

MUSIC AND PROPHEPIC KABBALAH

Moshe Idel, *Jerusalem*

The association between prophecy and music in prophetic kabbalah presents two aspects. On the one hand, music served as an analogy for the technique giving rise to prophecy and the prophetic experience; and on the other, it was an important element of the technique itself of Abulafia and his students. We shall first consider music as an analogy.

I. ANALOGY FOR PROPHECY-EVOKING TECHNIQUES

In *Gan na'ûl* we find a passage that contains a comparison between the influence exerted by music and the combination of letters¹:

“דע כי הצירוף דומה לשמע האזנים כי האזן שומעת והקולות יצטרפו לפי צורת הנגון וההברה והעד כנור ונבל שמצרפי קולם ובצירוף הקולות האזנים שומעות חלוף ותמורה בחבלי אהבה והיתרים המוכים ביד ימין וביר שמאל הם מתנועעים מביאים הטעם המתוק לאזנים ומהם עובר הקול אל הלב ומן הלב אל הטחול והשמחה מתחדשת בינתיים באמצעות תענוג חלוף הנגונים ואי אפשר לחדש זה כי אם בצורת הצרופים. והוא שיכה המוכה ביתר הראשון הנמשל לאות א' על דרך משל ויעבר ממנו אל יתר אחד או ב' או ג' או ד' או ה' כלומר אל יתר שני או שלישי או אל רביעי או אל חמישי כי נעמור בחמש על דרך משל ומשם יגלגל ההכאות ויחדש בגלגול ניגונים ונעימות מגלגלין הלב באמצעות האזנים וככה הוא ענין הצירוף לגלגל האותיות מחוץ עם העט בצורת צירופי אותיות א'מ'ש' כאלה אמש אשם משא מאש שאם שמא כן כל כיוצא באלה והדומים להם.”

“Know that the combination is like the hearing of the ears, for the ear hears and the sounds are combined according to the form of the tune and the sound-enunciation². Witness the [string instruments] *kinnôr* and *nevel*; their sounds are combined, and with the combination of the sounds the ears hear variation

1. Mbs, Cod. hebr. 58 (IMHM 23117), 324a-b; Lbm, Ms. Or. 13136 (IMHM 31268), 7a-b. The passage was printed in *Sefer hap-peli'ah* (Koretz, 1784), fol. 52a-53a, and it appears again in the anthology of Abulafia's works by Joseph Hamiz, Ob, Ms. Mich. 439 (IMHM 20522), 114b. Joseph ben Joseph copied it in *Sefer ma'amarim*, Musayoff Ms. 30 (IMHM 22858), 19a, from *Sefer hap-peli'ah*. For the edition of the Hebrew text, with textual variants between Mbs, Cod. hebr. 58 and *Sefer hap-peli'ah*, cf. Adler, *HWCM*, p. 35-36.

2. For the musical connotations of the term *havarah*, see Adler, *HWCM*, index, p. 359.

and exchange³ in the pangs of love⁴. The strings which are struck with the right hand and with the left hand vibrate, bringing the sweet taste to the ears, from which sound moves to the heart, and from the heart to the spleen⁵. In the meantime, joy is renewed through the pleasure of the variation of the tunes, which can only be renewed by the form of the combinations. That is, the player plucks the first string, which is analogous to the letter *alef*, for example, and it moves from there to one string⁶, to *bêt*, *gîmel*, *dalet*, or *hê*, that is to say, a second, third, fourth, or fifth string, for we are using five as an example. From there the pluckings are transposed and by means of transposition tunes and melodies are brought about which transpose the heart by means of the ears. Thus also is the matter of combining letters from the outside with the pen, in the form of the combinations of the letters (*'alef*, *mem*, *šîn*), as follows: *'mš*, *'šm*, *mš'*, *m'š*, *š'm*, *šm'*, thus all cognates and similar things.”

In three areas there are parallels between music and the technique of combination: (1) music-making and combination operate by means of the harmony which is produced by the conjoining of two different principles: two different instruments (*kinnôr* and *nevel*), two different tones from the same musical instrument, and the joining of two different letters in the process of combination. The movement from one string to another which Abulafia describes is similar to a certain technique of combination which begins with the letter and either moves to the adjoining letter or skips over one or more letters: *A.B.*, *B.G.*, *G.D.*, etc., or *A.G.*, *B.D.*, *G.H.*, etc.⁷ (2) Combination, like music, gladdens the heart; it does so by means of the “hidden things

3. For the musical connotations of these terms, see Adler, *HWCM*, index, p. 360: *hillûf qôl* (mutation), *hitlallefût haq-qôlôt* (modulating [?] voice); see also the term *tamrûr*, *ibid.*, 250 Simeon Duran, B, 3 (p. 134).

4. I have not found this metaphorical usage before the period of Abulafia. This author uses the combination “pangs of love” (“and the spirit of his love is drawn out with the pangs of true love”) in another work, *Sefer ha-ôl*, ed. A. Jellinek in *Jubelschrift zum siebzigsten Geburtstage des H. Gractz* (Breslau, 1887), p. 78. This phrase appears a few years later in the work of the Kabbalist known as “Joseph from Shushan the capital”, in *Ṭa'amê ham-mizwôt*, Jnul, Ms. 8° 3925, fol. 82b.

5. This connection between the spleen and joy stems from the fact that the saying in Tb, *Beraḳôt* 51b dealing with the “grinding (*šôheq*) spleen” was misunderstood. The reference in the Gemara, as in parallel sources such as *Kohelet rabbah* (7, 37) and others, was to the action of grinding (*šehîqah*) and not to laughter (*sehôq*). However in the Middle Ages the verb *ŠHQ* was understood to mean the same as *SHQ*; cf. the sources gathered by S. Wertheimer in *Batê midrašôt* (Jerusalem, 1956), II, p. 378, note 111. Add to them *Ša'ar haš-šamayim* of Gershom ben Solomon (Warsaw, 1876), fol. 33c, and *Ševilê emûnah* by Meir Aldabi (Warsaw, 1887), fol. 44a.

6. Instead of *yeter eḥad* perhaps read *yeter aḥer*, giving the translation: “. . . moves from there to another string, such as *bêt*, *gîmel* . . .”.

7. Cf. *Commentary to Sefer yezîrah* by Eliezer of Worms (Premisla, 1883), fol. 5b-d. This theory of combination appears in Abulafia's epistle known as *has-Seder ham-mithappeḳ*, Lbm, Ms. Add. 19,788 (IMHM 5003), 30a-31a, and in several other places.

which are found in the transposition of the letters”, in which case the joy comes from uncovering the secrets. (3) Like music, combination is an activity which takes place outside the soul, influencing the soul inwards.

This parallel between music and combination is repeated in *Sefer ha-ḥešeq*.⁸ There Abulafia writes:

“אתה צריך תחלה לאמת בלבך בכל דרך תוכל לאמתו; שהאותיות הם סימנים ורמזים בדמות מרות ומשלים בעצמותם ונמצאו להיותם כלים להורות בם דרך ההשגה לאדם ואצלינו הם בדמות יתרי הכנור שבהוצאת קולו עם הבאת העץ אשר ביד על היתירים, ובהשתנות ההבאה מיתר אל יתר ובצרוף ההברות אשר יולדו ממנו תתעורר נפש האדם המבקש לשמוח אל השמחה והששון והתענוג והתקבל מעדנה ורוב הנאת הנפש בזה.”

“You must first verify in your heart, any way that you can verify it, that the letters are signs and hints in the image of characters and in essence are parables, and were created because they are instruments by which man is taught the way of understanding, and to us they are in the image of the strings of the *kinnôr*. By means of the production of the sound when it is plucked on the string with the plectrum, with the shift of the plucking from string to string, and with the combination of the sound-enunciations which are produced by it, the soul of man wishing to be joyous is awakened to joy, happiness, and gladness. It receives from this its pleasure and much benefit to the soul”.

