

PREFACE (From "Baal T'fillah")
by Abraham Baer

The traditional synagogue tunes, which have made such deep impressions on our fellow Jews under various conditions during the past eras, were the products of many centuries, in the opinion of several scholars. The origin reaches back to the music of the Temple, as well as to the old oriental songs. The development of this music is still in darkness; the experts could not explain the exact origin of themes which were passed on by mouth for hundreds of years; in spite of the age, the music sounds so fresh in the daily synagogue services. The results of the research into the poetry of the holy books were the discovery of the accent, tonality and trope, which were discovered (studied) by Prof. Haupt in Goerlitz and Prof. Arends, who brought some light into this murky area.

The fact is, that in spite of the fact that the traditional songs were transmitted by mouth, and that the Jews were dispersed in so many countries and in so many congregations, these songs have not changed appreciably. In order to get an adequate education it was necessary for Cantors to study with famous Cantors first and acquire their knowledge from mouth to mouth. Because of these circumstances the traditional melodies, especially in the Polish and German rituals, frequently did not sound the same. (The Portugese songs were affected to a large degree by the Spanish and Portugese folksongs, as they were more recent than the Polish and German songs.) It frequently happened even to the competent Cantors who received their training in the Polish or the German or in the "new rites", that when they came into a new position where the unfamiliar themes were used, they were greatly inconvenienced.

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I learned from experience that the younger prayer-leaders frequently were unfamiliar with the instructions and usage of the rituals, therefore I had included these with the songs.

In handling these traditional tunes, which were already modified in the various works (refer to the end of the Preface and the notes to the Index), in no way did I wipe out the originality, but followed the intentions.

Frequently appearing tunes, when they are without the bass voice or without harmonic composition, are marked thus: 1.W, 2.W, D.W., P.W. etc. Also when "Choir" was not marked, the double staves on a line-system presented two different tunes.

New Tunes were marked "N.W." (neue Weise-new tunes); those which were the production of older cantors and were known locally, were marked "A.W." (alte Weise-old tunes); the tunes which were in both rituals (in Polish and German), were marked P.W. (Polish tunes) or M.P. (Minhag Polen), D.W. (Deutsche Weise-German tune), or M.A. (Minhag Polen), D.W. (Deutsche Weise-German tune), or M.A. (Minhag Ashkenaz), and the Portuguese were marked with Port. W. (Portuguese tune) or Minhag Sephard. In contrast the really old pieces, recognized by their typical character, were found without any markings similar to the above. The notation "choir" can also mean the congregation (the multi-voice choir pieces were scored also for the organ).

The pieces that had no tempo-designations were given recitavo, as most liturgical songs had an impression of recitativo, since most prayers in our liturgy lack stanzas (verses) and rhythmic timing. (Under these circumstances it is easy to appreciate the difficulties that one had to overcome during the treatment of this material.) I had to give up my wish to include the score of the organ-accompaniment

and the multi-voice choir with the songs, because the work would have been too extensive and quite costly. Therefore I limited the work to several very old and new songs; this way I obtained a considerable number of beautiful songs from Prof. S. Sulzer (Chief Cantor in Vienna), S. Naumbourg (Chief-Cantor in Paris), M. Deutsch (Chief-Cantor in Breslau), L. L. Lewandowski (Royal Prussian Musikdirector in Gothenburg). I say thank you to these honored gentlemen, partly for the encouragement to publish these works, partly for kindly granting my request for the use of their compositions. At the same time I am deeply indebted to Mr. Dr. S. A. Hedlund, the editor of the local newspaper, for his valued help in the project.

The fact that the volume of the work amounted to 100 pages instead of 70 pages, as I initially promised, shows how much I loved this work. I wanted to create a detailed, fundamental and practical guide for those who wished to train in prayer-leadership.

Those who will give their attention to this book will judge for themselves how well I succeeded.

As I release this book for the publisher, I ask for his kind indulgence for errors that may have been in the manuscript.

Gothenburg, September 1877

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In 1877, when I handed over this 50 year effort to the publisher, I did not think that after the passage of a few years the Second Edition would be necessary.

