



# Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

## June 2020 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

In June of 1944, two small Jewish communities in Greece were deported to German concentration camps. This issue will pay tribute to them. In addition, this E-Newsletter is in honor of two very special men who passed in May: Ralph Raphael (age 82) and Alex Samuels (age 93).

Please note that both our synagogue and museum are closed until further notice. Understandably, this has caused severe financial hardship. If you see it in your heart to send in a contribution, we would be most grateful. You will find information on contributions throughout this E-Newsletter.



Mouse Island in Corfu

This newsletter, our 135<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](mailto:museum@kkjsm.org)

Hopefully, we will soon be open for services again. When we are, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up by emailing [info@kkjsm.org](mailto:info@kkjsm.org) so we are sure that our Kiddush (traditional Greek Jewish Kosher foods) is sufficient. If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush for a special occasion or an Adara, contact Sol.

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### Simchas

A special Mazal Tov to Rhoda and Lloyd Hirsch on the birth of their second grandson, Kiran Janveja Hirsch, born on April 25, 2020. The proud parents are Jonathan and Seema Hirsch. Kiran is welcomed by his older brother, Jaden and large Greek-Jewish family. On his mother's side. Kiran is the grandson of Jack and Sarof Janveja. Kiran is the great-grandson of Jesse and Dorothy Elison (both of Blessed Memory), the great great-grandson of Elias and Nancy Colchamiro and the great great-grandson of Jessoula and Rachel (Galanos) Colchamiro, and Sam and Regina (Bacola) Matza.



Kiran



Elias Colchamiro



Elias Colchamiro family

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### Passings

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Rosina Pardo Asser on May 18, 2020. Rosina was born in Thessaloniki on August 7, 1933. She was 87 years old and was the widow of David Asser. She survived the Holocaust in Greece hiding in a neighbor's apartment with her family. Her story is among those told in the documentary "Kisses from the Children." She is survived by her sons, Sonny and Victor, and her daughter, Gina, and her grandchildren.



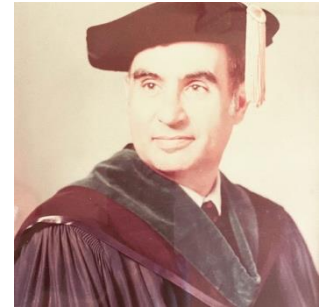
Rosina is second from the left

We mourn the passing of Clifford Post, son of Mollie Levy and grandson of Isaac Levy and Stella Cohen Levy. The Levy family lived on the Lower East Side.

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It is with the heaviest of hearts that we announce the passing of Rabbi Dr. M. Asher Murciano, Rabbi of the Sephardic Jewish Center of Forest Hills. Rabbi Murciano served the Sephardic Brotherhood, the New York Sephardic Community, and the national Sephardic community for over 50 years. His kindness, good spirit, and wisdom will be incredibly missed. Repoza en Gan Eden - May His Soul Rest in Peace.

Rabbi Dr. Masliah Asher (Prosper) Murciano, A"H, was a Tangier-born communal leader and rabbinical scholar, who lived a remarkable life that included formal education at the Alliance Israelite Universelle, rabbinical studies in Morocco and then the United States at Yeshiva University and the Mirrer Yeshiva, and academic research at City College, NYU, and Columbia University. For three years he officiated at Mikveh Israel: Philadelphia's Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, as Assistant Rabbi and Hazan. R' Murciano also served as Chaplain to the Sephardic Home for the Aged, Sephardic Brotherhood, NYC's Jacobi Hospital, and for 67 years as Rabbi of the Sephardic Jewish Center of Forest Hills. He is survived by his wife and their three children, eleven grandchildren, and thirty-four great-grandchildren, in the US and Israel.



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Frances Goldin, a Crusader for the Lower East Side, died at 95. Frances Goldin, a lifelong firebrand who won her first street brawl when she was 11 and as a grown-up never stopped fighting to safeguard her beloved Lower East Side from upscale developers, died on May 18<sup>th</sup> in Manhattan. She was 95.



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We regret to inform you on the passing of Sol Niego. Sol was a lifelong member of the Sephardic Brotherhood since the age of 18. In recent years, he served on the Executive Committee, had co-chaired the Scholarship Committee, and also headed the Cemetery Committee. He was passionate about his Sephardic culture and his willingness to help was exceeded only by his gentle and joyful demeanor. Sol Niego was an Architect and founder of Niego Associates, a graduate of Pratt Institute, and a member of the American Institute of Architects. He is survived by his wife of almost 59 years Myrna, two daughters Suzanne and Starr, their husbands Phil and Mike, and 4 grandchildren - and his sister Miriam and brother Joel. Sol was born 1/29/1939 and passed at the age of 81 on May 24, 2020. May his Soul Rest in Peace.



As mentioned earlier, this E-Newsletter is dedicated to two men who, in many ways, defined our New York community, Ralph Raphael and Alex Samuels. This newsletter is sponsored by generous donations made in the memory of these two men.

Ralph Raphael passed away on May 20, 2020, due to complications from several surgeries earlier this year. He died very peacefully, at home, surrounded by family and hospice nurses. He made it to 82.5 years old! Despite his very humble beginnings on the Lower East Side, poverty, bigotry, language, and other day-to-day challenges, he obtained his undergraduate degree from City College in Mechanical Engineering, and then, a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the Pratt Institute. During his career with the US Department of Defense, he held several patents, including one for a lifesaving module he designed for naval use in submarines.



It is with great sadness that we pass on the sad news of the passing of Alex Samuels at the age of 93. Alex's family was among the founding families of Kehila Kedosha Janina. His wife, of blessed memory, was Annette Menachem from another Yanniote family. Alex was born on the Lower East Side and had a love of his Greek-Jewish roots. He is survived by his daughter, Risa, his two sons, Michael (Janie) and Mark (Barbara of Blessed Memory) and his two grandsons, Jeffrey (and wife Melissa) and Craig. He will be mourned by his extended family and a loving Greek-Jewish community.

Alex was the son of Michael and Rebecca (Besso) Samuels, Michael born in Ioannina and Rebecca in Arta.

The family has requested that donations be made to Kehila Kedosha Janina, 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 or through our website [www.kkjsm.org](http://www.kkjsm.org) on our donate link.



Annette and Alex on their wedding day



Annette and Alex



Alex with his father, Michael

## Mike's Diner in Astoria – Corrections

In the last issue of our e-newsletter we published an article on Mike's Diner in Astoria. It appears that there were some errors in the article. Sometimes errors are good, as it was in this case. These errors enabled us to make new friends who not only corrected the errors but, also, provided us with cherished stories of Greek-Jewish involvement in diners in the New York City area.