Abulafia’s student, the anonymous author of *Ša‘arê zedeq*, to a great extent follows in the footsteps of his teacher when he writes⁹:

“ואיך מתגלגלים האותיות ומתחלפות ונצרפים ומתחלקים ומדלגים בראשי תיבות ותוכי תיבות וסופי תיבות וכל התיבות ואיכות צורת הרכבת הניקוד עליהן ותנועתן ומעתיקין אותו אל מעלה שניה והיא צורת הקול והנעימה עד שיעשה קול נועם שלו כדמות כנור מפעיל נפשו לדקות הנועם ושינויו ויתגלה לו אמתת מבטא האותיות לפי סגולתם הפועלות בשינוי נעימה בתנועה פועלת בנפשו כדמות פעולת המוסיקי במזג הגוף כן יפעל זה בנפש בכח השם.”

“... and how the letters transpose, change, conjoin, separate and jump about in the first letters, in the middle of the word, and at the end of the word, and the whole word, and the kind of form of combination of vowel points, and their pronunciation, which are carried over to the second degree, which is the form of the sound and melody, until its melodic sound is made to be like a *kinnôr*, putting in motion his soul to the fineness of the melody and its variation. Then the true pronunciation of the letter is revealed to him, according to their special natures which function by means of the variation of melody, in a motion work-

8. Njts, Ms. 1801 (IMHM 10899), 31b.

9. Junl, Ms. 8° 148, fol. 48b-49a, and New York-Columbia Ms. X 893 Sh. 43 (IMHM 16484), 19b. On this work cf. G. Scholem, “*Shaare Zedeq*, a kabbalistical pamphlet by a pupil of R. Abraham Abulafia”, *KS*, 1 (1923/24): 127-139 (in Hebrew).

ing in his soul. Just as music affects the [proper] balance¹⁰ of the body, so this has an effect on the soul by the power of the Name.”

When we pronounce the various combinations of the letters, we affect the soul only, whereas the influence of music is perceptible both in the soul and in the body. There is an important distinction between the citation from *Gan na'ûl* and that from *Ša'arê zedeq*: the influence of the revelation of the secrets—that is, the intellectual principle behind the process of combination—in the latter passage turns into an influence on sensation: the voice of the one uttering the letters of the Name is pleasant, as is the sound of the harp, and thus it influences the soul¹¹. Music is used as an analogy also when prophecy itself is described.

II. ANALOGY FOR PROPHECY

The comparison by which the mystical experience is made analogous to the hearing of music¹² (a motif which often appears in mystical literature) serves to describe the actual occurrence in terms of a non-verbal medium, and this medium makes it possible to compare the sensation at the moment of the experience with something recognizable in everyday experience. Abulafia's approach is different. In his view, the analogy of music serves to describe the mechanism of the coming-about of prophecy itself. We read in the *Mafteah ha-ra'ayôn*:¹³

“יודוע שהמקום החלול או המנוקב, הקול נשמע בו יותר חזק מפני זכות האויר הרוחני הנכנס בו כמו הכנור והדומים להם מכלי הזמר המולידים קול בלא דיבור כלל וכן האצלות העליות הגבוהות והמערות וההרים והמרחצאות והבתים החרבות וכיוצא בהן אוירם (!) חלול, וראה כי נולד מהן ג"כ קול כקול המדבר ומוזה הסוד תבין מהענין משה ידבר והאלהים יעננו בקול כקולו של משה שתרע שגוף האדם כלו נקבים נקבים חלולים חלולים ומוזה תבין איך השכינה שורה בנוף הנקוב החלול המוליד הרבור.”

“It is known that sound is heard to be louder in a place which is hollow or pierced, due to the purity of the spiritual air which enters therein, as in the case of the *kinnôr* and musical instruments of the same sort, which give birth to a sound without any speech, and so also the concavities of the upper stories, caves, mountains, bathhouses, ruins, etc.—their interior is hollow. Notice that from them also is produced a sound like the sound of one who is speaking. By

10. On the influence of music on the body cf. Adler, *HWCM*, index p. 361, “influence of music”.

11. Another new principle found in *Ša'arê zedeq* is the topic of the vowelizations or the vowel points, which allow the pronunciation of the consonants. Cf. Below, section IV.

12. Cf. e.g. E. Underhill, *Mysticism* (London, 1945), p. 76-78.

13. Ob, Ms. Heb. e. 123 (IMHM 24762), 64b.

means of this secret you will understand the meaning of 'Moses spake and God answered him by a voice' [Exodus 19, 19], which means in a voice similar to that of Moses¹⁴. You must know that the body of man is 'holes, holes, and cavities, cavities'. From this you will understand how the Shechinah dwells in the body which is pierced and [contains] cavities and which gives birth to speech."

Here Abulafia compares the body to the *kinnôr* or to some other musical instrument, since the human body has cavities and holes which are apt to produce a sound when the wind blows. This process is similar to the wind of the Holy Spirit—the Shechinah—blowing in the human body, giving rise to prophecy.

The analogy of the human body with the *kinnôr* is found in *Imrê šefer*¹⁵:

"כי כמו שביד בעל הגן כח להשקות את הגן על ידי נהרות ברצונו, כן יש כח ביד המנגן בשם להשקות האברים בנפשו ברצונו ע"פ ה' הגדול יתב' וזהו והיה כנגן המנגן ונחה עליו רוח ה' וזה כנור שהיה תלוי למעלה ממתתו של דוד שהיה מנגן מעלין[ו]ן הללו בנבל ובכנור אבל לא יהיה אלא אחר קבלת שפע האלהי הנק' שם ע"ב עם ידיעת נתיבותיו."

"Just as the owner of a garden has the power to water the garden at will by means of rivers, so also the one making music with the Name has the power to water at will his limbs by means of his soul, through the Almighty, Blessed Name, and this is [the meaning of] 'and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him' [II Kings 3, 15], and this is the *kinnôr* which was hung above David's bed, which used to play of itself and 'praise Him with *nevel* and *kinnôr*'¹⁶ [Psalms 150, 3]. However, this would be only after receiving the divine effluence which is called the name of the seventy-two, together with the understanding of its paths."

It seems to me that the analogy of the garden and the body extends to the *kinnôr* as well: just as the garden and the body are passive, receiving the action of the gardener and the one making music with the name of the seventy-two letters, so also David's *kinnôr* plays "of itself" when the divine effluence reverberates within it. Abulafia here appears to suggest that David's *kinnôr* resembles the human body: like the *kinnôr*, man also makes

14. Cf. *Tanḥûmâ hay-yašan* (ed. Buber), Genesis, p. 3. The combination "in the voice of Moses" appears several times in the work of Abraham Abulafia, in order to emphasize the inner source of prophecy. Cf. e.g. *Ôzar ʿeden ganûz*, Ob, Ms. Bodl. Or. 606 (IMHM 1580), 12a; *Sitrê tôrah*, Pn, Ms. 774 (IMHM 12332), 140a.

15. Mbs, Cod. hebr. 40 (IMHM 1670), 246b; in the anthology of Joseph Hamiz, Ob, Ms. Mich. 439 (IMHM 20522), 130a.

16. The combination of the legend of David's harp with the verse in II Kings 2, 3 is found in several places. Cf. *Pesiqetâ de-rav Kahanâ* (ed. Buber), chapter 7, 62b-63a, and Buber's notes; also L. Ginzburg, *The legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1946), VI, p. 262, n. 81-83.

music "of himself" when the wind blows. Possible support for this interpretation may be found in the *Ḥayyê ha-‘ôlam hab-bā*¹⁷:

”והגוף כגן הוא בעל הצמחים והנפש ערן שהיא בעלת התענוגים והגוף נטוע בה והסוד גן
ערן ער גן שהנבואה שורה על פי עבר גן והיה כגן המגן כאלישע.”

“The body is like a garden, which is the master of vegetation. The soul is Eden, for it is the master of delights, and the body is planted in it. The secret of *gan eden* [Garden of Eden] [is] *‘ad naggen* [through playing], for prophecy dwells when *‘eved naggen* [the servant plays?], ‘when the minstrel played’ [II Kings 3, 15], as in the case of Elisha.”

If we have correctly deciphered Abulafia’s meaning, then we are confronted with the widespread analogy of man to the *kinnôr* or *nevel* upon which God plays music. This motif is hinted at as early as Philo¹⁸. Since Montanus¹⁹ it appears explicitly several times in mystical literature²⁰, nor is it missing from Hebrew literature. The Midrash²¹ speaks of prophets as those “who were like an instrument full of speech”. R. Judah the Hasid describes the Glory as a *nevel* upon which God plays in order to arouse the prophet to prophecy²².

