THE

History of Hazanuth

Issued to the
30th ANNIVERSARY
of the
Jewish Ministers
Cantors Association
of America
Sunday, February 3rd, 1924

AARON H. ROSEN
Editor
FOREWORD

TO restore the honorable status of a calling almost as ancient as Judaism itself — to give again to the Hazan, the chanter of the Jewish liturgy; the dignity which his ministrations demand is the prime purpose of the Jewish Ministers-Cantors Association of America.

In days of yore, the Hazan — the Cantor — was the chief functionary of the Jewish synagogue. He led his people in prayer, he gave utterances to their hopes, their aspirations. He was their spokesman at the throne of the Almighty, he was their Messenger through whom they transmitted their desires to Him who hath it in His power to grant men the things for which they pray. He was honored in the community above all other men. He was a scholar, a poet, a musician. But above all, he was looked upon as a man chosen for his piety, his fitness as one worthy to approach the Throne.

It is otherwise now. The Hazan is still the “Messenger” — he still gives voice to the longings and aspirations of his people, but much of that ancient dignity that once was attached to his sacred calling has gone as so many of Israel’s treasures have gone. The prestige of the Hazan is but another of Israel’s possessions that have been wrecked during the dark centuries. Scout respect is shown him as a leader of his community, and oftimes he is the victim of man’s inhumanity to man. Where once his position was secure and his old age made safe, today his tenure is subject to whim and caprice and his old age a period of sorrow and suffering.

The Jewish Ministers-Cantors Association including in its membership men of scholarship and erudition, as well as men of piety and men with glorious voices aims to protect its members against the injustices of the changed attitude toward the Hazan. It protects the relationship between the Cantor and his congregation. It provides for his old age and for his bereft widow. And one of its chief aims is the establishment in New York of a Seminary in which the Cantor, and those who aspire to follow that calling, may be the better equipped for those duties which fall to the “Shehiach Tzibur”, and to qualify him to convey that message in keeping with the reverence, the dignity and the charm of our hallowed liturgy.

We are grateful to those who by their patronage of this concert and by their advertising in this program have helped to make it possible for us to go on with our tasks so essential for raising the standards of Jewish life in America.

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The Cantor's Contribution Towards Charitable Institutions

By HON. SAMUEL BUCHLER

The Cantors are coming into their own. They are being recognized as a very important element of productive workers upon every field of humane endeavor. Cantors are no longer confined within the walls of the Synagogue or the Temples. The “Omed-Brett” (sacred platform) is not the sole place where the cantor’s voice is heard and his influence felt. He contributes, by way of his art, to all causes comprehensible. More particularly so to the cause of charity.

Charity appears to be the great goal Chazanim at large are aiming at in their long and varied careers. I remember distinctly that during the trying times of the recent world conflagration the Cantors have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars by their concerted singing engagements in Town Hall, in front of City Hall and at all the numerous celebrations held in this metropolis. More Liberty Bonds were sold in one day by virtue of the united efforts of the Cantors Association than by thousands of the most influential individuals in a whole month’s time. This act of the cantors alone is sufficient to rank them among our distinguished patriotic citizens. They simply sang themselves into the hearts of the hundred million population of the country. Their remarkable services during the world war will long remain an inspiring chapter in the annals of our history. The President of the United States, Governors throughout the land and—last but not least—the Mayor of the City of New York—all have given vivid expressions of gratitude for the Cantors’ ready aid in those days of trials. Moreover, the Jewish community never built a charity institution in the city without the able and generous assistance of the Cantors, collectively or individually. Homes for the aged, orphan asylums, hospitals of all kinds, kindergartens, Talmud Torahs, etc., etc., are the direct or indirect result of the contribution of the Cantors at money-raising affairs like “breaking of grounds,” “dedications,” “opening of the door,” “schlussel-selling” and other similar festivities, which are arranged to increase the treasury.