We thank Morris Eliassof for the following corrections:

Thanks so much for taking a few minutes to discuss the article in this month's Newsletter.

The passing of Gus is heart-breaking and I do appreciate your mention of him and the diner in the newsletter, although there are many glaring inaccuracies that I'd like to address. The real story is as follows:

Morris Eliassof (definitely not Michael or Mike), my grandfather owned Mike's Diner from the late 20s when it was an actual railroad car. Alex never named the diner after his father...it was called Mike's Diner before Alex was even born. He had 5 children, four boys and a girl. The boys were George (Haim), Al (Abraham), Alex and Solomon with Sylvia the lone daughter. When the boys were old enough they worked in the diner while George and Alex went to serve in the armed services...Solomon and Al helped my grandfather, Morris, in the diner. The diner had gone through some renovations and was modernized in the 60s when all four brothers could be seen working side by side with their father, Morris. When my grandfather decided to pull back and enjoy his later years with his wife Rachel, the four brothers created The Eliassof Brothers and ran the Diner as equal partners. In the mid 70's George and Al wanted to retire and so the decision was made to sell the Diner business. My father Solomon (Sal or Sol to his customers) worked on at Mike's until his retirement, along with my mother, Florence who could be seen smiling behind the cash register while she chatted with customers.



Eliassof family

Morris Eliassof (standing in the back with his wife Rachel).

Solomon is squatting down in front. Florence (Foula to family and close friends) is the smiling woman standing on the right of the three against the wall. My Uncle Al is two places to the right of my mother and George is laying back on his wife Katy's lap.

That summarizes over three generations of Eliassof's being a part of the Astoria landscape. By the way, Sol and Florence lived in Astoria from the day they were married until they days they passed. Thanks for making any corrections you see fit in the next newsletter. Truly appreciate you making the effort. - Morris Eliassof

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And the story continues. Because of the mistake in the original article (caused by "fake news" in an obituary), we had the delight to converse with Michael Matza, the grandson of the Michael Matza who was the original owner of Mike's Diner and, through him, his father Abraham. Abraham Matza, now a charming 91-year-old. Michael Matza sent us the following on his family's involvement with Mike's diner:

"I just read the May Newsletter reprint from 2010 RE: Mike's Diner (written by Nathan Duke). First, I am sorry to hear of the passing of Mr. Sergiadis as well as Alex Eliasoff (back in 2010). I recall many family gatherings as a child with Alex's Mother – My favorite Aunt Ray and her husband Morris Eliasoff, along with our extended Matza (Descendants of Menachem Matza circa 1810) families – who were my Grandmother's (Speranza Matza) sister and Morris Eliasoff her husband and my Grandfather's (Michael Matza, my namesake) brother in law. I wish to set the record straight concerning the history of Mike's diner. My Grandfather, Michael (Mike) Matza, was the original owner and for whom the Diner was named for dating back to 1920's (possibly early 1930's). Many years later, in the late 1930's, Morris Eliasoff (His brother in law) became a partner with my grandfather in the Diner. After a short period of time they split up with my grandfather opening another diner on Grand Avenue in Queens and subsequently one in Brooklyn. In speaking with my dad (Abraham (Al), Matza) – I confirmed Mark's grandfather is Morris Eliasoff. At some point Morris turned the Diner over to Alex (my father's cousin) and his sons. I subsequently spoke with my Aunt Annette (Michael Matza's daughter and my father's sister), who verified. Make no mistake, it is my Grandfather, Michael Matza (Mike) who is the original owner and the Diner's namesake! Thank you, I look truly forward to seeing you print a correction, acknowledging my Grandfather and to set the record straight.  
- Michael Matza



Abraham, Michael and  
Michael Matza

Finally, from our interview with Abraham Matza:

Interview with Abraham (Al) Matza:

Michael Matza opened Mike's diner in 1920's on 31<sup>st</sup> between 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave and Ditmars Blvd. Originally partnered with Morris Eliasoff. Then sold diner to him. Opened another diner a few blocks away on Grand and Ditmars. Then moved diner (now called Queen's Diner) to Flatbush Avenue Ext. in 1939.

## News from the Lower East Side and the East Village

Gem Spa, the East Village's General Store, Remembered - Full article by Dan Adler [here](#)  
The newsstand and egg cream shop that opened in the 1920s shuttered on Thursday, May 12, 2020

Parul Patel was a teenager when her father, Ray, bought Gem Spa, the beloved corner store in Manhattan's East Village, in 1986. The main thing she remembers from the time is the crowds. "We literally had to squeeze our way through people outside the store," Patel said on the phone on Sunday, three days after the store said it would be closing permanently—another city institution lost in the wave of shutterings brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. Perched at the intersection of Second Avenue and St. Marks Place, the newsstand and egg cream shop had often been a gathering place, whether for hippies, beatniks, punks, or unaffiliated neighborhood residents, since it opened in the 1920s.

The tributes that followed Patel's closure announcement on Thursday teemed with references to the art in which the store had served as a backdrop: Madonna's turn in *Desperately Seeking Susan*; Patti Smith writing about going for an egg cream with Robert Mapplethorpe in her memoir *Just Kids*; a pair of lines from an Allen Ginsberg poem ("Back from the Gem Spa, into the hallway, a glance behind / and sudden farewell to the bedbug-ridden



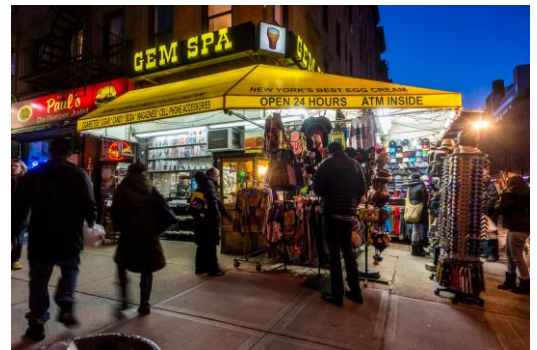
mattresses piled soggy in dark rain"); the back cover of the New York Dolls' first album; the title of a 1982 Jean-Michel Basquiat painting; Lou Reed's song "Egg Cream." The works traced a timeline of the East Village that both belonged firmly to the 20th century and remained top of mind.