This topic appears several times in Kabbalah literature²³. The motif reached later Hasidism, where one speaks of converting the musician to a musical instrument, and of the analogy of the shofar which produces a sound when one blows into it with the prophet who prophesies only when God dwells within him²⁴.

17. Ob. Ms. Mich. 143 (IMHM 16950), 7a. “*Gan Eden* in gematria equals *‘ad naggen*, and *gan eden* in gematria equals *‘eved naggen*.”

18. *De Virtutibus*, 39, 217; cf. also H.A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), II, p. 29.

19. M.J. Rufus, *Studies in mystical religion* (London, 1919), p. 40.

20. Cf. the material collected by A.J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York, 1962), p. 341, n. 28-29, and E. Meyerovitch, *Mystique et poésie* (Paris, 1972), p. 78, 88.

21. Cf. the Mekîletâ on Exodus 18, .19; cf. also B. Cohen, *Law and tradition in Judaism* (New York, 1959), p. 24 n. 70.

22. Cf. Y. Dan, *Studies in Ashkenazi-Hasidic literature* (Ramat Gan, 1975), p. 179:

”ולא יתכן שהכבוד ירבר מדעת עצמו כאדם שמדבר מדעת עצמו. משל לנבל שאדם מגן בתוכו
ואותו הקול אינו מדעת עצמו של הנבל.”

“It cannot be that the Glory speaks of His Own accord in the same way that man speaks of his own accord. Take the *nevel* as an example; the man plays on it, and the sound is not of the *nevel*’s own accord.”

R. Judah transfers the analogy from the sphere of the God-man connection to the sphere of God-Glory, given that the Glory is the source of prophecy and the place of its occurrence.

23. A.J. Heschel, *Theology of ancient Judaism* (New York, 1965), II p. 264-266 (in Hebrew); Z.R. Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo, lawyer and mystic* (London, 1962), p. 260, n. 7-8.

24. J. Weiss, “Via passiva in early Hassidim”, *JJS*, 11 (1960): 140-145. See also R. Shatz-Uffenheimer, *Quietistic elements in 18th century Hasidic thought* (Jerusalem, 1968), p. 112 (in Hebrew).

III. MUSIC AS A MEANS OF ARRIVING AT PROPHECY

In the passages cited above, music does not play any part in the manifestation of prophecy, although such a function is one of the most ancient ascribed to it. It fulfils such a role in the Bible²⁵, in the Talmud²⁶, and also in the medieval literature²⁷. In the latter period, the view was widely held that music performed a two-fold function: through its mediation, prophecy descended directly to the individual; moreover, it was within the capacity of music to prepare the intellect, the prophecy-receiving instrument, and thus to facilitate reception. Medieval authors considered music as an integral part of their theoretical education and as a means of strengthening their intellectual powers; Isaac ibn Latif writes²⁸: "The science of music is a propaedeutic one, leading to improvement of the psychological disposition as well as to understanding of some of the higher intellectual principles..." On the other hand, Solomon ben Adret writes²⁹:

”כי ברבות השמחה יתחזק הכח השכלי שיש בנפש ויהיה יותר מוכן להשיג המושכלות וכענין האמור באלישע קחו לי מגנן ודרשו ז"ל אין שכינה שורה לא מתוך עצלות ולא מתוך עצבות אלא מתוך דבר שמחה.”

“With the increase in joy, the intellectual power which resides in the soul is fortified and is better prepared to grasp the intelligibles, as was the case with

25. I Samuel 10, 5. II Kings 3, 15. The last verse became the scriptural support of all those who connected prophecy to music.

26. Tb, *Pesahim* 117a, *Šabbat* 30a, and other places as well.

27. *Hilkôt yesodê hat-tôrah*, 7, 4; *Sefer hay-yihûd* attributed to Maimonides (Berlin, 1916), p. 20-21, and so also in *Peraqim be-hazlahah* attributed to Maimonides (Jerusalem, 1939), p. 7. See also Adler, *HWCM*, index, p. 378-379, "prophetic inspiration, aroused by music".

28. *Ginzê ham-meleḡ*, ch. 15 (Adler, *HWCM*, p. 171, sentence 1); cf. the translation by Werner & Sonne, *HUCA*, 16 (1941): 283-284. See also *Mûserê ha-filôsôfîm*, ch. 18: "He says to the musician: awaken the soul to its honorable power from modesty and righteousness..." (Adler, *HWCM*, p. 148, sentence 6). Cf. also the remarks of the anonymous author of *Tôledôt ha-'adam*, written about 1444 (Ob, Ms. Mich. 78 [IMHM 21597], 184a):

”וחכמי המלאכה הזאת קוראי' ששה הקולות האלה בלשונם אט(1) מי(1) רי פא שול לא ויש עוד קול דק המשתתפת עם כולם יחד בשוה והוא שיר השירוי' קול גדול ולא יסף. ואפשר שלואת המלאכה רמו דוד ע"ה הו' קולות בראשוני' קול על המים להורות השם ובאמת היא מלאכה גשמית רוחנית ע"כ היא מעוררת שלימו' המדוי' אשר באמצעותם שורה הנבואה שני' קחו לי ויהי כנגן המנגן.”

"The experts in this art call these six notes, in their language, [u], [t], [mi!] re fa sol la, and there is another fine note which joins in with them all, together and equally, and it is the song of [all] songs, 'a great sound which did not cease'. It is possible that David of blessed memory hinted at this art with the seven sounds, firstly, the 'sound on the water' to instruct us in the Name. This art is truly material and spiritual, and therefore it arouses the perfection of the qualities by which prophecy sets in, as it is written, 'But now bring me a minstrel, and when the minstrel played'."

This work was written under the influence of Abulafia's theory.

29. Quoted from the *Perûš hat-tôrah* of Baḥya ben Asher on Genesis 1 (ed. Chavel, Jerusalem, 1966), p. 39. Cf. also the commentary by Solomon ben Adret on *Bavâ batrâ* 74b (ed. L.A. Feldman in *Bar-Ilan*; annual of Bar-Ilan University, vol. 7-8, 1970), p. 141.

Elisha, 'bring me a minstrel'. Our Sages of Blessed Memory taught³⁰, "The Shechinah does not dwell as a result of inaction or sadness, but rather as a result of something joyous'."

Joseph ibn Caspi holds³¹: "Poetic words: the whole art of song-making performed on musical instruments which have the effect of rousing the intelligent soul, and which was termed in ancient times music". The author of *Ór ham-menórah*, who belonged to Abulafia's school, writes in the fourteenth century³²:

"אמנם בקול יתהלל על דרך יותר קרובה בעבור שיש בו עונג לנפש ומביאה לירי רוח הקדש כאשר זכר ולפניהם ותוף וחליל והמה מתנבאים וגם בענין אלישע ועתה קחו לי מנגן וכו' על כן תמצא שבבית העולמים היו מנצחים ומנגנים בכלי שיר וידעת אמרם עיקר שירה בכלי וקצתם אמרו עיקר שירה בפה והכל בהכרת קול לבר בעליות וירידות ועיקר הכונה לעורר הנפש להשתמש בכחה הנכבד שהוא כח ההשגה השכלית."

"If he shall praise with [his] voice he is more likely to bring pleasure for the soul, and lead it to the Holy Spirit, as it is said, 'with *nevel* and *tóf* and *ḥalíl* and *kinnôr* before them; and they shall prophesy' [I Samuel 10, 5], and so also in the matter of Elisha [II Kings 3, 15] 'but now bring me a minstrel'. Thus you find that in the eternal house they played and performed upon musical instruments. You know their saying, 'the most important music was by means of instruments', though some said, 'the most important music was vocal'³³. It was all through the enunciation of sound alone, rising and falling. The main intention was to arouse the soul to make use of all of its glorious power, which is the power of intellectual attainment."

Another interesting testimony is given by the Persian kabbalist R. Isaiah ben Joseph of Tabriz, who writes³⁴:

"דע כי הנביא כשירצה להתנבא צריך תחלה שיתבודד ומן ידוע ויטבול טבילתו ואחר כך ישב במקומו המיוחד לו ואחר כך יביא אצלו מנגנים במיני זמר וינגנו אצלו וישוררו שירים רוחניים והוא יעסוק בזה הספר בפרקים ידועים ואיננו נפרשים לפניו ואחר כך יתחילו המנגנים לנגן בו כמו שבארנו במאמר השקפת השכל בספר הרביעי ממנו שהוא ספר ההשגחה בפרק שמונה מן הספר ואין צורך עוד לשנותו הנה."

