



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

February 2021 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

For Jews around the world, February 25-26 marks the Holiday of Purim. It is a joyous Jewish festival commemorating the survival of the Jews who, in the 5th century BCE, were marked for death by their Persian rulers. The story is recounted in the biblical Book of Esther. It tells of the near-destruction of the Jewish people as decreed by Haman, an adviser to the Persian King Ahasuerus. However, Ahasuerus' newly crowned queen, Esther is secretly a Jew and she intercedes for the saving of her people. In synagogues throughout the world, every time the name of Haman (the villain in the story) is mentioned, the congregation stamps their feet and make noise with handheld noisemakers to drown out the name of Haman.



Rachel Sara Osmo

See the story of Rachel's costume later in this newsletter

Because Purim coincides (on the Western Christian Calendar) with Carnavale it played an important role for Jews who had to hide their identity, fearing persecution or, even, death. In Spain and Portugal, during the time of the Inquisition, Jews would continue to celebrate Purim, donning costumes as their Christian neighbors did for Carnavale. They, secretly, called the Holiday "La Fiesta de Santa Esther."

In Greece, and other parts of the Eastern Orthodox world, in addition to Carnavale, often Fat Thursday (Tsiknopempti) is celebrated. This year, on the 200th anniversary of the Greek War of Independence, special events will take place, including a special exhibit at the Athens Museum.

This newsletter, our 143rd 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

In February we celebrate the recent birth of two beautiful baby girls whose families are from the Greek-Jewish world.

Hella Kounio Matalon and Elias Matalon announced the birth of their second grandchild, Celine de Vreese, the daughter of Kelly Matalon and Glen de Vreese and the sister of Victor de Vreese. We are awaiting photographs.

Mazal Tov to Joshua & Danielle Varon of El Portal, Florida on the birth of a beautiful baby girl, on Thursday, January 27th. Sophie was welcomed in at 8:28 a.m. Mazal tov to Great Grandmother Esta (Hazan) Varon, the Papou, Joseph Varon of West Hempstead, and Grandmothers Frances Lowenstein of Bellerose and Elzinha Schuindt of Nova Friburgo, Brazil, to the baby's brother Noah Eliahu, and to Uncle Seth Varon and Aunts Nia and Leila.



Passings

On December 22, 2020, we lost a dear member of the Baltimore Greek Jewish community, Soulamith Matsas Yohanas, a"h, at the age of 94. Soulamith and the Matsas Family survived the Holocaust in Greece by hiding in the mountains, with the help of Greek Christians.



Soulamith, her husband Joseph (Peppo) Yohanas, and their 2 young sons Isaac and Louis, immigrated from Patras, Greece to the United States, along with their good friends and relatives, the Velelli Family. In Baltimore, the Yohanas's and Velelli's joined the small but close-knit Greek Jewish community (Families of Koulias, Salis, Elhai, Carasso, and Idas), with whom they remained lifelong friends. They also made new friends among the Greek Orthodox community in Baltimore, sharing many good times together and remembering life in Greece.

Soulamith Yohanas was known for her incredible cooking of Greek dishes and baking of Greek delicacies, for her hospitality and for her generosity with all. She and her family were active members of Shaarei Tefillah Congregation in Baltimore. She continued to honor her Greek Jewish heritage, following all the traditions for holidays and life-cycle events. Her home was always open to visitors and she was most happy spending time with family and friends.

Sadly, in the summer of 2020, Soulamith had to move out of her home and into the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington. Because of the Pandemic and the restrictions placed on visitors, Soulamith was cut off from her greatest joy of being with others, even as she enjoyed speaking to her friends and loved ones over the phone. Soulamith Yohanas passed away from COVID-19 a few days after her 94th birthday. So many people were fortunate to have had her in their lives. May her memory be for a blessing. Zichrona livracha.



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Flory Jagoda at the age of 97th. Born Flora Papo to a Bosnian Jewish family in 1923, she grew up in the Bosnian towns of Vlasenica and her birth city of Sarajevo. She was raised in the Sephardic tradition in the musical Altaras family. Her mother, Rosa Altarac (or Altarasa) left her first husband and returned to the town of Vlasenica. There she met and married Michael Kabilio, and they settled in Zagreb, Croatia, where Kabilio owned a tie-making business.



When the Nazis invaded Yugoslavia in April 1941, her step-father (whom Flory referred to as her father) put 16-year-old Flory on a train to Split using false identity papers and removing the Jewish star from her coat. On the train she played her accordion ("hamoniku" in Serbo-Croatian) all the way to Split (at that time controlled by the Italians), with other passengers and even the conductor singing along; she was never asked for her ticket. Her parents joined her in Split several days later, and after a brief sojourn there they and other Jews who had escaped the Nazis were moved to various islands off the Croatian coast. Flory and her parents were sent to the island of Korcula, where they lived until fall 1943. Following the Italian capitulation the Jews on Korcula went by fishing boats to Bari, Italy, which had recently been liberated by the British army. While in Italy, she met and fell in love with an American soldier named Harry Jagoda. She arrived in the USA as a war bride in 1946, going first to Harry's hometown of Youngstown, Ohio, and later moving to Northern Virginia where she still lived until her passing. Flory and her husband Harry Jagoda had four children.

We mourn the passing of Annette Cabelli, Jewish Thessaloniki survivor of Auschwitz, who in 2015 received Spanish citizenship fulfilling the dream of her mother. Annette was a member of the extended Modiano family. Annette Cabelli was born within the Sephardic community of Thessaloniki on April 25, 1925. Since the German occupation, living conditions have been atrocious for the Jews of this city: forced labor, confinement in ghettos, obligation to wear the yellow star, etc. At the age of 17, she was deported to Auschwitz, where, upon arrival, her hair was shaved, her clothes removed, and the number 4065 tattooed on her forearm. Annette spoke Ladino, French, Italian, Greek... she said: " In Thessaloniki we worked in Greek, studied French, fell in love and became angry in Ladino, sang in Italian..." Adio addio kerida...



We mourn the passing of Ruth Abel Levy and her husband, Victor Levy. Both passed in January, Victor at the age 96 and Ruth, 95. Victor was a long-time Board member and former President of the Sephardic Home for the Aged, 1991-1994. For over forty years, Victor was dedicated to enriching the lives of our elderly residents as if each were a member of his own family. We extend our sympathies to Paul and Janice Levy and their son Eric Levy, a member of the Greek Jewish Young Professionals Network.

We mourn the passing of Joan Coffino, widow of Jack Coffino, who passed at the age of 92. She is survived by her children, Rhonda and Michael (Amy) and her grandchildren.

We mourn the passing of Corky Lee, the legendary photographer who brought the story of Asian Americans and their struggle to the greater world. Corky died of COVID19 on January 27th. Corky was an advisor to the Lower East Side Preservation Initiative.



News from Kehila Kedosha Janina

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

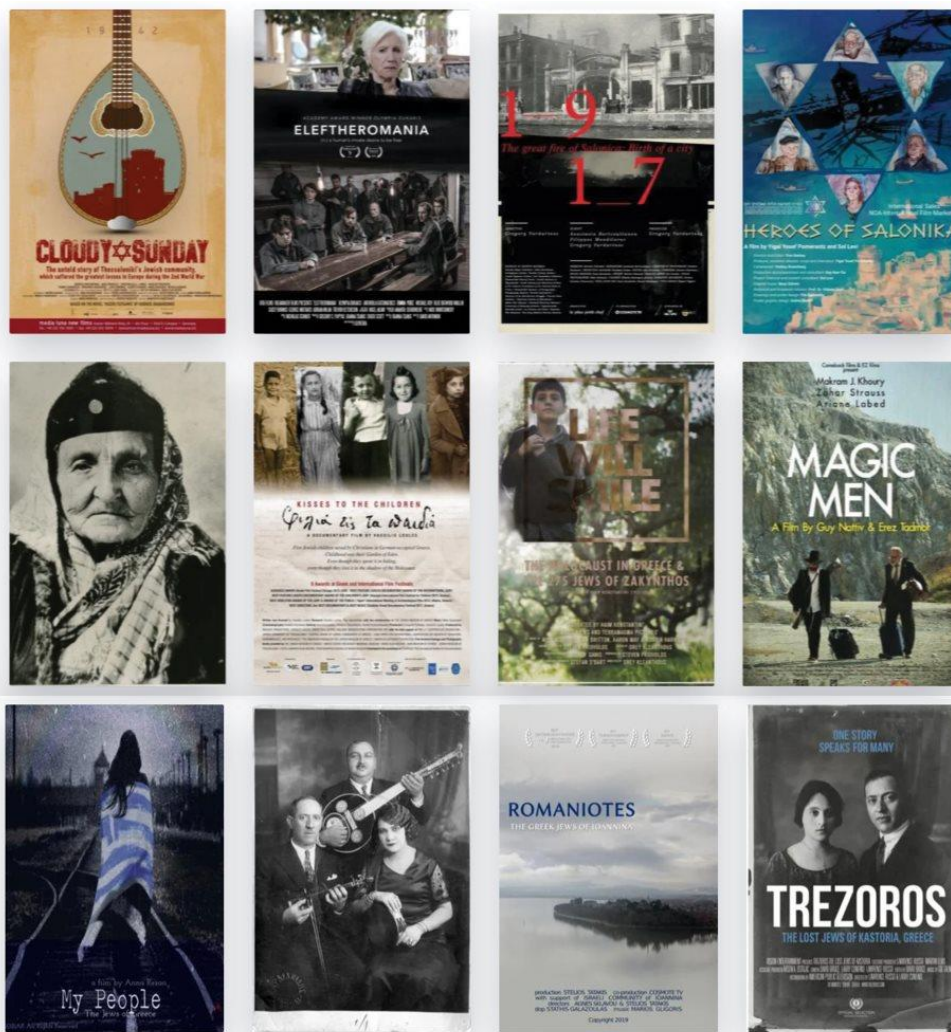
Our online Zoom presentations, coordinated by Ethan Marcus, the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America, and Kehila Kedosha Janina, have been a great success. The latest series by our Museum Director Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos on the Synagogues of Greece has been widely received. If you missed any of these presentations, you can access them online [here](#).

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, contact Marcia directly at museum@kkjasm.org.

