



Kehila Kedosha Janina

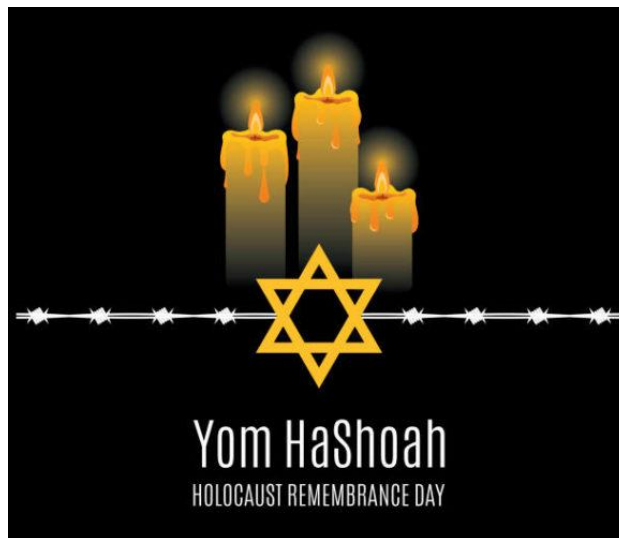
Synagogue and Museum

May 2024 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

This newsletter is dedicated to Yom HaShoah and the losses of Greek Jewry. It is especially poignant this year as it is the 80th anniversary of the deportations in Ioannina, Arta, Preveza, Trikala, Larissa, Volos, Chalkis, Patras, Rhodes, Kos, and Corfu.

Our hearts are with Israel and the hostages as the horrors of October 7th are still unresolved.



This newsletter, our 182nd 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 thousands of 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 are open for Shabbat every Saturday morning starting at 9:30am. Please email amarcus@kkjsm.org if you would like to attend, and enjoy a traditional Greek kiddush lunch after services. Our Museum is open every Sunday from 11am-4pm. If you wish to sponsor a newsletter, contact us at museum@kkjsm.org.

Passings

We mourn the passing of Raphael Frezis, who passed on April 4, 2024, at the age of 97 in his beloved hometown, Volos. Hellenic Jewry and KISE (the Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece) say goodbye with deep emotion to a man who for many years was involved in Jewish events. Raphael was an historian, author and activist. May his memory be for a blessing.



Visitors to Kehila Kedosha Janina

In April we welcomed many new visitors to Kehila Kedosha Janina. Some came from nearby, and some came from as far as away as Paris and Israel. We were honored to welcome Deputy Consul General of Israel in New York Tsach Saar, who was previously stationed in Athens, along with Julia Hizami, Senior Assistant of Community Affairs. We also welcomed Anais Mordehay, whose family originally came from Veria and Ioannina and is a long lost cousin of our President Marvin Marcus, along with her husband Lionel Benchimol. The Ojalvo family of Israel, whose parents were from Turkey, also loved their visit to KKJ.



Israeli Deputy Consul General
Tsach Saar with Julia Hizami



Anais Mordehay
from Paris



Ojalvo family from
Israel and Turkey

Past Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

On April 7th we were treated to a special presentation by Linda Matza Silverman, where she prepared and baked koulouria (round sesame cookies) from a recipe from her best-selling book, The Naphtali Family Cookbook. Once again, we had a packed house. We still have a few cookbooks available for sale – email Museum@kkjism.org to order your copy (\$30 plus shipping).



Celebration of Greek Independence Day at the Greek Consulate in New York and Gracie Mansion with NYC Mayor Eric Adams



Upcoming Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, is honored to be selected to give the annual Yom HaShoah presentation for the Center for Jewish Studies at Queens College on May 7 at 7pm on Zoom.

[Click Here](#) to Register

THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES ANNUAL YOM HASHOAH HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Orphan Child of Holocaust Studies: The Holocaust of Greek Jews

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos
Museum Director, Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

Tuesday, May 7, 2024 • 7 pm on Zoom

Although the actual victims lost (67,000) was small compared to the victims from Poland and other Eastern European countries, the devastation was greater. Greece lost 87% of its Jews, the largest percentage of any officially occupied country. We lost those who could tell the story, and we lost an entire generation of young people who had so much to offer. The most devastating blow to the memory of Greek Jews is the fact that, even today, many do not know of their tragedy. This lecture will try to remedy that.



Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos has been museum director of Kehila Kedosha Janina since 2004 and president of the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry since 1997. As a former educator, writer, editor and translator, she has dedicated her life to telling the story of Greek Jewry. Marcia was honored to be chosen a member of the scholarly committee for reviewing, translating, and microfilming the Salonika Archives at YIVO and compiled the text and visuals for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's website on the Holocaust of Greek Jewry. She is a frequent presenter at symposia of the Modern Greek Studies Association and is a member of the American Jewish Committee's Cyprus Team, where she engages in diplomatic outreach.

The annual Yom HaShoah Memorial Lecture has been endowed by Marvin and Celina Zborowski.