"Know that the prophet, when he wishes to prophesy, must first isolate himself for a determined period of time and perform his ablutions. Afterwards he settles into his special place, and then he summons musicians on various instruments who play for him and sing spiritual songs. And he will deal with certain chapters of this book which are not clear to him. Afterwards the musicians

30. Tb, *Šabbat* 30b.

31. *Sefer adné kesef* (London, 1912), vol. 2, p. 120.

32. Jnul, Ms. 8° 1303, fol. 47b.

33. The two views are found in Tb, *Sukkah* 50b.

34. *Ózar ha-hokmah*, Musayoff Ms. 55 (IMHM 22880), 84a. On this author and his times cf. G. Scholem, *Kitvé yad be-qabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1930), p. 42-43.

begin to play, as we explained in the eighth chapter of the *Sefer ha-hašgaḥah*, which is the fourth part of our treatise *Hašqafat has-sekel*, and there is no need to repeat it here.”

These are the views of some savants of Abulafia's period. We find a different point of view on music in the writings of two other contemporaries, both of them mystics. One of them, Isaac ben Jacob hak-Kohen, maintains that the science of music was known to those who served in the Temple and to the prophets, who employed it in order to receive the Holy Spirit³⁵:

“אמנם המשרתים בבית מקדשנו ותפארתנו היו בקיאים בדקדוקי הנקודות היוצאות מפיהם בשעת הנגון בשעורים ידועים ובציון כלי שיר דוד ע”ה נעים ומירות ישראל ובשעה שיוצא מפיהם באימה ביראה בקדושה ובנעימות קול מעלה ומוריד, מאריך ומקצר ע”פ רוח הקודש המיוחד בשעורים ע”פ הנביאים ע”ה ועל יסוד ציור הנקודות המצויירות בטעמי נועם קולות [...] ³⁶המרימים והמשפלים מהם דקים ומהם גסים מהם קטנים ומהם גדולים והשעורים והציורים וטעמי הקולות בנעימות כלם מיוסדים ומכוונים כנגד המעלות הפנימיות הרוחניות ואו רוח הקדש מתעוררת ומתנוצצת ומשתוקקת.”

“Those who served in our glorious Temple were expert in the subtleties of the *nequddôt*³⁶ which went forth from their mouths when they made music, in known measure and with reference to the musical instruments of David, ‘the most pleasant of Israel’s songs’, of blessed memory. At the moment when [the melody] emanates from their mouths with awe, reverence, holiness and pleasant voice, rising and falling, extending and shortening³⁷, according to the Holy Spirit, of specified measure, according to the prophets of blessed memory, and on the basis of the pattern of the notes (*nequddôt*) which are drawn according to the melodic [evolution] of the rising and falling sounds [...] ³⁸; some of them

35. This passage is brought in the name of R. Isaac in *Sefer ha-’emûnôt* by Šem Tōv ben Šem Tōv (Ferrara, 1556), fol. 94a published by G. Scholem in *Madda’ê hay-yahadût*, II (1927), p. 277. Cf. *Pithê ’ôlam* by Solomon ben Samuel (who apparently lived at the end of the fourteenth century), Adler, *HWCM*, p. 301, s. [1] note 1:

הפתח העשירי עבודת השיר בבית המקדש כפה ובכלי הניגון למשוך הלבבות לש’ ית’ ולהעלות הנפשות בעולם העליון עולם הרוחני והוא ענין נעימות הקול בבחי כנסיות בתפלות בקרובות ובפיזים ובמקדש היתה חכמת הניגון בירם על מתכונתה.

“The tenth gate: the musical service in the Temple, vocal and instrumental, in order to draw hearts towards Blessed God, and to lift the souls to the supreme world, the spiritual world. This is the issue of the pleasantness of voice [required] in the synagogues for prayers, *qerôvôt* and *piyyûṭim*. In the Temple they had proper command of the science of music.”

Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 300-301.

36. *Nequddôt*, usually denomination of vowel points; here the term was probably used in the sense of musical notes, cf. Adler, *HWCM*, p. 172 (the pref. of *360/Ibn Sahula*) and p. 173, sentence 3; see also *ibid.*, index, p. 375: “*nequddah*”.

37. For an identical formulation of the melodic and rhythmic evolution of the song of the Levites, see the reference to Adler, *HWCM* in the preceding note; see also below, the text by Ibn Sahula.

38. In ed. Ferrara and Pn, Ms. héb. 745: *hab-beṭen*; Scholem suggests the correction: *hab-bitṭûy*; the original version may have been a Hebrew transcription (*la^caz*) of the term ‘notes’, such as: הנוטי.

are high [pitch] and others low [pitch]³⁹, some are small and others large [rhythmic values?]. The measures and the drawings [of the notes according to] the melodic [evolution] of the sounds, are all based upon and directed to the inner spiritual qualities—then the Holy Spirit awakens, sparkles⁴⁰, and craves.”

We find similar remarks in the *Ha-cammûd has-smâlî* (Treatise on the Left Emanation) by Isaac hak-Kohen⁴¹:

”כהן גדול . . . יודע לבון כונה שלימה בכל אצילות ואצילות חיזונים ופנימים ומשפיע בסוד שרפי קדש ומעלתו כפי הרחקתו וכפי הקרבתו ומתעורר כחו בנועם השיר והתפילה הזכה. וגם המשוררים כפי מעלתם והשגתם מכוונים באצבעותיהם בנקבי הכנורות והנימין המעוררים השיר והניגון מכוונים לבם למקום ואז הברכה מתעוררת והשכינה שורה עליהם איש כפי עבודתו וכפי השגתו.”

“The High Priest . . . knows how to fully direct his concentration on all inner and outer emanations, in order to exert influence by means of the secret of the holy Seraphim. His elevation is according to either his closeness or remoteness. His power is awakened by the sweetness of the song and the pure prayer. So do the musicians direct their fingers, according to their elevation and understanding, [placing them] on the key-holes of [wind instruments] *kinnôrôt* [!] and [on] strings, arousing the song and the melody to direct their hearts toward God. Thus the Blessing is aroused and the Shechinah resides in them, on each one according to his performance and according to his understanding.”

The first passage had an influence on Isaac hak-Kohen's follower's student, Isaac ben Solomon ibn (abi) Sahula, who studied Kabbalah with Moses of Burgos⁴². In his commentary on the Song of Songs, Isaac ibn (abi) Sahula writes⁴³:

”ועל דרך הנכון היה ראוי לחכם לכנותו בשיר השירים ולא בשם אחר מפני כי חכמת השיר אשר היה ידוע באומה באותו הזמן והיו הלויים משוררים בו בבית הבחירה בשעת העבודה כענין שני ושרת בשם ה' אלהיו ובאה הקבלה: אי זה הוא שירות שהוא בשם ה', הו' אומר זו שירה, והשיר הזה היה ענין גדול ונורא עטרת צבי וצפירת תפארת כי בנעימות השיר שהיה בפה ובכלי הנשמה מתעוררת ורוח הקדש מתנוצץ בה ומתעלה ומשגת השגות עליונות מה שאינה משגת קודם לכן. והשיר המשוכח הזה הוא קול יוצא מפי המשוררים באימה ויראה וקדושה מעלה ומוריד מאריך ומקצר וכאלו הוא נאצל משיר של שרי מעלה, ובהתנועעו בשעורים ידועים מובנים על יד ציור הנקודות המצויירות בטעמי נועם הקולות מכוונים כנגד המעלות הרוחניות כאשר מפורש בחכמת

39. For these denominations of high and low pitch, see Adler, *HWCM*, index, p. 354 (“daq”) and p. 82, sentence 2, note 1 (“gas”).

40. Ed. Ferrara and G. Scholem read “*mitnôset*”, but see below, the corresponding passage of Ibn Sahula and see also the commentary *Ṭa'amê han-nequddôt ue-zûratan* in *Madda'ê hay-yahadût*, II (1927), p. 267, l. 18; we therefore adopt the correction *mitnôzet*.