Experience had proven in a few years, that the "Practical Prayer-Leader" for Cantors and others who devoted themselves to this profession without the help of a teacher, this book became a dependable leader and a true adviser for the many synagogue and at-home functions. Evidence of this was the many letters that I have received, as well as the demonstration of appreciation expressed on my anniversary celebration on September 8, 1882.

Regarding this Second Edition, I did not spare either the effort or the expense to correct the contents and I increased the number of liturgical remarks to no small extent. Where the accent did not please me (did not feel right) and where the explanation was inadequate, I tried to improve the text. This way the new edition, in the true sense of the word, may be called an enlarged and improved edition. On the contrary, I found it not only necessary, but also to conform to the wishes of some of my dear friends, to placing my name on the pieces which I have composed in the old style, so one would know that these were not the works of Hazzanim. Every reader should remember that we not only presented melodies for each prayer, but we allowed for the free outpouring of prayer-leaders for even the longest prayers. Here is an area where the Hazzan can show his talent, his soul and his knowledge of the Jewish music and can express his individuality.

To be sure, these recitatives (such as the Malchuyot, Zichronot, Shofrot, etc.) are slightly different with each Hazzan, but they give a common impression; yet these songs are not different from the products of competent Cantors, who cultivated their own art and method and popularized it by teaching it to their students.

In this sense the following pieces were affected: No. 179, 564, 621, 622, 840 (P.W.), 843, 1105, 1115-1123 (P.W.), 1136, 1163, 1183, 1188-1190c (P.W.),

1214-1215b, 1216a (D.W.), 1220 (P.W.), 1224, 1225, 1228, 1229, 1232-1250, 1316, 1330-1344, 1348-1361, 1369 (P.W.), 1402, 1410, 1427, 1430 (P.W.), 1431a, 1431b, 1444-1450, 1481, 1482, 1484, 1485, and other similar pieces. Besides these, the Polish and a portion of the Ashkenazi melodies which are marked with "A.W.", as well as all the "N.W." marked pieces of my compositions were revised. A small number of Ashkenazi tunes (No. 821, 1137, 1256 and several similar pieces) were included only for sake of completeness and to increase our devotion; these were not entirely suitable and were not popular by today's taste.

At this time I cannot omit the many demands I received, that immediately after the publishing of this edition, I should start on an Appendix to the "Baal T'Fillah" and on a second volume. In the first place a new collection of old Jewish prayers and recitatives, as the variations of the earlier ones, as well as some of the missing tunes which were not included, may not contribute to better understanding since these melodies were fully treated in the "Practical Prayer-Leader" volume.

Finally I again refer you to the Preface of the first edition, as I release this book to the publisher. May the knowledgeable colleagues accept this with indulgence and be it to the younger colleagues a guide on the road to become a Hazzan, so that the treasure given by our forefathers would further our devotion and our consecration in the synagogues.

Gothenburg, May 1883.

Abraham Baer
(translated by Albert & Marian Reet)

BIOGRAPHY OF ABRAHAM BAER
(From Introduction of "Baal T'fillah")

The Biography of Abraham Baer of Gothenberg, the life story of our friend, the Chief Cantor, came to us from a most valuable source and it is our pleasure that we undertake the work and bring to our friends and readers the biography of a man who has our respect, admiration and love and who is an exemplary person in his field.

This biography shows evidence of how much a human being who serves an idea in the realm of goodness and beauty can overcome all obstacles that hinder the accomplishment of this idea with strength and untiring work. It is an illustration of the poet's words: "Before everyone there is an image of what he wants to be. Until he has reached this goal no peaceful hour will he see."

On the 26th of December 1884, Abraham Baer was born, a son to a respected family in his home town. Even in his earliest childhood years music was his "A" and his "Z". If the little Abraham was unhappy, music used to calm him and he laughed with full cheeks and drummed the rhythm with his hands and sang with great ease the melodies that were played and sung to him to the surprise and admiration of all those who listened to him. It was moving to hear the child repeat a Hebraic melody. He seemed to show a very special interest and unusual talent for these, so that it came out in a very natural modulation and delivery and he was able to imitate variations, the variations with which the Jewish-Polish songs are so embellished.

