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Joseph Tal (Jerusalem):

As far as I remember, I was asked to answer the question: What is the Jewish content in my music? A good question can expect a good answer. But this question needs further clarification.

Do I have to speak only about the Jewish content of my music or about the Israeli content too? Because we have a large number of composers in the world who are Jewish composers but not Israeli citizens. Where do we draw the line between Jewish and Israeli?

Furthermore, as a composer should also be a good musician, does the question include Jewishness in the interpretation of music? Are there common Jewish grounds in the typical interpretation of music let's say by Yehudi Menuhin and Isaac Stern? Or for that matter is there any basic difference in Jewish or non-Jewish interpretation of Beethoven's Fidelio by Leonard Bernstein compared with Zubin Mehta? I, for myself, am certainly very consciously a Jew and an Israeli. Both in a much deeper sense than to show it simply by quotation of popular Sephardi or Ashkenazi or oriental tunes, using them pretentiously out of their functional context.

To conclude, I have the suspicion that this question about the Jewishness in my music belongs to the frame of mind of a Jew breathing the air of the Diaspora and desperately seeking an identity. Being a healthy Israeli composer, I do not suffer from paranoia. I believe that this question will disappear entirely, provided that the generations to come in Israel will stop making the State of Israel an extension of the Diaspora.