41. Published in *Madda'ê hay-yahadût*, II (1927), p. 247.

42. Cf. G. Scholem, *Madda'ê hay-yahadût*, II (1927), p. 169.

43. Ob. Ms. Opp. 221 (IMHM 17262), 38b. On this work and its relation to the Kabbalah of the *Zohar* cf. G. Scholem, *Peraqim le-tôledôt sifrût haq-qabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1930/31), p. 62. I have omitted the passage dealing with music indicated by dots, which deals with music from *Midraš han-ne'lam*, which G. Scholem published there. Cf. also Adler, *HWCM*, p. 172-174.

הניגון... והמשוררים הקדושים היה להם יתרון קצתם על קצתם באותה חכמה כמו שאמרו אגרט בן לוי היה לו פרק בשיר ר"ל יותר מפרקי המשור[ר]ים חביריו, וזה מורה שהיה להם ספרים מחוברים בקבלת השיר מסודרים כעין פרקי המשנה. וכל זה להעיר הנפש אל מעלתה לבוא עד תכונתה ואז רוח הקודש מתעורר ומתנוצץ ומשתוקק בה בחשק וחבה ואהבה רבה ואז תשיג מעלה יתרה."

"According to the proper way, the Sage should have called it 'Song of Songs' and no other name, because of the science of song which was known among that nation in that period. The Levites used to perform according to it in the Temple at the hour of service, as it is written, 'he shall minister in the name of the Lord his God', [Deuteronomy 18, 7] and we learned in our tradition: 'What is service which is in the name of God? One must say that it is singing'⁴⁴. This singing was a great and awesome matter, 'a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty' [Isaiah 28, 5]. For by means of the melodic song, both vocal and instrumental, the soul is awakened and the Holy Spirit sparkles within it and it is elevated, understanding things much more sublime than it has understood beforehand. This praiseworthy song is the sound emanating from the musicians' mouth with awe, reverence, and holiness, rising and falling, extending and shortening [see note 37], as if it were emanating from the song of the heavenly angels. By moving⁴⁵ in known measures, which are understood by the pattern of the notes [*nequddôt*] which are drawn according to the melodic [evolution] of the sounds, they are directed towards the spiritual degrees, as is explained in the science of music... Among the holy musicians there were some who were superior to others in this science, as they said⁴⁶: Hograš ben Levi had a chapter of song, which means more than the chapter which his fellow musicians had. This shows that they had books composed on the song tradition, arranged like the chapters of the Mishnah. All this was intended to awaken the soul to its loftiness, in order that it arrive at its true character. Then the Holy Spirit arises, sparkles, and craves with fondness, care, and great love, and then it achieves an even greater degree."

There is a very close connection between this passage and the first citation from Isaac hak-Kohen. One might even say that Ibn Sahula expanded upon what was said by Isaac hak-Kohen. The passages can be summarized

44. *Bam-midbar rabbah*, 6, 10. Cf. Adler, *HWCM*, p. 173-174, sentence 1, note 2.

45. *Tenu'ah*, (musical) motion; for the various musical meanings, see Adler, *HWCM*, index, p. 380 ("*tenu'ah*"), p. 376 ("*ni'nu'a*"); see also Werner-Sonne, in *HUCA*, 16 (1941): 306, n. 183, and 17 (1942-43): 537.

46. *Mishna Yômā* 3, 11. The idea that the science of music had originated with Israel and was then lost appears also in the passage cited above from *Adnē kesef*, and also in the important musical discussion of Moses Isserles in *Tōrat ha-ōlah*, part 2, ch. 38, "The science of music which, due to sin, has been forgotten by us from the day on which the song-service ceased to exist." Cf. also I. Adler, "Le traité anonyme du manuscrit Hébreu 1037 de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris", *Yuval* [1] (1968): 15-16.

as follows, as regards our subject: (1) There is a connection between the science of music, though it is now lost, and prophecy. (2) The singing of the Levites and of the prophets was connected with the name of God. (3) The somewhat ambiguous use of the term *nequddah* (musical note/vowel point) seems to indicate a connection between the song of the Levites and vowel points. We shall come back later to this parallel between the function of music and of vowel points.

These ideas appear also in the *Sôd haš-šalšelet*. It is difficult to determine exactly when this work was written, but it appears to date from the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century⁴⁷.

“סוד השלשלת בתורה בקצת מקומות יש טעם שנקרא שלשלת וזה ציורו } ובפרט כתוב במלת ויתמהמה ויאמר אדני אלהי אדני אברהם בכתובים ג”כ בדרכי תהלים ג”כ. והטעם זה [ח]כמי הקבלה אומרים שמן הניגון היפה שהן משוררין ומנגני לפני השם המלאכים, שמאותו הנגון קבל דוד ברוח הקדש. וגם הלויים שהיו משוררים בבית המקדש שירי הקדש שהם שירי תהילים והיו מנעימים קולם בניגון השיר בקול יפה ונאה וך וטוב והיו מניעין הדיבור עם הניגון כתנועה נכבדת באותה התנועה תלויה כמו בשלשלת גדולה להעלות אותו הדיבור בטעם שלשלת שיעשה בתחלת הדיבור וקודם שיצא מן הדיבור ההוא בסוף הדיבור יעשה ג”כ תנועה יפה בשלשלת קטנה. בזה היה מעלה ניגונו, ויורד מעט ניגונו, המשל בניגון חכמת המוסיקה וזו התנועה יעשה עם ניגון השיר הנאה והטוב אשר קבל הראוי לזו השלשלת ואם לא קבל וידע הוא לחדש ניגון יאה מעצמו שיהיה לניגון ההוא טעם יפה ותנועה כתנועת השלשלת או יוכל להזכיר שם בסדר הזה ובתנועה הזאת שכן היה עושה כהן גדול שהיה מוכיר השם בזה הניגון בקדש הקדשים, והיה מניע אותו בעבודת ניגונו בסדר זו השלשלת, עד שהיה מבלע האותיות של שם המפורש כענין שכל השומעין היו שומעין הניגון הערב ולא היו מסתכלין להבין אותיות השם, כל כך היו מתעדרים נפשם בשמעם הניגון. וכן יכול לעשות למי שחננו השם להזכיר שמות ולמי שיודע לעשות זה ויכוון האותיות ויפעול כל פעולה. וזהו הסוד שהשמחה במעונו. והשמחה אינה באה אלא משמחת הניגון, ושמחת הניגון מרוח הקדש דכתי’ והיה כנגן המנגן ותצלח עליו רוח אלהים. וכן היה מעשה בשתי נערות צרפתיות בעיר הר געש, בזמן קדמון היו יודעות ניגון המוסיקה והיה להן קול ערב והיו משכילות בחכמת הניגון והתחילו לומר למנצח על שושנים לבני קרח משכיל שיר ידידות והיו מנגנות על הדרך הישר ומדבקות עצמן למעלה בעליונים וכל כך נתרבו בשיר שתיהן שקודם שהגיעו לחצי המזמור שמח השם בשמעו מפייהן השיר כדרכו ועלה הניגון למעלה ונתרבו וזו בזה ופרחה נשמתן למעלה. ראה כמה הוא השם שמח בשמוע ניגון על מתכונתו, וכמה כח לניגון הטוב וראה הראיה כששליח צבור הוא מראהו יפה קולו ערב לשונו צח נעימותיו טובים הקהל שמחים עמו וזה למה מפני שהנפשות שהם עליונות לוקחין הנאה. ומהשם הם הנפשות. וכן הוא השם שמח עמהם. ועליו אומרים משמח אלהים ואנשים.”

