# *Libi B'mizrach*: The Use and Publication of Sephardi Liturgical Music by American Jews of Ashkenazi Heritage

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Cantorial Ordination

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Submission Date: January 24, 2018
Ordination Date: May 6, 2018
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# Summary

This thesis contains four chapters, in addition to the introduction and conclusion. This thesis will hopefully illuminate of an important part of the development of American Jewish worship, and demonstrate one aspect of the many ways that Ashkenazi-normative prayer communities have benefitted from Sephardi influence. Scholars may consider how the interactions described in this thesis have led to contemporary practices, and practitioners may find precedent to look to Sephardi sources for material to share with communities they serve.

The goal of this thesis was to identify significant inclusions of Sephardi music in publications of music intended for use in American Ashkenazi-normative worship, to determine, where possible, what sources were used by these composers, compilers, arrangers, etc., and finally, to explore the motivating factors and driving forces that led to their publication. In the first chapter, I offer historical background information, including, but not limited to relevant interactions between Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities in Europe and America. The second chapter discusses the American Jewish hymnals, and the significance of the Sephardi music they contain. The third chapter describes how the reactions to the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel impacted American Jews' connection to Jewish peoplehood, survivalism, etc., and the fourth chapter discusses how these circumstances, along with the social, political, and cultural shifts of the 1960s precipitated a surge of American Jewish interest in Sephardi music, especially after the 1967 Six Day War. This thesis made use of musical scores as primary source documents, as well as numerous secondary and tertiary sources for historical background and to meet its goals.

# Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to all those who gave their time and expertise in helping me to research, write, and edit this thesis. To my advisor Dr. Gordon Dale, I cannot express enough thanks for all your patient help and feedback, and for guiding me through this process. I am also grateful to Dr. Lilian Wohl, Cantor Josee Wolff, and Pedro D'Aquino for helping me to develop my ideas as I began delving into this material. Similarly, I am in many ways indebted to the Ades Synagogue in Jerusalem, as it was there that I first began my journey in exploring the depth, beauty, and diversity of *k'lal yisrael* and all the musical traditions therein. Finally, I would like to thank Cantor Jeffrey Shiovitz, Joe Eglash, Joyce Rosenzweig, Cantor Riki Lippitz, and Cantor David Berger for sharing their insights and inspiring me to consider how I may continue this research in the future.

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# Introduction

In 1654, a group of Dutch Sephardi Jews from Recife arrived in New Amsterdam. These immigrants, or more specifically, refugees, would establish the first Jewish community in the American colonies.[1] And while the majority of the Jews who would settle the colonies shortly thereafter were Sephardim, they were soon joined by significant numbers of German Ashkenazi Jews, who would subsequently become the majority of American Jewry.[2] The history of the relationships between these communities, the ways they developed, and the ways their identities adapted in an American environment, remain fascinating areas of study to this day. Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman goes as far to say that American Jewish communities that trace their roots back to Ashkenazi immigrants can no longer be thought of as truly, "Ashkenazi," and that the inclusion of elements from the ritual practices of other Jewish communities, and even elements from secular culture, have transformed American "Ashkenazi" Judaism into its own distinct entity. Among these elements are the ritual practices, and even the music, of Sephardi Jewish communities.[3] Hoffman concedes, however, that these communities are more like the Ashkenazi Jews of Europe than they are like anything else,[4] and many of those who are ritually active closely identify with their Ashkenazi roots.

In an article for the Jewish Forward, Jonathan Katz suggests that the American Jewish community is "Ashkenazi-normative." While arguing for a change to this status

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[1] Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (Yale University Press, 2008), Amazon Kindle Location 254-280.
[2] Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, original edition published in 1957) 15-16.
[3] Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy* (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 61-72.
[4] Ibid

quo, he does point to a contemporary reality in the vast majority of American Jewish communities, in which "ideas of normalcy…hew towards a highly Ashkenazi-centric model."[5] This being the case, it is all the more interesting when such Ashkenazi-normative communities are found to be using Sephardi melodies in their worship.

In this thesis, I will explore how the Ashkenazi, and subsequently Ashkenazi-normative, communities in America came to incorporate Sephardi music in worship, as well as try to identify the driving factors of change. To do this, I will primarily use music publications from American Jews with Ashkenazi heritage, and particularly those publications whose purpose was to provide American Jewish communities with music for use in worship, as the lens through which we examine how and why such music came to be used. While it will not be possible within the scope of this thesis to identify every relevant publication, I will attempt to identify those that are the most significant, and those in which motivations for the inclusion of Sephardi musical material can be discerned. Also, in order to determine a reasonable scope for this thesis, I have limited my inquiry to the period of time spanning from the years immediately preceding the first examined publication in 1897, to the quincentennial anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1992 (the reasons for this latter date as an end-point and the significance of 1992 will be briefly explained in the conclusion).

In the first chapter, I will cover the historical background that is relevant to this inquiry, including: a brief history of Sephardi Jewry in Europe, as well as an attempt to develop a working definition of the term "Western Sephardi"; and significant encounters between Western Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews in Europe, as well as those that occurred

[5] Jonathan Katz, "Learning to Undo 'Ashkenormativity'," The Forward, November 05, 2014, accessed January 20, 2018, https://forward.com/opinion/208473/learning-to-undo-ashkenormativity/.

in America/American colonies. As the latter of these involved German Ashkenazi immigrants breaking off from established Sephardi communities to maintain their own German customs, Chapter Two will discuss the gradual rapprochement between American Ashkenazi Jews and the inclusion of Sephardi music in worship. Chapter Three will focus on how the practices of preserving musical traditions that pervaded Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewish communities alike in the first half of the twentieth century, and especially after the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel, influenced the musical materials to which American Jews had access. Finally, Chapter Four will determine how the convergence of that access with the social, political, and cultural shifts of the 1960s precipitated a surge of interest in arranging and publishing Sephardi music among American Jews with Ashkenazi heritage. While this interest was by no means limited to liturgical music, I will attempt to determine how this shift in interest may have influenced and been influenced by changing norms in American Ashkenazi-normative worship.

For practitioners who facilitate Jewish worship, cantors and lay leaders alike, the role of music and the meaning it adds to the worship experience cannot be understated. However, even as important as it is to be aware of the way the music functions in worship, I believe it is equally important to approach the music we use with integrity. For those who serve prayer communities whose congregants are predominantly of Ashkenazi heritage, the access to Sephardi melodies presents both a wonderful opportunity and an incredible challenge. At its best, this access can serve to broaden our sense of Jewish peoplehood, deepening our connection to *k'lal Yisrael* ("the totality of Israel"), and to the lives and experiences of Jews in other communities. However, there are also inherent

risks of being overly reductive in how we present this music, or worse, portraying the music as somehow "exotic." In sharing melodies that are not necessarily resonant with the sounds of our upbringing, we are in some ways beholden to the ways the melodies were presented by the sources in which we found them. In examining the ways that American Jews of Ashkenazi heritage have presented Sephardi music in publications of music for liturgical use, I hope to encourage practitioners and scholars to approach these sources in a critical way. And for practitioners especially, I hope to encourage prayer leaders to dig deeper into the sources of music they draw upon, to see past the ever-present and less than helpful label of "Sephardic/Oriental Folktune" (which I myself have encountered countless times), and seek out nuance wherever possible in order to inform the ways we share this music with the communities we serve.

# Chapter 1 – Historical Background

## In Search of a Working Definition for "Western Sephardi"

In order to discuss the use and representation of Sephardi melodies, Western or otherwise, it is important to first clarify the meaning of the term "Sephardi," as well as the qualifier "Western," in this context. "Sephardi," in its broadest sense, can refer to those communities, as well as the cultures and traditions thereof, that can claim a lineage tracing back to the Jews of Spain, and the communities that existed there prior to the expulsion in 1492. While the communities formed after the expulsion presented an immense variety of customs that persist to the present day, they have all been connected by this shared memory of Spain, and have all, in one way or another, attempted to reconstruct the cultural and religious practices of pre-expulsion Spanish Jewry. The term, "Western," in this context, requires significant unpacking, and at least a brief overview of the history of the Sephardi Jews who were eventually labeled with this qualifier.

The history of Western Sephardi Jews is at its outset the history of *conversos*, those Jews who were forced (or occasionally persuaded) to convert to Catholicism. While these conversions date back to the Reconquista period in Spain (ca. 13th century C.E.), the scope and the impact on the Jewish community increased dramatically following the massacres and mass conversions of 1391. According to historian Jane S. Gerber, "the overall scope of the conversions was mind-boggling," with an estimated 100,000 Jews converting in 1391, and an additional 50,000 by 1415.[6] This unprecedented trend created new layers of class divisions within the Jewish community, and within Spanish society as

[6] Jane S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1994), 113-117

a whole. “The Jews were deeply divided into three separate groups: those who openly continued to practice Judaism, those who had become conversos and remained so, and those who privately renounced their forced baptisms, secretly maintaining their adherence to Judaism.”[7] And for Spanish society as a whole, there was a clear division between Old Christians, New Christians (i.e. the conversos), and the Jews who had not converted (the latter of these eventually relocated to areas outside Spanish control, including the Muslim lands of North Africa and the Levant). Throughout the fifteenth century, there was a growing distrust of the conversos among the Old Christians, with a particular focus on the relationship these New Christians retained with the remaining Jewish communities. There was suspicion, in many cases justified, of crypto-Jewish practices, a suspicion that ultimately led to the Inquisition in 1478, and subsequently the expulsion in 1492.[8]

While Spanish Jews spread in many directions, both during the Inquisition and after the expulsion, our focus is primarily on those who first went to Portugal, which included most of the Jews from Castile (numbering around 120,000), and Navarre, where several thousand Jews sought sanctuary. About 600 of the families that arrived in Portugal were able to pay for permission to remain, while the rest, after an eight-month reprieve, were given the choice between conversion and slavery.[9] Though these Jews in slavery gained temporary clemency after a change in leadership, pressure from Spain eventually led Portugal’s new monarch, Manuel I, to expel those Jews who would not convert. The problems of Spain, particularly that of the Old Christians not accepting

[7] Ibid, 119
[8] Ibid, 123-130
[9] Ibid, 139

conversos, would then repeat themselves in Portugal, eventually leading to another inquisition in 1536. However, unlike the inquisition in Spain, the Jews in Portugal faced this situation "with no practicing Jewish community from which to draw sustenance."[10] For those living as crypto-Jews, their practices had to be hidden even more carefully. These circumstances, according to Gerber, created "a new religion, neither wholly Jewish nor wholly Catholic," a faith that "combined secrecy with fear, partial memory with substantial loss."[11]

As New Christians spread from the Iberian Peninsula to other parts of Europe, the changes of the 16th and 17th centuries, most notably the Protestant Reformation, opened many opportunities for the crypto-Jews among them to begin exploring "more open forms of Jewish expression."[12] By the 17th century Sephardi communities living in Protestant nations of Western Europe were able to practice their Judaism with little to no restrictions. The most prominent of these communities was that which formed in Amsterdam, becoming a "mother to the rest, outstripping them in culture, affluence, and Jewish learning."[13] This is significant, since according to Gerber, the former conversos who had travelled north from Portugal were initially distinguished from other Sephardim, especially those living in Muslim lands, by their relative lack of knowledge about their Jewish heritage, especially normative public Jewish practice.[14] Without any already existing open Jewish communities to help them acclimate and provide them with resources, "everything had to be created from scratch."[15] Edwin Seroussi explores the

[10] Ibid, 143-144
[11] Ibid
[12] Ibid, 178
[13] Ibid, 181
[14] Ibid, 188
[15] Ibid

question of whether or not the former conversos in Amsterdam invented a "new liturgical music tradition," the answers to which prove inconclusive. By drawing upon resources and sometimes even hiring religious functionaries from among their Sephardi brethren in North Africa and the Levant, they did gain access to a more continuous strain of Sephardi liturgical music tradition, albeit one that had been influenced by the musical aesthetics of the Arabic-speaking host culture in which it had developed. However, Seroussi notes that the conversos "also cultivated a taste for Baroque music (as well as art and popular culture), especially for the Italian style prevalent in Spain and to a certain extent in the Low Countries in the seventeenth century."[16] And so, while not entirely disconnected from traditions whose origins could potentially be traced back to Spain, the former conversos did create a new synthesis that suited their own identities.

We can see now how the term "Western Sephardi" has become complicated, and potentially problematic. Are they western because they primarily formed in Western European nations? Because they retained elements of Western European culture? And what are we to make of the fact that these Jews often described themselves as part of the "Portuguese Jewish Nation," retaining Portuguese culture and language as a part of their Jewish practice all throughout Europe and even in the Americas?

For the purposes of this thesis, when I speak about Western Sephardi or Portuguese Jews, I mean precisely this: Those former New Christians/conversos who, having renounced their forced conversions, began living openly as Jews, forming communities in the Protestant-controlled nations of Europe, the foremost and most influential of which was in Amsterdam. I additionally include any communities that

[16] Edwin Seroussi, "New Perspectives on the Music of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogues in North-Western Europe," *Studie Rosenthaliana*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2001), 298-304

formed as off-shoots of the former, such as those in the Americas. Also, though much more will be said regarding the aesthetic of Western Sephardi synagogue music in later sections, it is worth noting at this point that, according to Seroussi, the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam heavily emphasized decorum in their synagogue worship, and this "order and decorum…and a restrained musical style predominated in their synagogues."[17] With a sufficient definition for Western Sephardi, there are now two sequences of historical events that have bearing on our subject. Both of these involve instances in which Ashkenazi Jews, particularly those of German and central-European background, encountered their Portuguese brethren.

