



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

September 2021 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

As we celebrate the High Holy Days at Kehila Kedosha Janina, we invite you to join us for in-person services at the only Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere located at 280 Broome Street in New York City. A full schedule is included in this newsletter. In this time of introspection and renewal, we pray that the new year 5782 will bring health, peace, and happiness to our community and to all people around the world.

תזכו לשנים רבות
Tizku Leshanim Rabot
Χρόνια Πολλά
Anyos Munchos i Buenos
May You Merit Many Happy and Healthy Years



Kahal Kadosh Yashan Synagogue in Ioannina

Photo credit: The estate of Vincent Giordano and Queens College.
For additional information on this collection, contact us at museum@kkjism.org

This E-Newsletter is sponsored by Irene Matza in memory of Rose Matza Goldstein.
If you wish to sponsor a newsletter, contact us at museum@kkjism.org.

This newsletter, our 150th 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.

Our Museum is open every Sunday from 11am-4pm. Reservations are suggested & mask wearing is required.

Simchas

Belinda & Michael Genee are delighted to announce the wedding of their son, Ryan Seth Genee, to Erika Lynn Hershey on August 8, 2021 at The Sheraton of Eatontown, NJ. Rabbi Glenn Jacobs officiated.

Ryan is the grandson of Sally Matza Genee & Abraham Genee, (both of blessed memory), the great-grandson of Morris (Bechorakis) Genee and Fani Genee (Jenny) and the great-great grandson of Avraam Genee and Estrea Negrin Genee.



Ryan and Erika Genee



Sally and Abe Genee

Correction: We welcome the birth Rhonda Paganetti's new granddaughter, Vale Theo Kleiner, Born: 6-28-21. Vale is the daughter of Maxx and Kelly Kleiner and the big sister of Nash Kleiner. She is the great-granddaughter of Shirlee Cabillis Paganetti and Louie Levy (of Blessed Memory), the great-great-granddaughter of Moses (Morris) Cabillis and Eva Eliezer Cabillis (both of Blessed Memory), the great-great-great-granddaughter of David and Sarah Cabillis, and the great-great-great-great-granddaughter of Moses Cabillis (b. in Ioannina circa 1830). Her Eliezer roots make her the great great-great granddaughter of Iosif Eliezer and Rachil bat Shemos Eliasaf and, finally, the great-great-great-great granddaughter of Eliezer (b. circa 1840 in Ioannina). Certainly, an admirable Yanniote family tree.



Vale



James, Rhonda and Vale

Congratulations to our Board of Trustees advisor, Holly Kaye, on the birth of her first grandchild, Sam.



We celebrate the birth of another great-grandchild for Shirlee Paganetti. Ariana Paganetti Williams gave birth to a son, Sawyer Mackenzie Williams. The proud father is David Williams. The proud grandparents are Glenn and Kathy Paganetti. In addition to being the great grandson of Shirlee Paganetti and Charles Paganetti (of Blessed Memory), Sawyer is the great-great-grandson of Moses (Morris) Cabillis and Eva Eliezer Cabillis (both of Blessed Memory), the great-great-great-grandson of David and Sarah Cabillis, and the great-great-great-great-grandson of Moses Cabillis (b. in Ioannina circa 1830). His Eliezer roots make him the great-great-great grandson of Iosif Eliezer and Rachil bat Shemos Eliasaf and, finally, the great-great-great-great grandson of Eliezer (b. circa 1840 in Ioannina). Sawyer Mackenzie Williams was born on the 11th of August, 2021.



Sawyer



Louie Levy & Shirlee Cabillis



Morris Cabillis & Eva Eliezer Cabillis

Congratulations to Anita Altman on the birth of twin grandchildren, Silas Jacob Altman Woelfle and Lilah Seraphina Altman Woelfle. The proud parents are Alice Woelfle and Sascha Altman DuBrul. Silas and Lilah are the great grandchildren of Sarah Coffino Altman and Jack Altman (both of Blessed Memory) and the great-great grandchildren of Anna Mazza/Matza and Zadick Coffino.



Sarah and Jack Altman



Anna, Zadick, Mo and Teddy Coffino

It seems that there was an abundance of twins born in August 2021.

Ivy Sher became a grandmother for the first time when her daughter Eden gave birth to twin girls. The precious babies are the great-granddaughters of Miriam (Askinazi) Levine, the great-great granddaughters of Morris (Willie) Askinazi and Rebecca (Betty) Coffino (both of Blessed Memory), the great-great-great granddaughters of Joseph and Esther Askinazi (both of Blessed Memory) and the great-great-great-great granddaughters of Moisis and Rebecca Askinazi. On the Coffino side of the family, the twin girls are great-great-great-great granddaughters of Anna Mazza/Matza and Zadick Coffino and, finally, the great-great-great-great-great granddaughters of Hyman Mazza and Esther Levy. To simplify matters, Ivy's twin daughters and Anita Altman's twin daughter and son are now second cousins.



Miriam Askinazi as a child



Eden, Hans and Benjamin Sher



Ivy in Israel 2017



Mazza Family

Passings

We mourn the passing of Albert Barouch. He was a talented Cantor and had visited Ioannina with us on a number of occasions. In 2000, on the occasion of Maxx Kleiner's Bar Mitzvah, during a meeting with the then Mayor of Ioannina and the over 50 Yanniotes who had gathered there in the Mayr's office, Al enthralled the crowd with a moving rendition of the Greek National Anthem. Cantor Albert Barouch died on July 17, 2021. He was born in N.Y.C. on Dec. 12, 1930 to Ray (Rachel) Colchamiro and Benjamin Barouch. Al grew up in the Bronx surrounded by a large and loving family. He served our country in the Panama Canal Zone during the Korean War. After his discharge, he studied voice at the Manhattan School of Music and spent summers at Tanglewood. Al was a member of Actors Equity and appeared in many summer stock productions. He received a Master's Degree from Columbia's Teachers College and C.W. Post and taught chorus and directed many plays in the Oceanside Public Schools for 33 years. Al served Temple Menorah of Little Neck and Temple Isaiah of Great Neck as their Cantor. He performed with the Long Island Cantor's Ensemble as well as the Gilbert and Sullivan Light Opera Company of LI, touring nationally and internationally in their Yiddish productions. He was an avid chess player and a long standing member of the U.S. Chess Federation. Albert is survived by his children: Barry, Randi and Andrea; and four grandchildren. Both of Al's parents were part of Janina's Romaniote Greek Jewish community that immigrated to N.Y.C. in the early 1900's. The family requests that donations in Al's memory be made to Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum. <http://kkjism.org>

Al was the grandson of Malka Levy Barouch and Haim Barouch (both of Blessed Memory). On his Colchamiro side, he was the grandson of Matathias Colchamiro and Sarina Levy Colchamiro (both of Blessed memory) and the great-grandson of Jessoula and Rachel Galanos Colchamiro



We mourn the passing of David Corito, the son of Besso (Saby) Corito (born in Preveza) and Esther Mordecai (born in Ioannina), the grandson of Moshon Corito and Chaida Matza Corito, all Romaniotes of Blessed Memory. He was 83 years old. David was born in 1937 in Lexington Avenue in the Bronx Yanniote Community. His father had a stand in the Hunts Point Fruit Market.

David is survived by his wife, Louise Corito; daughter Elisa Elba; son in law Robert Elba; and daughter Randi Arnold; brother Murry Corito, sister Irene Baron, step sister Marcia Steel, step sister Elsa Liebman and step sister Estelle Celoski; granddaughter Cori Elba, granddaughter Samantha Elba and granddaughter Lauren Arnold. David loved his Greek-Jewish world and his special ancestry.



David & Louise 1961



Corito Family 1912



David & Louise

We mourn the passing of Bertini Ackos Bergstein, aunt of our Board member, Marc Winthrop. Bertini Ackos Bergstein, daughter of the late Rosa and Menachem Ackos, was born in Athens, Greece, and passed away at the age of 79 on April 13th at her home in Winnetka, IL. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband of 51 years Melvyn Bergstein. She is survived by her loving children Seth and Adam (Alisa), and her adoring grandchildren William, Maxwell, Elizabeth, Ross and Charles. A hidden child during the Holocaust, "Tina" immigrated to the United States and created a wonderful life, and cherished every day spent with those she loved. Tina will be remembered for her kindness, generosity, strength, and most of all for her devotion to her family. No memorial service is planned (Covid). Donations may be sent to Northwestern University Jayesh Mehta Leukemia Research, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Jewish Board (New York), or Cradles to Crayons (Chicago).



Ackos family in Athens

"Tina" as she was known, was born in Athens Greece in 1941, close to the Acropolis. Tina lost her father in the Holocaust and after surviving in hiding, emigrated with her mother Rosa and four siblings to the United States when she was 10. She settled in St Paul, Minnesota. With little money and little experience speaking English, she started to build her life. She became a citizen of the United States when she was 18, lost her mother at age 20 to cancer, and left for New York after she secured a job as a PanAm stewardess. Soon after moving, she was introduced to Mel, who had just graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1963 and was in the Navy. The two were married in 1965 and their first son Seth Ross was born in 1966. Their second son Adam David was born in 1968.



Ackos family arriving in Minnesota

We mourn the passing of Jesse Benjamin on July 13th at the age of 86.

From the Senior Home in Greece (Restion) we learned of the passing of Esther Cohen at the age of 97.

"On August 10, 2021, the oldest guest of our Center and Holocaust survivor passed away. Mrs. Esther came to Restion in January 2008, while she was 84 and completed her life cycle 13 years and 6 months later at 97 years old. Her life is a historical document. A reality of harsh yet hopefulness for the emotional stature a man can stand up against the very hard side of life.



ESTHER KOEN



Esther Cohen was born in Ioannina in 1924. At the age of 20 she was arrested by the Germans in Ioannina where they transported her through Larissa to Auschwitz - Birkenau. One year later in May 1945, she managed to survive and was liberated from the camp. The Red Cross returned her to Greece.

Arm Number: 77135

How much did Mrs. Cohen's eyes see?

How much did she hear? How much did she feel?

We don't need to say anything else, and let's know.

But one thing we have to mention.

The nod with the eyes that she insolently made every time we went to her with a melancholy smile. Good paradise from all of us Mrs. Esther. You gave us a lot."



From Israel we received the following news of the passing of our Danny Negrin, a native of Trikala and a Holocaust survivor from Greece.



Sara and Zadick Cohen
1926

We mourn the passing of Hyman Cohen, the son of Sarah Solomon Cohen and Sadick Cohen, and the grandson of Israel and Eva Cohen, all of Blessed memory. He is survived by his daughter, Sharon Cohen.

We mourn the passing of Mickey (Michael) Mazza, son of Dora David Mazza and Ralph Mazza (both of Blessed memory). Mickey was 79 years old.

