

Cape Hebrew Helping Hand Association.

ANNUAL REPORT.

The annual report of the Cape Hebrew Helping Hand Association issued this week reflects a great deal of credit on the Committee responsible for the work done. In a quiet and unobtrusive manner the Association has carried out its task of assisting those in financial difficulties to re-establish themselves in such a way as not to lose their self-respect and self-reliance.

The demands upon the funds of the Association are very much on the increase. During the year 178 loans were granted, involving the sum of £8,458. Each case was investigated, and no deserving applicant was refused assistance.

The amount of subscriptions received during the year was £470 7s. 6d., showing an increase of £50 1s. 6d. as compared with last year.

The capital of the Association is now £8,511 13s. 8d.

It is gratifying to note that the Trust Loans which were given to the Institution from time to time have now all been repaid, and that the bad debts contracted during the year did not exceed £11.

Cape Hebrew Helping Hand Association.

Notice is hereby given that the **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of the above Association, will take place in the **ZIONIST HALL**, Hope Street, on **SUNDAY**, the **9th AUGUST, 1936**, at **10.30 a.m.**

Agenda:

1. Minutes of Last Meeting.
2. Adoption of Report and Balance Sheet.
3. Election of Committee.
4. General.

I. FRANK,
Secretary.

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The Story of Jewish Music.

INTERESTING LECTURE BY
Rev. S. KIBEL.

"The Story of Jewish Music" formed the subject of a most interesting lecture by Rev. S. Kibel to the Bnoth Zion Association on Thursday afternoon, 30th July, at the Zionist Hall, at which Mrs. R. Movsovic presided.

"If you would know the heart of Israel, look into its history; but to catch a glimpse of the soul of Israel, you must look at Jewish music," said Rev. Kibel. The survival of Jewish music is as great a miracle as the survival of the Jewish people—and the reason lies in the fact that music is part of the soul, part of the very life of the Jew. Many references are to be found in the Bible relating to the use of music in all spheres of life, martial for military marches, love songs, songs for the harvest festival and for the vintage, songs for meetings and songs of farewell. Music and singing is associated with all the activities of life. And the Jews were rich in their supply of musical instruments; they had no less than six varieties of string instruments, more than is to be found in a modern orchestra, eight wind instruments, and a variety of percussion instruments, including symbols and the triangle. There are many references in the Bible as to how these instruments were employed; in many instances dancing and singing and the clapping of hands accompanied the music.

Music was early associated with divine worship and with prophecy—Elisha listened to the strains of music before receiving prophetic vision. David, besides being a great reformer, was both singer and musician and under him music reached a high level in the ancient world.

But music can only thrive in a congenial atmosphere, and in captivity, there was no singing. For "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land," answered the singers. After the Babylonian captivity the first thought of the Jews was to establish their music, and two hundred Levite singers and players accompanied the 42,000 people who returned to rebuild the Temple.

As the Temple became more firmly established in the life of the Jews, the Levites came to fill an important role and special chambers were reserved for them in the Temple. The Talmud gives in great detail the high level to which music, enriched by the experiences in Babylon, attained at this era.

The destruction of the second Temple abruptly ended this development, since the Rabbis forbade the use of all vocal and instrumental music as a sign of mourning—with the discontinuation of the sacrificial cultus and with it its music the Levites lost their importance to the community. It was not until the end of the tenth century that the ban was officially lifted.

Jewish music was saved from destruction by the evolution of the role of Chazan. In exile the synagogue became the most important centre of interest in the community, and the gradual realisation that the familiar service was enhanced by a good voice led to the choice of a Chazan being influenced as much by his vocal ability as by his learning. In spite of the criticism of the Rabbis, the role of the Chazan as the chanter of religious music within the synagogue became firmly established. And between the sixth and thirteenth centuries, we learn of many famous Chazanim—the travelling Chazan popularised melodies which became traditional. These Pietanim Chazanim borrowed melodies from non-Jewish sources and in a masterly fashion adapted them for use in the synagogue—thus accounting for the modern note which is to be found in much of our traditional music. When the spirit of the Renaissance swept westward, its influence was felt in the synagogue too. Since the synagogue, unlike the church, was unable to employ instruments, or the use of female voices, all the richness of development was concentrated in the melodies that accompanied the service.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century Solomon Rossi, singer at the ducal court at Mantua, was the first person who attempted to improve synagogue music. He was the composer of many songs, founded choral societies and trained Jewish actors and produced Jewish plays.

Since that day there have been many really great musicians who have devoted themselves to the development of Jewish music. Goldfaden is the father of the first Jewish opera and of modern Jewish music—many of his melodies being borrowed from synagogue music. Later popular songs came into fashion—and the Chazan is still the best exponent of Jewish folk music. Modern times opened up illimitable fields for the development of Jewish music, and, concluded, Mr. Kibel, he was confident that Jewish music would enrich the world with many masterpieces, which he hoped would be recognised as Jewish music.

Vocal and musical illustrations added greatly to the pleasure of Mr. Kibel's address, especially his rendering of "Eli, Eli," Achron's Hebrew Melody and Chassidic melodies. Mrs. M. Oblowitz ably accompanied Mr. Kibel at the piano.

Mrs. M. D. Immerman proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Kibel and Mrs. Oblowitz on behalf of the large and appreciative audience.

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