## Encounters between Western Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews in Europe and America

The first of these interactions took place in Hamburg in the wake of the German Jewish Enlightenment (ca. late 18th and early 19th c.). The series of emancipations of Jewish communities in Europe that directly preceded, and in many ways precipitated, this period of enlightenment also exposed Jews to new possibilities for aesthetics of worship. Seroussi notes that this exposure, coupled with the new opportunities afforded them by emancipation, led many synagogue music functionaries to study music outside of the Jewish community. The new and growing familiarity with concepts such as notation, trained choirs, and originally composed music, "opened their eyes to their potential for beautifying the synagogal services."[18]

[17] Edwin Seroussi, *Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue Music in Nineteenth-Century Reform Sources from Hamburg: Ancient Tradition in the Dawn of Modernity* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1996), 17.
[18] Seroussi, *Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue Music in Nineteenth-Century Reform Sources from Hamburg*, 11

It so happens that there was also, at this time, a community of Portuguese Jews among their German coreligionists, and that this community was both influenced and supported by the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam.[19] Even though Seroussi warns against making any assumptions of direct causality from the precedent created by the Sephardi Jews for a focus on decorum and aesthetic in synagogue worship, that certainly doesn't mean that there was no connection at all. Indeed, he notes that, "Limited though the contacts between German and West-Sephardi Jews may have been, there is no doubt that German *maskilim* (Enlightenment thinkers) seeking an alternative to traditional Ashkenazi Judaism found a model in their perception of the Sephardi Jew."[20] This high perception, as noted by historian Michael Meyer, cast Sephardi Jews as "exemplar individuals who had combined adherence to Judaism with full participation in the non-Jewish world around them… [and] never abandoned the openness to secular culture."[21] Seroussi concludes that while there is not enough evidence to draw a "direct cause and effect relationship between early Reform synagogue music and its Italian and Spanish-Portuguese precursors,"[22] the reformers *did* use their perception of Western Sephardim as a precedent for the changes they were attempting to make, both musical and liturgical. On the latter point, Seroussi brings up responsa of early reformers citing Sephardi scholars' opinions as justification, and liturgical scholar Jakob Petuchowski indicates that reformers in Hamburg not only used Sephardi omission of *piyyutim* (liturgical

[19] Gerber, 181
[20] Seroussi, *Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue Music in Nineteenth-Century Reform Sources from Hamburg*, 18
[21] Michael A. Meyer, "The Emergence of Jewish Historiography: Motives and Motifs," *History and Theory*, Vol. 27, No. 4, Beiheft 27 (Dec., 1988): 160-175.
[22] Seroussi, *Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue Music in Nineteenth-Century Reform Sources from Hamburg,* 20

poem/hymn) as a precedent, but even substituted Sephardi piyyutim for Ashkenazi ones when they used piyyutim at all.[23]

In addition to its use as a precedent for changes in liturgy and synagogue decorum, the Portuguese Jewish community was also a source for two other significant changes in ritual practice. The first was a change to Sephardi pronunciation of Hebrew, which "intellectuals within the Reform circles in Hamburg [claimed]…was more correct from a historical perspective."[24] The second was the actual borrowing of synagogue melodies for congregational singing, the first and perhaps most notable occurrence of which was in the New Israelite Temple of Hamburg. This borrowing was no doubt aided by the engagement of their first cantor, David Meldola, who was an Amsterdam-born Jew of prominent Sephardi lineage.[25] Indeed, Seroussi claims that "unlike…occasional use of a Sephardi melody, the Reform Temple in Hamburg reveals a systematic adoption of entire portions of the holiday repertoires, geared specifically to a Portuguese cantor."

One of the most significant pieces of evidence for the use of Portuguese melodies in the Hamburg Temple can be found in *Melodienbuch zum Gesangbuch*, published in 1827, and described in the catalogue of the Eduard Birnbaum collection as, "mainly German chorales arranged for keyboard followed by an appendix of 15 items." The items in this appendix, according to Seroussi, follow "The Portuguese tradition from Hamburg," and constitute, "one of the earliest evidences of traditional Sephardi liturgical melodies."[26] "Further research," he claims, "has shown that some of these melodies were

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[23] Jakob Josef Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe; the Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1968), 50.
[24] Seroussi, *Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue Music in Nineteenth-Century Reform Sources from Hamburg*, 41-42
[25] Ibid
[26] Seroussi, *Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue Music in Nineteenth-Century Reform Sources from Hamburg*, 23

adopted by several Reform synagogues."[27] That the use of these melodies was neither confined to the Reform Temple in Hamburg, nor merely a "passing phenomenon,"[28] helps form part of the context for the second significant interaction between Western Sephardi and German Ashkenazi Jews pertinent to our subject, in this case taking place in the Americas.

While it's true that there were crypto-Jews living and prospering in Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the Americas up until the Inquisition arrived ca. 1569, open Jewish practice didn't arise until the advent of Dutch prominence in the Caribbean in the mid-17th century.[29] Communities formed in Dutch colonies such as Curacao, Cayenne, and Surinam, and in 1654, a small group of Jews who had fled from Recife (a Portuguese colony that had briefly been captured by the Dutch) arrived in New Amsterdam, seeking asylum. This small community, somewhat scattered by the 1660s and reestablished by the 1680s, became the first to take hold in the American colonies. And in fact, all of the early Jewish communities that were subsequently formed in these colonies were Western Sephardi in their composition, and maintained a connection with the flagship community in Amsterdam. There were six major synagogues that formed in the colonies during this period. The first and most prominent of these was Shearith Israel in New Amsterdam/New York, in addition to Mikve Israel in Philadelphia, Mikve Israel in Savannah, Touro Synagogue in New Port, Beth Shalom in Richmond, and Beth Elohim in Charleston.[30] Once the permission of public worship for Jews became the norm

[27] Ibid
[28] Ibid, 45
[29] Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, Location 227-234
[30] Marc Lee Raphael, *The Synagogue in America: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 7

(beginning with New Amsterdam at the turn of the 18th century), these synagogues dominated Jewish religious life in the region for the next 125 years.[31] This dominance was all encompassing, and resistant to any change or innovation. According to historian Jonathan Sarna, "Sephardic Jews [in America] believed…that ritual could unite those whom life had dispersed. They wanted a member of their nation to feel at home in any Sephardic synagogue anywhere in the world: the same liturgy, the same customs, even the same tunes."[32] This rigid adherence to tradition, in addition to being informed by religious functionaries imported from overseas, was also enforced by a hierarchy of laypeople (since rabbis did not appear regularly at American synagogues until 1840). The ultimate tool this power-structure had to enforce its will upon the community was excommunication, though the disparity in numbers between the threats of its use and its actual implementation diminished its effectiveness, as is evidenced by the wide variety in personal religious practice of Jews outside of the synagogue.[33] Understanding this religious hegemony, albeit limited to the confines of public/synagogue religious life, makes it easy to understand how the Western Sephardi rite remained dominant in the American colonies even after Ashkenazi Jews began arriving in great numbers (surpassing the Sephardim by 1720).

## German Jews Challenge Sephardi Hegemony in America

The first significant challenges to the dominance of the Western Sephardi rite began as early as the late 18th century, with break-off communities like Beth Elohim in

[31] Sarna, Location 333
[32] Ibid, Location 359
[33] Ibid, Location 397

Charleston (which along with its Portuguese counterpart Beth Elohim Uvneh Shalom, claimed to be the "legitimate heir" to the colonial congregation), and Rodeph Shalom in Philadelphia (formed by German Jews who had broken away from Mikve Israel).[34] But these were the only occurrences until the 1820s, when America was in the midst of the second Great Awakening. In 1825 a group of German Ashkenazi Jews broke away from Shearith Israel in New York, forming B'nai Jeshurun. Their process and justification for their formation was used as precedent for other Ashkenazi communities over the following decades.[35] While it is uncertain if the split between Sephardi and Ashkenazi members of Shearith Israel arose solely from cultural differences, this seems to have been the primary impetus. However, the divisions among the Jews elsewhere in America, and the strength they were gaining, were not limited to cultural differences. Like the early reformers in Germany and the Caribbean, similar efforts were being made in America, notably with the Reformed Society of Israelites in Charleston, ca. 1825-1833.

There is little evidence to suggest anything about details of the ritual life of these synagogues in America that was the basis for challenges, initially cultural challenges from German Ashkenazi Jews, and later challenges by reformers. Also, having little to no information about the music of these congregations (except that the Sephardi Jews had attempted to preserve traditions from Amsterdam), it is hard to say if the Ashkenazi Jews breaking away from their Sephardi neighbors in this period between 1790 and 1830 rejected the use of any Sephardi melodies in their newly formed synagogues. In Charleston, however, we do get a small hint. When the members of the recently dissolved Reformed Society of Israelites reintegrated with the dominant synagogue, Beth Elohim,

[34] Ibid, Location 866-870
[35] Ibid, Location 890-930

their influence led to a number of reforms in the 1830s, including the hiring of a hazzan, Gustav Poznanski, in 1836.[36] While Poznanski was born in Poland, he had spent time in Hamburg prior to coming to America, and had served as a *shochet* (a person officially certified as competent to kill cattle and poultry in the manner prescribed by Jewish law) and assistant hazzan at Shearith Israel in New York before coming to Charleston. His initial reforms regarding decorum and reverence in the synagogue led Michael Meyer to suggest that, "perhaps memories of the Hamburg Temple were kindled as he encountered the remnants of the Reformed Society of Israelites."[37] Other congregations began to implement reforms in the following decades, and by the mid-1850s such communities could be found in New York, Albany, Cincinnati, and Baltimore, in addition to Charleston. Meyer notes that, "the rise of the Reform movement in America…must be attributed to both Germanizing and Americanizing trends."[38] This was in part due to some 250,000 Jews from German-speaking countries who immigrated to America between 1825 and 1875,[39] so that by the mid to late 19th century, Sephardi hegemony in American synagogue ritual had become a distant memory.

In the next chapter, we will explore how these American Jews with Ashkenazi heritage, having formed their own communities to maintain German and mainstream American customs, came to include Sephardi melodies in publications of music intended for use in worship. This will involve, in the first place, examining the processes by which American Ashkenazi reformers reconnected to the value of "tradition" as it applied to

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[36] Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), Amazon Kindle Location 6457-6499.
[37] Ibid
[38] Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, Location 6525
[39] Benjie Ellen Schiller, "The Hymnal as an Index of Change in Reform Synagogues," in *Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian Experience*, ed. Lawrence A. Hoffman and Janet R. Walton (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 187.

liturgical music, and in the second place, how and to what extent their concept of "tradition" had expanded.

# Chapter 2 – The Path Toward Publishing:

# Mid-Nineteenth Century-1932

The development of the hymnal in Jewish communities in the Unites States was characterized in part by a gradual reintroduction of "traditional" Jewish melodies. In this process we will also see the first American publications to include musical material from the Sephardi custom, which is some ways fits into the context of the broader inclusion of traditional material. For our purposes, particular interest will be given to the backgrounds of the people making musical decisions in these publications, and how they present the Sephardi melodies, both in the way they render the music itself and in how they indicate its origin. This will enable us to determine what motivation these people might have had in incorporating these melodies, if they had any conscious motive at all.

## American Reformers and the Rise of Hymnals

It is reasonable to say that the watch-word of the American psyche by the mid-nineteenth century was "individualism," as Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller notes, highlighting prominent figures like Ralph Waldo Emerson, who embodied this doctrine.[40] The liberal-minded German-speaking immigrants, therefore, arrived to America finding a fruitful ground in which to plant the ideas and values of the reforms that were happening in the Jewish communities in Europe.[41] It is not surprising that while the earliest

[40] Schiller, 188

[41] This idea is a matter of some debate, as Leon Jick argues that the Americanization of Judaism was not "influenced by the Jewish intellectual ferment in Germany" (*The Americanization of the Synagogue: 1820-1870*, Hanover: 1976; 1992). However, Charles Liebman makes a distinction between "elite religion" and "folk religion" (an idea that is also the matter of some debate), the former referring to "the symbols and rituals...and beliefs which the leaders [of a given religious institution] acknowledge as legitimate," and the latter to subcultures "within a religion which the acknowledged leaders ignore or even condemn, but in which a majority of the members participate" (*The Ambivalent American Jew*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973, p. 46). It's possible, then, that Schiller's assertion could be ascribed to the "elite" religious forces in American Jewish life, and Jick's to the "folk."

American reformers used the hymnal from the Hamburg Temple for their worship, such as the Reformed Society of Israelites founded in Charleston in 1830 and the German-Jewish Reform Society founded in Baltimore in 1845, the following decades would see a plethora of hymn collections published by various communities throughout America.

In the 1860s notable hymn collections were published by Temple Emanu-El of New York City, Rabbi Isaac Meyer Wise, and Marcus Jastrow; in the 1870s by G.M. Cohen in Cleveland, Rabbi Adolph Huebsch of Temple Ahavas Chesed in New York City, Simon Hecht in Evansville, Indiana, and Otto Loeb in Chicago; and in the 1880s and 90s by Lansdberg-Wile in Rochester, New York and by Rabbi Isaac S. Moses of Central Synagogue in New York City.[42] All of these hymnals reflect the Germanizing and Americanizing trends noted by Meyer, which we noted in the previous chapter, and many were drawn upon for the 1897 publication from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations of the *Union Hymnal*.[43]

## Immigration and Culture Clash: A Reform Identity Crisis

If the period between approximately 1825 and 1875 was marked by the immigration of Jews from German-speaking countries, it would make sense, then, for the hymnals and musical collections coming out of this time to reflect the musical tastes of these immigrants. This becomes apparent in the significant number of hymns in these publications whose musical settings were rearrangements of European classical music. As Schiller notes, the German Jewish immigrants who had been part of the reforming processes in Europe had replaced what they saw as outdated aspects of Jewish ritual with

[42] Abraham Wolf Binder, *Studies in Jewish music: Collected Writings of A.W. Binder*, ed. Irene Heskes (New York: Bloch Pub. Co., 2001), 259-265.
[43] Ibid

a style of worship more closely aligned with that of the western Protestants.[44] The German Ashkenazi Jews during this period in America had limited interest in ethnically "Jewish" sounds, and their goals to modernize placed limited value on "tradition" as a concept in liturgical music. Both of these sentiments may have precluded interest in publishing music with Sephardi material that was perceived as "ethnic,", and the latter may also explain similar disinterest in Western Sephardi music, which was admittedly more palatable to western ears. In order for the publishing practices of American Ashkenazi Jews to begin to include Sephardi musical material, Western or otherwise, there would need to be a shift in these sentiments, a shift that would begin with the mass influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe between approximately 1880 and 1925.

This immigration wave was followed by a significant culture clash between these newly arrived Eastern European Jews and the liberal German Jews who had already established themselves there (not unlike the previous clash between the German Jews and the established Sephardi hegemony).[45] The reaction of the reformers to this identity crisis for their movement began, in part, with an 1885 conference in Pittsburgh that created a platform of Reform Jewish principles. This was followed in 1890 by the first convening of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), who addressed, among other things, what they perceived as a "need for uniform standards in worship."[46] Up until that point, Reform communities had been worshipping form a variety of prayer books, notable among which were *Minhag America* (1857) by Isaac Mayer Wise and *Olat Tamid* (1855) by David Einhorn.[47] These two prayer books were the most widely used, and became the

[44] Schiller, 188
[45] Ibid, 190
[46] Ibid
[47] Meyer, Response to Modernity, Kindle Edition, Location 7696

basis for the *Union Prayer Book* published by the CCAR in 1894. With the same goals of unifying Reform worship in mind, the CCAR formed a committee on hymns, and, in conjunction with the Society of American Cantors, published *The Union Hymnal* in 1897.