Greek Jewish Festival – Sunday May 19

Join the Greek Jewish Festival on Sunday May 19 from 12pm-6pm to celebrate our amazing community! Experience a feast for the senses including authentic kosher Greek foods and homemade Greek pastries, traditional dance performances with live Greek and Sephardic music, an outdoor marketplace full of vendors, arts and educational activities for kids, Sephardic cooking demonstrations, and much more! Learn more at www.GreekJewishFestival.com



KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM



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PRESENTS THE
NINTH ANNUAL

FREE ADMISSION

GREEK JEWISH FESTIVAL

SUNDAY MAY 19, 2024
12PM-6PM

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News from Jewish Greece

Athens

Commemorating Holocaust Day, KISE (Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece) and I.K. Athens (the Jewish Community of Athens) invite you, on Sunday, May 19, 2024, at 12 noon, in Block 15 of the Haidari Camp, to the unveiling of a votive plaque and to a commemoration of the Greek Jews who were captured and tortured there before their deportation and extermination in Auschwitz. I.K. Athens has a bus to and from the Synagogue (Melidoni 8, Thisio). Departure: 11am. In order to enter the camp, RSVP required by 14/5 here: <https://tinyurl.com/YOMASOA>



Ioannina

Between March 11-13, 2024, Samis Mosios and Victor Moses, both members of the ENE board, participated in an educational seminar about the hidden children of the Holocaust. The program was entitled "Remembering Hidden Children - Izieu Seminar", organized by the organization EUJS (European Union of Jewish Students) and held in Lyon, France. This seminar was attended by students, workers in Jewish communities in Europe, educators, as well as people who hold leadership positions in Jewish youth everywhere.

The program included a visit to the Maison d'Izieu museum and a Jewish tour of the city of Lyon, as well as various interactive and interesting workshops on the historical memory of the Holocaust. Of particular interest is the history of the Maison d'Izieu as a place: the Maison d'Izieu was a place established in the village of Izieu, in south-eastern France, by the organization OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants, Children's Aid Society). Its purpose was to provide shelter to dozens of Jewish children from many European countries while they were being persecuted by the Nazi regime. Unfortunately, however, on the morning of April 6, 1944, the Lyon Gestapo raided this shelter home in Izieu, arresting 44 children and 7 members of staff. After being imprisoned in Lyon, these people were sent to Drancy concentration camp the next day, from where they were then deported to extermination camps such as Auschwitz, Treblinka and Majdanek. The program, therefore, was dedicated to the memory of the hidden children who perished in the Holocaust, both those hosted at the Maison d'Izieu and the rest.

Before the arrival of the participants in Lyon, they were prepared through two shorter trainings, which were supervised by Yad Vashem. These trainings were generally about the stories of the hidden children in Europe during the Holocaust, but also how one can use them in an educational environment, so that one can more effectively talk about the Holocaust to children and teenagers. These presentations were accompanied by educational material which is available in various languages, including Greek, and can be used by anyone who wants to deal with this important work.

The presence of Baroness Regina Sluszný, who herself was a hidden child in Antwerp, Belgium, made a special sensation at the seminar. Ms. Sluszný, 85, shared her story with the participants and was present throughout the program. As reported by ENE envoys: "The atmosphere among the people who attended the program was fantastic. We met great people from different countries with whom we developed strong bonds, which was helped by the heavy subject matter of the program. It was a very moving experience and we are grateful to experience it and share it with other young Jews like us." Many thanks to EUJS for this wonderful and very constructive seminar.

Volos

On Wednesday, April 10, 2024, at her invitation Eleni Beze, lecturer at the Department of History, Archeology and Social Anthropology of the University of Thessaly, to president of I.K. Volos, Mr. Marcel Solomon, a speech

was given to the undergraduate students of the Department, who attend the course "Jewish life in Greece after the Holocaust: testimonies, memory, identities".

The president's narration regarding the story of the rescue of his immediate family who was rescued hiding in an area near the city of Volos, his other relatives who unfortunately did not have the same luck as well as life in the city after liberation, was watched with keen interest by all Students.

This is evidenced by the many questions the speaker received during his speech, which also concerned his personal history, but also information on the pre-war and post-war history of the Community, as well as the events during the Persecution.



The conclusion reached by all participants is that such initiatives, which include personal testimonies and direct communication, enhance the theoretical training students receive and can be a trigger for some of them to engage more extensively with the subject.

New Series of Stamps in Honor of the Synagogues of Greece

The commemorative series of stamps Synagogues of Greece was presented at an event organized by ELTA and KISE, in the Old Parliament, on April 18, 2024, the first day of circulation of the stamps. The six stamps of the series depict the historic synagogues of Athens, Thessaloniki, Larissa, Trikala, Ioannina and Rhodes, while the two envelopes depict the Synagogues of Corfu and Chania. During the event, greetings were addressed by the President of KISE David Saltiel and the President of ELTA Daniel Benardout. The creator of the stamps, Dr. Myrsini Vardopoulou, spoke about the process of designing the stamps and the director of the Jewish Museum of Greece, archaeologist, Ms. Janet Battinou, in her speech presented the "Synagogues of Greece over the centuries".



Southern Europe Leads Economic Growth, Surpassing Germany [Full article Here](#)

In a significant shift, southern European nations, once economic laggards, are now leading the Old Continent's economic development, even surpassing Germany, according to a recent article in the New York Times. The article highlights the remarkable growth of countries like Greece, Spain, and Portugal, which have outpaced Germany and other major European economies. Despite facing severe challenges during the eurozone debt crisis, these nations have made substantial strides in revitalizing their economies, attracting investments, boosting exports, and reducing unemployment rates.