Last May, Patel began running Gem Spa herself, after a police sting led to it losing its cigarette and lottery licenses. (The cops say the store sold cigarettes to minors.) Her father has Parkinson's disease and had hired someone else to manage the store for around ten years, and the debts had piled up. Patel's efforts to keep Gem Spa open—including Instagram and merch campaigns, as well as plans to install a lunch counter—prompted a media blitz and an array of activist efforts, and though Patel says the landlord, City Urban, was eager to see the store go, the trajectory was promising until the pandemic.

"We're walking away from a very big mess, and we fought really hard to stay," Patel said. Her family had fielded plenty of offers over the years to sell the store. "We never wanted to leave."

As much as Gem Spa was an emblem, it was also a neighborhood standby. New York City councilwoman Carlina Rivera grew up nearby, attended high school down the street in the '90s, and now represents the district. She said the closure was a sign that the federal and state governments were failing mom-and-pop shops amid the greater COVID-19 crisis. "This would be our corridor," she said of St. Marks Place. "Gem Spa is the place where we would go in; we would kind of look around. We didn't have much money, but they didn't really kick you out. So we would all chip in. We would get our egg cream, and we would hang out on the corner. It was one of the best places to people-watch."

"I would be in Gem Spa one minute," Rivera added. "I would be window shopping in the Gap across the street—I know that's not as bohemian, but this is the type of thing that we would do. And then eventually I was like: You know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna get my belly button pierced today."



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## News from the Greek Jewish Community in the United States

The Race is On: Why Pfizer May Be the Best Bet to Deliver A Vaccine by the Fall – Full article in Forbes [here](#)  
This article focuses on Pfizer chief Albert Bourla, a Jewish native of Thessaloniki.

"The unorthodox way Bourla took to the pinnacle of corporate power started in Greece's second-biggest city, Thessaloniki, a northern port city on the Aegean Sea. He grew up middle-class—his father and uncle owned a liquor store—as part of a tiny Jewish minority that survived the German occupation and the Holocaust."  
via [Forbes](#)

In the middle of March, Pfizer chief Albert Bourla beamed into a WebEx video call with the leaders of the American pharmaceutical giant's vaccine research and manufacturing groups. The two teams had worked late into the night on a robust development plan for Pfizer's experimental Covid-19 vaccine and told Bourla that they aimed to make it available lightning-fast. It could be ready sometime in 2021.



“Not good enough,” Bourla said. The faces of the researchers tensed up, and conscious of the Herculean effort that had taken place, Bourla made sure to thank them. But he also kept pushing. He asked if people on the call thought the virus might come back in the fall, and what they expected would happen if a vaccine were not available when a new flu season hit at the same time, an issue the federal Centers for Disease Control raised weeks later.

“Think in different terms,” Bourla told them. “Think you have an open checkbook, you don’t need to worry about such things. Think that we will do things in parallel, not sequential. Think you need to build manufacturing of a vaccine before you know what’s working. If it doesn’t, let me worry about it and we will write it off and throw it out.”

Says Mikael Dolsten, Pfizer’s chief scientific officer: “He challenged the team to aim for a moon shot–like goal—to have millions of doses of vaccine in the hands of vulnerable populations before the end of the year.”

On the first Monday of May, Pfizer dosed the initial batch of healthy American volunteers in Baltimore with an experimental Covid-19 vaccine it developed with Germany’s BioNTech. Bourla was informed immediately. The following day, in an interview from his home in suburban Scarsdale, New York, he pointed out that it normally takes years to accomplish what Pfizer had just done in weeks. “How fast we moved is not something you could expect from the big, powerful pharma,” he said. “This is speed that you would envy in an entrepreneurial founder-based biotech.”

A Greek veterinarian who worked his way up the Pfizer corporate ladder for 25 years before becoming CEO in 2019, Bourla says nothing in his career could have prepared him for this moment. But he does believe the massive corporate transformation he has led—steering a behemoth conglomerate (2019 sales: \$51.8 billion) deeper into the high-risk, high-reward game of developing new patented medicines and away from generic drugs and consumer products like Advil and Chapstick—has prepared Pfizer.

For Bourla, 58, the last four months have been a rollercoaster, an unending series of setbacks and victories. Pfizer is not alone in the race. Most of the world’s biggest pharmaceutical companies, including Johnson & Johnson, Sanofi, AstraZeneca and Roche, are throwing everything they can at Covid-19.

Some experts feel Bourla’s timeline—a viable vaccine in a matter of a few months—is simply unrealistic. Undeterred, Bourla has tasked hundreds of researchers to scour Pfizer’s trove of experimental and existing medicines to look for potential therapies. Early on, he openly authorized having discussions and sharing proprietary information with rival firms, moves unheard of in the secretive world of big pharma. Bourla has made Pfizer’s manufacturing capabilities available to small biotech concerns and is in talks as well to make large quantities of other companies’ Covid-19 drug candidates.

Pfizer’s most prominent effort is its work with Mainz, Germany–based BioNTech, an innovative \$120 million (2019 sales) outfit that is mostly known for making cancer medications. The resulting experimental Covid-19 vaccine works with messenger RNA, a bleeding-edge technology that has never resulted in a successful treatment. Pfizer is hoping to get emergency-use authorization from the U.S. government for the vaccine by October. Its unique strategy is to rapidly pit four different mRNA vaccine candidates against one another and double down on the most likely winner. For complete article, follow link above.

Bourla, of course, comes from the Sephardic family in Thessaloniki, Greece. We are proud.



HEAL US LORD AND WE SHALL BE HEALED; SAVE US AND WE SHALL BE SAVED, FOR YOU ARE OUR PRAISE. SEND PERFECT HEALING AND RESTORATION FROM ALL OUR PAINS, SICKNESS AND INFIRMITIES, FOR YOU ARE THE MERCIFUL, FAITHFUL GOD OF HEALING. BLESSED ARE YOU, LORD, WHO HEALS THE SICK OF YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL.

רְפָאנוּ יְהוָה וְנִרְפָּא, הוֹשִׁיעֵנו וְנוֹשְׁעָה, כִּי תִהְלָתְנוּ אִתָּה,  
וְהַעֲלֵה אֲרוּכָה וּמְרַפָּא לְכָל-תַּחֲלוּאֵינוּ וּלְכָל-מַכְאוּבֵינוּ  
וּלְכָל-מַכּוֹתֵינוּ. כִּי אֵל רּוֹפֵא רַחֲמָן וְנֶאֱמָן אִתָּה:  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, רוֹפֵא חוֹלֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Ἀνάρρωσον ἡμᾶς, Κύριε, καὶ θέλομεν ἀναρρώσει, σῶσον ἡμᾶς καὶ θέλομεν σωθῆ, διότι Σὺ εἶ ὁ πρὸς ὃν ἀποτεινομεν τοὺς αἴνους ἡμῶν χάρισον ἡμῖν τὴν ὑγείαν καὶ τὴν ἴασιν εἰς πάσας τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν, εἰς πάσας τὰς ὀδύνας ἡμῶν διότι Θεὸς ἰώμενος, ἐλεήμων καὶ πιστὸς Σὺ εἶ. Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, ὁ θεραπεύων τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ σου Ἰσραὴλ.



