

Limmud * Jewish Music, What do we know about it?

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1. משנה ערכין ב'ג' א
- (ג) ... אין פּוֹחֲתִין מְשֻׁנֵי נְבֻלִין וְלֹא מוֹסִיפִין עַל שְׁשָׁה. אֵין פּוֹחֲתִין מְשֻׁנֵי חֲלִילִין וְלֹא מוֹסִיפִין עַל שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרִי. וּבְשָׁנִים עֶשְׂרִי יוֹם בְּשָׁנָה הַחֲלִיל מְכָה לְפָנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. בְּשָׁחִיטַת פֶּסַח רְאִשׁוֹן, וּבִשְׁחִיטַת פֶּסַח שְׁנִי, וּבְיוֹם טוֹב רְאִשׁוֹן שֶׁל פֶּסַח, וּבְיוֹם טוֹב שֶׁל עֶצְרַת, וּבְשִׁמּוֹנַת יְמֵי הַחֲג, וְלֹא הָיָה מְכָה בְּאֲבוּב שֶׁל נְחֹשֶׁת אֶלָּא בְּאֲבוּב שֶׁל קָנָה, מִפְּנֵי שְׁקוּלוֹ עָרֵב. וְלֹא הָיָה מְחַלֵּק אֶלָּא בְּאֲבוּב יְחִידִי, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא מְחַלֵּק יָפֵה:

Mishnah Arakhin 2:3

(3) ... When accompanying their song with instruments, the Levites **do not use fewer than two lyres and do not use more than six.** When flutes are played, **they do not use fewer than two flutes and do not use more than twelve.** And there are **twelve days during the year when the flute plays before the altar:** At the time of the **slaughter of the first Paschal offering**, on the fourteenth of Nisan; **and at the time of the slaughter of the second Paschal offering**, on the fourteenth of Iyyar; **and on the first festival day of Passover; and on the festival of Shavuot; and on all eight days of the festival of Sukkot.** And one would not play with a copper flute; rather, one would play with a flute of reed, because its sound is more pleasant. And one would conclude the music **only with a single flute, because it concludes** the music nicely.

2. תוספות יום טוב על משנה ערכין ב'ג'ב' ב
- ובשנים עשר יום בשנה החליל מכה כו'. שבאלו הימים גומרין את ההלל

3. What is the reason that Music is so important in the Service? ג

Arakhin 11a

Rav Mattana said that the source for the requirement to accompany the Temple offerings with song is derived from here: "Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness, and with goodness of heart" (Deut 28:47). What is this service of God that is performed with joyfulness and with goodness

ערכין י"א א

רב מתנה אמר מהכא (דברים כח, מז) "תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב" איזו היא עבודה שבשמחה ובטוב לבב? הוי אומר: זה שירה

of heart? You must say that this is music

4. **Musical instruments in the Temple on Shabbat and Yom Tov** .ד
משנה תורה, הלכות כלי המקדש והעובדין בו ג'ו'
...וְחִלְלֵי זֶה דְּוָחָה שְׁבַת מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא חִלְלֵי שֶׁל קָרְבָּן, וְחִלְלֵי שֶׁל קָרְבָּן
עֲבוּדָה הִיא, וְדוּחָה אֶת הַשְּׁבַת:

Mishneh Torah, Vessels of the Sanctuary and Those Who Serve Therein 3:6

...the flute on these occasions supersedes the Shabbat [prohibitions] because it is associated with a sacrifice and the sounding of a flute associated with a sacrifice is an act of Temple service and supersedes the Shabbat prohibitions

5. **מאירי על סוכה נ' א** .ה
...חליל של קרבן דוחה שבת, שעבודה היא, וענין חליל לקרבן,
הוא שעומדים לויים על הדוכן בכל יום לומר שירה על הקרבן;
ואע"פ שעיקר שירה זו בפה ובמזמורים שאומרים בנגינה, והכלי
אינו בא אלא ליפות את השיר ולנאותו, מ"מ הואיל וסרך מצוה
היא, ואין בה אלא שבות, הותרו להם