“The secret of the *šalšelet*. In a few places in the Torah there is a *ta'am* called *šalšelet*, and this is its form: { . Specifically, it is found on the word *way-yitmameha* ('lingered') [Genesis 19, 16], and in the verse And he said, 'O Lord, God of my master Abraham' [Genesis 24, 12], and also in the Hagiographa, and in Psalms also. The Kabbalists say that this *ta'am* is like the

47. *Sôd haš-šalšelet*, found in *Sôdôt*, Pn, Ms. hêb. 790 (IMHM 12622), 141a-b; cf. E. Gottlieb, *Studies in Kabbalah literature* (Tel Aviv, 1976), p. 120, n. 57 (in Hebrew).

lovely music which the angels sing and play before God, and that David received some of this music by means of the Holy Spirit. So also with the Levites, who performed the holy songs in the Temple, that is, the Psalms. They made their voice pleasant by singing the song in a lovely, pleasant, clear and good voice. They pronounced their speech with a significant melodic movement, with that same suspended pronunciation, as with the great *šalšelet*, in order to elevate that speech with the *ta'am* of the *šalšelet*, which is made when beginning to speak. Before he ends that particular utterance, he makes a lovely pronunciation with the small *šalšelet*. He thereby would elevate his tune higher, and then lower it a little, as, for example, in chanting according to the science of music. He would make this pronunciation while performing the good and pleasant song which he knows by tradition to be fit for the *šalšelet*. If he has received no tradition, and he knows how to innovate a pleasant tune on his own - a tune which will have a pleasant cantillation and a pronunciation similar to the enunciation of the *šalšelet*, then he can mention the Name in this order and with this pronunciation. For this is what the High Priest used to do. He used to proclaim the Name with this tune while in the Holy of Holies, and he would vocalize it while employing a tune according to the rule of the *šalšelet*, so that he would swallow the letters of the Name. This was so that all those listening heard the pleasant melody and did not look to understand the letters of the Name, so much were their souls enjoying listening to the melody. This can be done also by one graced by God to proclaim Names, by one who knows how to do this, and who directs the letters and performs the necessary activities. This is the secret of 'He within Whose dwelling there is joy'⁴⁷. Joy comes only from the joy of music, and the joy of music comes from the Holy Spirit, as it is written, 'and when the minstrel played, the power of the Lord came upon him' [II Kings 3, 15]. Such also was the incident of the two young French girls in the city of the volcano [= Montpellier]⁴⁹, in ancient times. They knew how to perform music, and they had a pleasant voice, and they excelled in the science of music. They began to say [Psalms 45, 1]: 'To the chief musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of Loves'. They were chanting according to the straight path, and they fused with the higher [entities]. They were so absorbed in song that before they finished half the psalm,

47. *Sód haš-šalšelet*, found in *Sódót*, Pn, Ms. héb. 790 (IMHM 12622), 141a-b; cf. E. Gottlieb, *Studies in Kabbalah literature* (Tel Aviv, 1976), p. 120; n. 57 (in Hebrew).

48. The expression "in whose dwelling there is joy" appears twice in connection with music in *Sód ilan ha-azilút*, from the circle of *Sefer hat-temúnah*; G. Scholem published this small treatise in *Qovez 'al yad* (new series), vol. 5, 1950; cf. *ibid.*, p. 83, 97. There is no question that there is a very close connection between the conception of music found in *Sód haš-šalšelet* and that found among members of the circle of the *Sefer hat-temúnah*. I hope to write at length elsewhere on the conception of music in this circle.

49. Cf. H. Gross, *Gallia Judaica*, p. 322.

God rejoiced at hearing the song from their mouths, as is His way. The tune rose upwards, they achieved union, and their souls ascended to Heaven⁵⁰. See how God rejoices at hearing a tune done correctly, and how much power there is in good music! As proof, notice that when the cantor has a good appearance, a pleasant voice, clear speech, and good melodies, the congregation rejoices with him. For this reason, the souls, which are sublime, take pleasure. Souls come from God, and thus God rejoices along with them. Concerning it they say⁵¹, 'making happy God and men'."

In this passage appear some of the ideas which we found in the circle of Isaac hak-Kohen. Music is described as a science which, in ancient times, was known to the High Priest; it leads to devotion and is connected with the pronunciation of the Name. However, in the passage quoted above, music is described as a still effective approach, and not as a lost science. It seems that this science was "preserved" in the circle of Abraham Abulafia, who was closely associated with one of the disciples of Isaac hak-Kohen, namely Moses b. Simeon of Burgos⁵².

IV. MUSIC AS A COMPONENT OF THE TECHNIQUE OF ABULAFIA AND HIS STUDENTS

In striking contrast to the philosophers and kabbalists, Abulafia says very little about the theoretical aspects of the connection between music and prophecy. In his writings one can only find instructions concerning music-making while pronouncing Names, which is the path by which we arrive at prophecy. We find in his book *Ózar 'eden ganûz*⁵³:

"והעד שהשיר מורה על מעלת הנבואה שדרך השיר לשמח את הלב בניגונים כאמרו והיה כנגן המנגן ותהיה עליו יד ה' כי אין הנבואה שורה עליו [אלא] מתוך שמחה, וכבר רמו זה בשתי תיבות בסוף קהלת באמרו סוף דבר הכל נשמע את האלהים ירא ואת מצוותיו שמור כי זה כל האדם. חבר ירא עם שמר ותמצא שיר אמר והרמו ושמו את שמי על בני ישראל ואני אברכם ירא שמר את שמי."

"The proof that song indicates the degree of prophecy is that it is the way of song to make the heart happy by means of tunes, as it is said, 'and when the minstrel played, the power of the Lord came upon him', [II Kings 3, 15] for

50. On death due to religious excitement caused by singing, see D.B. Macdonald, "Al-Ghazzālī on music and ecstasy", *JRAS* (1901): p. 708, n. 3.

51. Cf. G. Scholem, *Tarbiz*, 3 (1932): 260.

52. See A. Jellinek, in *Bet ha-Midrash*, III, p. 21.

53. Ob, Ms. Bodl. Or. 606 (IMHM 16948), 62a. This passage is based upon the gematria of 751, by which *yarē šamar* ירא שמר = *šūr amar* שיר אמר = *et šemī* את שמי אמת.

prophecy does not dwell in him [unless there is] joy [see Tb, *Šabbat* 30b], and this was already hinted at in two words at the end of Ecclesiastes [12, 13], where he says. 'The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man'. Join *yarē* with *šamar*, and you find *šîr amar*. There is a hint in [Numbers 6, 27] 'and they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them' *yarē šamar et šemî*."

In other places Abulafia speaks of music in terms of practical instruction. We read in his book *Ḥayyê 'ôlam hab-bā*⁵⁴:

"ולפי זה הדרך יתגלגל כל אות פנים ואחור בניגונים רבים."

"In this manner he should transpose each letter frontwards and backwards, using many tunes."

In another place he says⁵⁵:

"ותאריך בנשימה ההיא המיוחדת כפי שיעור כח אריכות נשימתך האחת בכל מה שתוכל להאריך בה ונגן בא' וגם בכל אות שתוכיר באימה וביראה ובפחד עד שתוף שמחת הנפש בהשגתה שהיא גדולה וצורת הניגון בכל אות ואות תהיה ברמות הנקוד והוא שתהיה כחלם למעלה."

"Make that special breath as long as you can, according to your capacity for taking one long breath, as long as you can possibly make it, and sing the *alef* and every other letter which you proclaim with awe, fear and reverence, until the joy of the soul is combined with its understanding, which is great. The form of the tune for each letter should be in the image of the vowel points. It should be in the form of the *ḥôlam* upwards."

We find again in the *Ôr has-sekel*⁵⁶:

"עד שתאמר ה' כראוי וברמות חולם הנמשך למעלה נגן בחרק הנמשך למטה."

"Until you say *hē* properly, and in the image of the *ḥôlam* which extends upwards, then play the *ḥîrîq* which extends downwards."

Similarly, in the *Ôzar eden ganûz*⁵⁷:

"ויהיה לשונך מרבר תמיד בנגון נאה ונעים בנחת כנחת."

"Your tongue should always speak with a pleasant and pleasing tune, and very gently."

54. Ob, Ms. Mich. 143 (IMHM 16950), 11b. In this manuscript, as well as in several other mss. of this treatise, there is an addendum which explains that the term *niggûnîm* is used in the sense of *niqqûdîm*; this is also the case in our following quotation from *Ôr has-sekel*.

55. *Ôr has-sekel*, Vatican ms. 233 (IMHM 290), 109b-110a.

56. *Ibid.*, 110b.

