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HALPERN'S SYNAGOGUE HYMNAL

זמירות ותפלות ישראל. *Z'miroth ut'filoth yisroel*. A synagogue hymnal for Sabbath and Festivals, comprising songs for religious schools and junior services. Compiled, and adapted for the use of cantor, choir, and congregation, by Rev. M. HALPERN, Cantor of Congregation Adath Jeshurun, Boston. Boston: THE BOSTON MUSIC COMPANY [1915].

THE need of a synagogue hymnal for religious schools and Jewish homes generally has been greatly felt by rabbis and teachers engaged in instilling a Jewish spirit in the young generation. That music, particularly of the choral pattern, is a potent factor in this direction, is generally admitted: *musica ancilla ecclesiae* is more true now than it was a millennium ago. Yet while the Christian Church realizes this to its full extent and endeavours to foster choral singing in all its phases, the Jews are wanting in such an effort. Some attempts, it is true, have been made to present our ancient liturgical chants in a popular guise; the bulk of the Jews, however, still neglect choral singing as in days of yore. It is to remove this neglect that Mr. Halpern compiled his hymnal. As a starting-point it is commendable, though it suffers from serious defects. Thus the arrangement of the music is not always well-chosen. There is too much of Halpern, and very little of the real giants of our liturgical song like Sulzer and Lewandowski. Moreover, it is hardly proper to include in a synagogue hymnal choral compositions by Christian composers made expressly for the Christian Church (comp. J. B. Dykes' 'Call Jehovah thy Salvation' and half a dozen others at the end of the book). Music may be universal, as some assert. Nevertheless, there is something in a church hymn, even outside of the words, which is characteristically and inherently ecclesiastical, and as such should not enter an orthodox synagogue.

Another drawback is the transcription of the Hebrew, which is quite antiquated and anything but flawless. Certainly our modern transcription is not only grammatically correct but also musically more fit than the old one.

This book at best supplies the needs of a certain class of Jews. It accentuates the desideratum of a general hymnal for all Jews, whether Spanish or German, on the lines of *Church Hymns and Tunes* (New York, 1906), edited by Herbert Turner and William F. Biddle for Christian congregations of all creeds and faiths.

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