

CHAPTER I

A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR MUSIC IN ISRAEL AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES THROUGHOUT BIBLICAL AND POST-BIBLICAL AGES TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE.

In surveying the development of music in ancient Israel it is essential to consider the music of Israel's ancient neighbors. In so doing we are enabled to draw a conclusion as to the extent to which Israel's music resembled that of the bordering countries of Palestine, during the period of Israel's development as a nation and thereafter, through the Second Temple until its destruction. From such comparison we likewise gain an idea of the features gradually developed in Israel's music, as an expression of its spiritual evolution. We discover the musical elements and tools held in common with the other ancient cultured peoples, and find how these were reshaped in conformity with Israel's spiritual concepts, and how the resultant music received an original form of expression.

We observe that as the song of the other ancient Oriental peoples, so Israel's music from earliest times was determined by its religious and social life, and the form of that music changed with the changes of Israel's religious attitudes and political conditions.

We turn first to the old EGYPTIAN MUSIC. As long as the Egyptian religion and culture were in their flower, music was developed as a tool of expression and drew its significance from its influence upon the sentiments of the gods in the higher regions, the gods in the lower regions, and not less upon the

evil spirits. The musicians were the priests, male or female, who were also the sacred dancers. Music was regarded as sacred and was credited with its own *ETHOS*—its divine power. But in the course of ages Egyptian culture outlived itself. When new ideas arose, revolutionizing the old-established ones, the aristocratic party clung desperately to its tradition, and forced the priest-musicians to fascinating expressions which they could no longer draw from the heart of their institution, since it now lacked vital influence.

Though we no longer know Egyptian music because, in the words of the music historian AMBROS, we did not have the opportunity of listening to it for even one minute in order to be able to judge its sound,¹ nevertheless, from our record of the manner of use of the musical instruments we may deduce that at the time of its height, Egyptian religious music had a certain dignity and holiness, inasmuch as those instruments employed were not held conducive to arousing sensuality. Thus, the religious musicians did not use the "profane" *Aulos* (pipe). Neither did they employ a great number of instruments of percussion, but usually they employed only one drum and one pair of cymbals in an entire religious orchestra. The main instruments were string instruments: the *Nabla* (different kinds of harps) and the *Kithara* (different kinds of lyres imported later by Semites). There were further the *double-flute* which was of an entirely different quality from the single flute or *Aulos*, and finally the *trumpet* and the *Sistrum*—both signal instruments only.

Plato says that the Egyptians accredited their sacred melodies to the goddess Isis. He praises them for their ability to create melodies which had the power to subdue the passions of man and purify his spirit. "This certainly must be the work of god or of a godly man," he exclaims. This might have been the reason that the Egyptians considered their religious melodies

sacred and would not change them. Neither would they use foreign tunes, as Herodotus, the great Greek historian, states. He was, therefore, surprised to hear in Egypt a tune famous in Phœnicia, Cyprus and Greece—namely, the lamentation over *Linos* which the Egyptians called *Maneros*.²

At the beginning of the decay of Egypt, after the period of the Hyksos, we find that the flute was introduced for religious purposes, and that there was a marked increase of percussive instruments as well as of fascinating dancers and singers, as we see from the bas-reliefs representing processions of orchestras, etc., found in the tombs of the Egyptian kings. During the decay, the musicians carefully hid their products, both musical and poetic, allowing no one to see the "books of the songs." According to Pythagoras, who studied in Egypt around the sixth century B.C.E., the protests of the priests against virtuosity were of no avail, because artificiality had to cover the mummy of that great and powerful culture, until it was laid low by Cambyes and later cut off by Alexander. Did Egyptian musical expression die together with its religion? Not entirely; for some of the best human expressions in it were taken over by ISRAEL and GREECE.