We were honored to be represented at the events of UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture's "**Heritage and Memory: A Focus on Jewish Greece.**" Our Museum Director did a special presentation on January 29th. Moses Eliasaf, the Mayor of Ioannina and President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, was interviewed for the program on January 27th. In addition, there is a 10-day program of films offered by the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival. Those who missed any of the lectures can see the recordings which will be posted the week of February 8th. Check our Facebook page for the latest links.

LA Greek Film Festival – A Focus on Jewish Greece

Check out these award-winning Greek Jewish films for FREE from the LA Greek Film Festival. Watch them anytime between now and February 7! Sign up here: <https://heritage.eventive.org/films>



Heritage and Memory: A Focus on Jewish Greece

Learn more [Here](#)

HERITAGE AND MEMORY: A FOCUS ON JEWISH GREECE

A 10-DAY VIRTUAL EVENT IN HONOR OF
GREECE'S PRESIDENCY OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE

JANUARY 27-FEBRUARY 6 | ALL EVENTS FREE OF CHARGE

FILMS (FOR SCREENING DETAILS, PLEASE CONSULT: [HTTP://LAGFF.ORG/](http://LAGFF.ORG/))

THE QUEEN OF REBETIKO: MY SWEET CANARY
CLOUDY SUNDAY
MAGIC MEN
TREZOROS: THE LOST JEWS OF KASTORIA
ROMANIOTES: THE GREEK JEWS OF IOANNINA
LIFE WILL SMILE
ELEFTHEROMANIA
THE GREAT FIRE OF SALONICA: BIRTH OF A CITY
HEROES OF SALONICA
ISLAND OF ROSES: THE JEWS OF RHODES IN LOS ANGELES
KISSES TO THE CHILDREN
MY PEOPLE: THE JEWS OF GREECE (EXTENDED SPECIAL PREVIEW)



ZOOM LECTURES (TO RSVP, SEE <https://hellenic.ucla.edu/events/>)

JANUARY 27 10 AM PT *CONVERSATION WITH THE MAYOR*
THE HONORABLE MOSES ELISAF, MAYOR OF IOANNINA
(CO-SPONSORED BY THE PANEPIROTIK FEDERATION OF AMERICA)
INTRODUCED BY HER EXCELLENCY ALEXANDRA PAPAPOPOULOU, AMBASSADOR OF GREECE TO THE USA

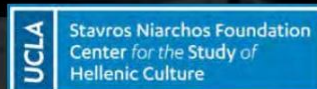
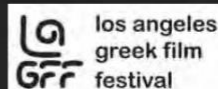
JANUARY 29 10 AM PT MARCIA HADDAD IKONOMOPOULOS, MUSEUM DIRECTOR OF KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA, NY
"MEET ME ON THE CORNER OF BROOME AND ALLEN: A VISIT TO KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA"
(CO-SPONSORED BY THE PANEPIROTIK FEDERATION OF AMERICA)

FEBRUARY 1 10 AM PT LEON SALTIEL, UNIVERSITY OF MACEDONIA, THESSALONIKI
"DEHUMANIZING THE DEAD:
THE DESTRUCTION OF THESSALONIKI'S JEWISH CEMETERY DURING WORLD WAR II"

FEBRUARY 3 10 AM PT RENA MOLCHO, HISTORIAN & INTERNATIONAL AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR
"PROBLEMS OF INCORPORATING THE HOLOCAUST INTO THE GREEK COLLECTIVE MEMORY"

BOOK DISCUSSION WITH AUTHOR RIKA BENVENISTE
(IN GREEK; TO PARTICIPATE, CONTACT SZENIOS@HUMNET.UCLA.EDU)

JANUARY 30 10 AM PT *Λούνα (Luna)*



Shabbat Services at Kehila Kedosha Janina

As we monitor ongoing guidance from health officials, we will host 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 in person on Saturday February 13, 2021 at 10am.

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

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
INVITES YOU TO JOIN OUR

SHABBAT SERVICES
IN PERSON
IN THE ROMANIOTE TRADITION

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 13 AT 10AM

JOIN US FOR SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES IN PERSON AND HELP US CONTINUE OUR ROMANIOTE TRADITIONS. WE CONTINUE TO MONITOR ONGOING GUIDANCE FROM HEALTH OFFICIALS TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITY SAFE AND WILL PROVIDE UPDATES AS WE PLAN TO RESUME MORE FREQUENT SERVICES OR MUSEUM TOURS.

PLEASE EMAIL AMARCUS@KKJISM.ORG TO RSVP

שבת שלום

Purim Gift Boxes

The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood has Purim Mishloah Manot (Platikos) available to send to family or friends to help celebrate the upcoming holiday of Purim.



Send your friends and family a unique Sephardic Purim Gift Box and fulfill the misva (commandment) of sending gifts on Purim! Mishloah Manot (lit. Sending of Portions) are gifts of food or drink that are sent to family and friends to help celebrate the holiday of Purim. This special box features unique Sephardic gifts including Halva, Turkish Delight, Turkish Coffee, Turkish Tea, Sesame Candies, Sparkling Cider, and a Turkish Style Coffee Pot (Jizve/Briki)! The box will also include a special Purim Guide that helps teach about Sephardic Customs and Laws for the Holiday, along with some holiday songs and Torah insights. This is a great gift to help your friends and family celebrate this upcoming festive holiday.

Order yours now for \$54 with FREE shipping included. Supplies are Limited! You must order your Gift Box by February 11th!

**Order your Purim Gift Box [Here](#)
Happy Purim!**

Romaniote Memories: A Jewish Journey from Ioannina, Greece to Manhattan New Photo Exhibit by Vincent Giordano

Virtual Opening Reception on February 11 at 5pm - Register [Here](#)
View the Entire Exhibit Online [Here](#)



The International Survey of Jewish Monuments and Queens College Libraries, Hellenic American Project and Center for Jewish Studies, invite you to the **virtual opening reception** of:

Romaniote Memories, a Jewish Journey from Ioannina, Greece to Manhattan: Photographs by Vincent Giordano

Thursday, February 11, at 5 p.m EST.

Learn more and register for Zoom opening here at <https://qc-cuny.libcal.com/event/7496075>



In 1999, photographer Vincent Giordano made an unplanned visit to the small Kehila Kedosha Janina (KKJ) synagogue on New York's Lower East Side. He knew little about Judaism or synagogues, and even less about the Romaniote Jewish tradition of which KKJ, built in 1927, is the lone North American representative. In this he was not alone. Romaniotes are among the least known of Jewish communities. Beginning in 2001 and guided by members of the KKJ community, Giordano documented the synagogue and its religious art of the congregation using film, video, and audio. This included trips to Greece to document KKJ's mother city of Ioannina, and its small Jewish community.

In 2019 the Giordano family donated the archive of Vincent's work to Queens College, where it is a major part of the Hellenic American Project and is preserved as part of the Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library's Special Collections and Archives. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Special Collections and Archives has not yet processed the physical materials in the Vincent Giordano collection. Fortunately, we were able to use scans of Giordano's prints and negatives to create a new online exhibit "**Romaniote Memories, a Jewish Journey from Ioannina, Greece to Manhattan: Photographs by Vincent Giordano.**" Many of these images have never been presented in public before.

The exhibition is curated by Samuel Gruber, President of the International Survey of Jewish Monuments and designed by Annie Tummino, Head of Special Collections and Archives, Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library. The opening reception, featuring a conversation with curators, distinguished guests, and friends, will take place via Zoom on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 5 pm (**register here**).

The exhibition is sponsored by the Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library, Hellenic American Project, and Center for Jewish Studies at Queens College, as well as the International Center for Jewish Monuments, an independent non-profit organization. The Library and Center for Jewish Studies will be teaming up to offer a paid internship for a student to help process and catalog the Giordano collection during the next academic year.

Virtual Exhibition at Queens College looks at one of the World's Oldest Jewish Communities

Brooklyn photographer Vincent Giordano's efforts to chronicle the Kehila Kedosha Janina community in NYC would prove critical to preserving Romaniote culture, with the synagogue being its only representation in North America.

The new Queens College virtual exhibition, "Romaniote Memories, a Jewish Journey from Ioannina, Greece, to Manhattan: Photographs by Vincent Giordano," is exploring one of the oldest Jewish communities in existence and its presence in New York City.

The exhibition coincides with International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Jan. 27 — the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau — in commemoration of these communities. It features over 100 photographs presented in 10 thematic sections, including the synagogue's art and architecture, religious rites and celebrations, as well as photographs taken during the High Holidays in Ioannina, Greece, in 2006.

A virtual opening reception, featuring a conversation with the curator, organizers, distinguished guests and friends, is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 11, at 5 p.m.

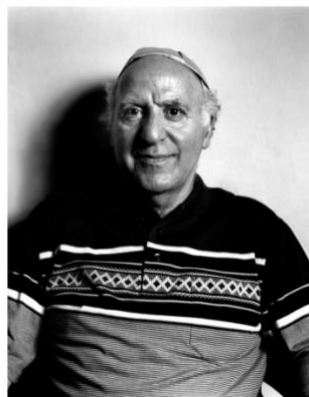
In 1999, Brooklyn-born photographer Vincent Giordano made an unplanned visit to the Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue on New York City's Lower East Side. Built in 1927, the synagogue housed a congregation (kehila) founded in 1906 by Jewish immigrants from the town of Ioannina (Janina) in northern Greece, who followed the Romaniote rite.

Unfamiliar with Judaism, let alone Romaniote Jews, Giordano would come to play a significant role in documenting the experiences of this millennia-old population that has maintained traditions dating to ancient Greece and Rome.

As part of a statement about his work for a 2007 exhibition on the Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue project, Giordano said what he heard and saw at the synagogue made an indelible impression on him.

"I listened with great interest and sadness to the story of the Romaniote's forgotten place in Jewish history. I wondered how a community and its culture wither away and vanish ... which forces are at work, and which are not?" Giordano said.

That's when Giordano began to photograph and document the synagogue and the community.



“This effort was transformed into an incredible personal journey of discovery, filled with wonderful people, interesting experiences and fascinating places,” Giordano said. As he explored and probed deeper, Giordano discovered that the story is much larger than the synagogue on Broome Street, reaching far into the past — the rich history of the Jews in ancient Greece and the Byzantine Empire, and the devastation of the Holocaust.