## ***The Union Hymnal*** **(1897) and Alois Kaiser**

The main musical editor for this hymnal was to be Alois Kaiser (1840-1908), who was at the time serving as the cantor at Congregation Oheb Shalom in Baltimore, Maryland, and had tried numerous times to get rabbinic support for a unifying American hymn book. Kaiser, born in Hungary, was grounded in Central European Ashkenazi musical traditions. He notably sang in the choir of Salomon Sulzer in Vienna as a boy, and served as a cantor in a suburb of Vienna, and then in Prague, before coming to the United States.[48] Between 1873 and 1886, along with cantors Moritz Goldstein (also formerly a Sulzer chorister) and Samuel Welsch, Kaiser published an anthology of synagogue music, *Zimrath Yah: Liturgic Songs Consisting of Hebrew, English, and German Psalms and Hymns, Systematically arranged for the Jewish Rite with Organ accompaniment*.[49] Despite Kaiser's and Goldstein's pedigrees, Idelsohn notes that this anthology is "German in character," and "contains but few traditional elements."[50] Neil Levin is somewhat more generous, noting that the three cantors did include material from Sulzer and Naumbourg, but still acknowledges that these were "often rearranged or re-adapted and given organ accompaniments where none existed in the original."[51]

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[48] Neil Levin, "Kaiser, Alois," Milken Archive of Jewish Music, accessed November 21, 2017, http://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/alois-kaiser/.
[49] Moritz Goldstein, Alois Kaiser, I.L. Rice, and Samuel Welsch, ed., *Zimrath Yah: Liturgic Songs Consisting of Hebrew, English, and German Psalms and Hymns, Systematically arranged for the Jewish Rite with Organ accompaniment*, four volumes (New York: Published by editors, 1873-1886).
[50] Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1992, originally published by Henry Holt an Company in 1929), 322-325
[51] Levin, "Kaiser, Alois"

In 1893, Kaiser and William Sparger, the cantor at Temple Emanu-El in New York, published another compendium, this one titled, *Songs of Zion: A Collection of the Principal Melodies of the Synagogue from the Earliest Time to the Present*. This volume was distinguished by its predecessor in that it did in fact contain many traditional melodies, as well as biblical cantillation motifs and Ashkenazi modal prayer patterns.[52] What is perhaps most notable about this volume for the purpose of our research, however, was the inclusion of a few melodies from the Western Sephardi custom. According to Levin, however, all these melodies, including the Sephardi ones, were "stylized within metrical quasi-hymn structures, with some modal/tonal adjustments as well."[53] Idelsohn, surprisingly, is somewhat complimentary of this collection, stating that "the selection of traditional tunes is well chosen, and some of the original compositions are of significance."[54] He is considerably less congratulatory of the 1897 *Union Hymnal*.

The 1897 *Hymnal* contains 129 hymns, in English, for four-part choir. The book is dominated by works of non-Jewish classical composers like Felix Mendessohn, Beethoven, and Haydn, as well as many of Kaiser's original compositions. Though the hymnal contains sixteen melodies that are labeled as "traditional," Idelsohn notes that two of them (nos. 110 and 118) are simply not, while the remaining fourteen are "modernized to the extent of being robbed of their original flavor."[55] We also find that there were a couple of melodies included from the Western Sephardi custom labeled as "Portuguese". The two hymns labeled this way were, "If a Mortal Man Might Sing" (no. 20), and "Men! What Boast it is that Ye…" (no. 88). Levin suggests that Kaiser may

[52] Ibid
[53] Ibid
[54] Idelsohn, Jewish Music, 325
[55] Ibid, 324

learned these as well as the other "traditional" melodies during his time in Vienna.[56] Both hymns are set to the same melody and harmonization, the former of which is quite recognizable as a Sephardi melody for the Song of the Sea (see below in the section on the 1914 edition of the hymnal). Despite Idelsohn's disparaging remarks, and while the quantity of "traditional" material in the 1897 hymnal is quite sparse, it remained an important step toward the increasingly thorough endeavors that took place in 1914 and 1932 editions. These later editions, incidentally, also contained Sephardi musical material, and the latter contained more such melodies than the previous two editions combined.

## Changes in the 1914 Edition of the *Hymnal*

Although Kaiser realized as early as 1904 that there would need to be an update for the hymnal, it wasn't until the next decade that rabbinic leaders in the Reform movement would begin to support his position.[57] [58] Beyond the sheer increase in size from the 1897 edition (from 129 to 246 hymns), the 1914 hymnal was also notable in its increased amount of material labeled as "traditional" (from 16 to 40 pieces). Another significant change was in the organization of the hymns. Where the 1897 edition had arranged them by theme, the 1914 hymnal organized them according to the Jewish calendar and life cycle. Schiller points to both changes as part of a new trend, "to look inward and backward as much as forward."[59] It is unclear to what extent Kaiser was involved in the editing of this edition. Twenty-four of his original compositions in the

[56] Neil Levin, "Union Hymnal Selections," Milken Archive of Jewish Music, accessed November 21, 2017, http://www.milkenarchive.org/music/volumes/view/jewish-voices-in-the-new-world/work/union-hymnal-selections/.
[57] Schiller, 193
[58] Judah Cohen, "Rewriting the Grand Narrative of Jewish Music: Abraham Z. Idelsohn in the United States," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 100, no. 3 (Summer 2010), 422
[59] Schiller, 194-195

1897 version had been reduced to fifteen, and he is not officially credited as a musical editor, nor is the Society of Cantors, which had been credited in the 1897 edition, and which Kaiser had led for several years.[60]

In the 1914 hymnal we once again find a few melodies included from the Western Sephardi custom, all of which were set to English texts with no connection to the Hebrew texts with which they had originally been used. Two of these hymn melodies were used with the texts hymn nos. 36, "Out of the Depths, O Lord, I Cry to Thee" and 100, "Dim Mine Eyes with Many Tear-Drops." The former is referred to as a "Sephardi Tune," and the latter as "Traditional Bemotzae," but both were apparently taken from the same source, which the editors present as, "From De Sola and Aguilar's 'Traditional Melodies.'" The full title of this source is "The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews," an anthology of Western Sephardi liturgical music published in London in 1857. It's interesting to note that hymnal's source index also only gives the label "Sephardi" to no. 36, while no. 100 is merely referred to as "traditional." In fact, the only way one could know that no. 100 is also Sephardi in origin would be if one knew the full title of the source, or if one inferred from the surnames of its editors that the source was Sephardi in its entirety.

There were also two other melodies in this edition of the hymnal of Sephardi origin, "O Star of Truth" (no. 103) and "There is a Mystic Tie that Joins" (no. 138). According to Levin, these melodies were known from the Portuguese community in Hamburg via the Reform temple there, and had also been borrowed by the Ashkenazi synagogue in Vienna from its Turkish Sephardi neighbor.[61] While the hymnal's source

[60] Levin, "Kaiser, Alois"
[61] Neil Levin, Union Hymnal Selections

index refers to both melodies only as "traditional," they are both indicated as Sephardi on their respective pages, and "There is a Mystic Tie the Joins" is even specifically attributed to a Hallel melody.

The melody used for "O Star of Truth" is perhaps most well-known for its use the chanting of the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1-19). It is also used in a Ladino summary of the prayer after meals, *Bendigamos*, as well as the concluding section of Psalm 118 in Hallel, *Baruch Haba*. Levin notes that the melody is "ubiquitous in western as well as Moroccan Sephardi repertoires, with numerous variants,"[62] which has also been my own experience. Levin also claims that the melody has "an intriguing pedigree, with musical notation in an Amsterdam manuscript as far back as the 18th century."[63] As we saw above, it was also used in the 1897 hymnal for hymn nos. 18 and 84, but the harmonization was not the same as that of Aguilar's, making it uncertain if Kaiser had been aware of this collection that had preceded the *Union Hymnal* by forty years.

When raising the question of how this melody may have made it into the American Reform repertoire, we find that there are several possibilities. Since the melody is quoted in part in Sulzer's first volume of *Schir Zion* (Vienna, ca. 1840),[64] it is likely that Kaiser learned it while in the choir of the Vienna synagogue. However, since the melody is also found in a wide variety of other publications preceding the 1897 hymnal, including collections by Aguilar-De Sola, Naumbourg,[65] and Baer,[66] it is difficult to make such a claim with any certainty.

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[62] Neil Levin, "Barukh Habba (Psalm 118: 26-29)," Milken Archive of Jewish Music, accessed November 21, 2017, http://www.milkenarchive.org/music/volumes/view/jewish-voices-in-the-new-world/work/barukh-habba-psalm-118-26-29/.
[63] Ibid
[64] See *Schir Zion* vol. 1, no. 29, with the text *Anna Adonay*
[65] See Agudath Schirim (Paris 1874), no. 60
[66] See Baal T'fillah, no. 819

The melody for "There is a Mystic Tie that Joins" is equally well-known in Western Sephardi communities, and is also used for many texts, particularly, as the hymnal indicates, in Hallel, "as well as for tal (dew) and geshem (rain) prayers on Pesah and Sukkot."[67] Both of these melodies are also found in the Aguilar-De Sola collection, which was not in this case cited as a source. Whether this was an error, or if the melodies were taken from another source, is unclear.

The seemingly arbitrary distinction in the way the hymns are labeled in this edition is concerning, and suggests that their Sephardi pedigree may not have been particularly important to the editors, nor a consideration in the ethos of this hymnal. We will see some, if limited, movement on this in the 1932 edition, but first, we must look more at the changes that were occurring in how the intellectual elite of American Jews perceived traditional Jewish music in general, and non-Ashkenazi Jewish music in particular. Because, in the same year that the CCAR published the second edition of the *Union Hymnal*, the first volume of a sprawling collection of melodies spanning Jewish communities from all over the world (or at least, Europe, North Africa, and the Levant) had been amassed by a man who would come to be known as the father of modern Jewish ethnomusicology, Abraham Zvi Idelsohn.

## Idelsohn and the CCAR

Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, born in Latvia in 1882, gained acclaim for his scholarship in Palestine, where he moved in 1905, as well as America, where he moved in 1922. Idelsohn's two seminal works, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies* (1914-1932) and *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (1929), are still considered critically

[67] Ibid

important in the field (though their numerous flaws are at this point widely acknowledged). While Idelsohn's work in Palestine was certainly important, as this was where he carried out the majority of his ethnographic work, we are primarily concerned with his activities in the United States. Judah Cohen notes a particular shift in Idelsohn's focus between his time in Palestine and America, "from inspiring communities in Jerusalem to invest in Hebrew melody for nation-building purposes to training a class of American specialists in Jewish music traditions systematically so as to renew the liberal Jewish spirit in the synagogue and concert hall."[68] This shift came out of the relationship Idelsohn developed with the Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Cincinnati.

As early as 1920, Idelsohn had already been in contact with HUC, when he received a letter from their lecturer on synagogue music, Rabbi Jacob Singer. Singer had been part of the push for the 1914 revision of the *Union Hymnal*, and as noted above, the first volume of Idelsohn's *Thesaurus* had been published that same year (a work that Singer praised).[69] Since Idelsohn needed funding for his musicological research, it is not surprising that he ended up developing a relationship with HUC, and that Singer remained an advocate of his work. An additional advocate was found in A. Irma Cohon, a Chicago-based musician affiliated with the Reform Jewish community.[70] Given Idelsohn's proposition that rabbis take over the responsibility of musical transmission in the Jewish community, in conjunction with his impressive scholarship, it is also not surprising that he gained great acclaim among members of the CCAR. When their

[68] Judah Cohen, "Rewriting the Grand Narrative of Jewish Music: Abraham Z. Idelsohn in the United States," in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 100, no. 3 (Summer 2010), 419.
[69] Ibid, 422
[70] Ibid, 422

Committee began the discussion of a third revision for the hymnal, desires to improve the overall quality of the music led them to consider and draw upon Idelsohn's research, much of which they gained from his lectures in a speaking tour he initiated in 1923.[71]

In 1925, Idelsohn was officially asked to join the committee in their work on the hymnal revision. However, due to numerous differences that arose surrounding the preparation of the manuscript, Idelsohn was eventually replaced with a New York-based contemporary, Abraham Wolf Binder (1895-1966).[72] While none of Idelsohn's melodies or arrangements were included in the 1932 edition of the hymnal, his research would remain invaluable to the Reform movement, and to American Jewry as a whole, for many years to come. Cohen writes, "In laying out the historical expanse of Jewish musical activity for a broad English-speaking audience, Idelsohn set the stage for a linguistic shift in the center of Jewish musical discourse."[73]

## A.W. Binder and the 1932 Union Hymnal

The period following Idelsohn's arrival in America in 1922 (and perhaps even beginning a couple of years prior) was also characterized in part by a narrowing of the cultural gap between the American Jews of German and Eastern European origin.[74] In the previous section, we saw how Idelson's involvement with the CCAR revealed a changing relationship between the intellectual elite of the American Reform movement and synagogue music, especially with regards to its "Jewishness" and the authenticity thereof. In her article on the development of the hymnal in American Jewish worship, Schiller

[71] Ibid, 429-430
[72] Ibid, 453, note 120
[73] Ibid, 440
[74] Schiller, 196

cites the revealing agenda of the hymnal's committee, "(1) to stimulate congregational singing; (2) to inspire Jewish devotion; (3) to revive values of Jewish melody; (4) to exclude, as far as possible, non-Jewish music and poetry; (5) to provoke in children of our religious schools a love for Jewish poetry and song; and (5) to encourage an earnest study of Jewish music in the religious schools."[75] Abraham Wolf Binder was just the person to bring this agenda to fruition.

Binder grew up in a traditional Jewish family in New York City where, from a young age, he was steeped in synagogue music. He began singing in synagogue choirs from the age of four, and mentored by a cantor (Abraham Frachtenberg) from the age of seven. Mark Kligman writes, "The idealization of the Eastern European tradition would permeate all of Binder's writings on synagogue music, no doubt as a result of his upbringing in a traditional Eastern European home, close relationship with his musical father, and singing in Frachtenberg's choir."[76] And Binder himself wrote, "The background of *nusach ha-tefillah*, which I inherited from my father and from Abraham Frachtenberg, was to stand me in good stead later on in my career as a synagogue musician."[77] In 1911 Binder took his first job as an organist and choir director, in 1917 he began a music program at the 92nd Street YM/YMHA, and in 1921, at the age of 26, he was invited by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise to teach at the Jewish Institute of Religion. Wise then went on in 1922 to invite Binder to become the choirmaster at the newly established

[75] Ibid
[76] Mark Kligman, "Reestablishing a 'Jewish Spirit' in American Synagogue Music: The Music of A. W. Binder," in *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times*, ed. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jonathan Karp (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 275.
[77] Ibid, 279

Free Synagogue.[78] These latter two posts in particular became the foundation of Binder's involvement in the third revision of the *Union Hymnal*.

Binder's work on the hymnal began in 1929,[79] and the edition was finally published in 1932. As we can see in Binder's statement quoted above, he was deeply concerned with the inclusion and dissemination of melodies that used the "proper" *nusach*, by which he is referring to the system of scales and motifs whose origins could be traced back to Ashkenazi communities in Europe. As his own background was Eastern European, this was certainly the specific nusach he had in mind. His endeavor was to include as many traditional melodies as possible, but also to commission composers to create new melodies in what he considered to be the correct musical modes.[80]

## Sephardi Melodies in the 1932 *Union Hymnal*

Of interest to us, the 1932 edition also contained six melodies of Sephardi origin (eight in total, as two of the melodies are used twice each), the most of any American publication thus far. Two of these hymns, "There is a Mystic Tie" (no. 138) and "Dim Mine Eyes" (no. 173) we can see were taken directly from the 1914 edition. Note that both of these melodies were also used with the same texts, and that but for a few minor alterations, use the same harmonization. Another melody that had been included in both the 1897 and 1914 editions was also included in this edition, namely a Sephardi melody for the Song of the Sea ("Az Yashir," aka "Shirah"), It is one of the two Sephardi melodies that is used twice, for the texts "O Bless the Lord, My Soul" (no. 62) and "True Freedom" (no. 121). The first of these instances is Binder's own arrangement, while the

[78] Heskes, 16-21
[79] Ibid, 25
[80] Kligman, 280

latter uses the exact harmonization from the 1897 edition in its keyboard accompaniment. There is also something interesting to note in the placement of these hymns in the hymnal. Hymn no. 62 is placed in a section titled "Praise" (the literal translation of "Hallel"), and hymn no. 121 is placed in a section for the festival of Passover, whose story in the Torah includes the Song of the Sea. Hymn nos. 138 and 173 merely carried over their texts from previous editions, but when Binder arranged and set the melody himself, we can see that he did so in a very intentional way, connecting the melodies to the liturgical context from which they originated.