Three times every weekday we read this prayer. In these difficult times we ask God to fulfill this prayer and answer the call of all of those in need.

**Due to New York State on Pause because of COVID-19 and the fact that religious institutions and museums must be closed, there are no upcoming events or services. We will let you know as soon as that changes. We recently hosted our first ever virtual service on Erev Shavuoth, which you can watch online [here](#).**

**Do check our website [www.kkjasm.org](http://www.kkjasm.org) and follow our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/kkjnyc/> along with news from our community partners (SHINDC and The Sephardic Brotherhood of America for news of online Zoom programs (music, services, rabbinical dialogues, etc.) Learn more [here](#).**

## News from Jewish Greece

### Athens

May 29, 2020

"Announcement on the operation of the Synagogue after the removal of the measures.

Our synagogue will be open daily from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm for individual or private prayer as well as for wishes, memorial services etc. from our Rabbi (after consultation with him).

The prayers of Shabath, the and the Holidays start from Friday 28 Iyar, 5780 E.C. (May 22, 2020) and will normally take place in the Athens synagogue, Beth Shalom.

The stay in the area our synagogue will be limited to the absolutely necessary. It is recommended to leave after the end of prayers, while access to Ehal will not be allowed. The total number of people who can attend at the same time, according to the ratio set by the Law, is 28 people (28), always strictly keeping the distance of 1.5 meters between the prayers (more detailed, 16 men, 10 women and 2 readers on the Teva). To keep your distance you will only be able to sit in the seats with a special marking. The exterior courtyards of the Synagogue have been shaped to host those of you who feel more comfortable praying outdoors. Please give priority to those who are obliged by Halacha to pray with a Minyan (such as those in mourning)."



Athens Synagogue Beth Shalom



Celebrating Shavout in Athens Lucy Beza, Lucy Levi and Graziela Bourlá (Virtual celebration)

"Hand hygiene with antiseptic is mandatory when entering our synagogue area. So please, at your entrance, wash your hands at one of the two antiseptic stations, wear gloves and cover your face with a mask. On your exit take your gloves off and place them in the special bins for used hygienic equipment (masks, gloves, tissues etc.). Gloves and masks will be given to you at the entrance, treat them wisely. Strictly avoid shaking hands and hugging. Entry to our synagogue will be controlled to avoid overcrowding and keep distances. You can call in advance (+30 210 3252773 3252773) about your intention to pray at the Kal. This would be helpful.

It is preferable to use your own personal prayer "utensils" (kipa, taleth, tefilin, prayer and other books). We urge you to bring them with you. If you wish you can still store them in the specially designed area side of the Synagogue and after you have disinfected them according to the recommendations and help of Shamas. The use of shared "utensils" will be meticulously avoided and their exceptional disposal will be made under strict conditions.

The natural ventilation of worship places is mandatory throughout their operation. Thus, the windows and doors of our synagogue will remain fully open (without exception) to all prayers. Now that the rules are more flexible, we are called to remember the wise words of the Hillel: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when?" protecting ourselves but also those who join us. Let us strengthen together, with endurance and patience."

## Kastoria

On May 14, 2020, the Kastoria Jewish Heritage Center, with a simple, modest event declared respect for the memory of their poor Jewish fellow citizens.

This year all events in Greece were suspended, for March and April, due to COVID-19, but we have an obligation to lay a simple wreath in respect to the memory of the Jewish Community of Kastoria, murdered by the Nazis.

The "Kastoria Jewish Heritage Center", was founded two and a half years ago in New York by Kastorian (Christians and Jews) and aims to save the Historical Memory of our local history and the promotion of Kastoria internationally.

To date, apart from the historical documentary "Trezoros", which is featured on all continents, Kastoria is screened through the March of Life (March of Life), the international solidarity organization Shalom, the Federation of America, in various events here and in America, and for the third consecutive year in a row at the United Nations.

This year, May 14th, is also celebrated as the day of the establishment of the State of Israel.



The event was honored by the presence of the Reverend Father Christos Mesimeris as a representative of the Holy Metropolis, MP Mrs. Teligiroidou, - MP Mr. Tzikalaya (by letter due to his obligations to Parliament) - the Regional Governor of West Macedonia, Mr. Kasapidis, the Vice-President of Kastoria Mr. Savvopoulos, the Mayor of Nestoriou, Mr. Gosliopoulos, the Regional advisors Dr. Kozatsani and Mrs. Kyriakidou.



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## Drama

Do watch this moving video by Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center in Glen Cove, NY. Including the story of an artifact from the synagogue in Drama donated by the Gatenio family. <https://youtu.be/OTMj7zyzFtc>



## Articles of Interest to Everyone

The city of Antakya is located 20 miles from the border with Syria and nestled in the mountainous region of Turkey's southern Hatay province. This region, a panhandle wedged between Syria and the Mediterranean, is hailed across Turkey for its multiculturalism and tolerance. The province was part of Syria until Turkey officially annexed it through a referendum in 1939, and its population remains a microcosm of Syria - a mosaic of Christians, Jews, Sunnis, Alawites and Alevis.

In recent years, though, with war on its doorstep and an influx of 30,000 Syrian refugees, the province has taken on a reputation as a hub for fighters and a crossing point for foreign jihadis.

The 2,300 years old Jewish community is today fading, but it is not the war that had driven away Antakya's Jews. The exodus started back in the 1970s, when a wave of political violence swept across Turkey, creating an intolerable environment for the country's minorities.

Thousands of Jews across Turkey fled to the country's economic and cultural center, Istanbul, or overseas to find a better life. Antakya's Jewish community never quite recovered. Forty years ago, there were several hundred Jews in Antakya. Today, there are about 15 left. The youngest is about 63.

### Antakya's Synagogue

On the facade of the city's only synagogue, a star of David is inscribed on the modest structure, which blends comfortably in the neighborhood it has set in for the last 250 years, just across the street from a Mosque and a Catholic church. The door opens to an empty, small cobblestone courtyard with a few sparse trees and a plain stone building where the men gather to pray every week. The floor is made of marble, and a rich blue curtain with golden inscription covers the ark. The building was erected in 1890. Because Antakya is North of Jerusalem, the synagogue is built with the Torah Ark on the southern wall with a semi-circular apse.

