

## Shabbat Hagadol

Rabbi Hagay Batzri

The speeches that Rabenu Yosef Haim, the Ben Ish Hai, a"h, delivered every year on Shabbat Hagadol (the Shabbat before Pesah) are well known. In Baghdad, just 100 years ago, more than 1000 people listened in the Bet Kneset Salat El Kebiri while thousands more would stand outside the synagogue and listen to the speech of the Ben Ish Hai.

Eyewitnesses described the speeches as miraculous events that happened there—how on Shabbat, without a microphone or amplification, so many men, women and children would hear every word from the Rabbi clearly and loudly. And, everyone understood the Ben Ish Hai's message at their own level. I would pay almost any price to go back in time and see, with my own eyes, this great miracle that our great-grandfathers experienced during their lifetime in Iraq.

Alternately, I would like to bring some of the Divrei Torah, the Torah lessons, that the Ben Ish Hai presented there, as they were recorded by Hacham Ya'aqob Me-

nashe. This particular lesson explains an apparent injustice in Hashem's favor for the Jewish people.

### Why did G-d treat the Jewish people differently from the Egyptians?

At the time of the splitting of the Red Sea, the angels of Misrayim (Egypt) claimed there was no difference between the Jewish people and the Egyptians. Just as these worshiped idols, so did those. The Holy One, Blessed Be He, replied that he does not judge one who committed a transgression deliberately, the same way as one who did it accidentally.

The question is how *Abodah Zarah* (idol worship) could be considered to be accidental. Even a small child who has a basic understanding would know that it is forbidden to serve wood, stone or animals. Hakham Yosef Hayyim, 'a"h, in Ben Ish Hayil, explains it with the following parable.

*There was a king who whenever he got so angry at a person that he would decide to kill him, always had a particular angry expression at the time he decided to kill him. All the servants and employees in the palace were familiar*

*with his facial expressions and the meaning of the looks in his eyes. One day, the king was sitting with important dignitaries from many countries and the servants served an abundant selection of delicacies.*

*One of the servants, who was serving hot soup from a large bowl, shook a little and some of the soup spilled onto the king's royal clothes. The king was furious and gave this young servant the angry look which made it clear to all the servants that he had made up his mind to kill this young servant.*

*What did the young servant do? He took the bowl of soup and poured it on top of the king's head in the presence of all the foreign dignitaries and king was drenched in soup from head to toe. The king's fury reached its limits and he told the servant that he would execute him in a cruel way. But he said, "First let me ask you why you did this instead of begging me for mercy when you spilled a few drops on me".*

*The servant replied that he saw the anger in the eyes of the king when he spilled a few drops and that he had made up his mind to kill him and said that had the king killed*

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Prayer Schedule

### SHABBAT HAGADOL

#### PARASHAT ACHAREI

*Friday, April 15th*

Minhah & Arvit 6:30 pm  
Candle Lighting 7:06 pm

*Saturday, April 16th*

Shaharit 8:30 am  
Tehillim 6:00 pm  
Minhah & Arvit 6:30 pm  
Motzei Shabbat 8:10 pm

### PESAH

*Sunday, April 17th*

Shaharit 7:30 am

Check for Hametz after dark

**First Seder:** *Monday, April 18*

Shaharit 6:30 am

Eat Hametz before 10:00 am

Burn Hametz by 11:00 am

Minha and Arvit 6:30 pm

Light Candles 7:08 pm

**Second Seder:** *Tues., April 19*

Shaharit 9:00 am

Minha and Arvit 7:00 pm

Light Candles after 8:12 pm

Sefirat Ha'Omer First Night

**Second Day:** *Wed., April 20*

Shaharit 9:00 am

**Secrets of the Omer** 6:00 pm

Minha and Arvit 7:00 pm

Havdallah 8:13 pm

**Hol Hamoed** *Wed./Thurs.*

Shaharit 6:30 am

**TALMUD TORAH PESAH BREAK**

*Monday, April 18th to*

*Friday, April 29th*

### EREV SHABBAT

*Friday, April 22nd*

Shaharit 6:30 am

Minhah & Arvit 6:30 pm

Candle Lighting 7:11 pm

### Torah Readings

Parashat Acharei 480-493

Haftara pp. 1005-1008

him for no reason, it would be a disgrace for the king in the eyes of the world. He told the king that the reason he poured the rest of the soup over the king deliberately, was that nobody would now blame the king for his actions. The king was pleased with this answer and told his servant that since he was willing to sacrifice himself for the honor of the king, the king would forgive him completely.

