

Getting Started Latest Headlines

Sephardic Pizmonim Project

Shabbat Pinehas Maqam SABA

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ספר

שיר ושבחה הלל וזמרה

100 Missing Pizmonim

Summer 2010

פזמון לפרשת קרה 133

פזמון לפרשת זקת 299

פזמון לפרשת בלק 406

פזמון לפרשת פינחס 480

פזמון לפרשת מטות-מסעי 237c

פזמון לפרשת דברים 487

פזמון לפרשת ואתחנן 180

פזמון לפרשת עקב 31

פזמון לפרשת ראה 274

פזמון לפרשת שופטים 203

פזמון לפרשת כי תצא 389

88,602 visitors since April 23, 2006.

SEPHARDIC HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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FEEDBACK

Pizmonim Project Miracle

David M. Betesh

Over the past few years, the Sephardic Pizmonim Project at pizmonim.com has had the ambitious goal of finding and recording every pizmon melody missing from our community's red pizmonim book, *Sefer Shir Ushbaha Hallel veZimrah*. This long-term goal is being accomplished one recording at a time; we are down from 220 missing pizmonim in 2006, to 190 in 2007, 130 in 2008, and 117 in 2009.

Unlike many of my peers whose goal it is to make their "first million" by the time they hit their 26th birthday, my long-standing and more realistic personal goal was to hit the milestone of missing only 100 pizmonim by June 29, 2010, my 26th birthday.

A lot of progress has been made this year from January to June, as many great associates of mine in New York and Jerusalem (Joey E. Mosseri, Isaac J. Cabasso, Victor Esses, Ezra C. Ashkenazi, Joey Harari, Sam Cohen, Mario Safdie and Uri Amram) have been helping me accomplish this goal by volunteering their valuable time searching for people around the globe who may be able to record for us the missing melodies. By June 14th, after a lot of pressure on all the people mentioned above, the number of missing songs was still stagnant at 101 with no lead in sight and no indication that I was going to accomplish my goal of reducing the list to 100 missing pizmonim by my birthday deadline.

I called my sister, Florence Simbol, and told her how disappointed I was that I wasn't going to accomplish the only real goal I set for myself this year. She offered me a helping hand, but there was nothing that she could do. I was very sad.

But somebody was listening in on that phone call. Wednesday, June 16, 2010, at 6 am, I mysteriously received an e-mail from someone in Argentina named Ezra Martin Zayat. It was in my spam folder; I was lucky to see it because I usually delete the material in my spam box without a single glance. The e-mail was in Spanish. I wasn't sure what it said, but I knew it had something to do with pizmonim and my great

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Pizmonim...

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grandfather, Gabriel A. Shrem. I sent an e-mail thanking Sr. Zayat and asking if he knew of any recordings from hazzanim in Buenos Aires, where there is a significant Syrian Halabi (Aleppo) Jewish population.

I continued on with my school day. When I returned a few hours later, I found the most amazing thing—my e-mail was flooded with recordings sent to me by Sr. Zayat. He had sent 30 pizmonim which were recorded by the late venerated cantor, Refael “Fule” Yanani A”H of Buenos Aires.

I immediately called my advisor and mentor, Joey Mosseri, to tell him what happened. He was excited to hear this news. I then wrote back to Sr. Zayat thanking him again and asking him to send more.

Several hours later, I returned to my computer and found that my e-mail was again flooded—with 45 more recordings.

I couldn’t believe it. All year long, getting one recording has been as painful as pulling teeth, and now, literally out of nowhere and all at once, I had received more than 75 new recordings in a single day! To me this was as big of a find as Qumran’s Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947.

All of these recordings were by Hazzan “Fule” Yanani of Sinagoga Shaare Zion of Buenos Aires, in the Halabi style of pizmonim. Many recordings were of pizmonim that we already had on the website (though duplicate renditions are always very helpful for the project), many were recordings of pizmonim that are common in Buenos Aires but not in Brooklyn (and therefore not located in our red pizmonim book or the checklist), and one pizmon, special for Shabbat Nahamu, (Re’eh Hashem Ki Sar Li), on page 180-II, was from my checklist of missing pizmonim, accomplishing my goal a week or so before my birthday deadline; officially reducing the list from 101 to 100 missing pizmonim. Mission accomplished.

The Sephardic Pizmonim Project set up the page pizmonim.com/yanani.htm in memory of Hazzan Yanani, with all the recordings that were sent to me on that great day.

I debated whether I should publicize this miracle or keep it to myself. I spoke to my good friend, Alberto Attia who assured me that I should tell my story. I hope it will strengthen the bonds between the New York and Buenos Aires Syrian communities and encourage more people to visit pizmonim.com.

Thank you again, Ezra Martin Zayat. Somebody (with a capital S) was definitely listening in on my phone call with my sister. □

David M. Betesh, a contributing writer for IMAGE Magazine. He is the president of the Sephardic Pizmonim Project and a student at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine.