Union Hymnal. The Committee on Liturgy and Music reports in 1970:

> A text of the new Union Hymnal, edited by Malcolm Stern and the Music Sub-committee, has been submitted to the Executive Board.

This is the last official reference to a revision of the Union Hymnal by the C.C.A.R. This document, despite the years of discussion and preparation, was never to appear. In its place, the Conference called for a hymnal to accompany the new Gates of Prayer, as is noted in the 1973 Conference Yearbook:

> The committee has plans to develop a Hymnal to accompany Gates of Prayer, and is working in co-operation with the American Conference of Cantors toward that end.

By 1976, we are informed that this project was near completion, as is recorded in the 1976 Conference Yearbook:

> Shaarei Shirah, Gates of Song, is now nearing completion. A project of the American Conference of Cantors, with Malcolm H. Stern serving as our representative, it will contain song texts printed together with the melodic line. A larger volume will offer full musical accompaniment for organists and choirs, both for Shaarei Tefillah and haarei Teshuvah.

In 1977 a musical supplement to Gates of Prayer entitled Songs and Hymns appeared. This work includes the words and melody line for all the songs included in Gates of Prayer. This collection was not intended for use by the individual congregant, but rather as an aid for cantors and organists to encourage the singing of those hymns found in the Gates of Prayer.

Despite the claim in 1976 that Shaarei Shira was near completion, the Committee on Music reports in 1980 that the work was still continuing.

> It was reported that Shaarei Shirah, the new C.C.A.R. hymnal, has made progress. A special committee is doing the editing. Our committee has no responsibility.

A presentation of musical selections from Shaarei Shirah was part of the program for the 1980 Conference as well.

At the 1981 Conference, the Committee on Liturgy issued the following report concerning Shaarei Shirah:

> It was reported that the Publications Committee had voted not to authorize further funds for the publication of the Volume, but it appears likely that Transcontinental Music will be able to publish the volume instead. It was suggested that a complete selection of Ta-amei Neginah be included.

In addition, the chairman of the Committee on Music made the following comments:

> The new C.C.A.R. hymnal is completely beyond our authority. Malcolm Stern was kind enough to keep us abreast as to what is going on, but it was obvious that we had no say as to its editing. Other matters were all of much less importance.

The deliberation of the "Committee on Synagogue Music" of the C.C.A.R. leave many critical questions unanswered. Despite official notification by the Conference in 1976 that the project was near completion, the musical companion to the Gates of Prayer, Shaarei Sherah as of this writing has yet to appear. What is the current status of Shaarei Sherah and how does one account for its delay in publication?

Rabbi Malcolm Stern, editor of the Union Songster and the C.C.A.R. coordinator of this project, was able to provide this author with some invaluable insights into these questions.(91)

Many different factors contributed to the delay of this project. First and foremost, Rabbi David Polish, president of the Conference from 1971-73, felt that the manuscript contained too much of the old and not enough of the new. It was during this period, from the early to mid-seventies, that contemporary Israeli music was beginning to exert a stronger influence upon liturgical music in the United States. The Israel and Chasidic Song Festivals in particular began to serve as an important source of Jewish synagogal music. It was recommended by Rabbi Polish that these new sources not be ignored in the compilation of the hymnal. In light of this suggestion, the contents of Shaarei Sherah were once again reviewed, setting back significantly its final date of publication.

A second important factor in the delay of the appearance of Shaarei Sherah was financial. As noted in the 1981 Yearbook of the C.C.A.R. funds were not authorized for the publication of the hymnal. Generating the necessary funds for the completion of the project proved to be a major stumbling block to its ultimate publication.

Finally, Rabbi Stern points to the bureaucratic delays of working in committee as a major cause for the delay of this critical project. This extended the time necessary to

complete the work several fold. Certainly example of this can also be noted in the creation of the 3rd edition of the Union Hymnal.

Shaarei Sherah, the newest hymnal of the Reform movement, will be available for congregational use in late 1986 or early 1987.

NOTES

Chapter Two - Hymnal

(1) A. Z. Idelsohn, Jewish Music in its Historical Development (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 20-21.

(2) Ibid., 21.

(3) See Deuteronomy 27: 21-26.

(4) See Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sotah 8:5.

(5) Shir Ha Shirim Rabbah, Chapter VIII end and as quoted in Idelsohn, p. 98.

(6) See Soferim, Chapter IV: "Similarly it is not proper for the precentor to stand alone before the reading desk; so two persons should stand with him, one on his right and the other on his left, the number corresponding to that of the patriarchs." Also see Pirke R. Eliezar, 44, for a reference to the "tomechim."

(7) Idelsohn, 104-5.

(8) A. W. Binder, "A History or American-Jewish Hymnody," in Studies in Jewish Music: Collected Writings of A. W. Binder, ed. Irene Heskes, (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1971), 256.

(9) A. Z. Idelsohn, "Synagogue Music-Past and Present," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, 33 (1923), 349.

(10) Ibid., 349-350.

(11) Ibid., 350.

(12) W. O. E. Oesterley, The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 99.

(13) Idelsohn, Jewish Music in its Historical Development, 109.

(14) Binder, 258.

(15) Alfred Sendrey, The Music of the Jews in the Diaspora (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1970), 183.

(16) Binder, 258. See also Idelsohn, Jewish Music, p. 220.

(17) Idelsohn, Jewish Music, 238.

(18) Rev. Francis L. Cohen, "The Rise and Development of Synagogue Music," in Papers Read at the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition, (London: Office of the "Jewish Chronicle," 1888), 115.

(19) Ibid.

(20) Binder, 257.

(21) F. L. Cohen, 116.

(22) Jacob Singer, "Jewish Music Historically Considered," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, 23 (1913), 244.

(23) Idelsohn, "Synagogue Music-Past and Present", 351.

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(25) Herbert Fromm, On Jewish Music: A Composers View (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1978), 20.

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(27) Ibid., 21.

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(38) Joseph Leucht, "Congregational Participation in Public Worship," Jewish Conference Papers, (1887), 34.

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(55) Ibid., 23-24.

(56) Ibid., 24.

(57) Ibid.

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(62) C.C.A.R. Yearbook, 6, (1896), 57.

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(64) Ibid.

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(67) C.C.A.R. Yearbook, 12, (1902), 45.

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THE ROLE OF THE CHOIR

Nowhere is the connection between the innovations instituted by Reform Judaism and its biblical and Talmudic precedent more pronounced than in the introduction of the choir to the Jewish worship service. A clear understanding of the role of the choir in the American Reform Synagogue initially requires, therefore, an examination of its biblical and post-biblical roots.

The first choir mentioned in the Bible was the one organized by the Levites for the Temple service, to be accompanied by musicians. Our primary resources for a description of the function of the levitical chorus are the Book of Chronicles and the Talmud. Both documents provide an in-depth look at the nature of this important biblical institution.

The singers were admitted into the levitical choir when thirty years old (I Chronicles 23:3).(1) This means that only when they reached this mature age, could they become full fledged members of the levitical guild of singers. The mere fact that the singers were admitted at this relatively late age, and that they were then called "skillful" (Hebrew מְבִינִים "experts"; I Chronicles 25:7), suggests that their years of schooling must have been long and arduous. Otherwise they could easily start their professional career at the age of twenty-five or even sooner.

They served twenty years, until they reached the age of fifty, when the vocal qualities of a singer generally start to decline.(2) Prior to their admittance, they had to pass a five year apprenticeship.(3) Such a relatively short period of preparation (beginning supposedly at the age of twenty-five) appears inadequate in view of the fact that the Israelites maintained at this time an oral tradition in their music. Therefore, the levitical singers had to memorize the entire voluminous and complete musical ritual in order to master all of its details. To achieve this goal, the actual training must have been considerably longer than the prescribed five years, and thus was bound to start at a much earlier age, most probably in childhood. This is proven by the Mishnah:

> None that was not of age could enter the Temple Court to take part in the (Temple) service save only when the Levites stood up to sing; and they (the children) did not join the singing with harp and lyre, but with mouth alone to add spice to the music. R. Eliezer b. Jacob says: They did not help to make up the required number (i.e. twelve Levites standing on the Platform), nor did they stand on the Platform; but they used to stand on the ground so that their heads were between the feet of the Levites; and they used to be called the Levites tormentors. (זעירי כלוים)(4)

זעירי כלוים is a play upon words discussed by Rashi. The assonance with סגן כלוים, "assistant or helper," has given rise to the interpretation that the little singers, owing to their vocal quality ("to add spice to the music"), may have annoyed the adult singers, leading to jealousy.(5) Thus, the levitical singers might have considered "the little ones" as

dangerous competition.

To be sure, the rabbinic references to the use of boy-singers in the levitical choir imply the practice of the Second Temple; it is safe to assume, however, that the usage had already been instituted in the First Temple. Without an appropriately long training, the high artistic level and famous musical precision of the levitical performances, repeatedly attested in the Book of Chronicles, could not have been achieved.

One aspect of the levitical choir which remains controversial and concerning which there is not unanimous agreement is the role of women in its ranks. This discussion was to have particular importance for the early advocates of reform, for it was upon their insistence, based on biblical proof texts, that women did participate in the levitical choir that they justified their inclusion of women in their own contemporary choirs. This issue, along with the question as to whether gentiles were allowed to sing in the synagogue choir, were to become the two primary concerns of the shapers of Reform religious practice over the years.