The music of the PHŒNICIANS, whose close geographical and ethnological relationship to Israel should lead us to expect many features in common in the music of the two tribes, was nevertheless—according to the description of many Greek authors—in the sharpest contrast with Israel's, at least during the period of the Second Temple. The Phœnicians had the triangular *Kinnor* which the Greeks borrowed and called *Kimura*, and the *Neval*, known to the Greeks as the Sidonian *Nabla*, and which, according to their tradition, the Egyptians likewise adopted. But the arrangement of the religious orchestra, as well, apparently, as the contents of the music, was of a different nature, for it had an exceedingly sensuous and exciting character. It

went to the extremity of joy on the one hand, and to the extremity of lamentation (especially for Adonis) on the other, resulting in a boisterous chaos of percussive instruments. Chief in the music of the Phœnician cult—whether for joy or lamentation—was the *Abobas* (pipe). By this instrument Adonis was lamented, and it therefore became synonymous with Adonis music. The fundamental difference between the music of Israel and Phœnicia affords the best proof for the contention that music was always a tool by which ideas were expressed. The fight of Elijah against the Phœnician Baal- and Ishtar-cult, which the Phœnician princess Jezebel introduced into Samaria, was one of the bitterest battles prophetic Israel fought. The Biblical description of the barbarous manner of the Baal worshippers: "they danced in halting wise about the altar . . . they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with swords and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them" (1 Kings 18: 26-28), finds its confirmation in the statement of Lucian that at the Spring festivity in honor of Ishtar the noisy and exciting music of the double-pipes, cymbals and drums used so to stimulate the youths to a frenzied craze that they would emasculate themselves. "At the sound of pipes, cymbals and drums, and several other percussive instruments, those emasculated servants of the goddess Ishtar would march through the streets in procession, cut themselves with swords, and lash themselves until blood gushed forth." Isaiah's satire (23: 16) on Tyre, "Take a harp, go about the city, thou harlot long forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered," finds an explanation in the statement of Horace, who says that "even during the time of the Roman Empire, Phœnician and Syrian female musicians, whose reputation for immorality was known, would be found in the *Ambubajarum Collegia* . . . and in the circus (Roman Arena) offering themselves."

Music in ASSYRIA and BABYLONIA was somewhat similar to that in Egypt. Only few bas-reliefs have been unearthed, presenting musical instruments. On the Ashurakhbal bas-relief a procession of an orchestra is reproduced.⁸ In that orchestra there participate nine boys singing and clapping their hands; three men with big harps, of whom two are dancing; one man playing the double-pipe; one, an oblong harp; four women fingering the big harp; one woman playing the double pipe; one beating a small drum; one man striking the cymbals; six females singing, one of whom presses her cheek and throat with one hand. The composition of that orchestra gives us a clear idea of the character of the music in Assyria. We learn from it that the percussive instruments were of minor importance, and that in employing nine boys' voices and six female singers, stress was laid upon vocal music and sweet singing. Furthermore, there are seven string instruments, only two double-pipes, and no single-pipes at all. Considering that the procession was to meet the king upon his return from battle as a conqueror—and Assyrian kings were always supposed to be victorious—the two small drums and the one cymbal are too modest noise-makers even for our refined taste. This fact indicates a tendency toward refinement of musical expression. And the highly developed hymns and supplications, with their RESPONSIVE form sung by priests and confessors and offerers of sacrifices, which were in use in Babylonia long before Israel came into being, lead us to conclude that the Assyrian music ranks next to the Egyptian as a source out of which Israel drew its best elements of musical forms.

With regard to ancient religious music of the TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM, we have to apply the same words that Ambros did to Egyptian music: ". . . could we listen to it for but one moment!" However, from the composition of the orchestra of the First Temple, we learn that Israel accepted some of the

arrangements of the religious orchestra used in Egypt at the time of its cultural height. The legend that when Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter she brought with her a thousand varieties of musical instruments⁴ seems to be based upon historical facts, for we find that the instruments employed in the First Temple and the arrangements of its orchestra bore similarity to those in Egypt.

