

Nigun Galut

Galut – ‘exile’ – has been a recurring theme through Jewish history. We have been expelled from many countries over the centuries. I don’t ascribe to the idea that Jerusalem belongs exclusively to Jews any more than it does to anyone else, but I do feel the universal human yearning for ‘home’, wherever and whatever that is. When we feel broken or lost, as individuals, or as a community, feeling into that rupture in body, mind and soul makes us realise that we ache to restore equilibrium, wholeness, and connection. That is what this *nigun* is about. Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi (*ztz”l*) taught that in yearning, we already begin to make that re-connection, even while the yearning continues to burn strongly within us.

This music unfolds in four phrases. We invoke the ‘in-gathering of the exiles’ (Ex. 30:3-4, Talmud/Pesachim 88a), drawing not just Jews, but all people together from the four corners of the earth. We call on and connect to our four kabbalistic selves of body, emotion, mind and spirit. We sing in order to make *t’shuvah*, to find our way back to God, and to make a space to let God back into our lives. Just as our return to the Source takes place in the yearning itself, so does the key note of the *nigun* ring in our mind even when it is not being sung. The yearning continues, and the *nigun* ends wistfully without returning to the key note.

Suggestions for use:

1. Don’t try to sing this metronomically. Give room for the phrases to breathe.
2. On the recording, I sang this through twice, and added a wordless vowel as a bass note, mostly on the key note. Listen carefully to when to change.
3. Please don’t add guitar or chords to this.

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Music: Alexander Massey

Yearning ♩ = 120

The musical score for 'Nigun Galut' is written in a single system with five staves. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Yearning' with a quarter note equal to 120 beats per minute. The score begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/4 time signature. The first staff contains the first six measures, including a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff starts at measure 8, the third at measure 15, and the fourth at measure 22. The fifth staff starts at measure 29 and concludes with a first and second ending bracket. The melody is characterized by a mix of quarter, eighth, and dotted notes, with frequent rests and a generally descending contour.