Alfred Sendrey and Mildred Norton are proponents not only for the active role of women in ancient Hebrew music but for the inclusion of women in the levitical choir as well. In their book David's Harp, they point to Miriam as the protype for women's participation in early Hebrew rituals. Not only did she lead the women in song and dance after the Israelites successfully crossed the Red Sea, but led the

people in ceremonies of song during their desert wandering, which was a customary function of women.(6)

In addition to Miriam, Sendrey and Norton also make note of the prophetess Deborah's contribution to ancient Israelite song.(7) Upon the defeat of the Canaanite chief Sisera, the people call to Deborah: "Awake, awake Deborah; awake, with a song." (Judges 5:12). Deborah herself said: "I, unto the Lord will I sing." (Judges 5:3).

Based on the thesis that women were never excluded from the musical life of ancient Israel, Sendrey and Norton then go on to argue for the inclusion of women in the levitical choir:

> Although we know little about their role, there is good reason to believe that women also took part in the musical service, a case in point being the three daughters of Heman who were mentioned in the Chronicles along with his fourteen sons. It may be that the daughters served in the vocal ranks, since the passage states that "they were all under the hand of their father for song."(8)

The authors also note the reference in Ezra and Nehemiah to "singing women."(9) In addition to pointing out that "these were probably secular singers who went along to help lighten the hardships of the long journey,"(10) they add the following argument:

> The chronicling Israelites were primarily concerned with matters affecting the religious cult, and their reference to such a group of singers suggests that these may have been drawn from extra Levitical reserves for the sacred service, prepared in Babylon against the possibility that the sons of Asoph might not survive the exile in sufficient numbers. If this were the case, then the

> statements of Ezra and Nehemiah would support the theory that women participated in the Levitical choirs from the beginning and even, for a time at least, in the Second Temple.(11)

In a final attempt to prove the participation of women in the levitical choir, Sendrey and Norton turned to eighteenth century Biblical scholarship. They conclude by quoting the French scholar, Augustin Calmet:

> In the Temple and in religious ceremonies, female musicians were found as well as male musicians. As a rule these were the Levites daughters. . . The Chaldean version of Ecclesiastes, in which Solomon says that "He got for himself men singers and women singers," indicates female musicians in the Temple.(12)

A. Z. Idelsohn takes exception to Sendrey and Norton's conclusion concerning the role of women in the levitical chorus. Despite their prominent role in ancient Israel, Idelsohn argues that "participation of women in the Temple choir is nowhere traceable."(13) In reference to the שרות or "Women Singers" mentioned by Sendrey and Norton, Idelsohn points out:

> The statements recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah reflect the secular musicians of the noble families who possessed among the 7,337 servants some 200 or 245 male and female musicians. No reference is made to their being Levites, i.e., of the traditionally sacred cast of musicians.(14)

Idelsohn further strengthens this point by noting the following statement from Pirke D'Rabbi Eliezer, Chapter XVII:

> Rabbi Meir said: "the singing men" refer to the Levites, who stood upon the platform singing; "and

> the singing women" refer to their wives. Rabbi Simeon said: These terms do not refer merely to the Levites and their wives; but to the skilled women. . .

As pointed out earlier, early Reform polemics supporting the role of women in the synagogue choir, utilized many of these same arguments. In an editorial in the American Israelite entitled "The Singing of Ladies in the Synagogue," the Rev. Dr. Eckman utilizes the reference to שרות in Nehemiah 6:67 and the three daughters mentioned in I Chronicles 25:5 to argue in favor of the inclusion of women in the choir. He concludes by stating: "If authority is required, is the following not conclusive?"(15) (With reference to the above examples).

The Rabbis, after the destruction of the Second Temple, issued a decree prohibiting all instrumental or vocal music, as a sign of national mourning: "The ear that listens to music should be (barren) deaf; any house where there is song should eventually be destroyed."(16) While no choral singing was formally permitted, we find that as early as the third century the Sheliach Tzibbur (messenger of the congregation), an honorary precentor who performed all parts of the liturgy supported by the worshippers' responses, was assisted by two helpers, called "tomechim" or "mesayim" who aided him whenever necessary in remembering the prayers.(17)

A. W. Binder, in agreement with Idelsohn's theory concerning the function of the "tomechim", reaches the following significant conclusion: "The 'tomechim' probably

often joined in singing the prayers and thus became the foundation for the synagogue choir that was developed in later centuries."(18)

"The first account of what might be referred to as a professional choir is to be found in Sefer Yuhasen, which describes the installation of the Exilarch in the ninth century:"

> The Hazan intones ברוך שאמר, the choristers respond to each sentence with ברוך הוא. When the Hazan begins the מזמור שיר (ps.92), the choristers respond by singing יום שבתון where upon the entire congregation recite the entire פסוקי דזמרה to the end. The Hazan then intones ישתבח and the young choristers respond by singing יתברך שמך. From here the Hazan recites one sentence and the singers respond with the next one and so forth up to the Kedushah (of the יוצר before קדושה). The congregation recites the Kedushah in a soft voice, and the choristers sing it aloud. Then the young men are silent and the Hazan alone continues until ותפילתנו at which all rise for the Amida. In the loud repetition of the Amida and Kedushah, the choristers respond regularly until the end of the "ועל הקדוש ברוך הוא" and thereupon the Hazan ends.(19)

This is, according to noted Jewish musicologist Eric Werner, the "earliest account depicting the performance of a choir in addition to that of a professional Hazan and the traditional responses of the congregation."(20)

Despite the rabbinic ban on all types of music referred to above, vocal music was to become a central feature of synagogue worship as illustrated above. R. Hai Gaon ws to further state that the ban referred only to Arabian love songs.(21) Maimonides also was to permit the choir to sing in God's praise at the synagogue and at all religious toasts.(22)

The modern synagogue choir owes its origin to the spirit of the Italian Renaissance. "So far as we know, the first synagogue singing which made use of a number of voices, singing with some pretensions to artistry, was in Italy"(23) in the early 17th century.

Even in this center of the Renaissance, where more and more Jews were participating in the musical life of the country, innovations in the standard worship service were met with considerable opposition. Despite this fact, under the influence of the Renaissance, many synagogue throughout Italy attempted to introduce choral singing in their services, according to "musical science," i.e., harmony.(24) The famous musician Salomone Rossi, at the suggestion of Rabbi Leon of Modena (1571-1648), set various Psalms to music and composed several pieces for choirs of three to eight voices. These compositions are void of any Jewish characteristics, and are modeled upon the art music of its day.

This innovation did not go unnoticed. It received a tremendous amount of criticism from rabbis and communities.

In his introduction to Rossi's collection of Psalms, entitled HaSirim Asher Lishlomo - The Songs of Solomon, Rabbi Leon of Modena further defends the introduction of the choir to the synagogue service:

> I am convinced that from the moment of its appearance this work will spread the taste for good music in Israel, to praise the Lord. Among us

> people were to be found--of this there is no doubt--those who infallibly resist all progress and who will also resist these songs which are beyond their understanding. I therefore consider it advisable to refer to the answer to a question put to me when I was still Rabbi at Ferrara; all the great scholars of Venice agreed with me. I demonstrated that there is nothing in the Talmud which can be cited against the introduction of choir-singing into our Temples; and that was sufficient to close the malevolent mouths of the opponents. Despite all they can say, I put all my trust in the honour and nurture of song and music in our synagogues, to extend these things and to make use of them, until the wrath of God is turned away from us and He builds His Temple again in Zion, and commands the Levites to perform their music, and all singing will be happy and joyful again, not as it is to-day, when we sing with heavy hearts and in anguish of spirit for the pain of our dispersion. (25)

The matter was finally submitted to the rabbinical assembly in Venice, where the opposition argued that "joy and song in the Synagogue had been prohibited since the destruction of the Temple."(26) The assembly decided in favor of the innovation. "One member of the assembly, Rabbi Benzion Zarfati, stated that in his youth, when he was studying in Padua, he used to join in singing in the choir in the synagogue."(27)

Despite these innovations, the synagogue in general was not yet ready to accept the choir. It would be another 200 years before the choir would become an accepted part of Jewish worship.

As noted in previous chapters, the Emancipation brought in its wake numerous attempts to reform the synagogue service. The first successful reformer was Israel Jacobson, whose innovations in Seesen served as a catalyst for future

synagogue reform.

These early reforms consisted primarily of a sermon in the vernacular, the singing of hymns, and the introduction of a choir with male and female voices to the accompaniment of an organ. This period was to witness the professionalization of the synagogue choir. Once limited to two male voices singing with the cantor, the choir now took on a new identity. A group of at least four male or mixed voices now attempted to present the synagogue service in an artistic fashion. Being able to read music and attend regular rehearsals now became requirements for participation in the synagogue choir.