Visitors Flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina

In August, we were honored by visitors from our extended community, always a joy. In August, we had relatives of our docent, Stella Bacolas, Rae Matza Yamali's nephew, Joseph, and his family. Joseph is the son of Rae's sister, Irene Matza Gottlieb (of Blessed Memory). Also visiting, at the same time, was Arielle Genee Sternberg, the daughter of our Board member, Marty Genee. Arielle also had a connection to the Gottlieb family since her great-uncle, Abraham Genee, was married to another sister of Rae Matza Yamali, Sally Matza.



Gottlieb Family



Gottlieb family with Arielle Genee Sternberg



Stella Bacolas and
Gottlieb family

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Services – RSVP Now



Join us for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services to celebrate the new year. We need each of you to help us maintain our traditions. Your presence during holiday services helps us ensure we continue our Romaniote heritage for future generations.

Please RSVP for services to Amarcus@kkjasm.org. View our full holiday schedule attached to this newsletter.

2021
5782

2021
5782

Kehila Kedosha Janina

280 BROOME STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10002

*The Officers and Congregation of Kehila Kedosha Janina cordially invite you to
Join us for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Services*

*Kehila Kedosha Janina, at the same location on the Lower East Side for the past 94
years, is the last remaining Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere
conducting services in the Judeo-Greek Romaniote Minhag (tradition)*

MONDAY, SEPT. 6	EREV ROSH HASHANAH	6:30 P.M.
TUESDAY, SEPT. 7	ROSH HASHANAH (1ST DAY) ROSH HASHANAH (MINCHA) (TASHLICH)	9:15 A.M. 6:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 8	ROSH HASHANAH (2ND DAY)	9:15 A.M.
SATURDAY, SEPT. 11	SHABBAT TESHUVAH	9:30 A.M.
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 15	EREV YOM KIPPUR (KAL NIDRE)	6:25 P.M.
THURSDAY, SEPT. 16	YOM KIPPUR MINCHA NE'ILA SERVICE	8:00 A.M. 4:15 P.M. 6:15 P.M.
SATURDAY, SEPT. 25	SUCCOTH (CHOL HAMOED)	9:30 A.M.
TUESDAY, SEPT. 28	EREV SIMCHAT TORAH	6:45 P.M.
SATURDAY, OCT. 2	SHABBAT BERESHITH	9:30 A.M.

*Prayer Books and shawls are available at the synagogue
For additional information, please contact:
Marvin Marcus, President at info@kkjism.org*

Please RSVP for services to Amarcus@kkjism.org

*We Look Forward to Having You Join Us for the High Holy Days
Tizku LeShanim Rabot
Xronia Polla
Anyos Munchos i Buenos*

*L'Shana Tovah
Marvin Marcus, President*

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
HASHKAVOTH
MEMORIAL PRAYERS

On Yom Kippur it is traditional to recite memorial prayers for the dearly departed. In many synagogues this ritual is observed by conducting a Yizkor service. At Kehila Kedosha Janina we follow the centuries-old Romaniote custom of our people by reciting Hashkavoth (memorial prayers) and the individual names of our dearly departed during the Kal Nidre Yom Kippur Eve service. If you wish to honor the memory of your family members or friends in this very special way, please email their names as soon as possible to Museum@kkjism.org. It is customary to include a voluntary donation of your choosing. The names and donation may also be submitted via PayPal on our website www.kkjism.org.

WISHING YOU GOOD HEALTH AND HAPPINESS
AS WE APPROACH THE HIGH HOLIDAYS

תזכו לישנים רבות

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
280 BROOME STREET NEW YORK, NY 10002
MUSEUM@KKJISM.ORG

Shabbat Services at Kehila Kedosha Janina in Person

We continue to host Shabbat morning services on a monthly basis for now. We will share updates when we plan to resume more frequent services.

Please join us for our next Shabbat Service in person on Saturday September 11, 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 SEPTEMBER 11 AT 10AM

JOIN US FOR SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES IN PERSON AND
HELP US CONTINUE OUR ROMANIOTE TRADITIONS

PLEASE EMAIL AMARCUS@KKJISM.ORG TO RSVP

שבת שלום

Greek Jewish Block Party

Our Greek Jewish Block Party on August 15 was a great success! Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate our incredible community with amazing music, food, dancing, and more. We should all take pride in our beautiful heritage and hopefully have many more celebrations together! Check out some of the highlight photos below with more [here](#). Watch select videos on our Facebook page [here](#) and on YouTube [here](#) and [here](#).



Sol & Koula Kofinas with Ellen Eichel

Andrew & Marvin Marcus with Cliff Russo

Cheryl Hametz helping with the food

Upcoming Events of Interest

National Sephardic Community Gala

An Evening of Sephardic Community, Unity, & Celebration – Honoring the Past, Ensuring the Future
Sunday December 5, 2021 at 6:30pm – 8th Night of Hanukkah
Full details and tickets available [here](#)



Guests of Honor



DR. ALBERT BOURLA
CHAIRMAN & CEO
PFIZER, INC.



ALBERT MAIMON
COMMUNITY LEADER &
SEPHARDIC EDUCATOR



SARAH AROESTE
LADINO ARTIST &
EDUCATOR

To Purchase Tickets & RSVP

EARLY BIRD TICKET - UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1 - \$180
GENERAL ADMISSION TICKET - \$250
YOUNG ADULT TICKET - UNDER 35 - \$180

ORDER TICKETS ONLINE AT
WWW.SEPHARDICBROTHERHOOD.COM/GALA

FOR QUESTIONS EMAIL
GALA@SEPHARDICBROTHERHOOD.COM
OR CALL 718-685-0080

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED

We Are Excited to Celebrate with You!
ESTAMOS TRESALIDOS DE SELEBRAR KON VOZOTROS!

Upcoming Presentations on Zoom



 The Sephardic Jewish
Brotherhood of America
La Ermandad Sefaradi

 Kehila Kedosha Janina
Synagogue and Museum

SEPHARDIC DIGITAL ACADEMY

**A TWIST ON SEPHARDIC
FAVORITES FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

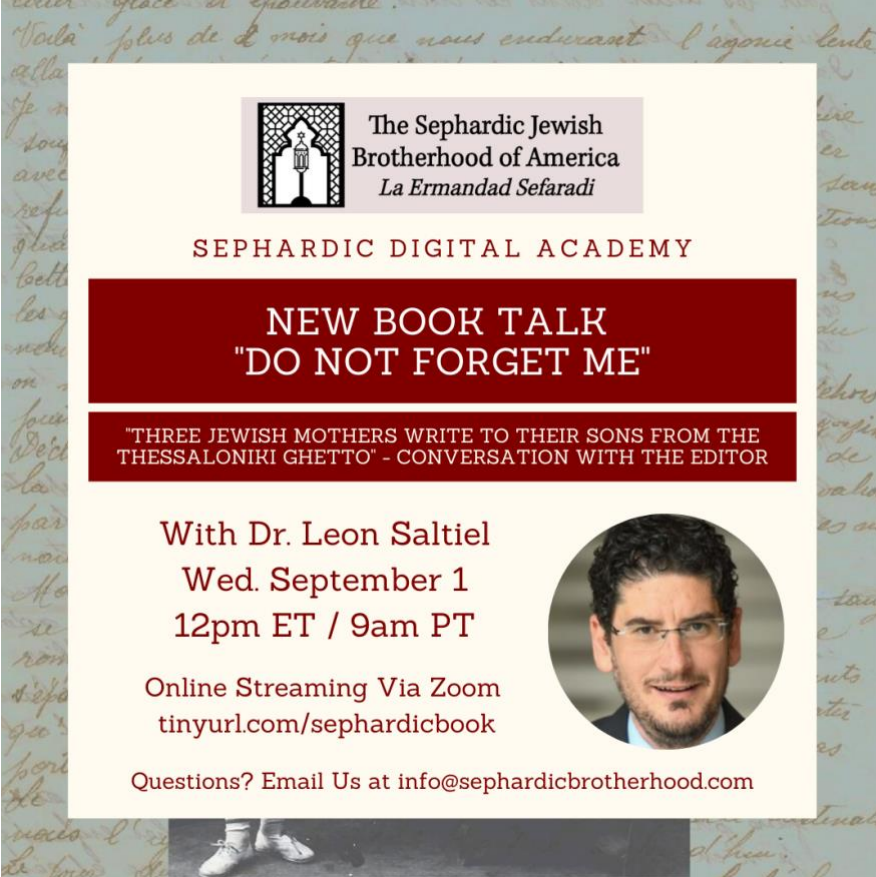
CANDIED APPLE SLICES FOR ROSH ASHANA, EASY
PAREVE BAKLAVA BITES, & MORE!


With Chef Susan Barocas
Tuesday August 31
4pm ET / 1pm PT

Online Streaming Via Zoom
tinyurl.com/sephardicroshashana



Questions? Email Us at info@sephardicbrotherhood.com



 The Sephardic Jewish
Brotherhood of America
La Ermandad Sefaradi


SEPHARDIC DIGITAL ACADEMY

**NEW BOOK TALK
"DO NOT FORGET ME"**

"THREE JEWISH MOTHERS WRITE TO THEIR SONS FROM THE
THESSALONIKI GHETTO" - CONVERSATION WITH THE EDITOR

With Dr. Leon Saltiel
Wed. September 1
12pm ET / 9am PT

Online Streaming Via Zoom
tinyurl.com/sephardicbook



Questions? Email Us at info@sephardicbrotherhood.com

This E-Newsletter is sponsored by Irene Matza in Memory of Rose Matza Goldstein

It is with deep sadness that I share the news of the passing of one of our dearest Matza cousins, Rose Matza Goldstein. Rose was born July 20, 1918 and passed away on June 1, 2021. She is the daughter of Nahoom and Simchoola Matza from Ioannina, then NY and then Los Angeles. Rose and her husband Ben stayed in NY longer along with some of her siblings. Rose and Ben eventually joined the rest of us on the west coast when they came to Los Angeles. Some years after Ben passed away Rose moved to Las Vegas where her daughter Ann and son Rick lived. She loved the casinos, and they loved her! The picture of Rose in the Casino was in 2019, at 101 years old. She frequently went to the casinos to spend time, AND, make many friends. Rose was recently filmed by a Las Vegas news channel when named the oldest Las Vegas resident to receive the Covid-19 vaccination. Her other son, Alex, lives in Colorado. Rose's children gave her 7 grandchildren; Laura, David, Serena, Robert, Nikki, Brian and Daniel. And they presented her with 6 greatgrandchildren; Nicholas, Steven, Rose, Liam, Carly and Matthew. MASHALAH, as we say! Rose was the perfect example of the saying, "you can take the girl out of NY, but you can't take the NY out of the girl!" She was funny, kind, thoughtful and generous. Rose always remembered birthdays, anniversaries, etc, and sent so many greeting cards through the years. Rose's siblings pre-deceased Rose; picture from left to right, Ralph, Simone, Morris, Rae, Esther and Rose. Their families were especially close and caring to each other and all their extended families. So many of us will deeply miss her but we also know she is now sharing her laughter and love with her husband Ben and so many others who love her deeply. REST IN PEACE, Dear Rosie.

