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Spiritual Narrative
in Sound and Structure
of Chabad Nigunim

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Music

by

Zachary Alexander Klein

2019
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Spiritual Narrative
in Sound and Structure
of Chabad Nigunim

by

Zachary Alexander Klein
Doctor of Philosophy in Music
University of California, Los Angeles, 2019
Professor Richard Dane Danielpour, Co-Chair
Professor David Samuel Lefkowitz, Co-Chair

In the Chabad-Lubavitch chasidic community, the singing of religious folksongs called nigunim holds a fundamental place in communal and individual life. There is a well-known saying in Chabad circles that while words are the pen of the heart, music is the pen of the soul. The implication of this statement is that music is able to express thoughts and emotions in a deeper way than words could on their own could. In chasidic thought, there are various spiritual narratives that may be expressed through nigunim. These narratives are fundamental in understanding what is being experienced and performed through singing nigunim. At times, the narrative has already been established in Chabad chasidic literature and knowing the particular aspects of this narrative is indispensable in understanding how the nigun unfolds in musical time.
In other cases, the particular details of this narrative are unknown. In such a case, understanding how melodic construction, mode, ornamentation, and form function to create a musical syntax can inform our understanding of how a nigun can reflect a particular spiritual narrative.

This dissertation examines the ways in which musical syntax and spiritual parameters work together to express these various spiritual narratives in sound and structure of nigunim. My work makes use of the extensive writings in Chabad chasidic thought on nigunim and the psycho-spiritual modes of expression, as well as the written and recorded repository of nigunim. In addition to developing an insider’s perspective, I make use of both ethnomusicological and theoretical analysis to reveal the ways in which chasidic thought is expressed in musical time. The ultimate goal of this research is to contribute to an understanding of Chabad nigunim in unique ways rarely seen in published analysis, as well as to examine the ways in which the musical syntax of nigunim have been represented in concert and popular music.
The dissertation of Zachary Alexander Klein is approved.

Vladimir Chernov

Mark L. Kligman

Richard Dane Danielpour, Committee Co-Chair

David Samuel Lefkowitz, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019
Dedications

To my wife, Noa, and my children, Chaim and Mimi.
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Biographical Sketch

Zachary (Michel) received is undergraduate degree in composition from Ithaca College where he studied under Dana Wilson and Sally Lamb McCune. During his studies at UCLA, he studied under David Lefkowitz, Richard Danielpour, and Ian Krouse. Zachary’s (Michel’s) music blends together various elements of contemporary style and traditional Jewish sacred material, seeking to find a unique fusion of the two. He has been commissioned to compose for events run by organizations such as Cypress College and the Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Los Angeles. His work has been read by ensembles such as Wild Up!, the Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble, and has had work performed by the Syrinx Collective, the Celloscape Collective, and the Nome Trio. His work was featured in the collectively composed oratorio “David’s Quilt” along with the Max Helfman Institute for New Jewish Music produced by the Lowell Milken Fund for American Jewish Music. Zachary’s (Michel’s) one-act opera Akeidah received its workshop premiere in March of 2018 with Opera UCLA, running for four performances. Zachary (Michel) has attended the Montecito International Music Festival where he studied with composer Nicholas Deyoe.
Introduction

This dissertation examines the ways in which spiritual narratives are expressed through nigunim of the Chabad-Lubavitch chasidim. Hebrew for “melody,” nigunim (singular nигун) are wordless songs that make up the musical folk creativity of the Chasidic movement. Set against the backdrop of the 1648 Chmielnicki massacres and the messianic letdown of Sabbetai Tzvi, the Chasidic movement came as a panacea to the physical and spiritual blows that had left the Jewish people nearly crippled. Founded by Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer—known by his followers as the Baal Shem Tov (Heb. Master of the Good Name) or Besht for short—the Chasidic movement came as a grassroots effort to bolster the spirits of the illiterate and impoverished working class, infusing everyday life with mystical undertones that had been exclusively known only to the spiritual elite and showing the tremendous value of the sincere faith of the simple folk.

According to pre-Chasidic Jewish thought, the Torah (Bible) scholar reigned supreme above all others, leaving the unlearned working class at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Within the Chasidic model, the simple faith of these unlearned Jews was elevated in esteem, together with individual prayer and spiritual concepts such as simcha (joy) and devekus (ecstasy). Nigunim played an important role in this socio-spiritual revolution, reflecting the creative and radical nature of Chasidic theology.1

According to Dr. James Loeffler the “Baal Shem Tov is credited with emphasizing the importance of vocal music as a form of personal confession and spiritual expression. He taught that song is an even greater form of spiritual expression than traditional prayer and that the Hasidic nigun was a musical path to God that transcended the limitations of language itself.”2

The connections between music, prayer-like spiritual expression (i.e. human-Divine

1 Loeffler pg. 1
2 ibid.
communication), and language are all vital in understanding the make-up of a nigun. To view a nigun through purely musical terms would paint an incomplete picture of what it truly is and what it represents. There is an old saying in the Chabad Chasidic movement “there are gates in heaven that cannot be opened except by melody and song.” The expansive, unbound nature of nigunim is an essential component in the worship of chasidim; they allow for higher levels of spiritual experience and open up channels between man and the Divine in a far greater way than words of prayer could. Viewing nigunim void of any of its spiritual potency would be like viewing a body without the soul vivifying it. It is for this reason why I have decided to conduct this study.

Nigunim can be utilized for various things. They can aid one in prayer or expand one’s mind in learning. One can bolster faith and trust in the Divine or heal inner spiritual turmoil. Jewish mystical thought speaks of a bridge between the mind and the heart; this bridge allows the heart to feel what the mind is thinking about, and for the mind to understand and articulate what the heart is feeling. According to Rabbi Dov Ber Pinson: “There are times when this connection is impaired or broken, so that the capacity to feel life is absent…In order to bridge this rift and repair the passageway, he may need a melody, a song, which can restore the harmony and balance, and hence the connection.”3 From this quote, we can see the ability of nigunim to unblock channels of expression and to help articulate certain emotions hidden within the person singing them. Regarding the nigunim composed by the founder of the Chabad movement, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), it is known that implanted within each of them are the intensely deep and holy emotions from the composer’s soul. According to Pinson “these nigunim are imbued and permeated with emotions of a soul yearning to be close to God;

3 Pinson pg. 71
thus, if one sings it and understands it, he will also be moved to come closer to God.”

Implicit in this statement is that singing the nigun is not enough; rather, the spiritual narrative etched into the musical structure of the nigun must be understood in order to properly connect to its inner content.

During the course of this dissertation, I will be analyzing several well-established nigunim in the Chabad-Lubavitch tradition that possess such spiritual narratives. In chapter one, I will provide the reader with not only the spiritual and musical parameters of nigunim as articulated in Chabad musical thought, but the cultural and historical context/significance of nigunim in Lubavitch as well. In chapter two, I will be looking at nigunim with what I call “revealed” spiritual narratives, that is, nigunim whose spiritual content are well known in Chabad lore. From these nigunim, I will derive a spiritual-musical syntax with which to articulate the “hidden” narratives of nigunim whose spiritual content are not well known; this will be the subject of chapter four. As mentioned above, nigunim were used as personal forms of confession and so the exact details of each nigun are not all known in Chabad lore. However, through applying the spiritual and musical parameters, we will be able to detect a general shape and flow of the narrative. Lastly, having looked at various nigunim and the ways that sound and narrative work together, I will look at various works of music that represent Chasidism and nigunim in chapter five. In doing so, I hope to highlight the importance of viewing nigunim through musical and spiritual narrative, as well as to see the ways that this narrative may or may not have been used in these works. My overall goal in conducting this research is to examine the immense power that nigunim possess and to show how through a dual spiritual-musical analysis, we can experience a glimmer of this power.

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4 ibid. pg. 72
Chapter One: Context, Terms, and Sources for Analysis

My personal background

The Chabad-Lubavitch chasidic community is incredibly diverse and complex. Originally established in the small shtetl of Lubavitch in Belarus, the Lubavitch court has grown from its humble origins into a global Jewish movement comprised of around 17,000 international outreach centers called “Chabad Houses.” The central headquarters of the contemporary Chabad-Lubavitch movement is the main synagogue referred to by chasidim as “770” the numerical address of the building on Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, NY. Eastern Parkway is one of many streets that make up the contemporary Chasidic community of Crown Heights, which first became the American residence of the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950) also known by chasidim as the Frierdiker Rebbe, in 1940. After Yosef Yitzchak’s passing, the position of Rebbe was filled by his son-in-law and distant relative, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (1902-1994) in 1951, making him the seventh Rebbe; due to the absence of any heir, Rabbi Menachem Mendel is posthumously considered the serving Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch. Many chasidim make annual pilgrimages to his burial place in the

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5 Yiddish for “small city,” the shtetl was the primary place of residence for thousands of European and Russian Jewry for the greater part of the 18th through early 20th centuries. While at one time the centers of many vibrant Jewish communities, all shtetl life was wiped out during the Holocaust.

6 The terms “Chabad,” “Chabad-Lubavitch,” and “Lubavitch” may be used interchangeably to refer to the chasidic court and movement.

7 The term Rebbe literally means “teacher” in Hebrew, though in the context of chasidic courts, the Rebbe is the spiritual leader of a particular court. The Rebbe is male and is considered by his followers, called chasidim, to be a saintly individual. The Rebbe is considered to have immense spiritual capabilities and possess the ability to bless people in various aspects of life (i.e. health, financial, relationships, childbirth, spirituality, etc.) For chasidim, the connection between Rebbe and chasid is an essential bond; this essential bond can, at times, manifest in a complete obedience to the will and directives of the Rebbe. Many chasidim consult the Rebbe on a variety of life issues/decisions and will follow his advice faithfully, considering it to possess mystical, prophetic power. The Rebbe has the ability to reveal mystical teachings to his chasidim called chasidus. Chasidus is considered a unique brand of Jewish mystical learning that reveals the essential, spiritual nature of all things. Many Rebbes teach different types of chasidus.

8 Yiddish for “previous.”
Montefiore Cemetery of Cambria Heights, Queens referred to as the Ohel.\textsuperscript{9} The Rebbe—as Rabbi Menachem Mendel’s followers refer to him—is buried next to his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, and many of the visitors who visit the Ohel continue the long-held practice of writing heartfelt letters to him, looking to the Rebbe for moral and spiritual guidance. It was during a visit to the Ohel that I wrote to the Rebbe for such guidance in what would be my journey to becoming a Lubavitcher chasid.\textsuperscript{10}

I find it important to mention my status as a chasid before stating the findings of my research and analysis. The topic of insider versus outsider observer is well-known in the field of ethnomusicology, one that could bring up many different issues in fieldwork. On the one hand, due to my current status as a chasid, I am privy to a certain understanding of the inner workings of the culture. I have been a Lubavitcher chasid since Fall 2009. Since then I have studied in two Lubavitch yeshivas\textsuperscript{11}, learning Chabad nigunim and the chassidus that motivated their composition. I have also spent a considerable amount of time and even resided in Crown Heights where I was able to attend the 770 synagogue and assimilate the Lubavitch culture into my worldview and identity. As a result, I have a certain advantage in understanding nigunim and the chasidic way of life over someone without such prior experience. However, this experience could lead to certain subjective biases in my analytical approach both conscious and subconscious. I have attempted to the best of my ability to maintain an “objective” approach in the musical and spiritual analysis of these nigunim. In sum, I feel that my experiences have given me the tools to look at non-chasidic sourced analysis of nigunim and chassidus through a critical, yet subjective lens.

\textsuperscript{9} Hebrew for “tent,” though referring to a Jewish monumental tomb.
\textsuperscript{10}Singular version of chasidim.
\textsuperscript{11} A yeshiva is Jewish house of study where Jewish scripture, law, philosophy, and mysticism is studied.
Historical Context of Nigunim in Lubavitch

As mentioned above, the Chabad chasidic dynasty was founded by Rabbi Schenur Zalman of Liadi, known by his followers as the Alter Rebbe. One of the distinguishing features of the Lubavitcher chasidim was their unique brand of Jewish mystical thought cultivated by the Alter Rebbe called Chabad chassidus. According to the Alter Rebbe, through intellectual meditation, one could produce genuine feelings of love and awe towards G-d found in the simple Jew’s pure faith. Along with the Chabad philosophy came a specific style of nigunim reflecting the nature of its philosophy. The melodies were slow both in tempo and in melodic build-up; their forms were very long and tended to proceed in step-by-step progression like the Chabad intellectual process of meditation. The Alter Rebbe, in addition to being a renowned genius and scholar, was also a composer of nigunim; he composed ten nigunim, each of which hold a sacred place in Lubavitch culture to this day. Through the successive generations of Lubavitch chasidim that followed, nigunim always played a vital role in the development of Lubavitch culture and religious identity.

It wasn’t until the leadership of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber Schneersohn (1860-1920) known as the Rebbe Rashab, that a more established approach towards nigunim began to take form. This coincided with the founding of the first Chabad Lubavitch yeshiva, Tomchei Tomimim, a school established with the purpose of imparting chasidic teachings in a more formal and systematic setting to students in their late teens and early twenties. The Rebbe Rashab saw nigunim as having an essential role in Lubavitch historical

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12 Many of the details in this historical summary are taken from the article “Nichoach: Preserving Chabad Music for Posterity” from the magazine Chassidisher Derher.
13 Pg. 2
14 “Chabad” is an acronym of the words “chochma,” “bina,” and “da’at,” commonly translated as “wisdom,” “understanding,” and “knowledge” respectively. It represents in compact form the three-part meditative process associated with Chabad chasidus.
development and possessing unique value in the chasidic educational process. He instituted a kapelye—a small orchestra intended to provide accompaniment to nignim that were used as a part of major ritual events in yeshiva life—and established a nignim class called seder hanigunim. In seder hanigunim, yeshiva students would gather to be taught new and forgotten nignim from either an elder teacher or a yeshiva student knowledgeable in nignim. One such knowledgeable yeshiva student was a young man named Reb Notte Paharher; he spearheaded organizing a proper system of teaching nignim in the yeshiva.

When the Rebbe Rashab’s son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, became the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, he continued his father’s tradition of having seder hanigunim in yeshivas and initiated the publication and dissemination of nignim; this was in part due to the social and political upheaval of the first half of the century, from the Communist Revolution in Russian lands to the Holocaust of World War II. The highly traumatic nature of this era in history necessitated the formal preservation of nignim that came with the Frierdiker Rebbe initiatives. The Frierdiker Rebbe requested that a group of chasidim skilled and knowledgeable in the tradition and singing of nignim be formed. The organization was called the Nichoach (Niggunei Chassidei Chabad [nignim of Chabad chasidim]) Society. The Nichoach Society’s first initiative was the compiling of the Sefer HaNigunim, a book of writings on and transcriptions of close to 350 nignim that was carried out by a Lubavitcher chasid, Shmuel Zalmanoff.

The idea of transcribing nignim into musical notation took form in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s mind as far back as 1935. In an exchange of letters between the Frierdiker Rebbe and his followers, he presented a plan of collecting nignim for the purpose of musical transcription. Within the cultural context of Chabad chasidim of that time, this idea was daringly “modern,” something that many staunch traditionalists reacted to with disdain. In a letter sent to the
Friediker Rebbe from Rabbi S.Z. Idel Zislin, a story is told of a chasid during the beginning of the century that had knowledge of music and had amassed a collection of personally transcribed Chabad nigunim. According to this story, when a senior chasid discovered this collection, he tore up the papers of the transcriptions. This senior chasid regarded the transcriptions as a modern innovation that would only lead to the weakening of the spiritual purity of the nigunim. After the 1937 publication of a nigun in the Chabad magazine *HaTamim*, many chasidim were upset at the transcription. They believed that by committing a nigun to notation, anyone regardless of spiritual standing would be able to sing it, profaning the sanctity of the melody. Nonetheless, the Friediker Rebbe perceived the necessity for such an undertaking—even at the risk of offending his own followers—in order to preserve nigunim for the modern world. He reached out to Zalmanoff in the summer of 1944 with the idea of publishing a volume of transcriptions. This idea came to fruition with the publishing of *Sefer HaNigunim* in three volumes in 1948, 1957, and 1980. *Sefer HaNigunim* represented the first large-scale attempt to codify a canon of nigunim through notation. It served many different pedagogical purposes that represented the Friediker Rebbe’s mission to bring “old world” spirituality into “new world” modern life.

This idea of carrying on spirituality through modern innovation can be seen even more so in the second initiative of the Nichoach Society, which was to produce musical recordings of nigunim. There had never been any recordings of Chabad nigunim and most recordings of other chasidic nigunim normally featured a choir of professional musicians. The Nichoach recordings, on the other hand, featured a choir of actual chasidim; the intent was to preserve not only the melody of the nigun, but the performance practice as well. While the recordings represented a shift into modernity, many precautions were taken to preserve the sanctity of the nigunim, all of

15 Loewenthal pg. 69-70
16 ibid pg. 71
17 ibid. Pg. 69
which were overseen by Rabbi Menachem Mendel after the Frierdiker Rebbe’s passing. The selection of which nigunim would be included on a record and the order of the nigunim was often suggested by the Rebbe himself. The Rebbe would have raw recordings brought to him for spiritual and musical guidance before sending them off for publication.

The Rebbe cared not only about the authentic performance practice, but the professional quality of the recordings as well. Velvel Pasternak, a well-known musicologist and producer, experienced in recording chasidic music, was hired to take part in the project. Pasternak arranged the nigunim for a small orchestra including piano, strings, woodwinds, and light percussion, as well as wrote light vocal harmonies to be sung along with the nigunim; the Rebbe gave his input on the orchestration as well, requesting that certain instruments be added or subtracted from an arrangement. In addition to overseeing the production of the recordings, the Rebbe would often promote the purchasing of and listening to the Nichoach recordings in his public talks with his chasidim. The Rebbe’s view on Nichoach can be summarized and expressed succinctly in an excerpt from a talk given by the Rebbe in 1961:

“The purpose of every aspect of Nichoach—the musical notes, the singing, and the orchestra—is for it to be utilized in bringing the wellsprings of chassidus to the furthest reaches. To illuminate the world through neginah (song) so that it can reach the essence of the neshama (soul). By executing this mission properly, they will manage to ‘submerge’ and transform the world into the wellsprings of chassidus.”18

In total, sixteen Nichoach records were published. Together with Sefer HaNigunim, the recordings successfully carried out the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe’s mission to bring spirituality into the modern world and to even transform the world into an expression of Divinity.

18 Derher pg. 41
Sources and Terminology

While much of my personal knowledge on nigunim and chassidus comes from years of being a member of the Chabad community, I have chosen written sources that are well known and accepted by Chabad chasidim as reliable sources for information on both topics. Sources such as the Tanya—the foundational work on Chabad chassidus written by the founder of the Chabad movement, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi—and Likkutei Diburim—a collection of stories, anecdotes, and writings on various topics in chassidus written by the Frierdiker Rebbe—are both considered seminal works and provide rich insight and commentary into the mystical traditions of Chabad chasidim. For other sources on chassidus I have made use of English language publications both printed and digital that are considered by many Lubavitchers to be “authentic.” For example, the website www.chabad.org is a repository of English translations of chasidic philosophy, as well as articles and blog posts written by prominent English-speaking Chabad rabbis.

My musical sources come in both transcribed and audio format. I take most of my written music material from Sefer HaNigunim and, at times, my own transcriptions. For my audio sources, I have chosen to use the Heichel Neginah\(^{19}\) recordings, a collection of field recordings compiled by Rabbi Mendel Lipskar of Sherman Oaks, CA. These recordings are a compilation of both Nichoach recordings and individual recordings of older chasidim by Rabbi Lipskar and are available for sale to the public. The Heichel Neginah recordings are viewed by Lubavitcher chasidim as “authentic” recordings of nigunim and are thus considered to be a reliable repository of musical representation and performance practice.

There are times when I look to outside sources for context and insight, making use of the academic research available. Music in Lubavitcher Life by Ellen Koskoff, though lacking in

\(^{19}\) Hebrew for “Chamber of Song.”
extensive musical analysis, was the first lengthy examination of nigunim and Lubavitcher culture. It is important to note that in writing her work, Koskoff decidedly included certain aspects of gender and feminist theory when analyzing the cultural contexts of Lubavitch music. While Koskoff’s work is considered the first major ethnography on music in Lubavitch, *Experiencing Devekut*\(^\text{20}\) *the Contemplative Niggun of Habad in Israel* by Raffi Ben-Moshe provides the analysis of many nigunim—24 to be exact—that was lacking in Koskoff’s work. Ben-Moshe is also, to my knowledge, the first scholar to propose a dual method of analysis, one that takes into consideration both musical and spiritual factors in his approach. That being said, even though he provides a tremendous amount of background on nigunim in chasidic thought and the music theory behind the nigunim, I don’t believe that he delves deeply enough in the final analyses. He does make use of chasidic terminology to refer to musical parameters such as the word *fal* in place of musical section and *tenu’ah* (*tenu’os* plural) in place of musical motive or gesture. In doing so, he provided insight into how we can understand the ways in music nigunim function musically. The use of chasidic terminology is a subtle, yet important factor in understanding nigunim since the terminology “reflects the attitude of the Hasidim toward certain aspects of music and musical performance, and reveals what they perceive as points of interest in the field of sound.”\(^\text{21}\)

\(^{20}\) For further information on *devekut*, see ch.2.  
\(^{21}\) Mazor and Seroussi pg. 118
Chapter Two: Spiritual and Music Parameters of Analysis

Among chasidic music, Chabad nigunim stand out for their unique structure and style. According to Chabad scholar Rabbi Nissen Mindel: “Rabbi Schneur Zalman (founder of the Chabad movement) is the creator of a cadre of neginah\(^{22}\) with a distinctive character and temperament of its own, which has come to be known as Chabad-neginah. It stands in relation to general Chasidic neginah as the Chabad philosophical system stands in relation to general Chasidu(s).”\(^{23}\) According to Mindel, most chasidic music generally tends to be light-hearted and joyous due to the general chasidic emphasis on joy. Chabad nigunim, on the other hand, are of slower movement, subtle and meditative, as well as richer in nuance and mood. This is due to the thorough, step-by-step process of meditation and prayer that Chabad chassidus is associated with.\(^{24}\) This parallel between Chabad nigunim and Chabad philosophy seems to indicate a direct correlation between musical structure and spiritual principles. With such a parallel, a dual analysis similar to that of Ben-Moshe’s work seems appropriate and necessary.