The orchestra of the Temple of Jerusalem consisted of the following instruments: *Nevel*, the big harp, originally without resonant body; *Kinnor*, the little lyre or harp, the Semitic form of which was the square, and the Phœnician and Assyrian form of which was mostly triangular. The *Kinnor* had no resonant body. Both were STRING instruments. Their difference lay in the number of strings as well as in size, as the Talmud explains.⁵ These two instruments were the most important ones, without which no public religious ceremony could be held. As to the number of their strings we have no definite information. Whether *sheminith* indicates eight and *asor* ten strings cannot be proved.⁶ We do know, however, that in Egypt and Assyria the number of the strings of the harps and lyres, etc., varied from three to twenty-two. Neither have investigations been successful in finding out the tonality, the range and pitch, of the string instruments in Israel or Egypt. We are rather more informed of the quality of their tone. The tone of the *Kinnor* is described in the Bible as "sweet," "tender," "soft"—lyrical. The *Kinnor* was popular among the more cultured classes in Israel. The tone of the *Nevel* was naturally stronger because the instrument was larger than the *Kinnor*, especially after it had received a resonant body. According to Josephus, the *Nevel* had twelve strings and the *Kinnor* ten.⁷ And from him we know that on the *Nevel* they used to play with their fingers, whereas for the *Kinnor* they employed the plectrum. However, it is reported of King

David that he played the *Kinnor* with his hand—which means fingers. (1 Sam. 16: 16 and 23; 18: 10; 19: 9.)

There were likewise two kinds of WIND instruments, one of which was of no musical value, serving only for signaling purposes. To this class belongs (a) the *Shofar*—ram's-horn (in Assyrian *shapparū*—wild mountain-goat).⁸ It produces a few tones approximating c—g—c, or any other equivalent intervals, e.g., 1—5—1, or 5—8—8; 1—4—8, and so on. The pitch, naturally, depends on the size of the *Shofar* and on the construction of its hollow. The instrument lends itself to the production of various rhythmical forms, from long notes to 1/32. But it is impossible to produce on it any melody whatsoever. Indeed, the Bible applies the terms "blowing"—*tekia*, meaning long notes, and "shouting"—*terua*, meaning short notes in staccato or tremulo form, but not *nagen*—"producing musical tones." It was used chiefly for announcements and signals, not only in secular life, but also in religious ceremonies to call on the god to remind him of his duties to his people, or to wake him from his sleep. To the *Shofar* was also attributed the magic power of frightening and dispersing evil spirits and gods of the enemies who helped their people in battle. This belief was current among all primitive tribes, and it was, likewise, accepted in Israel, as many Biblical stories and phrases testify. The blowing of the *Shofar* was even attributed to Yahve himself, in order to frighten his enemies and to gather the scattered remnants of his people to his sanctuary. Thus, Zachariah (9: 14-15) says: "And the Lord God will blow the horn. . . . The Lord of Hosts will defend them." Later, after the Second Destruction, the idea of blowing the "Shofar of Redemption" was transferred to the prophet Elijah, who is supposed to announce the coming of the Messiah.

During the latter part of the period of the Second Temple

two types of *Shofaroth* were in use: the curved (male) ram's-horn and the straight (female) mountain-goat's horn. The latter form with a gold mouthpiece was used in the Temple on New Year, whereas the first form, with a silver-covered mouthpiece, was used on fast days. After the destruction of the Temple no luxurious decorations were permitted.

The *Shofar* is the only instrument that retained its position in the Synagogue throughout the Medieval Ages up to the present day. On New Year's Day the *Shofar* was blown to remind God of His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and especially of Isaac's sacrifice and of the ram that substituted him (Gen. 21: 13).⁹ Later, Jewish philosophers, such as Saadia (tenth century), tried to interpret the custom of *Shofar* blowing by giving it a higher human idea, namely, that the sound of the *Shofar* stirs the heart to awe and reverence, and its purpose, therefore, is to remind us of our duties to God.¹⁰ In like manner, Maimonides speaks of this custom.¹¹

Of all musical instruments, it was the most unmusical of them, the *Shofar*, that was retained. Because of the religious reasons just mentioned, it was carried into the Synagogue. The term *tekia* of the Bible and Mishna was in the third century explained as a "long note," whereas concerning the term *terua* difference of opinion arose as to whether it meant short staccato notes or a tremolo on one sustained note. Finally, in the fourth century Rabbi Abahu in Cæsarea (Palestine) made a compromise that both ways should be used, the staccato (*shevarim*) and the tremolo (*terua*), and thus it remained to this day.¹²

