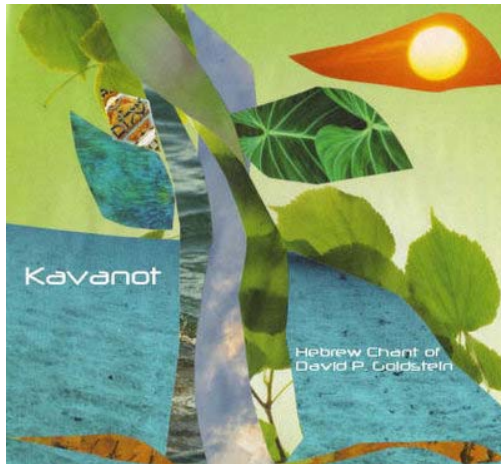


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Chanting great prep for Holy Days

by By Lee Chottiner
 Executive Editor
 09.02.10 - 09:49 am



Kavanot is a Hebrew word. It is the plural of kavana and means “intention” or “purpose.”

It’s also the title of a new CD by Pittsburgher David Goldstein, “Kavanot: Hebrew chant.”

As Goldstein said in his own liner notes: “Kavanot is a compilation of many of the Hebrew chants that I have written over the past few years, and which I use in my ongoing chant circles in Pittsburgh and elsewhere. ...Each

chant is centered around a sacred phrase from the Old Testament or from the Jewish liturgy, and represents a specific intention, or prayer focus designed to meet a spiritual need. As you chant along with these melodies, you have the opportunity to allow the intention to enter your heart and to deepen your connection with Creator.”

Let’s be straight, “Kavanot” is not the kind of CD you pop in your player while having friends over. It’s not even the kind of CD one listens to on a quiet evening while sipping a Chardonnay.

This is a CD for the soul.

True to its name, “Kavanaot” is the perfect music to listen to as one prepares for the holiest season of the year — Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, the Days of Awe.

Entering the synagogue at this time, especially if one is not a regular service-goer, can turn into an annual habit. Good that it is done, but an empty gesture if not accompanied by spiritual motivation — or kavanot.

That’s why many Jews recite psalms before a service, chant niggunim or perhaps, listen to them on a CD.

Goldstein discovered the art of the chant while attending a Shabbat service at the Aleph Kallah, a bi-annual Jewish Renewal gathering attracting hundreds of participants from all over the world. It was there he met Rabbi Shefa Gold, who Goldstein says is a “pioneer” in bringing chanting back into mainstream Judaism.

“It was a very powerful thing for me,” he told The Chronicle in a previous interview. “I knew this was a very powerful way for me to connect with Judaism.”

“Kavanot” can be a powerful way for other Jews to connect with Judaism, which makes this CD definitely worth a listen.

(Lee Chottiner can be reached at leec@thejewishchronicle.net.)

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