

1,000 Hazzanim To Celebrate Jerusalem's Reunification At Cantors Assembly Convention In Israel July 7 to 21

Picture almost 1,000 cantors from 16 different countries together in one place and then imagine how the air would ring with the sound of hazanot -- traditional Jewish prayers.

That will be the scene this summer in Jerusalem when, in response to President Herzog's call to strengthen Israel's economy through tourism, the Cantors Assembly -- the world's largest body of hazzanim -- will celebrate its 40th anniversary with a two-week convention and musical songfest in Israel July 7 to 21. The festivities will also mark the 20th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

Cantors, musicians, musicologists and synagogue members from five continents will take part in the program, to be chaired by Cantor Solomon Mendelson of Long Beach, N.Y., vice president of the Assembly.

Highlighting the musical festivities will be the Israeli premiere of "A Time for Freedom," an oratorio based on the trial of Anatoly Shcharansky, with Israel's national choir, at the Jerusalem Theatre in Jerusalem, Sunday evening, July 19.

A 42-voice choir from Johannesburg, South Africa, will perform in a concert of master cantors to benefit the Israel Soldiers Welfare Association. That concert will take place Satur-

day evening, July 11 at the Binyanei Ha'ooma (convention center) in Jerusalem.

There will be a concert of liturgical chants at the Habimah Theatre in Tel Aviv, a concert at Kfar Ha Horesh in the Galilee and a concert at Ben Gurion University in B'eer Sheva to celebrate the centennial of David Ben Gurion's birth.

Cantor Samuel Rosenbaum of Rochester, N.Y., executive vice president of the Assembly, reported that cantors from the following countries will participate in the convention: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Israel, Italy, Rumania, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey and the United States.

Unique Prayer Services

These professionals will find much to stimulate their minds and vocal cords during the convention, according to Cantor Saul Z. Hammerman of Baltimore, Md., Cantors Assembly president. Aside from a series of educational sessions designed to foster communal feeling and increase their cantorial skills, the hazzanim and those in the convention party will participate in three unique prayer services at the sites in Israel where the Patriarchs initiated Judaism's daily prayers: *shaharit* at the Western Wall, where Abraham introduced the morning prayer; *minha* in the Negev near B'eer Sheva, where Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer; and *maariv* in Beth El, where Jacob prayed after his dream of a ladder ascending to heaven.

The entire entourage will participate in a memorial service at Yad Vashem for cantors who perished during the Holocaust as well as a torchlight service of affirmation at the Western Wall that will conclude the program.

On the Sabbath after the conclusion of the convention, members of the Cantors Assembly will officiate at services in Conservative congregations through the country.

A special two-track touring option -- one for first-time visitors to Israel; another more intensive program for "repeat" tourists -- will be offered to convention participants.

Reservations and additional information about the convention may be obtained by phoning the Cantors Assembly at (212) 691-8020 or Israel Tours (212) 697-8553.

The Jewish Festival Of Spring

(Continued from page 35)

Wispering grass, now tongues released,
Talk dew and rain and naked sign.
Withered yellows cross the arid country
which these hills contain.

So rests the field, speechless in captivity,
And fettered to these ranges by a burning hand,
Tell night possess it (cruellest in humanity),
And dew, increasing dew, soaks
through the thirsty land.

Not only kibbutz members added these and similar poems to the Haggadah. In the cities as well, beautiful melodies that modern Jewish composers have dedicated to many of the moving lines of the Song of Songs are sung before, during and after the official seder service, such as:

Let us lodge in the villages,
Let us rise early to the vineyards,
Let us see if the vines have blossomed
Whether the young grapes have opened to view
Whether the pomegranates have budded.
The mandrakes are fragrant, and at our door
Are all manner of precious fruits.

The Song of Songs is full of such nature poetry. Also its celebration of physical love is as impassioned and uninhibited as the verses of John Donne, the 17th century English divine. Of course, the Jewish sages understood the Song of Songs allegorically as symbolizing God's love for Israel, not as describing a physical relationship. This understanding, combined with the many lyrical descriptions of spring, worked in favor of the book becoming an orthodox accompaniment to the Passover festival. Hardy souls read the Song of Songs in its entirety at the end of the Seder and on every succeeding day of Passover.

Thus Passover, with its several levels of meaning, also combines the theme of the Jewish people's issuing forth from slavery and entering into a life of freedom, with the springtime breaking forth of nature from the bonds of winter to a season of freedom and flowering.

Happy Passover



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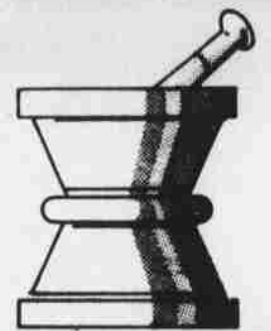
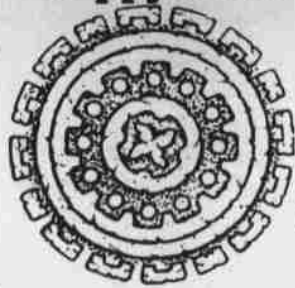
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