57. Ob, Ms. Bodl. Or. 606 (IMHM 16948), 163a.

On page 70 of the *Sefer ha-ôṭ*, music is mentioned as an additional element besides the letters and vowel points. The parallel between music and vowel points emerges from these citations. The vowel point serves as a sort of note which gives the pitch to the one proclaiming the Name: *ḥôlam* indicates a high pitch, and *ḥîrîq* a low pitch. This usage calls to mind the lost science of music that Isaac hak-Kohen mentions. Both he and Abulafia hold that this science leads to prophecy. There is no doubt that the remarks of the anonymous author of *Ner elohîm*⁵⁸ also represent in essence a description of a technique which was employed in practice, and not a "lost" science.

“הניגון הוא יופי התנועה ויורה על הוצאת הקולות וזכרונם לחמשה ענינים מפני חמש הברות הניקוד המשתנים וגם הכינור שהוא בעל חמשת יתרים כולל כל ניגון וקוראים חכמי המחקר זו החכמה בלשון יון מוזיקא כי שם כינור מוזיקא ונקרא אצלנו גם כן נועם גם טעם כמו הטעמים שהם זרקא ותרסא ותביר ורביע וגרש והדומים להם כי במ תתיפה הקריאה כלה ותנעם לשומעיה והעולה למעלה ומארכת וחוזרת לאחור.”

“The *niggûn* [= music] is the beauty of pronunciation and indicates the production of sounds, with reference to five matters, because of the five varying pronunciations of the vowel points⁵⁹. Moreover, the lute (*kinnôr*), which has five strings, encompasses all music⁶⁰. The philosophers call this science ‘*mûzîqâ*’ in Greek, because the word *kinnôr* [is equivalent to] music⁶¹. We also call it

58. Mbs, Cod. hebr. 10 (IMHM 23105), 142a-b. One of Abraham Abulafia’s students wrote this book.

59. The author refers here to the five long vowels which were accepted in Hebrew grammar since the time of Joseph Qimḥi and which appear in Abulafia’s books. Cf. also *Ḥayyê ha-ôlam hab-bâ*, Ob, Ms. Mich. 143 (IMHM 16950), 53b:

“והניגונים כולם חמש לכר והם נוטריקון וכסימן פיתוחי חותם קודש לה: וזה סידורם א א א א א.”

60. The four-stringed *cûd* (short-necked lute), considered by the Arabs to be the musical instrument *par excellence* (“instrument of the philosophers”), was liable to be supplemented by an added fifth string (*ḥad*); see, for instance, Adler *HWCM*, p. 26 (sentence IVb, 31), p. 38 (sentence 16), A. Shiloah, *The theory of music in Arabic writings* (München, 1979), no. 272. Of particular interest as regards our text, is the source quoted (after H.G. Farmer) by Werner-Sonne, *HUCA*, 16 (1941): 275-276, referring to the analogy of the four strings with the four elements, and associating the added fifth string with the soul. This may be related to the following quotation from *Ner elohîm* (fol. 137a):

“והנה האדם הורכב מה: יסודות שהם כלל כל הגוף ויסוד א’ פשוט שמימי שהוא כח מהכוחות הגלגליות הנקרא בכללו נפש או רוח או נשמה.”

“Indeed man is made up of five elements which encompass the whole body. One element is simple and heavenly, and it is one of the heavenly forces, and it is called in its entirety soul (*nefeš*), spirit (*rû’ah*) or higher soul (*nešamah*)” (see also further on, fol. 135b).

See also the references to the five stringed *kinnôr* in the *Tiqqûnê zohar*, cf. *Inventory of Jewish musical sources*, series B, vol. I: *Music subjects in the Zohar...*, by A. Shiloah and R. Tene (Jerusalem, 1977), *tiqqûn* 10 (p. 119, no. 175, 2), *tiqqûn* 12 (p. 121, no. 178, 4 and 11), *tiqqûn* 21 (p. 128, no. 181, 21).

61. The author probably has in mind the equivalence *kinnôr* = *cûd* = the musical instrument *par excellence*, thus arriving at the equivalence *kinnôr* = music (cf. the beginning of the preceding note).

no^cam, and also *ṭa^cam*, as with the cantillation accents (*ṭe^camûm*), which are *zarqâ*, *tarsâ*, *tevîr*, *revî^ca*, *gereš*, etc., because by means of them the entire recitation is made more beautiful and more pleasing to those listening to it. It [the recitation] climbs up, becomes longer, and then turns backwards⁶².”

Further evidence of the integration of music into the technique of Abulafia's students is found in *Ša^carê zedeq⁶³*:

“עוד יתק אל קול נעים ונגינות בפסוקי הזמרה ובחשק התורה לערן הנפש החיה
המשותפת עם המדברת.”

“He should then continue with a pleasant voice and with melodies in the verses of praise and out of love of the Torah, for the joy of the living soul which is partnered to the rational [soul].”

Relying on this passage, Judah al-Butini writes in *Sullam ha-^caliyyah⁶⁴*:

“עוד יתק לעשות ולנגן בכל מיני זמר אם יש לו או אם יודע לנגן בהם ואם לא ינגן בפיו
בקולו בפסוקי הזמרה ובחשק התורה כדי לערן את הנפש החיונית המשותפת עם הנפש
המדברת והשכלית.”

“He should continue to play on all sorts of music[al instruments] if he has such or if he knows how to play on them; if not, he should make music with his mouth, by means of his voice, [singing] the verses of praise and out of love for the Torah, in order to gladden the living soul which is partnered to the speaking, intellectual soul.”

Music's sphere of influence is the living soul. Its task is to make this soul happy so that it will not interfere with the proper functioning of the intellectual soul, or the intellect⁶⁵. This view appears also in the *Yesôd ^côlam* by

62. The five last words of this quotation perhaps refer to names of the *ṭe^camûm* (such as *ôleh we-yôred*, *ma'arik*).

63. Jnul, Ms. 8° 148, fol. 72a-b. On this treatise see note 9 above.

64. Published in part by G. Scholem in *Kitvê yad be-qabbalah*, p. 227.

65. Averroes wrote on the connection between the animal soul and sounds in his *epitome of Parva naturalis* ed. D. Blumberg. (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. 11, l. 6-9:

“והנה הנפש הבהמית הנמצאת בבעל חי לא תמנע פעולות הטבע, אבל תשמח במה שיוציאהו הטבע
מן הצבעים והקולות, כי הם נמצאים בנפש הבהמית בכח וכאשר יוצא בטבע בהם הנפש הבהמית
וחשמח בהשגתם.”

“The animal soul found in the living being does not deny the action of nature, but rather rejoices in the colors and sounds which nature produces, for they exist potentially in the animal soul...”

Cf. Johanan Allemanno's view in *Hey ha-^côlamîn*, Mantova, Biblioteca comunale, Ms. ebr. 21 (IMHM 801), 56a:

Elhanan ben Abraham ibn Eskira, written at the end of the thirteenth century, belonging to a circle close to the views of *Ginnat egôz* and the *Sefer ciyyûn*. There we read⁶⁶:

”כשהנפש משתוקקת להתבודד ולהתענג בערוני השכל, לולי שהטבע עומד לפני כפתוי משכיות היתה מתפרדת מהגוף ולענין זה היה הכנור מכה לפני המזבח בעת הקרבת הקרבן ובהיכנס הכהן לפני לפנים שהוא ההתבודדות, היה המעיל משמיע קול בל”ב פעמונים דכתי’ ונשמע קולו בבאו אל הקדש ולא ימות. וזה נודע למדברים בחכמת המוסיקא שהמוסיקא היא בין הרוחניים והגשמיים שממשיכה השכל בעת הכלאו כדכתי’ קחו לי מנגן וכתי’ עורה הנבל וכנור כאשר תמשיך הטבע על השכל ר”ל להניח השכל והשתעשע בגרמיים הטבעיים.”

“When the soul craves for solitude and to regale itself in the luxuries of the intellect, were it not that Nature stands in its way with a temptation of images, it would separate itself from the body. For this reason, the *kinnôr* was struck in front of the altar at the time that the sacrifice was offered⁶⁷. When the priest entered the Holy of Holies, which is the solitude, his garment produced sounds from the thirty-two bells, as it is written, ‘and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place... that he die not.’ [Exodus 28, 35]. It is known to those who speak of the science of music that music is between the spiritual and the material, in that it draws forth the intellect at the time of its imprisonment, as it is written, ‘but now bring me a minstrel’, [II Kings 3, 15], and as it is written, ‘awake *nevel* and *kinnôr*’ [Ps. 57, 9]. As Nature drags the intellect, that is to say, to leave the intellectual [world] and to amuse itself with material things.”

