

KOL MEVASSER



Iraqi Jews Bury Sacred Texts in NYC Cemetery

By Sam Sokol
Jerusalem Post
 December 16, 2013

According to Jewish law, holy texts that are damaged or otherwise unusable must be placed in permanent storage or buried.

A number of fragments of holy texts that had been confiscated from the Iraqi Jewish community by Saddam Hussein's secret police were buried in a Jewish cemetery in New York City on Sunday.

The documents, mainly consisting of fragments of Torah scrolls and the book of Esther, are part of a collection discovered in 2003 by coalition forces in the basement of Baghdad's Mukhabarat, or secret police, headquarters.

According to Jewish law, holy texts that are damaged or otherwise unusable must be placed in permanent storage or buried.

A portion of the documents, which are being restored, are on display at the US National Archives but are due to be returned to Iraq next year. Jewish groups have expressed strong opposition to the return of the documents, claiming that since they were confiscated by the government they rightfully belong to the expatriate Jewish community.

In a statement released to the press and signed by more than 40 American Jewish groups last month, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations called upon the US government to "assure that the Iraqi Jewish Archives currently in Washington, DC, would be protected, and continue to be accessible to Iraqi Jewish communities around the world."

The Iraqi government has stated that it believes the documents are an integral part of Iraqi history and cannot be relinquished.

The World Organization of Jews from Iraq (WOJI) negotiated the return of the fragments with Iraq, group President Maurice Shohet wrote in a letter to members obtained by The Jerusalem Post.

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KJ Schedule Parashat Shemot

Erev Shabbat

Friday, December 20th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:30 am
Shir Hashirim	4:10 pm
Shabbat Candlelighting	4:29 pm
Minhah/Arbith	4:29 pm

Shabbat / Parashat Shemot

Saturday, December 21st

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	8:30 am
Minha, Seudah Shlisheet, Arvit	4:00 pm
Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah	5:33 pm

Weekdays

Sunday, December 22nd

Shaharit	7:30 am
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Mon & Tues, Thurs & Fri, Dec. 23, 24, 26, 27th

Shaharit	6:30 am
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Wednesday, December 25th

Shaharit	7:30 am
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Erev Shabbat

Friday, December 27th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:30 am
Shir Hashirim	4:10 pm
Shabbat Candlelighting	4:33 pm
Minhah/Arbith	4:33 pm

Readings: Shabbat Shemot

Torah: Exodus / Sefer Shemot

Hertz edition pages 206 to 224

Haftara Jeremiah / Yirmiyahu pages 229 to 231

Shabbat Shalom

(Continued from page 1)

Representatives of the Iraqi government, US State Department, National Archives and National Endowment for Humanities were all due to attend the ceremony, which was closed to the press by agreement between the parties involved.

“This is a very important matter to us, as we wish to see the traditions and laws of our faith upheld and our Holy objects treated with the respect due to them,” Shohet wrote.



Not every Iraqi émigré agreed with Shohet’s decision to bury the fragments.

In a letter to Shohet, expatriate Robert Fattal, a writer and commenter, asked for the ceremony to be delayed.

“These are no ordinary religious texts, they are part of our Iraqi Jewish history and why should we rush to dispose of these treasures,” Fattal asked Shohet. “They tell our story, damaged as they are, they tell a story of perfectly good religious texts that were used by Iraqi Jews, seized by Saddam, damaged by war, and miraculously salvaged for everyone to see.”

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Sholeh & Moussa Shaaya &
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Welcome

Rabbi Navah

our Guest Speaker
for Parashat Shemot
on the topic of

“*Changes in Jewish
American Identity*”

Refuah Shlemah

Tilda Levy / Tilda bat Miriam
Joseph Sharaf / Yossef ben Jamila
Maurice Ovadia / Moshe ben Noosha
Pnina Herzbrun / Pnina bat Esther
Michael Herzbrun / Michael Baruch ben Sarah
Meir ben Farha
Rahel bat Marsel

Please renew these name listing this week, as we will be updating the list. If you would like to remove a member's name or to add a member name to the list please call 310-474-0559 or e-mail dafna@kahaljoseph.org

In Memoriam

We remember these yearzeit anniversaries for December 21st to 28th, 2013. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, and attend services the preceding Shabbat.

