



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

November 2020 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Wishing all those who celebrate a Joyous Thanksgiving. There are strong historical connections between Judaism and Thanksgiving. Most of the Pilgrims who celebrated the first Thanksgiving were Puritans, a branch of the Protestant faith. The Puritans strongly identified with the historical traditions and customs of the Israelites in the Bible.

In their quest for religious freedom, the Puritans viewed their journey to America as analogous to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. England was Egypt, the king was Pharaoh, the Atlantic Ocean their Red Sea, and the Puritans were the Israelites, entering into a new covenant with God in a new Promised Land. In fact, most of the Puritans had Hebrew names and there was even a proposal to make Hebrew the language of the colonies!

Many people believe that the Pilgrims modeled Thanksgiving after the holiday of Sukkot, as they are both harvest festivals that take place in the fall. In Jewish tradition, Sukkot has a dual significance: historical and agricultural. We dwell in booths to remember how our ancestors lived in sukkot for 40 years in the desert. However, the Torah also refers to Sukkot as *hag ha'asif*, the Festival of the Ingathering. At this time of year in Israel, the harvest was ending and the final fruits and crops were gathered and stored. Sukkot is also known as *z'man simhatenu*, the time of our rejoicing, as our ancestors gave thanks for the conclusion of the harvest and the bounty of the land.



This newsletter, our 140th will, as always, cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. Your feedback is of utmost importance to us. If you missed previous issues, they can be accessed on our website www.kkjsm.org.

We now reach over 10,000 households worldwide. What an accomplishment for a little synagogue on the Lower East Side of New York City. Our community of 'friends' continually grow with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at museum@kkjsm.org

We have resumed Shabbat morning services in person on a monthly basis for now. Please email amarcus@kkjsm.org if you would like to attend Shabbat services in person. We will share updates as we resume more frequent services.

If you would like to sponsor a KKJ E-Newsletter in Honor or in Memory of someone, please reach out to us at museum@kkjsm.org.

Simchas

First, our apologies for omitting baby Isaac Raymond Cohen's paternal Yanniotote roots (we just received them from his grandfather, Nathan Cohen). On the Cohen side of the family, Isaac's great grandparents Isaac and Sarah Cohen, and his great great-grandparents were David A. and Esther Cohen. David A. Cohen was an original member of KKJ. And, April 30, 2020 was the 100th anniversary of Isaac Cohen's birthday and not little Isaac's birthday.

But, on the positive side, this gives us another chance to post a picture of the beautiful baby.

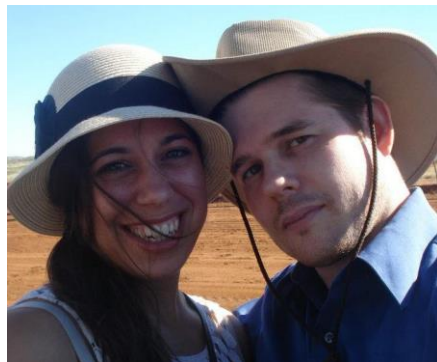


Isaac Raymond Cohen

We celebrate the marriage of Ariana Paganetti and David Williams. Ariana is the daughter of Glenn and Kathy Paganetti, the granddaughter of Charles and Shirlee Paganetti, and the great granddaughter of Moses and Eva Cabillis.



Kathy and Glenn Paganetti



Ariana and David



Cabillis Family

Passings

The Romaniote community in the USA mourns the passing of Louis Bates from the Greensboro North Carolina community just short of his 87th birthday.

Louis Bates, 86, passed away in Boca Raton, FL on Saturday, October 17, 2020. Born on October 21, 1933 in Greensboro, NC, he was the second son of Greek immigrants. He was a graduate of Greensboro High School and attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was a member of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity. Upon leaving U.N.C, he joined his father at Bates Nitewear Co., growing the company to become the nation's largest manufacturer of children's sleepwear. He was a member of Temple Emanuel and Beth David Synagogue. He was former member of the Greensboro Jaycees. He was also a member of Starmount Forest Country Club for over 60 years, serving a term on the Board of Directors. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Joan Wernick Bates of Boca Raton, FL as well sons Evan (Susan) Bates of Dallas, TX, Tony (Stefanie) Bates of Charlotte, NC, Keith Bates of Rutland, VT and Todd (Jill) Bates of Atlanta, GA. He is also survived by seven grandchildren and a great-grandson. He was preceded in death by parents Victor and Emma Bates, brother Seymour Bates and daughter Kimberly Bates. His memory will forever be a blessing to those he knew and loved. A graveside memorial service was held on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at the Greensboro Hebrew Cemetery in Greensboro, NC.

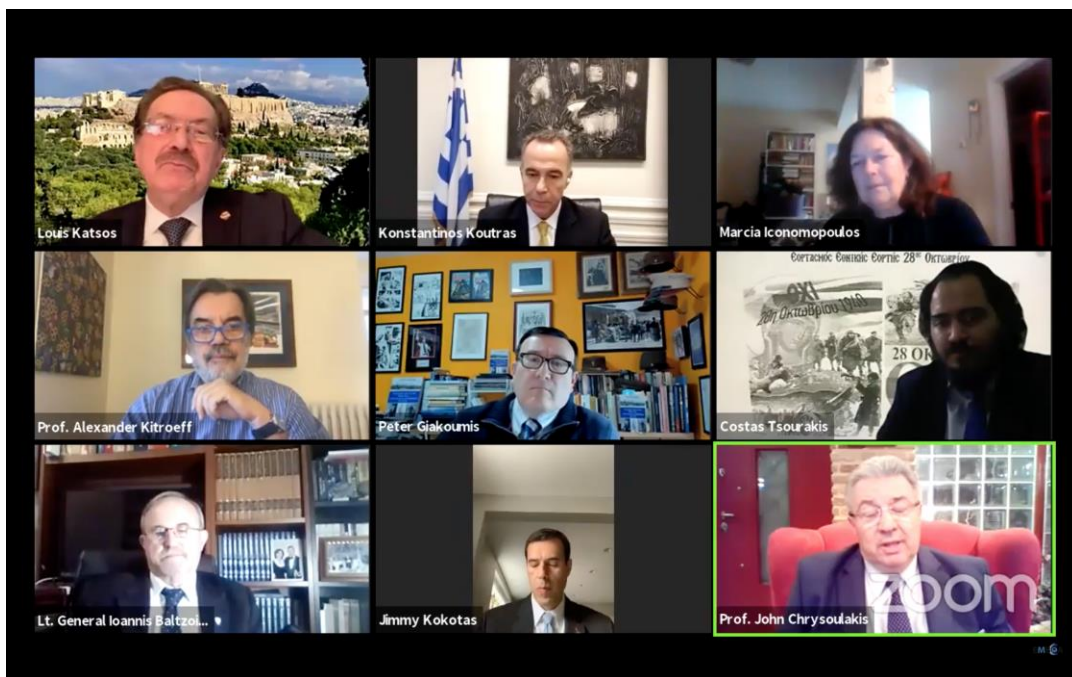


Lou and his cousin Annette Binder in 1999

Past Events of Importance in the Greek Jewish World

Eastern Mediterranean Business Culture Alliance (EMBCA) Online Presentation on Oxi Day

We were very proud that our Museum Director was asked to be part of this esteemed panel discussing the significance of Oxi Day. You can watch the full program online [here](#).