As the Jewish community has dwindled, Jews have become something of a novelty in this area, protected and supported by neighbors and by the local government. In 2014 for example, the municipality granted the community's request for two unused apartments to be used as guesthouses, free of charge, for visitors on the shabbat.

### Antakya's Jewish Cemetery

Jews have been an important part of the city since pre-Christian times, when it was known as Antioch. Apostles Paul and Peter were among the early Christian leaders to visit the community - a mixed assemblage of Jews and Pagans whose members were the first to identify themselves as Christians, a new faith, wholly separated from Judaism.

Strong relations between Jews and their neighbors go back for as long as the community can remember, to a time when Jews played an important role in the local economy, selling fabrics and clothing. Jews studied in Turkish schools, sold their goods in Turkish markets and shared in festivities with their Muslim and Christian neighbors.



Antakya's Statue of Tolerance (now the religious symbols have been removed)

The Jewish community of Antakya retained close relations with Jews in Aleppo, with whom they shared cultural and ethnic ties until that community shrank following the establishment of Israel. Political tensions and war in Syria have turned the city into an unfriendly place for its minorities. In the tense environment, anti-Semitism had reared its head.

In 2015, the "Statue of Tolerance" was erected in one of the city's main squares, with two hands raised toward the sky. In one hand is a globe, in the other was a crescent, a cross and a star of David. The statue was meant to celebrate diversity. But vandals repeatedly defaced the star of David. The religious symbols were promptly removed and -ironically- replaced with an olive branch.

With the help of the municipality, the Jewish cemetery of Antakya, which had been neglected and ragged for some time is ongoing renovations.

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## Israel

### Synagogue at Yad Vashem

"This Synagogue serves as a memorial to the destroyed synagogues of European Jewry. It will be a testimonial to the faith, to the rich spiritual world of European Jewry and to the extraordinary will of the Jewish people to survive, to remember and to rebuild." (Avner Shalev, Chairman of Yad Vashem at the dedication of the Synagogue, June 2005)



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## In Memory of the Jews of Corfu

### Remembering the Jews of Corfu

Reprinted from Le Lettres Sepharad 2001 with permission of the author

By Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos

On the small, verdant Ionian Island of Corfu, at the foot of the Venetian Fortress, are the remnants of a former Jewish "Ghetto", stark reminders of the once vibrant Jewish community that lived here for over a millennium. Little is left now: the shells of bombed out buildings, their former stores, now owned by Greek Christians and only one of the three synagogues that existed at the time of the Holocaust.

In the late nineteenth century the Jewish community numbered close to 5000, most of them poor. The wage earners were porters, street venders and owners of small shops. Education was at minimum, most young men leaving school to help their parents raise their large families, most young girls never attending school at all. The community was a mixture of Romaniote (Greek speaking Jews) and Jews from the south of Italy who had emigrated there after the persecutions in the 15th century. The dialect spoken was a mixture of Greek, Hebrew and Pugliese Italian. This was the community that produced Lazarus Mordos, a prominent doctor, the Olivetti family of typewriter fame, Albert Cohen, the famous poet and the grandparents of George Moustaki, the internationally acclaimed French singer.

In 1891 a "Blood Libel" ravaged the community. Ironically, the young murdered girl was Jewish, Rebecca Sardas, but the devastation that followed the accusation that Jews had murdered her caused over half of the community to immigrate, most to Egypt. Those that were left were the poorest, the least able to leave. At the dawning of World War II the Jewish community of Corfu numbered 2000, most of them young children and the elderly. On June 10, 1944, four days after the bombing of Normandy, with the end of the war in sight, the Jews of Corfu were rounded up to be deported off the island. First they were imprisoned in the Old Venetian Fort in dank, cramped quarters. Then they were sent off the island in small boats, final destination Auschwitz-Birkenau. Of the 1795 Jews of Corfu who were deported, only 121 would survive. The mayor of the island issued a proclamation, thanking the Germans for ridding the island of the Jews so that the economy of the island would revert to its "rightful owners".



All that remains of the vital Jewish presence in Corfu is a small and highly assimilated community, numbering about 80 Jews, most survivors of the Holocaust, and La Scuola Greca Synagogue, built in the 18th century and still standing in what was once the "Jewish Ghetto". A Holocaust memorial was dedicated on November 25, 2001.



On June 10, 2002, the 58th anniversary of the deportation of the Jews of Corfu, a reunion of Corfiote Jews, and their descendants, will take place on the island of Corfu. A memorial plaque with the family names of those lost in the Holocaust was installed in the synagogue. Through intensive research, the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry had been able to document the following family names: Akkos, Alchavas, Amar, Aron, Asias, Asser, Bakolas, Balestra, Baruch, Ben Giat, Besso, Cavaliero, Chaim, Dalmedigos, Dentes, Ftan, Elias, Eliezer, Eskapas, Ferro, Fortes, Ganis, Gerson, Israel, Johanna, Koen, Kolonimos, Konstantinis, Koulias, Lemous, Leoncini, Levi, Matathias, Matsas, Minervo, Mizan, Mordos, Moustaki, Nachon, Nechamas, Negrin, Osmos, Ovadiah, Perez, Pitson, Politis, Raphael, Sardas, Sasen, Serneine, Sinigalli, Soussis, Tsesana, Varon, Vellelis, Vivante, Vital and Vitali.

A documentary film "Farewell My Island", by Isaac Dostis, was shown. There was a memorial service in La Scuola Greca, with a special kaddish for the Jews of Corfu, followed by a candlelight procession.

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, President Association of Friends of Greek Jewry

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### **In Memory of the Jews of Crete**

The Nazi-German occupation of Greece began in 1941 and lasted until well into 1945. The circumstances that led to this were complex and perhaps initially only peripherally of concern for Germany as it was called upon to assist its Italian and Bulgarian allies in their expansionist and irredentist aspirations. Crete was taken by the Germans in May 1941. They were met by fierce resistance from the local population and the three main towns, Hania, Rethymon and Herakleion, were badly bombed.



The Axis Powers eventually prevailed in the Battle of Crete and established their rule by June 1941. By agreement the island was divided into two zones of occupation, the Germans taking the lion's share with the main ports and cities and the Italians holding the far eastern portion. Already, however, the singling out of Jews for some special treatment by the Luftwaffe was obvious by a demand by the German High Command for knives that were used for shehita or ritual slaughter and in compliance with a separate demand an initial list of the community and its members was to be submitted by the rabbi of Hania, Elias Osmos. It is significant that the Germans were acutely aware of the 'otherness' of the Jews in the Greek mentality despite their being politically defined as Greeks, in their approach to the community very early during the occupation.