(b) The *Chatzotzera*-TRUMPET seems to have been imported from Egypt, though it was also known to the Assyrians.¹³ The trumpet was made out of silver and was used for signaling purposes (Num. 10: 1-10), for secular and religious functions. Only the priests were entrusted with the

use of it, as was the custom in Egypt. *Chatzotzera* and *Shofar* are, as a rule, quoted together, and for both the terms "tekia" and "terua" are applied. From this we may deduce that their natures were alike. Both were handled by priests and not by Levites—the professional musicians of the Temple—a fact which proves that both served the same function of signaling. Josephus describes the *Chatzotzera* as being of approximately a cubit's length, its cylinder being somewhat larger than that of the *Halil* (pipe), its mouthpiece wide and its body expanding into a bell-like ending.¹⁴ The form of the *Chatzotzera* is still preserved on the Jewish coins of the later part of the period of the Second Temple, and on the Titus arch in Rome.

As to the number of these two instruments employed in the Temple, we are informed that originally two *Chatzotzeroth* were ordered (Num. 1.c.), which number remained as a minimum requirement for the Temple service. However, as a maximum, one hundred twenty trumpets might be used. And, indeed, at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, it is reported (2 Chron. 5: 12) that this number of trumpets was employed.¹⁵

The number of *Shofaroth* was restricted in the Mishna to one for New Year and two for fast days.¹⁶

We know of three kinds of *musical* wind instruments:

(a) *Uggav*—small pipe or flute. This instrument is not mentioned in the list of the musical instruments used in the Jerusalem Temple.¹⁷ The only reference to *Uggav* is in Psalm 150: 4. In the later period of the Second Temple it was called *Abub*—hollow reed,¹⁸ and was identical, at least in name, to the Phœnician *Abobas*. Tradition reports of an *Abub* which had been in the Temple since the time of Moses. It was small and of fine reed, and had a sweet tone.¹⁹ It was, however, seldom used—only as a solo instrument for interludes "because it slides over softly."²⁰ Emphasis was laid upon reed instruments which alone produced, according to Jewish taste, a tender

and sweet tone.²¹ The *Uggav*, it is reported, "was one of the two instruments retained from the First Temple, but when it became defective it could not be mended."²² From all of which we learn that the *Uggav* was an ancient instrument, once in use in the First Temple; that it had gradually disappeared, so that the last one which survived could not be mended when damaged.

(b) *Halil* or *Chalil*—big pipe; in Greek, *mono-aulos*. Though in ancient Israel the *Halil* was one of the most popular instruments in secular as well as in religious life, none the less we do not find its name on the list of instruments of the service throughout the First Temple.²³ Later, at the time of the Second Temple, the *Halil* was permitted at the service but only on twelve festal days during the year "to increase joy." The number was set from a minimum of two to a maximum of twelve. On Sabbath no playing of the *Halil* was permissible even at the Temple, because it was not held to be a sacred instrument as the *Kinnor* and *Nevel*.²⁴ The *Halil* was also considered by Jews at that time as an exciting instrument, and was used for occasions of extreme joy and gaiety, such as weddings or public processions of the pilgrims with their offerings of the first fruit.²⁵ Likewise was it used to express extreme sorrow, as, for example, during funerals, for which occasion even the poorest man had to hire two *Halilim*-players in order to show his grief over the death of his wife.²⁶

The structure of the *Halil* was similar to that of the Greek *Aulos* (i.e., with a mouthpiece), and, according to Maimonides, similar to the Arabic *Muzmar*.²⁷ Its tone was sharp and penetrating, like that of the oboe.²⁸ The Mishna tells us, in a somewhat exaggerated way, that whenever the *Halilim* were blown at the Temple their tone carried as far as Jericho.²⁹ For that reason the *Halil* was used for processions, as described by

Isaiah (30: 29), this custom prevailing as late as Mishnaic times.