One of these memories of his youth were put as a lasting memory into his work the "Vorbeiter" by Mr. Baer. It is this, his favorite melody from his childhood "Zacharti Ladi" which is on page 282, number 240 set down as a pious perpetuation. It was therefore natural that everyone loved the young coloratura who couldn't even stand steadily on his feet yet and everyone expected great things from him as a Cantor. This would have suited the little artist because he saw in the position of Cantor the ideal of earthly greatness and accomplishment. Within his childish heart it was an

accomplished thing: "aut Cantor aut nihil" but his parents had other ideas; the son shall follow in the footsteps of his father, to become a great scholar and Tzaddik because Cantors were not considered to be great personalities to be admired at that time. To follow in the tradition of his high minded predecessors, the little one was thought to be trained as a famous Rabbi, which (idea) his parents nurtured with tender love. His father, who was himself an outstanding Talmudic scholar, began therefore to spend a great deal of time with this wonder-child in order to prepare him for his future profession.

He was not yet seven years old when the secrets of the Gemorrah were revealed to him. But he was not discouraged by his parents from continuing his favorite pastime, because it did not hurt for a Rabbi to have a gift of voice anymore than it would hurt a Cantor to have knowledge. But unfortunately his life, up to now without trouble, was interrupted by a painful occurrence, his father died. After many conflicts his mother finally gave her consent, with a heavy heart, to have her son devote all of his time to the gift of song, and with great ardor he made the study of song his main interest.

With mixed feelings he took to traveling in order to pursue the outstanding Hazzanim. He became a "m'shorer". Only those know what that means who have tasted the life of "M'shor'rim" as our hero did. In his travels he reached such great Cantors as Yisralke, Skuder, Weintraub, Lichtenstein, Israel Heymann in Amsterdam, etc. He was only 11 years old when he performed Kobbalat Shabbat. Two years later he performed the maariv on the evening of Shavuot.

The congregation admired the young Hazzan who was so youthfully precocious and yet so serious in his delivery of the sad synagogue songs accompanied by the Cantor and the bearded "m'shararim". They admired him greatly but he stayed modest and his only ambition was to perfect himself in the realm of the Hazzan's work.

He accomplished his goal and that is not the only thing. Uniting genius and talent in the same person he invented not only melodies but performed them with great technical aplomb and perfection on the violin. His spare time was entirely dedicated to singing. But his song was only of a modest range. He sang from hearing as he was unable to read music.

By chance a book of music fell into his hands and this seemingly insignificant event was a turning point in his life. It finally came to him that the study and culture of music was to be his career and with unending striving and work, finally these books with music in them gave him the key that opened the door for his musical ability. Only the smallest part of his knowledge was owed to the music of "strange masters". He was his own teacher and his own pupil; that he was able to do this was due to the circumstances that, at a time when others still "wear childrens shoes" or are still in their childhood, he was able, due to his knowledge and ability, to accept a job that gave him a certain amount of independence. Thus, under great difficulties, he obtained in the year 1850, the position of private teacher with a family by the name of Flatawer in the Province of Posen and he conducted, to their greatest satisfaction, lessons in Hebrew. During his two year stay with this caring family he was able to collect many of the warmest remembrances of his youth.

The most important thing for him was the work which allowed him exclusively to throw himself into the arms of the muse but not to such exclusivity that he overlooked his secular education. After Mr. Baer for a short time gave Hebrew lessons and taught children in another family, he felt that in a constricted environment the mind also constricts and his desire came forth to promote his perfection in his work at the hands of a master. Thus he came to Mr. Isaac Heymann, who at that time lived in Gnesen which is near Amsterdam. This man not only became his great master but also his fatherly friend who was always able to furnish advise and acts of loving tenderness

to him. Here he learned his "shir tziyon" and with this the greatness of the old master, Sulzer. He lived with the most friendly relationship as a free guest in the house with the family for two years with the family of his teacher, with whom he was friendly even up to the time that this article was written.