The people not merely loves music, but heart-rending and neshumeh-digging music, which can be supplied by the Jewish Cantor extraordinarily well. You can not raise funds for charity in America unless you are able to open the hearts and pockets of your audiences at one and the same time. And the chazan excels in this game. That’s the main reason why he is so popular and in such tremendous demand. I do not believe that the Cantor receives the credit he merits for distinguished work done at all solemn and sacred occasions. He is indispensible, to say the least, whenever and wherever Jews assemble to practice the charitable precepts of their religion. Many an orphan, aged Hebrew and poor, wretched “schnorrer” does not realize that he is getting along in this world because of the fact that some good-hearted Cantor volunteered his services in Carnegie Hall or in Hotel Astor at a certain given concert.

The gigantic cantors’ jubilee at the Madison Square Garden (a daring enterprise unheard of before) is evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that I am justified in saying that the cantors have, at last, come into their own and are growing from day to day in the estimation of the Jewish public. And I am quite certain that when the historian will relate the true facts in the life of the Cantor of today he will give him a thousandfold gold-medal for his praiseworthy accomplishments in the Temple of Zedokoh.
JEWISH MUSIC!

JEWISH Traditional Music!
What visions does it not bring up of the glory, indeed of the tragedy of a great race whose civilization antedates that of most nations, for it goes back to the dawn of history?

Much of the progress in the world of music can be attributed to Jews or men of Jewish blood.

Look up the lineage and affiliations of the great composers and executants of the last hundred years, and you will find them Jews at every turn.

Call the roll!

You will find it includes many of the men and women we know as Russian, French, German, Polish or Italian composers and artists. They are Jews or of Jewish descent.

Wherever you go, what do you see back of every worthy musical enterprise?

The Jewish woman, and if not the Jewish woman, the Jewish man, supported and spurred on by the Jewish woman.

There is scarcely today any musical enterprise of value in this great city or in any other city that does not derive often the largest amount of its support from men and women of the Jewish race.

Whence came this predilection for music, this aptitude for it in the breast of the Jew?

It can be traced back to the night of time. The wandering Semitic shepherds sang their pastoral in the days of old before history came to be recorded.

Then, in Egypt, thirty-two centuries ago, the Jew sat at the feet of men who were scientists in music. We know that at the time of the bondage the people of the Nile were advanced in the arts, and that in music they had both a popular art and a sacerdotal one. To them can be traced not a few of the instruments of the modern orchestra.

The Jew was then, as he has always been, and as he is today, the most apt of pupils.

When he took up his staff and set out for the promised land, he carried with him into the wilds and the desert not only some of the popular Egyptian chants and some knowledge of the science of Egyptian music, but Egyptian instruments. One of these was the harp, still indispensable to the complete orchestral ensemble.

It has been said that every oppressed nation becomes music loving.

Oppression brought out the latent music in the Jew, his idealism, his passionate love of liberty, and this is particularly true of the Jewish women who bear, as they have always borne, the great burden of the woes of their race.

Gifts Flourished Under Oppression

From the oppression the Jews carried their music into Palestine, where it flowered, till fresh oppression carried it to every corner of the globe.

The tenacity of the race has kept much of its music in uncorrupted form. We have it here, as every capital and virtually every hamlet of the civilized world has it.

So we find the Jewish flair for music manifesting itself in two ways—the one, the preservation through many centuries of the melodic treasures of Biblical times; the other, virtual leadership in the international art music which has grown out of the simpler music of the people and, like that simpler music, has become a necessity in the lives of our people.

The pedants and pundits continue to argue over the meaning of the old marks, called 'neums', which, so far as we know, were all that the Hebrews had that in any way corresponded to our modern musical notation.

Be that as it may, we have with us a heritage
of Jewish melody, not only as it is heard in the synagogue, ritually, but in folk airs of unknown antiquity which are now being sung in concert halls along with the nationalistic songs of various races.

"From generation to generation these melodies have come down to us, expressive of the beauty of soul that has never been lost to the Jewish people.

*Traditional Ritual Music*

"We have, of course, the hair-splitters in the synagogues and those others who lament that there are different ways of presenting the traditional ritual music.

"We know that some of it was old before Rome was founded; that it probably goes back to Solomon and to David. We know that Theophratus, one of the first of the Greeks to make observations of the Jews, was deeply impressed by the music of the Temple.

"The Chronicles leave no doubt that this music was elaborate and essentially melodious; that sopranos and tenors sang and were accompanied or assisted by harps, flutes, lutes, trumpets and cymbals; that there were directors of music comparable to the modern cantor or choir leader, and that there were modes of composition.