Over 80 percent of Greece’s Jewish population perished in the Holocaust, decimating the country’s historic Romaniote communities.

Of the 1,960 Jews who were deported to Auschwitz from Ioannina, Greece, 110 survived. The Romaniote language, a Greek dialect that combines words and phrases from Hebrew and Turkish, is endangered, without preservation efforts to maintain or revive it. As of 2019, only a small number of Romaniote Jews remaining in Ioannina, Greece, spoke the language.

Giordano died in 2010. Nine years later, his family donated the archive of his work to the Hellenic American Project (HAP) at Queens College. Founded and directed by Queens College Sociology Professor Nicholas Alexiou, the project — which comprises a research facility, archive, Greek American library and museum — accepted the Romaniote materials in the context of its mission, which is to document the Hellenic American presence in the United States beginning with the mass migration from Greece to America in 1900.

Giordano’s photographs are a permanent exhibition within the HAP museum and maintained by the Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library’s Special Collections and Archives. Giordano’s work is included in numerous private collections. His portraits from Sept. 11, 2001, are in the permanent collection of the New York Historical Society. He was the recipient of several awards including seven Clio Awards for his film work in television.

View the Entire Exhibit Online [Here](#)

Past Events In Commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27

Washington DC – Congressional Holocaust Commemoration with SHINDC

On January 28 KKJ and other community partners joined for a special Congressional Holocaust Commemoration event that highlighted the Holocaust in Greece. Among the honored speakers was Albert Bourla, CEO of Pfizer and the son of Holocaust survivors from Thessaloniki. His family’s story of survival is reprinted below. Watch a recording of the program [here](#).

Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla's parents among the few Thessaloniki Jews to survive the Holocaust Ekathimerini Full article [here](#)

Albert Bourla, Chairman and CEO of US pharmaceuticals company Pfizer, shared the story of his parents, Jews from Thessaloniki, and how they managed to be among the 2,000 survivors from a community of 50,000 nearly eradicated by the Holocaust.

Bourla made his online remarks to the Sephardic Heritage International on the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. He posted both the video and a transcript of his remarks to his LinkedIn account. Bourla's remarks follow:

“Remembrance. It’s this word, perhaps more than any other, that inspired me to share my parents’ story. That’s because I recognize how fortunate I am that my parents shared their stories with me and the rest of our family.



Many Holocaust survivors never spoke to their children of the horrors they endured because it was too painful. But we talked about it a great deal in my family. Growing up in Thessaloniki, Greece, we would get together with our cousins on the weekends, and my parents, aunts and uncles would often share their stories.

They did this because they wanted us to remember. To remember all the lives that were lost. To remember what can happen when the virus of evil is allowed to spread unchecked. But, most important, to remember the value of a human life.

You see, when my parents spoke of the Holocaust, they never spoke of anger or revenge. They didn't teach us to hate those who did this to our family and friends. Instead they spoke of how lucky they were to be alive ... and how we all needed to build on that feeling, celebrate life and move forward. Hatred would only stand in the way.

So, in that spirit, I'm here to share the story of Mois and Sara Bourla, my beloved parents.

Our ancestors had fled Spain in the late 15th century, after King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella issued the Alhambra Decree, which mandated that all Spanish Jews either convert to Catholicism or be expelled from the country. They eventually settled in the Ottoman Thessaloniki, which later became part of Greece following its liberation from the Ottoman Empire in 1912.

Before Hitler began his march through Europe, there was a thriving Sephardic Jewish community in Thessaloniki. So much so that it was known as "La Madre de Israel" or "The Mother of Israel." Within a week of the occupation, however, the Germans had arrested the Jewish leadership, evicted hundreds of Jewish families and confiscated their apartments. And it took them less than three years to accomplish their goal of exterminating the community. When the Germans invaded Greece, there were approximately 50,000 Jews living in the city. By the end of the war, only 2,000 had survived.

Lucky for me, both of my parents were among the 2,000.

My father's family, like so many others, had been forced from their home and taken to a crowded house within one of the Jewish ghettos. It was a house they had to share with several other Jewish families. They could circulate in and out of the ghetto, as long as they were wearing the yellow star.

But one day in March 1943, the ghetto was surrounded by occupation forces, and the exit was blocked. My father, Mois, and his brother, Into, were outside when this happened. When they approached, they met their father, who also was outside. He told them what was happening and asked them to leave and hide. But he had to go in because his wife and his two other children were home. Later that day, my grandfather, Abraham Bourla, his wife, Rachel, his daughter, Graciela, and his younger son, David, were taken to a camp outside the train station. From there they left for Auschwitz-Birkenau. Mois and Into never saw them again.

The same night, my father and uncle escaped to Athens, where they were able to obtain fake IDs with Christian names. They got the IDs from the head of police, who at the time was helping Jews escape the persecution of the Nazis. They lived there until the end of the war ... all the while having to pretend that they were not Jews ... that they were not Mois and Into – but rather Manolis and Vasilis.

When the German occupation ended, they went back to Thessaloniki and found that all their property and belongings had been stolen or sold. With nothing to their name, they started from scratch, becoming partners in a successful liquor business that they ran together until they both retired.

My mom's story also was one of having to hide in her own land ... of narrowly escaping the horrors of Auschwitz ... and of family bonds that sustained her spirit and, quite literally, saved her life.

Like my father's family, my mom's family was relocated to a house within the ghetto. My mother was the youngest girl of seven children. Her older sister had converted to Christianity to marry a Christian man she had fallen in love with before the war, and she and her husband were living in another city where no one knew that she had previously been a Jew. At that time mixed weddings were not accepted by society, and my grandfather wouldn't talk to his eldest daughter because of this.

But when it became clear that the family was going to head to Poland, where the Germans had promised a new life in a Jewish settlement, my grandfather asked his eldest daughter to come and see him. In this last meeting they ever had, he asked her to take her youngest sister – my mom – with her.

There my mom would be safe because no one knew that she or her sister were of Jewish heritage. The rest of the family went by train straight to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Toward the end of the war, my mom's brother-in-law was transferred back to Thessaloniki. People knew my mom there, so she had to hide in the house 24 hours a day out of fear of being recognized and turned over to the Germans. But she was still a teenager, and every so often, she would venture outside. Unfortunately, during one of those walks, she was spotted and arrested.

She was sent to a local prison. It was not good news. It was well known that every day around noon, some of the prisoners would be loaded on a truck to be transferred to another location where the next dawn they would be executed. Knowing this, her brother-in-law, my dearest Christian uncle, Kostas Dimadis, approached Max Merten, a known war criminal who was in charge of the Nazi occupation forces in the city.

He paid Merten a ransom in exchange for his promise that my mom would not be executed. But her sister, my aunt, didn't trust the Germans. So, she would go to the prison every day at noon to watch as they loaded the truck that would transfer the prisoners to the execution site. And one day she saw what she had been afraid of: my mom being put on the truck.

She ran home and told her husband who immediately called Merten. He reminded him of their agreement and tried to shame him for not keeping his word. Merten said he would look into it and then abruptly hung up the phone.

That night was the longest in my aunt and uncle's life because they knew the next morning, my mom would likely be executed. The next day – on the other side of town – my mom was lined up against a wall with other prisoners. And moments before she would have been executed, a soldier on a BMW motorcycle arrived and handed some papers to the man in charge of the firing squad.

They removed from the line my mom and another woman. As they rode away, my mom could hear the machine gun fire slaughtering those that were left behind. It's a sound that stayed with her for the rest of her life.

Two or three days later, she was released from prison. And just a few weeks after that, the Germans left Greece.

Fast forward eight years and my parents were introduced by their families in a typical-for-the-time matchmaking. They liked each other and agreed to marry. They had two children – me and my sister, Seli.

My father had two dreams for me. He wanted me to become a scientist and was hoping I would marry a nice Jewish girl. I am happy to say that he lived long enough to see both dreams come true. Unfortunately, he died before our children were born ... but my mom did live long enough to see them, which was the greatest of blessings.

So, that is the story of Mois and Sara Bourla. It's a story that had a great impact on my life and my view of the world, and it is a story that, for the first time today, I share publicly.

However, when I received the invitation to speak at this event – at this moment in time when racism and hatred are tearing at the fabric of our great nation – I felt it was the right time to share the story of two simple people who loved, and were loved by, their family and friends. Two people who stared down hatred and built a life filled with love and joy. Two people whose names are known by very few ... but whose story has now been shared with the members of the United States Congress – the world's greatest and most just legislative body. And that makes their son very proud.

This brings me back to remembrance. As time marches on and today's event shrinks in our rearview mirrors, I wouldn't expect you to remember my parents' names, but I implore you to remember their story. Because remembering gives each of us the conviction, the courage and the compassion to take the necessary actions to ensure their story is never repeated.

Thank you again for the invitation to speak today. And thank you for remembering.
Stay safe and stay well."

News from Jewish Greece Holocaust Commemorations Held Across Greece

Athens



President of the Republic Mrs. Katerina Sakellaropoulou at the Holocaust Memorial in Athens



On the 76th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau from Soviet troops, the Attica Region and the Jewish Community of Athens co-hosted on Wednesday, January 27, 2021, an event on the anniversary of the Remembrance of Greek Jewish Martyrs and Heroes of the Holocaust

During the morning wreath deposition ceremony, which took place without the presence of an audience, the Regional Governor of Attica, Georgios Patoulis and the President of the Israeli Community of Athens, Albert Taraboulous welcomed the President of the Republic Mrs. Katerina Sakellaropoulou who, after the memorial service by the Rabbi of Athens, Gabrielle Negrin, laid a wreath on the Holocaust Monument.

Mrs. Sakellaropoulou made the following statement:

"With awe, respect and deep emotion I paid honor today in memory of Holocaust victims. The Holocaust is the most extreme manifestation of evil in human history and the most painful legacy of the twentieth century. An abhorrent crime against millions of innocents, who were eliminated not for what they did, but for what they were, for their racial identity. A genocide executed with the greatest coldness and systematicity.

