

Chanukah Services in Johannesburg

Beautiful Renditions of Synagogue Melodies.

IT has been said that Jews should be thankful for the Gentile observance of Sunday as a day of rest, as that gives them a free day for the holding of communal meetings and other social functions. Last Sunday, however—probably because it was also Christmas Day—this free day was also used for the holding of special services by three of our chief Johannesburg Congregations—and all on the same afternoon.

The three services were held at the Beth Hamedrash Hagodel, Saratoga Avenue, the Berea Synagogue and the Park Synagogue, Wolmarans Street. None of the synagogues had a full attendance, the Park Synagogue only filling up when the service at the Beth Hamedrash Hagodel had concluded. It was evidently beyond the realms of possibility for these Synagogues to have held one united and well-attended combined Chanukah Service on this Sunday for the whole of the Johannesburg Jewry.

It may be said at once, however, that each one of the three services was most beautifully rendered, reflecting the greatest credit on the Ministers, chazanim, choirs and instrumentalists.

At the Beth Hamedrash Hagodel, Cantor Berele Chagy officiated, assisted by the choir and a special orchestra under the conductorship of Mr. H. Ichilchik. One of the items in the service was specially composed by the Cantor and another by the conductor.

At the Berea Synagogue, Cantor S. Steinberg conducted the service assisted by the choir under the direction of Mr. Steinberg, junior, whilst Miss Steinberg was at the organ. Here those present included Messrs. J. Baratz and A. Harzfeld—the two Chalutzim leaders — and officers and members of the Habonim Movement, under Mr. N. Lourie. The Warden's Box was occupied by Messrs. J. Feitelberg (President), and I. J. Hersch (Vice-President).

At the Park Synagogue, the service was conducted by Cantor S. Inspektor and Cantor N. Lopato, assisted by the combined choirs of the Park and Yeoville Synagogues under Mr. G. Grosberg, the choir master, with Miss E. Ratzker at the organ. Chief Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau delivered the Sermon, and Rev. A. T. Shrock recited the Prayer for the Royal family. The Warden's Box was occupied by Messrs. M. Reuid, I. H. Lewsen and C. W. Behrman.

At each of the three services, hymns and songs appropriate to the Festival—in addition to the set service as contained in the Prayer Book—were beautifully rendered.

Dr. Landau's Sermon.

IN the course of an eloquent sermon at the Chanukah Service of the Park Synagogue, Chief Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau said that many a time in history had the Jews kindled lamps of noble thoughts and ideals, and a Joseph here and there had tried to interpret the dream of Pharaoh. It was a pity that so few of our people knew our history. If they knew the meaning of Jewish history and idealism, our people to-day would be stronger in mind and able to defend those ideals that now again were being attacked in many places.

One's heart ached to think that, after thousands of years of our carrying the torch of Judaism over continents and oceans drenched with Jewish blood, the world has returned to barbarism, and the dark cloud was again on the horizon, and the trumpet call threatening war was again heard in the land, so that there was no peace left. Italy was not satisfied, Germany and France were not satisfied, not sufficient lives had been destroyed. New young men were training the next war; and we Jews were told that the Messiah had already come. Civilisation to-day was a joke, and all hopes based on it had failed.

A Jew Speaks

FOR centuries we knew your hate,
Proud sons of patriarchs—
Our blood cried above from the
stone of your streets,
From the grass of your fields,
From the walls of hovels you gave
for homes;
In ghettos, you thought to shut us
up
From all the light of learning and
of life,
And so we said that God is every-
where,
And in His Law we quenched our
thirst to know,
And from our narrow, crowded
streets we made a world,
And in that world we nursed our
martyrdom,
Filling our hearts with throbbing
life,
Heaping coals upon our inmost fire,
O you, who dared to touch a sacred
thing,
Dared to play with living, God-
drunk souls,
Know that all the world's oppressed
shall turn to us,
For pride and scorn and stubborn-
ness!

—David Lovett.

(Concluded from previous column.)

Yet the Jewish nation has given the world not only the idea of the oneness of the God but also the doctrine of the Messiah. That was the source of our optimism, of our moral strength, of our eternal belief in spite of all disappointments—the belief that a better time must come, the belief in our Messiah, in the victory of Justice. They believed that from their Chanukah candles, a light will emanate that will fill the world with a knowledge of God, of Justice, and the world will realise the blessing of real peace.

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