From there he was called to the Province of Pakosh in 1854 as a Cantor and Teacher; and so he stood at the age of 20 years on his own two feet. A short time later he moved to a place called Shwetz. It was a mile away from Kum and it was there he made the acquaintance of Dr. Wolff which became a new friendship for Mr. Baer. Dr. Wolff was an outstanding Cantor and Talmudist in Kum who was very taken by his youthful brother. Soon thereafter Dr. Wolff was called to Gothenberg and was commended there. Eventually he recommended Mr. Baer for a position in the same place. Because of certain circumstances the actual beginning of his position was delayed for half a year and so Mr. Baer only got to Gothenberg on the 22nd of August, 1857. In a strange place, being young and inexperienced, it was lucky for him that Dr. Wolff and his very kind wife were concerned for him in a most loving way. With great concern for him they led him on a path of self-confidence and independence.

Before his real audition, Mr. Baer held a little private audition in the synagogue which resulted to the greatest satisfaction of all those who attended. The audience consisted of Dr. Wolff, two of the preachers, the organist and the Royal Music Director, Mr. Czapek, the conductor of the Choir, Mr. Nissen and another scholar. The quality of his high tenor voice, the coloratura, the fantasia and the way of presentation found general satisfaction with the audience and his very finely honed musical ear led him to perform the modulations which he had prepared with his theme.

Finally the big day arrived. With a beating heart he gave his audition. The Synagogue was filled to capacity but soon he regained his self-confidence and his

audition was so successful that the congregation granted him a contract three days later and invited him to begin his position immediately.

Thus he lived approximately three years in great happiness and undisturbed by his colleagues and admired by the congregation.

His functions consisted of performing those pieces which the Choir Conductor, the actual director of the musical portion, put before him and participation at rehearsals. But he was assured when the primary Cantor, who had been with the congregation for 40 years, would retire, he himself would then move into that position.

As far as his private life was concerned, he socialized with the family of Dr. Wolff. This association awakened within him the wish of his dream of an ideal domestic life for himself. In Culm he had met the 13 year old child, daughter of Cantor Wolff; a handsome, educated, musically gifted child, he met her and learned to love her. The first impression was very important and Mr. Baer left Culm with the intention of bringing Johanna home with him, and he accomplished this intention eventually. Since the death of her husband, the widow and mother of the child had led a very secluded life with her children. Meanwhile the oldest one had grown to be a very lovely young lady.

Mr. Baer came, he saw and he conquered! On the 12th of August, 1860 the engagement took place and after 14 months the marriage was performed in the synagogue of Culm by the then established Rabbi, Dr. Verlchenfeld. The whole congregation participated in the wedding and made a feast for the daughter of their former Cantor. The synagogue was decorated at its most glistening and after a short stay in Landsberg, the young couple sailed off to Gothenburg.

The reception for the young couple was most hearty. A house had been handsomely refurbished in the absence of the bridegroom and so nothing was lacking in a most comfortable home for Mr. Baer. Congratulations and letters on the part of the

congregation and all manner of invitations were privately sent to Mr. Baer. With such a pleasant life and domesticity, nothing could stop Mr. Baer from giving himself entirely to his beloved song. He cultivated, most of all, the synagogue song, but he was not against performing secular music (profane music) as well. This was accomplished by his participation with an honorary choir that performed in that town. Sometimes the group gave concerts, mostly of classical music such as Hayden's "Creation", "St. Paul" by Mendelssohn, "William Tell" by Rossini, "Don Juan" by Mozart, "Zemire and Azor" by Spohr, "Zigeunerleben" by Schumann, "Der Sturm" by Hayden, etc. But the participation in these concerts was only a kind of vacation activity from his official duties which Mr. Baer now had to undertake.

A half-year after the wedding, it so happened that his aged colleague and the choir master died. Finding and auditioning candidates and rehearsals for this took a full year and during this time not only his own duties and those of the premiere Cantor but also the rehearsals and the audition for the candidates were part of his responsibilities. Finally they found an able Cantor but this lasted for only a year and then they started (the search) all over again.

The second candidate, a nice young man, was totally unfamiliar with the area of a Cantor's duties. Therefore, he left Gothenburg after about a year. Such experiences prompted our subject (Baer) to create a work for just Cantors which took up all the duties and requirements of a Cantor. Meanwhile, he still had to find a second Cantor for the congregation. The congregation was tired of the constant comings and goings of the candidates and he made the suggestion that he take the young butcher, who at the same time had really great vocal potential for being a Hazzan, to school him as such. The Board of Directors accepted this idea and after tiring and endless trials and errors and efforts, Mr. Baer was able, during the year, to train the young (potential) Cantor to be ready for his audition.