The fate of the *Halil* in the Jerusalem Temple was similar to the fate of the *Aulos* in Greece. Olympus introduced it to Greece about 800 B.C.E. from Asia Minor, but the Greek philosophers opposed it because of its exciting sound and because it was tuned according to the four notes $d\frac{1}{2}$ $\sharp c\frac{1}{2}$ $bb\frac{1}{2}$ a , a tetrachord unfamiliar in Greece. On account of its strangeness (two half-steps and an augmented one) it was called "chromatic"; on account of its sadness, it was called "elegiac." The instrument was debarred from religious music and from the tragedy. But later, to the distress of the philosophers, Agathon, the virtuoso, at the beginning of the fourth century B.C.E., introduced the *Aulos* and its exciting scale into the tragedy. This scale is the most outstanding one in the Tartaric-Altaic and Ukrainian songs, and is of much importance also in Jewish music. It remained permanently in Greek music despite the dismay of the philosophers, and created a special type of song called *Aolodia*, an elegiac song with accompaniment of the *Aulos*. This scale survived even in the Greek-Catholic song to the present day after the *Aulos* has vanished and in spite of the strong opposition of the Church Fathers to "chromatic" scales.³⁰

Of all the close relationship with the *Aulos*, we still cannot say with certainty that the *Halil* had the same scale as the *Aulos* or what kind of scale it had, because there is no record whatsoever.

(c) *Alamoth* seems to have been a double-flute. The name bears a similarity to the Greek *Elymos* which, as Pindar tells us, was produced in Phrygia from a certain kind of wood, and to Phrygia it was originally imported from Assyria. In this case, the name *Elymos*, too, is possibly of Assyrian origin. It may come from *elamu*—confronting—usually employed for two

bodies close together and yet parted, which precisely fits the structure of the double-pipe, as seen on the ancient bas-reliefs and wall-pictures.³¹

The double-pipe, which is always found in the old orchestras in Egypt, Assyria, and Greece, was highly regarded. In the list of instruments of the Jerusalem Temple it is mentioned once (1 Chron. 15: 20) as being assigned to the *Nevel* group. In the lists of the instruments employed in the Second Temple the *Alamoth* does not appear at all.

About the beginning of the Common Era the name *Magrepha* (pipe-organ) occurs which, as described in Talmudic literature, was similar to the syrinx and was constructed of a skin-covered box into which were fastened ten reeds each with ten holes, each hole being able to produce ten different notes, so that the instrument could produce a thousand notes. The description concludes with the statement that it was used solely for signal purposes: to call the priests and Levites to their duties. Its tone, too, was very strong, so that it was heard as far as Jericho, and it was impossible to hear one talk when the *Magrepha* played.³²

It is recorded in the Talmud that there was no water organ (*organon hydraulium*) at the Temple, because of its sweet and powerful voice which was able to distract attention from the traditional instruments.³³

The third kind of instruments used in Israel was the PERCUSSIVE group. Of the many names mentioned in the Bible, we know with certainty that *Tof* was the little drum, but we are not sure of its exact form. It was the most primitive and popular instrument among the Semitic tribes from ancient times as a rhythm-indicator, and it was used for dances and joyous occasions. In earlier times the *tof* was used for religious celebrations likewise. King David still employed it at the installation of the ark into Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6: 5). Nevertheless,

despite its being mentioned in the Psalms three times (81: 3; 149: 3; 150: 4), the drum is not listed among the musical instruments either of the First or of the Second Temple.

The only percussive instrument permanent in the Temple orchestra was the *Metziltayim*, or as it was called later, *Tziltzal*—cymbal (derived from the Hebrew term *tzalal*—to sound). It was constructed of copper, and it had a very strong sound, penetrating "as far as Jericho."

In the time of David and Solomon much stress was supposed to have been laid upon the cymbal and percussive instruments. The chief musician of David, Asaf, was a cymbal player (1 Chron. 16: 5). David brought a great number of various instruments of percussive character to celebrate the dedication of the sanctuary in Jerusalem, such as *Mena'anin* and *Shalishim*. Ezra restored one hundred twenty-eight cymbal players of the Asaf family to their traditional function (Ezra 2: 41; 3: 10). However, in the last century of the Second Temple the percussive instruments were restricted to one cymbal which was used to mark pauses only, but not to participate while the singing and playing were going on.³⁴ All of the other kinds disappeared entirely.³⁵

Finally we have to mention another signal instrument, the *Paamonim* (little bells) which were attached to the skirts of the robe of the High Priest. "And the sound thereof shall be heard when he goeth into the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not" (Exod. 28: 35). This custom reminds us of the Egyptian *Sistrum* which, according to Plutarch, had a double aim: to call the attention of the worshippers to the sacred function in the sanctuary, and to drive away the evil typhon.³⁶