The first legitimate attempt to introduce a choir with four parts was made by Israel Levy (1773-1832), one of the outstanding synagogue singers of his day. Known among other chazzanim as Israel Glogow and later as Reb Yisrael Fuerth, Levy was also versed in the classical music of his day and played several musical instruments. In addition to being the first to introduce a modern four-part choir, Levy also "attempted to introduce into the service the style of the classicists of his day."(28)

Despite his great talent, most of his endeavors towards reform did not survive. This role of innovator was to be left to Solomon Sulzer in Vienna and Louis Lewandowaski in Berlin. A theory as to why this great talent had such little impact upon the modern synagogue is proposed by Idelsohn:

> . . .Levy was an extremist; as we see from his

> compositions, whose effort was to break with the past and tradition and to introduce entirely new tunes--an effort in line with the general attempt to do away with the old Jewish life and create an entirely new Jew and Judaism.(29)

Solomon Sulzer, known as "the father of modern hazzanut and synagogue music"(30) became hazzan of the Vienna synagogue in 1826. Possessing an outstanding voice and a well-rounded education in the secular music of his day, Sulzer was engaged to modernize the music of the Vienna synagogue as well as "to maintain the unity of its members, and therefore to avoid every extreme reform which might cause a split such as had occurred in Germany."(31)

Sulzer's guidelines in achieving this most difficult goal is best expressed in his own words:

> In the first place, it behooves us to fight the opinion that the regeneration of the service can be materialized only by an entire break with the past, by abolishing all traditional and inherited, historically-evolved liturgy. To limit the entire service to a German hymn before and after the sermon, to give a certificate of divorce to tradition, was the intention of those who instigated the ill-fated reform in Hamburg and Berlin. . . .But to me it appeared that the confusion of the Synagogue service resulted from the need of only a Restoration which should remain on historical ground; and that we might find out the original noble forms to which we should anchor, developing them in artistic style. The old generation should recognize the familiar and endeared element, while the young generation should be educated to the appreciation of it. Jewish liturgy must satisfy the musical demands while remaining Jewish; and it should not be necessary to sacrifice the Jewish characteristics to artistic forms. The principle was 'to unite the heart of the fathers with that of the children, and to win ambitious youth for the sentiments of the old generation. . . .'(32)

Sulzer was admired and respected by the entire Jewish world of his day. He was sought out by many cantors, and his musical opinion was in great demand. It was his ultimate, lifelong aim "to raise hazzanut to a high level of dignity and art."(33)

The accomplishments of this great musical genius are summarized by Idelsohn:

> (1) His form of expression distinguished itself by a brevity and conciseness similar to the ancient Hebrew style.
>
> (2) No lyrical melodies of playful character occur, his melodic line always being serious and dignified.
>
> (3) He was the first to base the Synagogue sing on classical harmony and style.
>
> (4) He further introduced the regular four part singing, consisting of boys (soprano and alto) and men (tenor and bass). In this innovation, however, the above mentioned Israel Lovy preceded him by inaugurating four part singing in the newly built Temple in Paris in 1822.(34)

What Sulzer accomplished for the Austrian synagogue, Louis Lewandowaski did for the German. Greatly influenced by Sulzer and Mendelssohn, Lewandowaski greatest talent was "his tasteful and skillful re-shaping of old material in modern forms."(35)

Lewandowaski became choir director of the New Synagogue in Berlin in 1864. It was at this time that Lewandowaski's musical genius began to blossom and his reputation spread. It was also at this time that he composed his first two works of liturgical music, "Kol Rinnah" (Sabbath services) and

"Todah V'Zimrah" (holiday services).(36)

Despite whatever criticism one might bring to their musical style, the choral music and arrangements of Sulzer and Lewandowski were soon to find their way across the ocean and find home in many Reform synagogues in the 19th century. Even to this day, much of their music has remained a staple in the repertoire of the American Reform synagogue.

The Choir in the American Reform Synagogue

The first synagogue choir in the United States is credited to Shearith Israel in New York. A congregational chorale of "fifteen ladies and ten gentlemen" prepared by the musically gifted Jacob Seixas participated in the special dedicatory service of the Second Mill Street Synagogue in 1818. Two women and three men in the choir were members of the Seixas family, and the general effect of this specially organized choir was "strikingly impressive."(37)

This first choir was formed solely for the dedication of the new synagogue building. After the ceremony several young men of the choral group turned to the Board of Trustees of Shearith Israel with the suggestion that they form a singing class to improve congregational singing.(38)

Some of the problems seen by the committee discussing the choir included possible jealousy or resentment. They admonish that a whole congregation should never rely on the gratuitous services of any number of persons.(39) Despite these objections and the feeling "that choral singing would be a break with the traditions of the synagogue,"(40) the "innovation proposed was adopted by the Trustees of Shearith Israel in a tentative and modified form:"(41)

> Your committee are therefore of opinion, that it would be expedient to grant the request in a manner as we conceive is contemplated by the association, whom they are convinced never considered it in the light that your committee have. They are, however, of the opinion that the association may do great good, and for that purpose invite them to commence

> their rehearsals without delay, with a full and entire understanding that any member of the congregation, may attend the same, join therein, as well as in the Synagogue, under such rules and regulations as shall be adopted. We shall thus acquire a harmony in singing and give a general solemnity to our service, offend none and prevent anything like discord in shool. . . .(42)

In 1825, the same Jacob Seixas participated in the dedication of Mikveh Israel's new synagogue building in Philadelphia, in a choir of five people. The event is described in a letter from Rebecca Gratz to her brother Benjamin.(43) In the same letter members of the choir are identified, ". . .you will wonder where 'these sweet singers of Israel' were collected from. The leader, teacher, and principal performer is Jacob Seixas and his female first voice his sister Miriam. . ."(44)

Although the efforts of Jacob Seixas appeared to produce a choir of high musical standards, the conservatism of Shearith Israel did not result in choir participation in the synagogue service. The first regular synagogue choir in New York was organized at Temple Emanu-El in New York. This choir, organized in 1845 by G. M. Cohen,(45) was a male choir comprised of volunteers. Compensation for participation was free membership, and for children a suit was given yearly as a gift from the congregation.(46)

In 1846, it was decided to use the music of the Temple at Munich(47) and in 1850 a copyist was engaged to write out the musical compositions of the Hamburg Synagogue.(48) When Isaac Meyer Wise heard this choir in 1846 he remarked, "...A

boy's choir, reinforced by a few men's voices, and a cantor with a weak tenor voice, sang some compositions of Sulzer as poorly as in a village synagogue; but dignity and decorum ruled. . ."(49)

In 1849 the Second Synagogue choir was organized at Congregation Anshe Chesed in New York. Originally constituted to sing at the dedication of the synagogue's new building, this group of sixteen men and women and eleven children began to sing every Sabbath thereafter.(50) Under the leadership of Leon Steinberger, a hazzan from Warsaw, the choir achieved a very professional stature. Copies of Sulzer's "Shir Zion" were procured and Steinberger provided musical training for the children that was "in line with present day methods in teaching music."(51) Compensation for choir members was similar to that of Temple Emanu-El. Some participants were given a regular salary, while most received free seats or membership.(52)

The choir, however, was not without its problems. With its growing sense of professionalism, choir members with excellent voices demanded regular increases in salary. Participants requested compensation for expenses incurred in their work. There was a significant increase in the turnover of choir members. To deal with all the difficulties related to the choir, a special committee was formed whose job it was to oversee all of these questions.(53)

The controversial issue of a mixed choir seemed to receive little attention at Anshe Chesed.(54) The only

indirect reference to this question in the minutes of the congregation is pointed out by Hyman Grinstein:

> The only reference to the legal point involved occurred when Jonas Hecht, the second hazzan, who sang with the choristers, was asked to leave the choir because "complaints had come forward to the effect that it was not proper of the hazzan to sing with the ladies in one choir and to run in and out twice during the service." The complaint about Hecht's running in and out twice during the service undoubtedly refers to his making his way up to the choir loft after officiating, first, at the Pesuke de-Zimrah and, later, at the reading of the Torah. Mr. Hecht's reply to the complaint stated that "the singing by the hazzan with the ladies in one choir was not prohibited by our Jewish laws but that the singing of ladies itself was not in accordance with the rites of the Jewish religion." The distinction made by Hecht does not seem to have impressed the board, for, in the fall, after the consultation with the membership, the trustees ordered Hecht moved from the list of choirsteers.(55)

Anshe Chesed now joined Emanu-El as the only congregations during this time to permit choirs of male and female voices. As noted earlier, Shearith Israel still only allowed a mixed choir to perform at special occasions, such as the dedication of a new synagogue.

The third choir to be organized was at B'nai Jeshurun in New York. "In 1855, Hazzan R. Herman trained a paid choir consisting of men and boys only."(56) Relying primarily upon the works of Sulzer and other unnamed composers, the choir performed on Friday night as well as Saturday morning. The New York Daily Times in 1856 referred to B'nai Jeshurun's choir of men and boys as "a novel feature in the religious services of the Jews in this city."(57)

The establishment by 1857 of choirs at Emanu-El, Anshe

Chesed and B'nai Jeshurun was to begin to influence Shearith Israel as well. An advertisement was placed for a permanent choir master. Despite this first bold step towards innovation, the trustees still "did not approve of a choir for this congregation."(58) It took over thirty years of experimentation and questioning, but eventually a choir of men and boys became a permanent fixture of the worship service at Shearith Israel.(59)

The minute books of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation from 1863 provide valuable insight into another painful problem faced by many congregations: the organization and maintenance of a choir.

> It becomes our painful duty to notify you that in consequence of the want of volunteer support to the choir, we cannot continue without material aid. At first it was our pleasure to offer the services in the capacity of choristers impressed as we were, with the importance of such an improvement to the service, and we have endeavored to sustain the choir to this time with all the support our individual exertions could afford. But from the first serious difficulties surrounded it from the fact that female voices must be dispensed with and their places supplied by boys; these who cannot control nature and at reaching fifteen years of age their voices crack, and also the fact that we cannot find even one voice of sufficient strength to be relied on in the production of new songs or difficult passages. To obtain volunteer tenors to supply the first singer was equally impossible. We are at last obliged to turn to the board for advice.(60)

Signed by the members of the choir.