This was also the case for the second Sephardi melody that he used twice, that of "Eil Nora Alilah". Like the melody for "Az Yashir," we find this melody in both the Hamburg hymnal and in the Aguilar-De Sola collection, but in this case Binder was the first to include it in the Union Hymnal. This is curious, since the text had made its way into Reform liturgies at least as early as David Einhorn's prayer book, *Olat Tamid* (Baltimore, 1858).[81] Regardless, it is significant that Binder chose to render the melody twice, first with a poetic translation of the original text by Moses ibn Ezra (no. 176), and then with an unattributed text steeped in N'eilah (concluding service of Yom Kippur) themes. Here again we see that Binder is being just as intentional with the placement of these hymns as he was with nos. 62 and 121. He even includes a footnote for hymn no. 176, provided by the translator, Solomon Solis-Cohen, "Pizmon introductory to the N'eelah (concluding) Service of the Day of Atonement, Sephardic Liturgy attributed in some rituals to Moses ibn Ezra. (S.S-C)".[82]

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[81] Eric L. Friedland, "Sephardic Influences on the American Jewish Liturgy," in *Shofar*, vol. 11, no. 1 (Fall 1992), 17-18.
[82] A.W. Binder, *Union Hymnal: Songs and Prayers of Jewish Worship*, 3rd ed, (The Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1932), 190.

The last Sephardi melody Binder includes in the 1932 hymnal is for a text in the "Religious School" section, "Duties of the Day" (no. 258). Here he indicates that the tune is "based on a Sephardic melody."[83] Partially because it is an adaptation, it is not clear what melody Binder is using as the basis for his rendition, and further investigation would need to be done to determine this. One could assume, however, as was the case for the two melodies that he used twice, that there may have been a connection between the melody he drew from and the text that he set. For this was Binder's ethos of the entire hymnal, i.e. conscious, intentional decisions for how melodies were to be arranged and used, and special reverence for melodies whose pedigree was "traditional." We see that his Eastern European background prevailed in what he considered to be "traditional Jewish music," since only eight hymns out of two hundred and ninety-two incorporated or were based on Sephardi melodies, and most had been published previously in Reform sources. However, it is clear that Binder made an effort to apply this ethos to those Sephardi melodies that he did include, especially those that he arranged himself.[84]

A final note on Binder for the moment is to speak of his Zionism, which had limited bearing on our areas of interest in his work on the 1932 hymnal, but which will have greater import on the subject of our next chapter. Binder was a staunch advocate of rebuilding Jewish life in the land of Israel, then called Palestine. In 1916 he formed the Hadassah Choral Union in New York City, which was "The first musical group to devote

[83] Ibid, 298

[84] Even the one Sephardi melody from the 1914 edition that Binder did not include suggests a possible adherence to this ethos. Hymn no. 36 in the 1914 edition, "Out of the Depths," (based on Psalm 130) was set with a melody from the Aguilar-De Sola Collection, "Shachar Abakeshcha" (no. 2). The former text is penitential in nature, while the text to which the melody was originally set is laudatory. Perhaps this disconnect was a factor in Binder's decision to retain the hymn text, but compose his own melody, and place it in the section for the "Day of Atonement and Penitence."

itself exclusively to the performance of Palestinian folk songs."[85] After his first visit to Palestine in 1924, Binder published a book of songs that he had collected during his time there, and he published a second volume after visiting Palestine again in 1931.[86] Later, in an article Binder wrote in 1951, he said "Composers both in and out of Israel are working toward the same goal-- the development of a Jewish musical idiom. Israel is an inspiration for Jewish musicians. The Jewish music of the future will therefore not be the expression of any one particular segment of the Jewish people, but of *Klal Yisrael*--the entire world Jewish community."[87] Binder's desire for a relationship, and particularly for a musical bridge, between the Jews of Palestine and America cannot be emphasized enough. It also foreshadowed the sentiments that would develop within the American Jewish community in the wake of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel.

At this point, the progression of Jewish hymnal publications in America demonstrates a trend of German Ashkenazi Jews becoming more comfortable with "traditional" forms of liturgical music. This can be attributed in part to the closing of the social and cultural gaps between Ashkenazi Jews of German and Eastern European heritage, and is also demonstrated by the activities of figures such as Idelsohn and Binder, and organizations like the CCAR. Despite the fact that these figures and organizations were predominantly Ashkenazi, we have seen a somewhat broadened concept of "traditional," now including Sephardi musical material. What's more, we can

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[85] Irene Heskes, "A Biographical Portrait of Abraham Wolf Binder," In *Studies in Jewish music: Collected Writings of A.W. Binder*, edited by author (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1971), 16.
[86] Ibid, 24.
[87] Abraham Wolf Binder, "Jewish Music: An Encyclopedic Survey," 1971, originally in *Jewish People: Past and Present*, Vol. 3. New York: Jewish Encyclopedic Handbooks - Central Yiddish Culture Organization, 1952, reprinted in *Studies in Jewish Music: Collected Writings of A.W. Binder*, Irene Heskes ed., (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1971), 129-199.

see that some of this music was taken from sources like the Aguilar-De Sola collection, which was perceived as an authentic source of Spanish-Portuguese melodies (as it is today). In the following chapters we explore the reasons for a marked increase in both the motivation to publish Sephardi liturgical music and the body of materials available to American Jews. Among these reasons, the most important will perhaps be the shifts in American Jewry toward sharing Binder's desires to preserve traditions and connect foster a sense of Jewish peoplehood.

# Chapter 3 – Post-Holocaust Reactions: Trends of Preservation

In this chapter we will examine how the drive to preserve musical traditions and foster Jewish peoplehood, initiated in America by figures like Idelsohn and Binder, became magnified by the events of the mid-twentieth century. We will also see how these events affected similar preserving practices in Sephardi communities. Finally, we will begin to determine how all these trends found synthesis in publications of music intended for use in congregational worship.

## Preservation Tendencies in America

It would be difficult to over-emphasize the extent to which the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel created a paradigm shift for American Jewry. Broad studies of the sweeping impact of these events are abundant, but for our purposes, we will focus on the institutional reaction, i.e. that of the "elite religion," referred to by Liebman (see note 41 in the previous chapter) and specifically the ways in which American Jewish institutions attempted to preserve the musical practices of the devastated European Jewish communities. There were at least three distinct ways in which such attempts were made, both during and after the war. First, a variety of American Jewish institutions, including but not limited to seminaries, used their resources and influence to rescue prominent Jewish scholars and musicians and bring them to the United States, and to provide them with support and even employment. The latter was also done for those who were able to seek refuge in America through their own means. Second, efforts were made to record and transcribe the music of these communities, often relying on the previously mentioned rescued scholars and musicians as sources. And finally, new institutions were formed with the aim to train a new generation to continue to preserve all of these musical

traditions. The most notable of these were perhaps the cantorial programs established at the Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox seminaries in New York. One can find a snapshot of all of these efforts in the activities of the Jewish Music Forum (JMF), formerly called "Mailamm" (the name changed in 1939), which operated from 1931 to 1962.

According to historian Irene Heskes, Arthur Holde (1885-1962) and Eric Mandell (1902-84), both members of Mailamm/JMF, and both German refugees, led efforts to rescue colleagues and/or provide assistance to those seeking refuge in America.[88] Heskes doesn't detail specific figures who were given support, but does mention several contributors at JMF meetings who were known emigres, and who had come to America as refugees. These contributors likely would have received such assistance. Notable among them were composers such as Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968), Herbert Fromm (1900-1995), Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), Karol Rathaus (1895-1962), Ernst Toch (1887-1964), Eric Zeisl (1905-59), Kurt Weill (1900-1950), Paul Dessau (1894-1979), and Stefan Wolpe (1902-1072), as wells as scholars such as Paul Nettl (1889-1972), Alfred Sendrey (1884-1976), Curt Sachs (1881-1959), and Eric Werner (1901-88).[89]

Heskes also notes the work done by the JMF to "reclaim and preserve whatever could be salvaged for private, synagogue, and institutional holdings of Jewish music that remained behind in Europe." She once again raises Eric Mandell as a principal example, as he was able to retrieve an enormous collection of music by Holocaust victim Arno

[88] Irene Heskes, "Shapers of American Jewish Music: Mailamm and the Jewish Music Forum, 1931-62," *American Music*, vol. 15, no. 3 (Autumn, 1997), 307-309.
[89] Ibid, "Shapers of American Jewish Music," 309-312

Nadel (1878-1943), and continued to build that collection from a variety of sources.[90] Other major compendiums of synagogue music, particularly those of the great 19th century synagogue composers and compilers, such as Louis Lewandowski, Samuel Naumbourg, Salomon Sulzer, Abraham Baer, and others, became increasingly important after the war. They were especially important in those institutions that were formed in order to train the next generation of American Jewish music professionals.

Already during the war, there were influential members of the JMF, such as Israel Goldfarb and Harry Coopersmith, calling for some formalized system of Jewish music education.[91] The forum held a series of meetings between 1941 and 1944, the last of which was held in conjunction with the CCAR. It was at this last meeting that the first formal proposals were made to introduce cantorial training at rabbinic institutions. In 1948 Eric Werner, the successor to Idelsohn's archiving work at HUC, collaborated with A.W. Binder to form a School of Sacred Music at the then-recently combined HUC-JIR. The Conservative movement followed suit in 1952 with the Cantor's Institute and College of Music at JTS, and the Orthodox movement followed as well, first in 1954 with the inclusion of cantorial courses at Yeshiva University, followed ten years later by an official Cantorial Training Institute. All three of these programs filled their respective staff with members of the JMF (Werner, Binder, Fromm, Goldfarb, etc.).[92]

Within the first few years of its formation, students and faculty at the School of Sacred Music of HUC-JIR began to see the need to collect musical materials for educational use (students had initially been responsible for finding music on their own).

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[90] Ibid
[91] Ibid
[92] Ibid, "Shapers of American Jewish Music," 312-314

Following a student-driven publication of nusach and cantorial recitatives by Adolph Katchko in 1951/2, the Sacred Music Press was created.[93] In the first volume of a publication called "Out-of-Print Classics," the Press reprinted the magnum opus of cantor and scholar Abraham Baer, *Ba-al T'fillah*, with a preface written by Eric Werner. Apart from noting that it had been considered a standard reference work for European cantors in its time, Werner outlines very specific reasons for its publication, including a need for didactic works in the training of cantors. He also cites the "extinction of the great European centers of Jewish learning" and the "danger of a disintegration of our heritage," and the benefit the volume would provide for scholarship in Jewish folklore.[94] Werner seemed particularly hopeful that the volume would help those using it to distill the purity of the traditions from particular Jewish cultural communities (e.g. Sephardic, German, Polish, etc.) which had previously become something of a "hodge-podge" in the western hemisphere.[95] According to Seroussi, the Baer anthology became an authoritative source for not only the School of Sacred Music, but also for the Cantor's Institute at JTS, and even for musicologists of the time.[96] In an explanation of its authoritative nature, Werner concludes the preface with the following, "This book is not really the work of a single man, or even of a group of men. This book is the result of the work of the many 'sweet singers' through the many centuries of Israel's history. In a sense, it was created by *K'lal Yisrael*; may it again serve *K'lal Yisrael*!"[97]

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[93] Unknown Author, "Sacred Music Press Bookstore," Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, accessed December 26, 2017, http://huc.edu/academics/become-cantor/cantorial-ordination/sacred-music-press-bookstore.
[94] Eric Werner, "Preface to the Out-of-Print Classics Reissue by the Hebrew Union School of Sacred Music," *Out-of-Print Classics*, vol. 1 (New York: Sacred Music Press, 1953), iii-iv.
[95] Ibid
[96] Edwin Seroussi, "Music: The 'Jew' of Jewish Studies," *Jewish Studies*, vol. 46 (2009), 20-21
[97] Werner, *Out-of-Print Classics* vol. 1, iv

## Preservation Tendencies among Sephardi Communities

As previously noted, all of the melodies Baer included from the "Portuguese" tradition were taken directly from the Aguilar-De Sola collection published in London in 1857 (and so we see with the Out-of-Print Classics the first American publication of melodies from this collection since the 1914 edition of the *Union Hymnal*). It is important to note at this point, then, that the drive to preserve traditions that might otherwise be lost was already well established in Sephardi communities long before either of the world wars. According to Seroussi, a critical contribution to the development of this mindset was made by non-Jewish Spanish musicologists in the early twentieth century. Apart from providing a framework for modern Jewish scholars of Judeo-Spanish songs, Seroussi claims that the work of these gentile academics had a significant impact on "a modernizing, French-speaking, elitist circle of Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire," who subsequently "learned from the Spanish interest in their lore to appreciate the importance of their own oral musical and poetical culture: a 'traditional' culture that they started to perceive…as being trapped in an inescapable process of deterioration and loss."[98] In a 1918 letter to A.Z. Idelsohn, a Sephardi journalist from Saloniki, Isaac Rafael Molko, expressed this fear of the "total and imminent annihilation" for the Sephardi musical heritage, stating, "I am very concerned by the legacy from the past which has no saviours."[99] We see the significance of this fear of loss in the writings of a number of Sephardi figures, whose subsequent preservation work had an incredible

[98] Seroussi, "The 'Jew' of Jewish Studies," 29
[99] Edwin Seroussi, "Reconstructing Sephardi Music in the 20th Century: Isaac Levy and his 'Chants Judeo-Espagnols,'" *The World of Music*, vol. 37 no. 1 (1995), p. 41-42

impact on the resources available to American Jews, figures like Alberto Hemsi (1898-1975), Leon Algazi (1890-1971), Isaac Levy (1919-1977), and others.

Alberto Hemsi was a Turkish-born musician and scholar whose ethnographic activities were primarily limited to the Eastern Sephardim of the then extant Ottoman Empire. This alone admittedly puts the materials of his collections beyond the scope of the focus of this thesis. Moreover, his main period of collecting melodies took place between 1924 and 1937, somewhat outside the scope of this chapter.[100] Also, despite his own personal aspirations and some limited success in synagogue work, most of his collections were concerned with Judeo-Spanish folksong, and not liturgical melodies.[101] However, his initial motivation to begin collecting melodies remains relevant, because it is in many ways paradigmatic of similar sentiments in the Sephardi community at large, sentiments that were magnified following the Holocaust, particularly after the destruction of major centers of Sephardi Jewry (e.g. Greece, Rhodes, etc.).