Rose was the daughter of Nahoom and Sophie Matza, the granddaughter of Moshe and Chaido Matza and the great-granddaughter of Nachum and Toovoula Matza.



Rose and her siblings



Rose Matza and Ben Goldstein

News from Jewish Greece

Ioannina

Desecration of Tomb in Jewish Cemetery in Ioannina

The Central Board of Jewish Communities said the tomb, in the city of Ioannina, was found on Thursday with the covering slab removed and smashed marble strewn around it.

"We strongly condemn this shameful act of sacrilege which indicates that the hatred of the perpetrators leads to villainous manifestations of violence and fanaticism," the Central Board said in a statement.

It also said that the Jewish cemetery of Ioannina had already been vandalized several times in the past.

"We call upon the relevant authorities to arrest the perpetrators and bring them to justice," the statement said. "The Jewish cemetery of Ioannina is ... a place of memory and cultural heritage for the city of Ioannina as a whole."



The city once had a thriving Jewish community that was decimated during World War II, when occupying Nazi forces deported Jewish residents to death camps. In 2019, Ioannina elected Moses Elisaf as its mayor. He is believed to be the first Jewish person elected as a mayor in Greece.

Moses Elisaf and the Jewish community of Ioannina

On the occasion of the new recent desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Ioannina, the mayor of the city, Moses Elisaf spoke to LIFO about the Jewish community of Ioannina, anti-Semitism and diversity.

The full article (in Greek) **by Niki Koutouloulis published in LIFO on 19.8.2021:**

"Ioannina was the metropolis of Romaniote Jewry. The historical Jewish community of Ioannina was populous, strong and had a Greek-Jewish character. It went through rise and decline and to this day, although small, it remains active.

It is one of the oldest Jewish communities in the wider Area of Greece, with a history of at least a thousand years, and the existence of Jews in the city of Ioannina is intertwined with the foundation of the city at the end of the first millennium.

Without knowing the exact date of the Jews' settlement in the city, the first written testimony is the golden bull of emperor Andronicus II Palaiologos in 1319, which gives financial, ecclesiastical and administrative privileges to the various minorities and Jews who lived in the city of Ioannina.

The characteristic of the community of Ioannina is that it was Romaniote. The Romaniote Jews, as they were called, spoke the Greek language enriched with Hebrew words. This Greek-speaking character was not lost, as happened with other Romaniote communities of Greece, despite the arrival of the Jews who left the Iberian peninsula.

They were mainly engaged in trade, like all Jewish communities. Especially in central Europe they were not allowed to work on agricultural land, so they were necessarily in urban centers and were mainly engaged in trade. Apart from merchants and craftsmen, the great mass were craftsmen, porters and street vendors.



Kountouriotou, Soutsou, Josef Eliyia, are some of the streets of Ioannina where the Jews lived. There was no ghetto, in the classical sense of the term, but they were mixed districts which were the centers of Jewish residences. Houses with a specific architecture, whose existence still characterizes today the narrow streets of the city of Ioannina where they are located.

For their construction they used stone, wood and clay. They looked like the houses of the rest of Ioannina, as they were constructed by the same famous craftsmen of the mastorohoria of Epirus. Two-leaf huge doors, windows protected by ironwork that protrude, most of the time, courtyards that are usually located at the back of the house and stone walls characterize most of them. There were even three types of residences, depending on the economic situation of the owner. The popular Jewish houses, the middle-class houses and the eponymous mansions. The houses that survive until today date back to 1820, when the city was burned and destroyed.

Like all communities that pass from heyday to decline through the years, So the Jewish community of Ioannina changed form. In the early 20th century, before the liberation, there were about 5,000 Jews in a population of about 25,000, i.e. it was about 20% of the total population. As the Ottoman Empire declined, the economic crisis was pushing migratory flows mainly to America. So many Jews and Christians of Ioannina followed the path of mass migration to the USA. Gradually, the population decreased and during the Occupation there were about 2,000 Jews in the city.

The great blow to the Jewish community of Ioannina came in the Second World War. The Germans gathered the Jews of the city in March 1944 in two squares, the castle and the pier, and after stacking them in trucks they were transported to Larissa and from there to Auschwitz. Few of them, who knew what was going to happen, since there had been other arrests, had joined the organizations of the national resistance and in the autumn of 1943 they went to Athens, hid and followed a network of escape to Palestine that operated with the funding of the Jewish Agency.

The path of escape was followed by Mr. **Moses Elisaf, mayor of Ioannina**, professor of Pathology and president of the Jewish community of the city. As he says while speaking to Lifo: "My father and my mother followed the escape network to the Middle East. They returned in 1945 to Ioannina, having lost virtually all their relatives, parents and siblings. So, they tried to set up their lives again. Of the 1,900 people arrested and taken mostly to Auschwitz, about 100 returned. That is, the total number of losses of the community is about 92%, one of the highest rates in Europe."

The community, when it was reconstituted in 1945, had about 160 people, but a gradual decrease in the number followed mainly due to the civil war. Today, the community in Ioannina does not have more than 50 members.

Mr. Elisaf, as president of the community since 2001, explains that a great effort is being made to keep alive the Jewish tradition through events, writing books and documentary production. "Traditions, as the community declines, begin to relax. Essentially it is just a different religion, nothing more. Religious life cannot exist, we are a secular community, we are not a particularly religious community. We try to make a big celebration once a year. We make an invitation of our compatriots, with Ioannina origin, from all over the world. People from Canada, Athens, Israel, Thessaloniki gather here in the city. Even last year, under pandemic conditions, we managed to organize it", says Mr. Elisaf.

As for whether it saddens him that the Jewish community is losing its momentum over the years, the mayor replies: "It saddens me because it's not just that it's dwindling as a community, it's that it's slowly going to follow a path to nothing. It is important to codify, write the history, the traditions and preserve the monuments that still exist in the city."

The Jewish monuments that still exist today in Ioannina are the Synagogue, which operates normally, the Jewish cemetery, where there are tombs from the 15th century, the Holocaust memorial and the neighborhoods where the Jews of the city lived, with a small percentage of their homes having remained unchanged over the years.

Antisemitism and Diversity

Prejudices against Jews are a timeless phenomenon. In Ioannina, in 2009, vandalism took place in the cemetery, resulting in the destroying of many Jewish graves, including that of the mayor's mother. More recently, in early August, strangers vandalized the Jewish tombs again.

M. Elisaf believes that "anti-Semitism is a disease of our societies, which dates back millennia. It is not a modern phenomenon and has multiple manifestations. At the core of the European axis of anti-Semitism is religious anti-Semitism. They are the god-killing people who did not accept their savior. Unfortunately, even the Gospels have sharp characterizations against the Jews. Therefore, anti-Semitism is encapsulated at the core of the Christian religion, and so, as Christianity has prevailed, it is the Jews who do not accept the prevailing religion, but remain entrenched in their own. Always in societies you look for a scapegoat, this victim is always the weakest link in this chain. The Jews, as a religious minority, were an easy victim, and thus begins religious anti-Semitism, which is then intertwined with economic interests. Jews were not allowed to do many professions. They were silversmiths, they were engaged in money, so they were easily exposed and this fact worked cumulatively with the religious. The "Merchant of Venice" is a very classic example of just that. Imagine that Shakespeare writes an anti-Semitic play, when in England who writes it there was not a single Jew, there were two or three left."

All this towards the 20th century, and as fascism emerges, is diving into racial, redemptive anti-Semitism; the concept of race is coming in for the first time. "This was the extreme manifestation of anti-Semitism. All its forms step on top of each other, without being identical", says the mayor of Ioannina.

The concept of diversity is understood too early for a Jew, but in the case of M. Elisaf, there was no discrimination on the basis of his origin. "From the first day you are born, you understand the concept of diversity. I have to admit that in my life there was no official discrimination. That is, at school, at university, at the hospital, I was not treated differently by the state and its statutory principles. At the level of everyday life, however, you do not cease to experience the suspicion and negative stereotypes that accompany the Jews", he explains.

The traces of the Jewish presence in Ioannina, through the old Jewish neighborhoods, the small colorful remaining houses and the Jewish monuments, give the city a beautiful color of multiculturalism, a fact that seems to be supported by its citizens by electing the first Greek Jewish mayor. As he says, giving me a gift before I left, a cd with Jewish music, "it was an excess my election. It's a message that stereotypes are starting to play a secondary role and the other person evaluates you based on who you are and not on the basis of your religion."

Concert in Ioannina

A special concert of Romaniote and Sephardic music took place in the Courtyard of the Cultural Multiplex "D. Hatzis" in July under the orchestration of Sakis Negrin, who was born and raised in Ioannina. From 2012 until today, Sakis Negrin directs the Cultural Center of the Jewish Community of Athens.

The interpretation of the Romaniote songs by Markos Batinos is imposing – we particularly distinguished the "Koina Glossa", which is a rhyme in Greek of the history of Esther and which is sung at the feast of Purim. Soly Iachana's interpretation of Sephardic songs is melodic – one of the most beautiful moments of the concert is the interpretation of "Alta Es La Luna" in the light of the moon. It is a very good idea to project the lyrics of each song on a cloth. Soly Iachana's brief explanations are informative, since the lyrics in ladino were aired without translation.

Violin was played by Thodoris Lykouropoulos, flute by Victoria Kyriakides, double bass by Eugene Bratouska, percussion by Solis Barkis and guitar by Sakis Negrin. Organization: Cultural Center of the Municipality of Ioannina. Undoubtedly, this concert is a crucial contribution to the promotion of the rich history and tradition of Ioannina, which is clearly based on multiculturalism. Source: Website enantiastonantisimitismo.



Hania, Crete

Resurrecting One of the World's Oldest Jewish Communities

After decades in ruins, Nikos Stavroulakis set out to revitalize Jewish life on the Greek island of Crete

Full article by Alexandra Ariotti in the Jerusalem Post [here](#)

Jews first arrived in Crete from Egypt some 2,300 years ago, perhaps as part of Egyptian military campaigns. A century or two later, they came from the Land of Israel during the Maccabean Revolt. At the time, Hellenized, Greek-speaking Jews were establishing communities throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, considered to be some of the oldest known Jewish diaspora communities.



Their descendants came to be known as "Romaniote Jews," over time developing a distinct culture including liturgical traditions and songs, and speaking "Yevanic", a Judeo-Greek dialect infused with Hebrew loanwords and written in Hebrew script. Romaniote synagogues even have a distinct interior layout that differs from Sephardic and Ashkenazi synagogues.