"The instance of David playing the harp for Saul to drive out an evil spirit seems to have been the first recorded case of musical therapeutics.

"There can be no doubt of the lyrical character of the Psalms. David set his own words to music. Then came Solomon and the period of the greatest glory in the Jewish music of Biblical times—Solomon 'who spake three thousand proverbs,' whose 'songs were a thousand and five.'

"We read today that four thousand musicians were provided by the Levites to assist in the services in the Temple.

"Whatever the music they borrowed from Egypt and perhaps from Babylon and Assyria, the Jews greatly exhausted it, regarding it as a direct means of communication with God.

"We feel this exaltation today in these traditional melodies, unaccustomed as Occidental ears are to some of the intervals and the use of less than half-tones which have survived only in the synagogues.

*Folk-Song Origins*

"No greater mistake can be made than to think of Jewish music only in the ritualistic sense.

"There are published volumes of folk-songs which prove that the Jews love of music was not confined to the church. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that with the Jews, as with all other peoples, the folk-song came first, and with respect to the Psalms there are authorities who hold that at least a number of them were set to melodies derived from folk-songs. The point particularly to one known as 'The Vintner's Song.'

"Let us never forget that music did not start as an art. It came out of the mass soul in the shape of the folk-song.

"It was inevitable that Jewish music, after the period of Solomon and his glory should take on a plaintive character and sigh with accumulated grief.

"The harps that were hung upon the willows of Babylon have carried the divine beauty of sorrow to every land and clime.

"The antiphonal singing beloved in some Christian churches was doubtless derived from the responsive verses sung by two sides of the old Hebrew choirs.

"Some authorities go further and declare that the melodies used by the early Christian Church, from which so much of the latter-day church music has been derived, came originally from the Synagogue.

"One of these authorities, has written his belief that Christian converts from Judaism handed down the traditional modes of the cantillation of the Holy Law and the Prophets in somewhat corrupted form and that this evolved to the music known as—the plain chant.

*Anticipated Modern Ideas*

"Another writer has illustrated how the Jews anticipated some of our most modern ideas concerning the agreement of word to note. In the old Hebrew music, he states, matters of grief were expressed by slow-sounding syllables; of rage, by harsh and difficult pronunciations; and matters of joy, gently, dying away in sounds of ease and delightful utterances.

"In Judea, prophets delivered their words of wisdom to the sound of cithars, harps and timbrels.

"The Jews saw the truth of what we are only now beginning to realize when they remarked that the same persons who were musicians were accounted as the prophets and the seers.

"Should it not appeal to you with such a record showing how much the best of our modern music goes back to the ancient traditional music of the Jews that you should hold that music in highest
honor, that you should preserve it faithfully as a sacred charge delivered into your hands?

"For this we must look largely to the idealism of the Jewish women, an idealism sprung from the agonies they have endured through the ages through man's inhumanity to man.

"Above all things, should you not be proud that Jewish blood flows in your veins as I, born of a Lutheran mother but descended from a Jew, on my father's side, am proud of the Jewish blood that flows in my veins, for I can say with the great Disraeli, one time prime minister of England, when he was sneered at as being of Jewish descent, I can say, 'My ancestors were princes in the temple when yours were but barbarians.'

"At this very time when the whole world is almost in chaos, we must look to the cultural and above all to the spiritual forces to reconstruct human life on a nobler, purer and above all a saner basis.

"It is through music—the universal language—that we may help bring the nations together in amity.

"Music which can allay the unrest of labor created by the monotony of the toil of the wage earner forced upon him through our inventive genius, which has taken the burden from the back and hands of man and put it on to the machine.

"Music, which can Americanize our alien population.

"Music, which can start the rhythmic flow of movements through the muscles and sinews and the very blood of your children.

"Music, which can assuage your grief and intensify your joy.

"Music, which can fill your brain with infinite harmonies.

"Music, which can hold the family together and bring peace and happiness to the humble home of the mechanic as well as to the palatial home of the millionaire.

"Music!—as the mother sings to the babe at her breast, as the choir chants at the wedding, in the requiem for the dead.

"Music! Music! which begins where words end, which whispers to us of immortality."

