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INNOVATION IN SYNAGOGUE MUSIC

Recent interest in the development of synagogue music, as reflected in the quality of cantorial vocalism, cantor association conferences, publications on synagogue music,¹ public interest in the cantorial art, and programs to encourage the renewal of forgotten Jewish synagogue music and the creation of new music for the liturgy,² have raised again an issue that has received much treatment among cantors and scholars in the past and which has significant implications for the future development of synagogue music. That issue concerns the source of synagogue music. Must it be derived from Semitic and oriental or Middle-Eastern music presumably sung by the Israelites in Palestine prior to their Exile?³ Or, as more recently formulated by a leading cantorial scholar, may new synagogue music idioms be introduced to enrich the traditional musical *nusah*, that is, the traditional musical modes that are associated with specific parts of the liturgy, and certain High Holy Day melodies known as “*mi-Sinai*” tunes, developed sometime before 1450?⁴

While this article deals with the canon of music used in Ashkenazi synagogues, I would argue that the issue applies in theory to Sephardi music as well. For a variety of historical and cultural reasons related to their surrounding cultures over the years and the relative stability of their own culture, Sephardi music has been relatively less subject to fission, differentiation and change over the years. With its virtually complete relocation to Israel, there is no reason to believe that this situation will change.⁵

I believe that as a matter of history and halakha, Jewish music has developed and should continue to be permitted to develop to meet the spiritual needs of the Jewish people, without being subject to any geographical, ethnic or time-bound formula as a test of

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authenticity. Indeed, neither halakha nor history has ever imposed a test of authenticity. To the extent that we have been induced in recent decades to search for and define an “authentic” Jewish musical idiom, Ashkenazi culture has been thwarted in the development of idioms, melodies and compositions that might have by now been accepted as part of its synagogue musical tradition, and has dismissed or ignored entire musical cultures, such as the treasures of Sephardi and 19th-century German synagogue music.

We must strive to introduce fresh musical elements into our synagogue services in the form of a serious, coherent body of music that speaks succinctly and directly to the modern congregations of 20th- and 21st-century Jews. We are looking for inspiration, transcendence, and a sense of community in the synagogue. Unless the music of the liturgy provides it, the void will be filled with cheap, vulgar, faddish or otherwise inappropriate secular music—for which, ironically, there is ample halakhic support.⁶ While a limited and discriminating use of some secular melodies may have a place in the synagogue, such melodies are too often the rule rather than the exception.

Unfortunately, those who criticize these melodies have offered little but chants based on our 500-year-old musical *nusah* as an alternative, as any cantor searching for a moving and modern melody for the *Kedusha* prayers on Shabbat can testify. It is one thing to urge that there is a need to re-educate our lay people in the traditional motifs and melodies which constitute the core of our musical tradition, and to treat that tradition respectfully. It is quite another to argue that this musical *nusah* of our liturgy is a closed canon, and that we therefore can never add to its musical idioms and melodies of the early 15th century (which is when Maharil, cited as the original halakhic authority for this closed canon doctrine, lived).⁷

Moreover, synagogue music, like other aspects of Jewish culture, did not cease to develop at some particular date, and most particularly not in 1450. Sephardic, German and Eastern European Jewry all took their own musical paths, reflecting the history and creativity of their communities and the differing impacts of the foreign cultures surrounding them. But, I would argue, Jewish musical development would have occurred even if we had never been exiled from our land. As the cultures of other nations have developed, so would have Jewish culture and Jewish music in its own land. Of course, with Jewry’s dispersion to many lands, and its later expulsions from and immigration to many lands, it was inevitable that Jewish culture and Jewish music maintained, mutated and synthesized aspects of its own culture and that of the nations of *Galut* in many different forms. Moreover, just as Jewish history and music

did not stop in 1450, the art of music and musical composition among the nations did not stop in 1450. Indeed, one can argue that the art of musical composition only began to divorce itself from the umbilical cord of religious music around that time.