Germany, traditionally the region's growth engine, now faces economic challenges, struggling to emerge from a recession triggered by rising energy prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While the eurozone economy experienced modest growth in the first quarter of 2024, Germany's growth rate remains sluggish compared to southern European counterparts. Southern European countries have implemented crucial reforms, including cutting red tape, reducing corporate taxes, and introducing labor market reforms to stimulate business growth. Additionally, they have benefited from increased investments, particularly in sectors like tourism and renewable energy.

Greece, for instance, experienced robust economic growth last year, fueled by investments from multinational corporations and a thriving tourism sector. Similarly, Portugal and Spain saw significant growth, driven by construction, hospitality, and other key industries. Even Italy, long viewed as an economic backwater, has seen improvements in its economic performance, with increased exports and foreign investments. However, Germany's economic stagnation reflects a failure to invest in crucial areas like education and digitalization during previous boom years. Over-reliance on Russian energy and exports to China has further exacerbated Germany's economic challenges. As southern European economies continue to rebound and demonstrate resilience, Germany faces an uphill battle to reignite economic growth and maintain its position as Europe's economic powerhouse.

Argentina

Meet Argentina's Axel Wahnish, the first rabbi ever to be appointed as an ambassador to Israel

Buenos Aires, Argentina (JTA) — Argentina's senate is on the brink of confirming President Javier Milei's nominee to be ambassador to Israel: his personal rabbi, Shimon Axel Wahnish.



Wahnish, 42, has been close to Milei as the Catholic "anarcho-capitalist" made a meteoric rise to power and is widely understood to be responsible for Milei's recent philosemitism, which shaped his candidacy and first months as president.

If confirmed, Wahnish will move from Buenos Aires to Israel with his family — his wife and six children — but it's unclear whether he will land in Herzliya, where Argentina's embassy has been located. Milei has vowed to move the embassy to Israel's contested capital city of Jerusalem.

Wahnish's approval has encountered snags amid concerns about Milei's embassy move and after a testy hearing last month that elicited charges of antisemitism from prominent Argentinian Jews.

"You must be aware that you are not the ambassador of Israel in Argentina. You are the ambassador of Argentina in Israel," said one lawmaker, Lucia Corpacci, in an admonishment that carried with it hints of dual-loyalty allegations like those that have plagued Jews around the world for centuries.

"Why do Jewish Argentines have to clarify that we are Argentines?" tweeted a lower-chamber lawmaker, Sabrina Ajmechet. Argentina's Jewish political umbrella organization, DAIA, said in a statement that it "strongly repudiates the prejudiced expressions" by Corpacci.

Another lawmaker, Martin Lousteau, raised concerns that the planned embassy move could harm Argentina's future claims to the Falkland Islands, territories that, like Jerusalem, have faced competing claims of sovereignty, in this case between Argentina and Britain. "We are not going to put the embassy in an occupied territory," Wahnish said in response to the senator, who has long drawn criticism from Jewish groups for what they say is a poor understanding of Middle East affairs. Last week, Foreign Minister Diana Mondino reportedly convinced Lousteau to sign off on Wahnish's nomination after personally assuring him that Argentina's claim to the Falklands would not be affected.

Now, Wahnish is expected to secure confirmation, which would position him to become, according to Israel's foreign ministry, the only rabbi in history to serve as an ambassador to Israel. (The role has been vacant since early 2022 when the previous ambassador was removed following a corruption conviction.) In his role, Wahnish will be responsible for maintaining newly improved relations between Argentina, home to the sixth-largest Jewish community in the world, and Israel.

It's a responsibility that the rabbi likely could not have anticipated growing up in Buenos Aires where, according to the haredi Orthodox magazine Mishpacha, he was not raised in Orthodoxy but became drawn to it as a young adult. After graduating from high school, Wahnish studied in yeshivas in Israel for a few years before returning to Argentina and getting a degree in education.

According to a resume submitted to the senate following his nomination as ambassador, Wahnish embarked on a series of Jewish outreach and education initiatives, including leading a program for young adults, founding a kabbalah study institute and working with Jews living outside Argentina's major population centers.

In 2012, he became the chief rabbi of ACILBA, Argentina's official Moroccan Jewish community. In that role, his resume says, he has been "in charge of the diplomatic link with Morocco, Egypt and the United States" and also certifies Argentinian applicants for Spanish and Portuguese citizenship as part of those countries' process of making reparations to the descendants of Sephardic Jews expelled during the Inquisition.

The ACILBA community is headquartered in a historic synagogue in central Buenos Aires that was built more than a century ago by Jewish immigrants of Moroccan origin, who arrived in Argentina in large numbers starting in 1891. The Great Temple of Piedras Street, also known as Bet El, hosted Albert Einstein during his 1925 visit to Argentina, but in recent years it had trouble filling its pews with the community in decline. According to Mishpacha, Wahnish's arrival brought new energy to the synagogue — and in the last decade, ACILBA has added another location in the trendy neighborhood of Palermo Soho. It is there that Wahnish has worked every day.