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**Thirty Years of Hazanuth**

We are celebrating to-day the thirtieth anniversary of our organization, but in reality it is our first anniversary, for it is the first year since we have earnestly put our hands to work, to realize the ideals for which this organization has been founded.

I believe that the present administration headed by our President, Rev. Jacob Rapaport, is not only the most distinguished and efficient, but also the very very first to build and to lay the foundation for future Hazanuth.

I am happy to be on the Board, to head the Grievance Committee and to be one of the chosen few on the executive staff, to further our cause. I feel confident that in the course of five years our organization will overshadow its thirty years of history.

*REV. N. CANTOR,*

*Cantor Temple Emanuel, Borough Park, Brooklyn.*

I greet you all my brethren and officers of this, our great organization to our great event, the thirtieth anniversary of our organization. I am proud to have been with you all this time and that my activities as member of the Board and as Vice-President has helped to bring our organization to this high standing in the Jewish community. I especially greet our President, Rev. Jacob Rapaport, who has proven to be an efficient executive and a man of deeds, a man of foresight, and I pray that when we shall live to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary we will have brought our profession of Hazanous to a glorified position. My heart and my work is with you for all future time.

*REV. A. SINGER.*
ALOIS KAISER.

Chazan and composer. Born November 10, 1840, Szobatist, Hungary. Religious education in Vienna Hebrew School, Realschule Teachers Seminary and Conservatory at Vienna. At 10 sang in Sulzers choir. In 1859 became a Cantor in Funhause Sub. of Vienna. In 1863-66 was Cantor of the New Synagogue at Prague. Kaiser arrived in New York June, 1866. A month later was appointed cantor of the Ohave Scholom Cong., Baltimore, Md. Was for several years President of Cantors’ Association of America. In 1895 was elected honorary number of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which entrusted him, in co-operation with William Sparger, with compilation of the music for the Union Hymnal, published 1897. In co-operation with Samuel Welsch, Moritz Goldstein, and J. L. Rice, Kaiser published the volumes of “Zimras Yoh” in 1871-1886, containing music for the sabbaths and festivals. He also published many others for special occasions. He died in June, 1907, and was buried from the Temple where he held the position since 1866.

SAMUEL NAUMBURG.

French Cantor and composer. Born in Bavaria March 15, 1817; died in Saint Maude, near Paris, May 1, 1880. Was Cantor at Strassburg until 1845, when he was called to the Synagogue Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth, Paris, where he became professor of liturgical music at the Seminary. Shortly after his death he was elected Officier d’Academie. Published “Ziuroth Israel,” “Shire Kadesh,” “Agudas Shirim,” and “Rassis Shirhashium Asher Lishomah.”

JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN.

Born Kecskemét, Hungary, March 27, 1836; died Vienna, June 17, 1899. Cantor Ober at the Leopold Stadt Temple, the largest Synagogue in Vienna, for 40 years. At the age of 11 he was elected as successor to his father in Neutra, Hungary. After graduating in Vienna for the opera and ready to accept the tenor position in the Florence Opera, he changed his mind and returned to the Cantorship and was elected in 1857 to the above position, where he died. Published various Synagogue compositions.

MARCUS HART.


LOUIS NAUMBURG.

Born in Bavaria 1813; died in N. Y. City March 4, 1909. Traced his family of Cantors to 1612. Came to America in 1848 and was elected Cantor at Kneseth Israel, Reform, Philadelphia, Pa., 1865. Was elected Minister to Radeph Shalom Cong., Pittsburg, Pa., where he died.

LOUIS LEWANDOWSKI.

Born at Wreschen, Province Posen, April 23, 1823; died February 4, 1894, at Berlin. Was solo soprano at Berlin Synagogue. In 1840 he was appointed chörmaster of the Synagogue. Composed “Kol Rinoh Utifloh” and “Todah Vsimroh.” In 1886 receives title “Royal Musical Director.”

SOLOMON SULZER.

Cantor and composer. Born at Hohenems, Tyrol, Austria, March 30, 1804; died at Vienna, January 17, 1890. His family name prior to 1813 was Loewy More from Sulz, hence the name Sulzer. In 1820 became Cantor a Hohenems. Modernizes ritual, introduces a choir. In 1826 called to Vienna, Reorganizes the song services, retains the traditional in a modernized harmony. Sulzer published two volumes “Shire Zion” as models for Cantor and for choir.