Thus, the musical sensibilities and sensitivities of the Jewish people in *Galut* could not and did not stop in 1450. And, perhaps most important, the sensitivity of the Jewish soul, and the worthiness of the people of Israel to pray and sing before God, did not begin to deteriorate in 1450.⁸ Indeed, to the extent we seek to reflect the heights and depths of Jewish experience as a nation in our communal prayers, the period from 1492 on has surely witnessed these in as great or greater a measure than the period in which the traditional music of our liturgy was created, *viz.* 900–1450 C.E. There have been new movements in Jewish music, like that of Hasidism of the 18th century and the varieties of 19th-century German synagogue music, born of new needs and new musical culture. The 2000-year-old Semitic content and the 500-year-old chants and “*mi-Sinai*” tunes of our traditional synagogue music cannot be legislated as the end of Jewish musical creativity and the only test of authentic Jewish music in the synagogue or anywhere else. If there has been a relatively unchanging quality to Jewish music for centuries, I submit it was because of respect for tradition, the undoubted excellence of the traditional (pre-1450) musical *nusah*, and the fact that time largely stood still for Ashkenazi Jewry musically in the *Galut*, as it did for the Western world by and large until the Enlightenment.

Continued innovation in synagogue music helps remove routine from the prayer services and can add to our *kavvanah*. Using new musical idioms⁹ that were not (and could not have been) composed in the medieval or pre-medieval period appeals to modern Orthodox Jews who are comfortable functioning within the contemporary culture and encourages compositions by sensitive Jews who are trained in modern idioms. New expressions can bring new meaning to an ancient text, thus bringing out the eternal aspects of our liturgy.

It has been argued that because of Maharil’s ruling, and the ancient modal character of Jewish prayer music, any innovation in the classical musical *nusah* and “*mi-Sinai*” tunes must be based on the three basic sources of synagogue music: the *te’amim* (music used to ritually chant biblical texts in the synagogue), the traditional (pre-1450) *nusah* modes, and the “*mi-Sinai*” tunes.¹⁰ But the evidence fails to support this view. Maharil wrote in (about) 1400 that a cantor or *sheliah tsibbur* should not change the custom or tunes of the place against the wishes of the *manhigim*, the leaders of the community, who presumably represented *da’at kahal*, the view of the community.¹¹ This view is brought down by Rema in his glosses to

the *Shulhan Arukh*; Rema uses the same words except that he changes “*makom* (place)” to “*ir* (town or city).” In the late 1600’s this ruling, still formulated as “*minhag ha-ir*,” is brought down by Abraham Gumbiner (the *Magen Avraham*) with the reason added “*she-mevalbel da’at ha-kahal* (the change will confuse the sense of the congregation).”¹² This same prohibition and its reason are finally repeated close to our own day by the *Mishna Berura*.¹³ The Vilna Gaon refers to a concern for “*mahluket*,” and seems to view Maharil’s ruling as an issue of local custom generally rather than as just an aspect of Yom Kippur liturgy and music.¹⁴

However, these texts (and Maharil’s story illustrating the seriousness of the prohibition by noting the death of the daughter of the rabbi-*hazzan* who defied the wishes of a congregation’s leaders) are addressed to the rabbi and the *hazzan* and not to the community. If the community wants to try a new *piyyut* or new melody, there is nothing in any of these texts that says it may not do so. Indeed, what is prohibited according to Maharil is for a cantor or a rabbi to defy a local community’s wishes and sing or recite a melody or a *piyyut*—even one sung or recited elsewhere—which the community’s leaders do not wish to be said or sung.

Moreover, there is nothing in these texts that freezes the musical canon of our prayer to the particular modes, motifs or tunes of any particular years. *Orah Hayyim* and other texts mentioned above do not prohibit a cantor from trying out new melodies for any part of the service, as long as he is not acting contrary to the wishes of the congregation. These texts certainly do not support the view that changes in *nusah* must be based on the modes incorporated in our music prior to 1450, and they do not support the rule that “*mi-Sinai*” tunes dating up to 1450 are the only ones that can be sung to their High Holy Day texts. Indeed, accepted *nusah* modes (e.g., *mi sheberakh* and certain “*mi-Sinai*” tunes) came *after* the Maharil, and differ in basic respects from prior Jewish music.¹⁵

If the preceding is correct, it follows that a congregation is free to add to or modify the musical *nusah*, as long as the new music does not violate any other halakhic restrictions, e.g., music used for the religious services of other faiths, which is precisely how our traditional *nusah* and other synagogue melodies gradually developed.¹⁶

Indeed, changes have been made by the *hazzanim* of Eastern Europe even in the basic *nusah* of the High Holy Days, down to the 18th century or even later. These changes, moreover, incorporated musical scales and modes that were based on local musical idioms that were different from what the closed canon advocates argue are the basic elements of synagogue music which have controlled—and are perpetually required to control—synagogue music innovation.