Rabbi Osmos was certainly a man of great age and little direct experience. The collusion of the Greek police in the first and subsequent censuses of the community is obvious by the fact that all orders from the Luftwaffe were directed to the Greek Municipality and hence to the Greek police and from them to the Jewish Community representatives in Hania.



It was not until the morning hours of 20 May 1944, and almost as an afterthought, that the Jews of Crete were arrested. Most of the Jews lived in what was then the Jewish Quarter between Kondylaki and Skoufon streets, bordered by Zambeliou and Portou Streets in the Old City of Hania. Jews who lived in such areas as Splantzia and Halepa and other parts of Hania were herded together and eventually were fed into the convoy of trucks that left from Zambeliou, Portou and Kondylakis Streets. From there they were taken to Ayias Prison located not far from Hania. Until 9 June they were kept in atrocious conditions, that were described by Christian friends who had attempted to make some contact with them, as inhuman. Many of the elderly and others had nothing to wear save the bed clothes that many wore at the time of their arrest. From Ayias they were transported to Herakleion by lorry and dispatched on the ill-fated ship Tanais. Together with Greek and Italian prisoners they were headed for Piraeus where they would have joined Jews from Corfu and Zakynthos destined for Auschwitz.

For some years the details of the last hours of the Tanais and the fate of its crew and human cargo was not clear. What was known is that the ship had been sunk and that all had perished. Evidence has now appeared through the Foreign Office in London that in fact the Tanais had been sighted by a British submarine and was given two torpedo broadsides and sank within 15 minutes. None of the prisoners survived.

A memorial service for the members of the Jewish community of Crete who perished on the Tanais is held annually, during which a list with all the names of the victims is read.

Nikos Stavroulakis  
Learn more [here](#)

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**Gershon Harris**  
**Hatzor Haglilit, Israel**



During this current coronavirus pandemic, which has permanently impacted virtually the entire human race, Jewish life has been especially hard-hit, since virtually all of Judaism revolves around ceremonies, celebrations and daily spiritual life that demand and require community participation. So the virtually total shutdown of communal Jewish life is certainly unique and most likely unprecedented in its scope, a brief review of how Judaism has handled plagues and epidemics over the ages is in order.



While in Biblical and even early Mishnaic times, epidemics and plagues were usually expressly associated with divine wrath, and the only true 'cure' being communal prayer, penitence and fasting, there are also examples in the Talmud where Sages mention a particular disease and what they did to avoid it being spread. Among others, these measures included confining oneself at home, avoiding insects purported to be the source of a particular affliction, avoiding crowds and groups, and more. Though there was still an emphasis on prayer, repentance and divine intervention, it seems apparent that the Sages understood that contagions and their containment also required human action.

In fact, as time went by, the view that epidemics may have natural as well as unknown divine causes, took hold among prominent rabbis. For example, without derogating in the slightest from basic Jewish faith and God being the source of everything, including the worst tragedies and plagues, both the Rambam (Maimonides) and the Ramban (Nahmanides), in the 12th and 13th centuries respectively, recognized that infectious diseases demanded very human and active sanitary and health measures to stop them. They firmly believed that while the success or failure of medical treatment depended on God alone, and since no human being can understand God's ways, as physicians they were duty-bound and even divinely required to treat the sick and encourage proper hygiene and health to the best of their ability.

By the 16th century, more specific and concrete methods of containing epidemics became part of Rabbinic thinking. One example was Rabbi Shmuel Ben Moshe de Medina from Salonika, who in the context of a legal decision concerning an inheritance, mentions that the deceased suffered from "a kind of disease that those who suffer from it are not visited." This apparently led to the exemption of the time-honored Jewish commandment of visiting the sick in certain communities. In the same century, The "Rama" (Rabbi Moshe Isserles of Cracow) ruled that one should flee a city struck by an epidemic, since "One must not rely on miracles or risk his life" (Shulhan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah, 116:5).

In the 19th century, when Europe was struck by cholera, more and more Rabbis gave credence to what they saw as life-saving health measures to help contain the epidemic. This included the first use of what is now called "social distancing", including the cancellation or prohibition of communal events. One major Sage, Rabbi Akiva Eger of Pozna, Poland in 1831, among other measures, called on the Jewish community to limit communal prayer in synagogue to 15 men, and even allowed a police officer to be stationed at synagogue entrances to ensure that said limit was not exceeded.

In the cholera epidemic that struck Lithuania in 1848, Rabbi Israel Salanter allowed relief work by Jews on Shabbat and even ruled that his congregants were not to fast on Yom Kippur. And in the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918, and much like today, prayer services at best were held outside synagogues in the open air, and in many localities synagogues were closed altogether, with all communal prayer being cancelled. Beyond these brief examples of Judaism's reaction to epidemics and pandemics, there exist hundreds of volumes of Rabbinic Responsa from ancient to modern times dealing with how individuals and communities must behave during health crises, including how to perform Jewish funeral and burial rights, how to dispose of the clothing and belongings of someone who died of an infectious disease, including holy objects like tefillin, emergency prayer and life-event regulations, and the absolute necessity to maintain both personal and community hygiene.

And while our reliance on God and special prayers and spiritual actions are still considered mandatory measures for Jews during this current pandemic, there is no argument among any and all Jewish community and religious leaders across the entire Jewish religious spectrum, that all national, regional and local coronavirus restrictions and prohibitions have the force of Halacha – Jewish law, and violators are considered as being blatant transgressors of the very basic and unequivocal Torah principle commandment of saving, preserving and protecting human life above all else. May we merit seeing the end of all restrictions and victory over this current pandemic speedily in our days!!

**Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé**  
**Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America**



Parashah of the Week - Shavuot  
The Angels v. Moshe

Our Sages state in the Midrash that as the Jews were about to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai, Moshe Rabbenu had a debate with the angels, they could not accept that the Torah that was holy and unique, was being given to human beings who were full of faults and impurities. But, did Moshe really have an argument with these spiritual beings? What is the meaning of this Midrash?