Hemsi's education in music began in Turkey, and in 1914 he continued his studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Milan. It was there that he had an encounter that precipitated his work in collecting Sephardi music. In the introduction to his collection *Cancionero Sefardi*, Hemsi shares this anecdote:

> At the age of eighteen I had at the conservatory in Milan a celebrated professor of music history Giusto Zampieri. He talked in class about all the peoples of the globe and their music, [but] never ours…I was disappointed by his silence…One day, at the end of class I approached him to ask him about his silence about Jewish music…The professor looked at me as he went out, promising to talk about it in one of the coming sessions…
> The day and the time arrived…He began his exposition by talking about the universal influence of our religion…He gave special mention to the role of music

[100] Alberto Hemsi, Edwin Seroussi, Paloma Díaz-Mas, Elena Romero, José Manuel Pedrosa, and Samuel G. Armistead, *Cancionero Sefardí*, Jerusalem: The Jewish Music Research Centre - The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1995.
[101] Ibid, 26-28

> during all periods [in the history] of the Jewish people and the importance attached by our ancestors to all musical genres: vocal and instrumental…Concluding, he regretted his inability to play Jewish melodies since these do not exist anymore because they were all lost…
> What a profound disappointment! Profound! ... Did not the hazzan from Cassaba [Hemsi's home town] sing the melodies of our ancestors? …
> It was a moment of silence and intimate sadness. The memory of the humble hazzan from Cassaba, awakened by the poignant remarks of the professor of the Conservatory, fired my heart…[102]

Hemsi concluded that the traditional melodies of his own childhood, as well as those of his people, were worth collecting and preserving. He expressed the importance of "rescuing the sacred heritage of our ancestral generations," and traditions that might otherwise "wither away."[103]

Another figure who deserves brief mention is Lèon Algazi. Born in Romania in 1890 (little over a decade after Romania gained independence from the Ottoman Empire), Algazi studied rabbinics and music in Jerusalem, and then continued his studies in Vienna and Paris before eventually becoming the conductor at the Rue de la Victoire Synagogue in Paris in 1937. It was during his time in Jerusalem that he met and studied A.Z. Idelsohn, a formative encounter that sparked an interest in Jewish music and folklore.[104] In 1951, he was a part of a World Collection of Recorded Folk Music, a project that had been launched by UNESCO's International Music Council, and contributed Judeo-Spanish music to the collection, as well as folk music specifically from the Jews of Salonika.[105] In 1955 Algazi published a sacred service, *Service Sacrè*, through Transcontinental Music Corporation in New York, and in 1958, through the

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[102] Ibid, 23-24.
[103] Ibid
[104] Unknown Author, "Leon Algazi," Leon Algazi | Jewish Music Research Centre, accessed December 26, 2017, http://www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il/content/leon-algazi.
[105] C.S., Review of "Collection Universelle de Musique Populaire Enregisirée," *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, vol. 5, edited by Constatin Brailoiu (International Council for Traditional Music, 1953), p. 93.

World Sephardi Federation in London, he published his own collection of 81 liturgical melodies in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Ladino, *Chants Séphardis*.[106] In the introduction to his sacred service, the publisher states that, "from his early youth on he wrote music…and devoted these primarily to the preservation and development of Jewish musical tradition. Thereafter, his efforts incessantly emphasized this trend."[107]

Perhaps the most deserving of our attention at this point is the renowned musician and scholar Isaac Levy, whose work, among the scholars of Sephardi music and folklore of his time, was perhaps the most influential in Israel and America. Levy was born in Turkey in 1919, and his family immigrated to Palestine just three years later in 1922. He studied voice at the Academy of Music in Jerusalem, and had a successful career as a singer and songwriter. In 1954, Levy was placed as the head of a Judeo-Spanish radio program in Jerusalem, which Seroussi notes as a turning point for his activities in the then recently established state of Israel.[108] Not only did his listeners become the core supporters of his collecting and preserving efforts, but many became informants as well, providing melodies for said collections.[109] We can see two underlying motives for Levy's work in a quote from the introduction to the second volume of his *Chants Judeo-Espagnols*, "In publishing this series of volumes on the Sephardi song, we ensure not only the preservation of this song which runs the risk of being lost, but we bring to the Jewish music under gestation in the State of Israel the contribution of the Sephardi traditional song."[110] Despite receiving heavy criticism for his methodology, his

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[106] Irene Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music: Its History, Traditions, and Culture* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 95.
[107] Lèon Algazi, *Service Sacré: pour le samedi matin* (New York: Transcontinental Music Corporation, 1955), inside front cover.
[108] Seroussi, "Reconstructing Sephardi Music in the 20th Century", 42
[109] Ibid
[110] Ibid, "Reconstructing Sephardi Music in the 20th Century", 44

collections became critical resources for Sephardi and non-Sephardi musicians alike, as we will see in the next chapter.

It is important to note that Hemsi's *Cancionero Sefardi* and Levy's *Chants Judeo-Espagnols* were exclusively collections of Ladino folk songs, and contained no liturgical material. Algaizi's *Chants Séphardis*, on the other hand was comprised entirely of liturgical music, as was Levy's later publication, *Antología de liturgia judeo-española*. That being said, all of these sources were part of the broad trend of Sephardi Jews preserving musical traditions, and, as we shall see in both the following chapter and the conclusion, even the Ladino folksongs become relevant when one considers practices of contrafactum/adaptation.

The importance of these insider attempts at preservation cannot be understated. Renowned ethnomusicologist Kay Kaufman Shelemay states that "what we are able to recount of the history of Sephardic music must be reconstructed almost exclusively from the surviving songs and from the networks of traditions surrounding their transmission by 20th-century descendants of the Spanish-Jewish exiles."[111] Up to this point, we have looked primarily at such networks as existed outside of America, and with Isaac Levy we see how the concentration of Sephardi communities in Israel after the second World War proved particularly beneficial for his work in preserving melodies (much in the same way Idelsohn benefited from his access to Middle Eastern Jewish communities during the

[111] Kay Kaufman Shelemay, "Mythologies and Realities in the Study of Jewish Music," *The World of Music* vol. 37, no. 1 (1995), 28-29.

Yishuv period).[112] Seroussi also notes that Israeli society was particularly beneficial for such work, since much of the documentation was sponsored by the state.[113]

While there were few publications of Sephardi music (Western or otherwise) in America during and immediately after the second World War, there remain a few examples, one of which is particularly significant. During his time at Shearith Israel, the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue in New York City, choirmaster Leon Kramer compiled his choral arrangements of Sabbath evening melodies as sung at that synagogue.[114] Since he passed away before completing the project, his successor, Oskar Guttman, posthumously edited and published the collection (Kramer passed away in 1943, but the publication was apparently retroactively dated to 1942, when he began the project).[115] This work becomes particularly significant for our focus, since four of its melodies were reproduced in the first volume of *Zamru Lo*, an anthology of congregational melodies published by Moshe Nathanson, beginning in 1955.

## Moshe Nathanson and the First Volume of *Zamru Lo*

All four of these melodies reprinted in *Zamru Lo* vol. 1 indicate that they were edited by Siegfried Landau, three of them including the footnote, "As sung in the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue in N.Y.C."[116] Siegfried Landau, a prominent conductor in

[112] While both Algazi, and Levy had contact with Idelsohn, and were likely inspired by his work, it seems that they did their own ethnographic research for the collections mentioned in this chapter.
[113] Seroussi, "Reconstructing Sephardi Music in the 20th Century", 42.
[114] Leon M. Kramer and Oskar Guttmann, *Ḳol She'erith Yiśrael: Synagogue melodies, as used in the Sephardic Congregation Shearith Israel in the city of New York, "The Spanish and Portuguese synagogue"* (New York: Transcontinental Music Corporation, 1942).
[115] Neil Levin, "Kramer, Leon," Milken Archive of Jewish Music, accessed January 22, 2018, http://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/leon-kramer/.
[116] Moshe Nathanson, *Zamru Lo* vol. 1 (New York: The Cantors Assembly of America, 1955), pp. 26, 33, 48, 124

New York City, also taught at JTS and served as the choirmaster at Shearith Israel.[117] According to an article in a 2014 bulletin, Landau only served as choirmaster for one year, in 1953[118] (likely while Moshe Nathsanson was working on the first volume of *Zamru Lo*). Even a cursory glance at the melodies Landau edited in *Zamru Lo* show that he took them directly from the 1942 Kramer-Guttman publication (they are all even in the same respective keys).

The other most prominent source of Sephardi musical material in the first volume of *Zamru Lo* seems to be a Jacob Bauer, a Hungarian born cantor who served in the Turkish-Israelite temple in Vienna in the late nineteenth century.[119] While the music of the Turkish Sephardim is beyond the scope of this thesis, it seems that the four melodies attributed to Bauer in the first volume of *Zamru Lo* were taken from *Schir Hakawod*, a collection of Turko-Sephardic melodies compiled by Bauer and Isidor Lowit (his choir conductor) in 1889.[120] What is particularly notable about this is that, besides Idelson's *Thesaurus*, it is the first substantial inclusion of musical material in an American publication of musical material from a non-Western Sephardi source. In the acknowledgements section, we can see that Nathanson credited his colleague Ḥazzan M. Amsel for the melodies from Bauer, and Landau himself "for his edited Sephardic – Trad. Melodies."[121]

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[117] Vivien Schweitzer, "Siegfried Landau, Brooklyn Philharmonic Founder, Dies in House Fire," Playbill, February 21, 2007, accessed December 26, 2017, http://www.playbillarts.com/news/article/6055.html.
[118] Zachary Edinger, "Choirmasters of Shearith Israel," The Bulletin, 2014, accessed January 23, 2018, http://shearithisrael.org/sites/default/files/2014/09/media/CSI_Bulletin_Fall%202014_FINAL.pdf.
[119] Unknown Author, "Jacob Bauer," Jacob Bauer | Jewish Music Research Centre, accessed December 26, 2017, http://www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il/content/jacob-bauer.
[120] Unknown Author, "Schir-Hakawod," Schir-Hakawod | Jewish Music Research Centre, accessed December 26, 2017, http://www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il/content/schir-hakawod.
[121] Nathanson, *Zamru Lo* vol. 1, p. 4-5

More mysterious than the source material Nathanson drew upon for *Zamru Lo*, about which he was relatively clear in most cases, were his motivations for including said material. While he never seems to have explicitly articulated any particular reasons, we can infer some possibilities based on his background and the overall goals he outlines in the preface to the volume. Nathanson was born in Jerusalem in 1899. The son of a prominent rabbi, he began his studies in a traditional cheder from a very young age, However, he eventually transferred to Beit Sefer Lemel, an elementary school affiliated with the Ezra School in Jerusalem, where, at the time, A.Z. Idelsohn was the director of the choir.[122] In 1922, Nathanson moved to Canada, incidentally the same year Idelsohn moved to New York. Nathanson himself came to New York shortly thereafter, and in 1924 he took the position of cantor at the Society for the Advancement of Judaism (the same position Idelsohn left to pursue his activities with HUC in Cincinnati). From his upbringing in Palestine, as well as his association with Idelsohn, we can presume a certain amount of openness to communities within the broader Jewish world as authentic sources of tradition. The diversity of his source material in *Zamru Lo* would indicate the same openness.

Moreover, the goals Nathanson outlines in his preface to the first volume of *Zamru Lo* provides us with some helpful information. He states that the cantor "must have ample opportunity to interpret the prayers and liturgy beautifully, artistically and musically…and the congregation should participate by joining in the singing of congregational melodies thereby transforming them from passive listeners to active participants." Interestingly, we find that both of these principles can be found in the

[122] Unknown Author, "Moshe Nathanson," SaveTheMusic.com, accessed December 26, 2017, http://archives.savethemusic.com/bin/archives.cgi?q=bio&id=Moshe%2BNathanson.

performance practice of Sephardi liturgical music, as articulated by Hazzan Ramon Tasat in the introduction to his publication *Sephardic Songs for All* (2000), "The most important and basic function of the Hazzan consists of leading the congregation in prayer. More than for his musical ability, the congregation is attentive to his precise pronunciation and in-depth knowledge of Hebrew grammar. A successful Hazzan is praised for his expressive rendition of the prayers and his enunciation and articulation of the text," and "The liturgical melodies sung at Sephardic synagogues are musically simple and repetitive. In other words, they are highly accessible to the congregation who can and wants to participate throughout the service."[123] Nathanson also says in his introduction to *Zamru Lo* vol. 1, "It is our earnest hope that this book will elevate the musical standards of the congregational melodies in our synagogues. The melodies contained in *Zamru Lo* were selected and approved because they are singable, melodic, Hebraically correct, musical and based on our traditional Nusaḥot."

His last point about nusach also merits a moment's consideration, since it will remain relevant for future publications of Sephardi musical material from American Jews with a Conservative background. Looking at the first volume of Zamru Lo alone, we can see that all of the Sephardi melodies included can be relegated to one of three sections/categories: Kabbalat Shabbat, concluding songs, and table songs for home ritual. What these have in common is that none of them are strictly bound by nusach, i.e. the do not have a fixed modal system (Kabbalat Shabbat does have such a system, typically used by the hazzan at the beginning and/or end of the psalms therein, but it is unclear to what extent these modes were strictly applied to congregational singing). Nathanson, then, was

[123] Ramon Tasat, *Sephardic Songs for All* (Cedarhurst, NY: Tara Publications, 2000), 11

able to capitalize on the aspects of Sephardi music that fit with his aims of elevating congregational singing without transgressing his desire for adherence to "correct" nusach.[124]

Another interesting point is how Nathanson raises up responsive singing as an "effective form of congregational participation." He says, "Wherever possible the prayer[s] have been arranged in this manner. We have tried to eliminate the repetition of words without seriously impairing the melody. Those parts where this could not be accomplished, we assigned as solos for the Ḥazzan." The emphasis on simplicity for the benefit of congregational participation while maintaining musical integrity is once again reminiscent of Sephardi practice. Also, although it is most likely coincidental, responsorial singing between soloist and congregation is also a widespread practice in all forms of Sephardi religious music, liturgical and paraliturgical alike. If Nathanson's goal was to simply include melodies that were suitable for congregational singing, it is no surprise then that he found Sephardi melodies that met those needs. What is less clear is how the inclusion of these melodies fit into his priorities to include music based on "traditional" modes, and to what extent those boundaries were flexible.

As we can see, the tendencies of both the Ashkenazi-normative American Jewish community and the Sephardi communities both in America and abroad laid the groundwork for publications like Nathanson's *Zamru Lo*. In the next chapter, we will explore how this trend continues, and how the collected materials we've mentioned thus far will become particularly important following the social, cultural, and political upheavals of the 1960s, and particularly after the Six-day Way of 1967.

[124] Nathanson, *Zamru Lo, vol. 1*, p. 2-3

# Chapter 4 – From Preservation to Public Consumption

The publication of the first volume of *Zamru Lo* in 1955 shows that there was already some interest in taking advantage of the musical materials preserved during the first half of the twentieth century, and that this interest was more inclusive of Sephardic music than in previous generations. However, before examining the ways in which this trend continued in succeeding decades, it is first necessary to discuss some landmark events of the 1960s (particularly the Six-Day War of 1967), and the enormous impact they had on the consciousness of American Jewry. Importantly, these events brought to the surface feelings about the Holocaust that had either been repressed or limited to those American Jews who had been impacted directly, and also occurred at a time by which the majority of American Jews were finally aware of the extent of the loss the Holocaust had inflicted. As a result of this shift, among other changes, American Jews, particularly those of the younger generation, became more interested in reclaiming their Jewish ethnic identities, emphasized ritual authenticity and particularism over the decorum and universalism of their parents' generation, and became more conscious of Jews living in places besides America and their own family's place of origin. These changes had a broad effect on the publication of music for American Jewish worship, including the quantity and type of Sephardi music, as well as its intended use.