Through ancient inscriptions, medieval manuscripts and other written and archaeological sources, we can trace some of the history of Cretan Jewry, which thrived under Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Andalusian Arab, Venetian and Ottoman control, before being nearly extinguished under German occupation in 1944. Today, the Etz Hayyim Synagogue in Hania is practically the only remaining testament on the island to the rich Cretan Jewish heritage, which spanned two millennia.



British troops in Crete prior to the German victory, 1940

Ancient sources

Jewish communities on Crete are first referenced in 4th century BCE epitaph inscriptions from Kassanoi and Kissamos where, in the city of Kissamos, a "Sophia of Gortyna, an elder and leader of the synagogue" attests to the leading role of women in diaspora communities.

A community in Gortyna is described in the First Book of Maccabees (15:23) dating to around 142 BCE, when Gortyna was the most prosperous city in Crete. Although only fragmentary inscriptions remain in Crete, inscriptions dating to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE from an ancient synagogue on the island of Delos honor two citizens of the Cretan cities of Heraklion and Knossos, providing evidence of the existence of a Jewish community on the island during that period, as well. By the time of the Roman conquest of Crete in the 1st century BCE, Jewish communities were thriving in most of the major cities, including Gortyna, Kissamos, Hania, Rethymnon, Knossos and Sitia. According to the renowned Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, the larger Greek islands, including Crete, were "full of Jewish settlements" (Legatione ad Gaium, 282).

Jewish communities in Crete are also referenced in the New Testament's Acts of the Apostles (2:11) as having been present at Pentecost (Shavuot) in Jerusalem, as well as in the Epistle of Paul to Titus (1-9:16) in which Paul describes the "Jewish Christians" in Crete. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the West in 476 CE, Roman rule continued in the eastern part of the empire, later termed the Byzantine Empire, where its citizens continued to view themselves as "Romans", a term that would eventually be associated with the Greek-speaking Jews, the Romaniotes.

At the time, Crete was one of the 64 provinces of the Byzantine Empire, with its capital in Constantinople. Jews are not explicitly mentioned in extant historical accounts from the short-lived "Emirate of Crete" (825-961 CE), established following the Andalusian Arab conquest of the island, but they certainly remained.

During the late Byzantine period (961-1204 CE), historical sources indicate that Jewish communities were not permitted to live within the island's walled cities, but were instead required to live outside the walls as close as possible to the main city gates which offered protection in times of danger.

Into and outside the Ghetto

In 1204, after the sacking of Constantinople as part of the 4th Crusade, which led to the temporary dissolution of the Byzantine Empire, Crete became a Venetian colony called the "Kingdom of Candia" with Heraklion (Kandia) as the island's capital. According to Venetian accounts, Crete's Jewish population grew significantly in the 14th and 15th centuries due to the influx of Sephardi Jews from the Iberian Peninsula following the exodus of 1391, the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 and again after the Spanish Expulsion in 1492. It seems that these and other immigrant families were absorbed into the indigenous Romaniote communities through the adoption of the local language, culture and religious customs, along with intermarriage.

By the 16th century, the three main Cretan cities, Heraklion (Kandia), Rethymnon (Retimo) and Hania (La Canea) were flourishing under Venetian rule, their populations steadily growing and the economy thriving due to trade and shipping.

At this time, Cretan Jews maintained already-established communities in the three major cities, though they were required to live in segregated ghettos or quarters called "Zudecca", where they worked as grocers, artisans, tanners, butchers, money lenders and traders of silk, metals, dyes and leather. They were also active in intellectual pursuits including philosophy and theology and many individuals travelled widely, especially to places like Padua and Mantova in Italy, where they trained as doctors, lawyers and rabbis.



Alongside these urban communities were rural Jewish settlements, which produced kosher cheeses, wines, grains and citrons for both export and local use. By the end of the 16th century, there were approximately 1600 Jews in Crete who worshipped in up to nine synagogues around the island. At that time, Heraklion was the largest community with four synagogues. Hania had two: Beth Shalom (Sephardic) and Etz Hayyim (Romaniote), both of them located in the historic Jewish neighborhood of Evraiki.

The period of Ottoman rule in Crete (1669-1898), particularly in later years, brought economic hardship to the island's general population, and as a result the Jewish communities in Heraklion and Rethymnon diminished. Many wealthy Jewish families moved to Hania, the new Ottoman capital of the island, and farther afield to Venice and elsewhere in Italy and to other Mediterranean port cities like Gibraltar, Istanbul and Salonika. Yet, Ottoman authority was also favorable to Crete's Jewish communities, which were afforded some degree of religious autonomy, just like their Christian Orthodox neighbors, under the Ottoman millet system.

In towns like Hania, the former ghettos were opened and Jews were allowed to settle in neighboring quarters where they were permitted to buy and legally inherit property for the first time. This in particular may be what enticed Sephardic immigrants from North Africa and Izmir to the city at the time. However, by the 19th century, sporadic violent revolts against Ottoman rule in Crete led many Jews to emigrate elsewhere.

It is estimated that in 1817, there were 150 Jewish families divided between Heraklion and Hania; in 1858, there were 907 Jews on the island; by 1881, there were only 647 Jews in Crete, with the majority residing in Hania.

German occupation

The German occupation of Greece began in April 1941 and lasted until 1945. Following the failed Italian invasion of Greece in October 1940, Germany assisted its Italian and Bulgarian allies in their expansionist aspirations and invaded the country.

Crete itself was invaded by the Germans in May 1941 through a major airborne campaign, and the three main cities of Hania, Rethymnon and Heraklion were badly bombed. The Germans were met by fierce resistance from the local population and by the Allied forces, but they eventually prevailed and established their occupation regime in June 1941.

From this time onwards, most of Crete's Jews, numbering only about 350 members, were residing in Hania where they increasingly faced restrictions imposed upon their daily lives. Some individuals managed to escape Crete for Athens during the occupation. Some survived there in hiding, while others were eventually arrested and sent to the extermination camps.

It was not until 1944 that the Hania community was to be deported to Auschwitz. On May 20th of that year, the Cretan Jewish community was arrested and taken to a local prison for two weeks before being transported to Heraklion, where they boarded a German steamship, the *Tánaïs*, together with Italian prisoners of war and Cretan resistance fighters. The ship was to sail to Athens and the Jewish prisoners were then to be transported by train to the death camps in Poland. Due to the ongoing naval war in the Mediterranean, however, the ship was torpedoed by a British submarine not long after departing Heraklion and it sank with all of its prisoners in the early hours of June 9, 1944.



British submarine that sank the *Tanaïs*

Once the community had been deported, Hania's Jewish neighborhood was ransacked by the Nazis who also stripped the *Etz Hayyim* Synagogue – the island's last remaining Jewish house of prayer – of its religious artifacts, books and the centuries-old community archive.

Etz Hayyim stood abandoned from then until the 1990s, when Hania resident Nikos Stavroulakis (an artist, art historian and founding director of the Jewish Museum of Greece) decided to rebuild and revive the synagogue.

Reviving *Etz Hayyim* and the Cretan Jewish tradition

Almost 50 years after the end of WWII, the fortunes of the *Etz Hayyim* Synagogue were to change thanks to Nikos, who managed to garner significant interest and funding to fully restore the synagogue in just a few short years.

Heading the work under the aegis of the World Monuments Fund in cooperation with the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KISE), Nikos secured support from leading European Jewish philanthropists – including the Rothschilds and the Lauders – as well as numerous other foundations, agencies and individuals.

On October 10, 1999 the synagogue was officially rededicated by Rabbis Jacob Arar and Isaak Mizan of Athens, and Rabbi Yacob Dayan of Salonika. Approximately 350 people attended, with members of the various Greek Jewish communities, representatives from the Orthodox and Catholic churches in Hania, along with local and international dignitaries, including the German ambassador to Greece.

Etz Hayyim today

Since 2010, the *Etz Hayyim* Synagogue has been operated by a non-profit organization in cooperation with the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KISE). The organization is registered as a charity in Greece and – because *Etz Hayyim* does not receive any public funding – it raises funds for the maintenance and preservation of the synagogue and for the various religious and cultural events held there.

Today, Etz Hayyim is both an active place of worship where a small multinational and multi-faith group called the "Havurah" share communal experiences, as well as a vibrant community and cultural center that hosts exhibitions, lectures, readings, films and concerts.

Its small team of dedicated staff undertake ongoing research into the history of the Cretan Jewish community, while engaging both local and international school groups and teachers as part of the synagogue's ongoing educational outreach program. The synagogue welcomes Jews of all different backgrounds and non-Jewish visitors, who can take a guided tour of the synagogue and learn about Cretan Jewish history and traditions, or attend regular Kabbalat Shabbat and High Holiday services. Two decades after its rededication, Etz Hayyim has once again become a fixture in the religious and socio-cultural life of Hania as a place of prayer, study, recollection and reconciliation.



Remembering Nikos

Nikos Stavroulakis, founding director of the new Etz Hayyim Synagogue and legendary figure in Greek Jewish life, passed away in 2017. The Etz Hayyim staff is currently cataloguing Nikos' private collection of artifacts, books, documents and other items. The Nikos Stavroulakis Collection will eventually be made available to researchers and the general public.

If you have any materials (photos, letters, documents, etc.) relating to Nikos or his work, please email the Etz Hayyim staff: info@etz-hayyim-hania.org.

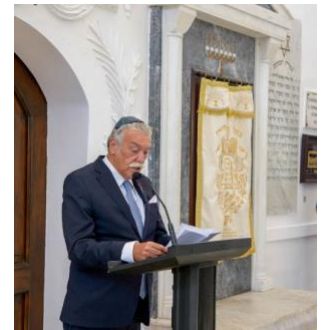
Rhodes

The events of the South Aegean Region and the Israeli Community of Rhodes for the Day of Remembrance of the Jews of Rhodes and Kos of Greek Jews who were exterminated by the Nazis during the Holocaust took place in Rhodes, on 26.7.2021, at the Synagogue of the island and at the Holocaust Memorial, observing all necessary sanitary measures due to the pandemic.

At the Kal Shalom Synagogue, in the Medieval City of Rhodes, the event began with a memorial service by the Rabbi of Athens Gabriel Negrin and the lighting of candles in memory of the victims. Followed by the greetings of the officials: The Regional Governor Giorgos Hatzimarkos, the Mayor Antony Kambourakis and the President of the KIS David Saltiel., Mr. Lazaris stressed the planned actions aimed at promoting research and highlighting the history of the Holocaust of Jewish communities in Greece.

Wreaths were laid at the Holocaust Memorial in Jewish Martyrs' Square. The events were also attended by the Ambassador of Israel to Greece, Yossi Amrani, the Consul of Italy Nikos Pharmakidis, the Adviser of the German Embassy Carsten Hoelscher, representative of I.M. Rhodes and representatives of the religious doctrines, the Security Corps, Vice-Regionals and Deputy Mayors, the Association of Old Town Shopkeepers, representatives of local associations, as well as representatives of the Israeli Communities from all over Greece.