This Midrash that has been a favorite amongst many Sephardic rabbis, exemplifies a debate that took place in the heavens between Moshe Rabbenu and the angels as he climbed up to receive further directives from G-d. According to the Midrash, understanding the holiness of the Torah, the angels, complained to G-d and could not understand why the Torah would be given to human beings. G-d turned to Moshe and asked him to provide an answer to the angels. Moshe then provided the following answer, "He [then] spoke before Him: Sovereign of the Universe! The Torah which You gave me, states? I am the Lord your G-d, who brought you out of the Land of Egypt. He said to them [the angels], 'did you go down to Egypt; were you enslaved to Pharaoh; why then should the Torah be yours? Again, [he said] what is written in it? You should have none other gods: do you dwell among peoples that engage in idol worship? Again what is written in it? Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: do you then perform work that you need to rest? Again what is written in it? You should not take [the name of G-d in vain]: is there any business dealings among you that you need to make an oath? Again what is written in it, Honour your father and your mother; have you fathers and mothers? Again what is written in it? You should not murder. You should not commit adultery. You should not steal; is there jealousy among you; is the Evil Tempter among you? Straightway they conceded [right] to the Holy One, blessed be He, for it is said, O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is your name." (1) Moshe had won the debate and the angels had conceded, they could not argue back to Moshe, but still we wonder, what is the message behind this fantastic Midrash?

Rabbi Yishak (Izak) Asseo from Salonika, Greece, (2) writes (3) that our Sages made use of allegories whenever they felt the need to transmit an important message. He states that through parables and allegories ideas and concepts are better understood by readers and listeners. He states that to some, this Midrash might sound farfetched or difficult to explain. However, he expounds that in any Midrash, one must always look for the central idea and purpose of the parable. He writes that in this instance, it is clear that our Midrash is speaking in allegorical terms, since G-d and all the celestial beings are being described in a physical form, a concept that is clearly rejected everywhere by the Torah.

Therefore, Rabbi Asseo writes that the purpose of our Midrash is to make us understand that the Torah was given to beings that will be able to observe it, not to creatures that are foreign to it. The Torah is prescribed for human beings and it intends to make us excel and become better people. Only human beings can keep the Misvot and live by them. He states that one can also clearly see that many of the commandments are unique to the Jewish nation, because of our unique history, namely the Exodus from Egypt.

He adds that our Midrash is further attempting to convey another important lesson, that is that one must study the Torah and develop the proper answers to the questions that arise. Concepts are viewed differently throughout time and we must be ready to respond to the demands of the generation just as Moshe Rabbenu

was pressed to reply to the angels in front of G-d. One must not be fearful, but rather confident, since our Torah is full of wisdom and common sense. As we celebrate the holiday of Shavuot, the time when we received the Torah, we must remember that the Torah was not given to angels, but rather to human beings. We must also keep in mind that human beings are not expected to be angels, but the teachings of the Torah are there to help us become better human beings, with vast knowledge, common sense and greater wisdom.

Shabbat Shalom and Moadim LeSimha!

(1) Talmud Bavli, Tractate Shabbat, 89a.

(2) Rabbi Yishak (Izak) Asseo was born in Salonika, He attended Rabbinical school in Vienna and immigrated to the USA in 1939. He was one of the most learned and respected Sephardic Rabbis in the United States at the time because of his formal training as well as his native cultural background and Ladino. Shortly after his arrival he developed and became the head of the Sephardic (Judeo-Spanish) Beth-Din. He dedicated much of his time helping many of the different Sephardic organizations and Synagogues. One of his main objectives was to merge all the Sephardic communities under one umbrella as he worked close together with other central figures of the time like Rabbi Nissim J. Ovadia and Rabbi Alcalay. This group was the forerunner of the Central Sephardic Jewish Community of America. Rabbi Asseo often published articles in La Vara a weekly Ladino newspaper, recognizing the need for a published forum to reach the entire Sephardic community and all its members. He was also a member of United Sepharadim of Hinsdale Street, in New Lots, Brooklyn. In 1959 he moved to Miami, to help develop further the Sephardic community in South Florida. In 1963 he returned to New York to head the Sephardic Temple of Mapleton-Janina Synagogue until he passed away 1973 at about the age of 80.

(3) La Vara, May 23, 1947, p.2.

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### **The Humility of an Open Mind: Thoughts for Shavuoth Rabbi Marc D. Angel**

When I was a senior at Franklin High School in Seattle, my teacher for Language Arts was Mr. James Britain. Even after these many years, I remember him and his class quite vividly.

I invariably got A grades on all my papers. But once, Mr. Britain marked my paper with a D. I think I learned more from that D than from all my A papers. What was the paper about and what did I learn?

Mr. Britain often presented the class with challenging assignments. Once, he asked us to walk around the outside of the school building and to observe all its architectural details. Another assignment was to study a painting and analyze it as carefully as possible—its colors, perspective, lighting etc. His goal was to teach us to “see”, to focus in on detail, to look for the usual and the unusual.

One day, he played a recording of atonal electronic music for the class and asked us to write our impressions. I was outraged by this “music” and wrote a scathing essay condemning it. This was not music at all! It was a cacophony of senseless screeching, painful to the ear. Mr. Britain gave me a D on this paper. He wrote me a one line comment: “In order to learn, you must open your mind to new ideas.”

When I spoke to him afterward about my “unfair” grade, he calmly explained that I had entirely missed the point of the assignment. He indicated that I should have listened carefully, with an open mind; I should have tried to understand the intentions of the composer; I should have put aside my preconceived notions so as to experience the music on its terms—not on mine. Only after I had processed the experience with an open mind was I entitled to offer my judgments about it. Think carefully, don’t rant.

That was one of the most valuable lessons I've ever learned—and one of the most difficult to apply.

We all have fixed ideas on a great many topics. It is often painful to hear opinions that conflict with our sure understanding of life. New ideas, unusual approaches, unconventional artistic expressions—these are difficult to absorb. It is tempting—and usual—to shut off ideas that challenge our own views and tastes. It is very common for those who have different views to talk at each other, or to talk against each other; it is far less common for people actually to listen to each other, to try sincerely to understand the ideas and approaches of others. To open our minds to new ideas demands tremendous self-control and humility.

And this brings us to some thoughts about Shavuoth.

The festival of Shavuoth commemorates the Revelation at Mt. Sinai. The Torah and its commandments were revealed by the Almighty to the people of Israel on this special mountain.

In the early 17th century, Rehucl Jessurun wrote *Dialogo dos Montes*, a drama based on the rabbinic tradition that various mountains competed for the privilege of having the Torah revealed on them. (The drama was presented on Shavuoth, 1624, in the Bet Yaacob synagogue of Amsterdam.) Each mountain offered its claim to be the most worthy of this honor. Mount Sinai, though, was humble. It was a low and unimpressive mountain, hardly worthy of being chosen by God for the Divine revelation of the Torah. Because of its very humility, God chose Mount Sinai upon which to give the Israelites the Torah.