Rotzo Vashov

In his work, Ben-Moshe states the purpose of his dual analysis as being “…to characterize the two facets of the contemplative nigunim: their musical nature and the spiritual-mystical significance revealed in their ebb and flow motions.”\(^{25}\) This idea of ebb and flow—known as *rotzo vashov* in Hebrew—is a central idea behind chasidic spiritual practice and one that Ben-Moshe places at the center of his analytical approach. Taken from the prophet Ezekiel’s vision of the Divine chariot, ebb and flow corresponds to the movements of the creatures of the

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\(^{22}\) General term for chasidic music both folk (nigunim) and liturgical (prayer melodies.)

\(^{23}\) Mindel pg. 211

\(^{24}\) ibid pg. 212

\(^{25}\) Ben-Moshe pg. 73
Divine chariot: “And the living beings would run and return (ratzo vashov) as the appearance of the sparks.”

Many Biblical commentators and mystics have explained this verse in different ways and the Rebbe is no different, offering up an insight into how this verse relates to the mystical teachings of chassidus: “…the simple meaning is that this (ratzo vashov) refers to the Holy Creatures who are running and returning. But there is another interpretation, namely, that ratzo vashov is the Divine light and vitality, and the Holy Creatures feel the Divine vitality, and thereby also the ratzo vashov within the Divine light…and the two interpretations are consistent with each other, for this is the reason why the Holy Creatures are in ratzo vashov.”

This idea of ebb and flow as the Divine vitality within all life can best be understood through the physical process of the heart pumping blood through the body; the constant beating of the heart physically represents the spiritual ebb and flow of the soul’s vitality that takes place within the person. As articulated by Mindel: “Just as the human body responds to the rhythmic beat of the heart, so does the soul respond to the rhythm of sacred melody. The pulse of the heartbeat itself is but a reflection of the worshipful rhythmic movements of the angels in their constants swaying to and fro, in a manner of ‘advance and retreat’ (i.e. ratzo vashov) as described in the Heavenly vision of Ezekiel.”

Yet what is the nature of this ‘worshipful rhythm’ in regards to humankind? In the words of Ben-Moshe: “The concept of ratzo vashov may be used to explain God’s wish to descend from His hidden place and to make Himself omnipresent in the cosmos…as well as man’s longing to ascend in devekut and to touch the eternal mystery of the Divine.”

According to this interpretation, the ebbing and flowing of Divine vitality one has

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26 Ezekiel 1:14
27 Torat HaMenachem, 1951, II. 328-329 as quoted by Ben-Moshe pg. 47
28 Mindel pg. 212
29 Ben-Moshe pg. 48
within their soul and physical existence is a direct reflection of and response to a general relationship between humanity and the Divine.

This concept of ebb and flow makes up the very nature of a person’s soul within their physical body. Using the verse from Proverbs “The soul of man is a lamp of God,” the soul-body relationship is compared to the connection between the flame and a wick:

“The flame knows no rest, for it lives in perpetual conflict between two opposite strivings. It clings to its wick, drinking thirstily of the oil that fuels its existence. At the same time, it surges upward, seeking to tear free of its material tether. It knows that such disengagement would spell the end of its existence as a distinct, illuminating flame; nevertheless, such is its nature. This is the paradox of the flame's life: its attachment to wick and fuel in the lamp sustains both its continued existence and its incessant striving for oblivion…Man, too, is torn between these two contrasting drives. On the one hand, he tends towards self and materiality, towards life and existence. At the same time, he yearns to reach beyond his material self, to transcend the trappings of physicality and ego. The tension created by these conflicting drives is the essence of the human life.”

According to chassidus, man is comprised of spiritual and physical elements respectively referred to as the Divine soul and the Animal soul. The Divine soul is a “veritable piece of God” and is that which strives to leave the body. The Animal soul represents all worldly life ranging from biological life to even loftier concepts such as the ‘self’ and is that which is content to stay tethered to worldly pursuits. Both souls cohabit the body of a person, creating an inherent existential tension, yet in their cohabitation they are both able to complete the other. The Divine

30 Proverbs 20:27
31 https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/143570/jewish/The-Soul.htm
32 For a more thorough analysis of the make-up and relationship between the Divine and animal souls, see Tanya by the Alter Rebbe Chapters 1-12.
soul is able to raise the animal soul to a loftier, more God-conscious life while the animal soul, together with the body, allows the Divine soul to fulfill its mission on Earth: to create a dwelling place for the Divine through learning Torah and performance of good deeds, something that can only be done in this physical life. It is this spiritual tension that Ben-Moshe places as the central focus of his analysis, looking at the musical ebb and flow of the nigun through the lens of the spiritual ebb and flow of the soul. It is from this existential tension of spiritual and physical lives coexisting within a person that a Chabad nigun derives its source and power.

**Letters of Music**

Nowhere is this spiritual power better articulated than in the famous aphorism of the Alter Rebbe “words are the pen of the heart; music is the pen of the soul.” According to chassidus, all of existence is comprised of lights and vessels; every physical thing is a vessel through which a particular light is expressed. In his work “Mystical Concepts in Chassidism,” Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Shochett states that each vessel is commensurate with its respective proportion of light. If the vessel is of inferior quality when compared to the light, it will either fail in expressing the light or it will be unable to handle the light’s intensity, resulting in the breaking of the vessel. This concept of light in vessels can be applied to the abovementioned statement: words are vessels that, in the case of the Alter Rebbe’s aphorism, are meant to express the heart’s emotions. Music, on the other hand, expresses a light far greater than words can handle, the light of the soul. According to chassidus, this is why music has played such a vital role in human expression. This is also why nigunim in general are sung on vocables such as “ay yai” instead of words; words are vessels that constrict and limit the light of the soul, while neginah in its’ purest expression is expansive and essentially limitless. The singing of the

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33 Shochett pgs. 936-939
nigunim, then, becomes less about expressing the words and more about expressing the spiritual narrative through the very structure of the musical narrative itself. “Sound and rhythm, beat and movement, meter and tempo—all have their place in the analytical exposition of neginah in the Chabad system of Rabbi Schneur Zalman.”

The connection between words and music are delved into further in chassidus with the idea of ‘letters’ of melody. While it may seem as if these letters corresponds to musical notes that would be conventionally notated, from the following analysis it appears to be a more abstract conceptualization. In Likkutei Dibburim, the Frierdiker Rebbe writes at length about the mystical nature of letters and how the letters of melody differ from other letters of speech or though. In brief, letters of thought and speech are meant to reveal that which was previously hidden within the mind and heart of the person. In regards to letters of speech, only a superficial level of thought is revealed since there are thoughts too abstract to be conveyed in spoken words. When a thought is revealed to the person thinking it, it is expressed through letters of thought. Letters of melody, on the other hand, are completely different. “…they raise a man aloft, beyond his present rung; utterly absorbing him within themselves, they uncover that which is hidden in the innermost and most exalted strata of his soul…Through the ‘letters’ of melody he is lifted up and drawn into the sublime altitudes of the palaces of light and revelation, where the rays of light dispel for a time whatever in him is undesirable.”

But what is it about that which lies in the ‘exalted strata of his soul’ that is able to have this particular effect vis-à-vis nigunim? According to Mindel: “…melody is the vehicle of the transcending power of desire and will, which are more sublime than the powers of reason and emotion, as is fully explained in Chabad literature. For although the rational and emotive powers are the ‘inner’ powers of the soul…

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34 Mindel pg. 212
35 Kaploun pg. 210-11
of desire and will touch upon the very essence of the soul.”

Through the singing of nigunim, one is able to tap into the very essence of the soul, the way that it is connected with the Divine, through a psycho-spiritual state called ‘devekus.’

**Devekus**

Devekus—Hebrew for "cleaving”–is a form of trance where one loses self-awareness and attains a Godly-awareness. This Godly awareness represents a sort of ‘tuning in’ to the Godly presence or ‘spark’ inside of a person. This particular understanding of devekus is discussed in connection to the singing of a nigun by Rabbi Mindel: “Under the influence of a nigun the person discards, as it were, his outer shell, at any rate temporarily, becomes absorbed in himself and reaches out to commune with his very soul in all its purity. Thus neginah has a cathartic effect, purifying the mind and heart, and elevating the Chasid to a higher level of Divine worship.”

From Rabbi Mindel’s words, we see that through a nigun a person is able to be in touch with their true self–the soul—as opposed to a false, superficial version of the self. Nigunim are able to work therapeutically to shed layers of physically oriented consciousness and to reach deeper levels of Divine consciousness; this reaching inwards towards true, Divine-centered self is considered a hallmark of devekus. As Ben-Moshe articulates that according to chassidus “…in order to achieve devekut the individual hasid must abnegate and nullify himself, and direct all of his longings and efforts, both spiritual and material, at discovering the Divine spark hidden within his soul through the path of devekut.”

He states that it is also within devekus that the state of ebb and flow can primarily be felt: “Devekut is an ongoing dynamic dialectic that strives

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36 Mindel pg. 214  
37 Mindel pg. 215  
38 Ben-Moshe pg. 38
to reach the light of God and turns back when God wishes to manifest Himself in His kingdom, This is an ongoing cyclic motion of ebb and flow, that has no beginning and no end.”

Ben-Moshe also discusses the particular effects that a nigun can have on the chasid singing it: “The niggun experience denotes a two-way spiritual-musical arousal of the hasid. Displaying the excitement of the singers who experience the process of devekut, it shapes the live performance of the niggun. But the niggun also exerts a spiritual-mystical influence: it stimulates those singing it and helps them continue in the process of devekut with all its ups and downs.” The relationship between devekus and nigunim is stated by Amnon Shiloah in his work *Jewish Musical Traditions*; the importance of nigunim in the worshipper’s ascent to achieving devekus is described there in detail:

“Worship of the Deity in joy and ecstasy is the foundation-stone of Hasidism, which endows the niggun with a central place in the movement: with its help the Hasid rises from one level to the next until he reaches the highest peak of enthusiasm- ecstatic devequt. This ascent is often supported by a single musical motif steadily rising in pitch…since the niggun becomes a form of spontaneously-expressed prayer, neither its structure nor performance can be subjected to aesthetic criteria. Its nature is unquestionably ritualistic, and it offers great latitude for individual improvisation.”

From Shiloah’s words, we may posit that nigunim transcend having the mere status of ‘music’ and instead take on an almost non-musical, linguistically expressive form. The idea of a nigun being a ‘form of spontaneously-expressed prayer’ indicates that the nigun itself is a sonic reflection of spiritual narratives taking place inside the mind and heart of the worshipper. The Rebbe Rashab is known to have said when discussing a particular devekus niggun that “when

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40 Ben-Moshe pg. 43
41 Shiloah pg. 197
one prays at length and when one engages in Divine service, the nigun comes automatically.”

In the involuntary singing of a nigun, one is sonically expressing the state of devekus that they are in: just as the chasid becomes a vehicle or ‘instrument’ for singing the nigun, so too has the chasid become an instrument of God. This is why certain devekus nigunim are simply referred to as a “devekus”: since the nigun is merely sonically expressing this state of being, the music is not only secondary, but nullified to the ecstasy being experienced. Every musical parameter of the nigun becomes subsumed within the experience of devekus. As Aviva Gottlieb Zornberg writes in her book *The Murmuring Deep*: “Inspiration comes when one allows the spirit to play upon one. One becomes a harp, or an organ, or a shofar: the latter motif appears throughout early Hasidic literature. In prayer, or in preaching, the Hasid opens himself to a form of involuntary speech. No longer regulating himself, he becomes the instrument of God.”

All that has been mentioned until now deals primarily with nigunim as they relate to a general state of devekus; when in such a state, the nigun acts as a sonic reflection of the devekus narrative. However, there is no way to tell the particular details of the devekus through the performance of the nigun since the spiritual narrative is taking place within the consciousness of the chasid. Certain aspects can be expressed such as mood (calm and contemplative versus enraptured and passionate), but there is no way for us to know the particular thing that the chasid is expressing this mood about. When one is in a state of devekus, their consciousness is not an expression of a tabula rasa, rather there is a particular spiritual concept that they are experiencing, some spiritual narrative that they are playing out that acts as the interface between them and the Divine. There are, however, certain nigunim in the canon that already come with a culturally well-established narrative, a story, or some spiritual journey that the singer undergoes

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42 Notes on nigun #8 from Sefer Hanigunim, freely translated from Yiddish by the author.
43 Zornberg pg. 258
through singing it. It could be the ascent through the spiritual worlds or a spiraling out into
eternity, the descent of the soul into the body or the soulful expressions of a chasid struggling to
connect to the Divine paradoxically through and in spite of their physical existence. Regardless
of whatever the narrative is, nigunim with such a narrative a) are known by chasidim as
possessing it and b) have writings by Rebbeim\textsuperscript{44} detailing them. Both types of nigunim—nigunim
with unknown spiritual narratives and nigunim with pre-established spiritual narratives—will be
expanded upon at greater length in chapters three and four. Regardless of the status of a nigun,
the function essentially remains the same. In the words of the Frierdiker Rebbe: “Singing is the
external dimension of the spiritual lifestyle of chassidus. The inward aspect of this external
dimension is its’ function of granting a man cordial entry to subtler levels of spiritual
sensitivity.”\textsuperscript{45} Implied in this is the sensitization towards spirituality specifically through the
singing of nigunim.\textsuperscript{46}

\textbf{Musical Context of Nigunim}

As mentioned above, regardless of whether or not we know the details of a spiritual
narrative, by associating various musical parameters with spiritual concepts, a general shape and
trajectory of this narrative can be detected. In analyzing the nigunim presented in this research, a
few predominant musical factors began to take shape, providing a musical vocabulary or syntax
with which to interpret the inherent narrative. In order to help make sense of these musical

\textsuperscript{44} Plural for “Rebbe,” this refers to the seven generations of Chabad Rebbes from Rabbi Schneur Zalman
up to Rabbi Menachem Mendel.
\textsuperscript{45} Kaploun, Uri transl. \textit{Likkutei Dibburim volume IV}, New York, Kehot Printing Society, 2012 pg. 105
\textsuperscript{46} There is in fact a well-known saying from Reb Hillel Paritcher, a famous Lubavitcher chasid, who said
that “one who has a \textit{chush} (talent, intuitional feel, or interest) in neginah has a chush in chasidus,” it’s
also quoted in the negative as “one who does \textbf{not} have a chush in neginah \textbf{cannot} have a chush in
chasidus.” Both quotes indicate an intrinsic connection between the two.
factors within a broader hierarchical context, I have made use of the work of Munir Beken, scholar and professor of ethnomusicology at UCLA.

In his article “Pitch-Form Continuum in Maqam Based Musical Traditions,” Beken identifies five facets of mode that comprise what he refers to as a pitch-form continuum: 1) pitch, 2) ornamentation, 3) melodic units with distinct flavor and designation, 4) more complex modal entities with “modulations,” and 5) larger form. From this perspective, Beken views his continuum as zooming out from the micro to macro level, perceiving ever larger stages of musical hierarchy and structure in a musical piece. Beken identifies pitch as the most micro level of the model, dividing it into two sub-categories–tuning systems and individual pitch in performance context, i.e. vibrato or glissando. After pitch comes ornamentation; the concept of ornamentation can at times be taken for granted as simply being an ‘add-on’ to a pitch, yet Beken suggests that developing an understanding of ornamentation can actually be problematic when seen within cultural contexts of various modal traditions. In his words, a “number of modal traditions treat certain pitches with a specific ornamentation attached to it. From this point of view, it becomes difficult to separate the pitch from the ornamentation.” He then gives an example of the vocal ornament Takiyah in Persian music as showing a cultural consistency in identifying an ornament. Indeed, in chasidic neginah, there are various ornaments that fit appropriately only within certain musical context of pitch and larger phrase form. After ornamentation comes melodic units with distinct flavor and designation; included in these melodic units are specific pitch materials, ornamentations, melodic affinities, and stereotypical melodic motives or fragments. Within the context of neginah, these melodic units can be equated

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47 Beken, Munir. “Pitch-Form Continuum in Maqam Based Musical Traditions” Report on the 7th meeting of the ICTM Study Group on Maqâm, 2011, pp. 45-51
48 He contrasts this from the pitch-form continuum of ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood, which includes scale, hierarchy of pitches, ornamental pitches, and extra-musical associations.
49 Beken pg 47
with the concept of tenu’ah as mentioned above in the section of sources and terminology and as
will soon be expanded upon. After melodic units come complex modal entities with
“modulations,” the next level up in the continuum. Beken states that the concept of modulation
should be “considered carefully as they are often either transpositions, a change in the intervallic
structure, or simply a given emphasis on a different scale degree. Whether the modulations are
brief or more established, they can be an essential part of a particular mode and without it the
mode would be considered incomplete.”50 One could equate this level of the continuum with the
concept of a fal51; even though successive faln52 might stay in generally the same mode, the idea
of the complex modal entity is that it connects melodic units into a larger section. The final level
in Beken’s micro to macro pitch-form continuum is larger form, which considers the previous
four levels in positioning a particular composition within a suite form. While suite forms do not
exist at least in a formally stated way in neginah, there are nigunim that tend to be related either
thematically or through extra-musical association. One could also look at the fifth level on the
continuum as representing the nigun as a whole, i.e. how the various faln connect with one
another.

One final element that factors heavily into the analysis of nigunim is the narrative nature
of mode. Beken states that music theory texts written during the Ottoman Empire explain
melodic modes in the form of a narrative. Each mode contained a series of modulations
imbedded in its progression, from one melodic unit to another. This narrative was so important
that compositions written during this time were expected to follow the rules described in the
narrative and failure to do so would be considered improper.53 From Beken’s words, we perceive

50 Beken pg. 48
51 See pg. 8 above
52 Faln is the plural form of fal.
53 Beken pg. 48-49
mode as being more than just the musical scale or various ornaments used in a particular melody, but the overall cumulative effect of the five levels together, a musical region with its own set of compositional rules and principles. This has direct bearing on how we can perceive the spiritual narrative inherent in nigunim; Beken articulates that which chasidic writers and masters have referred to in their writings on nigunim. Having taken into account Beken’s work, as well as what chasidic scholars have written on the way nigunim are structured, the musical syntax of neginah can be understood through the following parameters:

**Modal scales:** The use of mode plays a predominant role in the analysis of nigunim. The three most common modes used in nigunim are Ahavah Rabbah, Ukrainian-Dorian, and harmonic minor (figure 1.) In Ahavah Rabbah, an augmented second lies between the second and third scale degree, imbuing it with a strong feeling of yearning with the flatted second leading down to tonic.

![Modes used in nigunim](image)

**Figure 1**- Modes used in nigunim

The augmented second is a vital ingredient in both nigunim and in the broader canon of Jewish music. In the words of Ellen Koskoff:

“Perhaps the quintessential musical marker of Eastern European Jewish music…is the augmented 2nd, a scalar/modal interval so well known that is has, in essence, become a common
musical stereotype of Jewish culture. Its so-called ‘yearning quality’ calls up visions of Jewish wandering, of shepherd’s flutes, and of the pain of unfulfilled spiritual love. This interval, often highlighted in musical and performance contexts with heavy ornamentation and rubato, has become so effective in evoking Jewish culture that it has been used consciously as a staple by classical, popular, and theatrical composers for generations."

In Ukrainian-Dorian, the augmented second lies between the third and fourth scale degrees, expressing more of a minor feel with a particular sharpness at the top leading to the fifth. Ukrainian-Dorian has a connection to Ahavah Rabbah through its being a relative scale starting on the flatted seventh scale degree. In harmonic minor, the augmented second lies between the sixth and seventh scale degrees, maintaining the minor quality of the lower tetrachord while still possessing the strong leading tone up to the tonic found in Major scales. Minor also has a connection to Ahavah Rabbah through it almost always starting on the fourth scale degree of Ahavah Rabbah, acting as a minor iv chord. By employing these modes–either having one particular mode for an entire nigun or cycling through them in various modal modulations–they act as one of the primary ways in which the spiritual narrative is expressed.

**Musical height (range):** In *Likkutei Dibburim*, the Frierdiker Rebbe describes a nigun as possessing both physical and spiritual qualities, one of which is height. Physical height of a nigun would be expressed through height in pitch while spiritual height signifies greater depth, breadth, or profundity. We see from this statement that the melodic shape and overall trajectory of a nigun represents a spiritual height that is one is able to tap into via performance. In general, nigunim normally start in the low range and tend to get higher in pitch as the nigun progresses, implying a heightening of spiritual depth and awareness. Musical climaxes paired together with

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54 Koskoff pgs. 85-86
55 *Likkutei Dibburim Volume III* pg. 265 It’s also stated on pg. 133
extreme heights in vocal register evoke a sense of spiritual peaks, expressing the pinnacle of devekus. Ben-Moshe connects musical height and general melodic shape with the concept of ebb and flow: a movement upward represents the ‘ratzo’ while a movement downward represents the ‘shov.’ However, we can analyze not only the shape of the general melody, but also the relationship between individual pitches as containing spiritual significance. The idea of height in nigunim can also be applied to intonation. In live performance, the tone is unconsciously sharpened by the singer; this generally fits into the idea of yearning upwards that is present in the ebb and flow idea.\textsuperscript{56}

**Ornamentation:** Ornamentation is the spice that gives flavor to the nigun, imbuing it with the classic Eastern European Jewish sound similar to modal scales. As mentioned above, there are various ornaments that fit appropriately only within certain musical contexts of pitch and larger phrase form. Spiritually and emotionally, ornamentation can connote heightened spiritual growth or attachment, emotional excitement and outpouring, as well as opening up one’s heart and soul. The more ornaments one finds generally tend to indicate stronger feels of devekus. That being said, one needs to be careful not to be too heavy-handed in applying ornamentation to a melody; in addition to skewing the original musical integrity of the nigun, too much ornamentation can be considered a form of ego, something antithetical to achieving devekus. Ornamenting certain structurally important pitches in a melody or highlighting key tenu’os can also reflect their importance to the melodic and spiritual integrity of the nigun.