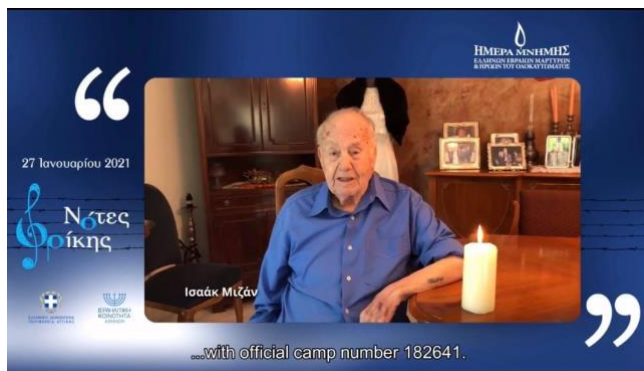
"The Holocaust concerns us all, not just the Jewish people. It constantly puts our historical consciousness, our moral conscience to the test. No one is untouchable against barbarism. Cultivating historical memory, shielding against hate speech and vigilance to preserve democracy and human value, is our mound in advance of evil ."

Survivor Mr. Isaac Mizan (number on his arm is 182641), also attended the ceremony, as did the First Vice President of the Central Israeli Council of Greece (KIS) Dr. Manos Alhanatis and, on behalf of the Government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Miltiadis Varvitsiotis, the Mayor of Athens, Mr. Kostas Bakoyannis and the representative of the Archbishop of Athens Theophilestatis.

This year for the first time and due to the circumstances, the main event took place online. Greek surviving hostages of concentration camps participated in the event lighting the candles of the Menorah, thus honoring the memory of those lost to the Nazi regime.

The theme of this year's event titled "Notes Fris", was dedicated to the paradoxical existence of Music in the extermination camps. While the use of Music in the camps covered many areas, the event focused on its use as accompanying the deaths in the gas chambers. Specifically, the story of Greek Jewish violinist Jacques Stroumsa, from Thessaloniki, who became the first violin of the orchestra in Auschwitz-Birkenau, was told. In

the camps, captive musicians, temporarily given a reprieve from their own deaths, in exchange for their music, accompanied the endless lines of hostages - their companions, their parents, their brothers, their children - destined for inevitable death. This was both the fate of Storumsa's family that was taken to the gas chambers with musical escort... And this event inspired songwriter Leonard Cohen to write the song "Dance Me to the End of Love."



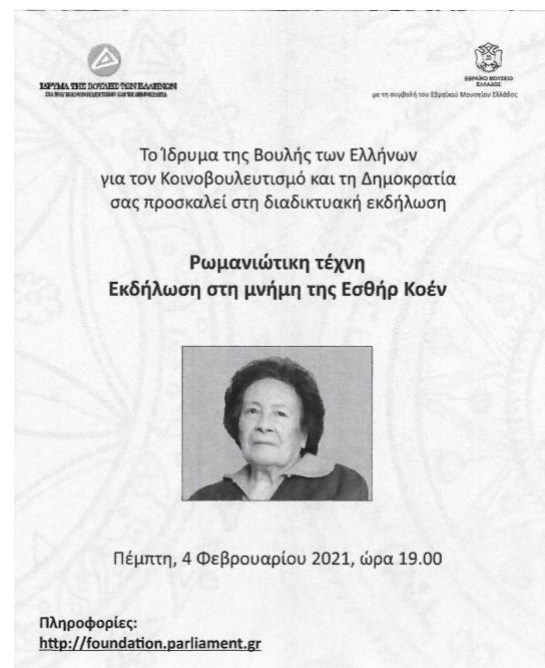
Then followed by an interview with Mr. Margaritas Schoinas, Vice President of the European Commission with the portfolio of promoting European lifestyle, to columnist / communicator Vivian Efthimiopoulou. The Mr. Mr. Vice President spoke about his memories of Thessaloniki and is developing EU initiatives to address anti-Semitism and racism.

Greek Parliament

The Holocaust Remembrance Day is commemorated in Greece since 2004, when the Greek Parliament unanimously voted for Law 3218/2004, which established the 27th of January as the "National Remembrance Day of the Greek Jewish Martyrs and Heroes of the Holocaust". The Greek Parliament, as well as the country's Regional Administrations, with the cooperation of the local Jewish Communities, organize annually a series of commemoration, cultural and educational events.

This year, due to the pandemic restrictions, most events were held on-line. From documentaries, to survivors' testimonies, concerts, lectures and interviews, the 2021 program covered a vast scale of activities that approached Holocaust history from many aspects and stressed the message of tolerance and respect of Human Rights. Greek officials, at the highest level, joined Holocaust commemoration events. The most symbolic ones are the following:

The Hellenic Parliament, during the Plenary session of January 27, 2021, paid tribute to the Holocaust victims. The session was broadcasted by the Parliament's TV channel. The Foundation of the Hellenic Parliament organizes an on-line event (on February 4) entitled "Romaniote art. An event dedicated to the Memory of Esther Cohen".



Ioannina

In Ioannina the commemoration events included a virtual concert of musical themes composed by artists persecuted for their Jewish faith. It was followed by the recitation of Paul Celan's "Todesfuge" by the Mayor of Ioannina Moses Eliasaf. The event concluded with the streaming of the documentary "Belsen: Our story" by Tom Stubberfield.

Mayor Moses Eliasaf meets with Prime Minister Mitsotakis in Athens

ATHENS -- Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis received Mayor Moses Elisaf of Ioannina city, northwestern Greece, at Maximos Mansion on Wednesday, on occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

"It is my pleasure to welcome the country's first Jewish mayor on this rather symbolic, special day", said Mitsotakis.

Elisaf thanked the Greek Premier for his kind words, and he said their meeting "is the highest honor for me, our city and the community."

Mitsotakis underlined that Greece honors Holocaust victims, including the tens of thousands of Greek Jews who perished at Nazi concentration camps.

Elisaf briefed Mitsotakis on the history of Israelite communities in Epirus, making a special mention of those who survived the horrors of Nazi atrocities, among them Elisaf's 97-year-old aunt Chrisoula Eliasa, still alive today.

The Prime Minister here mentioned his June 2019 visit to Jerusalem's Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center, where, he recalled, found the name of his grandmother's sister, Evaggelia Georgiadou, engraved on the plaques of the Garden of the Righteous, as she had been one of many Greeks who had helped out Jews in several courageous acts.

Greece has been a full member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) since 2005, said Mitsotakis, and is also taking over the IHRA presidency for the first time this year.

Finally, Mitsotakis congratulated Elisaf on the successful handling of the coronavirus pandemic at Ioannina municipality and Epirus at large.



Mayor Moses Eliasaf meets with Prime Minister Mitsotakis in Athens in honor of January 27th

Thessaloniki

In Thessaloniki the spectacular illumination of the 34 meter-high White Tower, landmark of the city, marked the tragic anniversary with the projection of the photo of the yellow Star of David, the striped uniform of the Auschwitz inmates and the WJC #We Remember logo, on the walls of the Tower on January 26 and 27, 2021. The event, organized by the Regional Government of Central Macedonia and the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, along with a wreath laying ceremony at the Holocaust Monument and speeches by the local authorities, is available through the You Tube channel of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki. The agenda in Thessaloniki includes the streaming of a special Holocaust feature, with messages of the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis - from his visit to Auschwitz in 2020 - the deputy PM Panagiotis Pikrammenos and other

prominent figures. It also includes: the virtual streaming of the theatrical play "The lost innocence of Anne Frank" by the theatrical group of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki "Entremosotros" (in Greek without subtitles) and the streaming of the 55th Dimitria Festival production "Forget me not...", a dramatized narration of excerpts from Leon Saltiel's book by the President of the Hellenic Republic Katerina Sakellariopoulou.



Larissa

In Larissa the Regional Government of Thessaly and the Jewish Community of Larissa organized a memorial service and a wreath laying ceremony -without public participation- at the Holocaust Monument of the city. The event was made available to the public through the website of the Community. In addition, the local schools participated in a number of on-line educational activities. The Radio station of Thessaly broadcasted the theatrical play "Mauthausen" by the renowned Greek writer Iakovos Kambanellis.



Trikala

In Trikala a video message, released by the Municipality on January 27, included messages by the local authorities and archival material on Holocaust history curated, edited and narrated by students at the city's high schools.



Volos



In Volos the online commemoration event was held on Friday January 29, with the participation of high schools of the region. Metropolitan Bishop of Demetrias Ignatios, and the Deputy Minister of Education are among the dignitaries who addressed the event.

Rhodes

In Rhodes, the Jewish Community promoted the online projection of the documentary **"Samuel Modiano – The Mission. From Rhodes to Auschwitz"**, produced by the Stamatiou Foundation. The film (with Greek, English and French subtitles) reconstructs the story of Samy Modiano, one of the few remaining Holocaust survivors, who was deported at the age of 13. Watch the film online [here](#)



Samy with children from the Matza Family

**Athens Jewish Community
New Educational Initiative for Students Age 8-18**

The Jewish Community of Athens is launching an exciting new online class series! It will include Greek language lessons and guest speakers about Greek Jewish history and traditions. The classes will be held 1-2 times per week over the course of 3 months.

This new E-Learning program is for children and teens aged 8-18 years old and living abroad. The courses aim to help children and teens strengthen the use of the Greek Language and reconnect with their Jewish traditions. Online registration is open until February 15, 2021. If you know any Greek families living abroad and you believe that the program will be of their interest, please share this exciting new program. For more information you can contact pmo@athjcom.gr or by phone at +30 210 220 5915.

Sign up for this New Program [Here](#)

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ATHENS

e-Learning for children aged 8-18 yo, living abroad
GREEK LANGUAGE AND JEWISH TRADITIONS COURSE

Have you grown up as part of a Greek Jewish community and currently raising your children abroad?

Would you like your children to strengthen Greek language skills and knowledge of Greek Jewish traditions?

Would you like your children to maintain a Greek Jewish connection as well as practice and use their Greek outside of the home?

Would you like your children to learn about the history of your family and their special Greek Jewish customs?

Mini course details
March-June 2021
1-2 times per week depending on the age group
Cost: €180,00 / \$220.00 / NIS 705

Please register with the following form
<https://tinyurl.com/elearning-en>
and we will be in touch with you after the deadline as to the details of the date and times.

e-learning
Registration deadline:
15th February 2021
Minimum class size is required for course to take place

For additional information please e-mail: pmo@athjcom.gr or call +30 210 220 5915

Urgent Appeal for Support for the Restoration of the Synagogue in Larissa

We recently learned that the Jewish Community of Larissa is in jeopardy of losing its synagogue due to serious damage. The cost of the project, which is estimated to be more than 500,000 Euros, is beyond the capacity of the small community in Larissa to fund on their own. The community has set up the means to donate through their bank account. Email museum@kkjism.org to receive a copy of their bank transfer information.

The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry has offered to help raise money for this important project. The Association is a not-for-profit in the USA and has extensive experience in similar projects, including the restoration of Kahal Shalom synagogue in Rhodes, the Etz Hayyim synagogue in Hania, and repair of both the synagogue and cemetery in Ioannina.

If you would like to donate by check you can send the check made out to the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry and mailed to Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, 1 Hanson Place, Huntington, NY 11743.

Every dollar collected will be sent to the Jewish Community of Larissa.



News of Interest from the Broader Jewish World

Croatia

The former synagogue in the town of Sisak was among the many buildings and historic sites in several towns that suffered serious damage in the 6.4 magnitude earthquake that struck central Croatia on Tuesday. Learn more [here](#). On its Facebook page the school said the building had suffered "severely." It has opened an account for donations to help reconstruction.

Believed to have been designed, in neo-Romanesque style, by the architect Franjo Klein, the synagogue was built around 1870-1880.

It was used for worship until the Holocaust. A memorial plaque to the destroyed community was installed on the facade in 1999. The synagogue was one of many more than century-old buildings in the Sisak town center, including other historic and cultural sites, to suffer serious damage in the earthquake. Other damaged sites in Sisak included schools, a tower in Sisak's Old Town, the railway station on the Old Masonry Bridge, and the Sisak Cathedral.



Turkey Izmir

Progress in Izmir: Rescue of the Etz Hayim and Talmud Torah synagogues, and substantial EU grant. Link [here](#)

Nesim Bencoya reports “meaningful progress” in the rescue of two long-derelict historic synagogues — the Etz Hayim and the Talmud Torah (Hevra).

In addition, in a separate development, he reports that a broad, three-year project to sustain Jewish community and heritage in the city has received a half-million euro grant from the EU.

The grant totals €523,000 — that is, €497,220.98 awarded under the European Commission program “Support to Civil Society Networks and Platforms in Turkey,” with the condition that the remaining 5 percent (€26,000) be provided by the Izmir Jewish Community Foundation.

The project was initiated on August 1 and is to last 36 months. The funding is to support restorations of synagogues, publication of books, and other activities aimed at strengthening the status of the Jewish Community in Izmir through culture.

“A master plan for the synagogues compound is being designed in these days, and restoration plans will follow the master plan next year,” Bencoya told JHE. Work has been going on for several years now to revitalize Izmir’s unique complex of nine historic synagogues and develop the complex as a Jewish museum and educational and visitors’ center.



Portugal

Jewish community shaped by the Inquisition opens Portugal’s first Holocaust Museum. Full JTA article [here](#).

Portugal is set to open its first Holocaust museum, built in the northern city of Porto by members of a Jewish community that was founded by descendants of victims of the Inquisition.

The Holocaust Museum of Porto was developed in cooperation with the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow and other institutions. It will open on Jan. 20, the Jewish Community of Oporto, an organization representing local Jews, said in a statement, and expects to receive 10,000 visitors a year when emergency restrictions connected to the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted.

On Jan. 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, students from across Portugal will visit the museum, the statement said. The museum features a reproduction of Auschwitz prisoner barracks, a memorial room with walls carrying the names of Holocaust victims and a study center.

The Inquisition, a campaign of religious persecution on the Iberian Peninsula that began in Spain in 1492, was applied also in Portugal in 1536. It ended Jewish life in Porto and across the region as hundreds of thousands

of Sephardic Jews fled both countries. Those who remained practiced Judaism in secret. Their descendants are known as bnei anusim.

Organized Jewish life in Porto reappeared in the 1920s thanks to Artur Carlos de Barros Basto, a descendant of the bnei anusim and army captain who helped promote Jewish life in and around Porto. Consequently he was thrown out of the army and labeled a pedophile on false charges in an anti-Semitic conspiracy. With his downfall, Jewish life in Porto suffered a setback.



In the 1940s, many thousands of Jewish refugees from further east in Europe passed through Portugal, which was neutral during World War II, and escaped from there to the United States and prestate Israel. Aristides de Sousa Mendes, a former Portuguese consul general serving in France, issued thousands of life-saving visas to Jews fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe.

In the early 2000s, multiple bnei anusim from Porto completed Orthodox conversions to Judaism, including the former leader of the community, Jose Ferrao Filipe.

The community also has members descended from Ashkenazi Jews who lost relatives in the Holocaust, including the community organization's treasurer, Michael Rothwell.

"My grandparents were good German patriots," he wrote in the statement, but with Nazism "they found themselves accused of unwanted foreigners, they were transported like cattle to Auschwitz, separated from each other, targets of all the violence and there they died."

Portugal today has about 3,100 people who self-identify as Jews — a 75% percent increase over 2001, according to a 2020 report on Jewish demographics in Europe by the London-based Institute for Jewish Policy Research. The Jewish Community of Porto says it now has about 400 members, compared to a few dozen a decade ago. Porto has about 200,000 residents in total.

The influx is connected to immigration from elsewhere in Europe and Latin America, as well as Portugal's 2015 law guaranteeing citizenship to descendants of Sephardic Jews that was passed to atone for the Inquisition. Spain passed a similar law later that same year.

The Jewish communities of Porto and Lisbon vet citizenship applications for the government, charging hundreds of dollars per application. There have been more than 76,000 applications, and about 30% have been approved.



The Porto community, which a decade ago could not afford to fix its cracked synagogue ceiling or hire a rabbi, in recent years has renovated its synagogue, hired a full-time rabbi, opened a Jewish museum and last year produced a \$1 million documentary on de Barros Basto.

Dignitaries and diplomats from several countries will attend the opening of the latest addition to the community's institutions, the Holocaust Museum of Porto, the community said. A community spokesperson declined to say how much the museum, which is located in the central Arrabida area, cost to build and what its annual budget will be.

The museum project benefited from "a substantial donation from a Portuguese Sephardic family from South East Asia," Rothwell said in the statement, which did not name the family.

Spain

3-year restoration work at medieval synagogue in Híjar is winding up; remarkable finds during the process, including remains of the bimah, document its history. Full article [here](#)

Extensive restoration work is winding up at the former medieval synagogue in Híjar, a small town in the northern Spanish region of Aragon. The first stage of work in 2017 revealed striking evidence of the building's history, including the foundations of the bimah and wall paintings showing a menorah and Hebrew inscription. A second stage of work is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

The synagogue was built in the early 15th century in the mudejar style, a fusion of Muslim and Christian influences typical of Spain from the 13th to the 15th century. However, after the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, it was transformed into a church, as were many other synagogues in the country. The church was dedicated to St. Anthony the Abbot, and today, though still a church, the synagogue is known as St. Anthony's Synagogue.



It was officially declared an Aragonese Cultural Heritage site in 2018 following the remarkable discoveries made in 2017.

Little was known materially about the synagogue until then. During the works, which began seven years after the partial collapse of the roof, major structural damage that had been concealed by previous repairs was discovered, and wall paintings hidden for centuries were revealed — including fragments of paintings showing a seven-branched menorah and an inscription in Hebrew.

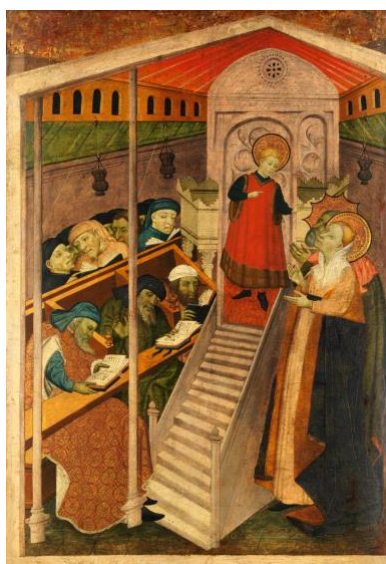


In addition, archeologists excavating inside the building identified other elements documenting that the building had been a synagogue. These included the remains of the bimah and its two access stairs.

The bimah would have been a square structure equipped with corner pillars to support a wooden floor, with two ladder-like wooden stairs, facing each other to the north and the south of this platform, by which the platform could be accessed — similar to the platform shown in the anonymous Catalan painting of Christ Among the Doctors

“The Híjar synagogue preserves all the elements of a medieval synagogue, which is something extremely rare,” archaeologist Antonio Hernández Pardos said in a video by the local news site La Comarca in 2019. He spoke during a visit to the synagogue by members of the Moreshet Jewish Heritage Network, which links several cities, towns, regions and organizations involved in Jewish heritage activities.

There are remains of the niche where the Ark used to stand, the bimah, the mudejar-style roof, the windows behind which the women used to follow the services, and some decorative elements, including a Hebrew inscription, and a representation of a Menorah.



The total expense of this first stage was around €298,250, funded by the Aragon Region Development Fund for the Teruel province (FITE), where the village is located. The first half of the second phase of works took place during a three-month period in



2019, funded by around €125.000 from the FITE. The aim was to rehabilitate and stabilize the building's structure, with the consolidation and repair of the arches, walls and abutments, the placement of a lighter roof, the reinforcement of the choir, and other details.

The second half of these works, currently underway, started at the end of September and should be completed by the end of this year, according to the plans of the Aragon regional council for Territory, Transports and Housing. A total expense of about €41.000 was allocated for it, co-financed by the FITE 2018 fund.

Fragment of a wall painting of a menorah in the former synagogue in Hajar, Spain. (Screengrab from video linked to in the article.)

The works include the replacement of the nave floor and the choir's plaster floor, the restoration of the access doors and the sacristy, the installation of a structure to access the interior of the bell tower, the installation of lights and fire protection elements, and the restoration of the choir railing, the old beams in front of the choir, and the sacristy window's grates. Also, the external entrance level will be adjusted with the interior pavement level. In an interview with Radio Sefarad in 2018, Hajar's mayor, Luis Carlos Marquesán, said that the municipality's aim is to guarantee a double function of the building, by keeping its current use as a church, but also transforming it into a cultural space, with the possibility of hosting Jewish services as well.

According to the Foundation for Jewish Heritage, the aim is "to turn the synagogue into a Sephardi Heritage Centre presenting the Jewish life that was, while running educational programs and cultural events for the town and wider region."

Future plans also aim to develop the old Judería area where the synagogue stands.

"We have plans for the [Jewish] quarter, starting from the rehabilitation of the square [where the synagogue stands]," Mayor Marquesán said in the video report by La Comarca. "To do so, we need to prepare a project, including the excavation of the square, in order to check whether at the time it looked the same as it does today, or if there were houses there instead".

How Jews expelled from Spain forged a diaspora with ties to 25% of Latin America

Film 'Children of the Inquisition' examines forced conversion of Sephardim from the Iberian Peninsula 500 years ago and why their descendants still feel ripple effects. Read the full article [here](#)

Recently, history came full circle when over 100,000 descendants of Sephardim around the world applied for Spanish citizenship under legislation aimed at repatriating a population expelled over 500 years ago. They squeaked in ahead of Spain's September 30, 2019, deadline, but the citizenship process in Portugal is still open for individuals who can prove their Sephardic Jewish lineage.

The 1492 Edict of Expulsion in Spain forced Sephardic Jews to convert to Christianity or leave, prompting a dispersion to locations including the Americas and the Middle East. Within Spain and its newfound American colonies, some *conversos*, or Jewish converts, kept their original faith in secret, under threat of discovery and punishment from the Inquisition.



The closing of the application window for Spanish citizenship marked an opportune time for the October 24 screening in Madrid's El Centro Sefarad of a new documentary about the past, present and future of the Sephardim: "Children of the Inquisition," by award-winning filmmaker Joseph Lovett.

"This film challenges everybody's ideas about history and identity," Lovett told The Times of Israel last month. "For many people, it challenges ideas about their own identity."

Premiering earlier this year at the Seattle Jewish Film Festival, the documentary follows the many paths taken by the Sephardic Jews after they were ordered to convert or leave in both Spain and neighboring Portugal. Shot across 12 cities in four continents, Lovett interviews descendants of conversos as well as academic experts. In August, the film won the Hearts, Minds and Souls award at the Rhode Island International Film Festival, and it has recently been invited for inclusion into the Library of Congress.

Asked about the issue of citizenship, Lovett recalled the journey taken by the ancestors of his recently departed sister-in-law Sylvia Moubayed — from Spain to Izmir to Rhodes to Alexandria to Lovett’s home state of Rhode Island. Despite these ancestral voyages far from Spain, Lovett said that his sister-in-law had gotten Spanish citizenship in the 1960s.

“I think, apparently, it was always possible,” he said. “As things are, it’s become very uncomfortable in the US. Obviously, more and more people than ever are probably looking toward European citizenship.”

The film took about a decade to shoot and edit; its backstory goes back even longer. Lovett began thinking about its subject in 1958, as a 13-year-old growing up in Providence. He was intrigued when his rabbi, William Braude of Temple Beth El, visited Franco’s Spain seeking to interview descendants of conversos, and upon his return gave a sermon entitled “Todos Catolicos,” or “We are all Catholic.”

“No one [in Spain] would speak to him,” Lovett said. “They literally [said] ‘We’re all Catholic, we’ve always been Catholic.’”



Olinda Cathedral in Olinda Brazil



200th Anniversary of Modern Greece 1821-2021

1821-2021: Marking the Greek Revolution Bicentennial at the Athens City Museum

As Greece prepares to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the 1821 War of Independence, a rich program of exhibitions is planned at the Athens City Museum. Full article [here](#)

The paintings, engravings, portraits, priceless historical items and authentic period furniture on display at the Athens City Museum attest to the lavish lifestyle of Otto and Amalia, the first royal couple to rule the modern Greek state after it emerged from the War of Independence in the 1820s.

My eyes, however, are drawn to a display of kitchenware. What is a humble cake tin doing in the “Old Palace” alongside grand works of art?

“Amalia loved sweets and cakes,” historian and museum director Stefanos Kavallierakis explains, smiling as he notices my surprise. “And, in order to have the butter to make them, she brought cows to the royal estate. The people of that time led normal lives; they weren’t aliens. That’s what I tell all the schoolchildren who visit. They looked for ways to make their lives easier.”

I try to imagine the former palace that forms one part of the museum smelling of fresh butter and vanilla, and of a young Amalia sitting at a table writing letters to her father complaining (as Kavallierakis tells me) about the narrow staircase to the throne room – a small space, though the kingdom was also small – and the royal couple’s private quarters.

Otto and Amalia lived here from 1836 to 1843, before moving to the building that is now home to Greece's Parliament, where the staircases were certainly grander.

Yet today the Athens City Museum is certainly not lacking in grandeur itself, housed as it is in two of the oldest residential buildings in the city, where it charts the capital's evolution in the modern era, and particularly the 19th century.



Exterior view of the Athens City Museum



A work by painter Stelios Petroulakis for the exhibition "Evzones"

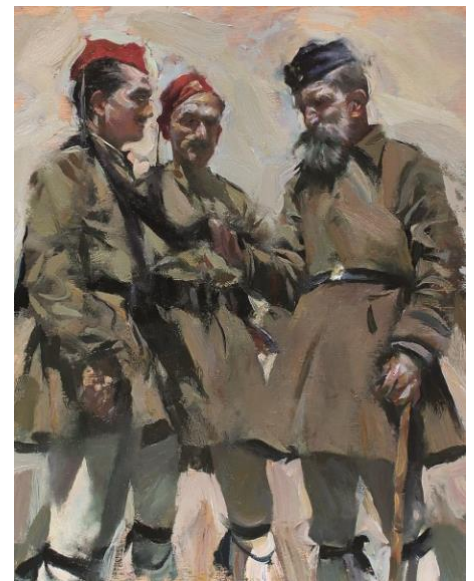
Kavallierakis and I stand in the passage that links the two buildings on Paparrigopoulou Street (at numbers 5 and 7), a walkway that is much like a bridge. Two different worlds are represented on either side: on one is the former residence of Lambros Eutaxias, a cultured politician and art collector who was the founder of the museum and of the Vouros-Eutaxias Foundation, while on the other is the royal couple's first home.

The museum, too, bridges these two worlds, both of which influenced the course of history in the city and in the country, each in its own way.

Yet another bridge was the recent exhibition "Evzones," which explored the history of the elite guard founded by Otto through the medium of the visual arts. This exhibition was a prelude of sorts to the events being prepared within the context of next year's bicentennial celebrations commemorating the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821.

The first royal residence, says Kavallierakis, was initially connected to another building that was demolished in the 1960s as a remnant of "Bavarian rule."

"The building is a unique example of Athenian neoclassicism, and we can only wonder why we once felt the need to demolish anything that was symbolic," Kavallierakis says. "We can look back at the past with a modern point of view, [but] the present is always fluid."



By Stelios Patroulakis

The dust from a nearby construction site, the noise from the busy street outside and the urban landscape that surrounds both buildings are all signs of the modern city that I almost forget is still out there as we move from the royal dining hall with its elegant tea set to the hall of the privy council, the office of Count Armanberg (a regent and prime minister under Otto) and on to Amalia's private quarters.

We look at the first handwritten copy of the Greek Constitution and the legendary map drawn in 1836 by Ferdinand Aldenhoven, the one which for the first time included Crete as part of the state's territory and served as a basis for the "Megali Idea", the dream of a Greater Greece.

The Costume of Rachel Sarah Osmo

Rachel Sarah was the youngest daughter of Eliahu and Esther Osmo who lived on the Greek island of Corfu with their five children: Leone-Yehuda, Yehudit-Agnes, Irena, Nata and the youngest Rachel-Sarah. In 1941 [the island of] Corfu was captured by the Italians, and two years later it was taken over by the Germans. By April 1944, when the orders to deport the Jews became effective, rumors of the deportations of the Jews of Athens, Salonika and Janina had reached Corfu but many had dismissed it as hearsay.

Nata's underground activities enabled her two older sisters to flee, but she herself presented herself with her parents and her younger sister as ordered. The four family members were sent together to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they were separated. Eliahu, Esther and their eight-year-old daughter Rachel-Sarah were murdered, Nata was sent to a series of forced labor camps and survived.

Nata found a final memento of her sister - a *Purim* costume in the guise of a Greek freedom fighter – when she returned to Corfu after the war. She brought it with her when she immigrated to Israel and kept it for years. A photo of Rachel-Sarah dressed in the costume was also found and preserved as a precious memento.

Found in the ruins of the Osmo family's house was also a *Megillat Esther* (Esther scroll) that had been in use by the family not long before they were sent to their deaths.



The Hidden Meanings of Ladino Music and Poetry by Vanessa Paloma Elbaz. Full article [here](#)

Fifteen years ago, when I was living in Los Angeles, I never imagined that the provocative questions I had about the hidden meanings of Ladino music and poetry would take me to working and teaching at Cambridge University, where I find myself today.

My own Sephardi background and ancestry from northern Morocco were always present, propelling me in my journey. As a performer of Ladino music in the Los Angeles area, I directed a choir founded by members of the Sephardic Havurah from Sephardic Temple Tiferet Israel. I spent my Shabbat dinners with a group of Canadian and Israeli Moroccans, and I went to synagogue in what was an almost private shtibl recreating a Moroccan synagogue on the corner of Olympic and La Cienega. It was clear to me that no matter where in the world a small Moroccan community formed, the transmission of its culture and identity remained strong. My experiences and perceptions drastically changed when I was awarded a Senior Fulbright Research Fellowship to Tangier to study the Judeo-Spanish music of Northern Morocco in an obscure language that nobody talked about — Haketia, or Moroccan Judeo-Spanish.

Since then, collecting, researching and performing the music of the Jews of Morocco has consumed my waking hours. Suddenly, I was able to hear the songs of my maternal ancestors, which had been almost completely forgotten after they emigrated to South America in the nineteenth century. I reconnected to an ancient part of my own history, which prompted a slew of questions: How does one enter the unspoken messages of a community's subconscious through its music? How can I, as a researcher and performer, transmit the depth and beauty of this millenary community's sounds — especially when the news cycle and political concerns dominate the discourse?

I began my research by investigating the songs that Moroccan Jews sang to their children while putting them to sleep, the soft humming of a woman preparing Shabbat dinner and the melodies sung around the Shabbat table or during Havdalah. These are the songs that generations carry with them across their migrations, forming the sonic backbone of Moroccan Jewish communities in Madrid, Toronto, Caracas and Paris. In contrast to the celebratory public music that Jews sing at Muslim and Jewish weddings and on national television and radio, these private repertoires tell another story. They are usually stories of belief in tsaddikim, humorous or satiric stories from the community's history or fictional depictions of violent episodes following a breach of the strict boundaries around women's sexuality and marital faithfulness. These songs tell the inner story of who the Jews are for the Jews — not who they are for their Muslim friends and neighbors.

These Songs Tell the Inner Story of Who the Jews Are for the Jews.

During the ten years I lived in Morocco, certain pieces of my life went into fast forward: I married a Jewish music producer from Casablanca, finished a Ph.D. at the Sorbonne in Paris, had three children, started a sound archive (KHOYA: Jewish Morocco Sound Archive), founded a Jewish film festival and sang for ambassadors, counselors to the palace, ministers and diplomats, artists, filmmakers and national festivals of diversity. And what I discovered in those ten years was that music in Morocco is split along gendered lines. Only men or non-marriageable women sing the public sphere repertoires in the public sphere — whereas the reputable matriarchs of the generation transmit music in the private sphere. This tradition brings the message of Jewish transmission and continuity squarely onto the laps of women singers. They sing about sexual boundaries, fertility and love of God. I have been fortunate enough to witness a grandmother sing a wedding song to her grandson while wrapping a ribbon around a dollop of henna on his palm on the morning of his Bar Mitzvah; and I have watched an aunt sing a humorous song about a difficult mother-in-law to a young bride on the night of her mikveh immersion.

In these intimate moments of transition between life cycle periods, women's singing infuses the younger generation with the bracha, or baraka in Morocco's Arabic (blessing), they need to protect and bless their lives. Surprisingly (or not), the community's soundtrack has a varied playlist: Hebrew liturgical music as well as Judeo-Spanish, Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Amazigh humorous and moralistic songs. Moroccan Jews listen, sing and dance to a splendid porousness of classic Moroccan Andalusian; popular chaabi music; French, Spanish, Israeli, Latin American, American and British pop; and the songs of Édith Piaf, Abdel Wahab, Enrico Macias, Sarita Montiel and John Lennon — confirming that a very Jewish cosmopolitanism and multilingualism is ever present.



Dr. Vanessa Paloma Elbaz is a Research Associate at the Faculty of Music of the University of Cambridge. She has a Ph.D. from the Center for Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Studies of Sorbonne Paris Cité University and was a Senior Fulbright Research Fellow to Morocco. She has been described by the New York Times as “a kind of one-woman roving museum of her own.”

Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



Purim will be celebrated on February 26th this year, with God's help, we will once again be able to celebrate Purim together, and especially the public reading of Megilat Esther.

But beyond Megilat Esther, beautiful 'piyutim' and 'pizmonim' – ritual poems and songs – have become part and parcel of Purim and Purim ritual, especially in the Sephardic and Romaniote traditions. Almost all relate or summarize the Purim story, with great emphasis on God's his mercy and miracles, which, like Purim, are often performed by very human heroes and means, demonstrating how God often works "behind the scenes", so to speak, on behalf of the Jewish people. Also, all piyutim and pizmonim use Biblical, Midrashic, Talmudic and Kabbalistic references, which reflect the author's amazing knowledge of Jewish law and lore. And while many pizmonim were written in Hebrew, others were written in Ladino, Judeo-Arabic and Greek, though often in Hebrew characters.

One of the oldest and best-known Hebrew liturgical Purim poems is "Mi Kamocha v'ein Kamocha" – Who is like You and There is None like You – by Yehuda Halevy of Spain (1075-1141), one of the greatest liturgical poets of all time. This 82 stanza work poetically retells the entire Purim story in great detail, and very early on became part and parcel of the Sephardic, Italian and Romaniote ritual, being recited in synagogue on "Shabbat Zachor", the Shabbat immediately preceding Purim. Originally, all communities read the poem just before the start of the Amida prayer in the Shabbat morning service, to correspond with the Hebrew phrase: "Mi kamocha B'elim Hashem, mi kamocha nedar bakodesh?" – Who is like You, God, among the mighty, who is like You, glorious in holiness? However, over time, most communities moved the reading of the poem to after the Amida prayer and before the Torah reading, though it is known that in Ioannina and other Romaniote communities, it continued being recited in its original location in the morning prayers.

A shining example of a specific Romaniote pizmon referencing Jewish sources that is recited on Purim itself, and most likely originating in Ioannina, is "Kina Glossa", written in Greek using Hebrew characters. According to Ninetta Matsas Feldman, who tells about the poem and sings it on Youtube (<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn611857>}, it was apparently written in Ioannina in the 1800's.

Our wonderful KKJ Museum director, Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos was kind enough to send me this pizmon and an English translation of the first four verses, taken from the book: "Pizmonim [Songs] for Purim, according to the Traditions of Ioannina and Arta in the Greek Language", published by Ezra M. Negrin in Salonika in 1875:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Start to speak O tongue of miracles unsung awaken those who inertly recline, make them inebriate with wine. | 2. Eat, drink, in reveling delight, in feasting and gladness and light, forget not the All Highest make G-d's freedom manifest. |
| 3. Forget not the poor brother, send gifts to one another, invite alike both rich and poor, praise the Lord with voices pure. | 4. Before Haman's blow could injure, G-d Himself prepared the cure, and myrtle Esther reigned our liberty ordained. |

Even these few lines illustrate the very essence of Purim and include references to many Jewish sources. The first stanza's call to speak about and celebrate the 'unsung', i.e. "hidden" miracles of Purim, is paramount in importance, which is accomplished by the mitzvah of everyone reading/hearing the Megilah and celebrating Purim, including the more apathetic and uninterested, even to the extent of making the latter drunk. Just these few short lines are rooted in references to the Talmud and Halacha. The second stanza obviously refers to another mitzvah of Purim, the "Purim seudah" - the festive meal, insisting that we not forget what God did for us and to declare and appreciate our freedom and His salvation as we celebrate with food and drink. The third stanza refers directly to the other two mitzvot of Purim: giving gift to the poor ("matanot l'evyonim") and to each other ("mishloah manot"). And as the last line of the stanza says, no one can be left out or wanting on Purim, which is rooted in Halacha, and of course, all must praise God. Finally, the last stanza above gives us an amazing 4-line synopsis of the entire Purim story: God himself prevents Haman's evil plan, the Jews are saved and prosper, Queen Esther rules, and thanks to God, our liberty as Jews is accomplished. As for the word "myrtle" before Esther's name, this is clearly a direct reference and to the verse in the Megillah that informs us that "...Hadassah is Esther" (Megilat Esther 2:7). Hadassah, which is Esther's true Hebrew name, comes from the Hebrew word 'Hadass' which means myrtle!

The original Greek pizmon is much longer, however, and as is always the case, those able to read and understand it in the original Greek will definitely discover even more numerous and deeper references to Jewish literature and sources. And all in a relatively short pizmon! May its recitation and singing be preserved for eternity! Happy Purim!

Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé
Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America



Parashah of the Week – Beshalah
Plagued with Signs and Wonders

Finally, after many years and much suffering, we read at the end of last week's Perasha how the Jews were led out of Egypt by Moshe. God had sent ten terrible plagues over the Egyptians and they had at the end conceded and accepted their loss. Yet, as one begins to read the Perasha this week something unexpected happens, the Torah tells us, "And it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said: 'Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.'" (1)

God had decided to take the people in a roundabout route and not to bring them into the promised land for now. But, was it not that God took them out of Egypt in order for them to inherit the land of Canaan? Was not that the promise that God had made to our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Could He not bring them into the promised land with wonders and miracles?

Attempting to give us an explanation, Rabbi Shemuel David Luzzato (2) writes a rather interesting statement in his commentary to the Torah He states, "God does not suddenly change people's traits and characters." In other words, God does not control or manipulate people, but rather, humans have the unique trait to guide and control their own destiny, we make our own choices.

He states that when the Jewish people left Egypt, they did not have the strength and courage to fight against other established people if it were required. He writes that even if God performed wonders and miracles for them in order to help them on their conquering the land, they did not yet possess the qualities of a powerful

nation. Rabbi Luzzato adds that slaves that have just broken the yoke of bondage, will either not be able to overcome their fears with ease and will eventually drift back into slavery or they will go to the other extreme and, with no control and guidelines, will fall completely into disarray and lawlessness, indeed they will fail to establish a stable society.

Still, one might wonder, what would it take for them to develop the right qualities? Rabbi Luzzato states, "He led them through the desert in order for them to remain there for a time and have the opportunity to slowly be educated and acquire the traits and knowledge to govern themselves. In other words, their current state did not allow them to be completely free. At this time they were slaves, the sons of slaves. In their minds they only felt secure under the rule of someone else, their slavery was their safe zone. Their minds needed to be trained and educated to be free and independent. It would indeed take some time in order to get there. The desert and wilderness would provide the perfect setting for that transformation.

Rabbi Shemuel David Luzzato then writes that there might have been a deeper reason for why God took them through the desert, he states, "In the lengthy desert it was possible for them to receive the Torah and the commandments at once, to acquire the owe of God and to learn about His ways and to learn to trust Him under His leadership and the leadership of Moshe." He adds that otherwise by them coming into the land without any preparations, it would indeed become extremely difficult to teach them Torah and any of the commandments while having them all spread out over their new land. (3)

Indeed, God had promised our forefathers the land as an inheritance, but the Jews being just freed were not ready to acquire it and to govern themselves. The time in the desert was to be used as a period of preparation to create and develop the Jewish nation, a distinct people amongst the nations.