Film screenings on the Holocaust are now an institution in the context of the annual Remembrance events in Rhodes. The screening on 21.7.2021, in the cinema "Rodon", with admission free to the public.



Fires in Greece

The Jewish Community of Athens expressed its solidarity with the Fire Brigade and the fire victims, by offering pharmaceutical material and essentials. We republish below the relevant post of the Athens I.K. on Facebook:

Our Community, on the occasion of the outbreak of the fire that has been affecting our country in recent days, has decided to support and assist our firefighters and fire-stricken fellow citizens by sending basic necessities. On the initiative of our Social Service, the General Secretary of I.K.A. delivered at 4, Mourouzi Street, pharmaceutical material (creams for burns, serums and electrolytes) to the Fire Brigade concerning the firefighters who are on the front line, who, as they were returning from their respective shifts, expressed their thanks and stressed how important is the material we provided them for their daily struggle!



This was also followed by a shipment of basic necessities (water, dry food, sanitary ware, etc.) to a point of collection of goods for the fire victims.

We hope that we will soon overcome this ordeal with as few losses as possible and return to normality again.

Two Israeli firefighting planes arrived on August 8 in Greece, in order to assist in the effort to extinguish the forest fires, following the communication between the Prime Ministers Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Bennett. As stated in a statement by **the Israeli Embassy in Greece**, the Prime Minister of Israel, Naftali Bennett, phoned the Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis this afternoon to express his solidarity and support for Greece as it faces the fires that are raging. It is noted that Mr. Bennett informed Mr. Mitsotakis about his decision to send two Israeli firefighting aircraft to Greece in order to help extinguish the forest fires in the country.



The assistance, as noted, is in addition to that of the Israeli firefighters who are already in the country and are active in coordination with the Greek fire brigade. It is recalled that Israel has sent 16 firefighters, who arrived in our country on Friday, August 6th. At the same time, the message is being sent out that Israel stands by the Greek people in time of need.

The Ambassador of Israel to Greece, Yoshi Amrani, stated that "this is an additional expression of the friendship between the peoples of Israel and Greece and the strong cooperation between our two countries. Although the level of fire alert in Israel is still high, we have no hesitation in stretching a helping hand."

Cyprus

75 years on, harsh British detention of Holocaust survivors in Cyprus remembered

One of the last remaining metal huts that housed thousands of Jewish prisoners attempting to reach Israel will be the centerpiece of a new Jewish Museum in Larnaca

LANARCA, Cyprus (AFP) — After surviving the Holocaust, trekking the Alps in winter and crossing the Mediterranean in an overcrowded boat, Rose Lipszyc clearly remembers her months incarcerated in harsh British camps in Cyprus.

"After all that, we were back behind barbed wire again," 92-year-old Lipszyc said, speaking 75 years after British soldiers began imprisoning Jews on the eastern Mediterranean island, dark events whose legacy resonates today.

Lipszyc's family, from the Polish city of Lublin, were among the six million Jews the Nazis massacred during World War II. She escaped death using false papers, working as a forced laborer in Germany.

After the war, she walked to Italy. Then, joining an exodus of thousands of traumatized refugees dreaming of a Jewish nation, Lipszyc boarded a rickety boat in Venice bound for British-run Palestine.

"There were 300 of us squeezed into the boat," Lipszyc said. "We were like sardines."

But as the shores of Palestine appeared on the horizon, two British warships powered out.

"The English soldiers — who I would have kissed the feet of for liberating me in Germany — were leaping into our little boat with batons," she said, her voice trembling.

She was taken 250 kilometers (155 miles) northwest to Cyprus, also then under British rule.

Between August 1946 and February 1949, more than 52,000 Jews taken off 39 boats were detained in a dozen camps in Cyprus, according to Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and education center.

"The English weren't starving us, and they weren't killing us like the Germans," Lipszyc said. "But it was so traumatic, that the very same people who had freed me just a short time ago now incarcerated me."

The British wanted the cramped camps to be a "deterrent" aimed at "breaking the power of the 'Hebrew resistance movement' in Palestine," Yad Vashem said. More than 400 people died of sickness in the camps.

It is a history that Arie Zeev Raskin, chief rabbi of Cyprus, wants to "teach to the next generation."

He calls it a "very important piece of the puzzle" between the Holocaust and Israel's foundation in 1948.

When he discovered a farmer using one of the camps' last remaining metal huts as a tractor shed, Raskin made it the centerpiece of the Jewish Museum of Cyprus he is building in the port city of Larnaca.

"The huts were boiling hot in summer, and freezing in winter," Raskin said.

In the camps, some 80% were aged between 13 and 35, "among the more spirited and lively survivors of the Holocaust," said Yad Vashem, which added that 2,200 babies were born in the camps.

Tally Barash was one of them. "They called me Bat Aliya, meaning 'daughter of the immigration,'" the 73-year-old Barash said, recalling descriptions of life in the camps by her parents, Jews from Romania. "It was a very hard time."

Barash served as an Israeli soldier during the Six Day War of 1967. Today, decades after she was born in British detention in a military hospital, she runs a print shop in London, and is proud of her past.

"The museum will help keep memories alive," she said.

Some Cypriots, also resentful of British rule, worked with Jewish militia forces. Key among them was Prodromos Papavassiliou, who after fighting fascist forces in North Africa with Britain's Cyprus Regiment, was outraged at the camps, his son Christakis Papavassiliou said.

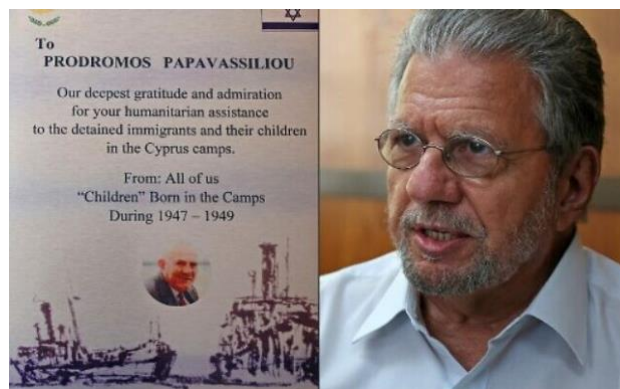
"He risked his life working with underground Jewish groups," said Papavassiliou, a retired honorary French consul. Prodromos helped hundreds of Jews, hiding those who tunneled out in orange groves and caves, until he could organize boats to smuggle them away from coves near the now-popular tourist resort of Ayia Napa. His exploits were dramatized in the 1960 Hollywood epic "Exodus," starring Paul Newman and Eva Marie Saint, while the Israeli port city of Haifa named "Papa Square" in his honor. Papavassiliou, president of the Cyprus-Israel Business Association, said that past had "helped forge close ties" between the two countries.

The history holds another lesson, with "obvious parallels" to the migrant crisis today, said Eliana Hadjisavvas of Britain's Institute of Historical Research, while acknowledging the "contextual differences" too. "The history... reminds us that in the face of persecution and suffering, people will endure huge sacrifices in search of safety," said Hadjisavvas, who is writing a book on the camps.

Lipszyc finally reached Palestine "just a week or two" before Israel's May 1948 declaration of independence, and war erupted again.

Later, she moved to Canada, where the great-grandmother of four offered her life advice to AFP, speaking from Toronto.

"If you could live through what I lived through, then you would see that hate does not help you in life," she said. "Hate only destroys."



Jerusalem

Djemal Pasha's Revenge on the People of Jerusalem [Full article here](#)

In the midst of WWI, residents of Jerusalem witnessed a horrific spectacle: the hanging of five local citizens by the Ottoman authorities. A photograph of the scene has since become a Jerusalem legend linking Christians, Jews and Muslims.

In June 1916, Ahmad Djemal Pasha, commander of the Ottoman Fourth Army and ruler of Damascus province, found himself facing a difficult problem: many soldiers had deserted from the ranks, and he was suffering a severe manpower shortage. Following the unsuccessful Ottoman attack on the Suez Canal, the defeated, exhausted and hungry soldiers returned to the Land of Israel. Jerusalem, like many other cities in the Ottoman Empire, filled with deserters, who hoped to escape the attention of the authorities.



The military police roamed the city in search of the absentee soldiers, who were called "Farar" (Arabic: فرار). Djemal Pasha, who urgently needed men, sentenced any deserter who would not turn himself in to death, but to no avail. In his cruel rage, he decided to teach the public a lesson. He ordered his men to seize five deserters and execute them in a central location in the city. The unlucky five—two Jews, two Christians and one Muslim—were caught and hanged in an expedited procedure. This is their story.

The Sick Man on the Bosphorus

The Ottoman entry into the First World War led to a severe economic crisis throughout the empire, in the Middle East in particular. Jerusalem was especially hard hit. Local tourism had collapsed and many sources of funding had dried up. A drought severely affected farmers' crops, and if all of that wasn't enough, in 1914–1915, the Middle East suffered a devastating locust plague that reached the Holy City as well. Moreover, the forced conscription imposed by the Ottoman regime left many families without a breadwinner, and poverty and hunger were rife. Many of the local men, instead of being sent to combat units, were sent to the "Amaliya," hard labor battalions in the service of the Ottoman army.



The combination of World War I and the economic crisis led to low morale and very high desertion rates among Ottoman soldiers in the Middle East. At the same time, local national movements began to revolt against Ottoman rule and side with the Allied Powers. Cases like the establishment of the Zion Mule Corps that took part in the Battle of Gallipoli and the revolt of Sharif Hussein of Mecca led Djemal Pasha to behave violently toward anything he interpreted as disloyalty or disobedience. Throughout 1915–1916, Ahmad Djemal Pasha committed a series of war crimes and acts, the Armenian Genocide foremost among these, which cemented his status as one of the cruelest figures of the First World War.



The Hanging at the Jaffa Gate

In the middle of 1916, after the hanging and exiling of deserters and "traitors" across the Middle East, Ahmad Djemal Pasha arrived in Jerusalem to deal with the local deserter problem. He announced that he would sentence to death any deserter who did not surrender by the end of June 1916. His promise to pardon all the fugitives if they returned to their units, did not help. In his rage, Djemal Pasha ordered five runaways caught at random to be hung, as an example. The deserters were chosen on the basis of ethnicity—two Jews, two Christian Arabs and one Muslim Arab.

Within a day, five defectors meeting his requirement were captured and hung in Jerusalem's main square, which at the time was located by the Jaffa Gate. The five were Ibrahim Andelft and Musa Sous, Christian Arabs; Ahmad Alozu, a Muslim; and Moshe Melal and Yosef Amozig, who were Jews. The convicts were granted a final meeting with a cleric, after which they were hanged. Around their necks hung signs stating their alleged crime, and their bodies were left hanging on the gallows until the evening hours, giving Djemal Pasha's violent message time to sink in.