Thus, we find that cantors in Eastern Europe introduced Ukranian (Ukranian-Dorian) music (called the *mi she-berakh* mode) that now dramatically punctuates the music of Rosh Hashana, notably at such points in the liturgy as *Ve-al ha-Medinot* and *Ha-Ben Yakir Li*.¹⁷

The concern that changes in *nusah* must be based on canonic guidelines as a test of legitimacy fails to recognize that there were no such guidelines when the so-called “authentic” or “legitimate” *nusah* developed. They did not exist to determine the acceptability of the 18th-century changes in *nusah* for *Ve-al ha-Medinot*, or for the Tartar *ahavah rabba* mode, gradually adopted for the synagogue in many countries in the 17th century, which Idelsohn assures us was not related to the other earlier, allegedly authentic Jewish modes derived from *te'amim*. What makes that mode acceptable today, according to Idelsohn, is not its musical genealogy, but that “it nestled itself in the fertile soil of the receptive Jewish soul.”¹⁸ That must be the ultimate guideline, as it always has been, for “authentic” musical *nusah*. Indeed, if a community is not free to add to the *nusah* it has been using, it is not clear why it should be free to introduce a new melody for any other part of the service that has been sung in a particular way for a long period. Yet the history of synagogue music is replete with new music introduced over the years and accepted by different communities all over the world.¹⁹

Indeed, one may reasonably conclude from our history that congregations have implicitly never excluded the possibility that some *piyyut* might come along that would merit inclusion in the service. Therefore, one cannot say that any community or congregation, in not chanting a *piyyut* or a melody in the past, meant to permanently bar itself from adopting one which might be composed or commend itself in the future—one which it decided would beautify its services with greater spirituality and holiness—just as Maharil’s ruling has never been interpreted to exclude the *ahavah rabba* mode that German communities first heard and adopted two centuries after his death. Moreover, if we are worthy to compose new music for *U-Netaneh Tokef*, for which there are no “*mi-Sinai*” tunes, surely we are equally worthy to compose new music for other prayers.

The “closed canon” approach, with its emphasis on modes instead of set melodies or compositions, resolves the tension between creativity and tradition in favor of the latter. Most innovations in the arts and sciences consist, for extended period, of improvements on an existing body of culture rather than radical change. But periodically there are breakthroughs that hurdle the human propensity to cling to the traditional, and thus do art and science progress.

One can, perhaps, ask how far the concept of *minhag avoteinu be-yadeinu* (the custom of our fathers is in our hands and is not to be

changed) applies to freezing a particular melody or *nusah*. Our halakhic literature shows at the very least a divided character and orientation on the ability of a congregation to change its *minhag* voluntarily. Perhaps the most generic and most analogous cases were those involving massive congregational and community adoption of the Sephardic pronunciation and liturgy for prayer, beginning with the rise of Hasidism and its use of the Sephardi liturgy. Indeed, even rabbis who accepted the idea of *minhag avoteinu be-yadeinu* and *al tittosh torat immekha* (do not forsake your mother's teachings) were among those who permitted congregations to change to Sephardi pronunciation and liturgy.²⁰ Moreover, those who opposed changes in Ashkenazi liturgy generally did not expressly oppose changes in pronunciation, and their prohibition of changes in liturgy generally were for reasons that do not seem to have any application to changing or adopting new melodies.²¹

Some Jewish musicologists seem to hold views that may limit innovation in synagogue music, to the extent they evaluate the worth and "genuine" quality of *nusah* and prayer melodies, in part at least, by age, and whether they are of "Semitic," "Jewish-Semitic" or "Oriental-Semitic" origin, or whether in their "very nature" they please the "Jewish spirit" or are based (in part at least) on "traditional" or "Jewish motives."²² The latter definitions are, of course, entirely circular. As to the Semitic and Oriental requirements, it is not at all clear how much of our musical *nusah* of that origin was originally Jewish, and how much derives from the culture of the surrounding peoples of the Middle East. In any event, neither age nor Middle East origin makes a melody superior. What does its strength in conveying the emotions and meaning of our prayers—in a word, its acceptance by the "Jewish soul"—as Idelsohn elsewhere suggests²³—not its source or its age.