There are several types of vocal ornaments or techniques used in singing nigunim, one of which is the *kvetch* or *knetch* (see figure 2), a small escape tone that is usually in falsetto. Kvetch is Yiddish for “cry,” which is fitting for the audio effect. A knetch is Yiddish for “fold,” which is

\textsuperscript{56} See the works of Ben-Moshe and Koskoff for further study on the connection between pitch sharpening and devekus/ebb and flow.
similar to the idea of a “wrinkle” in the melody. One can imagine that similar to an article of clothing that is full of wrinkles and, therefore, not smooth, the escape tones in the melody adds “wrinkles” to the melodic shape. Another term for this ornament is a krekhts or “cry” in Yiddish; the sonic effect is obvious. In their article “Towards a Hasidic Lexicon of Music,” Yaakov Mazor and Edwin Seroussi use all three of these terms as synonymous for the same thing. They identify this ornament as being “…the essence of Hasidic musical expression or its innermost substance, as stated by an informant…‘A niggun without a kneitch is like a body without a soul.’” They explain further the expressive power and capability of the kneitch as articulated by Shmuel Zalmanov “the niggun is an expression of the soul…and it is not necessarily the entire niggun [which conveys such expression], but sometimes a single motif or Hasidic wrinkle is sufficient.” Often times, ornaments can be less exacting and based more on the feeling of the individual chasid.

Another type of ornament is called a zechtsintul (see figure 3) Zechsin is Yiddish for sixteen, meaning the sixteenth notes that are used for ornamenting a note. A zechtsintul is not necessarily a set of four sixteenth notes, but more so the idea of a vocalise large or small with rapid pitches; indeed there are some nigunim such as the in which a lengthy zechtsintul is integral to style and structure of the nigun. The Rebbe is known to have made positive comments about chasidim who were very precise about their zechtsintuls, alluding to the idea that when used with exacting intention, zechtsintuls in particular and ornamentation in general can express and enhance the spiritual narrative. In this light, ornamentation goes far beyond being a stylistic feature of nigunim, taking on structural and cultural importance. In addition to the above-

\[58\] ibid. pg. 138
\[59\] ibid.
mentioned ornaments is the use of the glissando. The role of the glissando is meant to express some sort of heaving or sighing and it can also be seen as a manifestation of wooing or a faint; it is far more common for glissandi to descend than to ascend, perhaps for the connotation of sighing.

![Figure 2- a knetch](image1)
![Figure 3- a zechtsintul](image2)

**Tenu’ah:** While usually understood as a short melodic unit or phrase, at times it is unclear what the term is used to refer to. While tenu’ah is Hebrew for “movement,” according to Mazor and Seroussi, a tenu’ah is defined as being “an ambiguous term,” but in most cases referring to “a short musical unit or fragment of indefinable characteristics.”  

Regardless of terminology, the common usage of tenu’ah refers to a musical entity that is limited both in musical time and melodic scope. Ben-Moshe sees the tenu’ah as the basic formal component in any spiritual-musical analysis of nigunim. He uses the term freely to refer to both complete and incomplete musical ideas.  

In this present study, tenu’os are viewed almost as puzzle pieces that make up the larger form of the niggun. There are times when they can be moved around within the overall form or even isolated and dwelt on, sung by the chasid repeatedly to expand on a particular meditation or general state of spiritual feeling. In the tenu’ah, we can see elements of the narrative unfolding as the nigun progresses along its trajectory.

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60 ibid. Pg. 140  
61 Ben-Moshe pg. 65
**Fal**: Ben-Moshe defines a fal as a melodic unit similar to a musical period, consisting of at least two tenu’os and separated by clear cadences and rhythmic stops while Mazor and Seroussi simply define it as a section of a nigun. This term can and is used interchangeably with the term bava or gate in Aramaic. What separates a fal from a tenu’ah can at times be confusing; there are many shorter nigunim that are made up of a collection of various tenu’os as opposed to lengthier faln. Also, what separates various faln from one another can at times be confusing in certain nigunim, but what usually separates faln from one another is a repetitive and recognizable cadential tenu’ah that comes at the end of each fal. It is through the arrangement of various faln that the larger scale form of a nigun is made.

**Form**: we can see the fullest picture of a nigun’s spiritual narrative in its overall form. Mazor and Seroussi explain that the classic nigun form of ABCB symbolizes the four stages of the chasidic mystical experience: preparation, beginning of arousal, peak of ecstasy, and return to the second stage. Koskoff articulate sin her work how the four-part form of a nigun parallels the four general stages of devekus: awakening the kavanah through some sort of action (e.g. Torah study or prayer), mesmerizing the animal soul through introspection, separation of the Divine and animal souls through toil and effort, and union with the Divine through total absorption in focusing on the Divine. While these three sources may show some slight variance in the way chasidim view musical form, one thing they all have in common is the idea of extra musical association and its direct influence on musical material. In light of the abovementioned terminology, we will be able to construct spiritual narratives when not previously established by chasidim as we examine various devekus nigunim.

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62 ibid.
63 Mazor and Seroussi pg. 136
64 Faln is plural form of fal.
65 ibid.
66 Spiritual intention.
Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we saw how nigunim fit into a rich and complex spiritual tradition. They have the power to express the natural state of waxing and waning present within the soul of a person. The existential paradox of both physical and spiritual elements coexisting within a person is expressed through the letters of music, giving voice to the essence of the soul. This essence is put in direct communion with the Divine through the ecstatic, trance-like state of devekus. Through singing a nigun while in a state of devekus, one is able to shed their superficialities and connect to their Godly spark. Spiritual narratives such as those coming from a state of devekus are expressed through the various musical parameters of nigunim. Using Munir Beken’s work, we were able to develop a framework for understanding an implied hierarchy in nigunim. Music parameters such as melodic modes, pitch height, ornamentation, tenu’os, and faln all unite together to create the overall expression of the nigun. Having formed our musical syntax, we can now begin our analysis of nigunim.
Chapter Three: Nigunim with Revealed Spiritual Narratives

There are a vast number of nigunim in the canon of Chabad neginah; Sefer HaNigunim has upwards of 350 transcribed nigunim! In that canon, there are dozens of nigunim with revealed spiritual narratives: stories of how the nigun originated, implied spiritual journeys, metaphoric imagery, and other forms of spiritual content. While one could make an exhaustive survey of dozens of such nigunim, I have chosen three nigunim that I feel represent a good sample of nigunim with revealed spiritual narratives. They are Shalosh Tenu’os co-composed by the Besht, Maggid, and Alter Rebbe; Dalet Bavos the archetypal Chabad nigun and “holy of holies” composed by the Alter Rebbe, and Der Beinoni composed in the court of the Frierdiker Rebbe. In examining how the spiritual and musical parameters of each nigun interact, we will be given the tools to examine other nigunim without such overt narratives.

Nigun #1: Shalosh Tenu’os

Spiritual Context: The subject of authorship in nigunim is a broad reaching one. There are many nigunim that are simply known as nigun hisva’adus or nigun rikud for which we do not have a composer to credit. Other nigunim are associated with certain people, though we do not know who actually composed it. Then there are nigunim that not only have identifiable composers, but knowledge of who those composers are affects the way in which we view those nigunim; one such a nigun is Shalosh Tenu’os. According to Chabad lore, this nigun was “co-composed” by the Besht, his successor Rabbi Dov Ber, known as the Maggid (preacher) of Mezritch, and the Alter Rebbe.

The connection between these three men is known in chasidic literature; the Maggid was the primary follower and torchbearer for the Besht and the Chasidic movement as a whole, while
the Alter Rebbe was one of many disciples of the Maggid who began their own branch of chassidus. While the Alter Rebbe never physically met the Besht, he often referred to him as his zeide, which carries both connotations of transmission of leadership and spiritual lineage. It is perhaps due to the nigun *Shalosh Tenu’os*, in addition to other sources in Chabad literature that link these three men together, that the Besht, Maggid, and Alter Rebbe are at times seen together as a unit of three. Knowing the dynamics of what each chasidic leader accomplished and how each built off the spiritual work of the previous helps elucidate the structure of the nigun on various levels of analysis.

**Figure 4- Form of Shalosh Tenu’os**

The title of the nigun *Shalosh Tenu’os* literally means “three motions,” indicating that this nigun conceptually has three sections. There are, however, a few reasons why this nigun might not be called *Shalosh Faln*. The first might be in the nature of how each individual

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67 “Grandfather” (Yid.)
68 It is customary on the seven nights of Sukkos—the autumn time festival that comes after Yom Kippur—to have “guests” each night of the holiday. The first three nights are the three Biblical forefathers of the Jewish people—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—respectively, along with the parallel in Chabad leaders of the Besht, Maggid, and Alter Rebbe. Just as the three Biblical patriarchs as seen as one unit, so too are the three chasidic patriarchs.
69 For the sake of clarity, I will refer to each of the tenu’os as section since each larger tenu’ah is comprised of smaller and even smaller tenu’os. As such, each smaller tenu’ah of this nigun will be referred to as a tenu’ah.
section is constructed: there is no clear sense of a melody with a broad reaching trajectory. Many other nigunim have a melody that builds over a lengthy stretch of time equivalent to several measures (see analysis of Der Beinoni,) yet it is very clear from listening to and analyzing the score of this nigun that each section is comprised of smaller tenu’os strung together. The sonic effect of this stringing together is like that of breathing in and out, giving the nigun an organic, almost living feeling. In hearing this nigun, it is as if we can hear the Divine life force ebbing and flowing through the melody with each tenu’ah.

This leads us to our second reason for the nigun’s title: this nigun—quite literally—has motion. From tenu’ah to tenu’ah, we experience a sense of moving and growing, like an ember glowing and building up into a flame. The nigun also moves from section to section: each subsequent section modulates up a fifth, giving off the impression of echoing on into eternity similar to the auditory illusion of the ever-rising Shepherd’s tone or the ever-increasing Risset rhythm. Ben-Moshe sees this nigun as an embodiment of the spiral ascent present in the ebb and flow model of devekus. Quoting Dr. Yoram Jacobson from the Department of Hebrew Culture Studies at Tel Aviv University, Ben-Moshe describes this spiral ascent:

“Hasidism speaks of a spiral process, whereby in each new ascent man finds his way to a higher achievement, in wake of the fall which precedes it. In a dialectic sense, the fall is required for the ascent, which is to flow. When man is cut off from his supernal attachment, which entails a danger of the very departure of his soul, and returns to his own self, he is able to trace hidden, unrealized powers within himself, and by their inspiration to ascend to higher, divine levels towards which he had not yet ascended, and thereby to draw their hidden light into himself.”

Implicit in this statement is the idea that each level of downward returning is qualitatively deeper spiritually than the previous level of flow, as well as higher spiritual peaks of upward

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70 Ben-Moshe pgs. 57-58
running towards the Divine source. From the point of view of the spiral ascent, devekus becomes a never-ending process, a state of being in which the infinite of the Divine is manifest in the being of the chasid.

**Musical Analysis:** As mentioned previously, the opening A section is composed by the Besht (figure 5) and, as such, contains the initial seeds of devekus and ratzo v’shov. The A section is divided into four sub-sections: mm.1-4 (a), mm.5-8 (b), mm.9-12 (c), and mm.13-16 a repetition of (b). While Sefer HaNigunim attributes these opening sub-sections to the Besht, one could argue that mm.1-8 belong to the Besht while mm.9-16 belong to the Maggid; this is based on the varying differences between mm.1-8 and mm.9-16. In addition, the subsequent B section of mm.17-24, which, according to Sefer HaNigunim is attributed to the Maggid, appear to be a transposition of the material from mm.9-16 only up a fifth, something that takes place again in the C section during mm.25-32, which according to *Sefer HaNigunim* is attributed to the Alter Rebbe. If we are to view the defining characteristic of the Maggid’s section as just transposing that which came before it, then it would be superfluous to label the Alter Rebbe’s section as transposed again up another fifth. However, one could argue that the Maggid’s innovation was in the **single** transposition while the Alter Rebbe’s innovation was in the **cyclical** transpositions that could theoretically take place for eternity. If this is the case, then it would be the Alter Rebbe who is responsible for imbuing the nigun with the spiral ascent narrative, something that doesn’t require composing any new material, but completely transforms how we view it.
The opening tenu’ah i of sub-section a (figure 6) is a descending major second that repeats the final note. The rhythm of this tenu’ah creates an interesting balance: the opening F-sharp is long, followed by a short anticipatory note E, and concludes with an even longer E, creating the rhythmic pattern ‘long-short-longer.’ One could interpret this rhythmic pattern as hinting to the rhythm of breathing. After repeating tenu’ah i, we hear tenu’ah ii introduce the G as an upper neighbor tone to the F-sharp as two subsequent ascending minor seconds; we now know that the opening sub-section a is in e minor. It seems that these two minor seconds are executed with a slightly faster rhythmic pacing than tenu’ah i, perhaps hinting at the spiral ascent that will come later on in the nigun. Sub-section a concludes with another iteration of tenu’ah i, representing a “micro shov,” as it were, that takes place after the hinted at ratzo of tenu’ah ii. We hear within this opening sub-section a miniature version of the spiral ascent model in which the subsequent downward return is of a symbolically deeper nature; perhaps this is why in the many times I’ve heard and sung this nigun, the final F-sharp of the closing tenu’ah i is ornamented with a zechtsintul, subconsciously representing this depth.
Sub-section b (figure 7)—beginning with tenu’ah iii—opens with a series of repeated E’s that ascend to the F-sharp in what appears to be a seeming reversal of tenu’ah i. Tenu’ah iii is repeated once more, mirroring the same pattern found at the beginning of sub-section a with tenu’ah i. We then hear what our largest jump in tenu’ah iv is contextually: a perfect fourth up to a series of repeated B’s. The repeated notes tie tenu’os iii and iv together rhythmically and perhaps represent a turning point in the narrative towards deepening the level of ascent. After lingering on the B, sub-section b closes with tenu’ah v, a descending three note pattern of G-F#-E that is reminiscent of the rhythm of tenu’ah i with the combined notes of tenu’os i and ii. By combining these notes and rhythms together into a ‘hybrid’ tenu’ah, the idea of a deeper return following a higher ascent is reinforced, symbolically synthesizing the spiritual narratives of tenu’os i and ii and recontextualizing them within a new spiral ascent narrative.

Tenu’ah vi of sub-section c (figure 8) opens with a quasi-retrograded version of tenu’ah v, reconfiguring the rhythm into a triplet pattern that settles on the F-sharp before descending to the E. Following tenu’ah vi, we hear the return of tenu’ah i, a harkening back of sorts to the opening lower level of shov in the spiritual narrative. While I’m not exactly sure why this would
be since we are now on a higher level of spirituality, we could perhaps interpret it either as a hesitant look back or a symbolic ‘tying together’ of sorts before proceeding onto the Maggid’s section. Regardless of symbolic nature, reintroducing tenu’ah i creates a feeling of sonic balance and consistency. We hear tenu’os vi and i repeated before concluding with a repetition of sub-section b.

![Figure 8 - sub-section c of Besht’s Tenu’ah](image)

In repeating sub-section b, we can now view the entire section from mm.1-16 of the Besht (figure 9) as being comprised of two general sections with two smaller sub-sections, creating a form among the sub-sections of abcb. We can perhaps view this breakdown of the form as symbolically representing a descent or “ground level” perspective in the spiritual narrative (a and c) and an ascent (the two b sub-sections.)

![Figure 9 - Form of Besht’s Tenu’ah](image)
If it is the case that sub-sections a and c are both followed by identical sub-sections, then we can perhaps derive even further spiritual narrative through a side-by-side analysis of sub-sections a and c (figure 10). The overall form of sub-section a is aaba while the overall form of sub-section c is abab with the tenu’ah represented by b as a direct repetition of the opening tenu’ah i. By reusing tenu’ah i as the b in sub-section c, it can be suggested that sub-section c is a “re-composition” of sub-section a in which tenu’ah vi is retroactively inserted before tenu’ah i. This gesture ties into the overall idea of recontextualizing the downward return within the framework of a higher and deeper level of the cyclical spiral ascent. We would then view the overall abcb form as representing two versions of a ratzo v’shov model: one in which we see a descent prior to an ascent and one in which we can perceive the effects of the ascent on the subsequent descent. Just as with the closing tenu’ah i of sub-section a, I have heard many people sing the half note F-sharp in tenu’ah vi with a zechtsintul ornament, representing an infusion of spiritual depth into the “re-composed” sub-section a. In concluding the tenu’ah with a reiteration of the ascent-themed sub-section, the Besht opened the possibility for the further ascents that we experience with the subsequent sections of the Maggid (figure 11) and Alter Rebbe (figure 12.)

![Diagram of sub-sections A and C](Image)

**Figure 10**- Comparison of sub-sections a and c of Besht’s Tenu’ah
One final note about the harmonic language of Shalosh Tenu’os. Up until this point in the analysis, we have understood the entire opening section of the Besht to be in e minor. By transposing sub-sections c and b up a perfect fifth, the Maggid’s section suddenly recontextualizes the A section as being in e Dorian with the introduction of the C-sharp and D.

This idea of the Maggid recontextualizing the spiritual work of the Besht finds expression in chasidic thought. According to a biography of the Maggid, “attended by a unique group of followers, compounding the greatest minds and spirits of the time, Rabbi Dovber externalized the creative, seminal thoughts and teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and formed them into a comprehensive system.”

accomplishments, he paved the way for further ascents as is evidenced in one of the final things he said to his disciples before his passing: “My children, always stay together and you will overcome everything. You will go ever forward and not back.” This idea of going ever forward and never going back is represented by the subsequent section of the Alter Rebbe in which he retransposes the already transposed version of the Maggid. In doing so he opens up the possibility for going through the entire circle of fifths, which could theoretically cycle through every key and all twelve notes of the chromatic scale, representing an eternal ascent.

Nigun #2: Dalet Bavos

**Spiritual Context:** In his book Chabad Melodies: Songs of the Lubavitcher Chassidim co-authored with Eli Lipsker, Velvel Pasternack lists the nigun Dalet Bavos—alternatively known as the “Rav’s Nigun”—as the archetype of all Chabad song. It is in Dalet Bavos that the Alter Rebbe musically articulated the epitomized formulation of the Chabad mystical and philosophical approach to Divine service and worship. In doing so, the Alter Rebbe also created the purest expression of what a Chabad nigun should sound like; one could view this nigun as being the initial seed from which all Chabad nigunim sprout forth and are derived. In fact, there are certain ways that mode, pitch height, and tenu’os are used that will set the stage for later analyses of devekus nigunim.

The Rebbe Rashab articulated this through a discourse that he delivered in 1902 in which he spiritually analyzed the structure of Dalet Bavos. In doing so, he revealed how the nigun is the musical embodiment of the Chabad ideal, depicting a synthesis of deep introspection and

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72 ibid.
73 Lipsker and Pasternak pg. 5
74 The following information is taken from a translation of this discourse done by Rabbis Eli Rubin and Tzvi Freeman for chabad.org in the article Chabad in a Song: How Rabbi Schneur Zalman Captured the Soul of His Teachings in a Melody.
orderly down-to-earth practicality.\textsuperscript{75} In addition to encapsulating the entirety of the Chabad path in Divine service, the four sections or “portals” of Dalet Bavos parallels several kabbalistic concepts such as the four supernal worlds, the four letters of the Divine Name of God,\textsuperscript{76} and the five levels of the soul. While there are many different lenses that one could view this nigun through, it is beyond the scope of this present study to go through all of them. Being that the purpose of this study is to show how spiritual narratives are expressed by the chasid, I will focus primarily on how the nigun expresses the journey of the soul in its striving upwards towards the Divine.

The Rebbe Rashab begins his discourse by saying that each of the four portals of the nigun has a specific effect on the person singing it. In brief, the first portal brings you to a state of detachment, and then into deep thought; the second portal is connected to the first and opens with a sense of contrition, but immediately moves in an upward hopeful manner; the third portal, although in essence connected to the fourth portal, follows the second and emphasizes transcendent elevation along with an outpouring of the soul; and the fourth portal, although following the third portal, is entirely removed from it and expresses a euphoria emanating from the quintessential holiness of the soul as it is a part of the quintessence of the Divine. There are many nuances in the Rebbe Rashab’s analysis, primarily in the second, third, and fourth portals. These nuances, along with a more general spiritual narrative, will be expanded upon in the musical analysis.

\textbf{Musical Analysis:} As mentioned above by Rabbi Mindel on pg. 16, “Sound and rhythm, beat and movement, meter and tempo—all have their place in the analytical exposition of neginah in


\textsuperscript{76} I.e. Tetragrammaton, four Hebrew letters yud-hei-vov-hei represented in the alphabet as Y-H-V-H.
If this is true of neginah in general, then how much more so do these words apply to the archetype nigun Dalet Bavos (figures 13 and 14.)

Figure 13- Score of Dalet Bavos

77 Mindel pg. 212
In his analysis of the first portal, the Rebbe Rashab says:

“The first portal brings you to a state of **detachment**, and then into **deep thought**. The beginning of the melody shakes you up. It shifts you from your place, so that you break away from the mundane environment, from mundane worries and concerns, from all the things you need. Then it continues, taking you into a yet deeper state of thought. You begin to ponder why you are needed, what is the purpose of being in this world.”

Each of the parts of this analysis can be broken down into parts and mapped onto the various tenu’os of the melody. The first two concepts of “a state of detachment” and “into deep thought” are represented by the first two tenu’os i and ii of the first portal respectively (figure 15).

Tenu’ah i begins with an anacrusic E that leads up to a series of repeated G-sharps. The G-sharp functions as a leading tone up to A, which arguably establishes A as the tenu’ah’s tonal center. Knowing that the nigun is actually in E Ahavah Rabbah, we can see how tenu’ah i detaches the nigun temporarily from an E tonal center and “shifts you from your place,” so to speak. Tenu’ah ii begins on a G-sharp, but instead of leading up to the A established in tenu’ah i, shifts “into deep thought” by descending to the F-natural and resolving down to the E. In this light, the first

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two tenu’os can be seen as opposites: the first tenu’ah has to separate you “from the mundane environment, from mundane worries and concerns, from all the things you need” by deemphasizing the E tonal center so that you can “begin to ponder why you are needed, what is the purpose of being in this world” in tenu’ah ii by reengaging with the E tonal center as the true melodic mode of the nigun. This expresses the above-mentioned notion that the true nature of all physical things is Divinity: any worries or concerns about one’s physical needs comes from the concealment of the physical world, one needs to be disrupted and focus on what truly matters.