## Counterculture movement of the 1960s, The New Left, and Black Power

The major social changes and widespread political activism carried out by the post-war "Baby Boomer" generation in the 1950s and 1960s can be broadly put into the category of American "counterculture." In his seminal work, *The American Counterculture*, anthropologist Christopher Gair states that this generation, at this point

in their teens and twenties, "had very different tastes and ambitions to those of their parents."[125] These shifts can be traced to a number of causes, such as the dramatic increase in the number of young people receiving higher level education and the proportionately high disposable incomes to which these students had access (giving them the ability to pursue interests without the approval of their parents),[126] reactions to the conservatism of the religious revival of the 1950s,[127] increased social contact and cultural exchange between whites and blacks (a trend that admittedly predates World War II), etc. The political drive of American counterculture is exemplified in the New Left and the Black Power movement, the former of which in particular had large Jewish involvement.[128] The extent and reasons for this association are well-established and discussed at length by scholars of various disciplines, but for our purposes it is sufficient to say that the connection existed, and that is was seriously challenged by the American Jewish shift to ethnic particularism, precipitated by the Eichmann trial in the early 1960s, and the Six-Day War of 1967.

## The Eichmann Trial and 1967 Six-Day War

Jonathan Sarna notes that the 1960s, i.e. the period "before, during, and immediately following the Six Day War in June 1967" was significant in that it "jolted the American Jewish community from this universalistic agenda."[129] This "jolt" began in

125 Christopher Gair, *The American Counterculture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 4
126 Ibid
127 Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, Location 3675.
128 Norman L. Friedman, "Social Movement Legacies: The American Jewish Counterculture, 1973-1988," *Jewish Social* Studies, vol. 50, no. 3/4 (Summer, 1988-Autumn, 1993), 127-128; Seth Forman, *Blacks in the Jewish Mind: The Crisis of Liberalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 147-148; Michael E. Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 195; Jack Wertheimer, "The American Synagogue: Recent Issues and Trends," *The American Jewish Year Book*, vol. 105 (2005), 17.
129 Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, Location 4318

the early 1960s with the capture, trial, and execution of Adolf Eichmann, one of the major organizers of the Holocaust. Historian Nathan Glazer claims the emotional impact of the Holocaust had been largely repressed among American Jews up to this point, but that "Eichmann's trial made it impossible to repress the events any longer."[130] The 1967 war in Israel was also a major contributing factor to the process of becoming "sensitized to the enormity of the extermination of the Jews."[131] For the second time in a generation, American Jews saw the very real possibility of a Jewish genocide, as was clearly articulated by Arab spokesmen declaring their intentions for the Jewish people.[132] What made this event all the more significant was that those Jews who had previously associated strongly with the humanist, anti-imperialist New Left found themselves identifying strongly with the Jewish state and its predicament. Meanwhile, the gentile members of these movements, both white and black, strongly denounced the actions of Israel that they viewed as another instance of white imperialism.[133] The result of this crisis was a much larger constituency of American Jews connecting to their own Jewish identities, connecting to Jews living in other lands (e.g. Israel and the Soviet Union), and in many cases connecting to ritual Jewish practice, albeit a practice very different from that of the establishments against which they had originally rebelled.

While a Jewish religious revival had been apparent in America since the immediate postwar years, the post-1967 iteration of the movement that manifested most strongly among the youth was different in many significant ways. The postwar revival was characterized by a synagogue-building boom, dramatic expansion of Jewish

[130] Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 172-174.
[131] Ibid
[132] Ibid; Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, Location 4318
[133] Staub, *Torn at the Roots*, 208

education, increased interest in Bible study and Jewish theology and religious thought, and a "near collapse of Jewish secularism as an organized movement."[134] In contrast, the revival after 1967 was characterized by a "widespread return to ritual," "renewed interest throughout the community in neglected forms of Jewish music and art," "the awakening of record numbers of Jews to the wellsprings of their traditions,"[135]and an overall increased interest in communal participation in worship.[136]

The trends of increased interest in "neglected forms of Jewish music" and awakening to "wellsprings of their traditions," are perhaps most significant to us, since they indicate a possible reason for a surge of interest in Sephardi music noted by musicologist Neil Levin in his liner notes for *Shabbat Nusah S'fard*, a Shabbat evening service with Sephardi melodies arranged by Emanuel Rosenberg in 1970. In these liner notes, Levin refers to a trend in American Jewry of "emerging interest in Sephardi, Near Eastern, and other non-Ashkenazi musics in the late 1960s and early 1970s, prompted in part by the discovery of world Jewish music traditions that accompanied pride in Israel's victory in the 1967 Six-Day War—which ignited the beginning of heightened awareness of the variety of Jewish cultures."[137] This service deserves further attention, but first, we will explore how the trends noted by Sarna and Levin may have influenced that third volume of Moshe Nathanson's *Zamru Lo.*

## ***Zamru Lo*, vol. 3 (1974)**

The third volume of *Zamru Lo*, compiled and edited by Nathanson, was published by the Cantors Assembly in 1974, and contains congregational melodies for the Shalosh

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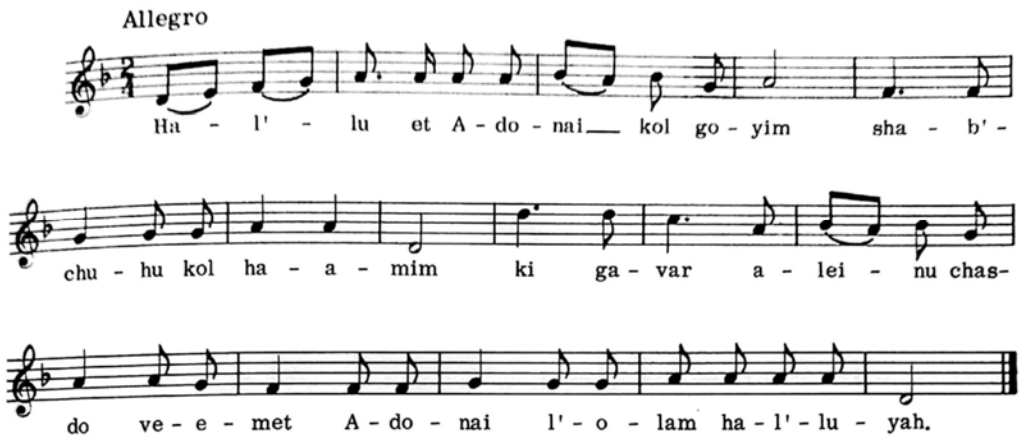
[134] Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, Location 3828
[135] Ibid, Location 4392
[136] Wertheimer, The American Synagogue, 29-39
[137] Neil Levin, "Shabbat Nusaḥ S'fard," Milken Archive of Jewish Music, accessed January 3, 2018, http://www.milkenarchive.org/music/volumes/view/a-garden-eastward/work/shabbat-nusa-sfard/.

R'galim (Three Festivals) and the High Holidays. It contains seven Sephardi melodies, as well as five melodies from other non-Ashkenazi origins (e.g. Babylonian and Yemenite). What is particularly interesting is that, in contrast to the previous two volumes, there are no melodies in this edition that are attributed specifically to Spanish and Portuguese communities, nor any label that suggest such a specific origin (e.g. "Western Sephardic," "Amsterdam," "Traditional Portuguese," etc.). This can perhaps be attributed to the already noted difficulties in finding the provenance of melodies in a primarily oral tradition, especially when such melodies travelled with functionaries who served in multiple Sephardi communities. Some of these melodies, such as the one used for the Song of the Sea (see Chapter 2) became so widespread in Sephardi communities that a particular geographic label, or even the categories "East" and "West," become exceedingly less useful. It is hard to know the extent to which Nathanson attempted to find any of this information for the melodies he included in this volume. However, in some cases we can at least determine his most immediate sources, and even this can provide us with some useful information.

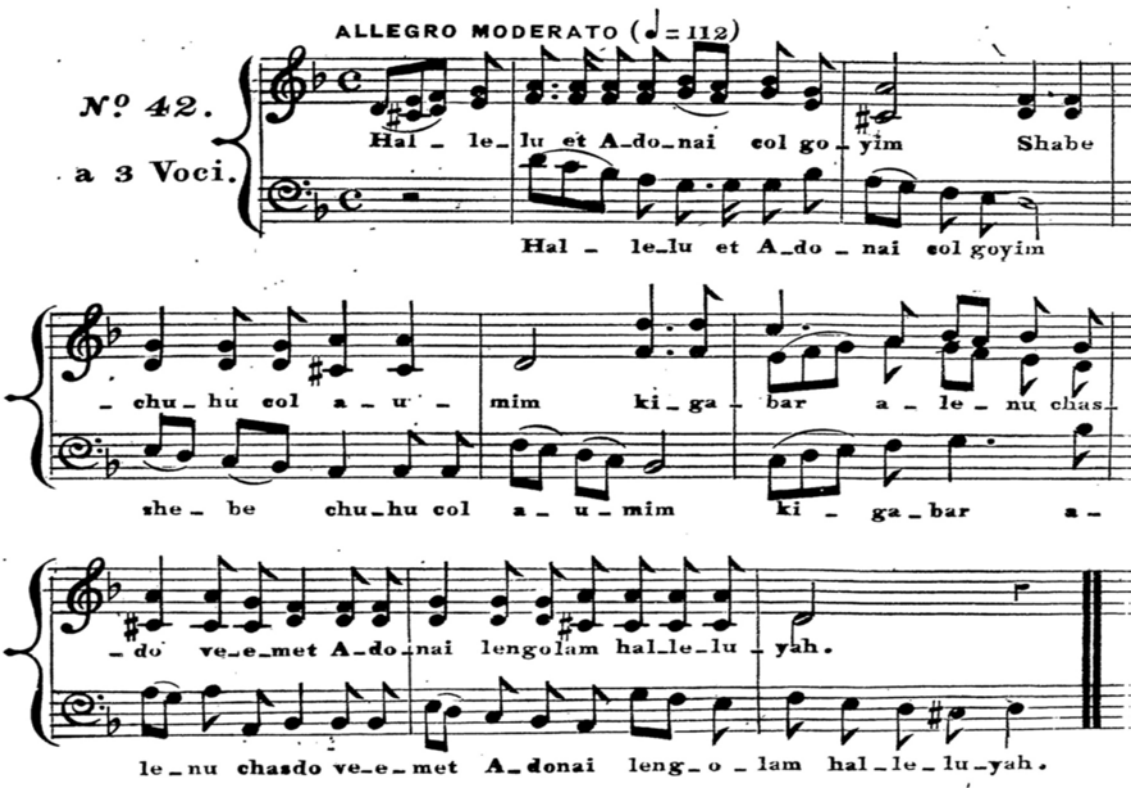
Four of the Sephardi melodies, "Hal'lu no. 3," "Hodu no. 7," "Od'cha no. 1," and "Annah Adonai no. 1" are labeled as being "notated by E. Mandell."[138] This attribution must be referring to Eric Mandell, whom I discussed in the previous chapter, whose notation is likely based on materials he had amassed in his collection at the Gratz College in Philadelphia (which contained both Ashkenazi and Sephardi musical material).[139] The melodies for "Hal'lu no. 3" and "Od'cha no. 1" are identical to one another, and "Hodu

[138] Moshe Nathanson, *Zamru Lo volume three: Congregational Melodies for the Shalosh R'galim and the High Holidays* (New York: Cantors Assembly, 1974), 46-48.
[139] Jane Myer, "Resources for the Study of Jewish Music and Dance I: Archives, Libraries and Research Projects," ed. Shalom Staub, *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Newsletter*, vol. 4 (1981), 2-5

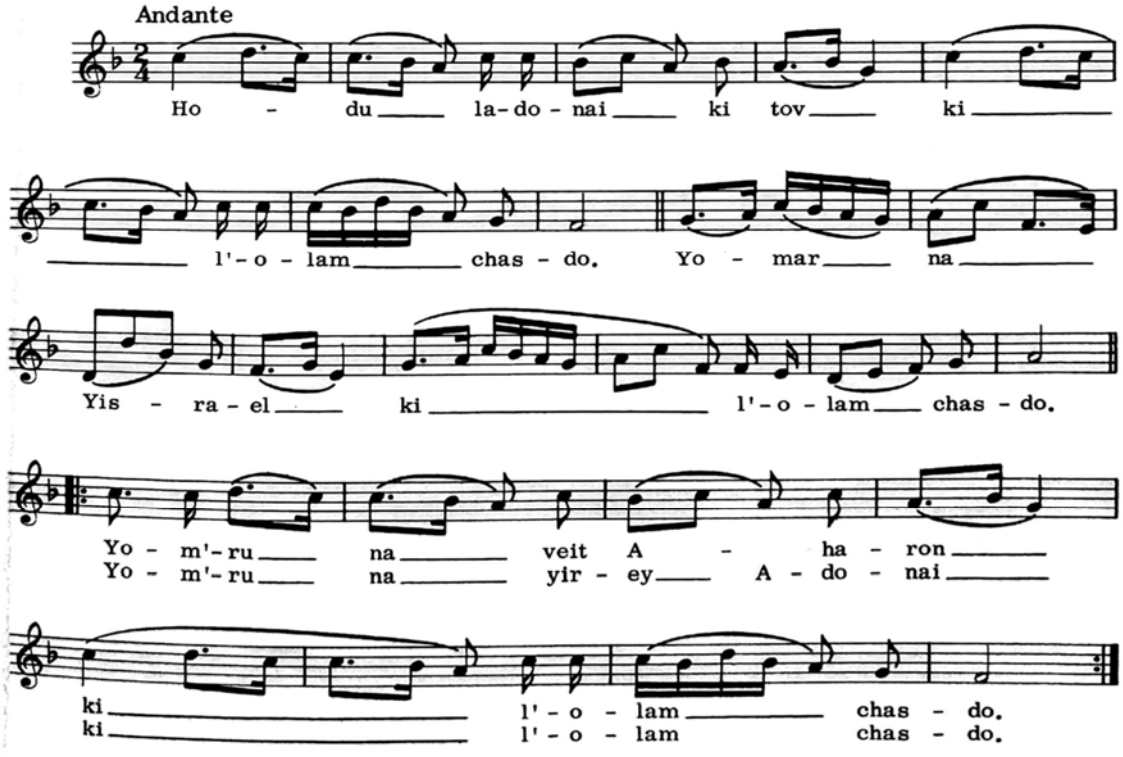
no. 7" and "Annah Adonai no. 1" are likewise a repeated pair. The inclusion of these materials in *Zamru Lo* provides us with a clear example of how the postwar preservation efforts were made available for public use. Looking more closely, we can see that the melodies for both of these pairs can also be found in the 1857 Aguilar-De Sola Collection:



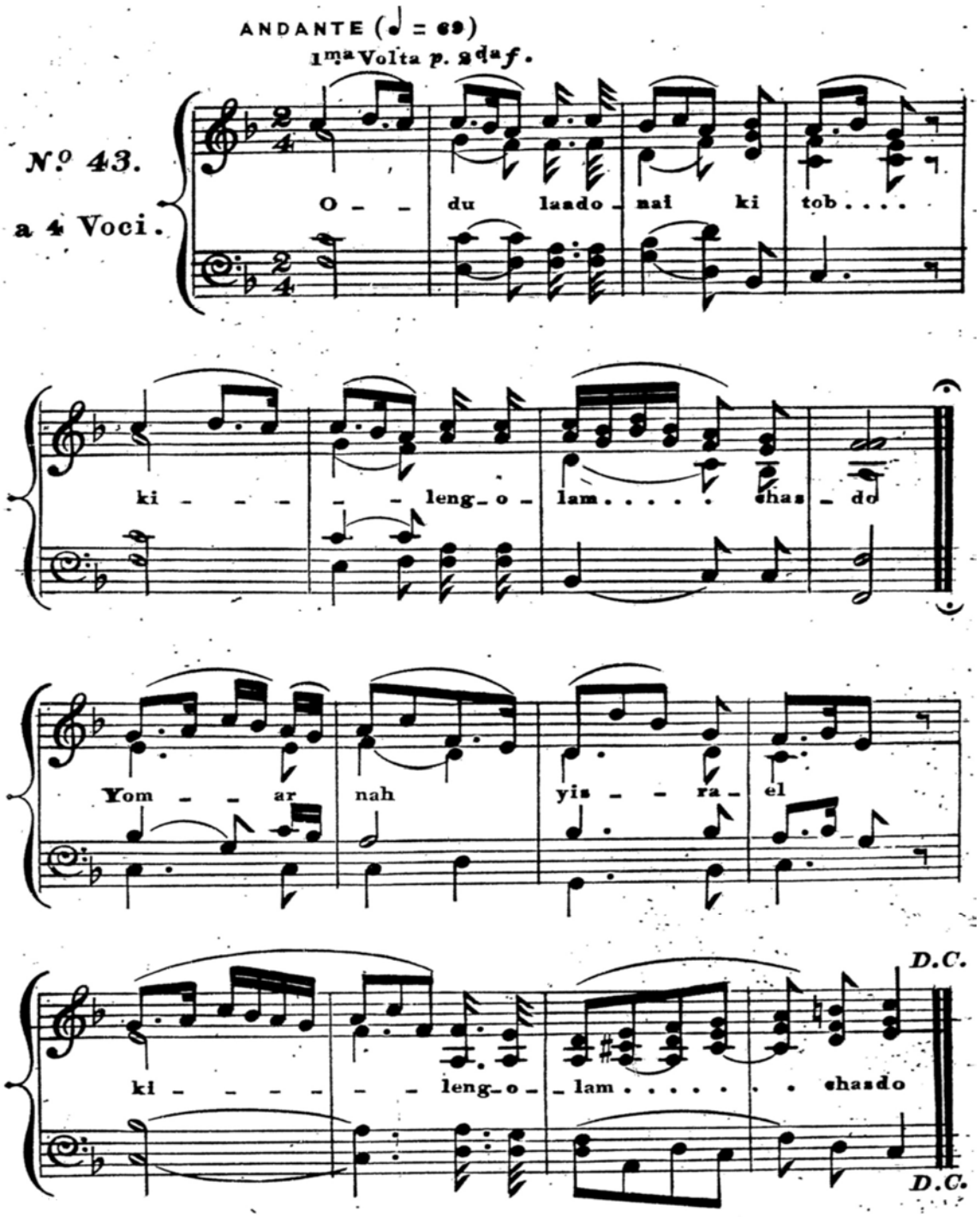

Ex. 1 - "Hal'lu no. 3," Traditional Sephardic Tune Notated by E. Mandell
*Zamru Lo*, vol. 3, ed. M. Nathanson




Ex. 2 - "Hallel," no. 42 in *The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, ed. E. Aguilar and D. A. De Sola, London, 1857.




Ex. 3 - "Hodu no. 7," Traditional Sephardic Tune Notated by E. Mandell
*Zamru Lo*, vol. 3, ed. M. Nathanson




Ex. 4 - "Hallel," no. 43 in *The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, ed. E. Aguilar and D. A. De Sola, London, 1857.

As we can see, the melodies for examples 1 and 2 are exactly the same, in the same key, with the same syllabification of the text, the only slight differences being that between 2/4 and 4/4 meter, and the lack of harmonization. We find the same evidence

with examples 3 and 4, where here even the meter is the same. Somewhere between the Aguilar-De Sola collection and *Zamru Lo*, the melodies lost the citation of their specific, Spanish-Portuguese origin, and became "Traditional Sephardic Tune(s)." It is unclear if the reason for this change is because Nathanson was unable to determine their provenance, or if it was because this was not a priority for him. The introduction for this volume of *Zamro Lo* states its intentions quite clearly, claiming that "congregational melodies…must be founded on tradition, must reflect the occasion on which it is sung, must elucidate the text and—above all—be faithful to the spirit of prayer."[140] It is helpful to know that these goals were extended to the Sephardic material included, even if explicit evidence of the authenticity of these melodies is not provided.

In addition to the Sephardi melodies notated by Eric Mandell, we also find two melodies provided by Hazzan Samuel Dubrow (1916-1974), "Hal'lu no. 2" and "Eil Norah Alilah."[141] The first of these is labeled, "Taken from the Sephardic Manual and submitted by S. Dubrow." It is unclear to which manual the attribution is referring, and why it was submitted by Dubrow, an Ashkenazi Conservative cantor. One could also raise the latter question about Dubrow's "re-notation" of "Eil Norah Alilah" (which, incidentally, is just labelled as "Traditional" and doesn't even indicate Sephardi origin). One possible connection is that Dubrow served for many years as the cantor at Temple Beth El in Cedarhurst, New York, where there was also a Sephardic synagogue founded in the early 1960s (The Sephardic Temple), and the first rabbi of this Sephardic

[140] Samuel Rosenbaum and Saul Meisels, "Preface," *Zamru Lo volume three: Congregational Melodies for the Shalosh R'galim and the High Holidays* (New York: Cantors Assembly, 1974), iv.
[141] Nathanson, *Zamru Lo volume three*, 46, 227

synagogue, Arnold B. Marans, was also an alumnus of JTS.[142] It is possible, then, that Dubrow had access to the material he provided through connections with the Sephardic Temple in Cedarhurst. This explanation, though plausible, holds less weight with the melody for "Eil Norah Alilah," given its widespread nature and the preponderance of sources in which it had been published even by the 1960s.[143]

There is no clear evidence that the social and political developments of the 1960s had any impact whatsoever on this volume of *Zamru Lo*. There are not significantly more non-Ashkenazi melodies than in previous volumes, nor are there any Israeli melodies (though it's possible that the Yemenite melodies came from Idelsohn's ethnographic work during his time in Palestine). In many ways, the volume merely continues the demonstrate motives attributed to Nathanson in our previous chapter, such as his commitment to high quality congregational singing, and his desire to draw upon sources that he perceived as authentically traditional. Like volume one of *Zamru Lo*, volume three also limits its Sephardic selections to liturgical rubrics that are not strictly bound to particular Ashkenazi modes, e.g. Hallel. What is different is that it draws upon sources collected in the immediate postwar period (as mentioned previously), as well as sources from a recently established center for Sephardi Jewry (i.e. The Sephardic Temple of Cedarhurst, NY). For examples of the impact of 1967 on the publication of Sephardi

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[142] Fred Ferretti, "Sephardic Jews' Temple on L.I. To Mark Its Own Coming of Age," The New York Times, April 23, 1976, accessed January 10, 2018, http://www.nytimes.com/1976/04/23/archives/sephardic-jews-temple-on-li-to-mark-its-own-coming-of-age.html.

[143] For more information on the extent of the ubiquitous nature of this melody in Sephardi communities, see Avner Bahat, "El NORA ALILA (God of Might, God of Awe): From Spain to the Four Corners of the Earth," *Inter-American Music Review* 17, nos. 1-2 (2007): (publication location unspecified), accessed December 18, 2017, https://www.academia.edu/8800754/_Users_bahat_Desktop_%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%AA_La_po_sie_h_bra_que_m_di_vale.pdf.

music in America, we will return to Rosenberg's *Shabbat Nusah S'fard*, as well as publications from Charles Davidson and Velvel Pasternak.

## ***Shabbat Nusah S'fard* (1970)[144]**

What is particularly significant about Rosenberg's service is that it is explicit about its source material and motivations in ways that many other publications of its time and preceding it were not. The work was both inspired and supported by the Metropolitan Synagogue of New York and its rabbi, Judah Cahn, who wrote the introduction to the service. There he claims that "there is a simplicity and beauty in the Sephardic liturgical tradition which is worthy of greater use in all of our Synagogues."[145] But it is his subsequent comment that justifies the claim of Zionist motivations made by Neil Levin (see above):

> We feel that this is especially important in our day when the people of diverse Jewish traditions are now living together in the State of Israel. Though Jewish communities will undoubtedly remain in many parts of the world, Israel is now the center which has changed these from a scattering of Jewish communities to an orbit of Jewish communities.
>
> It is our hope that through such Services and other cultural ventures, the Jewish people will be drawn closer together in an ever tightening bond.[146]

Cahn clearly sees this work as part of a commitment not only to the state of Israel, but also to a broader concept of *k'lal Yisrael* (literally, "the totality of Israel"), an umbrella term for connection between Jews in different places that had gained increased parlance in American liberal Jewish circles during this time.[147] We also see in this service

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[144] The title of this work is potentially misleading, as "Nusach S'fard" is typically used to describe a rite attributed to Isaac Luria, used by many Jews of Eastern European heritage, and especially by Hassidic sects. In the case of Rosenberg's service, he is clearly referring to Sephardi practice.
[145] Emanuel Rosenberg, *Shabbat Nusaḥ S'fard*, 3
[146] Ibid
[147] Ellen M. Umansky, "Jewish Religious Life in America: Changing Realities and Changing Visions," *Revue Française D'études Américaines*, no. 12 (1981): 209.

the explicit citation of sources for the melodies used. The three major sources are none other than Idelsohn's *Thesaurus of Hebrew-Oriental Melodies*, Isaac Levy's *Antología de Liturgia Judeo-Española*, and *Liturgie Sephardie*, an anthology of Sephardi secular and sacred music collected and edited by Ovadiah Camhy, and published under the auspices of the World Sephardi Federation in London in 1959.[148] Thus, with Rosenberg's service we see that there is a convergence of the desire to connect to Jews in other places and to draw upon previously untapped expressions of Jewish tradition, and the work of preserving Jewish musical traditions, in this case Sephardic, which occurred throughout the first half of the twentieth century, but which expanded after the second world war.

### ***Libi B'mizrach* (1972)**

Chalres Davidson, born in 1929, was one of the first graduates of the Cantors Institute (now the H. L. Miller Cantorial School) at the Jewish Theological Seminary (where he later taught, beginning in 1977).[149] In 1972, he arranged a Sephardic synagogue service, called *Libi B'mizrach* ("My Heart is in the East").[150] This rather telling title is taken from a poem by the famed medieval Jewish rabbi and poet Yehudah HaLevi:

[148] Ovadiah Camhy, *Liturgie Sephardie* (London: Published by Vallentine, Mitchell for the World Sephardi Federation, 1959).
149 Neil Levin, "Davidson, Charles," Milken Archive of Jewish Music, accessed January 10, 2018, http://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/charles-davidson/.
[150] Charles Davidson, *Sephardic Service for the Sabbath (Libi B'mizrach)* (Elkins Park, PA: Ashbourne Music Publications, 1972).

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|---|---|
| לִבִּי בְמִזְרָח וְאָנֹכִי בְּסוֹף מַעֲרָב | My heart is in the east, and I in the uttermost west-- |
| אֵיךְ אֶטְעֲמָה אֵת אֲשֶׁר אֹכַל וְאֵיךְ יֶעֱרָב | How can I find savour in food? How shall it be sweet to me? |
| אֵיכָה אֲשַׁלֵּם נְדָרַי וֶאֱסָרַי, בְּעוֹד | How shall I render my vows and my bonds, while yet |
| צִיּוֹן בְּחֶבֶל אֱדוֹם וַאֲנִי בְּכֶבֶל עֲרָב | Zion lieth beneath the fetter of Edom, and I in Arab chains? |
| יֵקַל בְּעֵינַי עָזֹב כָּל טוּב סְפָרַד, כְּמוֹ | A light thing would it seem to me to leave all the good things of Spain -- |
| יֵקַר בְּעֵינַי רְאוֹת עַפְרוֹת דְּבִיר נֶחֱרָב. | Seeing how precious in mine eyes to behold the dust of the desolate sanctuary.[151] |

As we can see, the choice of title makes sense both on the basis of the service's content, and on Davidson's position as an American Jew with Ashkenazi ancestry in the wake of 1967. The connection to a poem that is clearly speaking a longing for Zion resonates strongly in the midst of the Zionist fervor that permeated American Jewry during this time period. We know that Davidson was himself involved in many musical ventures that had Zionist motivations, such as his position as conductor of the International Zionist Federation Association Orchestra at the University of Pittsburgh, and the Hadassah Choral Society, respectively.[152] Moreover, he included in *Libi B'mizrach* a number of melodies labeled as Yemenite. Apart from not being remotely Sephardi, the vast majority of the remaining Yemenite Jewish community lives in Israel, and their music became accessible to American Jews through the ethnographic work of scholars like Idelsohn. Besides the apparent connections to Israel in the title choice, it is worth mentioning that Sephardi culture has always been associated with the "East" in

[151] English translation by Nina Salaman, found in *Essential Texts of Zionism* (Jewish Publication Society of America, 1924), accessed at http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-my-heart-is-in-the-east-quot-yehuda-halevi

[152] Levin, "Davidson, Charles"

contrast to that of Ashkenazi and Ashkenazi-normative Jewish communities, and so it is just as likely that Davidson had this in mind when titling his work.

Besides a number of pieces that are not labeled with a specific origin, and whose Sephardi provenance is questionable, three melodies are specifically attributed as "Spanish-Portuguese." The origin of the melody for No. 1, "L'chu N'ran'nah," becomes clear in the second phrase, "N'kadmah fanav b'todah…", at which point Davidson clearly uses the Spanish-Portuguese "Az Yashir Mosheh."[153] This practice of contrafactum, and specifically taking a Sephardi melody from one text, sacred or secular, and applying it to another prayer did not begin in this time period immediately after 1967, but it was perhaps less common than it would become. No. 3, "Mizmor Shir" is not contrafactum, but based on the Spanish-Portuguese setting of the same text, and the same is the case for no. 9, "Hashkivenu."[154] These latter two pieces can be found in a number of publications of Spanish-Portuguese music, such as Leon Kramer's 1942 publication of Shabbat evening melodies from Shearith Israel, and a variety of more recent collections put out by Tara Publications.

A number of other publications of Sephardi music came out in the 1970s, notably those of Richard Neumann and Velvel Pasternak (although the majority of their early publications of Sephardi music were secular, they did also include some liturgical selections). That the former of these was a Holocaust survivor[155] and the latter first published Sephardi material as part of compilations of Israeli music suggests possible

[153] Davidson, *Libi B'mizrach*
[154] Ibid
[155] Richard J. Neumann et al., "The Richard J. Neumann music scores, papers, audio and video recordings, 1948-1997," ArchiveGrid: The Richard J. Neumann music scores, papers, audio and video recordings, 1948-1997, accessed January 15, 2018, https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/data/783567741.

connections between their compiling and arranging work and the motivations we have discussed in this chapter. Neumann and Pasternak, along with Nathanson, Rosenberg, and Davidson, represent only a part, albeit significant, of the surge of interest in Sephardi musical material that became evident in the late 1960s and 1970s, and their work remains relevant to those who engage with Sephardi music today.