Meiri on Sukkah 50a

...even though the **essence of music** is expressed **vocally**, through the Psalms that are sung to a tune, and the musical instruments only beautify the performance -- nevertheless they are part and parcel of the performance of a commandment

6. **Musical Instruments in Tanach** .ו

Psalms 150

- (1) Hallelujah.
Praise God in His sanctuary;
praise Him in the sky, His stronghold.
(2) Praise Him for His mighty acts;
praise Him for His exceeding greatness.
(3) Praise Him with blasts of the **horn**;
praise Him with **harp and lyre**. (4)
Praise Him with **timbrel** and dance;
praise Him with **lute and pipe**. (5) Praise
Him with resounding **cymbals**;
praise Him with loud-clashing cymbals.
(6) Let all that breathes praise the
LORD.
Hallelujah.

תהילים ק"נ

- (א) הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה | הַלְלוּ־אֱלֹהִים בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּרָקִיעַ עֲזוֹ: (ב) הַלְלוּהוּ
בַּגְּבוּרָתוֹ הַלְלוּהוּ כְּרַב גִּדְלוֹ: (ג)
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתַקְעַ שׁוֹפָר הַלְלוּהוּ בְּנִבְלָה
וּכְנֹר: (ד) הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתֹף וּמְחֹל
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּמִנִּים וְעִגְבֵּי: (ה) הַלְלוּהוּ
בְּצִלְצְלֵי־שִׁמְעַ הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי
תְרוּעָה: (ו) כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יְהוָה
הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה:

7. Ancient Greeks were familiar with many kinds of instruments. Three in particular were favored: the **kithara** and the **lyre**, string instrument; and the **aulos**, a double-reed instrument. Other instruments included the *syrix* (panpipes), *kymbala* (cymbals), and *salpinx* (trumpet). **The art of singing to one's own stringed accompaniment was highly developed.** The **lyre** is a string instrument that dates back to 1400 BC in ancient Greece. In Ancient Greece, recitations of **lyric poetry** [chanted verse, hence modern English 'lyrics'] were accompanied by lyre playing. The **kithara** was a seven-stringed professional version of the lyre, which itself was more of a folk instrument

8. **Psalms 98:5**
 (5) Sing praise to the LORD with the lyre,
 with the lyre and melodious song.

תהילים צ"ח:ה'
 (ה) זַמְרוּ לַיהוָה בְּכִנּוֹר בְּכִנּוֹר וְקוֹל
 זַמְרָה:

9.



10. *To the left: Greek vase with a muse playing the lyre, 440-430 BCE.
 To the right: an ivory plaque with a lyre player before a king, 1350-1150 BCE, excavated at Tel Megiddo (Northern Israel)*

11. **It seems the Nevel (harp) was a 10-stringed version of the simpler Kinor (lyre)**
Psalms 144:9
 (9) O God, I will sing You a new song,
 sing a hymn to You with a **ten-stringed** harp

תהילים קמ"ד:ט'
 (ט) אֱלֹהִים יְשִׁיר חֲדָשׁ אֲשִׁירָה לְךָ
 בְּנֵבֶל עֲשׂוֹר אֲזַמְרָה-לְךָ:

12.



יב.

13.

Coin from Jewish Bar Kokhba revolt (132–136 CE) On one side trumpets [chatzotzerot] surrounded by writing "To the freedom of Jerusalem", on the other side: a lyre [kinor] surrounded by writing "Year two to the freedom of Israel"; written in Paleo-Hebrew alphabet also known as Ktav Ivri.

יג.

14.



יד.

15.

An *aulos* (Ancient Greek: αὐλός) was an ancient Greek wind instrument. Though *aulos* is often translated as "double flute", its sound was more akin to that of the bagpipes. A single pipe held horizontally, as the modern flute, was the *plagiaulos* (πλαγίαυλος)

טו.

16.

The levitical Choir

טז.