We are happy to share the the article below in the Greek National Herald.

EMBCA Panel Discussion on OXI Day and Its Effects on World War II - full article [here](#)

NEW YORK – On October 25, the East Mediterranean Business Culture Alliance (EMBCA) presented the OXI Day (October 28, 1940) and its Effects on World War II, Europe and America panel discussion via Zoom in association with the Hellenic American National Council (HANC), and AHEPA's Hellenic Cultural Commission.

Lou Katsos, EMBCA founder and president, gave the welcoming remarks noting that "OXI Day (October 28, 1940) a national Hellenic holiday represents when the Hellenic Prime Minister Metaxas was awoken to respond to a series of demands from a representative of a WWII Axis Power which would have allowed foreign troops free reign in Greece, a neutral nation at the time. His response to these demands a simple `OXI/NO' led to battles by the Hellenes of historical international consequences for Europe and the free world.

"It was the first time in the European theater that an Axis Power was defeated after they had taken over country after country, raised the hopes of occupied Europe, and caused the Nazi forces which were scheduled to attack the Soviet Union (Operation Barbarossa) to divert their forces and invade Greece instead. This diversion led to a delay in the Nazi invasion of the U.S.S.R. and the Nazi's eventual defeat there in the Soviet winter. As per the title of this event OXI Day was a turning point in WWII and had an importance that went beyond the Hellenic Republic and the war that was international in scope.

"In addition, despite the ultimate Hellenic defeat, having fought long and hard, the bravery of the Hellenic people during those difficult six months also had the effect of changing how Hellenic Americans were perceived in the United States. It transformed them from being thought of as the `Other' to being finally accepted as Americans. These and other aspects of OXI Day will be elaborated on in the panel discussion."

Opera singer Costas Tsourakis performed a cappella a few songs made famous by Sofia Vembo. Among those participating in the event, Secretary General for Public Diplomacy and Greeks Abroad Prof. John Chrysoulakis, speaking in English and in Greek, offered welcoming remarks and thanked all those participating in the event commemorating OXI Day.



Consul General of Greece in New York Konstantinos Koutras offered remarks about the current situation in the eastern Mediterranean and the lessons learned in the Mediterranean theatre during WWII. "Before we act, we must think," he said.

The highly distinguished panel included retired Hellenic Lt. General Ioannis Baltzois, historian and author Prof. Alexander Kitroeff of Haverford College, the Museum Director of Kehila Kedosha Janina Marcia Ikonomopoulos, AHEPA Supreme Vice President Jimmy Kokotas, and historian, researcher and author Peter Giakoumis.

Prof. Kitroeff noted the tremendous response of the Greek-American community, raising funds for the war effort, the Greek War Relief Association (GWRA), headed by Ahepan Spyros Skouras and other prominent Greek-Americans, local AHEPA chapters and parishes. Actively selling war bonds, Greek-Americans sold not only to themselves but to other Americans, mobilizing on the side of America and of Greece, Prof. Kitroeff noted.

Ikonomopoulos spoke about the Greek Jews who fought heroically in 1940, including Colonel Mordechai Frizis, born in Chalcis. Frizis, on horseback, continued to rally his men though he was mortally wounded and then died of his injuries. Ikonomopoulos also shared some of the lesser known stories of Ioannina Jews who were lost and those veterans, amputees, who were injured on the Albanian front and then met tragic ends in Auschwitz-Birkenau and others who later refused to be taken by the Germans and were executed.

Kokotas spoke about AHEPA's efforts during WWII, the selling of war bonds and the Greek battalion of the OSS. He noted that understanding the history, ideals and values are vital to the understanding of what is going on today in the eastern Mediterranean.

Giakoumis pointed out that his father and uncle fought on the Albanian front and he grew up hearing stories about the war. He spoke about Metaxas and the Balkan Wars in which 45,000 Greek-Americans fought, many of whom then fought in World War I, and then their sons fought in WWII.

Katsos also noted the contribution and the sacrifices of the Greek merchant marines who joined in the war effort. Kitroeff pointed out that there were strong seamen's unions one of which had the motto "keep the ships moving" and their efforts to get supplies to the Allies were vital. He also noted that Frank Sinatra performed a concert at Madison Square Garden to raise funds for Greece during the war. Lt. General Baltzois concluded by reading a letter from a Greek mother whose son was killed in the war, asking for her other sons to be drafted to fight, and who was honored with a statue in Greece.

Conversation with B'nai B'rith: The History of Greece's Romaniote Jews

Samuel Gruber and Renee Pappas spoke eloquently on Vincent Giordano's project "Before the Flame Goes Out" and mentioned the work he did both in Greece and in the USA (at Kehila Kedosha Janina). Watch their online video [here](#).



SHINDC: The Jews of Greece: From Antiquity to the Present, 3 part series with Rachel Velleli Glaser
 Presented by SHINDC, the Embassy of Greece, and the Embassy of Israel via Zoom
 Thursdays, October 22, October 29, and November 5, at 7:30-8:30PM Eastern Time
 November 5, Opening Remarks, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Museum Director of Kehila Kedosha Janina
 Sign up [here](#)

The Jews of Greece: From Antiquity to the Present

3-Part Series with Rachel Velleli Glaser

	Thursdays	7:30-8:30 PM (EDT)
	Part I	October 22
	Part II	October 29
	Part III	November 5

Part I - Jew Meets Greek: An Overview of the History of Greek Jewry
 Opening Remarks, TAMMY BEN-HAIM, Minister for Public Diplomacy of the Embassy of Israel to the US

Part II - The Holocaust Years: How My Family Survived
 Opening Remarks, H.E. ALEXANDRA PAPADOPOULOU, Ambassador of Greece to the USA

Part III - Customs and Rituals of Greek Jews: A Celebration of Family, Holidays and Culture
 Opening Remarks, MARCIA HADDAD IKONOMOPOULOS, Museum Director of Kehila Kedosha Janina | Music, SPYROS PILIOS KOLIAVASILIS

In this 3-part series, we will explore the little known story of the Jews of Greece, including a fascinating history, the blend of Greek and Jewish cultures, changes through the ages, the tragedy and challenges of the Holocaust years, and the unique culture of Greek Jewry as represented through music, food, customs and ritual.

Rachel is an educator who was born in Patras, Greece and emigrated to the United States with her parents and 3 older siblings in 1956 at the age of 8. Although missing their life in Greece, the Velleli family was grateful for the opportunity to have a new start in America, following all of the sadness and personal losses they suffered during the Holocaust. In America, Rachel became active in Jewish life and has dedicated her career to formal and informal Jewish education. The Baltimore Center for Jewish Education recognized Rachel's lifelong dedication to Jewish life and education with its Lifetime Achievement Award. Rachel is an esteemed member of SHIN-DC.

RSVP (Free) for Zoom Info: WWW.SHINDC.ORG/SHINSBN/GreekJews2020
 Rose & Robert Capon, in Loving Memorial of DANIEL CAPON and SOPHIE SASBON CAPON, נ"י, of Blessed Memory
 The Velleli and Glaser Families, in Loving Memorial of EMMANUEL & EMILY VELELLI, נ"י, of Blessed Memory

VISIT: WWW.SHINDC.ORG | TWITTER / INSTA: @Sephardic_in_DC LIKE US ON FACEBOOK: WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SEPHARDIC.HERITAGE.IN.DC

News from Kehila Kedosha Janina

After hosting successful High Holiday services, and monitoring ongoing guidance from health officials, we have decided to resume Shabbat morning services on a monthly basis for now. We will continue to monitor the situation and keep our community updated as we plan to resume more frequent services or museum tours.