Dance—*Machol*—was considered an integral part of religious ceremonies in ancient Israel. Even in the time of the Kingdom we hear, "David danced before the Lord with all his

might" (2 Sam. 6: 14). In the Psalms religious dancing is mentioned twice only (Ps. 149: 5; 150: 4), and it seems that this custom fell into disuse in the Jerusalem Temple. At least, it is never mentioned in the Bible or in the Talmudic sources. Only at non-devotional public entertainments, such as the celebration of "Water libation" on the festival of Tabernacles, prominent MEN would dance, displaying artistic skill in throwing and catching burning torches.³⁷ But the custom of procession around the sanctuary or around the altar was retained in the Temple (Ps. 26: 6), especially on the feast of Tabernacles, accompanied with singing, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, save; we beseech Thee, O Lord, make us now to prosper!" concluding with, "Beauty to thee, O Altar," or "To God and to thee, O Altar!"³⁸

This custom survived in the synagogue in various forms and is still practiced on different occasions up to the present day.

Participation of WOMEN in the Temple choir is nowhere traceable.³⁹ The statements recorded in Ezra (2: 65) and Nehemiah (7: 67) refer to the secular musicians of the noble families who possessed among the 7,337 servants some 200 or 245 male and female musicians.⁴⁰ No reference is made to their being *Levites*, i.e., of the traditionally sacred cast of musicians. Even the boastful statement of *Sennacherib*, the Assyrian king, that King Hezekiah of Judah had to send him, as part tribute, male and female musicians,⁴¹ would refer to secular singers of the court only. The same could be said with regard to the female mourners mentioned in Chronicles (2, 35: 25) who were professional public singers for funerals and the like. They still existed in the Mishnaic time.⁴²

The Mishna gives the number of the instruments employed in the Temple as follows:

Nevel, minimum two, maximum six.

Kinnor, minimum nine, maximum limitless.

Cymbal, only one.

Halil, minimum two, maximum twelve.

Thus the total minimum number required for the orchestra was twelve instruments, to which number two *Halilim* were added on twelve festal days during the year.⁴³ Such was the actual composition of the Temple orchestra toward the beginning of the Common Era. Once a year, at the above-mentioned "Water libation," it is reported that all the instruments, "an innumerable mass," would be employed.⁴⁴

We notice that the percussive instruments were reduced to one cymbal, which, as we have mentioned before, was not employed in the music proper, but merely to mark pauses and intermissions. We further learn of the absence of the drum, as well as of the dance and bodily movements and all means by which rhythm is created and marked and without which the rhythm of any music is weakened and diluted. This fact gives us a clue to the understanding of the nature of the music performed at the Temple. We get a full comprehension of it, however, when we learn about the construction of the whole body, the ensemble, i.e., the vocal and instrumental forces.

The chorus had to consist, so the same Mishnaic source reports, of a minimum of twelve adult male singers, the maximum being limitless.⁴⁵ The singer was admitted to the choir at the age of thirty, and served up to fifty, the age when the decline of the voice began. Before his admittance he had to have a five years' training.⁴⁶ In addition to the twelve adults, boys of the Levites were permitted to participate in the choir, "in order to add sweetness to the song."⁴⁷

Thus we see that the choir equaled the number of instruments. Later, the tendency toward the superiority of the vocal music was pronounced by the regulation that for playing the instruments even non-Levites were permitted, whereas for singers Levites alone were admitted.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the

opinion was pronounced that the importance of music lies in the singing.⁴⁹

The predominance of vocal music naturally grew out of the attitude toward music as a tool for the conveyance of ideas. Vocal music, by its intimate association with words, carried and interpreted thoughts and feelings; while instrumental music, according to Semitic-Oriental conception, serves only as accompaniment and embellishment. On the other hand, the tendency to restrict percussive, stirring and signal instruments, as well as dances and the participation of women, gives evidence of the striving to evade all the forms of pagan worship in use in Phœnicia and in all the countries bordering upon Palestine.