”ברוב עתות היום שהם עתות ההתבודדות כבקר וערב ישב בגנות המשמחות הנפש המרגשת בחמשת חושיה כי שם יופי חלופי המראים כפרחים ושושנים ומראות הפירות ושם יופי חלופי הקולות מומרות הצפורים המתחלפי אשר שם יקננו וימרו ומירת נעימות... כי בזה האופן לא תתעצב הנפש המרגשת בתחלת ההתבודדות.”

“At most times of the day which are the times of solitude, in the morning and in the evening, he should sit in the garden which delights the soul, which [soul] feels through the five senses that there exists a beauty of variety of sights—the flowers, roses, and the sight of the fruit—and a beauty of the variety of sounds—various songs with which the birds, while nesting, make pleasant melodies... in this manner his sensitive soul will not be sad at the beginning of solitude.”

The sensitive soul of Allemanno is the animal soul of Averroes and the living soul of *Ša‘arê zedeq*. It is worth stressing the difference between *Ša‘arê zedeq* and *Sullam ha-‘aliyah*: in the latter book primarily instrumental music is discussed, and we may here be encountering the influence of the Sufi practice of *sama‘*, which was based upon instrumental music. Cf. Meyerovitch, *Mystique et poésie*, p. 83 ff., and bibliography, as well as F. Rosenthal, “A Judeo-Arabic work under Sufi influence,” *HUCA*, 15 (1940): 433-484, esp. p. 468-469.

66. Moscow, Ginzburg collection, Ms. 607 (IMHM 4192), 8a. This passage seems to be an adaptation from *Müserê ha-filôsôfîm*, I, 18 (8), see Adler, *HWCM*, p. 148; see also the emendations of the sequence of this passage in Werner and Sonne, *HUCA*, 17 (1942-43), p. 515-516 and p. 525 (English translation). For the connection between music and sacrifices, see Ibn Falaquera’s *ham-Mevaqqeš* (based on the music epistle of the *Ihwân al-Šafa’*), cf. Adler, *HWCM*, p. 165, sentence 3.

67. The phrase, “the harp was struck in front of the altar” seems to be based on the Mishnaic phrase “the *ḥalîl* (flute) was played in front of the altar”, in *‘Araḥîn* 2, 3.

In another work written at the same time, Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi's commentary to *Sefer yezîrah*⁶⁸, the entry of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies is also seen as a symbol of mystical experience which has a connection with music:

“האותיות יוצאות ברכי הנתיבות ברכי הניגון וזהו סוד טעמי התורה לפי שהם נכנסים ויוצאים בקול השיר והסוד בזה פעמון זהב ורמון שהיה כהן גדול נכנס לפני לפני כרי וישמע קולו ומה תוכל להבין סוד רוח הקדש ששורה על הנביאים בדרך נגון.”

“The letters go out in the ways of the paths through the way of music, and this is the secret of the cantillation accents (*ṭe'amîm*) of the Torah, for they come in and go out with the sound of singing. The secret of this is the golden bell and pomegranate with which the High Priest used to enter the Holy of Holies, so that its sound may be heard. From this you will be able to understand the secret of the Holy Spirit which resides in prophets in the manner of music.”

The author of the *Sefer hap-pelî'ah*⁶⁹ combines the views of *Yesôd 'ôlam* and the commentary to *Sefer yezîrah* when he writes:

“ימשוך רוח אלהים חיים בנגינות ידועים שהם ל"ב נגינות אשר התורה מתגלגלת בהם ואמרו כי אותם הנגינות הם טעמי התורה.”

“He should draw the spirit of the Living God by means of known melodies which are the thirty-two melodies according to which the Torah is transposed. They say that those melodies are the cantillation accents of the Torah (*ṭa'amê tôrah*).”

Finally let us quote the remarks of Ḥayyim Vital, who writes in the fourth part of *Ša'arê qeduššah*⁷⁰:

“ו"ס בני הנביאים שלפניהם תוף וחליל וגוי כי ע"י מתק קול הניגון נופל עליהם התבודדות בעריבות הקול ומפשיטין נפשם ואז המנגן מבטל הניגון ובני הנביאים נשארים באותו הדבקות העליון ומתנבאים.”

“And this is the secret of the ‘sons of the prophets’, before whom went the drum and the flute, etc. For by means of the sweetness of the sound of music,

68. Ed. Jerusalem, 1965, fol. 31b. It would be superfluous to point out that the connection between the High Priest and ecstasy appears as early as Philo, and from there moved on to Plotinus. It also appears in the *Zohar*. Cf. G. Scholem, *Major trends in Jewish mysticism* (New York, 1941), p. 378, n. 9.

69. Ed. Koretz, 1784, fol. 50c. In the matter of the number of bells there is a clear parallel between *Yesôd 'ôlam* and *Sefer hap-pelî'ah*; the number thirty-two does not appear in Tb, *Zevahîm* 88b, where thirty-six or seventy-two, but not thirty-two, bells, are spoken of.

70. The text, still unpublished, is preserved in Lbm, Ms. Add. 19,788 (IMHM 5003), 15b. Vital himself admits that his conception of prophecy was influenced by Abulafia whom he quotes (among others) in chapter 4.

dumbness [of senses]⁷¹ descends upon them with the pleasantness of the sound. They withdraw their souls⁷², and then the musician stops playing, and the 'sons of the prophets' are left with this supreme union and prophesy."

71. *Hitbodedût*: here the meaning is not "solitude" or "isolation" like the usual connotations of this term. See M. Steinschneider, *MGWJ*, 32 (1883): 463, n. 8 and *Hebräische Übersetzungen* (Berlin, 1893), p. 74. The interpretation of *hitbodedût* as dumbness of the senses also seems plausible in the Pseudo Ibn Ezra *Sefer ha-ʿazamim* (London, 1901), p. 13.

72. *Mašitîn nafšam*: for the meaning of this "withdrawal", see Z.R. Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo, lawyer and mystic* (London, 1962), p. 61-62, 69.

YUVAL

STUDIES OF
THE JEWISH MUSIC RESEARCH CENTRE

Edited by

ISRAEL ADLER and BATHJA BAYER
in collaboration with Lea Shalem

VOLUME IV

JERUSALEM, 1982

THE MAGNES PRESS, THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY

ABBREVIATIONS

קיצורים

Adler, *HWCM* ראה אדלר, כתבים עבריים
 המכון לתצלומי כתבי יד, בית הספרים הלאומי
 והאוניברסיטאי בירושלים
 ריס"מ ראה *RISM*

<i>Adler, HWCM</i>	I. Adler, Hebrew Writings Concerning Music in Manuscripts and Printed Books, from Geonic Times up to 1800, München, 1975
<i>Cat. Margoliouth</i>	Margoliouth, G., Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum
<i>Cat. Neubauer</i>	Neubauer, A. Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library
<i>Cu</i>	Cambridge University Library
<i>EI²</i>	The Encyclopaedia of Islam, new ed. Leiden, 1960-
<i>EJ²</i>	Encyclopaedia Judaica, Jerusalem, 1971-72
<i>Erlanger</i>	Erlanger, R. d', La musique arabe, Paris, 1930-1939
<i>HUCA</i>	Hebrew Union College Annual
<i>IMHM</i>	Institute of Microfilms of Hebrew Manuscripts, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
<i>JA</i>	Journal asiatique
<i>JJS</i>	Journal of Jewish Studies
<i>JMRS</i>	Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies, ed. A. Altmann, Cambridge, Mass., 1967
<i>JNUL</i>	The Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
<i>JQR</i>	Jewish Quarterly Review
<i>JRAS</i>	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
<i>KS</i>	Kiryat Sefer; Bibliographical Quarterly of the JNUL
<i>Lbm</i>	London, The British Library

Mbs	München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek
<i>MGWJ</i>	Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums
Mus. pass.	Passage(s) concerning music
Njts	New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America
Ob	Oxford, Bodleian Library
Pn	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale
<i>REJ</i>	Revue des études juives
<i>RISM</i>	Répertoire international des sources musicales
<i>Tb</i>	The Babylonian Talmud