Please join us for our next Shabbat Service on Saturday November 14, 2020 at 10am.

People interested in attending services in person are strongly encouraged to RSVP in advance by emailing Amarcus@kkjism.org.



KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA SYNAGOGUE REOPENING FOR SHABBAT SERVICES

AFTER HOSTING SUCCESSFUL HIGH HOLIDAY SERVICES, AND MONITORING ONGOING GUIDANCE FROM HEALTH OFFICIALS, WE HAVE DECIDED TO RESUME SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES ON A MONTHLY BASIS FOR NOW. WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND KEEP OUR COMMUNITY UPDATED AS WE PLAN TO RESUME MORE FREQUENT SERVICES OR MUSEUM TOURS.

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT SHABBAT SERVICE ON
SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14, 2020 AT 10AM**

PEOPLE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING SERVICES IN PERSON ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO RSVP IN ADVANCE BY EMAILING AMARCUS@KKJISM.ORG. VISIT WWW.KKJISM.ORG TO READ OUR POLICIES FOR SAFE PRAYER SERVICES.

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA 280 BROOME STREET NYC

Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum

The Synagogues of Greece – New 3-Part Online Class

Exploring the History, Architecture, and Culture of Jewish Spaces in Greece

Monday nights at 8pm, November 23, 30, and December 7

Sign up for the class [here](#)

The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America
La Ermandad Sefaradi

Kehila Kedosha Janina
Synagogue and Museum

SEPHARDIC DIGITAL ACADEMY

THE SYNAGOGUES OF GREECE

EXPLORING THE HISTORY, ARCHITECTURE, AND CULTURE OF
JEWISH SPACES IN GREECE

With Marcia Haddad
Ikonomopoulos

Mon. Nov. 23, 30, & Dec. 7
8pm ET / 5pm PT

Online Streaming Via Zoom
tinyurl.com/GreekSynagogues

Questions? Email Us at info@sephardicbrotherhood.com

The Museum at Kehila Kedosha Janina has been busy working on genealogical research, compiling family trees and of course, collecting additional photos for our vast photo archives. If you have family trees you would like to add to our collection or questions on your Greek Jewish families, contact us at museum@kkjasm.org

In addition, a number of synagogues have booked Marcia for a presentation on Romaniote Jews and a virtual tour of the synagogue (for a small fee). If your synagogue would be interested in this, email museum@kkjasm.org.

Greek Jewish & Sephardic Young Professionals Network

Bear Mountain Nature Hike for Young Professionals – Sunday November 8
RSVP to GreekJewishYPN@gmail.com



**Greek Jewish & Sephardic
Young Professionals Network**

Κοινότητα קהילה Komunita

BEAR MOUNTAIN FALL NATURE HIKE

NEW DATE: SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8
ANTHONY'S NOSE, BEAR MOUNTAIN NY

**ESCAPE THE CITY FOR THE DAY AS WE VISIT TRAILS IN THE
HUDSON VALLEY AND ENJOY THE BEAUTIFUL FALL FOLIAGE**



FULL DETAILS PROVIDED UPON RSVP
OPEN TO YOUNG ADULTS IN THEIR 20'S AND 30'S
RSVP TO GREEKJEWISHYPN@GMAIL.COM

The Greek Jewish & Sephardic Young Professionals Network is excited to launch a new **Industry Leaders Series** through the Sephardic Digital Academy specifically for our Young Professionals Community! Over the next few weeks, we're going to have special conversations with various community members throughout the United States who are leaders in diverse industries including tech, politics, business, architecture, and beyond! Check out the full guest roster below. Sign up for upcoming conversations [here](#), and watch the past conversations with David Naggar [here](#) and former Congresswoman Shelley Berkley [here](#).



The Sephardic Jewish
Brotherhood of America
La Ermandad Sefaradi



Greek Jewish & Sephardic
Young Professionals Network
Κοινότητα יהודה Komunita

SEPHARDIC DIGITAL ACADEMY

INDUSTRY LEADERS SERIES

CONVERSATIONS WITH SEPHARDIC LEADERS IN TECHNOLOGY,
POLITICS, BUSINESS, GLOBAL AFFAIRS, AND BEYOND



Thursday Oct. 22 8pm ET/5pm PT
David Naggar, Global Vice President
Amazon Books & Kindle Content



Thursday Oct. 29 8pm ET/5pm PT
Shelley Berkley, fmr. Congresswoman
United States Congress



Thursday Nov. 5 8pm ET/5pm PT
Joel Benoliel, former Chief Legal Officer
Costco Wholesale Corporation



Thursday Nov. 12 8pm ET/5pm PT
Dr. Efrat Sopher, Activist & Policy Advisor
World Jewish Congress

REGISTER AT [TINYURL.COM/SEPHARDICSPEAKERS](https://tinyurl.com/sephardicspeakers)

Locals Propose Naming Forest Hills Corner For Longtime Rabbi Murciano of Blessed Memory

Queens Community Board 6 unanimously approved co-naming the corner by the Sephardic Jewish Center of Forest Hills for its longtime rabbi. Rabbi M. Asher Murciano led the congregation at the Sephardic Jewish Center of Forest Hills for decades before his death in May. Now, residents of the neighborhood are backing a proposal to add his name to the street corner of his longtime synagogue.



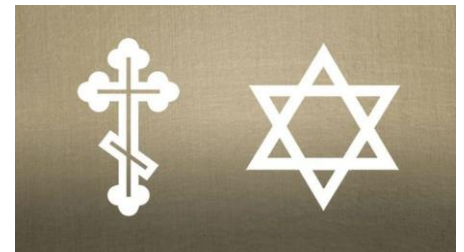
Queens Community Board 6 unanimously approved a proposal to co-name the intersection of 68th Avenue and 108th Street in honor of the rabbi. The proposal will next head to the City Council for approval. Murciano led religious services at the Sephardic Jewish Center, first in The Bronx then in Forest Hills, for 67 years. That makes him the country's longest-serving Sephardic rabbi of the same congregation, according to his obituary.

Murciano was born in Tangier, Morocco, in 1924 as a descendant of Spanish Jews from Murcia, Spain. He was ordained by Rabbi Baruch Toledano and achieved the highest degree of Yore Yadin Yadin, which permits a rabbi to make decisions on Jewish law, according to his obituary. He moved to Brooklyn in 1948 and started his tenure as rabbi of the Sephardic Jewish Center in 1953. He also served as a chaplain at Jacobi Hospital for 35 years. The rabbi died on May 8 of natural causes. He is survived by his wife, three children, 11 grandchildren and 34 great-grandchildren, siblings, nieces and nephews.

Message from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

In October 2020, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America released a resource page in response to anti-Semitism. This page explores the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and Judaism through the centuries and today.