Shabbat Shalom

(1) Shemot 13:17

(2) Rabbi Shemuel David Luzzato (often referred to by the acronym of SHaDaL or SHeDaL; 1800-1865), Italian scholar, philosopher, Bible commentator, and translator. His father, Hezekiah, was an artisan at Trieste and a scholarly Jew who could claim descent from a long line of scholars. He wrote his first Hebrew poem at the age of nine. His mother died when he was 13 and his father's pecuniary status declined seriously making it necessary for the young Luzzatto to assist his father in his work. His own wife died after a long illness, and he eventually married her sister. He survived two of his children - one Philoxenus (or Filosseno), had been a young man of especially great promise. Samuel David's translation of the Ashkenazi prayer book into Italian appeared in 1821/22, and that of the Italian rite in 1829. He established a regular correspondence with the Jewish scholar, Isaac Samuel Reggio, and through the efforts of the latter, Luzzatto was appointed professor of the newly established rabbinical college of Padua in 1829. There he spent the rest of his life teaching Bible, philology, philosophy, and Jewish history.

(3) Rabbi Shemuel David Luzzato, Commentary to the Torah, Perashat Beshallah.



**Thoughts on Parashat Beshallah
by Rabbi Marc D. Angel**

Q. What is the text of an Emergency Alert sent out by a Jewish Organization?

A. Start worrying! Details to follow.

This joke reflects an ongoing reality of Jewish life. There always seems to be something to worry about, some crisis that is about to erupt, some threat to our survival. Even when we don't yet know the details, we are called upon to get into the worrying mode.

The late Professor Simon Rawidowicz wrote a fascinating essay which he entitled: "Israel--the Ever-Dying People." He points out that in each generation, going back many centuries, Jews thought that Jewish history was coming to an end. They worried about destruction at the hand of vicious enemies; they worried about exiles and expulsions; they worried about spiritual decline; they worried about assimilation. It seems that since the time of Abraham, we've been worrying about our imminent demise. Although we have been "ever-dying", Professor Rawidowicz reminds us that after 3500 years we are still alive!

Perhaps our very awareness of the fragility of our existence has given us an added tenacity to survive, to find ways of solving problems. The 19th century Rabbi Israel Salanter once quipped: "When people come to a wall that they can't go through, they stop. When Jews come to a wall that they can't go through--they go through."

This week's Torah reading includes the dramatic episode of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea. When they reached the shore of the sea, they faced an existential crisis. Behind them, the Egyptian troops were coming to destroy them. In front of them was the Red Sea. They were trapped, with no obvious solution to their dilemma.

The Midrash tells of various reactions among the Israelites as they pondered their imminent destruction. Some said: we should have stayed in Egypt! Others said: the situation is hopeless; we and our families will perish. Woe unto us. The common denominator of these approaches is that they led to psychological and emotional paralysis. Crying over what they could have done or should have done did not address their current crisis; it stifled their ability to cope. Declaring the situation to be hopeless led to despair. They came to a wall--and they stopped.

The Midrash tells that Nahshon ben Aminadav, head of the tribe of Judah, walked into the Red Sea. When the water reached his neck, then the sea miraculously split--and the Israelites were saved. Nahshon is described as a great hero because he took things into his own hands; he acted decisively; he risked his own life.

Yet Nahshon's heroism was not the result of a sudden burst of desperation. Rather, we can imagine that Nahshon deliberated carefully before entering the sea. He might have thought: God performed so many miracles for us in Egypt; God obviously has unlimited power; if God wanted us to be liberated from Egyptian servitude and to be brought into the Promised Land, surely God can and will make good on His promises to us. Armed with this reasoning, Nahshon entered the Red Sea. He was confident God would redeem His people. Nahshon came to a wall--and he went through; and he brought the rest of the people through as well.

When we receive Emergency Alerts from Jewish organizations telling us to start worrying because we are facing enormous threats, we should worry. But we should worry in the right way. Worrying that stems from regret that we should have or could have done things differently--such worrying is negative and self-defeating. The past is over, and we need to confront the crisis as it faces us now. We don't have the option of returning to the past to undo decisions. (Hopefully, we can learn from these past decisions when we get through the current crisis and contemplate how to make future decisions.) Likewise, it is not productive to sink into self-pity and passive despair. Indeed, despair feeds on itself and infects others with a spirit of helplessness.

We should worry like Nahshon worried. We should not minimize the dangers and the risks; but we should deliberate on what is at stake and how we can overcome the difficulty. We should have confidence that if God has brought us this far, He will keep His promises to us and bring us ultimate redemption. We should be ready to act decisively, to think "out of the box", to maintain forward momentum.

On April 17, 1818, Mordecai Manuel Noah--one of the great American Jews of his time--delivered an address at the dedication ceremony of Shearith Israel's second synagogue building, on Mill Street in lower Manhattan. He closed his talk with a prayer: "May we prove ever worthy of His blessing; may He look down from His heavenly abode and send us peace and comfort; may He instill in our minds a love of country, of friends, and of all mankind. Be just, therefore, and fear not. That God who brought us out of the land of Egypt, who walked before us like 'a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night,' will never desert His people Israel."

Some Light Thoughts

A special recipe from Larissa to use on Purim: Koubeta, Fleas of Haman, Psires of Amman, Sesame Bars

½ lb. of sesame seeds
½ lb. honey
1 cup of sugar
Pinch of cinnamon
Whole almonds for decoration

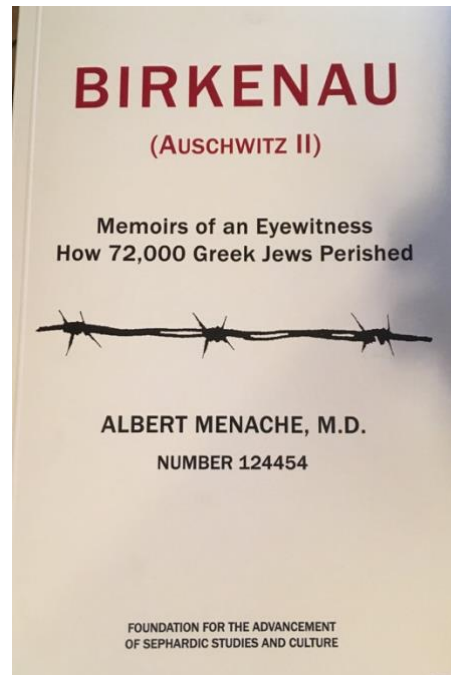


Toast the sesame seeds lightly in a large heavy-bottomed saucepan until they are brown and begin to pop. Remove from heat.

In a separate saucepan, put the honey, sugar, and cinnamon, and bring to a boil, stirring. Lower the heat to medium-low and cook, stirring, until a thick syrup is formed that will coat the back of a spoon, about 220° on a candy thermometer. When the syrup is ready, immediately mix the sesame seeds in thoroughly with a wooden spoon. Turn out on a well-buttered or oiled marble or glass slab and spread out evenly to a thickness of ½ to 1 inch. Immediately press the almonds into the surface, about an inch apart. Press down evenly with a spatula and let cool. Cut into squares with an almond in the center of each. Makes 30 or more.

New Book for Sale

Kehila Kedosha Janina is proud to offer a recently republished classic by Dr. Albert Menache of Blessed Memory: "Birkenau (Auschwitz II). Memoirs of an Eyewitness." This was one of the earliest memoirs of a survivor, originally published in Thessaloniki in 1947. It has now been re-published by the Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture, by Dr. Joe Halio. The book is \$25 plus \$7 P&H (within USA). To order, email us at museum@kkjism.org.



Looking for Our Help

Hello. I am Lior Kabelis that you have heard from Louise Rostker. With Louise we are working on the Azouvi family. I would like to ask if you could search something as the Museum Kehila Kedosha Janina does also genealogy. As i know my great grandmother Simcha Azouvi sister of the rabbi Yehuda had 7 siblings(rabbi Yehuda, rabbi Abraham, rabbi Gabriel, Elie, Haim, Ester married to Haim Filosof and Lea married to the rabbi Zacharia Sason). For the rabbi Abraham i know that he got married to Mazaltov and they had two daughters (Louise and Rachel). Rachel died after the war as i know. Louise got married to Lazare Mijan and they had a daughter who went to South Africa. Does Kehila Kedosha Janina have information maybe about this family?

Apologies for bothering you with one more family research question, but I believe I've made a connection between a Hatzis family originally from Ioannina and my Hadzi (Hadji) family who came to the United States. I learned about this Hatzis family through a Jewish Museum of Greece webpage about the family, and I was wondering if they might be able to help me track down the surviving family members, and if you have a recommendation on whom I might be able to contact or how I might proceed.

Specifically, I've learned my cousin Elaine wrote a book about my Bacola and Hadzi family, which includes two photographs labeled "our Hadzi cousins in Greece." The names mentioned on this page -- Leon, wife Nina, children Chrysoula and Morris -- completely match the Ioannina family described of Isaak Hatzis, whose extraordinary story is described on this page: <https://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/isaak-hatzis/>



I then compared the two photographs with the photographs present on the Isaak and Morris's Shoah testimony pages and looking at the images I believe they could very well be the same people, but they are not the same ages so I can't be 100% sure. I would like to see if it is possible to contact living members of this Hatzis family to see if they recognize the other individuals in my photographs and, if so, we can hopefully together determine how our Hadgi/Hatzi families are related. Apparently Isaak (the oldest child in the photo) passed away in 2018 but has two daughters. I am not sure if Morris (the younger boy in the photos, I think) is still alive. Do you know a good point of contact at the Jewish Museum of Greece or otherwise who might be able to assist with this?

Please email us at museum@kkjism.org if you can help Lior.

Photos of the Month

Athens Jewish Community Events (Pre-COVID)



Additional photos from our community

From Linda Kinsberg



Esther and Morris Cohen



Mazalu and Ezra Askinazi



Mazalu and Esther Akinazi

Malta Street Synagogue (former Sephardic Synagogue in Brooklyn)



The Alliance in Ioannina 1933



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.



**Kehila Kedosha Janina E-Newsletter – Number 143
February 2021
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street, New York NY 10002
Website: www.kkjsm.org
Email: museum@kkjsm.org**

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