It was through ACILBA that Wahnish first encountered Milei just a couple of years ago, when the economist was still a fringe political figure known for making outlandish statements on TV but not seen as a likely contender for national office. According to Argentine political lore, Milei sought to speak to Wahnish's group in part to remediate the perception that he was antisemitic. First, he had to sit down with Wahnish — and their pro forma meeting stretched for hours.

"Little is known about what transpired behind closed doors, but when Milei left the office, a brotherhood had been born," according to an account in Mishpacha. "Rabbi Wahnish was accepted into Milei's inner circle, until then occupied only by his sister, Karina (to whom he refers as the Boss). From then on, Milei, whose popularity was growing at an unprecedented rate, proclaimed to every microphone thrust before him that Rabbi Wahnish was his guide and spiritual mentor."

Even as Milei's popularity skyrocketed, he became a regular at the rabbi's classes in the synagogue. Behind the scenes, Milei began joining the Wahnish family for Jewish holidays. And in public, he was forthcoming with praise for Wahnish, often in starkly emotional terms.

Milei infused Jewish practices into his campaign and began walking on stage to the sound of a shofar. He became emphatic about relocating the embassy, a politically significant gesture that only a handful of countries have made and that would mark a stark departure from Argentina's historically checkered relations with Israel. And he began saying that he hoped to become Jewish one day, though he said he did not see Jewish observance as compatible with the requirements of the presidency.

Soon after he was elected, Milei traveled to New York City to pray at the grave of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the last leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. And to accompany his inauguration, Milei opted to hold an interfaith ceremony rather than the Catholic rites traditionally associated with the swearing-in, in part to make space for his friend Wahnish.

There, inside Buenos Aires' main Catholic church, the rabbi addressed Milei directly.

"Mr. President, I was asked to bless you. But ... I'm not the one who gives blessings. We are all humans and in front of G-d we are all equals," Wahnish said during the nationally televised ceremony.

"The only thing that I can do is to ask G-d ... to give you, dear president, exactly what you have been asking G-d for a long time," Wahnish continued. "Do you remember what it is?"

Milei responded by mouthing three words: "wisdom, temperance and courage." Then the two men embraced for a long time.

Since Milei's swearing in, Wahnish has continued to stay close to him, including during a three-day trip to Israel that was Milei's first trip abroad as president. There, Milei visited the Western Wall and the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and met with Israeli leaders, including President Isaac Herzog and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Milei attracted notice for his emotional reaction to being in the country, when he made official the embassy relocation plan.

"People used to think that a president is above other people, not human. We want to show that everyone has emotions and still grows spiritually and to be a better person," Wahnish told the Jerusalem Post about the trip, in one of his only interviews about his relationship with Milei. Wahnish declined to speak with JTA, saying in December that he wanted to keep a low profile.

Argentina's relationship with Israel could be one of the least divisive aspects of Milei's new presidency. Allying with Israel represents a shift from his predecessor, like many Latin American leftists a strong critic of Israel. Milei is eliciting more controversy with his economic policies, austerity cuts to the government and alliances with far-right leaders around the world, including former U.S. president and presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump.

For Wahnish, the move to Israel comes at a personally meaningful time, after a family crisis in which his wife and youngest daughter barely survived a traumatic birth right around the time he met Milei, according to Mishpacha. His brother Hernan, also a rabbi, will take up his responsibilities at ACILBA.

Diana Serfaty, ACILBA's president, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the mood in the community is a mix of pride for Wahnish's new role and also some sadness.

"While it won't be easy to say goodbye to his daily presence, we also know that it will be a gradual process and that he will remain in contact with the community as a guide and mentor to his eventual replacement," Serfaty said. She added, "We wish him the best and we know that he has important tools for his role due to his training, empathy, entrepreneurial spirit and proactivity."

Israel

A True Jerusalem Story: The Failed Raid of the Lost Ark

The National Library of Israel, full article [Here](#)

More than a century ago, a group of English treasure-hunters showed up in Jerusalem with the most ambitious of goals: They were determined to find the treasures of the ancient biblical kings, no less. This grand quest and its strange results made sensational headlines in newspapers around the globe, not to mention the riots that erupted across the city...



The rumor spread like wildfire across the city.

The crimes were unthinkable. Perhaps too fantastical to believe. And yet many did.

In mid-April of 1911, a team of English treasure hunters was busy at work in Jerusalem. They were digging under the Dome of the Rock, under the Temple Mount – the Noble Sanctuary, one of the world's most sacred

and sensitive religious landmarks. They were actually given permission, of a sort, to do so, but this did not make the act any less scandalous.

It was on the night of April 12 that the excavation came to an abrupt end: the wrong person found out about the dig, and it quickly became clear that remaining in Jerusalem was dangerous. The team packed up its equipment and findings and left town in a hurry. They were long gone when word began to spread that British adventurers had made off with the treasures of the ancient Jewish kings.



The press did not feel the need to downplay the event. Respectable newspapers declared that the stolen artifacts included King Solomon's crown, his sword and his ring, as well as an ancient manuscript of the Bible (long before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls). The New York Times ran with the headline: "Gone With Treasure That Was Solomon's". Some dispatches even mentioned the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant itself.

"It is believed that the explorers found Solomon's crown, his sword and his ring and an ancient manuscript of the Bible", from the May 20, 1911 issue of The Reform Advocate.