It was not until January 12, 1870, that any decisive steps were taken concerning this problem. One may learn from the perusal of the minutes that this problem had been batted

back and forth for a number of years. It is a slow, tiring experience of arguments pro and con before changes were finally accepted. In 1870, however, one notes a decided step towards the Reform movement. The committee which had been appointed on October 4, 1869 to consider in what ways the ritual and service could be altered to allow for a more pleasant atmosphere, submitted its report. In addition to various liturgical changes, the following is recommended concerning the choir:

> The organization of a choir either composed of male or mixed voices. The congregation at very considerable expense has endeavored to sustain a choir of male voices only but after a fair trail have failed in giving such satisfaction as the congregation had a reasonable right to expect, and we have no doubt a choir composed of male and female voices would prove much less expensive and give more general satisfaction. . .(61)

A strange turn of events concerning the role of the choir is to be found in the early history of Bene Israel Congregation in Cincinnati. Founded in 1824, the congregation dedicated its first building on September 9, 1836. The following description is provided of that dedication ceremony:

> Mr. David I. Johnson officiated on the occasion, and chanted the consecration service; he also led the choir of singers, supported by a band of music; the choir consisted of about twenty of the ladies and gentlemen of the congregation. Who did not enjoy supreme delight and heavenly pleasure, when the sweet voices of the daughters of Zion ascended on high in joyful praises to the great Architect of the universe on the glorious occasion of dedicating a temple to his worship and adoration? . . .The ceremonies and service being concluded, an

> appropriate address was delivered by the Parnass, Mr. Joseph Jonas. The Sabbath evening service was then solemnly chanted by Mr. David I. Johnson, in which he was again harmoniously supported by the vocal abilities of the ladies and gentlemen of the choir. . .(62)

As the years passed, the congregation grew steadily and soon it became evident that their present quarters were not adequate to accommodate its larger membership. A new structure was dedicated on the corner of Sixth and Broadway in 1852. An interesting incident took place at this time, when it was suggested that a mixed choir should be employed to enhance the beauty of the dedication ceremony. Very heated discussion followed and it was decided to dispense with female voices. This decision to dispense with the female voices came as a surprise, in light of the following observations by Joseph Jonas, a founder of the congregation:

> The original founders of our congregations were principally from great Britain and consequently their mode of worship was after the manner of the Polish and German Jews; but being all young people they were not so prejudiced in favor of old customs as more elderly people might have been and especially as several of their wives had been brought up in the Portugese congregations. We therefore introduced considerable choral singing into our worship, in which we were joined by the sweet voice of the fair daughters of Zion....(63)

As Jonas goes on to explain, this step can only be understood if we consider the fact that in later years a large German element had filtered into the congregation and managed to suppress these early reforms and instead institute customs that were prevalent in their birth places. This German

element that adhered to strict Orthodox tendencies retarded what might have been an earlier identification with the Reform movement.(64)

In addition to the issue of a mixed choir of male and females, the other dominant question facing Reform congregations was the participation of non-Jews in their choir. The question posed here by Kaufman Kohler in 1903, could still be asked eighty years later:

> A far more important question than that raised by the employment of female choristers is whether non-Jewish choristers of either sex should be engaged in a Jewish synagogue; whether the most sacred parts of the service should thus be sung by persons unable to enter into the spirit of the religious community which they represent. It is greatly to be deplored that this question has never received the serious consideration on the part of modern congregations which it really deserves.(65)

This was not the first attempt, however, to address this most sensitive issue. The American Israelite of December 28, 1888, in its editorial section attempts to provide a textual response to those whose question the participation of non-Jews in a synagogue choir. After refuting textual questions, the editorial concludes with the following practical concern:

> We can get no Hebrew singers, ladies excepted, because the Jewish young men, you know, have other pursuits. . .

The polemics on both sides of this controversial issue were wide-spread. The American Hebrew, in its issue of Friday, June 23, 1911, printed an editorial calling for the

removal of all non-Jewish participants in the religious service.

> The form of worship in Reform synagogues has frequently been criticized as theatrical. We believe that this ground of criticism can be largely removed by the exclusion of all but Jewish participants in the service. Is it not worth while for one of our leading metropolitan congregations to make the experiment?(66)

In its issue of July 7, 1911, the American Hebrew published many of the responses to its editorial comment. Reactions could be found both favoring and rejecting the papers editorial stance.(67)

> . . .It is a grave error to make birth the standard of sincerity. To reject non-Jewish singers on such grounds alone is evidence of the very narrowness and prejudice against which we so justly and persistently contend. . .It is a most commendable approach to that ideal to have sincere persons sing, whoever they may be. . .
>
> Henry Berkowitz
> Philadelphia, June 27, 1911
>
> . . .Musical ability should be the sole criterion. The religious views of the individual forming a choir have as much weight in considering the purpose for which they are employed as the color of their eyes. . .There is no reason why an Adon Olam of Sulzer or Lewandowski should not be as well sung by a Catholic as a Kyrie Eleisin by a Jew. . .
>
> C. W. Rubenstein
> Baltimore, Maryland
>
> The American Hebrew is to be commended for its stand in this matter. The employment of gentile singers by Jewish Congregations - some of which consider themselves conservative - is an unmitigated evil and a sign of the general degeneracy of our religious life. . .
>
> Rabbi Joel Blau
> Brooklyn, New York

The definitive Reform position concerning gentile singers in Reform Worship services is addressed by Rabbi Solomon Freehof in his book Reform Jewish Practice. Here Rabbi Freehof analyzes this problem from the viewpoint of Jewish law. He notes that the question of gentile singers in a Jewish prayer service is not debated in traditional rabbinic literature; the question never arose. The responsa literature deals with the question of inviting Christian musicians to entertain in the synagogue at a wedding, in honor of bride and groom, which was regarded as a "mitzvah." Many rabbinic authorities permit the entertainment of bride and groom by Christian musicians even on the Sabbath, although there are opposing opinions.(68) Rabbi Freehof concludes his analysis by noting that "the recitation of traditional Hebrew blessing by a Gentile was not at all repugnant to Jewish law."(69) Therefore, within Reform circles the singing of a gentile in a worship service is acceptable.

Despite this "official" position, the presence of gentile singers in Reform choirs remains troublesome for some. Isadore Freed addresses this concern in his article "Jewish Musical Style in Today's Choir Loft." Freed asks: "Is it possible for the gentile organist or singer to acquire a feeling for the subtle nuances of style which separate Jewish music from church music? Is it all possible for the non-Jewish participant to assimilate the characteristics of

Jewish style so that his music has an authentic quality?"(70)

Freed, like many of those responding to an editorial in the American Hebrew a generation earlier, believes that "musical style is not a matter of blood or birth; it is a matter of conditioning and cultivation. . .Jewish style is not a mysterious force with a locked-in secret. It is a combination of melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and emotional elements which one gets to recognize through contact with them."(71) For Freed, the answer to the question of the non-Jew in the choir lies not in his banishment, but in education and exposure to Jewish liturgical music. The specifics of his proposal are outlined in his article.

Alongside the hymnal and organ, the choir has evolved into one of the primary modes of musical expression in the American Reform synagogue. With roots dating back to the levitical choir of the ancient days, it allows for the free participation of women as well as the non-Jewish professional chorister. The conclusion of this work will analyze further the role of the choir in the ongoing "Participation vs. Performance" debate in the Reform worship service and its relationship to the organ and hymnal.

NOTES

Chapter Three - Choir

(1) Babylonian Talmud, Hullin 24a.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Babylonian Talmud Arachin 13b.

(5) Arachin 13b notes: "Our Tanna, however, called them tormentors of the Levites because their voice was high, the voice of the others low: they could sing high, wheree the others low: they could sing high, where the others could not do so.

(6) Alfred Sendrey and Mildren Norton, David's Harp (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1964), 186.

(7) Ibid., 186-187.

(8) Ibid., 52. The passage quoted here, from Chronicles I 25:5 is frequently used as a proof text in support of the inclusion of women in the Temple choir. The Jewish Encyclopedia, in its article under "choir" points out that the words "they were all" refers only to the sons, and not to the daughters, as is proved by the number of choir members mentioned in the list.

(9) Ezra 2:65; Nehemiah 7:67.

(10) Norton and Sendrey, 188.

(11) Ibid.

(12) Ibid., 189.

(13) A. Z. Idelsohn, Jewish Music In Its Historical Development (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 16.

(14) Ibid.

(15) The American Israelite, January 25, 1856.

(16) Babylonian Talmud Gittin 74.

(17) For Further Details on This Matter, Consult the Chapter on The Hymnal As Well As Idelsohn, Jewish Music, pp. 103-105.

(18) A. W. Binder, Studies in Jewish Music: Collected Writings of A. W. Binder, ed. Irene Heskes, (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1971), 147.

(19) Eric Werner, "Doxology In Synagogue and Church," H.U.C. Annual, 19, (1946), 307.

(20) Ibid.

(21) Idelsohn, 125.

(22) Yad, Ta'aniyyot, V. 14.

(23) Aron Marko Rothmuller, The Music of the Jews (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1967), 115.

(24) Idelsohn, 198.

(25) Rothmuller, 118.

(26) Idelsohn, 198.

(27) Ibid.

(28) Binder, 149.

(29) Idelsohn, 229.

(30) Binder, 152.

(31) Idelsohn, 248.

(32) Ibid., 248-249.

(33) Binder, 152.

