

KOL MEVASSER

An Emotional Mass Burial in India

By Joseph Dabby

A very sad and emotional event took place in Pune (Puna), India recently. Badly burned Sifrei Torah were buried in the Jewish cemetery there. These Torah scrolls were from the magnificent Ohel David Synagogue, which was built by the great philanthropist, Sir David Sassoon, and completed by his sons. Because of the synagogue's striking red color, the local indigenous Indian population refers to it as "Lal Dewal" (the Red Temple).

The actual fire took place several years ago. It was some time in 1991 when a fire destroyed the Hekhal (Aron Kodesh) of the Ohel David Synagogue. The fire department took some time to respond, by which time the Hekhal and several Sifrei Torah, many in solid silver cases, some almost certainly donated by the Sassoon families themselves, were entirely destroyed.

Foul play was suspected by the community. It is believed that the perpetrator hid somewhere in the large premises of the Synagogue while the worshipers left and the synagogue



was checked and locked. After the fire, it was discovered that a wide open window had been unlocked from the inside, from where it is believed the saboteur escaped. No windows were broken and there had been no forced entry.

For years, the cinders remained forgotten in sacks in one of the many rooms of the synagogue. Re-

cently, the caretaker of many years of the synagogue abruptly left. The chairman and managing trustee of the Sassoon Trusts in India, Mr. Solomon Sopher, then traveled to Pune from Mumbai (Bombay) and made a shocking discovery. Seven large sacks of what initially appeared to be charcoal, were stored in one of the rooms. Upon closer inspection, they were found to be the badly burned and charred remains of Sifrei Torah.

Mr. Sopher immediately contacted Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe in New York, (Rabbi Menashe is closely connected with the Sassoon Trusts), for advice on how to proceed according to the Halacha. Since Rabbi Menashe was intending to travel to India with the Grand Rabbi Sinai Halberstam, it was decided that upon their arrival, they would

KJ Schedule Shabbat Shekalim Parashat Pekudei

Erev Shabbat Shekalim Friday, February 28th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:30 am
Shir Hashirim.....	5:15 pm
Shabbat Candlelighting	5:30 pm
Minhah/Arbith	5:30 pm

Shabbat Shekalim / Birkat Hachodesh Saturday, March 1st

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	8:30 am
Minha, Seudah Shlisheet, Arvit.....	4:45 pm
Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah	6:34 pm

Rosh Hodesh Adar II / Sunday, March 2nd

Shaharit	7:30 am
KJ Kids Sunday School.....	10:00 am
David Kelly KJ Youth Choir	11:30 am

Rosh Hodesh Adar II / Monday, March 3rd

Shaharit	6:15 am
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Weekdays

Tuesday to Friday, March 4th to 7th

Shaharit	6:30 am
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Erev Shabbat /Friday, March 7th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:30 am
Shir Hashirim.....	5:20 pm
Shabbat Candlelighting	5:36 pm
Minhah/Arbith	5:36 pm

all travel to Pune together and conduct an appropriate funeral, one that was befitting the holy scrolls.

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As planned, upon their arrival, a delegation traveled from Mumbai to Pune and, with deep emotion and sadness, conducted the funeral and buried the holy Sifrei Torah. The attendees were visibly moved.

The perpetrator was never found. In fact, the police gave up and eventually even suggested that the fire may have been caused by a short circuit. The officials of the synagogue point out that the wiring and fuses of the Synagogue are all on the other end of the building and that it was a far-fetched suggestion. What is more important, however, is that these scrolls of the Torah were finally buried with the honor due to them, in accordance with Halakha.



Throughout the 1800's as well of the first half of the 1900's Iraqi Jews lived in Bombay, India in peace

and prosperity. An illuminating and richly detailed personal and historical account of their live, is contained in Rachel Manasseh's book Baghdadian Jews of Bombay: Their Life and Achievements.

Shabbat Shalom

Shabbat Hamin / Chulent

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Lunch & Learn
Rabbi Daniel Bouskila
SEC Director

March 22nd on the topic of

**Halakhic Genius, Political Revolutionary:
The Unique Legacy of Rav Ovadia Yosef**

Advance RSVP required to 310.474.0559

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In Memoriam

We remember these yearzeit anniversaries for March 1 to 8, 2014. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend services the preceding Shabbat.

29 Adar I / Shabbat, March 1st

Tefara Menashe Tefara bat Ezra

1 Adar II / Monday, March 3rd

Lily Shad Lulu Mahlab

Refuah Shlemah

Mordechai Cohen / Mordecai ben Avraham
Moselle Amron/Mazal Tov bat Salha Matana

Tilda Levy / Tilda bat Miriam

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To remove or add a name please call 310-474-0559

David Kelly KJ YOUTH CHOIR

Rabbi Hagay Batzri, Director



MEETING THIS
SUNDAY,
March 2nd
@ 11:30 AM

Tanakh Readings

Shabbat Shekalim / Parashat Pekudei

Pekudei from Exodus/Shemot 385 to 391

Additional Reading for **Shabbat Shekalim**
from Exodus/Shemot 350 to 351

Shabbat Shekalim Portion from the Prophets
Haftara Kings II / Melachim Bet 992 to 995

Wishing you a joyful & peaceful Shabbat