

Musical and Ritual Practices in the German Synagogue

dently large sections of the service, the German service may fall about midway between these extremes. Although the basic framework is for the congregation to *daven* quietly with the *Hazzan* ending the paragraph aloud, there are numerous places where the *Hazzan* recites a large part, if not the whole paragraph aloud. Furthermore, there are many sections that are recited responsively. It is difficult to say to what extent these practices are due to the retention of authentic tradition and to what extent they are due to the influence of nineteenth century attempts to modernize the service. The uninitiated worshiper who enters a German synagogue will probably notice that most of the silent *davening* is actually done silently, although there are some outbursts that appear to be spontaneous. If the guest worshiper takes the liberty to introduce spontaneous outbursts of his own, he may find himself chided by the regular congregants for disturbing the decorum. What the guest fails to realize is that the outbursts he hears are not done on a hit-and-miss basis, but, rather are largely limited to specified sections of the service which are seen as appropriate situations for audible congregational response. As examples, *Shema*, *Mi Khamokhah*, *Hashem Yimloch*, *Kadosh*, *Barukh Kevod*, the responses in *Kedushah*, and certain parts of *Tahanun* are considered parts for the congregation to *daven* aloud. Thus, there emerges a rather clearcut distinction between sections of the service recited silently and those recited aloud by the congregation.

The professional *Hazzan* of the Eastern European tradition conveys his art most dramatically by injecting into the

services one or more elaborate recitatives. In the German synagogue, although the cantorial recitative is not unknown, its importance is limited by several factors. First, the selection of a text for a piece is often fixed by tradition rather than a function of the cantor's discretion. For example, *Hashkiveinu* is sung in one tradition on the Friday evening preceding the first *Selihot*. This is probably done because of the phrase contained in the text, "and raise us up, O our King, unto life." In another tradition, *Hashkiveinu* is sung on *Shabbat Hanukkah* and on certain festivals to elevate the mood. *Ahavat Olam* is generally sung on *Shabbat Parshat Yitro* and on *Shavuot*. On *Parshat Yitro* we read the Decalogue and on *Shavuot* we celebrate "The Giving of the Torah." Hence, the *Hazzan* chants the passage containing the phrase, "Torah and commandments, statutes and judgements has Thou taught us." Furthermore, German congregations generally take a dim view of word repetitions by the cantor. Therefore, the opportunities for vocal gymnastics unimpeded by textual constraints is very limited. Moreover, the mentality of the German Jew favors emphasis of laudatory texts as opposed to texts of supplication. These factors mitigate the importance of the cantorial recitative in the German tradition. A result of this is not to place great importance on vocal artistry in the selection of a cantor.

INNOVATION IN THE MUSICAL SERVICE

The German tradition also has a rather well-defined boundary as to musical tradition versus musical innovation. Basic *Nusha'ot* are fixed. Some *Niggunim*,