(34) Idelsohn, 255-256.

(35) Ibid. 277.

(36) Ibid. 279-283.

(37) David and Tamar De Sola Pool, An Old Faith in A New World (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 152.

(38) Joseph L. Blau and Salo W. Baron, The Jews of the United States 1790-1840), A Documentary History, Vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 495.

(39) Ibid., 496.

(40) Ibid., 494.

(41) Ibid.

(42) Ibid., 495-496.

(43) David Philipson (ed.), Letters of Rebecca Gratz (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1929), 73-74.

(44) Ibid., 74.

(45) G. M. Cohen, The Sacred Harp of Judah (Cleveland: S. Brainard and Co., 1864), 2. Cohen claims to be the first to organize a synagogue choir in America being unaware of choirs used in synagogue dedications in 1818 (Shearith Israel, New York); 1825 (Mikveh Israel, Philadelphia), 1836 (Cincinnati; 1841 (Beth Elohim Charleston, S.C.); and 1843 (Rodeph Sholom; Philadelphia).

(46) Hyman B. Grinstein, The Rise of the Jewish Community in New York 1654-1860 (Philadlephia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945), 278.

(47) Ibid.

(48) Ibid., 278.

(49) Isaac Mayer Wise, Reminiscences (Cincinnati: Leo Wise and Co., 1901), 43.

(50) Grinstein, 279.

(51) Ibid.

(52) Ibid., 280.

(53) Ibid.

(54) The Text that is the basis of this prohibition forbidding women to participate in a choir with men is Brachot 24A wheree it states: "Samuel said: A woman's voice is sexual excitement, as it says: 'For sweet is they voice and they countenance is comely.' (Soncino Translation) The nature of this work will not permit a full analysis of this passage. See The American Israelite, Vol. 2, August 10 and 17, 1855, for an indepth discussion of this matter from an early Reform perspective.

(55) Grinstein, 281.

(56) Ibid., 282.

(57) David and Tamar De Sola Pool, 154.

(58) Ibid., 155.

(59) Ibid.

(60) Minute Books of The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, June 9, 1863.

(61) Ibid., January 2, 1870.

(62) Morris V. Schappes, Ed., A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States 1654-1875 (New York: Citadel Press, 1950), 231.

(63) The Occident, Vol. 2, (1844), 29.

(64) Ibid., 29-30.

(65) Gunther W. Plaut, The Growth of Reform Judaism (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1965), 310-311.

(66) See Appendix *B* for the full Editorial Article.

(67) See Appendix *C* for the complete text.

(68) Solomon Freehof, Reform Jewish Practice (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1963), II, 70.

(69) Ibid., 72.

(70) Isadore Freed, "Jewish Musical Style in Today's Choir-Loft" C.C.A.R. Journal, (June, 1958), 49.

(71) Ibid., 48-51.

CONCLUSION

This analysis set out to provide further insight into two primary questions: (a) what is the relationship between the three modes of musical expression discussed in this work and the ongoing "Participation vs. Performance" debate in the Reform worship service and (b) to what extent does the introduction of the organ, hymnal and choir into the synagogue service represent conscious modeling of dominant Christian culture, and to what extent does it reflect authentically Jewish modes of expression? Now that the proper historical context has been provided, these critical questions can begin to be answered.

One significant factor discussed in this analysis which laid the groundwork for the "Participation vs. performance" debate was a growing sense of professionalism in synagogue life. The roots of this trend are already noticeable in the institution of the Hazzan - the first professional musician in Jewish life. The tension between the "performance" of the hazzan and the traditional worship service, based on the participation of the congregation under the leadership of the שליח ציבור or precentor, was already evident in the synagogue of the late Middle Ages. The movement towards professionalism and performance was further enhanced by the spirit of the Italian Renaissance in the early seventeenth

century. With the development of more complex musical forms and the use of harmony, synagogal music slowly became the domain of those who possessed the proper musical training and knowledge. The seeds of the conflict between "performance" and "participation" had been sown.

The early movement towards reform, with its emphasis upon the decorum of the worship service, further exacerbated the schism. The development of professional choirs in Reform synagogues, designed to enhance the beauty of the worship experience, put still more distance between the pulpit and the pew. The hiring of non-Jewish voices then added to the "performance" aspect of the worship service. Contracts now symbolized the dominance of the professional in Jewish synagogal music, and with it a strong emphasis upon performance.

The Union Hymnal of 1897 was the first official response of the Reform movement aimed at balancing "performance" and "participation." As we learned from our sources, however, the hymnal, both in its original and revised versions, never adequately dealt with the problem. A vast majority of its contents could not be sung by the average congregant. The hymnal became an indispensable tool of the professional organist and choir.

The tension between "participation" and "performance" has evoked much dialogue over the years amongst the leaders of the Reform movement. Eric Werner, in his article in the C.C.A.R. Journal of January, 1966 entitled, "What Function

has Synagogue Music Today?", addresses this dilemma directly. He asks: "To what extent should the congregation be an active particpant and/or passive recipient or listener?" According to Werner and others like David Gooding,(1) one must strike a balance between what Werner calls "art music" and "popular music."(2) One must not dominate the other. David Gooding, in a plea not to overlook the merits of "art music" in our effort to promote congregational participation writes:

> Perhaps our congregations, too, should sing, but ought we deprive them of the even greater and more intensely personal experience of that song which sings in the heart alone?(3)

In recent years in the Reform movement, in response to an expressed need for greater emotional and personal involvement in the worship experience, there has been a return to a more participatory style worship service. Lay choirs composed of members of the congregation have replaced or augmented professional singers in many congregations. Songsheets or congregational songsters are commonplace. Soft sounding instruments, such as the guitar and flute, replace the dominating organ at many services. The proposal for less "performance" and more "participation" has been the call of rabbis and laymen alike.

The data presented in this analysis has demonstrated a very recognizable and dominant trend towards professionalism in synagogue music. This in turn has led to a tremendous emphasis upon the performance aspect of Jewish worship. What

the Reform movement is experiencing today is a direct response to a legacy of professionalism which has characterized it since its inception 175 years ago.

A systematic approach to the question of authenticity requires an examination of two integral aspects of the controversy: first, and most obvious, would be the consultation of precedent; second and seldom pursued in depth, would be an analysis of the aesthetic aspects of the issue.

As illustrated in each chapter, the early advocates of reform took the concept of historical precedent seriously. They attempted to ground their innovations in Jewish tradition and thereby to argue that what they were proposing was authentically "Jewish." The organ, for example, came to be identified by some musicologists with the ancient magrepha of the Temple in Jerusalem. Eric Werner went so far as to state that "the organ was used regularly in the Second Temple and is called magrepha in talmudic literature."(4) The historical roots of the choir were similarly traced to the levitical chorus of the first and second Temples. There are those supporters of the mixed choir who even attempted to demonstrate the participation of women in the ancient choir through their analysis of selected Biblical verses. Even the singing of hymns was traced back to ancient sources, with the chanting of short refrains, such as Amen, Halleluyah, Anenu and so on.

As noted throughout this work, however, there exists

considerable disagreement amongst musicologists regarding the interpretation of these historical sources. Idelsohn and Sendry, for example, differ in their interpretation of the Biblical sources which "prove" the participation of women in the levitical choir. There is no unanimity of opinion which regards the magrepha of the ancient Temple as the forerunner of the modern organ. The use of historical precedent, therefore, is inclusive in measuring the Jewish authenticity of these musical modes of expression. One must look beyond the realm of history for a complete understanding of this issue. The examination of historical precedent must be complemented by the second approach, namely, the consideration of the aesthetic aspects of the problem.

The earliest innovations advocated by the Reform movement were those aimed at improving the decorum of the prayer service. In an attempt to make the worship service of the synagogue more aesthetically pleasing, numerous reforms were introduced. Despite the search for internal historical roots, many of these additions were based on the external influences of the Protestant Church. Although originally "borrowed" from the Church, these modes of expression have developed an authenticity of their own in the Reform worship service. Their continued use in the American Reform Synagogue over the past 150 years validates them as a legitimate form of Reform Jewish expression.

The search for authentically Jewish modes of expression must ultimately lead to a thorough examination of both

historical precedent and aesthetic concerns. Reform Judaism has always insisted upon the consultation of tradition in making any decision regarding religious practice. Our Reform predecessors certainly took this concept seriously. At the same time, however, they were well aware that our tradition is shaped by external as well as internal forces. Guided by tradition and historical precedent but not bound to it, they incorporated forms of expression into their service which they felt would be aesthetically pleasing and enhance their religious experience. What originally may have been an "imitation of the gentiles" has become an authentic and accepted form of Reform Jewish practice.

As demonstrated in this analysis, the organ, hymnal, and choir have each been an integral part of the growth and evolution of the Reform worship experience. It is my hope that this work has provided the historical context necessary to understand the role of these three modes of musical expression for our Reform predecessors as well as providing insight into their use in the present.

NOTES

Conclusion

(1) See his article, "There is a Time to Sing and a Time to Refrain from Singing," C.C.A.R. Journal, (January, 1966).

(2) Eric Werner, "What Function has Synagogue Music Today?" C.C.A.R. Journal, (January, 1966), 37.

(3) David Gooding, "There is a Time to Sing and a Time to Refrain From Singing," C.C.A.R. Journal, (January, 1966), 45.

(4) Eric Werner, "Jewish Music," in The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion, ed. Louis Finkelstein, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society), III, 952-3.