The news of the hanging of Jews by the Ottomans spread in the city, and the next day it was also reported in the Ha-Herut Hebrew newspaper, including the last requests of those sentenced to death. Amozig, according to the report, sufficed with drinking a little water before being executed; Melal, on the other hand, asked that the money owed him be collected and paid to his mother and also demanded that the blindfold that had been placed on him be removed, so that he might walk toward his death with his eyes open. The reporter added that unfortunately the blindfold request was refused as it was contrary to Ottoman law.

The execution of Yosef Amozig was particularly tragic, as he was not a deserter at all. Amozig was born in Morocco and immigrated to Jerusalem with his sister and mother, Hanina. Like his father, Amozig became a tailor and set up a workshop together with a local Muslim in the Old City of Jerusalem. Among his clients were wealthy families such as the Nashashibis, and some say he even made clothes for Djemal Pasha and his entourage. Amozig closed his workshop with the start of the Great War before he was drafted into the army and sent to work as a tailor at a base in Beersheba, the only Ottoman-established city in the Land of Israel.

One day, Amozig's commander sent him back to Jerusalem to sew some uniforms for him. He had just reopened his workshop and started on the commission when he was spotted by Ottoman army informants who mistook him for a deserter. He was apprehended by the military police and imprisoned. Amozig was beset by difficulties to explain his presence in the city: he was unable to contact his commander in order to clarify his mission, and his military transit permit had disappeared. Amozig's mother tried desperately to find the permit, but could not. After his arrest, Amozig was placed in "The Kishla", the local prison near the Tower of David. The permit was not found, and he was forced to meet his end at the gallows.

The Legacy

Esther Harrush, Amozig's niece, who later married Akiva Azulay, a deputy mayor of Jerusalem, was one of the few who remembered the story, which was known in a few, slightly different versions. Over the years, the Sephardic Jews of Jerusalem retold the story of the hanging of Amozig and Melal until it became a well-known Jerusalem urban legend. One of the details that emerged years after the execution was that the executioner was a Jew named Mordechai Sassoon, who carried out the Ottoman orders with a heavy heart and accompanied the Jewish victims to the last.

Djemal Pasha's decision to hang five people by religious affiliation was unusual, even compared to the rest of his brutal actions during the war. The randomness of the choice, the expedited sentencing of the victims and the impact on the various communities in the city made the incident a landmark in the history of Jerusalem. Amozig and Melal, martyrs hanged because of their Jewish faith, take their place alongside Naaman Belkind and Yosef Lishansky, members of the Nili organization, who were executed on account of espionage in the same period. To some extent, this story is yet another symbol of Jerusalem's sacred status to the three monotheistic religions, a place where their believers meet, live and die together.

Turkey

This August marked the 35th year since the horrific murder of 35 Turkish Jews on Shabbat at the Neve Shalom Central Synagogue of Turkey in Istanbul. May their memories forever be a blessing.



Great Britain

The Expulsion of British Jewry

Did an Illicit Relationship Lead to the Expulsion of England's Jews?

The story of two courageous converts, their Jewish wives and institutional anti-Semitism Full article [here](#)

Little is known about Robert of Reading, a 13th century Catholic preacher who converted to Judaism and married a Jewish woman, an act that some have claimed led to the Edict of Expulsion, which legally barred Jews from England for nearly four centuries.

In truth, there were apparently two Roberts of Reading who converted to Judaism in 13th century England, each adopting the Hebrew name "Haggai" and marrying a Jewish wife.

The First Robert of Reading

The first Robert was a deacon and student of Hebrew at Oxford. Following his conversion to Judaism, this Robert was brought before the Archbishop of Canterbury, where evidence was presented against him, and according to the papers of preeminent English legal historian Frederic William Maitland:

"When it was seen that the deacon was circumcised, and that no argument would bring him to his senses... a cross with the Crucified was brought before him and he defiled the cross, saying, 'I renounce the new-fangled law and the comments of Jesus the false prophet,' and he reviled and slandered Mary the mother of Jesus, and made a charge against her not to be repeated."

By this account, Robert was taken out and decapitated, though his wife managed to escape the same fate. The executor reportedly lamented, "I am sorry that this fellow goes to hell alone."

The Next Robert

A few generations later, another Robert of Reading – also known as Robert de Reddinge – a Dominican friar in London, appeared on the stage of history. Like many others, Robert was tasked with trying to convert Jews to Christianity. In order to do so, he was sent to learn Hebrew.

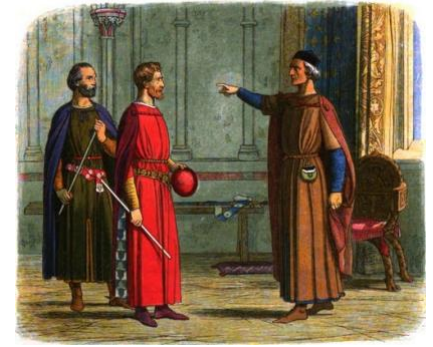
Yet the Church's plan seems to have backfired, as the more Hebrew and Jewish texts he mastered, the more drawn he apparently became to the maligned faith. Handed



Edward I

over to the Archbishop of Canterbury by King Edward himself, Robert “defended his new faith with great warmth,” according to the historian Heinrich Graetz, who believed that the conversion was genuine and not undertaken due to ulterior motives, such as the desire to marry a beautiful Jewish woman...

Though this Robert’s fate remains unknown, Graetz believed that both he and his wife actually escaped to safety. Modern scholars, including Richard Huscroft in *Expulsion: England’s Jewish Solution* and Robin Mundill in *England’s Jewish Solution: Experiment and Expulsion, 1262-1290*, have concluded that Robert actually died in prison.



Edward threatens the Lord Marshall

Either way, his acts clearly further enflamed the already ubiquitous English anti-Semitism. According to Graetz’s account, the Dominicans were so embarrassed following Robert’s conversion and marriage that they quickly approached the “bigoted, avaricious queen-mother, Eleanor, [who] ...first expelled the Jews from the town of Cambridge which belonged to her, and personally fostered the hostile feeling against them throughout the whole country, especially among Christian merchants.”

In fact, in 1275, the very same year that Robert converted, King Edward decreed a number of new anti-Semitic laws known collectively as *Statutum de Judaismo* (Statute of the Jewry), which among other things restricted the types of occupations permitted to Jews and the areas in which they were allowed to live.

An illicit relationship and its repercussions

Many historical sources draw no connection between Robert of Reading, his Jewish wife and the expulsion of English Jewry. In fact, the couple is often not even mentioned at all in that context.

Yet, a very direct connection between this convert, his wife and the king’s edict does appear quite prominently in a popular early 16th century work called *Shevet Yehuda*, written by Solomon ibn Virga a chronicler who was among those expelled from Spain. In ibn Virga’s story, there is a beautiful “Jewess” at the very center of this tragic event:



“There was a priest who... desired a very beautiful woman... and he would talk to her every day [but] she told him that she would not marry an uncircumcised one. The priest, who desired her and loved her and listened to her and secretly converted and married her. When his [fellow priests] heard about this thing, it was a disgrace – adding to their hatred of the Jews – and they demanded to harm the Jews...”

Ibn Virga further describes how the defamed Christians went to the king’s mother who tried to persuade her son to expel all of the Jews, though he wasn’t so easily swayed because of how important he knew the Jews to be for his kingdom.

She then went to his ministers to try and persuade them. Though they also understood the Jews’ importance to the kingdom, they were afraid of her and agreed to work together to convince the king to banish the Jews, ultimately succeeding. Historian Joseph Hacoheh tells a similar tale in his *Emek Habakha* (Vale of Tears), a chronicle of Jewish history traditionally read by some Italian Jews on Tisha B’Av. In that version, the priest even dresses up as a Jew in order to be able to speak with the object of his desire.

A work attributed to 16th century Italian Jewish scholar Gedaliah ibn Yahya ben Joseph may have mixed up the stories of the two Roberts, and taken additional poetic license as chroniclers of that time were known to do:

"A priest in England consented to be circumcised in order to be married to a Jewess, with whom he was desperately enamoured. The affair became known to the citizens, who were desirous of burning them. But the king chose to execute the revenge in a different way, and decreed that within three months, they should change their religion: those who circumcised the priest were burned and many of the Jews changed their religion." [Translation from "The Jews in Great Britain", page 391]

Connections and questions

The causal connection between Robert of Reading's conversion and marriage and the expulsion of English Jewry seems tenuous at best, among other reasons due to the fact that his conversion in the summer of 1275 took place a full 15 years before Edward I's edict.

Rabid, wide-spread and state- and Church-sponsored anti-Semitism was not new to England and would culminate with the expulsion in 1290. While Robert's conversion and subsequent marriage were definitely notable given the king's personal involvement, it does not seem that one friar converting and marrying a Jewish woman would have been – nor was it – the determining factor that brought about the expulsion.

Though the Jewish chronicle texts above can certainly not be taken as full historical truths, they raise fascinating questions about how and why such tales specifically captured the imagination of Jewish writers and their readers, and what role these courageous converts and their Jewish wives may have actually had in the broader context of this most tragic period in English Jewish history.

London Holocaust Memorial

Despite some opposition, the British government has given the green light to architect David Adjaye to create a national memorial for the victims of the Holocaust next to Parliament buildings in London. Work is scheduled to start later this year and be completed in 2025.

The project was first announced in 2016 and the monument project includes 23 large bronze sculptures with the sites between them paying tribute to Jewish communities in 22 countries that the Holocaust wiped out. It will also include an underground training center on the genocide of Jews and those that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur in Sudan (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CR65e14ItXP/>).

Permits to create the monument were rejected in 2020 by local authorities, as both they and residents argued that the Monument will overshadow the gardens that are nearby; gardens that are already very close to other monuments; including the monument to the Emmeline Pankhurst suffragette, the Buxton Memorial Fountain on the Abolition of Slavery and Rodin's sculpture "Bourgeois of Calais". Last October, 42 academics signed a letter in which they argued that the monument's location next to Parliament's buildings would exaggerate the UK's then-reaction to the Holocaust and promote Britain as the "final savior of the Jews". In addition, leading figures of London's Jewish community expressed concerns that the Monument may be the target of terrorist attacks.



However, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the largest organization of British Jewish descent, welcomed the latest development. "There will be something uniquely possible in placing a memorial to the Holocaust right next to the center of UK democracy," the organization's president Marie van der Zyl said in a statement.

Afghanistan

Last Jew in Afghanistan will stay put in Kabul — despite efforts to rescue him Full article [here](#)

The last Jewish resident of Afghanistan will be staying put, according to multiple people involved in an international effort to rescue him. Zebulon Simantov, 62, has lived in the country all his life and currently resides in the capital of Kabul where he lives in what remains of the country's last synagogue. He originally hails from the western city of Herat and previously worked as a restaurant owner and carpet dealer, according to past media reports. Simantov was on board to flee as late as Tuesday. As chaos consumed the streets of Kabul, a rescue mission organized by Moti Kahana, an American-Israeli businessman, was underway. Kahana, who runs a private security company, helped evacuate some of the last remaining Jews from war-torn Syria in 2014 and is currently involved in multiple ongoing rescue projects around Afghanistan — one of which had been Simantov.