When this difficult assignment had been accomplished he received two new assignments, as an heritage from his two colleagues who had died. The task was to build a Choir from the bottom up and to call to life not only a choir but song books, "partiture" for the organ, etc. The liturgy as the synagogue, was new. The synagogue songs which were part of "Shir Tziyon" in Hebrew and were partly created by the Music Director, Mr. Czapek, in the Swedish language were only added after a time. Printed solo pieces were not available, since the old Cantor, with all his accomplishments was only a natural singer (could not read or write music) it was easily explainable that everything was in a bit of chaos before the Choir Director found a way out!

Especial difficulties were presented during the High Holidays. The organist sat at the organ and waited constantly and with anxiety for the "mystical" score which the Choir Director would lay before him and without the cleverness of Mr. Czapek there would have been much confusion. But the Choir Director had died and the organist explained that without the score he simply could not continue playing.

The Board of Directors came to Mr. Baer who had gotten them out of a difficult situation once before and this time he had to undertake this difficult task since the High Holidays were imminent. All the solos, traditional as well as modern, were to be composed, arranged, substituted, transposed and made into a collated, orderly, complete unit. A truly monumental work and before the notes were completely dry on the paper they had to be already on the music stands.

But duty overcomes all obstacles. I must say that the consequences (of this hard work) did not stay away. His sense of duty kept Mr. Baer going throughout the holidays; then he broke down and was confined to a sick bed for many weeks afterward.

Now concerning the Choir: even during the beginning of our colleagues career, there were approximately 12 boys in the congregational school, "Gothilda-Skolan", but there children scattered after they left the school and Mr. Baer undertook the

Choir Director post with the assignment to build a choir and lead it and he dedicated himself to this assignment with great vigor. In the beginning he tried to build a choir from the ladies and gentlemen of the congregation because he felt that to carry this out would be especially favorable because, beside the technical advantages of such an undertaking in the religious sense, it would be a strengthening of the younger generation. The people were quite willing to join such a choir and during the Holidays to beautify the service. The rehearsals were well attended but the regular attendance and regular participation during the whole year was not attainable with these people. Therefore he recruited a choir of 20 scholars, male and female, of the so-called "Polish School" which point we shall discuss at a later time.

For two full years Mr. Baer worked with the choir and enjoyed it having built a respected and well-schooled choir and it is today in existence in its third generation (1882)

Meanwhile, in the course of the year, various new songs had been accepted into the repertoire of the synagogue. The Liturgy, here and there, had been changed and so the very busy choir director again had the need to create partiturs and in this manner a new collection of music of over three hundred folio pages, including partiturs and one hundred detailed choir books which are still in use with great success today. Many compositions for the congregation as well as those for his colleagues, also fall into this period. In spite of this tremendous amount of work he used his extra time exclusively for his composition "Baal T'fillah". About the creation of this work we learn the following: at the time that Mr. Baer was working at this opus in 1862 there was certainly not a lack of useful choir material and songs, yet in though they may have been quite complete and quite well suited for their own purpose, for the actual training of a Cantor there was very little material. This condition caused Mr. Baer to undertake such a work with the greatest energy since he had had the experience with the aforementioned candidates that ignorance of the "nigun" and of the art of the Hazan was a wide spread occurrence. His colleagues were very sympathetic toward his efforts to

complete this work. Up until the time of its publication the various compositions (previously published) left much to be desired in the detail of the cantorial finer points.

Enthusiasm and subscriptions were the means whereby this work was eventually published. The costs were, at the time, 6,000 marks. Help came in the person of Dr. S. Hedlund. This very fine gentleman, the editor of a trade newspaper and a representative in the senate, had then a 14 day absence from the senate because of urgent business duties and had hurried home in order to take care of these duties. He was most interested in the efforts of Mr. Baer and personally collected subscriptions and published articles in his newspaper about this work and the subscriptions, in short, he did everything he could to raise funds and to help this project.