The incident soon led to chaos. Riots were sparked in Jerusalem, with local citizens going on strike and venting their fury at the Ottoman government for allowing such an outrage to occur. It was clear to all that the authorities had been in the know. Only the eventual resignation of the district governor was enough to calm the masses.

But what was the nature of this strange incident? Who were these treasure hunters? What were they looking for and what did they truly find?

The Genesis of the Parker Expedition

It began a few years earlier with a man named Walter Henrich Juvelius. This strange Finnish poet was a man of eccentric interests, a doctor of philosophy who was fascinated with numerology, the Kabbalah and Jewish chronology. At some point in the early 1900s, Juvelius claimed to have made a startling discovery: he believed he had found a mysterious cipher while conducting research on Jewish history (one report mentioned he found it in the library of St. Sophia in Constantinople).



The cipher supposedly enabled one to unlock secrets hidden in the Bible and other ancient Jewish texts. Among these: the location of the treasures of the First Temple, including the Ark of the Covenant. As if this wasn't odd enough, there was also talk of strange ancient documents unearthed in Ireland that also hinted at treasure buried in Jerusalem.

Armed with these "revelations", Juvelius eventually turned up in London, where he met Captain Montagu Brownlow Parker. A decorated British soldier who had fought in the Second Boer War, Parker was also a well-connected aristocrat – his brother was the 4th Earl of Morley. Parker bought into Juvelius' scheme to locate the ancient treasures in Jerusalem, and set about raising money and recruiting personnel. The 30-year-old English officer was quite successful in this: he managed to raise some £25,000 from a number of wealthy British and American patrons (equivalent to more than £3.8 million in 2023), and convinced several of his army buddies to join him and Juvelius on the expedition to the Holy Land.

Why were these affluent socialites and bored army veterans so eager to support such an overly ambitious excavation based on such flimsy evidence, you ask? It likely had something to do with Juvelius' estimate that the treasure they were certain to find, including copious amounts of gold and silver, would be equal to a value of around \$200 million dollars (over \$6.4 billion today). This was also a time when the Spiritualist movement

was still quite popular in the upper classes of British and American society. Hidden bible codes, mystical long-lost artifacts and ancient buried treasure? What's not to like?

In 1908, before beginning the dig, Parker made a stop in Constantinople. His team may have been unorthodox (it included a former cricket player, a Swiss psychic and precisely zero archaeologists) and his motives were perhaps questionable, but the army captain was still intent on getting the proper legal permits from the Ottoman administration. After a quick negotiation, officials from the new Young Turks government supplied the permit in late November in exchange for £500 and half of any treasure to be found.

By this point Parker and Juvelius had already made a brief scouting trip to Jerusalem to identify the exact locations for the dig. Juvelius believed that the treasure lay underground, somewhere in the vicinity of the Temple Mount – the massive stone platform thought to be the site of both Jewish temples, where the Dome of the Rock now stood alongside the Al Aqsa Mosque.

Let the Digging Begin

Since digging under the platform itself was (initially) out of the question because of the religious sensitivities involved, Juvelius planned to reach the area by using already-existing ancient underground passages, accessible from what was known as the Hill of Ophel, the area south of the Temple Mount and the mosques. These would hopefully lead to a secret treasure chamber, that Juvelius was convinced existed under the Temple Mount itself.

The British team actually purchased land in the area of the dig site with some help from Ottoman officials. The Turks were able to overcome local resistance to the sale by announcing that the land was to be used for a hospital (this did not pan out). Finally, with the bureaucratic wrangling out of the way, work could begin.

In August of 1909, the team set up in a lone villa south of the Old City walls, the dig site was fenced off, and preparations for the excavation began. The European visitors stood out like a sore thumb in early 20th century Jerusalem, and their secretive behavior aroused plenty of attention and curiosity. Inevitably, despite the efforts to pretend otherwise, rumor got out that these were treasure hunters. Soon enough, the team was under pressure from suspicious locals and community leaders, who were eager to have someone on the inside that they could trust – a serious professional whose mere presence would reassure them. Parker finally gave in.

Enter Louis-Hugues Vincent.

Vincent was a Dominican monk, but also a respected archaeologist who worked at Jerusalem's *École biblique et archéologique française*. Parker agreed to allow Vincent full access to the dig, three days a week, on the condition that no information would be shared with the public until Parker saw fit. This had the double effect of silencing local criticism, as well as providing the team with its only certified and relevant expert.

It is primarily thanks to Vincent that we have a detailed record of most of the Parker expedition's underground work in Jerusalem. In fact, mere months after the scandalous incident on the Temple Mount, Vincent published an entire book, in both French and English, about the Parker expedition, detailing its work methods and findings and featuring intricate maps, drawings and photographs. A rare copy of *Underground Jerusalem: Discoveries on the Hill of Ophel (1909-11)* can be found in the Eran Laor Cartographic Collection at the National Library of Israel.

As work got underway, some three hundred men were employed from the nearby village of Silwan (Siloam) to do the digging. The team began the excavations in the area of the Gihon Spring, Warren's Shaft and the Siloam Tunnel (also known as Hezekiah's tunnel). Both the tunnel and the shaft were previously explored in the 19th century, to much fanfare, and were thought to have formed parts of ancient Jerusalem's

underground water system. The general plan was to search for as-yet undiscovered passages, branching off from the known tunnels, that would hopefully lead the team to the secret treasure under the Temple Mount.