"I dealt with so many crazy people and he is on the top of the list," Kahana, 53, told The Post, saying the curmudgeonly Semite vacillated until the end. "On Tuesday my team went to his home and he was packing," Kahana said, adding that Simantov then suddenly demanded \$50,000 as a condition of departure and thwarting the plan. "I don't pay people to save their life."



His wife and daughters left for Israel in 1998. "After initially indicating that he wants to come out, he decided that he wants to stay. And if someone wants to stay, that's up to him," Mendy Chitrik, chair of the Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States told The Post.

"He did not say why, but he is quite comfortable over there," Chitrik said, adding that his organization, which is based in Istanbul, Turkey, has been in touch with Simantov for years and has helped supply him with Matzo and other religious necessities.

Simantov, who lived through the first Taliban era, had indicated his desire to emigrate to Israel in June, telling Voice of America that he didn't have the stomach for life again under the mullahs.

G-d willing ... I will definitely leave by the time the Taliban come," he said.

Simantov became the country's last Jew after the death of Yitzhak Levy in 2005. Though they both lived in the same run-down synagogue, their hatred for one another was the stuff of legend. For years the two men spoke mostly to each other in swears and regularly denounced the other to the Taliban authorities. Once during a mutual stint in jail, their arguing was so annoying that their Islamic captors simply released them.



Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



One of the most ancient and probably best-known Jewish rituals, transcending all Jewish denominations worldwide, is the recitation of 'Kol Nidre' on Yom Kippur night. And the ritual itself is both awe-inspiring and even fearful, as at least 3 people enwrapped in Talitot stand on the bimah holding Sifrei Torah as we listen with trepidation as the Cantor solemnly sings this ancient prayer, and we contemplate G-d's impending judgment and our fates during the coming new year.

Yet in reality, Kol Nidre is not a prayer at all, but rather a dry and legal formula for publicly annulling personal vows. Furthermore, the holding of Sifrei Torah has nothing to do with awe or trepidation before G-d, but rather part of the required procedure for a rabbinical court of at least three to cancel vows by any individual. So how did Kol Nidre become such an inspirational and awe-inspiring rite? Why and when was it instituted for recitation specifically on Yom Kippur? These are just some of the questions we will try to answer.

We do not know who authored Kol Nidre nor when. What we do know is that it was already part of the Yom Kippur ritual in Geonic times, between 589-1038 CE, making it one of the earliest additions to formal prayer. One common theory is that it was specifically introduced during some sort of extreme persecution, perhaps even forced conversions to either early Islam or Christianity, or both, in order to annul vows of forced conversion. In fact, a once-popular belief was that Kol Nidre was indeed composed by forcibly converted 'Conversos' from the Spanish Inquisition in the 14th-15th centuries, but given the much earlier origins of Kol Nidre, this theory cannot be true.. Nonetheless, it is well documented that Kol Nidre was certainly used by Conversos on the eve of Yom Kippur to absolve themselves of the 'sin' of their vowing allegiance to another faith. This alone expanded Kol Nidre's significance and influence throughout the Jewish world.

The Zohar suggests a very different reason for Kol Nidre. Based on kabbalistic concepts of G-d, divine judgment and forgiveness, The Zohar says that Kol Nidre is recited specifically on Yom Kippur because sometimes Heavenly judgement is imposed on Israel as an 'avowed decree' that cannot be annulled. By reciting Kol Nidre, the ultimate annulment of vows, we are really asking G-d to favor us by annulling such harsh decrees of judgment, even if we are unworthy of such forgiveness.

The very fact that Kol Nidre became part of every community's Jewish ritual would suggest that the underlying reason for its institution was indeed not simply historical events, lending much credence to the Zohar's explanation. However, there is no doubt nullifying oaths and vows of Jews coerced to leave their Jewish faith on pain of severe punishment or death became a central part of Kol Nidre and its very solemn tone. It is also important to note that Kol Nidre is written in Aramaic, which was the lingua franca for Jews in ancient times, whether in Babylonia or the Land of Israel, as well as the language of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, and even the Zohar. This would also suggest a very ancient origin that encompassed the entire Jewish world. Interestingly, though the Aramaic version of Kol Nidre was, and still is, recited by both Ashkenazim and Sephardim, Rav Amram Gaon in his prayer book wrote and recited it in Hebrew. And of special interest to the KKJ community and Romaniote Jewry in general, it seems that until the arrival of masses of the Spanish Jewish exiles to Greece, Turkey and the entire Balkan region, Romaniote and Italian Jewish communities recited Amram Gaon's Hebrew text, and not the more prevalent and familiar Aramaic version.

And despite the unified and almost universal acceptance of Kol Nidre as part and parcel of the Yom Kippur ritual, there were rabbinic authorities who opposed its recitation. One of earliest was Saadia Gaon in the early 10th century, who felt that its recitation be only by those who indeed had taken upon vows in times of persecution, and no public general annulment of vows. A Sephardic authority from Spain in the 12th century, Yehuda Ben Barzilai, declared the custom as unjustifiable and even misleading, since if people believed that they could so easily annul all

oaths and vows, they would become very cavalier about making vows and oaths. Similar objections were raised by Rabbenu Yerucham from Provence in the 14th century, as well as many other rabbis during the Middle Ages.

As to why Kol Nidre was instituted on Yom Kippur, it is worthy to note that originally, public annulment of vows was done on Rosh Hashanah, so that everyone would enter the new year clean of any vows. Indeed, it is still customary in most congregations to conduct *hatarat nedarim* (annulment of vows) on the eve of Rosh Hashanah before a makeshift tribunal of 3 individuals. If so, what was the purpose of adding Kol Nidre on Yom Kippur? Some authorities felt that given the central theme of remorse and repentance and the very solemn nature of Yom Kippur and greater synagogue attendance, it would be appropriate that as many people as possible be cleansed and freed from vows and oaths. Others were concerned that even after the pre-Rosh Hashanah annulment, people may take more vows, which would be annulled at Kol Nidre. Finally, the text of Kol Nidre includes references and elements of penitence for making vows that certainly fits and even enhances the very nature of Yom Kippur.

Whatever its history or origins, Kol Nidre still constitutes an integral and indispensable part of the Yom Kippur ritual. And very soon, we will all once again stand silently and reverently as we listen to Kol Nidre's ancient and solemn melody and contemplate G-d's divine judgment for the coming year. May it be a year of true peace, prosperity, happiness and HEALTH! *Shana Tova!*

Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé
Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America



Parashah of the Week - Ki Tavo
Keeping the Pact
By Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé

This week in our Parasha, Moshe began to close the lengthy discourse of his final days. As he did, he structured his words in the manner that a Berit or a "Pact" was formed in those days. This is the pact that was made between God and the Jewish people. In it, he first stipulated the good things that would come to the people for keeping the Berit and then the consequences that would come if ever the agreement was not kept. But, what are some of these blessings? What are their meanings? The blessings are numerous, amongst them Moshe states, "And it shall come to pass, if you should hear diligently to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments which I command you this day, that the LORD your God will set you on high above all the nations of the earth." (1) Indeed, keeping the Mitzvot will uplift the Jews. It will give us meaning and it will guide us and allow us to become better people.

He states further, "Blessed you shall be in the city, and blessed you shall be in the field." (2) He also says, "Blessed you shall be when you come in and blessed shall you be when you go out." (3) In other words, these blessings will be with us constantly, at all times, and in all places. The proper observance of the Torah will transform us and will teach us to do what is right, this will allow us to attract goodness and also bestow blessings to those that are around us. In regards to the verse, "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out." (3) The Midrash states, "Rabbi Yohanan said, (this means) that your leaving this world should be just the same as when you came to it. Just as you came to this world with no transgressions, you should leave this world with no transgressions. (4)

Rabbi Barukh Epstein Ha-Levi (Benveniste) (5) explains that Rabbi Yohanan was questioning the order of the verse, he states, "one first leaves home and then returns and not the opposite." Since the verse seems to be stated in a backward manner, our Sages in the Midrash introduced here this important lesson. (6) A person should strive to do good, acting properly towards God and towards men. Yet, an important factor must be added, that after a transgression or a mistake is made, a man can always mend his or her ways and do Teshuva by repeating and

returning to do what's right. Moshe then also stipulates the consequences and the punishments that will come if the Mivot are not well observed. But as one reads this portion of the Torah, one quickly understands the consequences of our actions. Good will follow when we do good, but when people act in evil and in corrupt ways, evil and destruction will follow.

Interestingly enough, in the midst of this portion, Moshe specifies further the reasons for why punishments might follow, he states "because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things;" (7) in other words, it is the lack of appreciation and understanding that brings about these terrible consequences. As we conclude it is important to add that even after one has transgressed the laws, Teshuva or repentance, the ability to mend and change our ways, will play a major part in returning to God and attaining these blessings once again. As stated by Rabbi Yosef Sarfati (8) in his Yad Yosef, "Teshuva or repentance is one of the biggest gifts that God has given to man." (9)

Shabbat Shalom

(1) Devarim 28:1

(2) Ibid 3

(3) Ibid 6

(4) TB Tractate Baba Mesia 107a

(5) Rabbi Barukh HaLevi Epstein 1860-1941. In 1902, Rabbi Epstein published his Torah Temima, which became one of the most popular sefarim of the century. His father, Rabbi Yehiel Michel, was the rabbi of Novorodak and author of the classic Arukh HaShulhan, and his uncle was the illustrious Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, Rosh Yeshiva of the famed Volozhin Yeshiva. The family was of Sephardic extraction, whose name was originally Benveniste. However, after the Spanish Expulsion they were permitted to settle in the German city of Epstein and apparently in gratitude adopted Epstein as their own name. Possessed of a photographic memory, he was a brilliant student and though he received semikha from some of the greatest rabbis of the time, declined to accept a rabbinical position. Instead he worked as an accountant and banker in Pinsk. During the first World War, Pinsk was in dire financial straits and Rabbi Barukh was unable to concentrate on his Talmudical studies. Instead, he wrote his memoirs, Mekor Barukh, in four large volumes, containing over 2000 pages. They are a candid and fascinating portrait of his family and the leading personalities of the previous generation. Rabbi Barukh also wrote Tosafot Berakha on the Pentateuch and Barukh She-amar on the prayers. However, his magnum opus remains the Torah Temima, which was published when his father was still alive. Rabbi Barukh came to the United States in 1923 but was unable to find a suitable position and returned to Pinsk in 1926. Rabbi Barukh lived a long time, more than 80 years. When the Germans entered Pinsk at the start of July 1941, he was already old and sick. He was then brought to the Jewish hospital in the city, and two days later, during the month of Tammuz 5701, he rendered his soul to his Creator.