Also the chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr. Magnus, expended great efforts in this direction. These gentlemen worked very hard as the articles in 30 newspapers, both here and abroad, and all the testimonials and thank yours of the buyers, who were spared many embarrassments by the text of the prayer leader or Hazzan.

Because of the lively participation of these gentlemen in purchasing this edition, it was possible for the author to reduce the sales price from 30 marks to 25 marks.

The first edition was soon exhausted and Mr. Baer, if he found 200 more subscribers was to consider a Second Edition. The price of that came to 20 marks. At the present time the composer is busy with the Second Work which is a continuation of the "Baal T'fillah". The contents of this work will include the following items:

- 1) The complete Accompaniment to "Baal T'fillah" (as a matter of fact, also with a German translation of the Hebrew text. The accompaniment will be for piano for school and home use.)

- 2) New choir songs in a larger edition with organ and orchestration accompaniments, plus preludes for festive occasions such as confirmations, weddings, funerals, births and birthday festivities for the Prince of the County, Ground-breaking Ceremonies and Dedications of Synagogues, Installation of Clergy, as well as Cantatas, etc., etc.

3) Psalms-Chorales for the entire year for use in the synagogue, school and home.

4) Fundamentals of Music and Harmony, etc., different materials and rules for ritual uses.

So much for the activities of the "Jubilee Celebrant" (Baer on his 25th anniversary). His activities as a teacher have led to many accomplished pupils. His activity in this respect has centered in two schools:

1) The School which he founded and

2) The School founded for another purpose. At the time Mr. Baer started in his position, in the suburbs of Gothenburg there lived a whole community of Polish-Jewish families, who were even less suited to this congregation than they were to their surroundings. Their children had absolutely no education and were very neglected and unschooled. Mr. Baer together with Mr. Wolff and the Magistrate, Mr. Henryk decided to do something about this. This very generous triumvirate decided to rent a place for the purpose of having several lessons. They saw to it that proper supplies were purchased and after a woman was hired to teach sewing and needlecraft, a boys' and girls' school was founded which proved to truly be a blessing in its influence on the young people.

In order to support this school, again Mr. Edward Magnus and his generous and well-to-do daughter, Mrs. Gothilde Furstenberg, contributed funds and are highly to be commended.

In this manner a great many people who would otherwise have become a burden to human society were made into useful members.

The most recent project of Mr. Baer was that of becoming a Mohel. Dr. Ganz, a physician who had functioned in this respect for 20 years had retired and indicated Mr. Baer as the most suitable candidate for this job. In 1873, sponsored by the Board of Directors of his congregation, he traveled to Berlin and returned from

there as an accomplished Mohel who had passed his examinations. Helping him in this endeavor were the late Dr. Geiger, Dr. Aub, Dr. Ungerleiter, Cantor Lichtenstein and especially Dr. Phillips. His actual training in this field came to him by way of the jeweler, Mr. Hamburger, and since then he has practiced as a Mohel with great success bringing the young generation into the Covenant of Abraham with great success. It is often the case that when one is successful in his profession his domestic situation is an example of a quiet, idyllic life in a content atmosphere. A band of intimate love encloses a family consisting of father, mother and daughter sounding tri-chordal harmony. The daughter exceeded her father's greatest expectations. She intends to go to Stockholm during the Winter to study at the Musical Academy, aiming to pass an examination in technical music as well as theory, harmony and voice. She is sure to be successful for she is her "father's daughter". And so Mr. Baer has many reasons to thank God for his great good fortune. Most assuredly he will lift his hands to Heaven today for the opportunity to grow from the "small" Abraham to the "great" Abraham as his great ancestor in ancient times was want to call out.* He might also add, in humility, the words of his ancient father Jacob:**

As always the _____ is proven by him, even so, he might say in conscience, trust his success is due to God's help, continued work, uninterrupted activity, and punctual accomplishment of all his duties. We wish for the "Jubilant" that God will allow him many years of luck with all our hearts, and we hope that his younger colleagues will, just as he did, heed the advice of the "Ethics of the Fathers":

"When you come to a place where there is a death of Men,
be a Man."

May the name "Baer" be for many years an asset to the world of Cantors, Judaism and may he be a blessing to his successors until the end of time.

(Translated by Liesl Loeb from the German)

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ר' צוה"ק ר' ז"ל