The work was arduous and dangerous, continuing at all times of the day, in 4-hour shifts. The workers carried torches and chanted songs as they picked away. Vincent wrote that they "found it necessary to take some such means to counteract the monotony of the dark, mysterious tunnels which seemed to stretch endlessly into the very entrails of the rock".

The 1909 dig lasted into the autumn, but bad weather soon made further progress impossible. The team dispersed for the season, with Parker and company returning to Britain. They were back in Jerusalem by early August of 1910, with better equipment and aided by experts who had worked on the London Underground subway system. In this second dig season, the team continued to clear out the existing tunnels and even discovered previously unknown passages and chambers. Yet none of these came near the area of the Temple Mount, where the treasure was believed to be hidden. Parker even decided to begin carving out new tunnels, to bore an underground path that would lead them to their goal, but this was a slow and laborious process.

Vincent's book contains a number of detailed maps charting out the network of ancient tunnels excavated by the team, as well as tunnels that they themselves dug underground.

Conditions were difficult, even for those with experience. Vincent wrote: "Thirty metres from the fountain the candles would not burn any longer, and we had to fall back on portable electric lanterns. In spite of a ventilator and oxygen capsules, the gangs had to be relieved every hour. At certain times I was not able to be more than a quarter of an hour in the gallery."

While work was underway, water had to be diverted from the ancient Siloam Tunnel in which the famous Siloam Inscription was found in 1880. One of the benefits of this entire enterprise was that the clearing out of the underground waterways meant that water could now flow more easily through the channels. As the dig season drew to a close, the water was diverted back on October 11, 1910. Vincent wrote that its volume was now double what it had been previously, to the delight of the villagers of Silwan: "The flow of water gradually passed through to the Pool of Siloam; the shouts of acclamation and the noise of the feast to celebrate this occasion will long sound in my ears".

Kehila Kedosha Janina Announces Program for Greek Jewish Festival full article [Here](#)

Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum (KKJ) announced it will host the ninth annual Greek Jewish Festival on Sunday, May 19, 12-6 PM. The festival will take place in front of KKJ's landmark historic synagogue at 280 Broome Street between Allen Street and Eldridge Street on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

The Greek Jewish Festival celebrates and showcases the unique Romaniote and Sephardic heritage of the Jews of Greece. The festival offers a feast for the senses including authentic kosher Greek foods and homemade Greek pastries, live Greek and Sephardic musical performances with four different bands, two different traditional dance performances, an outdoor marketplace full of vendors, arts and educational activities for kids, Sephardic cooking demonstrations, and much more. This is the only festival of its kind in the world.



In past years the festival has attracted thousands of people, and more are expected this year as people are eager to come together and celebrate with new performers and community partners. KKJ is proud to collaborate with more than 30 different community organizations that include local, national, and international

partners. Long-standing local partners include the Tenement Museum, the Museum at Eldridge Street, Lower East Side History Month, and Saint Barbara Greek Orthodox Church, among others. National partners include the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America, the American Sephardi Federation, the Panepirotic Federation of America, Combat Antisemitism Movement, the University of Washington Sephardic Studies Program, and many other community institutions. New partners in 2024 include the National Hellenic Society, PJ Library, and renowned Chef Susan Barocas and the Savor Sephardic Music and Food Experience.

Live international performers will keep the music flowing and are guaranteed to get attendees up on their feet and dancing throughout the day. Melodies will span the Mediterranean and feature songs that cut across cultures and history, including Greek, Turkish, Ladino, Israeli, Cypriot, and other genres.

The performance schedule includes the Stavros Theodorou Orchestra at 12 PM, Hellenic Dancers of New Jersey at 1 PM, Noga Group featuring Avram Pengas at 2 PM, Hannah Belly Dance Performance at 3 PM, Sounds of Cyprus at 4 PM, and Habbina Habbina at 5 PM.

"As the only Greek Jewish Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere, Kehila Kedosha Janina is thrilled to bring our community together to celebrate our phenomenal festival once again this year. Visitors will be guaranteed an afternoon of delight that celebrates the rich culture of Greek Jews," said Marvin Marcus, President of KKJ. "As a Lower East Side native, I grew up experiencing different cultures among neighbors, and the Greek Jewish Festival is our way of sharing our traditions with the broader Lower East Side and New York community."

"We're thrilled and humbled that we're going to take part in this year's Greek Jewish Festival," said Habbina Habbina musician Amit Peled. "Greek music plays such a huge role in my musical universe. The amount of inspiration and influence from artists such as Aris San on the development of modern Jewish music and the unique role of the guitar in it, is monumental. Not only does this music have such richness in style and material, but so much life! It feels like part of our band's mission to play this music from every stage and bandstand, and keep it alive and relevant as it deserves to be. Our music is the ultimate mixture of sadness, laughter, and a full on celebration of life – join us on May 19 to experience it yourself!"

"No matter your ethnic, cultural, or religious background, there is something for you at our Greek Jewish Festival," said Festival Director Andrew Marcus. "Join us and learn more about a community you may not have known existed, while enjoying our delicious foods and energetic music and dancing."