משנה ערכין ב'י'

(ו) אין פוחתין משנים עשר לנים עומדים על הדוכן, ומוסיפין עד לעולם. אין קטן נכנס לעזרה לעבודה אלא בשעה שהלנים עומדים בשירה. ולא היו אומרים בגבל וכנור אלא בפה, כדי לתן תבל בגעמיה...

Post Temple – The case of the Ashkenazi ‘Kol Nidrei’ melody

Maharil (R. Ya’akov HaLevi Moelin, 1365-1427, Worms):

[17] ספר מהרי"ל (מנהגים) הלכות ליל יום כיפור, ה'
...בליל כל נדרי טוב הוא לאתחולי כל נדרי מבעוד יום משום דהתרת נדר הוא, ואין מתירין
נדרים לא בשבת ולא בי"ט... לפיכך יתחיל ש"צ כל נדרי טרם שיקדש היום, אכן יאריך בו
בניגונים להמשך עד הלילה

...On the eve of Kol Nidrei, it is proper to start ‘Kol Nidrei’ while it is still day, as it is an annulment of vows – and one does not annul vows on Shabbat and festivals... therefore, the prayer leader should begin ‘Kol Nidre’ *before* the actual start of Yom Kippur, but draw out [its recitation] with **melodies [plural]** till nightfall.

Levush (R. Mordechai Jaffe, 1530-1612, Prague):

[18] לבוש אורח חיים סימן תריט, א'
רוב נוסח של כל נדרי אשר נדפס במחזורים אין בו ממש, ואין לו שום פירוש אלא הניגון בלבד,
ואינם יודעים ואינם מבינים מה אומרים... וכמה פעמים רציתי לתקנו וללמדו לחזנים כהוגן, ולא
היו יכולים לשנות בעת תפלתם מפני הרגל הניגון שבפיהם... רק צפצוף דברים בעלמא כמו
העופות שמצפצפין ואין בהם דיבור...

Most of the text of Kol Nidrei as printed in the machzorim has no substance, it has no meaning but for the melody. They don't know what they're saying. A number of times, I desired to teach the cantors an improved text, but they were unable to adjust at the moment of the prayer service, because of the **habit of singing the melody [singular]**... it is mere chirping, like birds unable to speak...

The christian composer Max Bruch famously created an adaptation of ‘Kol Nidrei’ for cello and orchestra, which he completed in **Liverpool, 1880**. Bruch wrote the following about it:

[19] ...I became acquainted with “Kol Nidre” and a few other songs in Berlin through the Lichtenstein family, who befriended me. Even though I am a Protestant, as an artist I deeply felt the outstanding beauty of these melodies and therefore I gladly spread them through my arrangement.

...As a young man I had already ...studied folksongs of all nations with great enthusiasm, because the folksong is the source of all true melodic--a wellspring, at which one must repeatedly renew and refresh oneself--if one doesn't admit to the absurd belief of a certain party: “The melody is an outdated view.” So lay the study of Jewish ethnic music on my path. – Letter to cantor and musicologist Eduard Birnbaum, 1889

The success of “Kol Nidrei” is assured, because all the Jews in the world are for it *eo ipso*. – Letter to Emil Kamphausen, 1882

- The music of ‘Kol Nidrei’ started as a *free improvisation using several motives*, because of a practical need to start early and fill the time till night.
- By the 16th century these motives had evolved into *one fixed*, well-known and beloved melody.