18 Tevet / Shabbat, December 21st

David Davoudian *David ben Yehezkel*
Esperance Mathalon Shaaya *Esperance bat Simha*

19 Tevet / Sunday, December 22nd

Yehekel Goury *Yehekel ben Shaul*
Solomon Raymond *Shlomo ben Rahamim*

20 Tevet / Monday, December 23rd

Ronnie Kelly *Raphael ben Saleh Moshe Kadoorie*
Joseph Hayeem Messiah *Yoseph Hayim Mashiah*
Ruby Mussry *Reuven ben Yaacob Saleh Mussry*

21 Tevet / Tuesday, December 24th

Solomon Reuben *Shlomo ben Reuven D'loom*
Behejohn bat Yehudah

22 Tevet / Wednesday, December 25th

Matooka Girgiyr *Matooka bat Farha*

23 Tevet / Thursday, December 26th

Kovkah Cohen *Kovkah bat Yaakov HaCohen*
Hannah Dallal

Pinchas Khalili *Pinchas ben Nissan*

Emma Moses *Amuma bat Farha*

24 Tevet / Friday, December 27th

Rev Moses Hai Abraham *Moshe Hai ben Avraham*
Louise Jacob

Sulman Sheeri *Sulman ben Yosef*
Shather Shokri *Shather bat Yaacov*

Watch the Iraqi Jewish Sacred Texts Burial Video

Link to a video of the damaged sacred texts' burial in West Babylon, New York Jewish Cemetery at the site below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyTaMA7j8jg>

Understanding the Necessity of Evil

by Rabbi Hagay Batzri

Based on the teachings of Hacham Yosef Haim, also known as the Ben Ish Hai, on Parashat Shemot

“We need to nurture the simple faith that the Creator, blessed be He, created everything for a reason. Everything expresses His will.”

There is nothing good that does not have its opposite. Light exists, and therefore its opposite exists. “Night” was created because “day” needed it.

There is not one hour in the day that does not contain within it night, and not one hour of night that does not contain day. Just as on planet Earth, one side of the globe is in day, and the other in night. As in the verse, “Neither night nor day shall cease” (Beresheet / Genesis 8).

Our Sages, may their memory be a blessing, established this idea in the evening prayer of Arvit, “Light moves away in the face of darkness, and darkness in the face of light.” Light exists for the sake of darkness, and darkness for the sake of light. In the place where light is absent, there is darkness; where goodness is absent, there is evil. Evil does not have a separate existence of its own; it is only

the result of the absence of goodness. Unlike other religions, we believe that both good and evil come from One source—Hashem. Good is connected to Hashem’s compassion for us; evil to His aspect of judgment. When the darkness descends upon us, we have something to learn, something to correct in us.

And a person has no choice other than in the moment when he turns his thoughts, words, and actions away from evil, away from darkness, and towards the good.

In that moment, darkness exists for the sake of light.

And in that moment, a person accepts his situation, and thanks the Creator for the existence of darkness and evil too. He blesses the existence of evil as he blesses the existence of goodness. And through this we may understand the verse, “And night, like day, will dawn; like darkness, like light” (Tehillim 139, line 12)

Oh my G-d, how can we do this? How can we reach this state of mind?

In these teachings, the Ben Ish Hai reveals to us that it is possible to stop fearing evil. Evil is not a calamitous aspect of reality. It exists, as does everything in the world, because of Hashem. It was created by Hashem. We accept evil more easily when we recognize it as

necessary to reveal goodness. The dark side of life was created so that our light might flourish. In this matter, we have no choice.

On our own, we create “there is not” in order to see that “there is.” We choose the void for the sake of existence. We will be nothing/zero for the sake of the One...

And we will not disown the evil that is within us. We will know it well, intimately, become familiar with it so that we may nurture within us the shining light of self-knowledge and understanding. We will go in peace, agreeably on the path that crosses over the ‘very narrow bridge.’

And during times that are frightening and painful in this world, we may tear open the heavens with our cries from the agony of birth, to scream out “It hurts me!” and to plead for mercy. “Accept our cries for help! Hear our cries, One who knows!”

And at that very moment, we accept that everything is done for the sake of love, peace, and joy. “Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuto Le’Olam Va’ed.” *Blessed be His Kingship for ever and ever.*

In truth, what other choice do we have?

Yours,

Hagay Batzri



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February 2014

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Consider donating a laptop to our Sunday School & Talmud Torah at Kahal Joseph Congregation.

Laptops will be used for student's educational and creative projects. They will enable us to expand our reach from millennia of tradition into the 21st (or, rather, the 58th) century. *Call our office at 310.474.0559 and receive a tax deduction too!*