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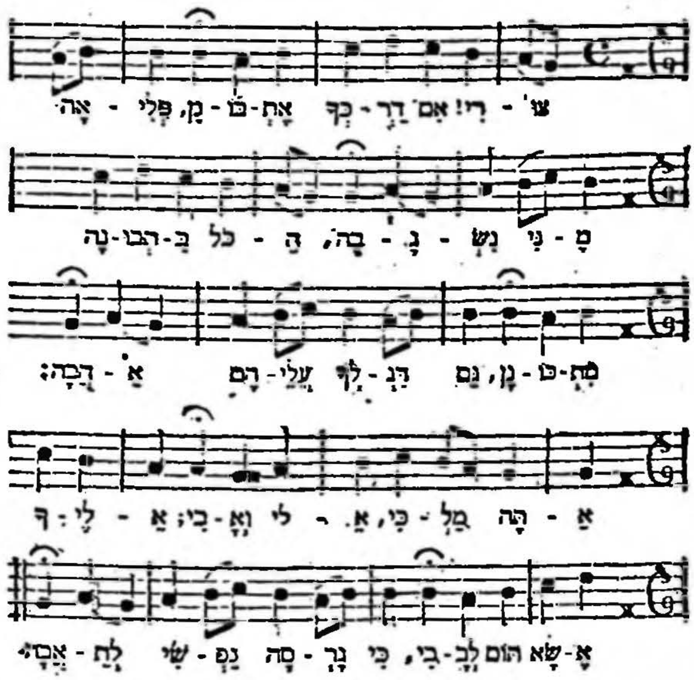
APPENDIX A

I.

Uebersetzung von: Wenn ich, o Schöpfer 2c.



2. סביב חחוינה עינים — יצורך
שמך יפארו, — יפעת וטהר השמים —
הדר עוזך יספרו; — מי שם השמש
לצהר? — מי הלבישה הוד גם זהר?
— למי כוכבי אור יזמרו?

3. מי יצו לרוח ויסובב — יאמר
הרקיעי שחקים? — מי מוציא, נפשינו
לשובב, — מחק ארץ לחם הקים? —
אתה אדני עושה אלה! — ידי לא
הקצרו ולא הלאו — אמתך עד
עולם תקים!

Facsimile 6.
Israel Jacobson Hymnal. Pub. Cassel, 1810. No. 1.

APPENDIX B

The American Hebrew
AND JEWISH MESSENGER

June 23, 1911— Sivan 27, 5671

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NOTICE

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JEWISH CALENDAR.

SABBATH, June 24, Sivan 28.
Portion of the Law:
Numbers XIII, 1—XV, 41.
Prophetical Reading:
Joshua II.
TUESDAY, June 27, New Moon Tammuz.

EDITORIAL

THE coronation honors bestowed upon English Jews are much more meagre than was usual under the reign of Edward VII. To make the Attorney-General, Sir Rufus Isaacs, a member of the Privy Council, is merely following precedent, and does not count. Sir Sidney Lee has well earned his knighthood as editor of the "Dictionary of National Biography" and Sir Frederick Cowen has been for forty years one of the most distinguished of the English composers. Sir H. S. Leon's baronetcy is probably a reward for political services, and that is all. It has always been suspected that King George was less favorable towards Jews than his father, and this scanty list of honors confirms the impression.

ANTI-SEMITISM in Austria may be dying, but it still shows signs of life. At the first elections to the Reichstag a considerable number of anti-Semitic candidates have received a plurality of votes, and the party will probably have an accession of strength in the new parliament. An even worse sign of the recrudescence of anti-Jewish feeling is in the report of a considerable number of deaths at election riots in Galicia where, it is stated, no less than thirty "Zionists" were killed. The form in which the rumor reaches this country leads one to hope that it is exaggerated. The Zionists, as such, do not take part in parliamentary elections. The rumor probably refers to the adherents of some candidate of the "Jewish Club" which has rather unwisely been formed in the Austrian parliament.

JUDEO-CHRISTIAN CHOIRS.

DR. H. PEREIRA MENDES is quite right in his protest against non-Jewish singers in Jewish choirs. This is a matter which has grown up insidiously, largely, we believe, because the members of congregations have not given the subject any thought. It is not at all a question of Reform. The choir stands to the congregation in the relation of assistants to the cantor. Surely no congregation would engage as its Chazan anybody but a Jew, no matter how excellent his voice, and by the same criterion nobody but Jews should be selected to assist him.

It is no answer to this criticism to say that some Christian churches have Jewish singers in their choirs. If they like that sort of thing, it is a matter between them and those Jewish choristers who for money are willing to sing the praises of the Trinity. For our public worship, we think a higher standard is required. It will be answered that the musical necessities come first and that it is impossible to find Jewish singers of proper capacity. This we do not believe to be true, and even if it were true, it would not be conclusive. Unless there be sincerity in public worship it may as well be abandoned, and how can there be sincerity when it is known that part of those who conduct the service do not believe that which they proclaim?

When, a few months ago, Dr. Wise arranged his joint services with several non-Jewish congregations, a universal protest arose from Orthodox and Reform Jews alike, that protest being based largely upon the fact that the worshippers could not freely and fully express their beliefs, and that in consequence the note of sincerity must be lacking. Does it not occur to our friends who countenance Christian choristers that they put themselves in precisely the position which they criticized Dr. Wise for taking?

The form of worship in Reform synagogues has frequently been criticized as theatrical. We believe that this ground of criticism can be largely removed by the exclusion of all but Jewish participants in the service. Is it not worth while for one of our leading metropolitan congregations to make the experiment?

PEACE AS AN IDEAL.

THE excellent series of short treatises entitled "The Home University Library," published by Messrs. Holt, begins with a volume on the History of War and Peace by Mr. G. H. Perris. This gives in short compass a history of the world from a novel standpoint. Mr. Perris is at pains to trace the various influences in the history of man which make for peace or against it. Incidentally, of course, he devotes some space to the rise of the ideal of peace in human consciousness, and this is where his exposition touches upon Jewish interests.

"The Jews are the supreme instance of high organizing power and intellectual ability continuously dissociated from imperial temptations and burdens." With this sentence Mr. Perris begins his account of the part which Israel has played in developing the ideal of peace among the nations. The Prophets, he declares, give the nearest approach the world has ever seen to a religion of humanity. In accordance with the newer school of historians who trace economic motives working throughout history, he bases this supremacy of the Hebrew Prophets on the fact that the Israelites were prevented by their geographical position from joining in any schemes of world conquest. However this may be, there can be no doubt as to the original character of Hebrew prophecy in this regard, and the remaining history of the world since that time has been the increasing spread of peace as an Ideal.

Strange to say, in another direction Jews of later times have helped on toward making peace a part of the desire of the nations. Karl Marx and Lassalle, by forming an international social democracy, have created a strong peace movement among the working classes by diverting their attention to social rather than to national questions. Mr. Perris also points out that the foundation of the world's commerce on a credit system also makes for peace in the modern world. Though Prof. Sombart has somewhat exaggerated the part taken by Jews in founding modern industry on credit, yet they have cer-

APPENDIX C

Christian Singers in Jewish Temples—Are They Out of Place?

THE AMERICAN HEBREW made editorial comment upon the recent utterance of Dr. H. Pereira Mendes on the question of the propriety of having Christian singers in synagogues. The following questions were sent to a number of rabbis: (1) As to whether it is really a grave matter; (2) as to the cause responsible for the condition; (3) whether the condition cannot be readily remedied. We give a few of the replies received, reserving a number for our next issue.

ABOLISH SOLOISTS.

TO THE AMERICAN HEBREW:

In reply to your questions, I wish to say that many years ago the Trustees of Temple Israel of Harlem passed a law that none but Jewish choristers be engaged for its choir. Nevertheless, it found great difficulty in inducing those concerned to live up to this provision. The matter is entirely in the hands of the Cantors. Let the two Cantors' Associations resolve that none but Jewish choristers be engaged in the choirs of their respective congregations, then it will be a *fait accompli*. When I have been told that "you cannot get Jewish choristers," I have always retorted "we find no difficulty in getting Jewish 'Chazanim.'" The reason is clear. A Christian Chazan is unthinkable. When a Christian chorister in the synagogue is unthinkable this anomaly will pass away.

But there is yet something further to be said. The usual Jewish choristers are professional musicians first and last. They are Jews or Jewesses only by the accident of birth. They are nearly always unreligious, if not irreligious. Their relation to the congregation is wholly commercial. I have often found a keener appreciation of the religiousness of the Jewish Service in the average Christian than in the average Jewish chorister.

Therefore, to make the choir the leaders of the congregation in song worship (their function as I understand it), something more than your recommendation is needed for this desideratum. The voluntary service in the choir of sons and daughters of the congregation, under professional leadership, points the way. The singing might possibly not be as good, but what we lose musically we may gain religiously. In this connection, I would like to add that I think the soloist in the choir should be abolished. It always changes the setting from a shrine to a concert hall. When it is over, I always feel like applauding or hissing.

One last word: Our greatest need in our worship of song is congregational singing. Not till that idea is attained will the Jewish *audience* in the synagogue become a congregation.

Very truly yours,

MAURICE H. HARRIS.

BIRTH NO STANDARD OF SINCERITY.

TO THE AMERICAN HEBREW:

The note of sincerity must resound throughout the worship as well in the fervent prayer, in the eloquent exhortation and in the harmonies of praise with which we seek to commune with our Maker.

