

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
היברו יוניון קולג – מכון למדעי היהדות

Rabbi Elkanah Shmotkin
Director
Jewish Educational Media
784 Eastern Parkway, Suite 403
Brooklyn, New York 11213

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Dear Rabbi Shmotkin,

I am writing to express my appreciation to you for Jewish Educational Media's assistance in allowing me to use specific clips of *nigunim* sung at Lubavitch *farbregen*. I am an ethnomusicologist and I specialize in Jewish music. Over a year ago I was invited to participate in the conference "Reaching for the Infinite: The Lubavitcher Rebbe – Life, Teachings and Impact" November 6-8, 2005. I was asked to present on the topic of "The Rebbe and Music." While I have had some experiences at Chabad Houses in college campus settings and have been to 770 Eastern Parkway on a few occasions I certainly knew very little on this topic.

I started my search of the Rebbe and music on Chabad.org and found many video clips of the Rebbe singing *nigunim* made available by Jewish Educational Media. Dovid Zaklikowski responded to my email and was very helpful in providing me many sources of information and provided to me, through your services, video clips of two versions of the *nigun* "Tzomo Lecha Nafshi". I was able to incorporate the video clips into my PowerPoint presentation and this was quite an addition. My aim for the presentation was to show how the Rebbe sang so people can encounter the experience, since one can only talk about music in a limited fashion. There is no doubt that including these video clips added a significant dimension to my presentation. In fact the Jewish Week, in an article by Debra Nussbaum Cohen on 11/11/2005, quoted the following about my presentation at the conference:

And indeed it was video of the rebbe that provided one of the conference's most compelling moments, during a presentation on the rebbe's relationship to music by Mark Kligman, a professor of Jewish musicology at the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

When he played old videotape of the rebbe, from 1973 and 1980, singing a Lubavitch *niggun* (wordless melody), everyone in the conference room was riveted. Because it took that grainy black-and-white footage of the rebbe singing, and hundreds of his followers around him responding as one, to finally reveal what all the academic presentations simply could not: the power of the rebbe's charisma

As a teacher and a scholar I am constantly striving for new ways to engage adults in music and Judaism. I have now used these video clips in a variety of presentations and teaching in various venues. In the various college settings that I teach in and the adult educational settings, I encounter largely non-Orthodox Jews who have an interest in observant Judaism and when I have played these video clips and other Chabad *nigunim* I always receive a positive reaction. More importantly it allows people to encounter the world of observant Judaism through Lubavtich in an accessible way.

Having access to this material for me as a scholar is important to future research not only for me but for my students and the many interested individuals who are searching to explore their Jewish heritage. Particularly for today's generation of students, material made available in digitized technology over the web in a searchable fashion is certainly the way to disseminate and share this valuable material. The footage, talks, celebrations and many other contexts of films you have in your archive are most valuable for learning about Judaism and American history.

I have heard that you intend to expand your project to make more material available and wish you luck and success in this endeavor.

I am grateful to you and Jewish Educational Media in letting me use this material and look forward to using this in the future.

With Best Wishes,

Mark L. Kligman
Professor of Jewish Musicology
School of Sacred Music