The same applied to the Children of Israel. The Egyptians made their lives a misery enslaving them, throwing babies into the Nile and slaughtering them for Pharaoh . . . And they were the people of G-d, the descendants of the holy Patriarchs. The nations of the world would question why G-d seemingly abandoned His people and they were being trodden underfoot by the Egyptians, because the nations of the world did not realize that the slavery was purifying the Jewish Nation to be in a fit state to receive the holy Torah. The result would have been a desecration of G-d's holy Name in the world

This is why some of the Jewish people, even though they did not believe in idolatry, publicly served idols in order to prevent the nations of the world from even thinking that G-d would desert the Jewish people and criticizing Him. Just like the young servant who dared to pour soup on the king's head in order to save the king's reputation, the Jewish people served idols to help preserve Hashem's reputation in the eyes of the world. And that is why G-d judged them as having served idols "accidentally."

**Shabbat Shalom**

## Community News

### THANK YOU

to

The Sisterhood of Kahal Joseph  
for graciously and generously  
hosting the Member Luncheon

in honor of

President Ronald Einy & the  
Board of Directors

### THANK YOU

to the ladies and gentlemen  
who cleaned and polished  
our Torah scroll cases

this past Sunday

*Louise Nathan*

*Shoshana & Shaoul Goury*

*Flossie Jacob*

*Diana Solomon*

*Ben Elias and his son*

*Reuben Elias*

### SHABBAT MITZVOT

We offer for donation the following Mitzvot.

- 1. Petichat Hechal** opening of the ark;
- 2. Carrying of the Sefer Torah & Sefer Haftara**;
- 3. Hakamat Sefer** lifting of the Torah;
- 4. Mashlim\*** The seventh aliya to the Torah who recites Kaddish;
- 5. Maftir\*** The last aliya to the Torah which includes the Haftara (read by the clergy unless member reading is preapproved). We suggest a minimum donation of \$126 or multiples of \$18 or \$26. You will receive confirmation before Shabbat to confirm if you will receive the aliya. Members may reserve in advance by calling the office. Non-members reserving aliyot should contact the office for availability at 310.474.0559. We appreciate your support.

## In Memoriam

It is customary to light a memorial candle in the evening and to donate tzedakah. Family members are encouraged to attend prayer services in honor of loved ones.

### Shabbat / 12 Nisan

Farha Mitana bat Rahma Regina Cohen  
Rafal ben Itzhak Faraj HaCohen\*  
Luna bat Mazal Cohen  
David ben Shlomo HaLevi\*

### Sunday / 13 Nisan

Avraham Asher ben Ezra

### Tuesday / 15 Nisan

Tillie bat Evelyn  
Naima bat Zvida  
Eyob ben Yehudah\*

### Wednesday / 16 Nisan

Ezra ben Shaul Halevi  
Shlomo Nachmun ben Yaacov  
Homayoun John Nahai\*

*To update, please call the office  
at 310.474.0559.*

## Refuah Shlemah

Yonatan ben Alizah • Mazal Tov  
bat Sulha Mitana • Matilda  
Louisa • Yaheskel ben Regina •  
Ayala bat Naomi • Khayah Noa  
bat Sara • Haim ben Mordechai •  
Pnina bat Esther • Yosi ben  
Esther • Victor ben Latif • Ramah  
Regina bat Farha • Aziza bat Sara  
Judith bat Malka • Ofek ben Yochai  
• Efrayim Zev ben Fayga • Sulha  
Matana bat Mozelle • Gershon ben  
David • Farangis Miriam bat  
Touran • David ben Leah •  
Avraham Haim ben Miryam •  
Yaakov ben Freda • Rachel bat  
Mazal Tov • Avraham ben Rab-  
bie • Mazal Sigalit bat Rivkah •  
Orit bat Tikvah • Yaakov ben  
Aliyah • Chana Leah bat Reiza •  
Victoria Cohen • Avraham  
Moshe ben Miriam

### SPONSOR KIDDUSH

To sponsor a Shabbat Kiddush or an afternoon meal, known as Seudah Shlisheet, in honor of a special occasion or family member or friend, please contact our office at 310.474.0559.