The overwhelming, tragic aspects of the Diaspora notwithstanding, it has nevertheless benefitted Israel and the entire world in that it allowed each to contribute the best of its knowledge and culture to the other. Indeed, Israel was also a carrier of the cultures of others to all parts of the world to where it was dispersed. In many ways we are a mixture of peoples from countries all over the world. We should be suspect of any argument that ascribes cultural superiority or authenticity to aspects of Jewish culture on the basis of its "purity," its age, or its origin. Any such philosophy of musical superiority or inferiority is dangerous and must be rejected.²⁴

For those who question the possibility of being deeply religiously moved by a synagogue service that departs from so-called authentic *nusah*, I would cite the Friday night service recently composed by Abraham Kaplan.²⁵ One cannot listen to this service

without being persuaded by its “rightness” as music for Friday night, even though it is not written in the traditional modes for that service. It beautifully portrays the tender, awakening soul of a Jew on a Friday night, it perfectly reflects the meaning of the words of the liturgy as well as its feeling, and the worshiper’s glowing feeling of holiness, joy and excitement on the first service of the Shabbat. It is entitled to become a permanent part of our musical *nusah*. More importantly, our congregations are entitled to the opportunity to experience the music and decide for themselves.

In conclusion, let me suggest some guidelines to *hazzanim* for the introduction of new music into the synagogue services:

1. The criterion for changes in the modes or melodies of liturgical texts for which a traditional musical *nusah* exists should be the very difficult one of whether this new music seems to have the special qualities to make it a permanent and regular fixture in the service. Of course, the more ingrained the melody or mode that is being changed, and the greater its importance in the service, the more careful with change one should be. A session with the congregation to go over new music is a worthwhile idea where a significant innovation is contemplated.

2. New material should be introduced in small doses. The cantor should try not to make a whole *Kedusha* new, or a whole service new, unless it is unavoidable, as in the case of a special concert service devoted to a composer or to a new work.

3. The music should return from new to traditional musical *nusah* whenever possible. People feel less anxious if they periodically “come home” musically.

4. Music that is not being accepted should not be pressed. If, after three or four hearings at the most, there is no solid congregational response, it is likely that the problem is more than just unfamiliarity. Reintroduction after a decent interval is possible.

5. Music that is associated with the worship services of other faiths should be avoided, and a similar attempt should be made regarding the songs of the “wicked.” There is, for example, some halakhic soundness in the Israeli rejection of Wagner and his music because of *him* and what he stands for; yet even this can be pressed too far.

6. After new melodies are introduced, there should be some agreement as to when and where that new melody will be used, and how it should be used. Indiscriminate use cheapens any melody and mocks the text of the prayer. There are times when uses of melodies from one holiday in the prayers of another makes sense, but those occasions are rare. (For example, a quotation from the music of the

Avodah of Yom Kippur may be used in the section of the prayer for rain on Shemini Atzeret that concerns Aaron.)

7. In general, the law permits secular music like love songs and classical music, Jewish folk music, and Jewish music composed for holy texts like Song of Songs.²⁶ However, cantors should be careful to avoid confusion, distraction and divisiveness in their choice of melodies. Thus, care should be taken in the use of secular music in the synagogue service. It must, of course, be appropriate musically and fit the text and surrounding material. Beyond that, such music should, first, be limited generally to a source that is not well known and which has no association that takes away from its ability to enhance the text of the prayer. Second, the cantor should try to keep the quotation short, particularly where it will become recognizable if extended. Third, he should beware of classical music that was written or used as religious music. Fourth, where the prayer will be enhanced by the knowledge and connotation of the outside source, a recognizable quotation may be appropriate. For example, a number of *hazzanim* use the music from “*Yerushalayim shel Zahav*” in the last section of *Kedusha* for *Shaharit* on Shabbat. Similarly, one may use a short but recognizable quotation from it in the repetition of the *Amidah* for *musaf* on the High Holy Days, where the cantor chants the phrase, “*Ve-lirushalayim, ir kodshekha.*”²⁷

The problems of *hazzanut* are solvable by the same method that has kept Judaism alive: education. Our composers, like our cantors, need to be trained in all aspects of Jewish musical tradition. Our cantors need training in classical music, musical composition, and improvisation to assure taste in music selection and variety in musical rendition²⁸. The congregation must be continually trained formally and informally by cantors (including *ba'alei tefilla*) who themselves are constantly stretching and refining their musical taste.²⁹ Such a cooperative relationship will assure that we maintain our traditions while being open to the careful introduction of new music, and that we develop the discrimination to take hold of the worthy and reject the unworthy. Without such education, openness and good taste, *hazzanut* will return to the excesses of the past—either, at one extreme, where “anything goes,” or, at the other extreme, where an increasingly distant and professional elite³⁰ sings uninteresting and ultimately irrelevant music to an unhearing, uninterested and uninvolved congregation.³¹