The page also features News, Official Orthodox-Jewish Dialogues, Orthodox perspectives, those celebrated as "Righteous Among the Nations," books, and videos, as well as an original miniseries of panel conversations:



Episode 1: Dr. John Fotopoulos, Archon and Associate Professor Department of Religious Studies & Theology at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, Professor of New Testament & Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School, Dr. Margaret M. Mitchell, Distinguished Service Professor of New Testament & Early Christian Literature at the University of Chicago, Dr. Jim Skedros, Professor of Byzantine Studies, Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology

Episode 2: Rev. Dr. Brandon Gallaher, Senior Lecturer of Systematic and Comparative Theology at the University of Exeter, Dr. Aaron Hollander, Associate Director of Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute & Associate Editor of Ecumenical Trends Journal, Rabbi Noam Marans, Director of Interreligious and Intergroup Relations of the American Jewish Committee, Rev. Dr. Demetrios Tonnias, Lecturer of Religious Studies at Hellenic College & Ecumenical Officer of the Metropolis of Boston

Episode 3: Rev. Dr. Michael Azar, Assistant Professor of New Testament and early Patristics in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Scranton, Dr. Paris Chronakis, Lecture in Modern Greek History at Royal Holloway, University of London, Hannah Gais, Senior Research Analyst at the Southern Poverty Law Center & Journalist, Michael Wahid Hanna, Senior Fellow at the Century Foundation and Senior Fellow at Reiss Center on Law and Security, NYU School of Law, Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Radio Show Host & Executive Vice President of the New York Board of Rabbis

Visit the page here: <https://www.goarch.org/society/antisemitism>

Sol Kofinas

Our Sol Kofinas (Shamas of Kehila Kedosha Janina) was recently photographed by photographer B.A. Van Sise who has been commissioned to photograph Holocaust Survivors for the UN and Yad Vashem. We applaud the efforts but lament the fact that Sol is the only Greek Jew photographed so far.



We Are Always Proud of Romaniote Jews Who Achieve Greatness

We are very proud of Barbara Nessim who was inducted into the Society of Illustrators Hall of Fame on October 8, 2020.

Since 1958, the Society of Illustrators has elected to its Hall of Fame artists recognized for their distinguished achievement in the art of illustration. Artists are elected by former presidents of the Society and are chosen based on their body of work and the impact it has made on the field of illustration.

Barbara Nessim briefly worked in the textile industry after graduating from Pratt Institute in 1960. That same year, Nessim entered the Society of Illustrators' 2nd Annual, and received recognition for her monotype etchings "Man and Machine". With this prestigious accolade, Nessim began receiving commissions and became a professional illustrator, appearing in such notable publications as Harper's Bazaar, Esquire, Rolling Stone, TIME, Ms. Magazine, New York Magazine, and The Boston Globe, among others. Working as one of only a few women illustrators during the 1960s, Nessim paved the way for generations to come. Nessim's art was also featured on album covers, calendars, various corporate projects, and international magazine covers. In the 70's alongside doing illustration she designed shoes for Carber, as well as her own line of clothing Lady Vantastic for Lady Van Heusen. In 1980, Nessim was one of the first illustrators ever to experiment with digital art and illustration, using TIME Inc's Time Video Information Services' computers, serving as their Artist in Residence. Nessim has taught at the School of Visual Arts, Fashion Institute of Technology, and Pratt Institute, and from 1991 to 2004 she served as the Chair of the Illustration Department at Parsons The New School For Design, introducing computers into her curriculum which launched a school wide initiative. In 2013, a body of Nessim's work was featured in an extensive retrospective at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. In 2015 she received Pratt Institutes' Lifetime Achievement Award. In addition to her illustration and teaching work, Nessim has also created several large-scale installations for public buildings in New York City. She is now working on a major show of paintings for the Malin Gallery in NYC opening October 15, 2020. Throughout her professional career, Nessim continued to create personal work which greatly informed her illustrations. Barbara is a proud Romaniote Jew.



News from Jewish Greece Thessaloniki

Greece is not alone, says US Consul General in Thessaloniki

Full article [here](#)

"We see Greece as a pillar of stability in the region, but what I think is important to emphasize is that the United States are standing by Greece's side and Greece is not alone," said the new Consul General of USA in Thessaloniki Elizabeth Lee, during an interview with *AMNA*.

Consul General Elizabeth K. Lee arrived in Thessaloniki in August 2020. She holds an M.A. degree in Public Policy and International Affairs from Princeton University, a law degree (J.D.) from the University of Minnesota, and a bachelors in English Literature from Grinnell College. She is proficient in Greek, Korean, and Hebrew, and has studied Arabic and Spanish. Lee is a career member of the Foreign Service with over 13 years' experience as a foreign policy leader, manager, and negotiator on a diverse range of regions and issues, including the Middle East, East Asia, and the UN Security Council.



During the interview, she stressed the importance of Greece and the ports of Alexandroupolis and Kavala for USA's strategic interests. "The United States considers Greece a pillar of stability in the region, a country that is vital to our strategic interests." Lee also pointed out that US Ambassador to Greece, Geoffrey Pyatt, has visited Alexandroupolis five times during his tenure, "more than any other US ambassador in history."

The New Consul General also underlined Thessaloniki's promotion as a regional hub of science and technology as well as of the dynamic development of USA's presence in northern Greece which was reaffirmed by the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recent visit to the region. "You can see it – for example – in the Microsoft announcements made a few days ago. They affect all of Greece but I definitely believe that there are very exciting opportunities here in Northern Greece. I think that this scenario is reflected in the trip made by the Secretary of State."

One of the key priorities for Lee's three-year tenure in Thessaloniki is the completion of the Holocaust Museum, which she says is "one of the most important issues" she will focus on. "One cannot tell the story of modern Thessaloniki without telling the story of the city's Jews," she said, expressing hope that Pompeo's visit to the Jewish Museum raised awareness in Greece, and internationally, "for this tragic past and the important goal of establishing a museum that will honor those who lost their lives during this terrible chapter of history." Lee also noted that she will forge even stronger bilateral ties during her term. "As Greece approaches the 200 years of independence, I am proud of the fact that the relations between our two countries are at a high level and as Consul General I want to see them become even stronger at all levels."

Greek President Sakellaropoulou visits the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki

The President of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellaropoulou, said that the history of Thessaloniki's Jews "fills us with admiration, stimulates our conscience and invites us to be vigilant," speaking after her visit to the city's Jewish Museum on October 27, 2020.

Ms. Sakellaropoulou also expressed sentiments of "respect, sadness, maybe some shame: with these feelings I followed in the footsteps of the over-2,000-year-old Jewish presence in Thessaloniki." The Jewish community, she said, "enriched the city with its culture, creativity, entrepreneurship, vitality, but was severely tested in the 20th century, culminating in its almost complete annihilation in Nazi camps."



Sakellaropoulou was welcomed at the Jewish Museum and accompanied during her tour there by the President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece and the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki David Saltiel.

Rhodes

On Monday, October 12, four graves in the Jewish cemetery of Rhodes were vandalized. Such appalling acts are condemned by everyone. The World Jewish Congress took a stand on the matter by recently tweeting that: "Even after major steps were recently taken in Greece against racism, the fight is on-going."



Response from the Jewish Community of Rhodes

Dear friends,

Our recent post about the vandalism of four graves at the Jewish Cemetery of Rhodes, caused frustration among the Rodesli Community around the world. The aim of our post was not to upset you.

Following the formal announcement of the Jewish Central Board of Greece to the local and international media, we decided that it was proper for the Jewish Community of Rhodes to personally inform you.