SOLOMON ROSSI.

Rabbi (Chazan) and composer. Lived at Mantua, Italy, end of sixteenth and beginning of seventeenth century. His family tradition was that they were brought to Rome as prisoners under Titus. In 1587 he was engaged as musician and singer at the Ducal Court. He was allowed to discard the yellow bade, then compulsory to Jews. He was a skilled contrapostist. Prevailed upon the Rabbis to allow polyphonic music in the Synagogue music. He also was a poet. His most famous work is “Hashirim Asher lishlomah,” published Venice, 1622.
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Cantor Elias Kritchmar

The new cantor of the Washington Heights Congregation, of which M. Emanuel Hertz is president, is one of the best known and popular Russian cantors. He has been praised highly by various Russian composers. Born thirty-four years ago in a city in Podolia, Russia, he joined the choir of the noted cantor Giberma at the age of eleven. Kritchmar had such a remarkable voice that Giberma took him along on his concert tours from city to city. He studied at the Berditchev Yeshiva and sang also in Belzer’s choir. At the age of 20 he became cantor in Yekaterinoslav. Shortly afterward he accepted a post in Odessa, where he continued his musical education. Within a short time after his arrival in Odessa he was elected cantor of the Great Synagogue of Odessa, where some of the most famous Russian cantors, such as Bachman and Rozummy, had officiated.

For more detailed Biography of same Cantor see p. 179
Cantor Theodore Guinsburg

In the history of the American Cantorate the name of Theodore Guinsburg looms very big; not only because he was a pioneer in this field, but also because he held his ground almost to the last. He was the dean of the American Cantors. He held the record for tenure of position in one congregation, where he officiated for forty-one years.

He was born in the city of Suwalk, Russian Poland, October 29, 1844. Like most Jewish boys of Poland, he first acquired a good Jewish education. When he had grown into manhood, he became the bass singer of the then most famous Cantor of Poland, Yisrolke Suvalka, who used to make an annual concert tour over the country in a Covered Wagon. In those days the bass was the most important member of the choir, in as much as he had to improvise a prelude before the Cantor's chanting, in order to give, so to say, a setting to the Cantor's song as well as to inspire him. This prelude, therefore, had to be of the highest type from both the melodic and technical point. Theodore Guinsburg was then already famous as the most eminently fitted basso for that complex position, not only because of his remarkable voice, a very sonorous and flexible one, with large compass and volume, but also because of his great genius in improvisation.

When he reached the age of twenty-one, he went to Berlin to study with the great masters for an operatic career. However, his natural calling, for which he was consecrated from birth, would not be suppressed. He therefore decided to emigrate to America, where he could find a position befitting his talent. He arrived in New York in 1867, where he was at once elected Cantor of the Green Street Synagogue, one of the leading synagogues at that time. His fame as a Cantor spread very soon beyond the confines of New York City; and in 1868 he was called to the Charter Oak Synagogue at Hartford, Conn., where he officiated for eight years, after which he was elected Cantor of the Sha-ar Hashomayim Temple, then located on Rivington Street, New York City, where he held the position for two years. From this position he was called to the Ahavath Chesaed Temple, one of the leading congregations in New York, known now as the Central Synagogue, where he established the record for active service in the pulpit in this country.

He died on Smi't Atzeres, October 2, 1923, after an operation. The funeral took place from the Temple, where three of the most prominent Rabbis, eulogized him. A delegation of about fifty Cantors acted as honorary pallbearers, who followed his coffin chanting Shivisi and Yoshev b'eser, which lent solemnity and reverence to the obsequies even as his presence in the pulpit lent reverence to the service. For he was of a most impressive and reverential appearance. Even his voice, although operatic in character, became mellow and prayerful on the occasion under his wonderful mastery. And, like his voice, so was his character. He was gentle in manners, and had a most even tempered disposition, unusual for a man of artistic ability of his calibre. The Service to him was a labor of love. His face would beam when he spoke about its music. He felt the synagog music to be his mission in life, and that all the God-given powers he owed to the synagog.