Following tenu’ah ii comes tenu’ah iii, an expanded version of tenu’ah i. In tenu’ah iii, the repeated G-sharps lead up to a series of repeated A’s that finally lead up to the half note B—the highest note in the nigun thus far—only to leap down to the D—the lowest note in the nigun thus far. As mentioned above, the second portal is connected to the first and opens with a sense of contrition; this contrition is hinted at in the first portal by this leap down to the D. In doing so, our tonal center is temporarily shifted away from E Ahava Rabba to the relative D Ukrainian-Dorian, giving off the impression of deeper levels of thought and sowing the seeds of contrition. The move to the relative Ukrainian-Dorian is often used cadentially in Jewish modal theory. The first portal concludes with a restatement of tenu’ah ii, further reorienting us towards pondering our purpose in this world.

Figure 15- First Portal of Dalet Bavos
As the second portal begins (figure 16), we can clearly see how it is connected to the first: the opening tenu’ah is a repetition of tenu’ah iii. We sense the contrition immediately with the major sixth leap downward from the B to the D, coloring the melody with a shading of D Ukranian-Dorian, only to shift back to an A tonal center with tenu’ah iv. Tenu’ah iv imbues the A tonal center with a minor quality, something that hadn’t been established up until now. It is also structurally reminiscent of tenu’ah vi from the Besht’s section in Shalosh Tenu’os (figure 17) which we said had represented a deepening of the spiral ascent. According to my analysis, tenu’ah vi is where the nigun immediately “moves on upward, toward hopefulness.” According to the Rebbe Rashab “The bitter nuances and the hopeful, uplifting nuances both come out of the shakeup and the introspection of the first portal: when you are shaken up and detached from your place, there’s an element of bitterness—the discomfort and embitterment over your spiritual situation. When you meditate profoundly on the divine purpose for which you are here in this world, that brings a ray of hope, and a movement upwards.”79 The Rebbe Rashab goes on to state that bitterness and upward movement are two opposites: bitterness is brokenness, lowliness, meekness, and a downcast spirit while the upward movement emerges from a sense of essential self-worth. The two opposites fuse together through the theme of hope. “When you contemplate the divine intent that brought you into the world, hope emerges. The very introspection into your failings—the very sense of deficiency, the feeling that you are lacking in some way—that itself is the beginning of the remedy.”80 This idea of the “sense of deficiency” is represented by identifying the A tonal center as A minor. Previously there was a harmonic ambiguity to the A, but by identifying it as A minor, we symbolically identify our deficiencies, which brings us hope through the reference back to Shalosh Tenu’os. When the second portal finishes with a

79 ibid.
80 ibid.
restatement of tenu’os iii and ii, we feel as if they have somehow been affected or reinforced by the tenu’ah of hope born from contrition. We are left once again pondering our existence through tenu’ah ii, leading us to the third portal.

Figure 16 - Second Portal of Dalet Bavos

Figure 17 - Comparison of tenu’os from Dalet Bavos and Shalosh Tenu’os

As mentioned, the third portal is essentially connected to the fourth portal, yet still follows the second portal. “Just as the bitterness, hope and ascent of the second portal are a result of the detachment, shake-up and introspection of the first portal, similarly the elevation of the soul expressed in the third portal is the collective result of the bitterness, hope and ascent of the second.”\(^{81}\) However, the Rebbe Rashab goes on to say that while the second portal has a direct and tangible relationship with the first as can be seen both musically and spiritually, the third portal has an indirect and abstract relationship with the second. Implicit in this abstract relationship is the idea that while tangible experiences pave the way for transcendental

\(^{81}\) ibid.
abstraction, their effect is not directly apparent in the experience of such abstraction. Musically we can see this abstracted relationship hinted at through various manifestations.

The third portal (figure 18) opens with tenu’ah v similarly to how tenu’ah iv begins, only transposed down a fifth—perhaps hinting at the idea of drawing lofty revelations downwards— to the notes D-E-F-E, followed by an expansion upwards with E-G#-B-A, spelling out an E Major chord that resolves on A. In doing so, the harmonic formula found in tenu’ah iii of A minor shifting to D Ukranian-Dorian is reversed. Through this, we see “the collective result of the bitterness, hope and ascent.” This then leads to tenu’ah vi, which is primarily comprised of a repeated descending G#-F-E pattern that shifts focus back to E Ahavah Rabbah. We can hear the “outpouring of the soul” mentioned in the Rebbe Rashab’s analysis through these repetitions. After a repetition of tenu’ah v, we hear a varied version of tenu’ah ii as it cadentially moves downward towards the E. One glaring question that remains is that if the third portal is primarily focusing on the sense of transcendent elevation that comes along with the outpouring of the soul, then why doesn’t the melody ascend higher than the B in tenu’ah v? In fact, this portal spends more time in the lower register of the nigun than either of the previous two portals! However, in light of what was established in the first and second portals in regards to the Major sixth between D and B, 82 we can view the opening tenu’ah v of the third portal as “the elevation of the soul expressed in…the collective result of the bitterness, hope and ascent of the second.” The structure of tenu’ah v is inspired by tenu’ah iv—the tenu’ah of hope after the bitterness—and it musically climbs up through the Major sixth.

82 See above pp. 43-44
Figure 18- Third Portal of Dalet Bavos

The fourth portal (figure 19), as mentioned above, is completely removed from the previous three portals and expresses a euphoria emanating from the quintessential holiness of the soul as it is a part of the quintessence of the Divine. Of this euphoria, the Rebbe Rashab says “(t)he quintessence cannot be divided into any parts and from there the soul’s euphoria is derived—a quintessential euphoria born of the quintessential delight that derives from the quintessence of the soul.”83 This indivisibility is mirrored in the musical and spiritual structure of the fourth portal by its connection, surprisingly, to the first portal. “There are two reasons for this [connection] and one cause. The first reason…is because the higher something is, the greater its potential to descend downward when it needs to be drawn downward. The second reason…is because ‘the beginning is implanted in the end;’ the planting of the beginning is the end. These two reasons both result from one cause: because God desired for Himself a dwelling in the lower realm through the service of man…”84 In a sense, since the fourth portal represents an expression of the essence of the soul, all of the previous three portals are musically alluded to in it.

83 ibid.
84 ibid.
The opening tenu’ah vii begins with an A framed by double neighbor tones, establishing A as the new tonal center. We can connect this tenu’ah to the cadential tenu’ah ii both rhythmically and structurally in the pitches; this can be seen as using the framework for the cadential tenu’ah as a launching platform to reach higher in spiritual ascent (figure 20.) The second half of tenu’ah vii is a direct quote of tenu’ah iv (figure 21)–the tenu’ah of hope–commenting on the quality of this ascent. This idea of going ever and ever higher can be understood through the Chasidic idea of yerida l’tzorech aliyah (lit. the descent for the sake of the ascent Heb.,) that a spiritual descent can take place in order for a person to reach an even higher ascent than they high prior to the descent. As a result of having descended to the lower register at the beginning of the third portal, we are now embarking on even higher levels of ascent. Having progressed up to C–now the highest note of the nigun–we resolving back to A. Tenu’ah vii’ takes the material of tenu’ah vii and transposes it up a third, establishing C as the new tonal center and expanding the range of the nigun up to an E. Instead of resolving back to C, however, it stays on the D, perhaps hinting at a shade of D Ukrainian-Dorian. Tenu’ah viii can really be seen as a re-imagined version of opening tenu’ah I (figure 22) only this time starting on
the D and reaching up a perfect fourth to the G, which is ultimately the highest note in the
nigun’s range. Additionally, in the juxtaposition of tenu’os vii’ and viii/i’ we hear an allusion to
tenu’os i and iii from Shalosh Tenu’os (figure 23) perhaps calling upon the musical ascent
models used in that nigun. The nigun leaps up a fourth from the D to a high G, the highest note
of the nigun. Interestingly, the leap of a perfect fourth also takes place in Shalosh Tenu’os in
tenu’ah iv. The first half of the fourth portal closes with tenu’ah ix, a cadential figure that
actually takes the pitches of tenu’ah v and partially inverts them (figure 24.) Starting on the D,
tenu’ah ix descends down two steps instead of up two steps like in tenu’ah v, but ultimately goes
back to the E before resolving down to A. Interestingly enough, it was tenu’ah v that represented
the “transcendent elevation” of portal three, so by finishing with a partially inverted version of it
the nigun is drawing somewhat of a parallel between the elevation and euphoria of the soul.

One note about musical height, it is interesting to note that the first three portals expand
the range incrementally and slowly—something that is in line with the step-by-step meditative
practice of Chabad—yet come the fourth portal, the pitch expands upwards rapidly. The reason for
this could be that the whole point of Chabad meditative practice is to approach the spontaneously
expressive outpouring of the soul through step-by-step meditative practice; it is the ultimate goal
of the meditation.

Figure 20- Comparison of tenu’os vii and ii

Figure 21- Comparison of tenu’os vii and iv
While we would imagine that this is the end of the nigun, it doesn’t end there as would be expected. As Ben-Moshe notes, “although hasidim perceive this niggun as having four sections, it is actually made of five sections…sections D and E (the two halves of the fourth portal, which I will refer to as A and B) are regarded as a single unit. To the Hasidim I interviewed, section E is a transition to the closing section C (third portal), which ends the niggun.”\(^{85}\) As to why section B returns back to the third portal, Ben-Moshe states “These sections represent the aspiration to reach ecstasy and shed off worldly matters. Because a prolonged state of devekut is thought to be risky, section C, with its compelling conclusive ebb motion, is repeated.”\(^{86}\) According to the Rebbe Rashab, however, the expanded fourth portal and ultimate return to the third portal are a

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\(^{85}\) Ben-Moshe pg. 77

\(^{86}\) ibid. Pg. 78
direct representation of the Chabad approach to Divine service. “Rabbi Schneur Zalman revealed
and founded the Chabad chasidic path…directed from the bottom up, through a labor of distilling
and refining. One of the conditions of this path of service is that…your service must always be
connected to the lower realm…In all four portals of the melody, this affinity to the lower realm is
always apparent. Even in the fourth portal…the affinity with the lower realm is apparent. This is
the true path of Chabad: even the loftiest and most profound thought and the deepest concept
must result in a practical application in divine service–making the physical lower realm a vessel
fit to receive the essential loftiness of divinity.”

We see this affinity articulated perfectly in the closing section of the fourth portal.
Tenu’ah x opens with a leap of a perfect fifth up from A to E; the only other time we saw a leap
of a perfect fifth up was in the second portal between tenu’os iii and iv, which represented the
hope that comes from contrite bitterness. In fact, the intervallic formula between the B and D of
tenu’ah iii and the A of tenu’ah iv–down a Major sixth and up a perfect fifth–are somewhat
reversed in tenu’ah x (figure 25): we jump up the perfect fifth from the A (the same middle
pitch) to the E and then down a minor sixth from the E to the G-sharp. In light of the high G-
natural that took place in tenu’ah viii, one could look at the G-sharp as representing taking the
highest peak of spirituality and drawing it down into the lower realm. This descent goes even
further as tenu’ah x finishes off with a descending four note pattern G#-F-E-D. The final three
notes of the pattern combine the rhythm of tenu’ah ii with the descending three note pattern G#
F-E in tenu’ah vi transposed down a step. This could be interpreted as a continuous drawing
down into the lower realms through combining musical materials from different portals. The
final tenu’ah of the nigun before returning to the third portal can be seen as tenu’ah iv only

87 https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2087237/jewish/Chabad-in-a-Song-How-Rabbi-
transposed down a fifth to D. We could also see the closing tenu’ah as having the first half of tenu’ah v and the last half of tenu’ah iv (figure 26.) As just mentioned, tenu’ah iv represented elevations of hope while the D pitch center represented bitterness and more specifically the ascent from bitterness as seen in tenu’ah v. By combining the two, the nigun musically represents the fusion of profoundly deep concepts with practical application. In ending the tenu’ah with a C-sharp, it prepares for the third portal with a leading tone, representing a descent back into the lower realms to infuse them with Divine purpose. It is also the lowest note in the range of the nigun, emphasizing the importance of the lower realms in Chabad chasidus.

Figure 25- Comparison of tenu’os x and iii/iv

Figure 26- Comparison of tenu’os iv’ with iv and v

Niggun #3: Der Beinoni

Spiritual Context: According to the Chabad path of Divine service, the ultimate position attainable for a person is to be what is called a beinoni. In Hebrew, beinoni literally means “average” or “in-between.” The term beinoni usually refers to someone who has equal merits and sins, yet the version of the beinoni as put forth in the Alter Rebbe’s magnum opus, the Sefer HaTanya, is completely different from the traditional understanding. In order to understand what
a beinoni is and why the Alter Rebbe’s version of it is so unique, we first need to understand the various differences between people’s spiritual standings as elucidated in *Sefer HaTanya*.

According to the *Sefer HaTanya*, there are five general categories of people: *tzadik v’tov lo* (a righteous person who prospers, alternatively a completely righteous person), *tzadik v’rah lo* (a righteous person who suffers, alternatively an incompletely righteous person), *rasha v’tov lo* (a wicked person who prospers), *rasha v’ra lo* (a wicked person who suffers), and the beinoni. The Alter Rebbe’s understanding of the tzadik and the rasha as detailed in chapters 10 and 11 of *Sefer HaTanya* respectively has less to do with the quality of life a person has and more to do with the spiritual nature of a person. The direct translation of *tzadik v’tov lo* is literally “a righteous person who has good to/for them” while the direct translation of *tzadik v’rah lo* is literally “a righteous person who has evil to/for them.” The Alter Rebbe understands both of these people as being void of any physical temptations or evil inclinations; neither of them would ever sin and both are imbued with a Divine perspective and inclination towards holiness. The only difference is that for the *tzadik v’ra lo*, there still lingers in them a fragment of evil, except that it is subjugated and nullified by the good, which is why they are referred to as “having evil to them” while for the *tzadik v’tov lo*, all of the evil within them has been transformed over to good, which is why they are referred to as “having good to them,” meaning only good. The way that this directly manifests is in their level of hatred for evil: the *tzadik v’ra lo* does not completely hate evil since there is a remnant of evil within them—albeit insignificant and inexpressible—while the *tzadik v’tov lo* hates evil with a consummate hatred since it has absolutely no place in their life.

On the opposite end of the spectrum lie the *rasha v’tov lo* and the *rasha v’ra lo*—two categories of people who do have evil within them and do express evil in their thought, speech,
and actions. For the rasha v’tov lo, while they will commit evil acts of varying degrees and varying intervals, there is still a remnant of good active within them and, as such, they will experience remorse and may even repent for their misdeeds. The rasha v’ra lo, on the other hand, will commit evil acts and never feel remorse; this is due to the fact that any remnant of good within them is completely nullified to evil. When it comes to articulating what a beinoni is, the Alter Rebbe asks an obvious question: if a beinoni is someone who has equal merits and sins, then why not just call them a rasha v’tov lo? It seems as if trying to define what a beinoni is ends up being more difficult than first thought.

It is in chapter 12 of Sefer HaTanya that the Alter Rebbe answers this question and in doing so, puts forth his model of Divine service according to Chabad chassidus:

“The beinoni is he in whom evil never attains enough power to capture the “small city,” (i.e. the body) so as to cloth itself in the body and make it sin. That is to say, the three “garments” of the animal soul, namely, thought, speech and action, originating in the kelipah, do not prevail within him over the divine soul to the extent of clothing themselves in the body…thereby causing them to sin and defiling them, G-d forbid.”

What this means to say is that the beinoni is not like a tzadik since they do possess an active animal soul with temptations and inclinations, yet they are neither like a rasha since that evil never finds expression in anyway shape or form. In other words, the beinoni struggles their entire life to overcome and suppress the evil within them and to only do good. According to Chabad scholar Rabbi Mendel Rubin, “The beinoni constantly confronts inner tension between confliction desires, between yearning, contemplation, action and emotion. But all of these

88 Likutei Amarim Tanya pg. 47
tensions are drawn together through a continued and constant effort to maintain the disciplined and joyful service of G-d in every aspect of life.”\(^{89}\)

Rabbi Rubin goes on further to speak about how this spiritual narrative is reflected in the overall mood of the nigun:

“Considering the beinoni’s struggles…you might expect the “Beinoni” nigun to be filled with striving and climbing, yearning and frustration, sharp highs and deep lows…While there are many Chabad melodies that do eloquently depict the ups and downs of the beinoni’s inner struggle, the “Beinoni” nigun does not seem to be one of them…Instead, this nigun exudes a confidence that is at once restrained and powerful. From the outset, its measured tones build slowly upward, and where other melodies have deep valleys, the “Beinoni” has ever so gentle gullies….it is notable for its calm stoicism rather than for searching self-confrontation, intense yearning, or the negotiation of tough challenges and exalted resolutions.”\(^{90}\)

In looking at the musical analysis of this nigun, we will see a clearer portrait of the defining characteristics that the beinoni possesses.

**Musical Analysis:** *Der Beinoni* was composed by famed chasidic composer Reb Aharon Charitonov of Nikolayev, Ukraine. Reb Aharon was a member of a family of well-known composers of Chabad nigunim who lived during the times of the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe. While this nigun might not necessarily have been composed with the image of the beinoni in mind, the Frierdiker Rebbe especially cherished this nigun and gave it the name *Der Beinoni*, saying that the nigun musically expresses the beinoni’s character. Rabbi Rubin states that the main thing that defines the beinoni is “…unwavering resolve and stamina. Resolve to see God’s mission through. Resolve not to let the obstacles defeat him. Resolve that he has the

\(^{90}\) ibid.
intellectual and emotional capacity, the vision and methodological know-how, to successfully achieve exactly what G-d wants of him. And with that resolve the beinoni marches forth, calmly and confidently, steadfastly progressing upward along the divine path of ordinary life.” In terms of how this resolution translates into the musical phrases of the nigun, he continues by stating:

“This is a very stable melody; there is no descent into uncertainty, no gesture toward approaching despair. It drives forward, pacing itself with measured strength…When it does roll slightly downward, it seems only to be gathering itself for the climb ahead. And even at its highest points, it never ascends into unbridled exuberance or ecstasy. Instead, its rising tones disclose a stirring triumph that is as disciplined as it is resolute, shining inwardly even as the beinoni drives onward…”

The modal structure of Der Beinoni is similar to Dalet Bavos, hovering mostly around E Ahavah Rabbah with shadings of a minor and D Ukrainian-Dorian. However, instead of stringing together short tenu’os like in the previous two nigunim, this nigun has longer phrases. It has a four-part form similar to Dalet Bavos, yet in labeling each section, we see that it can be broken down into ABCB (figure 27); while we did not seen this form in the previous two examples, this is actually a very common form for many nigunim. We can see how the measure numbers of each section match up in the score (figure 28.)

Figure 27- Form of Der Beinoni

91 ibid.
92 ibid.
The melody begins (figure 29) with a dotted eighth followed by a sixteenth on a D and then moves to the repeated E figure. Both the rhythmic figure and the D on the first beat stand
out against the consistent quarter note E’s on beats two through four. I perceive this as being a deliberate rhythmic and melodic device meant to offset the nigun from the very beginning. Being that the nigun is in E Ahavah Rabbah, we would expect the first measure to be something like a series of four repeated E quarter notes; instead, it begins with instability on the lower neighbor tone. In light of our understanding of the beinoni’s character, however, we can see this offsetting tone and rhythm as representing the idea of “displacement;” the beinoni is neither a tzadik nor a rasha, unable to find a completely stable place spiritually.

![Figure 29- A Section of Der Beinoni](image)

The nigun continues by hovering around the minor second between E and F, moving up to the G-sharp for a moment before descending back down the minor second. The augmented second between F and G-sharp is exploited for its emotional potency as the narrative of striving and climbing is expressed through the incremental build of the melody. The melody dips down to the D for a brief shade of Ukranian-Dorian before rising back up to the G-sharp, spelling out the emotionally potent augmented second once more. In measure four, we finally hear the repeated four quarter notes lacking in measure one, only now it’s on the A—the highest note of the nigun thus far. One could interpret this A as representing a brief movement towards a minor; the V-I motion from E to A supports this assumption. One could also argue that the collective range of measures three and four—D up to A—all fall under the D Ukranian-Dorian tenu’ah. Just like in
Dalet Bavos, the high A gives off a feeling of hope while the Ukranian-Dorian reinforces a slightly dark shading to the melody. The next two measures are an exact repetition of the first two, perhaps representing a reattempt at struggling to ascend, followed by the cadential tenu’ah of the A section: a dip down to the D with a minor seventh leap up to the C followed by a descending scalar pattern to the E. This leap is so far uncharacteristic of what has been a fairly steady, stepwise melodic structure and the scalar passage that follows this leap reinforces both the D Ukranian-Dorian supertonic mode and dark shading to the nigun. The final measure of the A section ends in a way reminiscent of the beginning: just as the first measure delays the E by beginning with the lower neighbor tone D, so too does the F delay the final E of the phrase. Unlike the first measure, however, in which this device is used to offset the E, the minor second resolution actually orients our ears towards the E. It also recontextualizes the extramusical association of yearning imbued in the minor second: the first time we heard it in the second measure it was part of an overall ascending trajectory towards self-transcendence, while in this cadential tenu’ah it points towards the E tonal center, which we will see has a strong connection to the identity of the beinoni.

The B section (figure 30) can be broken down into four sub-sections, each with their own unique modal flavor and narrative. The first three sub-sections open with the same rhythmic device that the first measure began with—the dotted eighth followed by a sixteenth—giving off the feeling of rhythmic instability. Each of the first three sub-sections can be split into two separate tenu’os: the first is characterized by more rhythmic and melodic variety while the second is rhythmically homogenous—a series of four quarter notes—and always has a descending melodic shape. One could look at these two contrasting tenu’os as an expanded version of the first measure: just as the first tenu’ah has jagged rhythmic followed by the more rhythmically stable
second tenu’ah, so too does beat one of the first measure begin with the offsetting rhythmic
device followed by a series of more stable marching quarter notes. The relationship between the
structure of these two tenu’os gives us a glimpse into the psycho-spiritual world of the beinoni,
one that is defined by oscillating between extremes of animalistic and Divine urgings, all the
while moving through various emotional states represented by the different modal regions of
each sub-section.