The vandalism occurred not only in our cemetery but also in the Jewish cemeteries of Athens and Thessaloniki. We would like to reassure you that both our Community and the Jewish Central Board of Greece, which represents all the Jewish Communities of Greece, reacted immediately by taking all the necessary actions with the local authorities in Rhodes and Athens and with Jewish organizations from abroad.

Unfortunately, incidents like these, are very common all over Europe. Our fellow citizens of Rhodes immediately offered their support, which was very encouraging and moving. In all societies, there are negative elements. It's not a Greek phenomenon and vandalisms also happen in non-Jewish sites (most recent Berlin).

Lots of people are asking us about the tombs that were damaged. The tombs are situated in the small section of the cemetery, dated after 1930. We are in the process of repairing the damages. Thank you for your support and interest.

Read more about the recent cemetery vandalism, as well as desecration of the Holocaust memorial in Thessaloniki:

Jewish Cemeteries, Holocaust Memorial Desecrated in Greece Oct 19, 2020
The Times of Israel full article [here](#)

Greek Jews celebrate outlawing of neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party Full article [here](#)

'We hope other nations which allow similar neo-Nazi parties to run in elections. will likewise proscribe parties which promote racist ideologies', EJC president Moshe Kantor said.

Greek Jews celebrated a court decision to outlaw the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party, calling it a "landmark" ruling that protects democracy.

The ruling on Wednesday by the Athens Court of Appeals convicted seven of the party's former lawmakers, including party leader Nikos Michaloliakos, of leading a criminal organization, a felony that carries a prison sentence of up to 10 years, the Associated Press reported. The remaining 51 defendants were convicted of belonging to a criminal enterprise.



Thousands of anti-Golden Dawn demonstrators gathered outside the court in Athens to await the verdict

The court decision caps a trial that began in 2015 with prosecutors arguing that Golden Dawn leaders were criminally responsible for the fatal stabbing of rap singer Pavlos Fyssas by a party supporter. Other cases supporting the prosecution were assaults on immigrants and left-wing activists. Leaders of Golden Dawn, which uses a Swastika-themed symbol, have a history of Holocaust denial and incitement against Jews.

"The landmark ruling of the Greek court that criminalizes this neo-Nazi entity shields the republic of our country," the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece said Wednesday. "It reaffirms an important truth: Neo-Nazi organizations that weaponize patriotism are dangerous and spread hatred."

European Jewish Congress President Moshe Kantor expressed hope that other countries would take similar steps to outlaw neo-Nazi parties. He said it is "a welcome and important decision and finally tells the facts as they are, that neo-Nazis like those in Golden Dawn are criminals, pure and simple."

"We hope other nations which allow similar neo-Nazi parties to run in elections and sit in parliaments will likewise proscribe parties which promote racist and hateful ideologies. Today is a win for democracy and a defeat for hate and intolerance. This is hopefully the death knell for the Golden Dawn."

News from Greek Jewish Israel



Looking for Identification of these Survivors from Corfu in Israel

Earthquake Hits Greece and Turkey, Bringing Deaths and Floods [Full article from BBC here](#)

A powerful earthquake has struck off Turkey's Aegean coast and north of the Greek island of Samos, destroying homes and killing at least 22 people. The 7.0 magnitude tremor was centered off Turkey's Izmir province, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said. Turkey put the magnitude lower, at 6.6, saying 20 people had died and 786 were injured in the province of Izmir. On Samos, two teenagers were killed. The shallow tremor triggered a mini-tsunami that flooded Izmir and Samos.



The authorities in Izmir, the provincial capital, are now setting up a tent area to house about 2,000 people overnight, amid fears that more buildings could collapse. The authorities said that 70 people had been rescued from under the rubble. Rescuers continued to dig through concrete blocks after darkness fell, hoping to find more survivors. The USGS said the quake - which was felt as far away as Athens and Istanbul - struck at a depth of 10km (six miles), although Turkish officials said it was 16km below ground.

Turkey and Greece both sit on fault lines and earthquakes are common. In Izmir, Turkey's third largest city with the population of nearly three million, many people were seen running out into the streets in panic and fear after the quake struck. At least 20 buildings collapsed. Videos have been posted on social media appearing to show the moment one multi-story building went down, the BBC's Orla Guerin in Istanbul reports. Other footage shows local people scrambling over rubble looking for survivors.

There were reports of flooding in the city after the sea level rose, and some fishermen are said to be missing. "It was a really strong shaker almost enough to knock you off your feet. Running out of the house with my children was like a drunken wobble," Chris Bedford, a retired British teacher who lives in Urla, west of Izmir, told the BBC. One of the 20 confirmed victims drowned, the Turkish emergencies agency said.

Yasar Keles, an official in Sigacik, near Izmir, told BBC Turkish that a person died after their wheelchair was hit and overturned by the rising water. Officials later said that 70 people had been rescued from under the rubble. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the government would help those affected by the quake "with all the means available to our state".

In Greece, two teenagers were killed when a wall collapsed on Samos. Eight people were injured across the island. A mini-tsunami flooded the port of Samos and a number of buildings were damaged. Greek officials put the magnitude of the tremor at 6.7. "We felt it very strongly," local journalist Manos Stefanakis told the BBC, adding that smaller aftershocks were continuing. He said it was the biggest tremor to have hit the island since 1904.

Fareid Atta, another Samos-based journalist, told the BBC that the damage was "quite extensive along the seafront" of the island's main town. "Many businesses will be going under after this," he said. Residents were urged to stay outdoors and keep away from coastal areas. About 45,000 people live on Samos. Reports said Friday's quake was also felt on the Greek island of Crete.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said he called Mr Erdogan "to offer my condolences for the tragic loss of life from the earthquake that struck both our countries. Whatever our differences, these are times when our people need to stand together," Mr Mitsotakis wrote in a tweet. Mr Erdogan later responded, also by posting a tweet. "I offer my condolences to all of Greece on behalf of myself and the Turkish people," he wrote. "Turkey, too, is always ready to help Greece heal its wounds. That two neighbours show solidarity in difficult times is more valuable than many things in life," he added.

Relations between Greece and Turkey have been particularly strained in recent months by a dispute relating to control of territorial waters in the Mediterranean and the resources beneath them.

The Jewish Community of the United Arab Emirates

Small but growing, UAE's Jewish community to get second full-time rabbi from NY full article [here](#)

Beirut-born Elie Abadie, a prominent scholar of Sephardic Judaism, to relocate to Dubai by November 1, as Emirati community expects to expand following Abraham Accords

The small but growing Jewish community of Dubai is getting its second full-time rabbi, the Jewish Council of the Emirates (JCE), one of two Orthodox congregations in the country, announced.

Beirut-born Elie Abadie, a prominent rabbi and scholar of Sephardic Judaism currently living in New York City, will relocate to the Gulf metropolis to serve as the community's senior rabbi. The JCE is the country's oldest congregation and the only one recognized by local authorities.



Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie

"I feel like I'm coming home to my roots, to the region where I was born, to the language that I first spoke, and to the beautiful traditions and customs with which I grew up," Abadie said in a statement. "I look forward to meeting, teaching and praying with all of the congregants and members of the Jewish community at large. I will be honored to share and celebrate in all of your *semahot* [life cycle events] and rejoice in all of our holidays together. Together we will grow the seeds of the UAE Jewish community." Abadie will assume his post on November 1, the JCE said in a press release

"The Jewish community of the Emirates deserves nothing less than a true renaissance man, a scholar, pastor and visionary builder," said Yehuda Sarna, the JCE's New York-based non-resident chief rabbi. "He comes not only with a sense of indigeneity, being of the region, but also of internationalism. His fluency in both Arabic, as well as six other languages, positions him as a unique resource to the entire region."

