

Musical and Ritual Practices in the German Synagogue

"Young Israel" - type settings. In this way, these congregations avoid the monotony of congregational singing common in most modern orthodox congregations.

It must be emphasized, that the choir in German congregations aims only to sing specific pieces. The choir has virtually no function in assisting the cantor to sustain a tone, or repeat a word after the *Hazzan* for a chord or cadence. Where there is a choir, they do not necessarily sit as a group for the entire service but rather gather at the appropriate place only for those selections of the service at which they function.

Generally, the same texts were invariably sung chorally, but the number of settings was quite numerous, particularly in the larger communities. The potential for adding repertoire centered more around a new setting for a text always sung, rather than expanding the number of texts sung chorally. A large city choir might, at any one time, have in its repertoire upwards of ten settings for texts, one every *Shabbat*, with a specific setting often reserved for *Shalosh Regalim* and another for *Yamim Nora'im*. The special *Yom Tov* settings generally were based on *Nusha'ot* or *Skarbova* motives for those occasions; those in use for the Sabbath simply reflect nineteenth century Western music. The most favored texts for choral singing are hymns such as *Lekha Dodi*, *En Kelokenu* and *Yigdal*, certain portions of *Hallel*, and most particularly *Hotza'ah* and *Hakhnasah* which were sung with great pomp to a variety of settings and moods.

The limitation of texts admissible for choral singing was carried to an extreme by the strictly orthodox congregation in

Frankfurt Am Main, founded by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, and is carried out with virtually the same rigor today in K'hal Adath Jeshurun, which considers itself a direct successor of that community. This policy limits the choral singing to the texts which liturgically are rather peripheral to the *Ikar Hatefillah*. Choral singing during the *Ikarei Hatefillah* is not permitted. According to I.M. Japhet, the first choirmaster of that synagogue and whose music was used in some 180 larger and smaller communities, there is an *Issur Hefsek* during the *Ikar Hatefillah* which, strictly interpreted, proscribes choral singing. The one exception is *Hallel*. Apparently the very nature of *Hallel* makes choral singing appropriate. Other communities took a less rigid line. Yet, in virtually all communities, the texts enumerated below, more or less form the nucleus of the choral singing. They would be slightly augmented on rare occasions such as the *Yamim Nora'im*, by such additions as the response during *Ma'ariv* and a very small number of pieces during *Hazarat Hashatz*. In some communities the *Kedushah* was also sung chorally; this might have consisted of the responses only (e.g. *Kadosh*, *Borukh Kevod*, etc.).

Since the roster of texts sung chorally by the Frankfurt orthodox community may be seen to represent the German orthodox choral tradition in its purest sense, and in view of the fact that this tradition has continued to this day substantially unchanged, the texts sung in this tradition follow:

FRIDAY EVENING

Lekha Dodi, *Mizmor Shir Leyom Hashabbat* (either complete or beginning with