![Figure 30- B Section of Der Beinoni](image)

Opening with a leap up to the A, sub-section a opens in A minor, albeit briefly, before
descending with D Ukranian-Dorian. Sub-section b opens the same way as sub-section a, only
the A minor is further reinforced as opposed to just briefly visited. Sub-section c opens in a way
different to that of the previous two, suggesting D Ukranian-Dorian by spelling out a D minor
triad, and playing out with the exact same notes and rhythms as sub-section a. After hearing the
first three sub-sections, we can see how all three are tied together to create a larger sense of
musical narrative: sub-section a is characterized by modal ambiguity, seemingly opening with A
minor, but really being in D Ukranian-Dorian; sub-section b takes the opening of sub-section a
and follows through on the A minor, and sub-section c opens differently and reframes the tail
end of sub-section a in its proper modal context. Through this musical lens, we can see the idea
of clearing through the ambiguity and making sense and order of the modal jumble similar to the beinoni’s discernment between good and evil that is essential to him staying in good spiritual standing. As sub-section d unfolds with what will become the cadential tenu’ah for the rest of the nigun, we get a clearer sense of settling and orderly progression as opposed to the dynamic extremes of the cadential tenu’ah found in the A section.

The C section (figure 31) offers up new modal variety, imbalanced metrical phrases and elided cadences. The melody opens similarly to the B section with a leap from E to A and goes on to further establish A minor as the opening mode of the section. It does this through a series of repeated A’s set to a sixteenth followed by a dotted eighth—a rhythmic retrograde of the unsettled rhythmic figure found at the beginning of the A and B section. The repetition of this rhythm three times together with it being the retrograde version of the initial figure could possible represent the beinoni’s resolve to overcome his obstacles. This makes sense within the modal context as well: up until now, the modal scheme of the nigun has almost seemed to be pitting A minor against D Ukranian-Dorian and with the introduction of the C section, we hear the clearest declaration of A minor yet. One could look at the three main modes of this nigun—D Ukranian-Dorian, E Ahavah Rabbah, and a minor—as representing the balancing act that the beinoni has to live with. As explained in the analysis of Dalet Bavos and seen in this present analysis, the D Ukranian-Dorian represents the contrition over negative, earthly bound desires while the a minor represent the hope of achieving Divine consciousness. Between these two extremes lies the E Ahavah Rabbah, the intermediate mode, the beinoni, struggling between physical desires and Divine pursuits.
The C section represents the beinoni’s greatest yearnings to achieve transcendence, only to be met with the struggles from within. As the melody descends towards the E, the familiar Ahavah Rabbah is replaced with minor. This can symbolically represent two things: on the one hand, the beinoni is able to integrate these Divine strivings into his life, yet there is also the realization that the beinoni is not a tzadik—he has an evil inclination—and, therefore, he cannot live with these strivings in the same way that a tzadik can. This is why the e minor is experienced only briefly and when we do hear it, the meter is disrupted. The beinoni tries again to achieve transcendence of the physical by leaping up to the C and repeating the tenu’ah, yet the meter is disrupted once more and after yearning once more to stay on the A, falls down to the D, stuck with the knowledge that in his heart he will always be tethered to the physical. The C section goes to end with the cadential tenu’ah heard at the end of the B section, yet instead of ending in the normal way, it leaps up to the C similar to how it did at the end of the A section and elides with the beginning of the repetition. It’s almost as if the beinoni, frustrated with the outcome of the C section, tries once more to achieve Divine transcendence, only to be met with the same unfulfilled modal desires and metrical imbalance. The C section finally ends with the normal version of the cadential tenu’ah in E Ahavah Rabbah.
While one could say that the B section repeats merely to fulfill the formal expectations of the nigun, within the spiritual narrative, we can see the B section as a return to determined resolution and spiritual clarity. Nothing is done just “because,” so the fact that this section is repeated must mean something significant and different for the narrative. Even after the letdown of the C section, the beinoni continues in his life’s mission. The beinoni by definition will never be able to completely vanquish the evil that is within him, but it is through his determination, resolve, and persistence that he will be able to negotiate the complex spiritual landscape of Divine service.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we saw the various spiritual and musical parameters at work through three fundamental Chabad nigunim. In Shalosh Tenu’os, we saw how the idea of ratzo vashov and the spiral ascent model were expressed on many different levels in the analytical hierarchy (i.e. tenu’os, mode, pitch height, etc.) We also saw how chasidic leadership and spiritual lineage were expressed through the compositional choices that each of the composers/Rebbeim made. In Dalet Bavos, we experienced the fullest articulation of the Chabad philosophical approach through a dual spiritual-musical analysis. Using the Rebbe Rashab’s analysis as our guide, we used musical analysis to unearth the narrative hidden within each tenu’ah and fal. We saw how changes in spiritual emotions were translated into modal shifts, as well manipulations and repurposing of various tenu’os. Pitch height was used as a commentary to express the Chabad “mission statement” of creating a dwelling place for the Divine in the lowest realms. Lastly, in Der Beinoni, we saw how the personal struggle and story of the beinoni was expressed through modal manipulation and structuring of various tenu’os. The common factors between all of these
nigunim were the ways in which mode, pitch height, tenu’os (both the structuring of each individual tenu’ah and the interaction between various tenu’os across large-scale form), and faln were utilized to express levels of nuanced depth within an established spiritual narrative. With all this in mind, we will now be able to examine nigunim whose spiritual content are not so overt and to sense the devekus narrative hidden within their musical make-up.
Chapter Four: Nigunim with Hidden Spiritual Narratives

Having looked at three examples of nigunim with well-known spiritual narratives, we now have the tools to be able to examine nigunim that have no such revealed narratives. This is not to say that they have no narrative; as mentioned previously, every nigun has both musical and spiritual components, the spiritual components being the spiritual narrative behind the nigun’s unique musical structure. Regardless of whether we know the precise motivation behind the singing of a nigun, there is a narrative that was hidden in the hearts and minds of those that composed these nigunim. While it is impossible for us to know the exact details of the spiritual narrative that the chasid was experiencing, through musical parameters such as modal scales, pitch height, ornamentation, and the structuring of tenu’os and faln, we can get an idea of the general shape and expressive quality that the nigun possesses.

Before delving into our analyses, it would be worthwhile to examine how Ben-Moshe looks at devekus nigunim and the various types of characteristic melodic gestures that he identifies. In addition to providing musical description, he also provides somewhat of a spiritual description for each gesture as well; I will underline such spiritual descriptions for better clarification:

**Extension notes**: this first gesture is what he calls extension notes, notes that are repeated several times. These notes may appear at the beginning or end of a musical sentence, and often bridge between sentences. They also delay the progress of the melody, representing sensibility, spiritual depth, and are sometimes used to gather energy for an approaching ascent.

**Fanfares or extension signals**: characteristic fanfare figures are dotted eighth notes, triplets, sixteenth notes, sequences, arpeggios, etc. They delay the progress of the melody even though they are an integral part of it. Their fanfare-like nature stresses the ascent in devekus. They

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93 Ben-Moshe pgs. 74-75
appear at the beginning or the end of musical phrases, and bridge between phrases. A signal may also be made of a single note or a pair of notes that appear at the beginning of a section. We have already seen examples of extension signals at the beginning of the C section in *Der Beinoni*.

**Melodic oscillations around extension notes:** Extension notes are sometimes concealed within melodic oscillations that surround them and are part of the melody.

**Upward leaps:** Large leaps (between a fifth and an octave), usually appearing at the beginning of a section or a phrase, are used to highlight intense ratzo energy. We have already seen upward leaps used in *Dalet Bavos* during the beginning of the second half of the fourth portal.

**Identical melodic fragments:** They may appear in different nigunim, sometimes with some variation or in the form of sequences. As seen above, fragments of tenu’os have been shared across different nigunim (see the connection between *Shalosh Tenu’os* and *Dalet Bavos*) and within the same nigun (see the relationship between the four portals in *Dalet Bavos*).

Knowing how to identify these various melodic devices and their spiritual parallel will help aid us in constructing imagined spiritual narrative that while we may not know the particular details of, is present there nonetheless. At the end of each analysis, I will include a summary of my own personal take on the narrative behind each of the nigunim. This narrative will be based on the findings of the analysis, as well as my own personal feeling.

### Nigun #4: Devekus Tefilos Shabbos V’yontiv of the Alter Rebbe

**Spiritual Context:** As mentioned previously, in addition to being a tremendous scholar, the Alter Rebbe was a composer of nigunim. There are ten holy nigunim composed by the Alter Rebbe—one which we’ve already seen is *Dalet Bavos*—each possessing immense spiritual power and musical potency. This particular nigun, *Devekus Tefilos Shabbos V’yontiv*, though not as
widely sung as *Dalet Bavos*, is still considered among the ten holy nigunim. The Alter Rebbe used to sing this nigun during his personal prayers on the Sabbath (Shabbos) and holidays (yontiv). The nigun was sung by the Rebbe Rashab during his prayers as well. The title of the nigun also bespeaks something of how it is viewed in its cultural and religious setting as a devekus nigun. According to *Heichel Neginah*, here are two types of devekus nigunim: (1) a nigun that helps one achieve devekus and (2) a nigun coming from a state of devekus. In the first category, there is still the selfhood of a worshipper trying to achieve devekus while in the second category, complete selfhood has become subsumed by Godliness/Godly revelation in Divine unity. Given these two different categories, we can view Devekus Tefilos Shabbos V’yontiv as belonging to the latter category.

Two issues to address in looking at this nigun are the different lines of transmission that existed in passing it down and the various versions of it that exist as a result of this transmission. While it is known as one of the ten holiest nigunim, the tradition of how it was sung was actually lost for a time until the Rebbe Rashab revived it. One method of transmission came from the Rebbe Rashab himself in which he sat down with ten yeshiva students and taught it to them. One student, Choni Morozov, taught it to his two children, Mendel and Dovid Leib, who in turn made recordings of this nigun. Another method of transmission came through the Ukrainian town of Klimavitch where the Alter Rebbe’s brother resided. The two distinct traditions corroborate one another as to an accepted standard structure and flow of the nigun. Even so, various versions of this nigun exist; as a result of the Rebbe Rashab’s appropriation of Devekus for his own personal prayers, there are two main versions that exist on a macro level. The Alter Rebbe’s version has a form of ABCB as seen with Der Beinoni. The Rebbe Rashab’s added on two additional sections in the beginning and a new closing statement, resulting in the form [AB]CDED[F] (figure 32.)
On the micro level, hearing this nigun from multiple recorded sources reflects that there may not be such a thing as an “authentic version” of this nigun. This can be attributed to the general aesthetic of devekus nigunim to have multiple “versions.”

![Diagram of Devekus Tefillos Shabbos V’yontiv](image)

**Figure 32-** Form of *Devekus Tefillos Shabbos V’yontiv* of the Alter Rebbe

The tenu’os themselves may have different ways of being sung, as well as varying placements within the general form of the nigun. This is the nigun about which the Rebbe Rashab was known to have said “When one prays at length and one engages in Divine service, the nigun comes automatically.” This idea of the nigun “coming” as opposed to singing it reflects the general idea of devekus, that there is no self-identity of the worshipper to actively sing a nigun. The fact that it comes automatically means that it almost happens on its own. The passivity of the nigun’s performance is what most likely results in this nigun having so many various versions. The structure of the nigun, being that it is comprised of various tenu’os, lends itself to fragmentation, which could result in the switching of tenu’os, truncating a tenu’ah, breaking a tenu’ah down into smaller fragments and interspersing them among words of prayer. Many devekus nigunim were composed and utilized during prayers when the worshipper would be in a state of devekus. During this time, it was not uncommon to hear a continuously layered collage of prayer text and tenu’os. This concept has led me to the conclusion that devekus
nigunim can and should be view as a process by which the worshipper can palpably experience the central focus of his meditation or prayers through the melody. This process can help materialize the concepts expressed in the prayer text further into the worshipper’s framework of reality, allowing them to “perform” their devotional worship in real time as they experience it.

**Musical Analysis:** As can be seen in the score (figure 33), the sections highlighted in red belong to the Alter Rebbe while the opening and closing sections highlighted in blue belong to the Rebbe Rashab. Before beginning our formal analysis of this nigun, it would be worthwhile to discuss the topic of modal modulations in Jewish modal theory. In looking at the Jewish cantorial tradition, one can see many various formulas of modal modulation; these formulas are used to structure the chanting of certain prayers and can act as commentary on the text. In his work *The Sound of Sacred Time,* Cantor Andrew Bernard does a thorough analysis of the basic Jewish prayer modes and the various modulations that utilize these modes. For the sake of our analysis, I will mention two specific modal devices that he uses. The first is a modulation, which he defines as migrating from one mode to a different modal center.\(^{94}\) They may return to the original mode or lead into a completely new section. Contrasting with modulation is the idea of what he calls an “excursion.” He considers excursions a subcategory of modulations. They are short detours into a different mode that add variety or color. Excursions always return to the original mode.\(^{95}\)

Both modulations and excursions can either be continuing or contrasting. If they are continuing, then the chant migrates along a continuum of overlapping modal and tonal scales, similar to the relationship between relative major and minor keys in Western music. An example\(^{96}\) given by Bernard of a continuing modulation is called the “bridge” modulation (figure 33.) The name bridge modulation is due to its symmetrical arch form. In the bridge modulation,

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\(^{94}\) Bernard pg. 77
\(^{95}\) ibid. pg. 78
\(^{96}\) ibid. pg. 83
the chant begins on Ahavah Rabbah (for the sake of this study we will say E Ahavah Rabbah,) moves to what he calls Magein Avot (what I refer to in this study as minor) in A, then to C Major, back to A Magein Avot, and returning to E Ahavah Rabbah. If we were to assign roman numerals to each of the individual modes in the bridge modulation, we might see something like I–iv–VI–iv–I.

![Figure 33- Modal Layout of “Bridge” Modulation](image)

Contrasting modulations/excursions require a chromatic shift (e.g. moving to the parallel minor key) and introduce a sudden change of color. An example given by Bernard is called the Sim Shalom Maneuver (figure 34), called such due to its use in the prayer for peace by the same name. It begins in Ahavah Rabbah similar to the bridge modulation (again I will use E Ahavah Rabbah), and also like in the bridge modulation, moves to a mode beginning on the fourth scale degree. However, unlike the bridge modulation, we hear A Major as opposed to Magein Avot; in doing so, the C-natural found in E Ahavah Rabbah is sharpened. From A Major, we then make our way back to E Ahavah Rabbah by modulating to A Ukrainian-Dorian. In doing so, the C-sharp is made natural again, yet we now have the chromatic D-sharp, which was originally D-natural in E Ahavah Rabbah. In Jewish modal theory, parallel Ukrainian-Dorian and Magein Avot modes can move back and forth between each other with ease due to their sharing

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97 ibid.
98 ibid. pp. 90-91
six out of seven pitches. Since that is the case, the A Ukrainian-Dorian acts as the A Magein Avot does in the bridge modulation and is used to modulate back to E Ahavah Rabbah. If we were to assign roman numerals to each of the individual modes in the Sim Shalom maneuver, we might see something like I–IV–iv–I.

![Modal Layout of Sim Shalom Maneuver](image)

In looking at *Devekus Tefilos Shabbos V’yontiv*, we will see that both the Alter Rebbe’s version (figure 35) and the version that includes the Rebbe Rashab’s additional tenu’os (figure 36) use aspects of these modulatory/excursion devices, yet in a less formulaic way.

![Score of Alter Rebbe’s version](image)
Figure 36- Score of version that includes Rebbe Rashab’s tenu’os
In the recordings made by the Morosov brothers, Mendel sings only the tenu’os of the Alter Rebbe while Dovid Leib sings the tenu’os of the Rebbe Rashab. In looking at Mendel’s recording first, we see that the first tenu’ah (figure 37) opens up in C Major with a simple descending stepwise motive of E-D-C. After repeating once more, we hear a second motive that steps up to F, down to D, and then resolves from the D down to the C. The structuring of these motives is similar to the sub-section a of the Besht’s tenu’ah in Shalosh Tenu’os. In sub-section a, the form of the tenu’os was i-i-ii-i, in the Alter Rebbe’s first tenu’ah it’s i-i-ii-i’. Also, the melodic motion of both the Besht’s and Alter Rebbe’s tenu’os is similar: the first two motives are descending, the third ascends, and the fourth descends. The significance of this connection could perhaps be to highlight slight shadings of a ratzo vashov present in the first half of the Alter Rebbe’s tenu’ah. This makes sense in the context of the entire tenu’ah; the melody returns to tenu’ah ii and then expands outwards reaching up to the G and down to the C in tenu’ah ii’/iii. After returning to tenu’ah ii, it repeats tenu’ah i’ to ends the overall first tenu’ah of the Alter Rebbe.

![Figure 37- Alter Rebbe’s first tenu’ah as sung by Mendel Morosov](image)

The overall nature of this first tenu’ah is very placid. The Major mode provides us with a bright color and the gestures build slowly and stepwise. The range is fairly narrow—never reaching beyond a fifth—and develops slowly. Many of the tenu’os are either repeated in their entirety or expanded upon to create an overall sense of uniformity. There is very little
ornamentation, making the melodic lines very clear and free of any sense of intensity. When an ornament is used, it is very sparingly and it is no more than a note or two, only occurring towards the halfway mark and ending point of the tenu’ah. All of these musical factors combined give us the sense of serenity and spiritual calm. This isn’t a devekus that is full of fire and upward aspirations yearning to break free. It gives off the sense of having arrived at where you want to be, being fully present and serene in the moment.

The second tenu’ah (figure 38) takes a sudden modal turn to the parallel minor, similar to the Sim Shalom Maneuver. It begins with a D on the downbeat prefaced by a minor second configuration from the E-flat above it. The D expands back up to the E-flat, jumps a major third to G, back to the E-flat, and steps down to C via a D passing tone. The second half of the tenu’ah has a basic melodic contour of C-D-Eb-D-C embellished with escape tones, a pitch bend that plays with the minor second relationship of D to Eb, and a 32nd note melodic oscillation around D/C filled with swallowed or silent notes marked by X’s. This tenu’ah is different from the first in many ways. The turn to the parallel minor creates a modal darkening that we immediately feel with the introduction of the E-flat. The first tenu’ah is made up of smaller tenu’os while the second tenu’ah is comprised of what are essentially two long phrases. These elongated phrases imbue the melody with a sense of dramatic intensity and power. Even though the range appears to be the same as the first tenu’ah, the way in which the melody is saturated with ornamentation creates a sense of spontaneity and unrest. The melodic oscillation extension towards the end of the tenu’ah is especially powerful, imbuing the melody with a sense of yearning for the final C.

![Figure 38](image)

**Figure 38**- Alter Rebbe’s second tenu’ah as sung by Mendel Morosov
As mentioned above, extension notes are used to gather energy for an approaching ascent, which we get in the third tenu’ah (figure 39.) Beginning on G and dipping down briefly to F-sharp, the melody ascends to A and makes its way down to D through the G and F-sharp as well. After touching on the D, the melody rises back to F-sharp, descends through Eb-D-C, and establishes a D tonal center through extension notes on D. It is very clear from this melodic section that we are establishing D Ahavah Rabbah as the new mode of the tenu’ah. As mentioned above, parallel Magein Avot (minor) and Ukrainian-Dorian modes can substitute each other with ease; this seems to be the case in this tenu’ah with the shift from C minor to C Ukrainian-Dorian.

As mentioned previously, Ukrainian-Dorian is a relative mode to Ahavah Rabbah, possessing the same pitch structure only starting on the seventh scale degree. Within this context, the move the D Ahavah Rabbah makes sense. After a repetition of the opening of the tenu’ah, the melody makes a brief excursion to C Ukrainian-Dorian by establishing a C tonal center via extension notes. After returning to D Ahavah Rabbah, the third tenu’ah finishes with a direct quote of the Alter Rebbe’s second tenu’ah, establishing the modal scheme of the third tenu’ah as Ahavah Rabbah–Ukrainain-Dorian–Ahavah Rabbah–Ukrainain-Dorian. Other versions have the entire third tenu’ah repeating itself before repeating the second tenu’ah as the closing section.

Figure 39- Alter Rebbe’s third tenu’ah as sung by Mendel Morosov
The melodic sequences at the beginning of the third tenu’ah seems to give off a dancing feel as we move our way through Ahavah Rabbah. As mentioned above, these sequences are meant to delay the progress of the melody and stress an ascent in devekus. While we don’t hear an increased flow of ornamentation, the melodic structure itself implies the intensifying of devekus. Since it has already been established that this is not a heavily ornamented nigun, the lack of zechtsintuls and other such intensified melodic oscillations makes sense. The extension notes on D and C between the melodic sequences break up the rhythmic activity and provides us with moments of rest. They imply a sense of spiritual depth and stability, allowing us to hear the shifting back and forth between Ahavah Rabbah and the relative Ukranian-Dorian.

Dovid Leib’s recordings show us how the Rebbe Rashab structured his tenu’os to fit with the aesthetic of the Alter Rebbe’s version. In the first tenu’ah (figure 40), it clearly opens in G Ahavah Rabbah. While we don’t hear the augmented second between the A-flat and B that is normally needed to establish this mode, the juxtaposition of B-natural with E-flat and F give off that major/minor feel that Ahavah Rabbah tends to have. Even though I consider this tenu’ah to be in G Ahavah Rabbah, the majority of this tenu’ah is made up of extension notes on D, which would seem to imply a D modal center. There seems to be a modal ambiguity present in this tenu’ah that wasn’t really present in either of the Alter Rebbe’s tenu’os. A difference that exists between the first tenu’ah of the Rebbe Rashab and that of the Alter Rebbe is the length of the opening motive; the Alter Rebbe’s is very brief, while the Rebbe Rashab’s is slightly longer. In addition, there is a clear metrical drive to the Rebbe Rashab’s tenu’ah as opposed to the broken up tenu’ah of the Alter Rebbe.
The second tenu’ah (figure 41) seems to switch from G Ahavah Rabbah to c minor. The opening of this second tenu’ah plays around the notes C-D-Eb-G, giving more prominence to the D to G relationship as opposed to the C, yet the halfway point of the tenu’ah cadences with a strong C modal center established by a double neighbor tone figuration of C-D-C-Bb-C. The beginning of the second half of the tenu’ah embellishes the opening of the tenu’ah by jumping from D to Bb before landing on a set of G extension notes, implying a G modal center. The tenu’ah then closes out in the same way it did at the end of the first half, cadencing in c minor.