- It is explicitly mentioned that in terms of *meaning* the melody has become much more important than the text (even though the intellectual elites resented this)

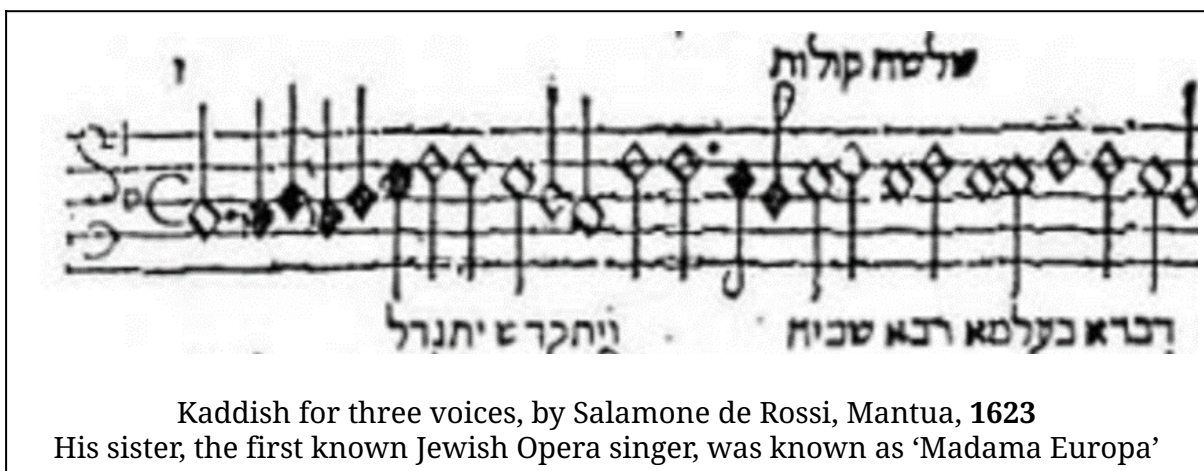


- Jewish denominations, from Orthodoxy (e.g. Rabbiner Hirsch) to Reform, have tried to remove *the text* of Kol Nidrei from the Yom Kippur service, but they all failed in the end, due to the belovedness of *the tune*
- Starting from the 19th century, this Kol Nidrei tune has become a *Jewish cultural symbol*, featuring as a major theme in classical music (Bruch) and in one of the first talking movies ('The Jazz Singer', 1927)

The first notations of Jewish Music came from Italy



'Baruch Ha-gever' with music in *neume* notation, around **1100**, by Ovadia Ha-ger (formerly John from Oppido, **Southern Italy**). Note' how the 5 lines of music are marked at the righthand side with ה ג ב א, and how the music flows from right to left.



Kaddish for three voices, by Salamone de Rossi, Mantua, **1623**
His sister, the first known Jewish Opera singer, was known as 'Madama Europa'

Intonazione degli Ebrei Tedeschi sopra
מעוז צור ישועתי וגו'

מעוז צור ישועתי לך נאה לשבח תכון בית תפילתי ושם תודה
 נזבח לעת תכון מטבח מצר המנבח או אנמור בשיר
 מזמור הנזבח המזבח

Maaz Tzur, 'Intonation of the German Hebrews',
transcribed by Benedetto Marcello, around 1725

What do we know about the origin of 'traditional' melodies?

May 10, 1963 *Inquiry about the origin of the melody of Shalom Aleichem*

Dear Hazzan Pinchas Spiro,

Please be assured that the melody originated with me and me alone.

I composed the melody forty-five years ago this month (1918), while sitting on a bench near the Alma Mater statue, in front of the Library of Columbia University in N.Y. I began to hum to myself. I fished out a sheet of music-paper from my briefcase and jotted it down. It was on a Friday, which may be the reason why the melody and the words came to my mind simultaneously. Besides, I was working at that time on my "Friday Evening Melodies" which was published in 1918, in which it was printed for the first time. The popularity of the melody traveled not only throughout this country but throughout the world, so that many people came to believe that the song was handed down from Mt. Sinai by Moses.

I have received innumerable requests from Rabbis, Cantors and composers to give them permission to use the melody in their music collections, and I was liberal enough to grant such permission. Some were generous enough to acknowledge the authorship. A great many publishers, some in Israel, not knowing the origin of the melody, simply wrote "traditional" or "Hassidic." But the fact remains that I am the composer, and the melody has been copyrighted by me and recorded at the Library of Congress in 1918.

I went to this length in writing to you, in order to silence once and for all the many claims to the contrary. – Rabbi Israel Goldfarb