NOTES

1. Among the scholarly publications in the United States are *The Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy* published by the Belz School of Jewish Music in conjunction with the Cantorial Council of America; *The Journal of Synagogue Music* published by the Cantors Assembly; *Musica Judaica* (and a very expanded *Newsletter*) published by the American Society for Jewish Music (ASJM); the *Bulletin of the Jewish Liturgical Music Society of America*; and, in Israel, *Orbis Musicae*, published by Tel Aviv University's Department of Musicology.
2. Note, for example, the important new records being produced by the Beit ha-Tefutsot (Diaspora) Museum in Tel Aviv, Israel, documenting historically important cantorial music; the tapes being produced by the Park Avenue Synagogue of its concert services of new and classical cantorial compositions; the records of newly commissioned synagogue service music at Congregation Beth Abraham of Dayton, Ohio; and similar ventures where adequate funding has been available. Abraham Kaplan, Jerome Kopmar, Shalom Kalib, and Ralph Schlossberg are among a larger number of Jewish composers writing beautiful and inspiring new music for the liturgy. The recent completion by Cantor Jacob Lefkowitz of the CCA of his complete musical setting to all of the Psalms ("A Song in Every Psalm") is a noteworthy recent example of a non-liturgical composition which is nevertheless of great potential use in the liturgy. See my review of this work in the *Journal of Jewish Music*, Vol. XVII, No. 1 (July 1987).
3. See, e.g., Abraham Wolf Binder, *Studies in Jewish Music* (Bloch Publishing Company 1971), pp. 83, 94–95, 107, 230–35, 282–88.
4. A mode is a combination of short musical phrases within a scale based on the ancient Oriental practice, in contrast to the more encompassing structural arc and regular meter of a melody or tune, based on the more recent Western practice. The modes constitute the musical building blocks and connective tissue for the rendering of the prayers by the Cantor. Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (Schocken 1967), p. 24; Eric Werner, *A Voice Still Heard . . . The Sacred Songs of the Ashkenazi Jews* (Pennsylvania State University Press 1976), pp. 18–19; Macy Nulman, *Concepts of Jewish Music* (Cantorial Council of America 1975), p. 73.
Nulman, pp. 5, 72–3, 78, citing R. Jacob Levi Mollin, called Maharil, (1365–1427) and *Orah Hayyim* 619, maintains that new synagogue music must be based on the traditional *nusah*. See also Idelsohn, p. 178. Werner includes in his definition of *nusah* certain seasonal motifs, like the *Maoz Tsur* melody sung on Hanukkah, despite the often idiosyncratic rather than regularized use of these motifs with the liturgy. The "*mi-Sinai*" tunes are melodies composed primarily for the High Holy Days (and for "Tal" and "Geshem" on Passover and Shemini Atseret) in southwestern Germany from the 11th to the 15th centuries. References in this paper to the year 1450 are based on Cantor Macy Nulman's use of the period 900–1450 C.E. for the development of Jewish liturgical modal "chants" and "*mi-Sinai*" tunes, although the modes, in general, are older than the "*mi-Sinai*" tunes. Nulman, pp. 72–73; Werner, p. 61; Idelsohn, pp. 136–7, 144, 147. Werner suggests that the "*mi-Sinai*" tunes developed until 1550; Werner p. 32.
5. See Werner, p. 29, for a somewhat overstated but essentially valid contrast of the extent of variety and change in the Ashkenazi and Sephardi synagogue traditions. One must also distinguish between the musical tradition and *nusah* of East European and West European Ashkenazi Jewry. While the differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewry were primarily based on cultural separation, those between the two Ashkenazi branches were also caused by cultural antagonism and hostility, particularly after the Enlightenment. See, e.g., Werner, pp. 2, 5–9, for East European criticisms of the great 19th-century German cantor-composer Salomon Sulzer. For a recent scholarly picture of the repulsion and attraction by German Jews for their East European brethren, see Shulamit Volkov, "The Dynamics of Dissimilation: Ostjuden and German Jews," *The Jewish Response to German Culture*, J. Reinharz and W. Schatzberg, Eds. (University Press of New England 1985), pp. 195–216. In part because of attitudes deplored in this article, ". . . the pure Western Ashkenazic style is slowly fading away, yielding to a mixed tradition in which the Polish element is stronger." Werner, p. 146.