Taking the subsequent C Major tenu’ah of the Alter Rebbe into consideration, we begin to see how these tenu’os fit into a larger modulatory form. The Rebbe Rashab’s first tenu’ah begins in G Ahavah Rabbah and shifts to the second tenu’ah in c minor. Within this context, the move to the C Major of the Alter Rebbe’s first tenu’ah strengthens the modal shift. One possible interpretation of how the Rebbe Rashab’s opening two tenu’os fit into the devekus narrative is that they provide us with the spiritual build up necessary to achieve that “having arrived” feeling of the Alter Rebbe’s tenu’ah. The G Ahavah Rabbah provides tremendous modal context for the Alter Rebbe’s version of the nigun, allows us to see the journey needed in order to arrive at the peaceful serenity that the Alter Rebbe’s nigun begins with.
The closing tenu’ah (figure 42) of the Rebbe Rashab was nearly impossible to transcribe from the Dovid Leib recording; Dovid Leib’s squeaky voice in combination with the poor recording quality make it practically inaudible and unintelligible for anyone trying to transcribe it. I opted instead for a recording from Dovid Horowitz, known in Lubavitch circles for his knowledge of nigonim. The tenu’ah is divided into two sections, the first of which is repeated before ending with the second. The entire tenu’ah is in D Ahavah Rabbah, only touching at Ukrainian-Dorian at the beginning of the second half. The tenu’ah opens with a slight reference back to the Alter Rebbe’s first tenu’ah with a descending motive from F-sharp to D. As opposed to the Alter Rebbe’s first tenu’ah, the melody moves up to the A. It then elaborates upon a motivic cell taken from the Rebbe Rashab’s first tenu’ah at the end of the first system, only this time it descends in stepwise motion down from the A through the entire D Ahavah Rabbah tetrachord of A-G-F#-Eb-D. The second half of the tenu’ah begins in Ukrainian-Dorian as mentioned before and then idiomatically moves back up to Ahavah Rabbah. It briefly establishes G as a tonal center through a double neighbor tone of G-F#-G-A-G, thus exhibiting the three main modes that we have heard throughout the entire nigun: C Ukrainian-Dorian/minor, D Ahavah Rabbah, g minor. The tenu’ah ends with a strong D Ahavah Rabbah feel. In comparing the Alter Rebbe’s tenu’os with the Rebbe Rashab’s tenu’os, the Rebbe Rashab’s tenu’os tend to have more of a metrical drive to them as opposed to the fragmented feel of the Alter Rebbe’s first tenu’ah and the rubato feel of
the second tenu’ah. The Rebbe Rashab’s tenu’os also tend to follow the “rules” of modal theory, exploring the Ahavah Rabbah and the two modes complimentary to it: the relative Ukrainian-Dorian and minor. The Alter Rebbe’s tenu’os, on the other hand, do seem a bit more adventurous with the opening tenu’ah in C Major and the other two tenu’os don’t seem to have as strong of a D Ahavah Rabbah feel as the last tenu’ah of the Rebbe Rashab does. While registral build doesn’t play as much of a role in defining this narrative as in the nigunim of chapter three, the modal excursions, exacting use of ornamentation, presence or lacking of metrical pulse in the structuring of the tenu’os, and general melodic shape of the tenu’os all are indicative of an internal narrative at work.

Figure 42- Rebbe Rashab’s closing tenu’ah as performed by Dovid Horowitz

Summary of Spiritual Narrative: There are two narratives that emerge from an analysis of Devekus Tefillos Shabbos V’yontiv: the Alter Rebbe’s version and the version with the Rebbe Rashab’s additional tenu’os. The beginning of the Alter Rebbe’s version essentially presents three different spiritual states. The first tenu’ah expresses serenity emerging from having achieved a state of devekus, the second tenu’ah expresses intense yearning and power, and the third tenu’ah expresses a heightening of quality and reach in the devekus. Overall, I can imagine this nigun having dual functions: the first being to express the spiritual pleasure experienced in the words of Sabbath prayers and the second being the yearning to experience even deeper and higher levels of spiritual pleasure as we progress in the prayer service. The Rebbe Rashab’s
additions take this narrative and frame it, articulating the narrative potential in this nigun in a more palpable format. The first tenu’ah’s fixation on framing the D through repetition in addition to the metrical drive and narrow register are indicative of the stepwise form of spiritual work required to achieve the state of spiritual pleasure experienced in the beginning of the Alter Rebbe’s first tenu’ah. The higher register more rubato feel present in the Rebbe Rashab’s second tenu’ah seem to indicate that we are close to reaching a heightened state of devekus, which is then realized with the Alter Rebbe’s first tenu’ah. The Rebbe Rashab’s final tenu’ah generally stays in the lower register and utilizes the common modal cadential device of shifting to the relative Ukrainian-Dorian before finishing the tenu’ah. The feeling I get from this tenu’ah is that the purpose of prayer in Chabad spiritual service is to draw the spiritual pleasure down into the non-prayer times (i.e. the lower realms.)

Nigun #5: Nigun Devekus of the Tzemach Tzedek

**Spiritual Context:** The Tzemach Tzedek (1789-1866)—also named Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson—was the grandson of the Alter Rebbe and third Rebbe of the Chabad Lubavitch dynasty. Among the seven rebbes of Chabad, he and the Alter Rebbe are the only two leaders of the movement who actively composed their own nigunim. In *Sefer HaNigunim*, this nigun devekus attributed to the Tzemach Tzedek is transcribed with meticulous detail, paying special attention to its ornamentation. While a written transcription leaves much to be desired in terms of specific sonic qualities, when paired together with a recorded performance of the nigun from *Heichel Neginah* a much clearer picture of this nigun can be seen. Upon closer examination of the written and recorded sources, one cannot help but notice that there are some major inconsistencies between the two: certain ornaments are different, repetitions found in the
manuscript are left out of the recorded version, and melodic contour varies drastically. These incongruities do not, however, hurt the integrity of the nigunim, but rather highlight the variety found in devekus nigunim. In a sense, it is almost inconsequential whether or not there is a clear tradition of musical transmission with this nigun, what matters most is the individual feelings of devekus as expressed through the music.

Musical Analysis: Nigun Devekus is an excellent example of how flexible the various musical parameters of devekus nigunim are. In comparing both the Sefer HaNigunim (figure 43) and the Heichel Neginah (figure 44) versions, we can see on multiple levels how different these nigunim are, which is surprising since one would expect for a nigun with such an illustrious composer as the third Lubavitcher Rebbe that there would be a tradition of a “definite” or “authentic” version. It is through the variation in musical parameters that we can see differences in how the spiritual narrative unfolds in each version of the nigun.

Beginning on the macro level, we find that the forms for both versions vary drastically. The form found in the Sefer HaNigunim version (figure 45) is ABBCDEFF while the form found in the Heichel Neginah version (figure 46) is AABBCDEEE. While on the surface, these variations in form may not seem so extreme, comparing each section, we find that certain faln are substituted and used in different places: while both the A and B fal match up, the C (blue) and D (red) faln of Sefer HaNigunim end up being the D and E faln in Heichel Neginah respectively, the E fal in Sefer HaNigunim isn’t even found in the Heichel Neginah version, and the F (green) fal in Sefer HaNigunim is used as the C fal in Heichel Neginah. We can see from this how faln are used almost like puzzle pieces to create what can potentially be endless versions of this nigun, something that we have already established as being characteristic of
devekus nigunim. It is plausible that the difference in traditions came from the practice of arranging the faln to fit the personalized spiritual narrative of the chasid experience devekus.

Figure 43- Score of Nigun Devekus of the Tzemach Tzedek Sefer HaNigunim Version
Figure 44- Score of Nigun Devekus of the Tzemach Tzedek Heichel Neginah Version
In addition to variety in the structuring of fa’ln, we also find variety in the structuring of tenu’os as well. While the various tenu’os that make up each fa’l are parallel between the two different versions, we find that in the Sefer HaNigunim version there is a single tenu’ah iii used for the cadential formula (figure 47) while in Heichel Neginah (figure 48) three are used: a single tenu’ah ii repeated twice followed by the an elongated version of tenu’ah iii used in Sefer HaNigunim.

iii (cadential formula)

Figure 47- Cadential tenu’ah Sefer HaNigunim Version

ii (cadential formula)

Figure 48- Cadential tenu’os Heichel Neginah Version
We also find that there are no tenu’os that line up perfectly between the two versions.

One can see how tenu’ah iii (figure 49) according to Sefer HaNigunim is much short than tenu’ah iii (figure 50) in Heichel Neginah. Another example is found in comparing tenu’ah vi (figure 51) of Sefer HaNigunim and tenu’ah viii (figure 52) in Heichel Neginah. This variation is due to the heavy use of ornamentation in the form of fanfares, extension signals, and melodic oscillations.

![iii (cadential formula)](image)

**Figure 49-** Tenu’ah iii Sefer HaNigunim

![iii](image)

**Figure 50-** Tenu’ah iii Heichel Neginah

![vi](image)

**Figure 51-** Tenu’ah vi Sefer HaNigunim

![viii](image)

**Figure 52-** Tenu’ah viii Heichel Neginah

If we strip away the various melodic oscillations and look mainly at the extension notes and notes essential to the mode, a basic structural skeleton of pitches emerges, shedding light on melodic progression throughout both version. The Sefer HaNigunim version (figure 53) begins with an overall range of a fifth for the A section, expands to an octave in the B section, and
expands slightly further to a Major ninth in the C section. There is a registral contraction back to a fifth in the D section, followed by a return to the octave in the E section, and finishes with a minor sixth in the F section. The lower note of the minor sixth is an E natural, the first and only time we experience this note in the entire nigun. Aside from the second appearance of the octave in the stand-alone E section, there is an overall clear sense of registral build throughout the nigun.

Contrast this with the Heichel Neginah version (figure 54,) which has the same range for the A and B section, yet introduces the minor sixth with the E natural in the C section. From this minor sixth, the register greatly expands up to the Major ninth in the D section, reaching up to the G. In both versions, each section with the Major ninth—the C section in Sefer HaNigunim and
the D section in *Heichel Neginah*—are only heard once, perhaps not to exhaust the range of the nigun too much. The nigun ends with the range of a perfect fifth in the E section.

![Figure 54- Structural Notes for Heichel Neginah version](image)

From comparing the two different versions we can see how modal variations occur throughout the nigun. In the *Sefer HaNigunim* version, the overall modal scheme moves between f minor and f (Ukrainian-) Dorian a lot more freely during ABBC. From the D section and onward, we tend to hear tenu’os in f minor for the most part, only briefly hinting at Ab Major in tenu’ah vii. In the *Heichel Neginah* version, due to the extended cadential formula [ii-ii-iii] we hear a lot more hints of Ab Major with the repeated tenu’ah ii. In the B section, we hear a mixture of c minor/f Ukrainian-Dorian, along with Ab Major and f minor. The C section is completely in f minor while the D section returns to F (Ukrainian-) Dorian, Ab Major, and f minor. The final E section is in f minor, only giving us a brief moment of Ab Major at the
conclusion of the first ending, but resolving the nigun in f minor in the final cadence. Overall, the *Sefer HaNigunim* tends to have more of a Ukrainian-Dorian sound while the *Heichel Neginah* version feels more like it is in f minor. In *Sefer HaNigunim* (figure 55), tenu’os v and v’ both clearly highlight the B natural while tenu’os v, v’, and v’’ in *Heichel Neginah* (figure 56) do not.

**Figure 55-** Tenu’os v and v’ from *Sefer HaNigunim*

**Figure 56-** Tenu’os v, v’, and v’’ from *Heichel Neginah*

Overall, the *Sefer HaNigunim* version tends to get really high quickly, reaching its highest note by C. From that point onward, it seems as if the last half of the nigun sort of wanders around f minor/Ukrainian-Dorian. It does make an attempt to climb registrally by reaching up to the high F in the E and F sections, yet it never seems to achieve the dramatic power that it had in the C section. The *Heichel Neginah* version, on the other hand, seems to have be better paced, saving the high G for the penultimate D section. The D section (C section
in the *Sefer HaNigunim* version) seems to be structured slightly differently, extending the descending scalar passages. The overall slowly pacing of the *Heichel Neginah* version seems to even be manifest in the elongating of the cadential tenu’ah both in the amount of tenu’os that are used (ii-ii-iii of *Heichel Neginah* versus iii in *Sefer HaNigunim*) and the lengthening of tenu’ah iii as seen above in figure 50. While the *Heichel Neginah* version seems to be better paced, there is more modal variety in the *Sefer HaNigunim* version, switching out f minor for Ukrainian-Dorian. This modal shift imbues the nigun with a darker mood, perhaps indicating a more intense form of devekus. Modally, I believe the *Heichel Neginah* version tends to exhibit the idea of being settled through the lack of Ukrainian-Dorian and the preponderance of A-flat Major in the extended cadential formula. We can see from how mode, pitch register, ornamentation, tenu’os, and faln are used that two differing devekus narratives can be expressed through the same nigun.

**Summary of Spiritual Narrative:** Just like with *Devekus Tefillos Shabbos V’yontiv*, there are two narratives at work here due to the two different versions. In the *Sefer HaNigunim* version, the narrative is essentially darker due to the moments of Ukrainian-Dorian. There is a more intense build up of devekus closer to the beginning of the nigun, which quickly dissipates and later on meanders around for the remainder of the nigun. While there are moments where it climbs registrally, we never get the feeling that the devekus was achieved in as strong of a form as in the C section. In the *Heichel Neginah* version, due to the pacing, the devekus seems to be more mature, building to a certain point and then falling in a “descent for the sake of the ascent” fashion. The rise up to the high G in the D section indicates achieving a higher level of devekus; the fact that the D section in *Heichel Neginah* is structurally longer than its’ C section parallel in the *Sefer HaNigunim* version seems to indicate a expansive flow of spiritual pleasure. The lack of Ukrainian-Dorian in the parallel sections in *Sefer HaNigunim* seems to indicate less dark
intensity, something reflected in the Major-feel sections of the longer cadence. The longer cadence, similar to the elongated D section, seems to indicate either a) more mature devekus or b) more effort to draw down the spiritual levels of devekus into the consciousness of the singer.

**Nigun #6: Reb Asher (Grossman) Nikolayever’s Nigun**

**Spiritual Context:** The very roots of chasidic nigunim came from various shepherd songs and folk songs that the first schools of chasidim heard and picked up in their travels. This active display of cultural assimilation gives rise to a very poignant question: how is it that a demographic so strongly in favor of retaining their cultural values would incorporate foreign entities, something that seems completely antithetical to their self-preservation? The answer lies in an understanding of the mystical concept of tikkun, literally “fixing.”

As mentioned previously, the world is comprised of various spiritual concealments or shells called kelipos; were it not for the kelipos, we would be able to see how everything is truly a part of and one with the Divine. However, since the kelipos are prevalent in this world, we see reality as it is within physical nature. Among the physical darkness of the kelipos, however, exists what are called nitzutzos, sparks of Divinity that once belonged to a now fractured realm of holiness. This realm of holiness existed wholly prior to the prevalence of the kelipos, yet now that this fracturing occurred, it provides spiritual nourishment and energy to the kelipos. According to chassidus, it is the job of humanity to extricate these nitzutzos through engaging with physicality and restore them to the realm of Holiness by utilizing their energy for a Divine purpose. One must be wary though, since within the kelipos exist two specific categories. The first are the three completely impure kelipos called shlashos kelipos tameies that trap the nitzutzos in a permanent state of “exile.” The second category is called kelipas nogah, literally a
kelipah that “shines,” meaning that depending on whether or not a person utilizes the physical thing for a Divine purpose, the nitzutzos will either remain imprisoned in the kelipah or redeemed to the realm of Holiness. While everyone can redeem the nitzutzos from kelipas nogah, albeit with the proper intention, only a saintly person of tremendous holiness called a tzadik can interact with the three completely impure kelipos; otherwise a normal person would fall victim to the darkness of the kelipos. It is through an understanding of the general process of tikkun that we can understand the seeming incongruity in preservation versus progress: to the chasidic community, various melodies or styles from non-Jewish sources may- with the proper intent or through one with the necessary spiritual character and standing - be adapted into the Jewish musical canon via an active cultural assimilation, referred to by Ellen Koskoff as 'musical tikkun'.

Koskoff describes the act of musical tikkun as a four-step process. The first step, as mentioned above, is that a person with the appropriate spiritual qualifications must perceive the Divine spark within the music; this means that when hearing the song as it is in its source, the chasid becomes spiritual aroused from the nitzutzos hidden within the kelipah of the song. Secondly, one must claim the song as his own; this can be accomplished through either “buying” it from the original “owner” (composer), tricking the owner into giving it to them, or any other sort of act of acquisition. After this process occurs and the melody is transferred over to the one acquiring it, the individual is then considered to be the song's “savior.”

Once the song has been transferred over to the ownership of its new savior, the song must be “opened up” to let the Divine spark within it rise back up to the realm of holiness. This can be accomplished by removing any song texts that may have been associated with the

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99 Koskoff pgs. 76-79
melody, allowing for the song to become the “pen of the soul.” In addition to textual exchange, the melody may also go through some alterations, usually by increasing or decreasing the intervallic spacing of the melody or by even adding on an additional section that is based on the original melody. It is during this step that the spark takes shape in the form of a spiritual narrative that is then shone through the lens of the music. Once that occurs, every musical parameter present in the song will be rearranged and take form around this spiritual narrative.

The fourth and final step is the stylization of the nigun to make it sound more chasidic through various performance practices such as ornamentation, accents, phrasings, manipulation of time, and sometimes slight pitch alteration. This stylization is generally seen as coming from the creativity of the nigun's performer, allowing the singer to take part in a real-time compositional process that gives the nigun their own perspective on the meditation or spiritual feeling. This process of musical tikkun plays a huge role in understanding how Reb Asher Nikolayever’s nigun came to become part of the canon of Chabad neginah.

Reb Asher Grossman was a chasid during the times of the fourth Rebbe, the Rebbe Maharash, Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn (1834-1882), as well as the Rebbe Rashab. He was a shochet (ritual slaughterer) who lived in the city of Nikolayev, which is the reason why he was sometimes known as Reb Asher Nikolayever. He was also a talented baal menagen. The story behind the nigun is that he was once at a wedding for family friends in Kiev. While there, he heard the band play a waltz and was instantly overwhelmed by it. He sang the song as a nigun in front of the Rebbe Rashab, who was pleased by its nostalgic melodies and repetitive themes. The Rebbe Rashab told Reb Asher that “with this nigun, one can daven (pray) well.

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100 “Master of Song” (Heb.) Someone who is a baal menagen is expected to not only have a good voice and feel for nigunim, but they are expected to remember the nigun in every detail (falt, tenu’os, zechtsintuls, etc.)
One can rinse out the vessel very well (i.e. the body) with passionate tears. It aids one in expanding the heart.”101 Upon his return back to Nikolayev, Reb Asher sang the nigun for Reb Aharon Charitonow, famed baal menagen and composer of Der Beinoni. Reb Aharon took the waltz, added on the opening phrase and some embellishments, effectively turning it into the nigun that we know today. Later on, Reb Asher sang Reb Aharon’s version of the nigun in front of the Rebbe Rashab, who remarked that “in this nigun is reflected how a chasid feels lost because of his deeds and how he hopes for assistance from his Rebbe.”102 When Reb Asher repeated the words of the Rebbe Rashab to Reb Aharon, Reb Aharon replied “the Rebbe sees how much effort this nigun cost me deep in my heart.” The Rebbe Rashab later remarked about this particular nigun that it aids one in achieving devekus and his son, the Frierdiker Rebbe, remarked that this nigun represents the spiritual narrative of tikkun.103

Musical Analysis: While most Lubavitcher chasidim only know Reb Asher's Nikolayever's nigun as it is post-recomposition, Chabad scholar Rabbi Simon Jacobson told me that his father-in-law, Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Gansbourg—a well known baal menagen for the Rebbe—knew the original waltz and taught it to him. Rabbi Jacobson's performance of the original Kiev waltz (figure 57) allows one the opportunity to see musical tikkun at work.

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101 Heichel Neginah
102 ibid.
103 ibid.
The form of the waltz is fairly straightforward, divided equally into an A and B section. Each section is further divided into two sub-sections each four measures long. The modal scheme of the melody seems to hover back and forth between b minor and F# Ahavah Rabbah. The first sub-section opens up with an octave that then descends to the fourth scale degree B, followed by the second sub-section, rising from the A-sharp to C-sharp and then descends stepwise down to the F-sharp. The first time through the A section features some rhythmic variation as the melody slightly lifts from F-sharp to A-sharp while the second ending settles on the F-sharp. The B section opens a smaller leap of a fourth from the F-sharp to the B and then turns back down to E, the lowest note in the entire melody. After repeating this leaping figure once more, we hear the material from the second sub-section of the A section, only down a third. The B section ends similarly to how the A section ended.

By sensing something deeper in the waltz and bringing the tune to the Rebbe Rashab, Reb Asher was accomplishing the first two steps of musical tikkun. While Reb Asher himself may or may not have been a tzadik, we know for sure that the Rebbe Rashab was considered the

Figure 57- Kiev Waltz According to Rabbi Simon Jacobson
foremost spiritual authority in Lubavitch at that time and as such, having the Rebbe Rashab’s approval was paramount to this waltz becoming a nigun. Once the waltz was given over to Reb Aharon, the third step of musical tikkun could take place. This third step is broken down into sub-steps, the first of which was most likely isolating the various parts of the waltz into separate tenu’os. Breaking down the waltz into separate tenu’os (figure 58) was a vital step in the process since it was only then that each tenu’ah could be rearranged and even recomposed to fit the framework of the spiritual narrative. In total, five tenu’os were identified that were then recomposed into the nigun.