Much of human life resembles the Dialogue of the Mountains. People seek to assert their pre-eminence, to highlight their virtues, to claim the highest honors. Yet, it is the Mount Sinai of the world who reflect the quiet humility worthy of Divine blessing.

As we celebrate the Shavuoth festival commemorating the Revelation at Mount Sinai, it would be appropriate for us to recall the symbolic virtues of Mount Sinai—humility, awareness of limitations, openness to new and unique revelation.

“In order to learn, you must open your mind to new ideas.”

This does not mean that one must accept all new ideas, or that one should adopt every new opinion. Rather, it entails the ability to listen carefully, to analyze and process ideas, to think carefully and not to rant. Even ideas that we ultimately reject may contain kernels of truth that will sharpen and enhance our own understanding.

To open our minds to new and differing ideas is not only the way for all of us to grow intellectually and spiritually; it is the foundation of a responsible civil society.

Moadim leSimha. Although this Shavuoth will be different from all other years due to the covid 19 pandemic, we pray that the festival will imbue us with hope for the future, with blessings of good health and happiness.

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### **Seeking Help**

Our Museum Director Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos is developing a database of the of Greek Jews who were deported to Auschwitz. Please contact us if you know the names and numbers tattooed on the arms of Greek Jewish when they entered Auschwitz.

## **Dr. Joe Halio's Memories of Rabbi Murciano (of Blessed Memory)**

May 15, 2020

Rabbi M. Asher Murciano passed away peacefully at home on May 8th.

As the name "Murciano" indicates, the Rabbi was a descendant of Spanish-Jews from Murcia, Spain. Rabbi Masliah Asher (Prosper) Murciano was born in Tangier in 1924, just after it became the International City on the Strait of Gibraltar. By the time of his birth, his Spanish-speaking parents, had already lost six children. Familiar with the biblical story of Samuel, they promised God that if they were fortunate to have another son, they would give him to the service of God. The young boy, *ijo regalado*, was given to Rabbis to train. Before his formal education began, he lived in synagogues, sleeping on benches, absorbing our rituals, melodies, and teachings. Formal education began at the Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Rabbinical Seminary of Tangier. As a teen he was also trained as a Shoet and Mohel. He was sent to Menkes, Morocco, to the home of the Chief Rabbi, where he studied and sang with the famous Sephardic singer, Joe Amar. Ordained by Rabbi Baruch Toledano, Rabbi Murciano achieved the highest degree of Yore Yadin Yadin, an ordination that permits a rabbi to make rabbinical decisions on Jewish law.

In 1948 arrangements were made by the Mirrer Yeshiva in Brooklyn, to bring the top eighteen students from Morocco to study at the world-renowned graduate school for Talmudic scholars. Shortly after arriving, he officiated at both Sephardic and Syrian synagogues in Brooklyn. While attending the Mirrer Yeshiva and Yeshiva University on weekdays, he commuted to Philadelphia to officiate at Mikve Israel, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, as Assistant Rabbi and Hazan for three years. There he met Madeleine, of Sephardic Dutch descent and they married in August 1951.

In 1953 Rabbi Murciano became the Rabbi of the Sephardic Jewish Center of the Bronx. He continued to study at City College, where he earned a BA degree, and then studied at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University where he earned his master's degree. He studied at Columbia University with the world-renowned Jewish historian, Dr. Salo Baron, for five years. He earned his Ph. D at NYU. He taught at York College and YU. He became a respected member of the Rabbinical Council of America and the New York Board of Rabbis. He was Chaplain to the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America and the Sephardic Home for the Aged. For thirty-five years he was Chaplain at Jacobi Hospital. For sixty-seven years he served as Rabbi of the Sephardic Jewish Center, the same congregation from the Bronx and Forest Hills, making him the longest tenured Sephardic Rabbi of the same congregation in the USA. He was beloved by all who knew him for his distinct religious services, Tora reading, Haftarat, scholarship, *divre Tora*, his memorable voice singing in Hebrew and Ladino, and his sense of humor. His services and compassion touched so many people, young and old, from all the Sephardic communities in the greater New York area.

The Rubisa and their three quite accomplished children, eleven grandchildren and thirty-four great-grandchildren, siblings, nieces and nephews, in the US and Israel, together with his loving congregation will sorely mourn his loss. Though unable to gather together at this time, surely there will be services and remembrances, as soon as our community is able to join in prayer together again.

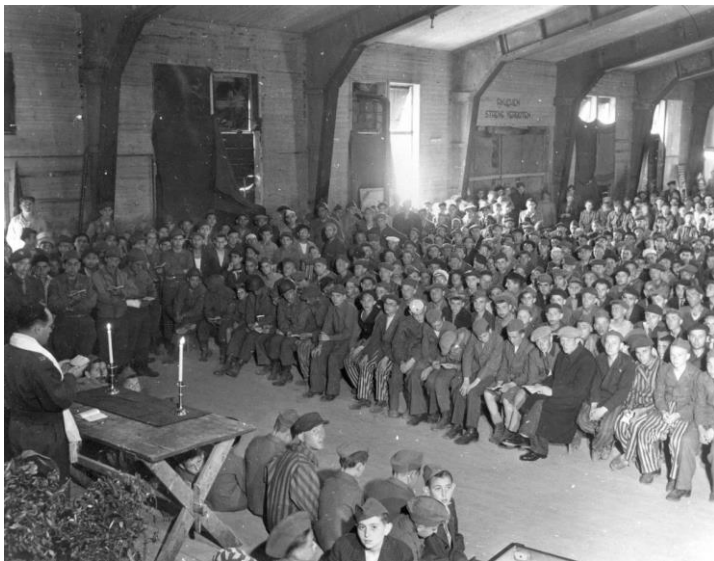
Joe Halio, M.D. Secretary, Sephardic Jewish Center Board of Directors, American Sephardi Federation

## Picture of the Month



This picture was taken at the wedding of Morris Vitoulis and Lydia Saporta. We need help in identifying the young boy who acted as a page boy. The wedding was in 1926.

We received this photo of Isaak Levy from WWII. It will be added to our collection. If you have any family photos you would like to share, please send them to us at [museum@kkjism.org](mailto:museum@kkjism.org)



This photo was taken at Buckenwald as survivors celebrate their first Shavuot as free men and women.

**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](http://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 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 135**

**June 2020**

**Kehila Kedosha Janina**

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