(6) Rabbi Barukh Epstein Ha-Levi, Torah Temima, Devarim 28:6

(7) Devarim 28:47

(8) Rabbi Yosef ben Hayyim Zarfati (d. c. 1640), a member of the renowned Zarfati family that traced its descent to Rashi, was a leading Rabbi in Kuzkuncuk, where he gave many of his famous sermons, he is also accounted among the sages of Adrianople, Turkey. It is reported that he died in Jerusalem. He studied under his father, Rabbi Hayim's Zarfati. Rabbi Yosef would give sermons on Shabat and on the holidays. After Shabbat, Rabbi Yosef would write them down and eventually comprised all into a book that he called Yad Yosef, the Hand of Yosef. The reason he called it that, is because he writes, "I exerted myself and examined it to the place where the hand reaches". Rabbi Yosef's knowledge of Tanakh, Mishan and Talmud, Halakha and Midrashic material are apparent in his writings. His sermons are pleasant and full of sensitivity and common sense.

(9) Rabbi Yosef Sarfati, Yad Yosef, Sermons Ki Tavo 2, Teshuva



Rabbi Marc D. Angel

Physical and Spiritual Survival: Thoughts for Parashat Ki Tavo

In his essay "Fate and Destiny," Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik delineates two aspects of Jewish peoplehood: the camp and the congregation. "The camp is created as a result of the desire for self-defense and is nurtured by a sense of fear; the congregation is created as a result of the longing for the realization of an exalted ethical idea and is nurtured by the sentiment of love. Fate reigns in unbounded fashion in the camp; destiny reigns in the

congregation....” The camp is concerned with our physical survival. We join together to fight against our enemies. We mobilize our resources to defend ourselves from attack. The camp is our means of maintaining our existence in a hostile world.

The congregation is concerned with our spiritual survival. Yes, we need the camp to protect us from danger; but we also need to know the purpose and meaning of our community. Why are we fighting? What are our goals? Survival in and of itself is not enough; we need to survive in order to fulfill our role as a congregation. Rabbi Soloveitchik notes: “The congregation is a group of individuals possessing a common past, a common future, common goals and desires, a common aspiration for a world which is wholly good and beautiful and a common unique and unified destiny.”

This week’s Torah portion includes the passages to be recited by farmers when they brought their first fruits to the Temple. This recitation reviews Israelite history: our ancestor was a wandering Aramean; we were slaves in Egypt; we overcame many obstacles and much suffering. The text reminds us of our history as a camp. We were endangered; we were afraid; we were victims of a negative fate.

But then the recitation continues by expressing gratitude to the Almighty for bringing us to the land of milk and honey. It puts life in context of the Divine promises to Israel, and the many blessings enjoyed by the people of Israel. The Torah then makes it clear that we are a congregation with a destiny, not merely a camp forced to defend itself. “This day the Lord your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances; you shall therefore observe and do them with all your heart and with all your soul. You have avouched the Lord this day to be your God and that you would walk in His ways, and keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His ordinances, and hearken unto His voice.” ([Devarim 26: 17-18](#))

Throughout our history, the people of Israel has had to view itself and act as a camp. This continues in our own time. The State of Israel and the Jewish People are constantly under physical and political attack. Our survival is threatened by tyrants and pundits, by extremists and bigots, by missiles and potential nuclear attack.

First and foremost, we need to strengthen ourselves as a camp, as a strong and determined people dedicated to defending ourselves from vicious enemies. Not one of us is safe unless we ensure the safety and security of all our camp. Yet, throughout our history, the people of Israel has understood its nature as a holy congregation. We have stood tall and strong in promoting the great vision of the Torah; the messianic idea that teaches peace for all people; the dedication to God and kindness to our fellow human beings. We have known “why” we survive; we have been a people with a revolutionary and powerful devotion to righteousness, compassion, respect for all human beings.

Just as we need to devote tremendous energy and strength to maintaining our camp, so we need to devote tremendous energy and strength to maintaining ourselves as a congregation. Our physical survival is a primary responsibility; our spiritual flowering is equally vital. Some Jews are “Jewish” only (or mainly) in response to anti-Semitism or anti-Israel attacks. They are “camp” Jews. Some Jews are “Jewish” only (or mainly) in their fulfillment of the rituals of our religious tradition. They are “congregation” Jews. In fact, though, we each need to play our role in both domains. We need to fortify our camp and activate our congregation.

Some years ago, Israeli families were forcibly evacuated from Gush Katif as a peace gesture on the part of the Sharon government. One of the families, whose son was murdered by Palestinian terrorists, was reluctant to leave their home. The Israeli military insisted that the evacuation had to take place by orders of the Israeli government. The family left its home, but the father asked to return to his house to retrieve two items. The army officer gave him permission to do so. The man returned with two items: an Israeli flag from above the front door; and the Mezuzah which had been on the doorpost of the front door.

The Israeli flag: a reminder of our need to be a camp, a powerful State that can defend itself from its enemies. The Mezuzah: a reminder of our need to be a congregation, a spiritually vibrant, compassionate and idealistic Torah community. May the camp of Israel forever be strong in defending our nation. May the congregation of Israel forever be a beacon of light, illuminating ourselves and others with the ideas and ideals of a compassionate, righteous and meaningful Torah.

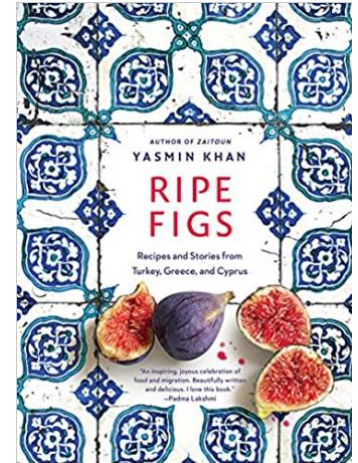
New Books Available from Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum

Ripe Figs: Recipes and Stories from Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus

\$30 plus \$7 P&H within Continental USA

For thousands of years, the eastern Mediterranean has stood as a meeting point between East and West, bringing cultures and cuisines through trade, commerce, and migration. Traveling by boat and land, Yasmin Khan traces the ingredients that have spread through the region from the time of Ottoman rule to the influence of recent refugee communities.

At the kitchen table, she explores what borders, identity, and migration mean in an interconnected world, and her recipes unite around thickets of dill and bunches of oregano, zesty citrus and sweet dates, thick tahini and soothing cardamom. Khan includes healthy, seasonal, vegetable-focused recipes, such as hot yogurt soups, zucchini and feta fritters, pomegranate and sumac chicken, and candied pumpkin with tahini and date syrup.



Fully accessible for the home cook, with stunning food and location photography, *Ripe Figs* is a dazzling collection of recipes and stories that celebrate an ever-diversifying region and imagine a world without borders. 100 illustrations. Check with us for International Postage. Contact us at museum@kkjism.org

Bottom of the Pot: Persian Recipes and Stories

By Naz Deravian

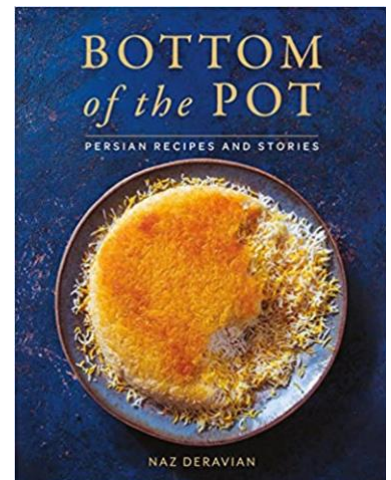
\$30 plus P&H (\$7 within continental USA) please contact us at museum@kkjism.org for further details

My personal introduction to Persian cooking came years ago when I was teaching in Great Neck, where there is a large Persian Jewish population. Their rice made me a fan for life!

"Naz Deravian lays out the multi-hued canvas of a Persian meal, with 100+ recipes adapted to an American home kitchen and interspersed with Naz's celebrated essays exploring the idea of home.

At eight years old, Naz Deravian left Iran with her family during the height of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis. Over the following ten years, they emigrated from Iran to Rome to Vancouver, carrying with them books of Persian poetry, tiny jars of saffron threads, and always, the knowledge that home can be found in a simple, perfect pot of rice. As they traverse the world in search of a place to land, Naz's family finds comfort and familiarity in pots of hearty aash, steaming pomegranate and walnut chicken, and of course, tahdig: the crispy, golden jewels of rice that form a crust at the bottom of the pot. The best part, saved for last.

In *Bottom of the Pot*, Naz, now an award-winning writer and passionate home cook based in LA, opens up to us a world of fragrant rose petals and tart dried limes, music and poetry, and the bittersweet twin pulls of assimilation and nostalgia. In over 100 recipes, Naz introduces us to Persian food made from a global perspective, at home in an American kitchen."



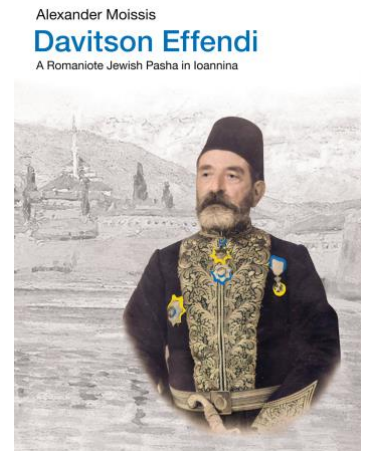
Davitson Effendi: A Romaniote Jewish Pasha in Ioannina By Alex Moissis

\$15 plus \$5 processing and handling. We have decreased the price because we feel that this book should be on everyone's shelf!

When Alex Moissis writes a book, we all stand up and take notice. His first book, a collection of photographs, "1898-1944: Nissim Levis Panorama," was a labor of love, as Alex published a before-unseen collection of photos taken by a member of his own family, a prominent Romaniote family from Ioannina. The saga continues with the publication of Alex's latest work, "Davitson Effendi: A Romaniote Jewish Pasha in Ioannina."

In his latest work, Alexander Moissis demonstrates the indelible influence of the Greek-speaking Romaniote Jewish community of Ioannina by focusing on its most important figure. Davitson Effendi Levis was for many years the community's natural leader and at the same time a multilingual cosmopolitan merchant and an official of the Porte; he contributed decisively to the smooth coexistence of the many ethnic and religious groups, especially during the turbulent period of the Ottoman Empire's gradual disintegration and the rise of nation-states, with all the consequences that these changes meant for the lives of minorities."

- Moisis Elisaf, Mayor of Ioannina and Jewish Community President



Looking for Our Help

This photo is from our collection of the deportation of the Jews of Ioannina on March 25, 1944. We strongly believe it to be Isaac Samuel Cohen (Koen), age 82. If you can confirm this, or believe it to be someone else, please get back to us.



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 150
September 2021
Kehila Kedosha Janina
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