![Figure 58: Kiev Waltz Tenu’os](image)

Turning our attention to Reb Aharon’s reworking (figure 59), we see a nigun that appears to be completely different from the waltz, seemingly to only vaguely resemble its previous incarnation. To begin with, Rabbi Jacobson sung the waltz much faster than the accepted tempo of the nigun; in *Sefer HaNigunim*, this nigun is marked andante. This generally
fits with the concept that Chabad meditation is one that is meant to develop slowly, resulting in a vast majority of its nigunim being slow. The opening figure begins with a sustained F#, which is functioning as a V of B minor, the same function that the first note of the waltz had as well. One could suggest that by lingering on the F-sharp, the nigun from the outset began with contemplation as opposed to the brisk movement of the waltz. The F-sharp jumps up a sixth, followed by two steps down and a step back up; this motive appears to be a variation on the 1st tenu’ah of the waltz (figure 60,) retaining the similar descending scalar motion. After its initial statement, tenu’ah i repeats itself two more times in a downward pattern that spells out an F-sharp Major chord and establishes the F-sharp Ahavah Rabbah mode as opposed to the b minor that the waltz began with. The change in mode seems to reflect a change in the mood of the nigun from the waltz. Tenu’ah ii that follows (figure 61) is a clear quote of the first ending of the B section from the waltz with a slight variation in how it ends. In addition, we find that the second ending of the waltz’s B section is used as the cadential tenu’ah (figure 62), which is similar to the way that the waltz uses it.
Figure 59 - Score of Reb Asher Nikolayever’s Nigun

Figure 60 - Waltz’s 1st tenu’ah compared to tenu’os i, i’, and i” of nigun
The B section of the nigun opens with two statements of tenu‘ah iii (figure 63), which is a variation on the 4th tenu‘ah found in the B section of the waltz. Tenu‘ah iii splits the difference between the F-sharp and B found at the beginning of the fourth tenu‘ah found in the waltz. By narrowing its pitch range from a fifth to a third to establish a brief moment of E Ukrainian-Dorian and dulling down its rhythmic bounce before ending with the cadential tenu‘ah. The “toning down” both in terms of pitch and rhythm of the B section is mostly likely coming from the idea in Chabad meditation of going through a step-by-step progression as opposed to making major leaps. At this moment in the nigun, the form of the nigun has essentially mirrored the form of the waltz.
Perhaps therefore when the C section opens with a signal tone B, it seems to come out of nowhere, having no basis on the waltz at all. However, when compared (figure 64) to the first ending of the waltz, we can see that the pitch material is embedded in the second tenu’ah of the waltz, albeit out of context and reworked rhythmically. Its function in the formal structure of the nigun is to reinforce the nigun's base in F-sharp Ahavah Rabbah and in regards to a meditative narrative, to perhaps gain a clearer comprehension of those concepts and emotions that had already been expressed in the A and B section. After reinforcing the F-sharp Ahavah Rabbah with tenu’os iv, iv’, and iv’’, the C section ends once again with the repetitive cadential tenu’ah.

![Figure 64- Waltz’s 5th tenu’ah compared the tenu’ah iv of nigun](image)

The D section comes and we suddenly hear a quote of the octave leap (figure 65) from the beginning of the waltz, only now its placement in the nigun seems to express all the drama that a climax has to offer. We are clearly at a turning point in the meditative narrative, highlighted by the return of the opening first tenu’ah that seemed to have been forgotten in the A section, as well as a slight variation in the cadential motive. We can see that perhaps tenu’os i/i’/i’’ of the nigun’s A section were unfulfilled versions of tenu’ah v in the D section, something that is hinted at in the triplet rhythmic figure variation in the cadential tenu’ah (figure 66.) Reb Asher Nikolayever's nigun ends with a repetition of the B section, giving the listener the feeling that after going through the process of trying to reach the state of devekus through meditation, we still have more to go through.

99
Something that stands out with startling clarity is that which was mentioned earlier: that Reb Aharon composed and added on the opening section. If we look at the A section, it is the most “composed” section. The opening tenu’os are loosely based on the 1st tenu’ah from the waltz, the spelling of the F-sharp Major chord is not found in the waltz, and the quote from the 5th tenu’ah of the waltz being juxtaposed with the A section of the nigun seems to be a direct and deliberate decision that Reb Aharon made. The other sections- with the exception of the C section- can be seen as just a musical reworking of the waltz. Overall, we can see from this comparative analysis how Reb Aharon reworked the waltz, using the musical parameters of neginah to express the spiritual content that Reb Asher initially sensed in the melody.

**Summary of Spiritual Narrative:** As mentioned before, this nigun is meant to help one achieve a state of devekus as opposed to a nigun coming from a state of devekus. We can sense this immediately in the first section with the three opening tenu’os; it is almost as if we are immediately trying to reach for something out of an intense yearning. The cadential tenu’ah (ii) that follows seems to represent more of a solid effort as opposed to reaching and falling. This makes sense within the context of tenu’ah iii that follows it in the B section: it has a
comparatively lower register and lesson melodic activity, representing a more restraint and serious tone. It is almost as if the B section is the exact opposite of the A section, trying to balance out it’s frenetic energy. The cadential tenu’ah at the end represent an attempt to truly balance out these opposite forces. The C section, with it’s declarative B, seems to try and build off of the seriousness efforts of the B section. It utilizes the same rhythm and varies both the rhythm and pitches two times after. The C section ends once again with the cadential tenu’ah, representing further efforts to integrate this devekus. Once we reach the D section, we experience intense spiritual yearning with abandonment. We are frantically trying to achieve this devekus, or perhaps maybe we have reached it and are expressing the fiery type of devekus as opposed to the placid serenity of the Alter Rebbe’s first tenu’ah in Devekus Tefillos Shabbos V’yontiv. Either way, this fiery yearning goes so far as to influence our cadential tenu’ah, perhaps representing a change within the chasid himself. We finish off with the more serious contrasting recapitulation of the B section, perhaps representing the unfinished quality of spiritual service; there is always more work to do.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we utilized the set ways that musical and spiritual parameters were used in the third chapter to construct hidden devekus narratives. After briefly discussing continuing and contrasting modal modulations and excursions, we analyzed the various ways in which Devekus Tefillos Shabbos V’yontiv expresses its inherent narrative. Through modal excursions, melodic/registral pacing, exacting ornamentation, and the structuring of tenu’os/faln, we could sense varying aspects of devekus such as peaceful serenity, spiritual deepening, enhanced drama, and aspects of darkening in the narrative. In Nigun Devekus of the Tzemach Tzedek, we
saw how the same nigun could be experienced in multiple ways through rearrangement of the faln, modal variety, restructuring of tenu’os, and the layering of ornamentation for individual expression. Lastly, in Reb Asher Nikolayever’s Nigun, we saw the process of musical tikkun at work through the recomposition of the Kiev waltz. In viewing this restructuring process, we saw how spiritual narrative dictated the registral pacing of restructuring of the various tenu’os and faln. Having studied the nigunim of chapters three and four, we can now examine the ways in which nigunim and chasidic musical archetypes have been used by various composers in concert settings. In doing so, we will be able to perceive through a thoughtful, yet critical lens how these composers may have hit or missed the mark in expressing chasidic music.
Any conversation about representing Chasidism and chasidic music would be remiss without mentioning the Buber-Scholem debate.\textsuperscript{104} There are two main scholarly views that have shaped the way we view Chasidism. According to philosopher Martin Buber (1878-1965), chasidic tales were the best way to understand the devotional life of chasidim. Opposition to Buber came from his contemporary, Gershom Scholem (1897-1982), who believed that by focusing on chasidic stories and parables, Buber was neglecting the history of chasidic literature, using Chasidism to further his own philosophical agenda. From this disagreement, two very clear depictions of Chasidism were formed: that of Buber in which a radical and audacious devotion to mysticism saved Judaism from the dry rigidity of the Orthodox establishment, and that of Scholem for whom the question “what did Chasidism contribute to the history of Jewish mysticism?” was of most importance. While Scholem’s views dominated the academic sphere, it was Buber’s sentimentality, nostalgia, and exoticism expressed through captivating narrative that captured the popular view, affecting the way in which contemporary society came to view Chasidism and its adherents. While it may be easy to look purely at the sentimental and nostalgic aspects of chasidic life in works such as Fiddler on the Roof, however, one would be painting an incomplete picture without taking into consideration the thriving spiritual lives of chasidim. As can be seen from our analyses up until now, one cannot divorce the musical body from the spiritual soul. If we look at nigunim through the lens of nostalgia without any spiritual content taken into consideration at all, we lose a vital part of how we can understand and hear nigunim. By looking at four contrasting ways that nigunim and Chasidism have been represented in

\textsuperscript{104} Synopsis of debate taken from Rachel White’s \textit{Recovering the Past, Renewing the Present: The Buber-Scholem Controversy over Hasidism Reinterpreted}
concert and popular music settings, it will help shed light on the importance of spiritual narrative in properly approaching and understanding neginah from an artistic viewpoint.

**Ernest Bloch’s Baal Shem Suite:** Bloch wrote *Baal Shem*, a suite for violin and piano in 1923 during his time in Cleveland. Originally born in Geneva, Switzerland, Bloch traveled through Germany and France before settling in the USA in 1916. Speaking of his experiences in Europe, Bloch was famously quoted as saying “In Germany I am a Frenchman. In France, I am too German. And a Jew, to boot! As if one were not a man above all.” This sense of Jewish otherness was one embraced and promoted by Bloch’s racial understanding of Jewishness. According to Joshua Walden, for Bloch, the notion of race primarily provided a way of feeling rooted in a collective history and of explaining what it meant for him to be Jewish. According to Bloch “Racial feeling is certainly a quality of all great music, which must be an essential expression of the people as well as the individual.” Bloch’s own sense of racial heritage made him feel justified in writing the music that he was writing. As opposed to some of his St. Petersburg-based contemporaries who aligned themselves with the Russian *Society for Jewish Folk Music*, Bloch did not seek to embellish traditional Jewish melodies with harmonies contemporary for his time; Bloch expressed his racial heritage by composing music that completely came from him. He didn’t seek to be an archeologist, but to write good, genuine music that was his. He was interested in the Jewish soul, which he felt coursing through him as equally as it coursed through the Bible that he would study. His melodies flowed from intuition as opposed to the study of traditional folk melodies.

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105 Walden pg. 787
106 Walden pg. 784
107 ibid. Pg. 786
108 ibid. 784-785
While not a chasid himself, in writing *Baal Shem*, Bloch hoped to embrace and express this inherently racial sonic expression of Jewishness by gesturing toward a Jewish past to the East with references to genres and techniques associated with chasidic tradition. Yet as Walden points out, these references were largely based upon the influence of Orientalized stereotypes of Eastern European Jewish culture with which he grew up with in Geneva and later studied in the Jewish Encyclopedia.\(^{109}\) This Orientalism can be detected in his description of Part I-Lamento of his first String Quartet (1916): “Decidedly of Jewish inspiration…Recall the Bible, the ardour of the Psalms, of Oriental blood. Recall those poor old fellows which you have certainly met in the streets, on the roads, with their long beards, sad, desperate, dirty…and who still have some hope as they mumble their prayers in Hebrew.”\(^{110}\) One can also detect an overt sentimentality in Bloch’s recounting of his first time in a chasidic synagogue: “Everything was vibrant, living, creating an extraordinary atmosphere. I dissolved with emotion…I assure you that my music seems to me a very poor little thing beside that which I heard. You will understand everything that this experience means for me.”\(^{111}\)

Many sonic elements of Chasidism are present in the musical construction of *Baal Shem*. Comprised of three movements—Vidui (contrition), Nigun, and Simchas Torah (a joyous holiday marked by extensive song and dance)—the titles bespeak the extremes of Hasidic devotion, song, and celebration. In looking at the middle and most famous movement, Nigun, one can see many elements of Hasidic nigunim at work. The melody is an original one composed by Bloch mostly in Phrygian or Ahavah Rabbah. According to Mark Slobin, this mode became associated with a sense of Jewish history and nostalgia, as they were divorced from the South

\(^{109}\) ibid. 788  
\(^{110}\) Schiller pg. 25  
\(^{111}\) Walden pg. 90
Eastern European context.¹¹² Nigun has a four-part form, based largely off of the four-part form of actual nigunim as seen in the analysis of *Dalet Bavos* and *Der Beinoni*. Section one has a tonic key of G minor and concludes on a D-major chord that pivots away from G minor into D Ahavah Rabbah in section two. A Ahavah Rabbah is experienced briefly before switching to a fervent excerpt in D Ukrainian Dorian. The piece moves towards the climax on D Ahavah Rabbah leading towards the final section, which is a recapitulation of the opening section in G minor. The Ahavah Rabbah and Ukrainian-Dorian modes make more appearances before the end of the piece. As in four-part nigunim, the general drama of the piece intensifies from section to section, climaxing in the third section before falling back down in the fourth section.

In addition to form and harmony, Bloch imbues *Nigun* with a chasidic “flavor” through prolonged cadenzas (figures 54-56) that feature leaps, double-stops, repetitions, and fast rhythmic passages.¹¹³ According to Walden, many of the rhythmic and melodic techniques that Bloch uses in *Nigun* to depict chasidic song were commonly used to evoke Jewish culture in art music of the nineteenth century, techniques such as augmented seconds, juxtaposition of duple and triple rhythms, and ornamentation. Bloch’s contemporaries were split in their opinion of such compositional mechanisms; some called it “banal, penny-Judaism of the *Baal-Shem suite,*” likely referring to their exotic signification, while others believed that if used correctly, these techniques could operate as effective signifiers of Jewish culture and identity.¹¹⁴ While it is true that ornamentation plays an important role in the construction of certain nigunim and in giving them their chasidic “flavor,” the way in which Bloch interprets this certainly came more from a concert music tradition than from an “authentic” chasidic approach. As can be seen in figure 67, the ascending scalar passage covers an immensely broad range and doesn’t exist in any of the

¹¹² Slobin *Tenement Songs* pgs. 187, 191-92 as quoted in Walden pg. 795
¹¹³ ibid. Pg. 798
¹¹⁴ ibid. Pg 803-804
nigunim that we have looked at. Especially in Chabad nigunim where pitch height is so heavily associated with spiritual height, the ease with which this cadenza covers three octaves seems to indicate a different approach to pitch range. It still seems to be true that the range and velocity of the cadenza are meant to indicate spiritual excitement and enthusiasm. Additionally, in figure 68, the length of the arpeggiated passage doesn’t resemble any sort of ornament found even in the heavily ornamented *Nigun Devekus of the Tzemach Tzedek*. In my opinion, while Bloch may have been coming from a highly personal place in writing nigun, he missed the mark on many aspects of representing nigunim faithfully. He relied mostly on mode and certain aspects of form to evoke the “Jewish spirit,” yet it is very apparent that the exoticized “other” embodied in Bloch’s view of chasidim heavily influenced him in the composition of *Nigun*.

**Figure 67- Cadenza mm.21-22 of Nigun**
Leonard Bernstein’s *Dybbuk*: As a Jew living in post-World-War-II America, Bernstein felt as if his feelings of Jewishness and the musical universe that he inhabited were impossible to reconcile. In a melting pot-society that promoted cultural pluralism, a separate Jewish culture free of influence seemed to go against the American tendency for individual ethnicities to combine with specifically American idioms. This did not mean that he didn’t attempt to achieve a synthesis free of dissonance; at times he was able to accomplish this while at other times (and more often) he had to reconcile himself to juxtapositions and discontinuities. Regardless of the outcome, Bernstein’s Jewish musical endeavors always came from a place of individual expression rather than a feeling of racial heritage.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Schiller pg. 172
Bernstein’s ballet *Dybbuk* based on the World-War-I-era S. Ansky play by the same name and with choreography by Jerome Robbins was premiered on May 16th, 1974. In the work, Bernstein sought to evoke the magic and mysticism present in the original play. Ansky’s play about doomed lovers who are parted by death, only to be reunited via supernatural possession, provides a narrative ripe with chasidic exoticism, something that Bernstein imbues his score. In addition to the outright symbols of Chasidism present in the storyline, Bernstein embraced a further element of chasidic philosophy that proved to be fruitful in synthesizing with his musical oeuvre: kabbalah. In his initial notes for the work, Bernstein drew for himself a diagram of the kabbalistic tree of life (figure 69) through which, according to kabbalah, the Divine uses to bring creating into existence. While unclear how that diagram made its way into the score, it undoubtedly portrays where Bernstein’s mind was during its composition. In a more direct way, Bernstein called upon Jewish mystical numerology, called *gematria*, and married it to the chromatic scale. He spelled out various names of the characters in the play, as well as created synthetic scales based on the numerical equivalencies of the characters’ names. Certain numbers show up more predominantly in his score (36’s and 18’s) due to their importance in Judaism and kabbalah.

Figure 69- The Kabbalistic Tree of Life according to Bernstein
While much of the musical material for the score was derived from these Hebrew letter-music note equivalencies specifically through the lens of gematria, Bernstein also directly quoted various chasidic and Jewish melodies. The ballet opens with a melody (figure 70) reminiscent of a chasidic melody. This is due to two factors: the use of the octatonic scale and the use of duple and triple rhythms also found in *Nigun*. Through the lens of Jewish modal theory, one can view the octatonic scale as being comprised of a juxtaposition of parallel Ahavah Rabbah and Ukranian-Dorian modes, giving it both a Jewish and contemporary flavor. Towards the climax of the opening movement, the Yiddish song *Oy Vey Rebeynu* (figure 71) is quoted. While satirical and critical of Chasidism in origin, I believe that Bernstein’s appropriation of the tune reinterpreted the melody to (ironically) express the musical character of Chasidism. Towards the end of the ballet, several Jewish melodies are quoted during the exorcism section, all of them in some way having to do with a Sabbath theme. The melodies *V’taher libeinu* (figure 72) and *Yismechu* (figure 73) are both from the Sabbath prayer service while the last fragment comes from a Sabbath song (figure 74). The heavy use of Sabbath songs within the context of the exorcism is not coincidental; in his score, Bernstein has two vocal parts that sing the text of the *hamavdil* blessing recited at the end of the Sabbath, separating Sabbath from the rest of the week. His choice of text was perhaps with the intention of expressing a separation of the dybbuk from its host. In doing so, Bernstein was using Jewish text and chasidic melodies to create a musical commentary on the narrative of the story.

116 “*Oy Vey Rebenyu*’ Performed by Josh Waletzky.” Edited by Itzik Gottesman, *Yiddish Song of the Week*, 6 Nov. 2014, yiddishsong.wordpress.com/2014/10/29/oy-vey-rebenyu-performed-by-josh-waletzky/. The reference to this song making fun of chasidim is embedded in the video at approximately 0:12 in the video.
Figure 70- Opening Chasidic Melody

Figure 71- Quote of Oy Vey Rebeynu

Figure 72- Quote of V’taher libeinyu

Figure 73- Quote of Yismehu

Figure 74- Quote of Sabbath Song
As can be seen from figure 72, the melody of V’taher libeinu is transformed to fit within an asymmetric meter, something that Bernstein was known to do.\footnote{See Jeremiah Symphony mvnt. II for use mixed meter in treating the Haftorah melodies} Unseen in figures 70 through 74 are the harmonies and orchestration providing the context for these melodies, all of which are derived from contemporary pitch collections. These examples show a fairly consistent treatment of chasidic and Jewish musical sources in the score.

Bernstein’s use of chasidic music was clearly taken out of context and reappropriated for his own artistic use. The narrative being expressed here can hardly be seen as representing “authentic” Chasidism. S. Ansky’s play comes from the same exoticization that was at play in Bloch’s Nigun. While the idea of spiritual possession plays a role in Chasidism, it absolutely pales in comparison to the idea of individual ecstatic worship through praying with devekus. While we can conclude that Bernstein’s use of chasidic music misses the mark in terms of expression spiritual narratives, we would be remiss in discussing his relationship with chasidic neginah without mentioning a story of his interacting with Chabad chasidim and the Nichoach records. The story goes that Leonard Bernstein ran into a group of Lubavitcher chasidim who asked him to don tefillin–special prayer phylacteries that Jewish men wear; putting on tefillin is a mitzvah and it is Chabad practice to ask Jewish men to put them on. These chasidim asked Bernstein if he would like to, to which he replied no. Bernstein then asked the chasidim if they could sing any Jewish songs, after which the chasidim decided to play one of the Nichoach records for him. They chose to show Bernstein a recording of the nigun Shamil, a nigun taught to the chasidim by the Rebbe himself. The story continues as follows:

“Bernstein heard every note of it…they never saw anybody listen to music like that; it was like Bernstein and Shamil were bound up as one. Moved almost to tears after hearing the nigun, Bernstein expressed his admiration for it and his inability to explain the sense of release
that he felt upon listening to it. Spritzer (one of the chasidim) seized the opportunity and volunteered to explain what had just happened if Bernstein puts on the tefillin… Bernstein asked why he had chosen it (i.e. that particular nigun, Shamil) and Spritzer, as he prepared the tefillin, said, ‘Because . . . I felt you had to hear it.’ ‘You have a feeling for music’ Bernstein responded. ‘If you promise me that you will take up music for your future, I will put on tefillin right now.’ ‘It’s a deal,’ Spritzer said.”

While this story doesn’t necessarily shed light on how Bernstein utilized chasidic music and Chasidism in Dybbuk, it does shed light on his emotional connection to the song of his people regardless. It was during this interaction after being moved by hearing the nigun Shamil that Bernstein mentioned to the chasidim that much of his own “universal” music indeed had Jewish roots.119

Oren Ambarchi’s *The Alter Rebbe’s Nigun and Radical Jewish Culture*: Responding to the cultural “quietness” of postwar American Jewry that existed up until the 1990s, the Radical Jewish Culture movement (RJC), established by John Zorn at the Munich Art Projekt in 1992, sought a way for downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn musicians to express their Jewish background. Many of the musicians wanted their music to be both experimental and Jewish without any mooring in Jewish tradition; this lack of tradition was mainly due to many of them growing up in American pluralism. Their endeavors were difficult to navigate since their artistry demanded a uniquely individual musical identity that was also in some way grounded in a group identity. As such, Tamar Barzel in her book New York Noise: Radical Jewish Culture and the

118 Seroussi pgs. 299-300
119 ibid.
Downtown Scene defines RJC as a “moment” rather than a “movement.” Her reason for choosing “moment” over “movement” had to do with disagreements musicians often had about what RJC was to represent and how it was supposed to connected experimental music with Jewish identity. Most of the works belonging to the RJC movement used Jewish sonic material through allusion and quotation, blending them with varying levels of experimentation.

Such is the case with Oren Ambarchi and Robbie Avenaim’s concept album *The Alter Rebbe’s Nigun*. In an interview from the blog 5049 records, Ambarchi spoke about having grown up in a non-religious environment, choosing to attend a Lubavitch yeshiva in Brooklyn from 1988-1992, and then later leaving the fold. While in yeshiva, Ambarchi would collect and play free jazz records and play jazz in his dorm. He spoke about learning Chabad philosophy and Talmud from 7:30 in the morning to 9:30 at night and then going to downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn for jazz shows. At a certain point, he felt as if the juggling act of balancing life as a chasid and life as a jazz musician was not working and he decided to leave behind his chasidic identity. After having met John Zorn in 1992 at a show, Zorn later invited him to play at the Munich Art Projekt, establishing his connection to RJC. It wouldn’t be until several years later that Ambarchi and his fellow band mate, Ronnie Avenaim, would put out *The Alter Rebbe’s Nigun* under the Tzadik Label, Zorn’s signature record label for the RJC movement.