As we have seen, the increase in the interest expressed Sephardi music by American Jews of Ashkenazi heritage after 1967 demonstrates broader trends of American Jews becoming more connected to ideas of Jewish peoplehood and particularism. Authenticity becomes an issue of importance for music that is used in worship, even as the scope of what is considered "authentic" is broadened. The years following 1967 may well have been the beginning of a process of "normalizing" non-Ashkenazi forms of worship for Ashkenazi-normative American communities. By examining the early stages of this trend and its underlying factors, we can perhaps gain a better understanding of more recent developments, as well as the current status quo.

# Conclusion

In this thesis I have discussed the history of the use of Sephardi melodies in Ashkenazi-normative Jewish prayer communities in America. To do so, I have focused specifically on publications of liturgical music compiled, adapted, and arranged by American Jews of Ashkenazi heritage. This history provides, in many ways, a snapshot of the social, political, and cultural trends that have characterized the broader history of American Jewry. The major trends discussed in this thesis include demographic shifts caused by mass immigration waves, reactions to the trauma of the Holocaust, and the rise of new forms of Jewish liberalism and nationalism. In addition to their broader significance, all of these had a great impact on the extent to which American Jews with Ashkenazi background expressed interest in Sephardi music, an effect that can be seen in music published by American Ashkenazi Jews for use in worship.

For reasons I explored in the first two chapters, the earliest examples of such publications were limited exclusively to music from Western Sephardi communities, the most significant of which was Amsterdam. In the first place, the original Jewish communities in the American colonies were all of Dutch Sephardi provenance, and the Sephardi rite maintained hegemony over American Jewish ritual life until the 1830s, when German Jews began to break off to form their own communities. However, since these communities were established primarily for the purpose of maintaining Ashkenazi customs, the more compelling reasons for their eventual rapprochement with Sephardi liturgical music had to be found elsewhere.

One such reason may be the extent to which the wave of Jews emigrating from German-speaking lands, ca. 1825-1875, was influenced by the ideology of the

Enlightenment and reforming processes in European Jewish communities. The writings of the *maskilim* and practices of early Reform communities like the New Israelite Temple in Hamburg (as well as the compilations of synagogue music reformers and scholars like Naumbourg and Baer) demonstrate how some Ashkenazi Jews in Europe raised up Sephardim as paragons of authentic tradition and decorum, and even began the practice of transcribing and borrowing some of their melodies. We know, for example, that some of the first attempts at reforming in American Jewish communities, such as the Reformed Society of Israelites in Charleston, used the Hamburg hymnal, which included some Western Sephardi Jewish melodies. I have also shown that the first edition of the Union Reform Hymnal, published in 1897, contained the Western Sephardi melody for *Az Yashir Mosheh*, a melody that had already been included in the Hamburg hymnal, as well as publications by Naumbourg, Baer, and even Sulzer.

A broader rapprochement with Sephardi liturgical music, however, had to be first preceded by a reconciliation between the Americanizing and Germanizing drives of the early American reformers and the value of "traditional" Jewish melodies. This process began in the early twentieth century with contributions of important figures like A. Z. Idelsohn and A.W. Binder. Binder's 1932 edition of the Union Hymnal, a project that in its early stages had also involved Idelsohn, included more Sephardi melodies than any American Jewish publication up to that point (albeit, only eight settings out of 292). The next major shift in attitudes toward Sephardi music in Ashkenazi-normative American Jewish worship came in the period during and immediately after the Second World War.

The impact of the Holocaust and the near annihilation of European Jewry precipitated a major interest among American Jews in preserving traditions, musical and

otherwise, that might otherwise be lost (as I discussed in Chapter 3). This trend can be seen in the activities of the Jewish Music Forum (originally called Mailamm), as well as many other organizations. It is during this time that major cataloging work is done on the Eduard Birnbaum Music Collection at HUC in Cincinnati, and also when Holocaust survivor Eric Mandell began amassing material for what became another major collection of Jewish music primary sources at the Gratz College in Philadelphia. One could also point to the establishment of formal cantorial training programs as a consequence of these preservationist motives, especially when one examines some of the early publications that came out of these programs, such as the Out-of-Print Classics from the Sacred Music Press of the School of Sacred Music at HUC-JIR in New York. Sephardi communities, both in America and abroad, were also engaged in this process of preserving musical traditions, though their involvement goes back much further. Despite that, the work of postwar Sephardi scholars and cantors such as Alberto Hemsi, Léon Algazi, Isaac Levy, Ovadiah Camhy, and Leon Kramer clearly demonstrate an increased urgency to record musical traditions.

It is also significant that this body of notated material was no longer limited primarily to the Western Sephardi communities. Perhaps the earliest synthesis of the preservationist tendencies and the resulting materials they amassed can be found in Moshe Nathanson's 1955 publication of the first volume of *Zamru Lo*, in which we already find music from both Spanish-Portuguese and Turkish-Sephardic traditions. His work presents three trends that became even more pronounced in succeeding decades: the practice of drawing upon the materials collected by the ethnographic work of Jewish music scholars throughout the first half of the twentieth century, but especially after the

Holocaust; the expansion of interest from primarily Western Sephardi music to that of other Sephardi communities, precipitated especially by increased identification among American Jews with the idea of Jewish peoplehood; and the general shift in American Jewish communities toward including more participatory forms of worship. The social and political upheavals in America in the 1960s, e.g. counterculture, the New Left, and the Black Power movement, as well as events in Israel like the Eichmann trial and the war of 1967, caused these trends to become much more dramatically pronounced.

Many historians note that the emotional impact of the Holocaust on American Jewry did not become fully apparent until the events of the 1960s, and in particular the Eichmann trial in 1961 and the Six-Day War in 1967. The latter of these was seen as an existential crisis for the Jewish people, and even as another potential genocide. The surge of triumphalism and nationalism that followed the Israeli victory affected the vast majority of American Jews, even those who had up to that point associated with the New Left and the Black Power movement. At the same time as the major movements of American Jews with a renewed interest in the affairs and fate of Jews in other lands (particularly Israel and the Soviet Union), there was also a marked increase in American Jewish composers of Ashkenazi background arranging and publishing collections of Sephardi music for use in American Jewish worship. In both Moshe Nathanson's third volume of *Zamru Lo* in 1974 and Emanuel Rosenberg's *Shabbat Nusaḥ S'fard* in 1970, one can see that they drew heavily upon the body of material that had been amassed in the immediate postwar period. The latter even specifically pointed to Zionist/peoplehood motivations for its publication, and cites melodies from collections that had come from ethnographic work done among Sephardi communities in Israel (e.g. the work of Idelsohn

and Levy). The connection to Israel can also be observed in some of the early publications of Velvel Pasternak, who included Sephardi melodies in collections of Israeli music.

All of these publications, as well as several others, demonstrate a widespread process of taking melodies from scholarly collections of music from the first half of the twentieth century and the immediate postwar period, as well as music being produced in Israel (the two of which were not always mutually exclusive), and repackaging it for use in American Jewish worship. The process raises questions of how the music was then shared with Jewish communities, and how it was then experienced by the members thereof. Did the impetus to connect to the musical traditions of the broader Jewish world, expressed sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly by the composers, arrangers, and publishers who produced the music, translate to similar experiences by congregants if and when the music was used in worship settings? Did they feel a connection to *k'lal Yisrael*, as was part of the ethos of many Jewish movements at the time? Did they experience this music as "exotic," or perhaps merely as "Jewish"?

Historian Jack Wertheimer writes the following about the increased use of Israeli melodies in American synagogues after 1967, "While these melodies may spark a conscious association with Israel for some congregants, for others they may represent the reverse: it has become so completely natural to incorporate such music that Israeli songs in the synagogue have become, unselfconsciously, part of the cultural heritage of American Jews."[156] Perhaps the same principle could be applied to the use of Sephardi melodies, as certain melodies have become so ubiquitous in American Reform,

[156] Jack Wertheimer, "American Jews and Israel: A 60-Year Retrospective," *The American Jewish* Yearbook, vol. 108 (2008), p. 20.

Conservative, and Reconstructionist congregations, they have lost their Sephardi association (e.g. *Eil Nora Alilah* and *Az Yashir Mosheh*). These questions remain relevant for the use of Sephardi melodies in Ashkenazi-normative American Jewish worship today, and could be the subject of additional ethnographic research.

In addition, conversations with even just a handful of synagogue music professionals today reveal a host of additional questions about the sources that are used for Sephardi musical material, what motivates cantors and music directors to share those melodies with their communities, how they present the music, and how congregants then experience that music when it is used.[157] Contemporary sources to consider, beyond those covered in this thesis, include the following: Music published during and after 1992, which marked the quincentennial anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain (among these, specific mention was made of collections complied by Sephardi insiders and published by Tara Publications, as well as choral works put out by organizations like the Zamir Choral Foundation and its affiliates);[158] music obtained through continued contact with Israeli sources, such as *Hazmanah L'piyyut* ("Invitation to Piyyut"),[159] "a collective database of piyyutim from various Jewish traditions from all over the world,"[160] personal travelling to Israel to experience Sephardi music in that context,[161]

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[157] Interviews were conducted with five individuals, which will be cited in the following parapraphs. Those individuals include: Cantor Jeffrey Shiovitz, music editor involved with publications from the Cantors Assembly, including *Zamru Lo: The Next Generation*; Joe Eglash, current director of Transcontinental Music Publishing, and former director and creator of the website OySongs; Joyce Rosezweig, music director at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah in New York City, adjunct instructor at the H. L. Miller Cantorial School at JTS, and Artist-in-Residence at the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music at HUC-JIR; Cantor David Berger, who currently serves as the cantor at KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation in Chicago, IL; and Cantor Erica ("Riki") Lippitz, one of the first women to be invested as a cantor by JTS, and who currently serves as the cantor at Oheb Shalom Congregation in South Orange, NJ.
[158] Erica Lippitz, telephone interview by author, January 19, 2018.
[159] David Berger, telephone interview by author, January 19, 2018.
[160] Unknown Author, "Invitation to Piyut," Invitation to Piyut | Jewish Music Research Centre, accessed January 20, 2018, http://www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il/content/invitation-piyut.
[161] David Berger, telephone interview

and informal contact with Israeli sources of Sephardi music in places like American Jewish summer camps and independent prayer circles.[162]

One avenue to explore with the music obtained from Israeli sources is the contemporary practice of transcribing and arranging melodies from recordings. Cantor David Berger, of Chicago, Illinois, points to the dangers inherent in this practice, as in an effort to make melodies accessible to Western ears, one might distort their authenticity, and even remove the elements that made them interesting and desirable to their transcribers in the first place.[163]

Another practice to note and explore in this line of research would be the use of contrafactum/adaptation, especially when melodies are taken from Sephardi piyyutim and folk songs whose texts do not appear in American Ashkenazi-normative prayer books. As with the process of transcription and arrangement of melodies from recordings, these adaptations raise questions about authenticity, depending on how they are used. While this practice by no means unique to our times (In this thesis I discussed the use of the Western Sephardi melody for *Az Yashir Mosheh* with English texts in the 1897 Union Hymnal, as well as with text from Psalm 95 in Charles Davidson's *Libi B'mizrach*), it would be worth examining the types of melodies that are chosen and the way they are adapted, to see if and how they may be distinct from previous generations.

And finally, the contemporary motivations for using this music in worship, and how it is subsequently experienced by congregants, presents a worthy avenue of inquiry. Joe Eglash, director of Transcontinental Music Publishing, indicated his own desires to have as diverse a catalogue as possible. This, he claimed, informs his decisions to publish

[162] Erica Lippitz, telephone interview
[163] David Berger, telephone interview

Sephardi music, as well as music from other non-Ashkenazi sources. He also suggested desires to be inclusive and racially sensitive as possible reasons that this music remains marketable to American Jews from Ashkenazi backgrounds.[164] Cantor Riki Lippitz of South Orange, New Jersey also suggests that she sometimes thinks less about the inherent value of the music's provenance, and more about how the melody serves the moment she wishes to create in worship. Apart from appreciating the general beauty of Sephardi melodies, she suggests that many Sephardi tunes have a certain rhythmic quality that is lacking from the various Ashkenazi options.[165] Cantor David Berger also adds to this, characterizing the 1950s to the 1990s as a time in which the American Reform movement was particularly isolationist, and frequently exoticized anything that did not fit into the perceptions of what was "authentically" Reform.[166] Joyce Rosenzweig, music director at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah in New York City, and instructor at both the H. L. Miller Cantorial School at JTS and the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music (formerly the School of Sacred Music) at HUC-JIR, indicated similar sentiments. She also suggested that the use of Sephardi melodies in Ashkenazi-normative communities could make space for connection with congregants who do have Sephardi background (even, and perhaps especially if those congregants are not always connected to their heritage).[167]

We American Jews, and particularly those of us with Ashkenazi heritage who participate in Ashkenazi-normative communities, are the inheritors of an amazing opportunity and an incredible challenge. We now have access to a wellspring of resources

[164] Joe Eglash, telephone interview by author, December 21, 2017.
[165] Erica Lippitz, telephone interview
[166] David Berger, telephone interview
[167] Joyce Rosenzweig, in-person interview by author, January 17, 2018.

and materials we can use to enhance the worship experiences in our communities, but this access also raises a whole host of questions and considerations concerning appropriation, oversimplification, and even exoticization. In examining the use and representation of Sephardi liturgical music by American Jewish composers of Ashkenazi heritage and publishers of Ashkenazi music in past generations, we can, perhaps, gain wisdom from their approach to this material as we address such questions. And perhaps by examining the practices of both the past and the present, we can learn how to best represent that material in worship, and indeed any material that may be thought of as somehow "other," with honesty and integrity.

# Appendix

## List of Sephardi Melodies in the Union Hymnal

1897 Edition

| Title | Hymn Number | Page Number | Attributed Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| If a Mortal Man Might Sing | 18 | 20 | Portuguese |
| Men! Whose Boast It Is That Ye | 84 | 88 | Portuguese |

1914 Edition

| Title | Hymn Number | Attributed Source |
|---|---|---|
| Out of the Depths | 36 | From De Sola and Aguilar's Ancient Melodies, "Sephardi Tune" |
| Dim Mine Eyes | | Traditional "Bemotzae", From De Sola and Aguilar's "Ancient Melodies" |
| O Star of Truth | 103 | Traditional Sephardi |
| There is a Mystic Tie that Joins | 138 | Sephardic Tune "Hallel" |

1932 Edition

| Title | Hymn Number | Attributed Source |
|---|---|---|
| O Bless the Lord, My Soul | 62 | Traditional "Az Yasheer" melody, arranged by A. W. Binder |
| The Lord of All | 80 | Sephardic Melody (Adon Olam), arranged by A. W. Binder |
| True Freedom | 121 | Based on Sephardic "Az Yasheer" |
| There is a Mystic Tie | 138 | Sephardic Tune, "Hallel" |
| Dim Mine Eyes with Many Teardrops | 173 | Based on Sephardic "Bemotsoay" |
| God. That Doest Wondrously ("Ayl Nora Aleelah") | 176 | Sephardic Melody, arranged by A. W. Binder |
| N'eelah Hymn | 178 | Sephardic Melody, arranged by A. W. Binder |
| Duties of Today | 258 | A.W. Binder, Based on a Sephardic Melody |

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