6. See, e.g., Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, *Yehavveh Da'at*, Vol. II, no. 5 and *Yabia Omer*, Vol. VI, no. 7. Rav Yosef, citing many authorities, is generally lenient with respect to love songs, Jewish or non-Jewish, although he prohibits love songs and probably other music that bring to mind the secular lyrics of the music and thus distract from the *siddur* liturgy. The authorities cited by Rav Yosef generally permit, with the caveat just noted, Jewish and non-Jewish secular music. There is *contra* authority that takes a much stricter approach to the use of non-Jewish music. See Y. Y. Hahn Neuerlingen in *Yosef Omets*, para. 602, which seems to be followed by Nulman, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–6. There is authority prohibiting all love songs on the theory that the melody inevitably suggests the lyrics in such cases (Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Waldenberg, *Tsits Eliezer*, Vol. XIII, no. 12). Finally, there is the interesting view of the hasidic master Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav who prohibits the melodies of a *rasha* (“wicked” person, undefined), except for those engaged in the study of Talmud in the evenings, who presumably are able thereby to nullify any insidious effects from such music (*Likkutei Moharan*, Ch. 3, Part 1). Rav Yosef in *Yabia Omer* cites authorities that prohibit music used in the religious services of other faiths. Music for Conservative and Reform services would seem *not* to fall in this category, although I have heard certain Orthodox cantors express a concern that it might. However, Rav Yosef cites interesting authority *contra*, which not only permitted but encouraged the adapting of certain church music to the High Holy Day liturgy where it conveyed a quality of submissiveness. See Rabbi Yisrael Moshe Hazzan in “Krakh Shel Romi,” no. 1, p. 46.
7. See Nulman, p. 76. See also the interview with Cantor Bernard Beer, Director of Yeshiva University’s Belz School of Jewish Music, in *The Commentator* (Yeshiva University’s student newspaper), October 1, 1987, p. 6.
8. David Hartman, *A Living Covenant* (Free Press 1985), chapters VI and VII. See also my article on Hartman’s views, “Fear and Awe: May Man Bring Song to Prayer?” *Tradition*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Summer 1987).
9. As with secular music, new modes of musical expression do not replace traditional music, but become part of the tradition. In the context of music generally, the point has recently been made that certain types of musical idioms are inherently capable of effectively communicating only certain types of ideas and emotions, and that to restrict musical idioms to any one category restricts the ability of the composer to broaden the scope of his musical message to meet the interests of his listeners. Neil M. Ribe, “Atonal Music and its Limits,” *Commentary*, November 1987.
10. Nulman, pp. 5, 72–3, 76, 78, 146; Idelsohn, pp. 110–11, 176–83, 199–214. See also Werner, pp. 14–17, 32, 46–50, 60, 203–4, 217–18, 241, 294. They suggest that *nusah* historically and traditionally was based on improvisations on modes rather than “set” melodies or tunes. Indeed, Werner suggests that the Jewish antipathy to “set tunes,” harmony and notation may be associated with “the antipathy of most Semitic nations to painting and sculpture”! Werner, pp. 17, 50. However, the view of scholar Max Wohlberg is that Jewish prayer music in the Temple included melody, “the pleasant tune, the melodic chant,” and children’s voices were added to those of the Levites in unison to achieve “sweetness.” See his “Toward a New Congregational Chant,” *Community and Culture—Essays in Jewish Studies, In Honor of the Ninetieth Anniversary of Gratz College, 1895–1985* (Seth Press, Philadelphia 1987), p. 245. In any case, melodies do not have to be pressed between bar lines and sung in strict meter if the liturgy requires such freedom; indeed, most “*mi-Sinai*” tunes were not composed metrically. Werner, p. 32. Most importantly, there is no evidence that the Levites considered their music a closed canon, or that they would have rejected more modern forms of melody, composition or harmony had music advanced that far while the Temple stood. Moreover, the prophetic and rabbinic desire that Israel pray “as if with one mouth,” i.e., in unison, seems to connote “set” tunes or melodies and perhaps even meter and not (solely) the improvisational surprises of creative modal chant. Werner, pp. 15–17; Idelsohn, p. 21. The desire of modern congregations to sing therefore suggests the need for balance between unison singing, modal chant, and choral works of “art” music in and among our synagogues. Werner, pp. 236–7.
11. See, e.g., *Sefer Maharil* (Jerusalem), *Hilkhot Yom Kippur*, p. 47, beginning with “*Sheliah Tsibbur . . .*”; Rema’s gloss to *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 619:1.
12. *Ibid.*, *Magen Avraham*, n. 7.
13. *Mishnah Berura*, n. 7.
14. *Ibid.*, *Be’ur ha-Gra*. That these rulings are found in sections dealing with the liturgy on Yom Kippur raises the very intriguing question of whether they were ever intended to apply