It is the duty of every self-respecting congregation to drive out the insincere rabbi, the hypocritical Chazan and the deceitful chorister. Your inquiry has reference only to the best method of disposing of the last named.

In Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Philadelphia, we have a well-trained Jewish Boys' Choir which supplements the regular choir.

We seek Jewish singers for this choir and have a Jewish organist. We cannot always find Jewish singers, and when we find them the fact that they are Jews by birth does not necessarily insure their sincerity. It is equally unfair to declare all non-Jews as out of sympathy with our service and insincere in their participation. Quite the contrary is known to be true. In most cases where ladies and gentlemen engage to become members of the choirs in Jewish congregation it is because they are so far emancipated from Christological or other prepossessions and prejudices, that they can enter with genuine devoutness into the Jewish worship. The mere accident of birth is no evidence either of sincerity or insincerity.

We unite annually with Unitarian congregations in Thanksgiving Day services. It is, to say the least, an unwarranted insinuation to declare that "the note of sincerity" is wanting in the songs of patriotism, gratitude and adoration which thrill our souls in that common worship.

The voice that rings true is the voice that makes the soulful response of the worshiper. To that test we all yield ready acquiescence, and the whole being responds thereto even though the singer be out of sight and though we know nothing whatever about his or her racial, social or religious status. Indeed, the intellectual interpretations of religion, its dogmas and ecclesiastical sanctions, are something quite distinct from the devout emotions, hopes and yearnings of the spiritual life which find a universal language in music alone.

It is indeed a really grave matter to eliminate every trace of hollowness from worship. It is a grave error to make mere birth the standard of sincerity. To reject non-Jewish singers on such grounds alone is an evidence of the very narrowness and prejudice against which we so justly and persistently contend. The ideal condition is undoubtedly to have the choir made up of devout Jews and Jewesses whose participation in the worship is sincere. It is a most commendable approach to that ideal to have sincere persons sing, whoever they may be. Let us remember that no inquisition has ever been effective in discovering sincerity.

HENRY BERKOWITZ.

Philadelphia, June 27, 1911.

JEWISH SINGERS IRREVERENT.

TO THE AMERICAN HEBREW:

1. Not very grave and not very new. The earlier volumes of THE AMERICAN HEBREW, under my editorship, will be found full of the same complaint. It is a "choice of evils," because of

2. The frequent insubordination and irreverence of many Jewish singers, who chafe under requisite discipline and take their duties very lightly. With few exceptions, I have found gentile singers more reverential.

3. With the growth of refinement and culture only. Perhaps the Almighty is willing to take the will for the deed when Christian choristers sing in a Jewish service; they mean it well.

F. DE SOLA MENDES.

JEWISH SINGERS ARE TROUBLESOME.

TO THE AMERICAN HEBREW:

In response to your query I would say, I do not regard the presence of Christian singers in the choirs of Jewish temples a serious matter. Good music inspires me and strengthens my religiousness no matter by whom it is rendered. I believe that many others feel likewise. Of course congruity might be better served if our singers were Jewish, but the confining of our choirs to such is beset with very troublesome difficulties. It is not easy in general to secure acceptable Jewish singers, and when they are secured they are as far as my observation of a good many years goes, a source of considerable annoyance. They frequently presume upon their Jewishness to ask or even take a variety and number of liberties which are subversive of the proper conduct of a good choir. I have found this to be the opinion of other rabbis also. I do not think, however, that our religious situation is to be improved by this latest protest of what appears to me to be indicative of a desire of certain persons to be in evidence. Many of our reformers are accused of a sensationalism that aims to thrust them into the limelight of public recognition. This may be true, but I suspect that some of our orthodox and so-called conservative brethren are beginning to furnish a close second. It is true that our religious life is far from criticism. In this respect it only expresses our imperfection. Instead of so much criticism of the externals and incidentals of our religious observance or non-observance let us give ourselves to a more extensive self-scrutiny and self-improvement, and the rest will follow by logical sequence.

ALEXANDER LYONS.

526 Eighth Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

A CHOIR ONLY FOR ESTHETIC PURPOSES.

TO THE AMERICAN HEBREW:

In your letter requesting me to give my views on mixed choirs in synagogues you state that, upon reflection, I will agree with you as to "the impropriety of the continuance of non-Jewish choristers in Jewish worship." I regret to be compelled to say that I do not agree with you on this point. The question has come up often before, and it has received from me due consideration.

I do not accept your statement that the choir stands to the congregation in relation of assistants to the cantor. The choir is an attempt on the part of a Jewish congregation to enhance the beauty and impressiveness of its public worship in our modern day with the aid of the musical art. The quality of the music and the kind should be the only criteria of a synagogue choir. A cantor, beyond his individual part in the conduct of the service, is useful only in so far as he can appreciate the

quality, and prescribe the kind of music furnished by the choir. Where that is done by an able music committee or by the rabbi himself, the Cantor can easily be dispensed with, and that is the case in some of the largest congregations in the country. The Cantor is in fact secondary to the choir and your statement that "the choir stands in relation of assistants" should really be reversed.

And the Cantor himself, however devout and learned, is not chosen by the congregation on account of his piety and learning, but on account of his musical abilities. Even where other qualities may be wanting, a fine voice will carry the day. The Cantor is virtually only a living musical instrument, to be used and paid for when serviceable, to be discarded when worn out. Besides singing, however, he conducts the synagogue ritual and must be known to be a Jew. But he is not employed because he is known to be a Jew, but because, over and above that, he is also a Cantor.

I think it is very plain that what the congregations require, especially with reference to their choirs, is good and appropriate music. Musical ability should be the sole criterion. The religious views of the individuals forming a choir have as much weight in considering the purpose for which they are employed as the color of their eyes. Nor do I believe the specialization you imply that Jews are best adapted to the rendering of Jewish music and Catholics to Catholic music and the like has any foundation in art or psychology. Music is music. There is no reason why an Adon Olam of Sulzer or a Lewandowski should not be as well sung by a Catholic as a Kyrie Eleison by a Jew.

The matter of religious sincerity as to the words sung by a mixed choir is here beside the question. We do not select our singers on a theological basis, but by a musical test; and I doubt if we only had Jewish singers, whether we should retain them only for their piety in case they fell short of our musical standard. They, too, I am sure, would be paid for their services, and it would be showing decided prejudice in their favor to say that it was their Jewish fervor and not their musical ability (for which they were paid) that added so much to the beauty of the service. A trained singer in synagogue, church or opera house is an artist more or less, and he should be pledged by no other criterion whether he is singing a hymn or an operatic aria, than a musical one.

I should be glad to see more Jewish singers in our choirs, but only on condition that they have musical ability. If their Jewish birth should outweigh every other consideration I should rather have no choir at all. If it is Jewishness we are after we should go about it in another way. Let us select the young men and women who would be moved by religious ferver to assist the Cantor in the service, with the quality of the music as a minor consideration. Let us be frank about it; let us say that we want no body of singers, employed *as singers*, but young Jews and Jewesses, to take their place, whether they are capable of doing so or not, but in all events to stimulate the congregation with their religious zeal. The choir question would be solved; there would be no choir. The difficulty lies in finding such Jews and Jewesses who would devoutly assist the Cantor and show the worshipers an example of holy zeal.

C. W. RUBENSTEIN.

Baltimore, Md.

A letter by Rabbi Joel Blau in this symposium will be found on page 299.

Reform Rabbis at St. Paul

Central Conference of Rabbis Holds Annual Meeting

(*By telegraph to* THE AMERICAN HEBREW.)

ST. PAUL, July 3.—The twenty-second annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis opened on Friday evening with services at the Temple here, Dr. Samuel Schulman, of New York, delivering the conference sermon. On Sabbath morning, services were held, at which a sermon by Rabbi Moses J. Gries, of Cleveland, was delivered. The conference proper opened on Sunday morning, with prayer by Rabbi David Marks. The roll call showed that there were forty-five rabbis present. A message of greetings was received from Claude G. Montefiore, among others, and on motion a return cablegram was sent to the leader of the London Jewish Religious Union. Dr. Max Heller, of New Orleans, then read his presidential message, a large extract of which appears elsewhere in this issue.

The message was received with thanks and referred to a special committee to consider the recommendations made in it. Reports followed by Rabbi Ephraim Frisch, correspoding secretary, Rabbi Julian Morgenstern, recording secretary, and from other officers. The committee appointed to solicit funds for superannuated ministers, and for tracts, reported that it had collected during the year, for the relief fund, $673.50: for the tract fund, $510.50. Dr. Philipson was chairman of the committee.

The report of the publication committee, Dr. A. Gutmacher, chairman, was then read. The Union Prayer Book was introduced into five new congregations: the total number of congregations and schools now using it being 303. Since the adoption of the Prayer Book seventeen years ago, 115,876 copies have been sold.

On Sunday afternoon, Rabbi Louis Witt, of Little Rock, Ark., read a paper on The Basis of Membership in the American Synagogue, which was followed by a discussion of two hours. The paper advised the adoption of the method of having unassigned pews, the abolition of a maximum tax as a condition of membership, and the abolition of all classes of membership as regards the right to vote at congregational meetings.

On Sunday morning a paper on Ludwig Philippson by Rabbi Joseph Kornfeld, of Columbus, Ohio, was read with a discussion by Rabbi Mendel Silber.

On Sunday evening there was a round table discussion led by Rabbi Samuel Goldenson, of Albany, on "The Synagogue and Social Service."