"We are very excited to share our rich culture from Epirus at this year's Greek Jewish Festival!" said John Katsimbaris, President of the Panepirotic Federation of America. "We are especially proud of Epirus' rich art, food, and music, probably Europe's oldest surviving folk music! This major multi-ethnic festival is sure to be a rewarding experience for all who join."

"The Greek Jewish Festival has become our signature event of the year," said Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos, Museum Director of KKJ. "I have seen the festival bring together extended families and friends, and this year is sure to reunite many more. Greek Jews have come from all over the country to eat our traditional foods, dance to Greek music on the tenement-lined Lower East Side streets where our families first arrived as immigrants, and to remember what makes us so special."

"The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America is thrilled to continue to partner with KKJ," said Sedat Behar, President of the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America. "We are very proud of our heritage and this festival helps bring together our Sephardic and Romaniote communities in an incredible way. It is exciting to see the festival grow every year and we look forward to continuing the revitalization of our community."

Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



This year, the month of May contains four significant dates and events for Israel and the Jewish People: Holocaust Remembrance Day, Israel Memorial Day, Israel Independence Day and "Lag B'Omer" [the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer], which celebrates the anniversary of the death of the Talmudic Sage and author of the Zohar, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai at his gravesite in Meron.

Yet there is yet another significant date in the Hebrew calendar that occurs on May 22nd, somewhat obscure and quite possibly even unknown to many Jews: "*Pesah Sheni*" – the second Pesah, which occurs on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Iyar, exactly one month after the 14th of Nissan, the day prescribed for bringing the *Korban Pesach* – the "Paschal offering", i.e. the Passover lamb).

Pesah Sheni originates in the Torah, as described in the Book of Bamidbar, chapter 9, verses 5-13. A year after the Exodus, G-d instructed the people of Israel to bring the Passover offering on the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nissan, and to eat it that evening, roasted over the fire, together with matzah and bitter herbs, as they had done the previous year just before they left Egypt. The bringing of the Paschal offering is a fundamental tenet of Judaism, and anyone who wantonly avoids bringing the Paschal offering is liable for the very severe spiritual punishment of "*karet*" - being cut off from the Jewish people.

However, to perform the Paschal sacrifice, a person must be considered ritually pure. As the Torah describes, there were individuals who had become ritually impure just before Pesah under circumstances not under their control, and therefore were disqualified from bringing the Paschal offering on the 14th of Nissan. In their desire to be continue to be part and parcel of children of Israel community, and fulfil this important mitzvah, they approached Moses and Aaron and asked why they should be deprived of bringing G-d's offering in its proper time, since their state of impurity was not caused by any wanton deed on their part, but rather by their inadvertent exposure to a dead body, which renders a person ritually impure of the highest degree? Moses, faced with this very legitimate question, turned to G-d for a solution.

G-d's response clearly demonstrates that he well understood the people's plea, and in response, G-d established the 14th of Iyar as a day for the "Second Passover" (Pesach Sheni) allowing anyone who was unable to bring the offering on its appointed time in the previous month to do so on that date. The rules for the Paschal offering and its consumption were identical to those of the original date, thereby enabling all children of Israel to participate in the Paschal offering and be included in the Israelite nation.

Observance of Pesah Sheni continued throughout both first and second Temple times. However, after the destruction of the Second Temple and the total cessation of the sacrificial rite, Pesah Sheni became basically irrelevant, remaining only a date on the Hebrew calendar with no practical significance or ritual action.

However, later Jewish sages, especially among the Hassidic masters and Kabbalists in the 17th and 18th centuries, saw Pesah Sheni as being a very important spiritual symbol of giving Jews a "second chance" in religious terms, with a special emphasis on the idea of "*teshuvah*" – repentance – and how every Jew may find his or her way back to greater observance of Jewish ritual, no matter how distant he or she had become from Jewish life and lore. In short, there is never a 'lost case' among Jews. Almighty G-d Himself allowed, and even commanded, Israelites unable to perform one of Judaism's most tantamount mitzvot, to 'make up' the deficit by observing Pesah Sheni. As such, even though the observance of Pesah Sheni in its original form ceased almost two-thousand years ago, the message of providing a spiritual second chance remains eternal, and Pesah Sheni

symbolizes this vital idea and principle. The last Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson was especially well-known for developing the idea of giving Jews a second spiritual chance.

As for any formal celebration of Pesah Sheni in more modern times, there are Hassidic Rebbes who hold a *'tish'* – a 'table', on Pesah Sheni, including the drinking of four cups of wine and the consumption of Matzah and bitter herbs like the Pesah seder. However, in the wider Jewish community, Pesah Sheni today is commemorated only by not reciting penitential prayers (*Tahanun*) on the 14th of Iyar. There are also who eat matzah as well, though this is chiefly a Hasidic custom and not that widespread.

Nonetheless, the symbolism and message of allowing a person a second chance in terms of improving his or her spirituality and feeling part of the Jewish community is a vital message that must be more intensely adopted and internalized by us all. We must never give up on any Jew and ensure that each and every Jew of every personality and level of observance – or lack thereof - feels that he or she belongs and is welcome in the worldwide Jewish community and people. Happy Pesah Sheni to one and all!