In listening to *The Alter Rebbe’s Nigun*, it becomes immediately apparent that this album is imbued with Ambarchi’s knowledge of Jewish mysticism. As mentioned during the analysis of *Dalet Bavos*, there are many layers of narrative behind the composition of the nigun; the particular narrative focused on in this study was that of the personal struggle for self-

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120 Barzel pg. 26
121 http://www.5049records.com/podcast/oren-ambarchi
122 The term “leaving the fold” is chasidic slang for deciding to leave the religious community and forgo religious observance.
transcendence. Also mentioned in the analysis is one of the more esoteric layers of narrative—the four spiritual worlds. The four worlds represent various layers of Divine awareness that become less opaque the “higher” they go; height is not used here in the physical sense, but in the spiritual sense of Divine conscience and awareness. The four worlds, beginning from the lowest and most physical one is Asiyah (the world of action), followed by Yetzirah (the world of formation), Beriah (the world of creation), and Atzilut (the world of emanations.) The use of the four worlds narrative is expressed in a review by Ari Davidow on his website klezmershack.com:

“Opening with gentle guitars, and quickly descending to the clash of disharmonic guitar, then on to heavy metal soaring, the album begins with the first level, "Asiyah" (Action). Then there is the spaciness of "Yetzirah" (Formation), with pipelike tubes of sound, followed by shofar-like crescendos as something builds…Gradually, we are left with creaks of sound slowly leaving behind silence as we move to the third sphere, "Beriah" (Creation) and the buzz of kazoo-like ululation. Now space begins to close in as sound gathers, filling the emptiness, and eventually, amid the random percussion, there is the rapid-fire of guitar notes, gradually replaced by a glockenspiel playing a hasidic nigun. And finally, on to Atzilut (emanation). Behind a reading, in a very Ashkenazic Hebrew, about the Alter Rebbe's nigun, looping and spliced, the sounds begin to slowly reverberate, as from afar. Electronica, sound, slowly begin to create an ethereal, fascinating texture…Suddenly, the words are processed further, so that they become as babble behind a now-noisy tapestry of white noise, crashing, random guitar chords, and then the words resolve themselves as recognizable nigun, created out of the white noise, gradually building in passion until it sounds like a huge crowd of dancing, singing hassidim. Then silence, and the Rebbe resumes reading over gentle guitar picking out
sounds that, again, resolve themselves as nigun, sounding more and more like human voice, wordless. Asiyah. Action.“123

In my own listening to The Alter Rebbe’s Nigun, I heard allusions to the Chabad philosophy behind the nigun. For instance, in the first piece title Asiyah, the actual first stanza that is used in the recording is not fully realized until the end of the track, expressing the yearning of breaking free from the physical world and reaching for a higher world. What also stood out to me quite obviously is the very last two seconds of the final track Atzilut. After having brought the listener through all of the four worlds, each one higher than the previous one, the pre-recorded voice of the rabbi simply says the word “Asiyah,” representing the concept mentioned before of the “end being wedged in the beginning.” In representing Chasidism through various allusions weaved within the musical fabric of the text, as well as with quotations of the fragmented Dalet Bavos nigun, The Alter Rebbe’s Nigun reflects the way in which from a RJC approach Chasidism could be reinterpreted to serve a unique experimental individualistic expression.

Andre Hajdu’s Kulmus HaNefesh: Andre Hajdu (1932-2016), in addition to being one of Israel’s most prolific composers, had an active role in spreading Chabad nigunim through his involvement with the Nichoach records. Hajdu—who grew up in a secular environment in Hungary—became religiously observant later in life and was involved with Chabad music since 1966, a year before the Six Day War. He worked on making arrangements for and playing on several Nichoach records, as well as helping put together live performances of Chabad nigunim in various kibbutzim around Israel. Born out of his love for nigunim, Hajdu, together with the

123http://www.klezmershack.com/bands/ambarchi/alterrebbe/ambarchi.alterrebbe.html

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HaOman Hai Ensemble, created the Kulmus HaNefesh ensemble. Hebrew for “pen of the soul,” the ensemble put together a highly tasteful, yet experimental performance of various nigunim.

Regarding the purpose of the ensemble, Hajdu said:

“On the one hand, ‘Kulmus Ha’nefesh’ was created out of a profound sense of faith in the spirit of Chabad, getting deep into the Chabad world. This is an authentic world where we feel how it maintains a certain musical style, a way of life, and a most original musical heritage. We could have chosen another brand of Chassidism, something a bit closer to today’s experience. However, when we started working with Chabad, we immediately felt the depth of Chabad music. This authenticity is not a common thing in the music sold today under the heading ‘Chassidic music.’ Most of these albums miss the intensity of Chabad music, concentrating on the ‘schmaltz’ instead. On the other hand, there is a tremendous innovation in our work on these niggunim. First, the theatre and narrative that we put into the niggunim. We also wrote a story that we read during the performance, and between the niggunim, the audience hears the words of the Alter Rebbe on the Kabbalistic meaning behind the niggun or the voice of Rabbi Zalmanov on a recording. We don’t just sing and play music; we also try to communicate the Chabad Chassidic experience.”

By inserting direct quotes on nigunim and the kabbalistic intentions behind the nigunim, Hajdu and the Kulmus HaNefesh Ensemble were able to reinforce a strong anchoring in the spiritual narratives behind the nigunim, allowing for deeper levels of musical complexity in the arrangements.

On the arrangements themselves, Hajdu wrote:

124 [http://beismoshiachmagazine.org/articles/dinner-with-andre.html](http://beismoshiachmagazine.org/articles/dinner-with-andre.html)
“We are not trying to be purists. The difference is only in attitude. Instead of unconscious assimilation, we are offering something in the style of Bartok, Ravel or Gershwin, where the original has been faithfully preserved and alongside it are additions by each composer embodying the spirit of his generation, his consciousness and personality.”

Mark Slobin, noted Jewish music scholar and author, reviewed the arrangements as having a “…range from Kronos Quartet-like and jazz-influenced settings to voice and piano arrangements to Middle Eastern-tinged stylings. The album covers the full range of the extraordinary expressivity and variety of Lubavitch niggun genres, from the mystical quest for divine union to the animated dance forms.”

In listening to the recording of the performance, Hajdu’s words become immediately apparent. While not afraid to shy away from Jazz, atonality, and noise elements, there is always an element in the music that seems organic and respectful. Most of the pieces begin with a fairly straightforward performance of the nigun, seamlessly dissolving into more contemporary, dissonant musical textures and extended jazz harmonies. Each of the musical choices made by the musicians represent a dialogue between the ensemble and the musical tradition. The use of a plaintive shepherds flute at the end of Shalosh Tenu’os is a nod back to the tradition that many nigunim were adapted from shepherd tunes while the interweaving of chasidic vocables with jazz scat vocables creates an interesting sonic bridge between two musical worlds. In the track Tzama Lecha Nafshi, the nigun is framed with a lot of vocal ornamentation, modal mixture, jazz harmonies, and improvisatorial piano lines. There seems to be less sticking to the strict rules of Jewish mode and more usage of mode more as a

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125 https://tipehamusic.wordpress.com/haoman-hai-ensemble/kulmus-hanefesh-the-quill-of-the-soul/  
126 Slobin pg. 171
color or ornamental device. The free structure of the phrases, something often heard in many nigunim, is used as inspiration to create mixed asymmetric meters.

In one of the pieces based on the nigun Shalosh Tenuos, a recording of Shmuel Zalmanoff singing the nigun is juxtaposed with these musical textures, creating a stark contrast between the two. According to Kerrin Hancock in his review, “as Rabbi Zalmanov delivers his dialogue, it is underplayed with a contemporary instrumental improvisation by the HaOman Hai Ensemble. The result successfully unites in one performance a formal text from an old recording and the sound of contemporary Jewish music. This symbolically links the older and younger Jewish generations in a spirit that speaks of the progress and continuity of Judaic culture.”

While their musical practices are anything but traditional, there is a firm nod to the tradition. Hajdu expressed this respect in reverence when discussing how the ensemble approached Dalet Bavos, the holiest of all Chabad nigunim:

“I was afraid to make an adaption of this niggun. Even in the framework of the ‘Kulmus Ha’nefesh’ band that I established some years ago, we sing it straight, without revisions or other techniques that I use in other niggunim. This niggun contains a great deal of the Alter Rebbe’s ideological devotion, such that the audience and the performers realize that it’s best not to tinker with it…people who are not Chabad chassidim get an impression and an idea of Chabad through this niggun.”

**Baal Shem, Dybbuk, The Alter Rebbe’s Nigun, and Kulmus HaNefesh in dialogue**

Each of the four above-mentioned works call upon the symbol of Chasidism and use chasidic principles to some extent. Each represents Chasidism through various musical devices:

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127 Hancock pg. 182
128 http://beismoshiachmagazine.org/articles/dinner-with-andre.html
the Bloch utilizes established musical devices—such as mode and ornamentation—meant to imbue music with an Eastern European chasidic or Romani flavor; many of the same rhythmic devices such as mixed use of duple and triple rhythms are used by Bernstein both in ways that evoke a traditional melody and stretch traditional melodies through mixed asymmetric meter. Bloch’s choice of creating original Jewish melodies reflects his racial sentiments; the music that would come from him carries almost a mystically-charged Orientalism as opposed to real spiritual power.

While Bloch may not use any folk-sourced nigunim, Bernstein, Ambarchi, and Hajdu use pre-existing Jewish musical material. The contrasting treatments of traditional folk sources by Bernstein and Ambarchi reflect the times that they were both living in: Bernstein in an American pluralistic idiom and Ambarchi in a highly individualistic and experimental oeuvre. Hajdu’s use of the material stands out alone from the other three, mainly due to his reverent nod towards the tradition in which he had become enmeshed. One similarity between Dybbuk, The Alter Rebbe’s Nigun, and Kulmus HaNefesh is their use of chasidic philosophy. For Bernstein, this manifested in the marriage between chromaticism or Serialism and gematria. Ambarchi, on the other hand, used chasidic philosophy in a more impulsive, even organic intuitive process; this is most likely due to his time spent learning in yeshiva. For Hajdu, it meant trying his best to express spiritual content or performance practices through his own unique jazz idiom.

In treating Chasidism as an exoticized “other” through musical reinterpretation and appropriation, Bloch and Bernstein not only said something about their views on Chasidism, but perhaps even how they viewed themselves as Jewish—i.e., “others” in the artistic world. In the case of Bloch, it was very evident that by imbuing original melodies with musical mechanisms that could be seen as uniquely chasidic in nature and since his view of chasidim was that of the
Oriental “other,” he was reflecting on his uniquely racial view of his Jewish otherness. In trying to synthesize an overly exoticized portrayal of Chasidism in the Ansky narrative with contemporary sonorities, metric qualities, and scales, Bernstein was reflecting on his attempts to synthesize his Jewish otherness within a pluralistic American idiom. Had he perhaps been dealing with a less fantastical portrayal of Chasidism, he may have treated chasidic music differently; his interaction with the Chabad chasidim seems to indicate this. Ambarchi and Hajdu, on the other hand, utilized their background in the Chabad chasidic world in creating their works. By heavily veiling and faintly alluding to the melody of Dalet Bavos with experimental musical textures, Ambarchi was utilizing the RJC aesthetic to represent the otherness that he felt as a Jew inhabiting both worlds of Chasidism and Downtown jazz; in doing so, Ambarchi was using these musical textures as vehicles for the chasidic metaphor and philosophical concepts that he had absorbed while in yeshiva. While The Alter Rebbe’s Nigun sounds nothing like traditional chasidic music, his use of mystical concepts in motivating musical choices indicates a knowledge and conscientious application of spiritual narrative. By utilizing his background in jazz and his knowledge of Chabad nigunim, Hajdu weaves together extended jazz harmonies and contemporary musical textures with traditional musical practices of nigunim, creating unique hybrid arrangements that only someone like him could. While not directly connected to the contemporary chasidic community, these portrayals and many other artistic portrayals of Chasidism in various manifestations bespeak something of the potency of the spiritual nature that lie at the heart of Chabad nigunim in particular and Chasidic neginah in general.
Conclusion

In looking at the ways spiritual narratives are used in Chabad nigunim, it becomes apparent that any musical representation—be it analysis or artistic adaptation—that leaves out these narratives misses out on a fundamental aspect of neginah. There is an abundance in Chabad chasidic literature on the potency of nigunim, the expressive capability that a nigun possesses, and the spiritual power of nigun on those singing it. Through musical analysis, we saw that in cases where the narrative was both revealed and hidden, each note had significance and meaning within the broader context of the spiritual tradition.

In *Shalosh Tenu’os*, we saw how the eternal spiral ascent was represented through continuous musical transposition, as well as how chasidic leadership and lineage was represented through the musical structuring of the nigun. *Dalet Bavos*, along with the analysis of the Rebbe Rashab, exemplified the Chabad chasidic ethos and established a sonic reflection of the Chabad path in Divine worship. Through melodic construction and modal manipulation, we saw the story of the Beinoni of the Alter Rebbe’s *Sefer HaTanya* expressed through the tenu’os and musical phrases of *Der Beinoni*.

Even in cases when the devekus narrative was unknown, such as in *Devekus Tefillos Shabbos V’yontiv* of the Alter Rebbe and the Rebbe Rashab, we could tell the presence of a spiritual narrative was at work through the various musical parameters established over the course of the previous analysis. Expanding on the idea of the devekus narrative, parameters such as form, modal theory, and ornamentation were all used as malleable puzzle pieces in *Nigun Devekus of the Tzemach Tzedek*, arranged according to the experience of devout chasidic worship and ecstasy. Lastly, we established a chasidic compositional practice through a comparative analysis of *Reb Asher Nikolayever’s Nigun* and the Kiev waltz that it was based on.
In this analysis, we could see the process of musical tikkun at work as the waltz was broken down and rearranged to fit a particular spiritual narrative.

While these six nigunim are a mere sample of the vast canon of Chabad neginah, they represent the immense power of a nigun as a musical-spiritual entity. Although this study has examined Chabad nigunim in particular, one cannot overstate the importance and tremendous influence that chasidic nigunim and thought have had on Jewish music. To highlight this power, I would like to present a story that is told in *Likkutei Dibburim* detailing an incident that occurred during the Frierdiker Rebbe’s childhood. He was once witness to a group of elderly chasidim reminiscing about when the Frierdiker Rebbe’s great-grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, was still alive. The conversation took an emotional turn when one of the elder chasidim began singing a familiar melody that the Tzemach Tzedek used to sing during his prayers. The Frierdiker Rebbe writes: “Then they came to the stirring theme…to which my great-grandfather used to sing to the words ‘Happy is the man who does not forget You, the son of man who holds fast to You.’ They were now in such a state of ecstasy that their faces were enflamed and tears streamed down their cheeks. One could see that at this point these men were reliving those hallowed and luminous moments. There is not the slightest doubt that at that time each one of them felt that he was standing right near my great-grandfather, seeing and hearing the Rebbe as he was *davenen* (praying).”

The Frierdiker Rebbe goes on to explain how while he was never physically present during the Tzemach Tzedek’s lifetime, the nigun and overall experience of the emotional chasidim were able to transport him there. “In my mind’s eye, I too witnessed the sight of my great-grandfather- wrapped in his tallis (prayer shawl), dressed in his white garments, with a white yarmulke (skullcap) on his head as he said ‘Happy is the man who does not forget You, the son of man who holds fast to You.’…it was clear to me that my great-grandfather was certainly...”

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129 *Likkutei Dibburim* Vol. I pg. 249-250
here.” In this moving story, we are witness to the power of spiritual narratives and devekus present in the singing of nigunim.

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130 ibid. Pg. 250
Appendix 1

Founders of Chasidism and Leaders of Chabad-Lubavitch


The Maggid of Mezritch (lit., “the preacher of Mezritch”): R. Dov Ber (d. 1772), disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, and mentor of the Alter Rebbe.

The Alter Rebbe (lit., “the Old Rebbe”; Yid.): R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), also known as “the Rav,” founder of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement within the larger Chasidic movement; disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch, and father of the Mitteler Rebbe.

The Mitteler Rebbe (lit., “the Middle Rebbe”; Yid.): R. Dov Ber of Lubavitch (1773-1827), son and successor of the Alter Rebbe, and uncle and father-in-law of the Tzemach Tzedek.

The Tzemach Tzedek: R. Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (1789-1866), the third Lubavitcher Rebbe; known by the title of his responsa of Jewish law called Tzemach Tzedek; nephew and son-in-law of the Mitteler Rebbe, and father of the Rebbe Maharash.

The Rebbe Maharash (acronym for Moreinu (“our teacher”) HaRav (Rabbi) Shmuel): R. Shmuel Schneersohn of Lubavitch (1834-1882), the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe; youngest son of the Tzemach Tzedek, and father of the Rebbe Rashab.

The Rebbe Rashab (acronym for Rabbi Shalom Ber): R. Shalom Dov Ber Schneersohn of Lubavitch (1860-1920), the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe; second son of the Rebbe Maharash, and father of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The Frierdiker Rebbe (lit., “the previous Rebbe”; Yid.,) alternatively known as the Rebbe Rayatz (acronym for Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak): R. Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950), the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe; only child of the Rebbe Rashab, and father-in-law of the Rebbe.
The Rebbe: Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (1902-1994), the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe; eldest son of the saintly Kabbalist, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, rav of Yekaterinoslav; fifth in direct paternal line from the Tzemach Tzedek; son-in-law of the Friediker Rebbe.
Appendix 2

Glossary of Terms

1. **Bava**: Aramaic for “gate,” used at times to refer to a section of a nigun.

2. **Beinoni**: Hebrew for “intermediate individual,” the idea of the beinoni as articulated by the Alter Rebbeis that of a person who has an impulse to do evil, but never acts upon it.

3. **Chabad**: An acronym of the words “chochma,” “bina,” and “da’at,” commonly translated as “wisdom,” “understanding,” and “knowledge” respectively. It represents in compact form the three-part meditative process associated with Chabad chasidus.

4. **Chasid (chasidim pl.):** Literally “pious” in Hebrew. Followers of a Rebbe. Alternate spellings include hasid/chassid.

5. **Chassidus**: the mystical teachings of chasidic Judaism.

6. **Devekus**: a form of trance where one loses self-awareness and attains a Godly-awareness.
   Alternate spellings include devekut/devequt.

7. **Fal**: (faln pl.) Yiddish for “section of a nigun.”

8. **Heichel Neginah**: A collection of records from both the Nichoach records and field recordings of elder chasidim singing. It is the largest collection of recordings of nigunim.

9. **Kapelye**: a small orchestra intended to provide accompaniment to nigunim.

10. **Kavanah**: Spiritual intention.

11. **Kelipah (Kelipos pl.)**: Hebrew for “shell,” the idea of kelipah is that all of Divine reality is covered over by a physical shell that prevents us from being able to see the spiritual nature of the thing. There are two types of kelipos: the first is a completely unholy category called *shlashos kelipos tameies*; they completely trap the spark in a permanent state of exile. The second category is called *kelipas nogah*—literally a “kelipah that shines”– is a kelipah that depends on whether or not a person utilizes the physical thing for a Divine purpose. If it’s used for a Divine purpose, then the spark is redeemed to the realm of Holiness.

13. Musical tikkun: Tikkun literally means “repair” in Hebrew. In this study, musical tikun is the four step process of converting a song into a nigun; through doing musical tikkun, one redeems the “spark” hidden in the song.


16. Nichoach: The Nichoach (Niggunim Chassidei Chabad) Society was founded by the Frierdiker Rebbe to preserve Chabad nigunim. The Nichoach Society was made up of a group of chasidim skilled and knowledgeable in the tradition and singing of nigunim.

17. Nigun (nigunim pl.): Wordless religious folk songs of chasidim. Alternate spellings include Niggun.

18. Nitzutzos: Hebrew for “sparks,” refers to Divine sparks of holiness that reside in all physical things and give life force to that thing.

19. Ohel: Hebrew for “tent,” though here referring to a Jewish monumental tomb. Known in Lubavitch as the term for the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe’s burial place.

20. Rasha: Hebrew for “wicked individual.”

21. Rasha v’ra lo: Hebrew for “a wicked person who suffers.”

22. Rasha v’tov lo: Hebrew for “a wicked person who prospers.”

23. Rebbe (Rebbeim pl.): The term Rebbe literally means “teacher” in Hebrew, though in the context of chasidic courts, the Rebbe is the spiritual leader of a particular court. The Rebbe is male and is considered by his followers, called chasidim, to be a saintly individual. The Rebbe is considered to have immense spiritual capabilities and possess the ability to bless people in various aspects of life (i.e. health, financial, relationships, childbirth, spirituality, etc.)
24. Rotzo vashov: Hebrew for “ebb and flow,” translates into the ebbing and flowing that takes place in chasidic neginah.

25. Sefer HaNigunim: The first and largest book of Chabad nigunim transcribed with chasidic commentary on the spiritual nature of the nigunim.

26. Shtetl: Yiddish for “small city,” the shtetl was the primary place of residence for thousands of European and Russian Jewry for the greater part of the 18th through early 20th centuries. While at one time the centers of many vibrant Jewish communities, all shtetl life was wiped out during the Holocaust.

27. Simcha: Hebrew for “joy.”

28. Tenu’ah (tenu’os pl.): Hebrew for “motion,” refers to a short musical unit or fragment of indefinable characteristics.

29. Torah: Hebrew term for the Pentateuch/Five Books of Moses, as opposed to the Tanakh, which stands for Torah, Nevi’im (prophets), and Ketuvim (writings.), also refers to the general body of Jewish study text from the oral tradition (e.g. Mishnah, Talmud, etc.)

30. Tzadik: Hebrew for “righteous person.”

31. Tzadik v’rah lo: Hebrew for “a righteous person who suffers,” alternatively “an incompletely righteous person.”

32. Tzadik v’tov lo: Hebrew for “a righteous person who prospers,” alternatively “a completely righteous person.”

33. Yerida l’tzorech aliyah: Hebrew for “descent for the sake of ascent,” idea that a spiritual descent can take place in order for a person to reach an even higher ascent than they had prior to the descent.

34. Yeshiva: A yeshiva is Jewish house of study where Jewish scripture, law, philosophy, and mysticism is studied.
35. Zechtsintul: Yiddish for “sixteenth notes,” a zechtsintul is not necessarily a set of four sixteenth notes, but more like a vocalise of varying length.

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