The conference opened on Monday morning with a report by Dr. Joseph Stolz, of Chicogo, as chairman of the arbitration committee. Dr. Stolz reported that not one case had come before his committee for action.

Dr. G. Deutch as chairman of Contemporaneous History reports, presented his report for the year, and various recommendations made were referred to several committees. The memorial address on Prof. Ephraim Feldman was read by Rabbi Charles Levy, of Peoria, Ill. A paper on Leopold Loew was presented by Rabbi Julius Rappaport, of Chicago.

Monday afternoon there was a round table discussion on "A Helpful Book of the Year," in which Rabbis S. N. Deinard, of Minneapolis, Eugene Mannheimer, of Des Moines, and Joseph Rauch, of Sioux City, participated.

During the morning, the committee on Synagogal Music reported through Rabbi Harry H. Mayer, of Kansas City, that the Union Hymnal had been revised and was now near completion. One thousand dollars was appropriated to complete the work.

(*By telegraph to* THE AMERICAN HEBREW.)

Tuesday, July 4.—The committee on Church and State of which Rabbi W. S. Friedman is chairman, reported this morning. This committee had been engaged in various enterprises for the elimination of religious matter in the public schools, and had taken action against the stage Jew. The committee reported that it had received favorable replies from the leading theatrical producers and managers in America, sustaining its objections against the stage Jew. It had also received word from certain book publishers regarding objectionable school songs and sectarian hymns. It recommended omitting from the song books used in public schools such hymns as "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" on the ground that they were objectionable to Jewish children. It had engaged in correspondence with regard to the exclusion of all references to sectarianism from the new constitutions of New Mexico and Arizona. It had also furthered the agitation for the abrogation of the treaty with Russia, unless it respects the American passport.

Rabbi Tobias Schanfarber read a paper on The Problem of Ethical Instruction in the Public School. Rabbi Moses J. Gries spoke on the Religious Education Exhibit, and there followed a general discussion on the problems of religious schools.

In the afternoon, Dr. Philipson spoke on "The Harvest Service," Rabbi Leo Franklin, of Detroit, on Religious School Work for High School Pupils, and Rabbi Gries on The Text-book Commission.

The conference endorsed the correspondence school for teachers organized by the Jewish Chautauqua, and advised that it co-operate with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations on school text books.

(*By telegraph to* THE AMERICAN HEBREW.)

ST. PAUL, MINN., July 6.—The sessions on Wednesday dealt with various reports. The question of the preparation of a ministers' handbook was referred to the executive. The report of the social religious union was also referred to the incoming committee. The conference was the guest during the afternoon and evening of the Minneapolis congregation. A paper was read by Rabbi Harry Ettelson on Leopold Stein.

Christian Singers in Jewish Temples—Are They Out of Place?

(*Continued from page 276.*)

THE CONGREGATIONS THEMSELVES TO BLAME.

THE AMERICAN HEBREW is to be commended for its stand in this matter. The employment of gentile singers by Jewish congregations—some of which consider themselves conservative—is an unmitigated evil and a sign of the general degeneracy of our religious life.

The chief cause of this evil lies in the congregation themselves. No serious effort is made by them to secure Jewish singers. It seems as if they had no use for *Kosher* voices—just the same as some hospitals, maintained by Jewish money, have no use for Kosher diet. We pose as non-sectarians in every aspect of our life. We have non-sectarian hospitals, non-sectarian homes, non-sectarian this and non-sectarian that; and so we have non-sectarian schools as well.

By way of contrast, I recall the case of a friend of mine, a talented Jewish organist, who had been employed by a Catholic church of this city. When three or four years ago a papal edict forbade the employment of non-Catholic musicians, he was dismissed with regret. In vain did he apply to some Jewish congregations; he was told that they must employ gentile musicians because refusal to hire them on the ground of religious difference might breed *Kishus*. Here lies the core of the problem. Our much-vaunted non-sectarianism is grounded in morbid, craven fear. The Catholics, on the contrary, are not afraid of the taunt of sectarianism. They do not recognize a non-sectarian Catholicism, while we are frantically trying to make the world believe that we are non-sectarian Jews and Jewish non-sectarians.

While placing the blame where it rightly belongs, we should not be blind to the practical difficulties in the way of hiring Jewish singers. Not that there is a scarcity of Jewish talent. When I pass through the thickly populated Jewish districts of this city on a Sabbath afternoon and hear the latest coon-hit floating on the air through the open windows, I cannot ward off the thought: What splendid Chazonim and Meshorerim these lusty fellows would make! But there you are—we are paying the price for our occidentalism. In former years our hopeful-ones prided themselves on being able to sing a *Yigdal* or a *Kedushas*; nowadays our *jeunesse doree* considers it an accomplishment to hit off a student vaudeville-song with the same flourishes and blandishments as made the poor painted devil of a jig-dancer popular with the show-lovers.

Yes, talent there is in plentitude, for we are a musical race, yet there is a scarcity of talent available for the purpose. I witnessed not long ago a try-out of singers in a local synagogue which prides itself on its conservatism. A new quartette was advertised for; and about 70 to 80 singers had to be heard before the four voices could be selected. The almost total absence of Jewish applicants was apparent. It so happened that the young lady soprano who was successful was Jewish—by mere accident. This case illustrates the difficulty in getting suitable singers at all, and Jewish singers in particular. In the case of female singers, the difficulty is still greater and is based upon certain differences, temperamental, social, psychological—call them as you list—between the average gentile woman and the average Jewish woman.

The gentile woman takes up singing as a profession, as a means of earning a livelihood; the Jewish woman takes it up as an accomplishment, an addition to her graces. The former studies harder in order to perfect herself in her profession and heighten her earning capacity; the latter studies just enough to enable her to carry away the laurels of the drawing-room or of the charity-concert. This difference, manifest to all who are thoroughly acquainted with the situation, is based upon the fact that the average Jewish woman looks instinctively to matrimony as her ultimate goal; while the average gentile woman is less apt to do so. Moreover, the gentile woman, if married, continues in her profession; while the Jewish woman, once wedded, engages in social and domestic activities and leaves to her husband the task of providing for her needs. In fact, I believe that if the matter were investigated, it would be found that the majority of female singers in our choirs are married gentile women.

The remedy: There are those who suggest the organization of voluntary choirs composed of Jewish men and women recruited from among the members of the respective congregation. They would, I think, work about as well as voluntary teachers in our farcical Sunday schools. Fancy a Jewish girl giving up the prospect of amusing herself at a dinner or dance for the sake of singing *Veshomru* in the synagogue! Others may suggest the abolition of female choir and organ. I do not think such a course advisable. There can be no valid objection to the female voice in our synagogues, as

the exaggerated orientalism of "Kol beisha ervah" could not appeal to any rational being. As for the organ, I hold that while its power to arouse religious devotion and deep prayerfulness may be mooted, there can be no doubt about its usefulness as a help towards decorum. Especially is its value in this regard noticeable in the newer congregations in and about Manhattan, composed of the first generation of Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe, of men and women who are honestly, almost painfully, striving to overcome the handicap of centuries and centuries of ill-discipline. In such congregations the effect of the organ upon the behaviour of the worshipers is instantaneous, one might say, automatic. Therefore, I, for one, would not advise the elimination of the organ.

The real remedy might lie with the existing theological institutions of this country. But recently these considered their mission to be the training of sermonisers alone; until the munificence of a Schiff made possible the extension of their work to the training of religious school teachers. Why not widen their sphere still further? Let them add a regular conservatory for the training of competent Chazonim and singers. If sufficient inducement would be held out, students could be found. Graduates from such a conservatory might little by little raise the status and dignity of Chazanuth in this country. We may not have to recruit our Chazonim from the Yiddish stage or other incongruous careers, as is oft the case to-day. A certain standard of scholarship may be required for graduation—as, for instance, the ability to translate Hebrew prayers into fair English, a rudimentary knowledge of the principles of our faith, etc. It might be necessary to stipulate that men desiring to graduate as full-fledged Chazonim must first serve for some time in synagogal choirs. It might be even possible, in order to make of choir-singing a remunerative profession, to unite the same with the office of religious teacher. In brief, I have in mind the creation of a sort of Jewish *bas-clergé*, which might hold the esteem of the Jewish public through the prestige lent it by the recognized theological institutions of America.

As a preliminary step it is absolutely necessary to procure statistical data concerning conditions as they exist in our choirs. We know not the percentage of Jewish singers that may be found in the latter, small though it undoubtedly is. We are groping in the dark—as usual.

RABBI JOEL BLAU.

Brooklyn, N. Y., June 28th, 1911.

Beth Sholom of Bensonhurst

Temple Beth Sholom took formal possession of its new Temple House at its quarterly meeting on Monday evening of last week. Among the matters disposed of was the formal election of Samuel Weiner as Cantor, and a contribution to the fund for the local Fourth of July celebration.

As had been previously announced, the usual curtailment of the services during the summer months was inaugurated on Friday evening. Beginning last Saturday, the morning services, also, are conducted by the Rabbi and the Cantor.

The Entertainment Committee, of which Joseph Popper is chairman, is arranging for a gala night for the formal opening of the Temple House. A piano, angelus pianola and all appurtenances have been secured for the House.

The recent open-air whist for the Sisterhood under the management of Mrs. M. Weinhandler and Mrs. M. H. Brand was in every respect a most pronounced success.

Mrs. Jacob Block and Miss Louise D. Block, mother and sister of Dr. Siegfried Block of Brooklyn, sailed on Thursday for Europe, where they will stay until the fall.