Rabbi Marc D. Angel
Angel for Shabbat--Aharei Mot/Kedoshim
JewishIdeas.org

The Sifra on Vayikra 19:18 records a debate between Rabbi Akiva and Ben Azzai. Rabbi Akiva states that the verse, "and you shall love your neighbor as yourself" is a great principle of the Torah. Ben Azzai, while agreeing with Rabbi Akiva's basic point, suggests that another verse contains an even greater principle of Torah: zeh sefer toledot adam, zeh kelal gadol mizeh (This is the book of the generations of man--this is an even greater principle). This verse, drawn from Parashat Bereishith, includes the words that G-d created human beings in His image. Thus, we are called upon to respect all human beings--regardless of their particular backgrounds. Ben Azzai, is offering a universal vision of inclusiveness and commitment to humanity in general, not just to our own friends and neighbors. This is an even greater principle than loving one's neighbor as oneself, in the sense that it enlarges our perspective, and helps us view ourselves as part of the greater human family.

But how do we balance the particular commitment to our family and faith with a recognition of the universal value of all human beings?

Some years ago, I read a parable in the writings of Dr. Pinchas Polonsky that helped me clarify my thinking. Imagine that you have carefully studied a painting day after day, year after year. You know every brush-stroke, color, shadow... you know every detail of the painting and you understand it to the extent humanly possible. And then, one day someone comes along and turns on the light. You then realize that the painting you had studied to perfection is actually part of a much larger canvas. As you stand back, you realize that you need to re-evaluate your thinking. The segment of the canvas that you have studied all these years has not changed; you still know every detail; it is still absolutely true. Yet, you must now study your truth in context of a much larger canvas.

Each faith, at its best, has a very true understanding of its piece of the larger canvas. But when the lights go on, each faith must come to realize that it represents part of the picture but not the whole picture. A grand religious vision must necessarily entail a grand perception of G-d: G-d is great enough to create and love all human beings. G-d sees the whole canvas of humanity in its fullness.

One of the great challenges facing religions is to see the entire picture, not just our particular segment of it. While being fully committed to our faiths, we also need to make room for others. We need, in a sense, to see humanity from the perspective of G-d, to see the whole canvas not just individual segments of it.

Religious vision is faulty when it sees one, and only one, way to G-d. Religious vision is faulty when it promotes forced conversions, discrimination against "infidels," violence and murder of those holding different views. How very tragic it is that much of the anti-religious persecution that takes place in our world is perpetrated by people who claim to be religious, who claim to be serving the glory of G-d.

While religion today should be the strongest force for a united, compassionate and tolerant humanity, it often appears in quite different garb. Religion is too often identified with terrorism, extremism, superstition, exploitation...and hypocrisy. People commit the most heinous crimes...and do so while claiming to be acting in the name of G-d.

The authentic religious voice should be one that fosters mutual understanding; we should remind ourselves and our fellow religionists that G-d loves all human beings and wants all human beings to be blessed with happy and good lives. There is room for all of us on this earth. We need to foster a religious vision that is humble, thoughtful, and appreciative of the greatness of G-d.

Short Term, Long Term: Thoughts on Israel and the Jewish Future – Rabbi Marc D. Angel

In the short term, things look very difficult. Israel is in the midst of military confrontations with Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran. In spite of the remarkable achievements of IDF in Gaza, the war lingers on with no clear end in sight. Israel faces increasing international censure from the United Nations, the International Court, and from political leaders around the world. American college campuses are rife with anti-Israel activity. Radical Hamas supporters unashamedly call for the destruction of Israel and the murder of Jews.

We all feel the pain and the pressure. We are going through a protracted nightmare. And it won't likely get better in the short term.

But the crisis will pass, sooner (hopefully!) or later. How can things change for the better in the long term?

Israel must conclude its war in Gaza as quickly and effectively as possible. It must work with allies to put into place a responsible Palestinian leadership that will eschew ongoing warfare and that will work peacefully with Israel for the benefit of all. It cannot ignore the Palestinian issue or let it fester endlessly.

Israel has taken great strides forward through the Abraham Accords. The more Arab and Muslim countries recognize Israel, the more secure Israel becomes. Formal diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia would be a potential game changer in the Middle East. Aside from the political and economic benefits, it would undercut the hateful voices that call for Israel's destruction. It would make it clear that Israel is strong, creative, and a genuine partner with other nations seeking a harmonious region.

While short term challenges must be faced courageously, we need to focus on long term resolutions of problems. It isn't realistic to expect that the deep hatred of our enemies will dissipate overnight. The ugly anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism that have exploded in recent months will not suddenly cease. But visionary leadership can help us move gradually and intelligently beyond the problematic status quo. In spite of all the battles and threats, we need to formulate sensible strategies to bring us to a lasting peace.

We need to be strong to defend ourselves from our enemies; but we need special strength and blessing to work for and attain peace. Indeed, it may well be more difficult to achieve peace than to win wars.

"The L-rd gives strength to His people, may the L-rd bless His people with peace."

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. **You can do this online 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.



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Kehila Kedosha Janina

280 Broome Street, New York NY 10002

Website: www.kkjsm.org

Email: museum@kkjsm.org

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