Sarna will remain in the US but will continue to connect the Dubai community "to global Jewry and building bridges of cooperation with Emirati authorities and international stakeholders," according to the JCE press release.

"Rabbi Abadie is no stranger to our community, having led us in completing the country's first Torah scroll in March 2019 at the Villa," Sarna wrote to community members this week, referring to the house where the congregations meets to worship.

"Many of you remember that evening, when almost one hundred men, women and children joined Rabbi Abadie in a profound spiritual act: writing their own letter in a Torah scroll. Rabbi Abadie has since visited several times, and regularly joins our pre-Shabbat Zoom services."

"The appointment of Rabbi Abadie shows how the JCE is building the institutions for a confident, mature and thriving Jewish community in the UAE," the group's president Ross Kriel said. "With the rabbi's expertise and leadership, we look forward to continued expansion and taking our place as a valued stakeholder in Emirati society."

Abadie was born in Beirut, grew up in Mexico City and later moved to New York to attend Yeshiva University, where he was ordained as a rabbi in



Rabbi Abadie is a dear friend of Kehila Kedosha Janina. We were honored to host him along with other prominent Sephardic and Romaniote Rabbis at our Greek Jewish Shabbaton in 2018

1986. Four years later, he obtained an MD degree, and still maintains a private gastroenterology practice.

For many years, he served as the spiritual leader of the Edmond J. Safra Synagogue. He also founded the School of the Sephardic Academy of Manhattan and headed the Jacob E. Safra Institute of Sephardic Studies at Yeshiva University.

He is an officer of the Rabbinical Council of America and co-president of Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, a group advocating for Jewish refugees from the Middle East.

It is unclear how many Jews are currently living in the UAE. Estimates range between 500-1,500, but Sarna and others expect the number to increase significantly in light of the Emirati-Israel peace treaty signed on September 15 in Washington.

"Rabbi Abadie will address the growing spiritual needs of a residential community that has expanded significantly in recent years, and especially since the historic Abraham Accord," the JCE said. "That treaty has emboldened increasing numbers of Jews in the UAE to publicly identify as such after years of living in the shadows, uncertain about whether they would be accepted."

In recent years, the UAE has made great strides in presenting itself as an open country that respects all religions. President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan declared 2019 to be the "The Year of Tolerance" in the UAE. In this context, the country announced the building of a massive interfaith compound in Abu Dhabi that will also include a synagogue.

The so-called Abrahamic Family House is slated to open in 2022, and it is currently unclear who will be invited to move into the building.



Rabbi Abadie with his parents in Lebanon



A model of the so-called Abrahamic House campus on display at the Abu Dhabi Louvre

News from the Lower East Side

Kehila Kedosha Janina is proud to be an ally of the Lower East Side Preservation Initiative. From LESPI: Some great news - Community Board 3 unanimously approved a resolution, requested by LESPI, in support of restoring and reusing the East River Park's Art Deco Track House and Tennis Center Comfort Center, rather than demolishing them as currently planned by the City. LESPI is now working to convince the City to actually change its plans for the park to preserve these unique and important historic buildings.



Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



Since the presidential elections are literally a day or two away, it would seem appropriate to remind ourselves of the unique nature of truly free elections and the privilege of living in a land with a "government of the people, by the people and for the people" in Abraham Lincoln's inspiring words. But even more so, it is fascinating to see how much a democratic system of government was embedded in Judaism, Jewish tradition, and Jewish history.

Though the Torah does not speak about "elections" per se, the seeds of democratic rule were already planted in the clear separation of powers created in the Torah. From the outset, a clear division was prescribed in the Torah between the spiritual/educational versus the political/governing leadership. When the Patriarch, Jacob, blessed his twelve sons and their offspring on his deathbed, his blessing to Judah also contained the establishment of a permanent and binding rule that "the scepter will not depart from Judah", meaning any form of sovereign Israelite leader, including kings, must come from Judah's descendants. On the other hand, later in the wilderness, God will appoint the family of Aaron, Moses' brother, to be the perpetual "Cohanim" – Priests, whose exclusive role would be in the spiritual sphere: conducting Temple worship, educating the people and formulating much of what would later become official Jewish law in these arenas. And in fact, this clear division between two equally important spheres was strictly maintained, including during the era of the monarchies of Kings Saul, David and Solomon, until its breach by the Hasmonean dynasty after the defeat of the Seleucid Greeks and the rededication of the Second Temple, which was in blatant violation of this cardinal principle of a separation of powers and authority. This was unequivocally condemned by the Sages at that time, and many at consider this illegal usurping of total power by the Hasmonean dynasty as being a major contributing factor to the subsequent conquest of Land of Israel by Rome.

The pre-monarchy period of Biblical history, during the period of the Judges, in Israel, was characterized by leaders who either arose spontaneously, or were called on by the people to lead the nation. However, the chaotic nature of this period led to the people demanding a more fixed and stable leadership by a king. Though the Prophet Samuel only reluctantly agreed, he was insistent on using the Torah's clear instructions and demands of an Israelite king, which were like no other: Torah demands that a king must first and foremost be a servant of the people and of God, and not the ultimate authority; he must be a native son of the Israelite nation, and not a foreigner, no matter how talented or admired. And to ensure that he not lose sight of his role and position, he was basically superseded in his authority by a the Divinely appointed Prophet, who acted as the spiritual and ethical supervisor of the king, calling him out for any corrupt and anti-Godly behavior. And the king must be totally observant of the entire Torah, and should he not do so, and actively or passively violate cardinal principles of Jewish law or a direct command by God through a Prophet, he would be dethroned.

Later in Jewish history, a Nasi – President would be chosen to lead the Sanhedrin and other major Jewish bodies during the Mishnaic and Talmudic eras, as well as an "Exilarch" in many major Diaspora communities in early times. Many were elected by their colleagues and peers, while others were appointed. And obviously, not all were the models of morality, nor necessarily the wisest or most respected candidate, but the main point is that their authority and respect, and even downfall, was recognized or rejected by the people. And even when such a leader was the totally unqualified and corrupt political lackey of a foreign conqueror, as was unfortunately the case of the many of appointed High Priests in Second Temple times, the people did not hesitate to resort to mass rebellion, no matter how violent or deadly, to eject such individuals.

Thus, the idea of the people's power and majority rule has been Judaism's course since the beginning of time, and continues even today in the structure of almost all organized Jewish community and institutional structures that provide the communal, economic and spiritual needs of their constituents.

There is also no question that these Biblical and later Judaic-based models highly influenced America's Founding Fathers and authors of the Constitution as they formulated the democratic nature of governance that would shape the Constitution and the creation of the United States of America.

Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé
Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America



Parashah of the Week - Lekh Lekha
Abraham and his Legacy

Our Perasha begins this week with God speaking to Abraham and telling him to depart and leave his people and the land of his birth. He was to travel to a new land and meet new people, a society with a different culture, somewhat of an uncertain future. God then reassured Abraham and said, "And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you and your name will become great, and those that bless you will be blessed..." (1)

What is unique about this statement is that these blessings and words were to be recognized and seen within the children of Abraham as time would go on, his descendants were to become a great nation. Indeed, after so many thousands of years the Jewish nation carried on, survived and prevailed against all odds. One can not deny that the Jewish people have made a major mark in history. Still, one must ask about its beginnings, what made Abraham stand out in the eyes of God? Did he have any special traits? And was there a message and a mission that Abraham was looking to convey?