Although Jewish spiritual life sought to elevate the form of its musical expression, it, nevertheless, could not stay the development of virtuosity among its musicians at the Temple. It is recorded that a certain *Agades* (Hagros) was a virtuoso singer, and that in applying some brilliant tricks he would produce tremolos in Oriental manner which would fascinate the people. He kept his "art" a secret, and did not want to teach it to others. His professionalistic spirit brought down the scorn of the sages.⁵⁰

This is about all that our sources report of the Temple music. There are no descriptions of the tunes retained, nor is there any indication of scales and rhythm employed, such as the Greek philosophers and authors left us. In Israel music was seemingly taught and preserved in oral tradition only, as is the custom in the Orient to the present day. Yet with the scant information at hand, let us try to visualize a musical performance at the Temple service in the last century B.C.E. as it is depicted in the Mishna.⁵¹

After the priests on duty had recited a benediction, the Ten Commandments, the *Shema* (Deut. 6: 4-9), the priestly benediction (Num. 6: 22-26) and three other benedictions, they

proceeded to the act of the offerings. And after they were through with the arrangement of the sacrifices, one of them sounded the *Magrepha* (see above) which was the signal for the priests to enter the Temple to prostrate themselves, whereas for the Levites that sound marked the beginning of the musical performance. Two priests took their stand at the altar immediately and started to blow the trumpets *tekia-terua-tekia* (see above). After this performance, they approached Ben Arza, the cymbal player, and took their stand beside him, one at his right and the other at his left side. Whereupon, at a given sign with a flag by the superintendent, this Levite sounded his cymbal, and all the Levites began to sing a part of the daily Psalm. Whenever they finished a part they stopped, and the priests repeated their blowing of the trumpets and the people present prostrated themselves.

The texts sung by the Levites were not Psalms alone, but also portions of the Pentateuch.⁵²

The description gives us a picture of the service and its musical rendition as conceived by laymen, without indicating whether the instruments accompanied the singers, or whether choir and orchestra worked alternately.

A short time after the destruction of the Temple the entire art of the instrumental music of the Levites fell into oblivion; and two generations later the sages totally lost all technical knowledge and all sense of the reality of that silenced music. They either exhausted themselves in praising the music of the Levites or in homilizing on the musical terminology as well as on the names of the instruments. The VOCAL music, however, the intonations of the Psalms and the Pentateuch, as well as the recitation of the prayers (see above), was most likely retained and transplanted into the Synagogue, the *Beth-Hak'neseth* (House of Assembly), an institution established long before the destruction of the Second Temple. We are

informed that in Jerusalem many synagogues existed, and that even in the Temple court there were synagogues in which priests, Levites, and laymen would worship.⁵³

The vocal song of the Temple, like all religious song among the ancient and primitive nations, drew its sap from the folk-song, though foreign tunes may have occasionally crept in. These Temple songs—folk-tunes modified and sanctified—were in turn copied by the “representatives of the people,” the *Anshe Maamad*, from all parts of the country, who used to be present at the Temple service.⁵⁴ They certainly learned the melodies together with the texts, and would carry them to their homes. Furthermore, many Levites would participate in public services in the synagogues and were naturally chosen to act as precentors or leaders in singing Psalms, portions of the Pentateuch and the Prophets.

The FORMS in which the Psalms and prayers were rendered were explained by sages who lived in the first century. Of these, Rabbi Akiba had still witnessed the service in the Temple. From them we learn that three forms of public singing were customary, which were based upon the principle of response. In form A the leader intoned the first half verse, whereupon the congregation repeated it. Then the leader sang each succeeding half-line, the congregation always repeating the same first half-line which thus became a refrain throughout the entire song. This was the form in which ADULTS used to sing the “Hallel” (Ps. 113-118), and, according to Rabbi Akiba, this form was also employed for the Song of the Sea (Exod. 15). This form of singing the *Hallel* is still in use among the Jews in southern Arabia. In form B the leader sang a half-line at a time, and the congregation repeated what he had last sung. This—Rabbi Eliazar, son of Joseph Hagalili, said—was the form in which the children used to be instructed at school. Form C was responsive in the real sense, i.e., the

leader would sing the whole first line, whereupon the congregation would respond with the second line of the verse. This was the form, as Rabbi Nehemiah explained, in which the *Shema* was recited in public; and it is still used by the Babylonian Jews for chanting the *Hallel* on Passover.⁵⁵