He contributed many valuable compositions to the synagog music; some of which are published in the Souvenir book of the Council of Jewish Women. He also has a large number of hymns to his credit, published in Dr. Moses' Hymnal.

CANTOR WEINSTOCK,
Central Synagogue, New York City.
Cantor Simon Schlager
of the Temple Emanuel, New York

Cantor Schlager, began his musical education at an early age in Europe and graduated from the Thur- berts Conservatory in America. He is the pos- sessor of a luscious rich baritone voice. For some time he held positions at Buffalo, Temple Beth Zion, Newark; Temple Bnei Yeshurun and Ohab Sholom. Since 1903 he has been the Cantor of the Temple Emanuel, Fifth Avenue, New York. Early in his professional career he had several offers of the operatic stage but refused them, and resolved to devote himself to the office of Cantor, in which position he has achieved success and distinction.

Temple Emanuel, Manhattan, New York, is one of the most prominent synagogues in the world. Louis Marshall, its president, is one of the leading Jews in the world, and the Temple is renowned for its superior musical service rendered by the Cantor and choir.

Cantor Schlager has been president of the Jewish Ministers Cantors Association, and has proven to be a very efficient leader, and has helped much to elevate Synagogue music in this country.
Rev. Solomon Baum

Rev. Solomon Baum was born September 13th, 1868 at Sebes, Hungary. He received his education at the Jeshiva Sator Al. Ujhely, Hungary, and later attended the Royal Conservatory of Budapest. His Cantor's diploma was conferred by Prof. Moritz Friedman of Budapest. He officiated as Cantor in Europe, as Rabbi and Cantor at the Congregation Beth Jacob, Brooklyn, N. Y., and as Cantor at the Temple Beth Israel Bikur Cholim, 72nd Street and Lexington Ave. where he was connected for 27 years. When that Congregation recently dissolved, it presented him with a handsome purse, and also set aside a sum of money, sufficient to pay him a pension for life.

Rev. Solomon Baum was Honorary Secretary, and for three successive years President of the Jewish Ministers Cantors Association of America and his work on behalf of this organization is well known. He brought about an amalgamation of the rival orthodox and reform Cantors Association, and much of the fame and prosperity of the organization is due to his efforts. He was also the prime mover in the widows' and orphans' fund.

Rev. Solomon Baum is a composer of note. Publications, שירים ו псיפתים Songs and Prayers for the Sabbath Service, ועב O, Jacob 52 יר for Piano, Violin and Cello Solo with a view of re-awakening the love for our traditional music he composed these sacred airs for the home and the Temple. His compositions are known all over the world.

At present he is connected with the Congregation Sons of Israel of the Bronx, 77 East 178th Street, as their Rabbi and Principal.

Address: 806 East 175th Street, Bronx, New York.
Cantor Armin Rosenberg
of Temple Beth Israel, Philadelphia, Pa.

Cantor Armin Rosenberg was born at Klausen- burg, Hungary, on the 12th of March, 1868. He showed remarkable musical talent in early youth, and possessed an unusual soprano voice as early as his seventh year. After singing for several years in the choirs of Cantors near his home city, the famous Ober-Kantor M. Friedman of Budapest, became interested in him. Under Kantor Friedman's patronage he not only received a thorough training for the vocation of "HAZAN", but was allowed to attend the National Conservatory of Music of Budapest, under such masters as Hubay, and the great Joachim. He graduated with honor from the conservatory in 1885.

Shortly thereafter he became Kantor in Kronsstadt, Hungary, but in 1897 came to the United States, to assume the position of Cantor with Congregation "BAITH ISRAEL", of Brooklyn, N. Y., remaining there for six years. In August, 1903, Rev. Rosenberg was elected Cantor of Temple "BETH ISRAEL", Phila., Pa., leading Conservative Congregation in that city, where he has served for twenty years.

Rev. Armin Rosenberg has to his credit original compositions, embracing a complete musical service for the holidays of the entire year, as well as for the Sabbath. His complete works will very shortly be published. A number of congregations throughout the United States are now using some of his compositions. Mr. Rosenberg possesses a rich baritone voice of wide range.
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לֹא גַּבְּרוּ נְדָעָה קָהֵפֶּסֶת
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