Abraham Avinu is known as the first Jew, the father of the Jewish nation and the founder and promoter of monotheistic beliefs, the belief that all that is was created by one infinite and omnipotent God. Polytheistic and pagan beliefs were widespread when he came to the scene. By and large, humanity saw itself as if controlled and manipulated by all sorts of strange forces. Man was not free to act, he was subjugated under the powers of the many gods found in nature and elsewhere, and by individuals who claimed to be gods. Abraham's powerful and universal message changed humanity forever. But, what are some of his traits? Abraham stands out as a unique individual in the Jewish bible. Abraham is a family man, loving and faithful to his family. He is able to maintain constant and open communication with Sarah, his wife, and with his household. In turn, she appears to be able to call on him whenever she feels the need. He is thoughtful whenever questions and challenging issues come up, he is stable and confident.

When he is forced to travel down to Egypt, he's aware of the dangers, he has street smarts. Abraham surrounds himself with like-minded individuals, he chooses his friends intelligently. It is interesting, but throughout the readings, Abraham is able to engage all kinds of individuals. Old and young, those in power or even those without. Abraham is able to build trust with his neighbors, he has the strength and fortitude to make others act with respect and honor towards him and his family. His dealings are always honest and fair. He pursues his goals with tenacity and never fails to attain that which he believes is right, yet Abraham is always able to maintain the right balance in life. Abraham is a man of war when he needs to rescue his nephew from kidnappers, but he is also very kind and able to welcome and host complete strangers in his dwellings for a good meal and a place to rest. He is a very wealthy man and also very successful. His personality mostly stands out, when without any fear, he decides to stand up and defend the people of Sodom from being destroyed by God for their evil ways. Abraham has indeed left a powerful legacy to his descendants.

In regards to Abraham's legacy, Rabbenu Moshe Ben Maimon (Ramba"m) states "The thoughts of the Creator of the World are beyond anyone's understanding." He writes that in some strange ways Abraham's teachings and ideals became famous and well known throughout the world through Islam and Christianity. Abraham became famous just as God had promised Abraham. (2) And in regards to the blessings, Hakham David Elnecavé writes that the descendants of Abraham were never to become a mighty empire, they have remained a small group of people. He states that the greatness of the Jewish people has consisted on the transmission of their ideals and beliefs. It is without any doubt that today the world relies heavily, morally and spiritually in Jewish beliefs. (3)

Shabbat Shalom

(1) Genesis 12:2

(2) Rabenu Moshe ben Maimon, (Rambam), Mishne Torah, Shofetim, Hilkhot Melakhim 11:7.

(3) David Elnecave, El Buen Pastor P.52

(4) Rabbi David Elnecavé (1882-1963) was born in Haskoy a suburb of today's Istanbul, Turkey. Even as a young boy he dedicated himself heart and soul to the study of talmud and judaic sciences at the main Talmud Torah. He later studied talmud in the yeshivah of Rabbi Yishak Menashe, where he became known as a "Darshan" by the age of 14. In 1898, he joined the yeshivah directed by his eminence Rabbi Avraham Danon. The program of the yeshivah consisted of Exegesis of Tanakh, Talmud, History of the Talmud, Theology, Jewish History, Applied Ethics and Jurisprudence, History of Hebrew Literature, Grammar and Hebrew Composition, Comparative Languages Hebrew, Arabic and Akkadian. While some of the subjects were taught in Turkish or French, the Talmudic class was given in Judeo-Espanyol (Ladino) by Rabbi Sherez. Amongst some of graduates to have come from this rabbinical seminar are Ben Sion Hay Uziel, first Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel and Shabetay Dja'en, Chief Rabbi of Bucharest and later Argentina. Hakham David himself served as the interim Chief Rabbi of Turkey while the post was vacant and the new Chief Rabbi was voted in. At some later time, he was asked to fill the post as principal of the Talmud Torah in Monastir (Bitola) in Macedonia. He returned to Constantinople in 1909 where he founded "El Judío" a Zionistic newspaper in Judeo-Espanyol (Ladino). In 1921 he moved to Bulgaria where he continued to publish the newspaper until he moved to Argentina in 1931. In Buenos Aires, he founded a new magazine called "La Luz", which became one of the most important Sephardic magazines in Latin America at the time. David Elnecavé distinguished himself as a leader in the zionistic movement in Ottoman Turkey and later in Latin America and also as an educator and a Darshan. He was appointed delegate of the XII Zionistic congress in Carlsbad, Czechoslovakia in 1921 and acted as an emissary of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in a number of countries in Latin America. The ideal of Eres Israel overtook him, but he was also greatly concerned about the Jewish masses needing to be educated and prepared to the many changes that were happening at the time. He would travel constantly to many cities throughout Latin America teaching, promoting Jewish education and Zionism. He passed away in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1963.



Angel for Shabbat, Parashat Lekh Lekha by Rabbi Marc D. Angel

Abraham Wasn't Electable – But He Was Elected!

Abraham must have been a very unpopular man in the society and family in which he was raised. He wouldn't likely have been elected to lead the citizenry of Ur Kasdim. He rejected their worldview, smashed their idols, repudiated their (un)ethical system. Who would vote for Abraham? He was a starry-eyed mystic and philosopher, not interested in pandering to the values and interests of his fellow citizens.

A Midrash tells a story that Terah, Abraham's father, was not only an idolater, but did business manufacturing and selling idols. One night, the young Abraham went into his father's shop and smashed all the idols, except one. In that last idol's hand, Abraham placed a hammer. When Terah went to his shop the next morning, he was shocked to see the idols broken to pieces. He asked Abraham: who could have done such a terrible act of vandalism? Abraham answered: the idol holding the hammer must have smashed the other idols. Terah responded: that's impossible, that idol is made of stone, it can't do anything. Abraham retorted: if you don't believe a stone idol can smash other idols, why do you believe it is a powerful god? It's just a piece of powerless stone!

Children like this story because it shows how Abraham outsmarted his father, thereby demonstrating the foolishness of idolatry. Abraham thus made his preliminary case for the truth of ethical monotheism.

As we grow older, though, this story requires a more sophisticated interpretation. After all, we do not think that idolaters really believe that their idols are gods. Rather, the idols are symbols of gods. Terah certainly would never have imagined that one of his idols could act autonomously. He would have thought that his idols were symbols of gods, or that in some way the gods' spirits rested within the idols. So he would not have been impressed with

Abraham's question and seeming refutation of idolatry. By analogy, we pledge allegiance to the flag--but the flag is just a piece of cloth, with little intrinsic value. When someone burns the flag, though, we are outraged--not because a piece of cloth was set ablaze, but because that flag is a powerful symbol to us of our nation and our values. Terah would have been outraged to see his idols shattered, in a similar sense to the outrage we feel when our flag is desecrated.

Perhaps that Midrash was alluding to a deeper idea. It was telling us something important about Abraham that would have convinced God to choose Abraham to be father of a new nation.