We know that the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians had already used the responsive form, notably form A (refrain), in their laudations and supplications.⁵⁶ In ancient Israel, too, that form was popular. Refrains, as *Amen*, *Halleluyah*, *Hoshianah* (Oh, help!), *Anenu* (Answer us!), etc., were mostly used in public worship. And in accordance with the spiritual development of the people, we can follow a certain development in this form. While in ancient times, the people—in that they were primitive—were able to participate by responding with but one word, as those mentioned above, in later times we find a higher development of the people as shown in their response with phrases, for example, *Ki leolam Chasdo* (Ps. 118: 1-3; 136).

Besides the responsive form, the UNISON and SOLO forms were used. To antiphonal singing, i.e., to the alternate singing of balanced groups, we have but few references in the Bible (Deut. 27: 21-26), and it is described in the Mishna.⁵⁷

Thus far we dealt with the SACRED music only. All we can gather about the SECULAR music in Israel indicates that it was of the same nature as the music of the neighboring nations in the Near East. As the many references in the Bible to the music performed in secular life testify, Israel enjoyed life through music both vocal and instrumental, and associated music with dance and wine in which men and women participated. The drum and cymbal, the harp and lyre, the small and the big pipe, were used. Rhythm played an important part, and in order to emphasize it, hand-clapping was employed. As a whole, we may say that in its FORMS, the secular music was

similar to the Arabic music still used in Palestine and the Near East.

We learn that toward the beginning of the Common Era Greek song penetrated into Palestine,⁵⁸ and that people of education cultivated a great liking for it,⁵⁹ a fact which aroused the dismay of the pious spiritual leaders.⁶⁰

As already stated above, all the explanations thus far give us no clue as to the TONALITY—scales and modes—of ancient Jewish song. We have no reference to its theoretical basis, for so far as we know, there never was written, as in the case of Greek music, a theory of Hebrew music.

There is, however, one authentic source preserved and at our disposal. And this is oral tradition!

Long before the destruction of the national sanctuary in Jerusalem, large Jewish settlements were established throughout the ancient world, from Persia to northwest Africa, and from Arabia to Rome,—settlements which cultivated spiritual values. After the complete ruin of the national center in Palestine, the remnants of Judea were scattered. They were taken into captivity, sold into slavery, and dispersed throughout the Roman Empire as far as the Pyrenean peninsula, the Rhine, and the Danube. They had lost their country, their independence; they had been robbed of their possessions, even of their human rights. But their spirit, their God, could not be taken away from them. Their spiritual values became their only treasure, a recompense for country and independence. And just as they had once defended their country against giants like Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, so they stood henceforth ready to give their life for their God and their culture—their spiritual creation embodied in a TRADITION! From that tradition we justly draw our information as to the nature of Jewish music and its history.

This musical tradition is preserved in memory and practice

in various Jewish centers in the East and in the West—centers whose existence continued since the destruction of the Second Temple, and in some instances from even before that event, throughout the ages up to this very day. These centers are:

YEMEN in South Arabia, historically known from pre-Mohammedan times, a community that lived practically in seclusion for thirteen hundred years, and evidence of whose contact with other Jewish settlements we have but scant sources;

BABYLONIA, historically the oldest Jewish settlement, dating from the destruction of the First Temple, never ceasing to exist despite changes of conditions;

PERSIA, almost as old as the Babylonian community. SYRIA, NORTH AFRICA, ITALY, and the so-called SEPHARDIM, i.e., the Spanish Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, who, despite dispersion, did preserve their SPANISH tradition;

The GERMAN Jews, whose settlement in southwestern Germany dates back to the fifth century;

And the Jewish settlement in EASTERN EUROPE, the largest center of all in number, whose tradition comes partly from Germany and partly from the Oriental communities.

The results of our investigations of the traditional song of these communities enable us to construct the features of Jewish song; and the analysis of that tradition reveals to us its elements, its originality, its development, and its growth—in a word—its history.⁶¹