Abraham was living in Terah's household. He knew his father worshipped idols and promoted idolatry. What young boy wants to rise up against his father's values and his father's business? It would have been so much easier for Abraham to hold his peace, and wait until he was old enough to live on his own before he espoused his monotheistic views. Moreover, even if Abraham chose to argue with his father about the worthlessness of idols, why would he have vandalized his father's shop, an action that was bound to generate a lot of discussion and anger among the townspeople? Furthermore, why would he make a public mockery of idolatry while living in a society full of idolaters? It would have been so much more convenient for Abraham to remain silent, to keep his ideas to himself, to respect the mores of his father, his birthplace, his society.

The Midrash is teaching us that Abraham was a powerful, courageous individual who was not afraid to dissent from the majority when he knew that the majority was wrong. Abraham was willing to risk his own comfort by defying the perverse ideas and values of his father and of the entire idolatrous society. He did not just speak out against idolatry: he had the gumption to smash idols, to bring matters to a head. He was not "diplomatic" in espousing belief in one God and in rejecting idolatry.

Thus, when God saw that Abraham was absolutely not "electable" by his community, God decided that Abraham was His man. God "elected" Abraham--a man of incredible personal strength and vision--to set out on the journey, to leave his society, his birthplace, his father's home. God elected Abraham to establish a new nation, with a new vision, a new idealism, a new ethical system, a new way of relating to God.

The words "lekh lekha" are commonly translated: get thee out. But they can also be translated as: go to yourself. In the latter sense, God was telling Abraham: go to yourself, to your own inner core; don't be misled by your father and his society; don't strive to conform and get along. Stand on your own, be true to yourself. If you "go to yourself" and stay faithful to who you are, you will be the father of a great nation.

Looking for Our Help

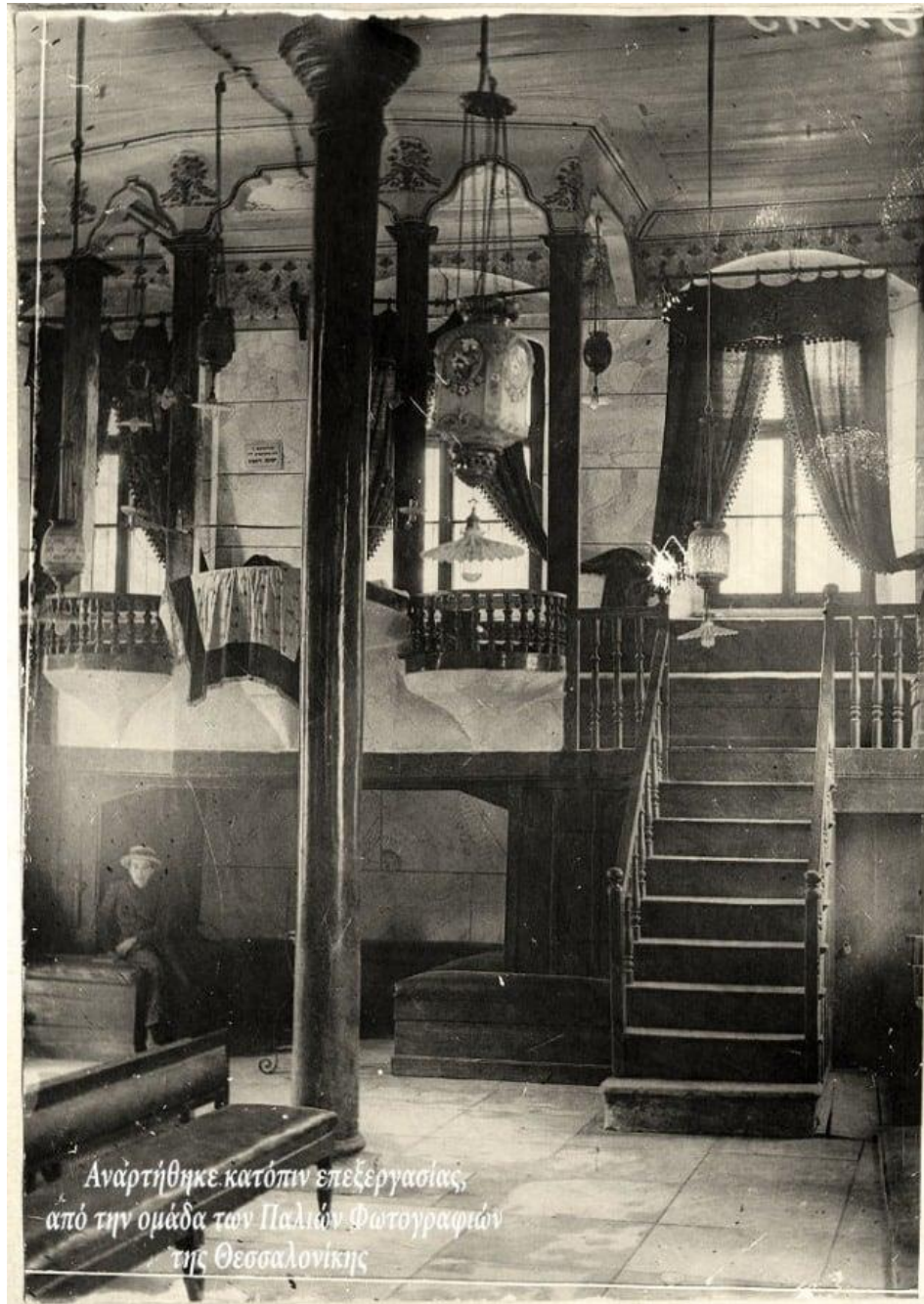
Rae Yamali who has Vitoulis roots on her mother's side, grew up hearing a story of family members who went to Egypt. Looking for anyone who was from the Egyptian Jewish Diaspora who can remember a Vitoulis in Egypt.

Looking for anyone who can identify this uniform. The caption with the photo identifies it as from the "Indian" campaign and we believe it was from Britain's stay in India. We would also love to identify the man in the photo, if possible.



New Additions to Our Photo Archive

Provence Synagogue in Thessaloniki before the 1917 Great Fire



This very rare photo is from inside one of the old synagogues of downtown Thessaloniki before the Great Fire in 1917. According to the note, this is the Provence Synagogue (Provincia) whose position (based on the 1918 cadastral survey by E. Hekimoglou) has been identified inside the square of the then old streets of Saint Theodora, Palamas, Protagoras and Agios Nikolaos - today we would locate the spot very close to the corner of Charles Deal with Papamarkou pedestrian street at the bottom of Athonos Square. The synagogue was founded before the 18th century by Jews of Provence, but the year of the building of the photography is of course impossible to define. It was completely ruined in August 1917 and not rebuilt - but continued its operation from 1919-20 to 1943 in a new position in the settlement of Regi Vardar.

So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.

If you would like to make a contribution to Kehila Kedosha Janina, please send your check (in US dollars) made out to *Kehila Kedosha Janina*, to us at 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 (attention Marcia). Your donation will enable us to continue to hold services and preserve our special traditions and customs, and to tell our unique story through our Museum.

Some of our major donations have been generous bequests, which have enabled us to complete major work in our synagogue/museum. Do remember us in your will. Your legacy will be present in our legacy. **We need donations more than ever now. You can do this on line on our website: www.kkjsm.org accessing the donation link in the upper left hand corner.**

When you are in New York, visit us on Broome Street. We look forward to reopening. Normally, we are open for services every Saturday morning at 9:30am and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11am-4pm and by appointment during the week.



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