

19 Nisan 5774

19 April 2014

KOL MEVASSER



President's Message

by Ronald Einy

Dear Members and Friends,

Spring is the season for renewal, celebration, and the welcoming of life. Spring, or in Hebrew 'aviv,' brings us the birth of the Jewish people. Passover is the first holiday we celebrated as a historically distinct nation, rather than a collection of families who shared forefathers.

On the eve of our redemption from Egypt, on that first Passover millennia ago, the Jewish people were not what we are today. We were barely out of bondage. We had few resources with which to navigate the world. We were not yet independent people, keepers of our own destiny.

At the time of the Exodus, as in recent history, we were simply refugees. Little more than slaves set adrift by another culture, by other peoples who kept us down. But guided and protected by G-d, then as now, we created a place to call home.

Today as Jews, we enjoy a time of relative prosperity, a time when we can enjoy success, sovereignty and self-determination,

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A Word from the Rabbi

by Rabbi Hagay Batzri

Each person is obligated to see himself/herself as the one who went out of Egypt

Why?

Aside for the amazing historical fact of the Exodus from Egypt, or Yetziat Mitzrayim, a fact which is very important for us to remember, appreciate and analyze, there is another way we should look at the Exodus.

The Ben Ish Hai explains that each of us needs to look within ourselves for the attitude of enslavement, as if we were slaves in Egypt. We each need to answer the question, and discover within ourselves: "In what part of my life am I still enslaved?"

Any act that we do and we know deep in our hearts that it is not what we really want to be doing; any time there is something stopping us from fulfilling our life's purpose, pursuing what we wish and are meant to accomplish—that is slavery.

We can see this attitude in almost any matter in life.

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KJ Pesah Schedule Shabbat Pesah

Erev Shabbat, Passover Fourth Day
Friday, April 18, 2014

Shaharit	6:30 am
Shir Hashirim	6:45 pm
Minha & Arvit	7:00 pm
Candle Lighting	7:08 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer Fourth Night	

Shabbat Pesah, Passover Fifth Day
Saturday, April 19, 2014

Shaharit	8:30 am
Class with Rabbi Batzri.....	6:00 pm
Minha, Arvit, Seuda Shlisheet	6:45 pm
Shabbat Havdallah	8:12 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer Fifth Night	

Erev Yom Tov, Passover Sixth Day
Sunday, April 20, 2014

Shaharit	7:30 am
Candle Lighting.....	7:10 pm
Minha and Arvit.....	7:00 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer Sixth Night	

Yom Tov, Passover Seventh Day
Monday, April 21, 2014

Shaharit	8:30 am
Class with Rabbi Batzri.....	6:15 pm
Minha and Arvit.....	7:00 pm
Candle Lighting.....	after 8:14 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer Seventh Night	

Yom Tov, Passover Eighth Day
Tuesday, April 22, 2014

Shaharit	8:30 am
Class with Rabbi Batzri.....	6:15 pm
Minha & Arvit	7:25 pm
Havdallah.....	8:15 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer Eighth Night	

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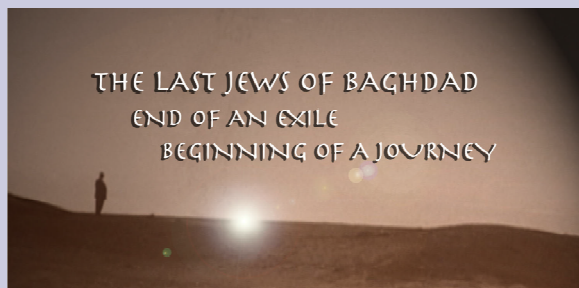
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and a time when our children can follow the path of Torah, the path of mitzvot and good deeds; the path of the Jewish people. And we can stand proud and strong.

The Jewish people have done much more than survive; we thrive in the world. This is something to celebrate, but not to be taken for granted, as we remember our birth as a nation and our long journey to freedom.

On this our Passover, Letizia and I are remembering with you, the rich tradition of the Seder. As we wish you warmth and togetherness, a time of reflection, peace in our hearts and homes, and happiness always.

May our synagogue and the entire Kahal family be blessed with the bountiful gifts of life, the love of family and friends, and a year fresh with new hope and promise. Hag Sameach.



Thursday, May 1st at 7:00 pm
at Kahal Joseph
Filmmaker Carole Basri will attend

*You haven't heard the whole story of Iraq until you meet **The Last Jews of Baghdad**. Take a historical journey into their world of persecution, torture, escape and exile.*

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Our holiday, Passover, is really more about the future and much less about the past. The "geulah" or redemption we must look for is from our internal bonds, not from anyone else's bondage or enslavement of us. People who are waiting for the Mashiach to come and solve all their problems are living in a dream.

As one Maimonides' 13 Principles of Faith is the statement: "I believe with a complete belief in the coming of the Mashiach; even if he should delay, I will wait for him."

Every moment after you have freed yourself from a bad habit, you should continue to maintain that level of consciousness and introspection. We should continue to seek the Mashiach. If he has not appeared yet then it means we are not there yet, individually. We need to keep going and elevate every aspect of our life; we need to try to redeem ourselves, one by one. We need to believe we'll achieve our "Mashiach" readiness within ourselves. If we experience this type of redemption in our own way, we'll notice that by ourselves we have redeemed ourselves from our own Egypt, our own enslavement in a modern Mitzrayim of slavery.

I wish you all success with your individual redemption. Then, when we greet one another this Pesah we will be able to see the approach of "Mashiach" in each other. Amen.

Shabbat Pesah Torah & Haftarah Readings
Shemot / Exodus 362 to 367
Bamidbar / Numbers 695 to 696
Haftara Yehezkel / Ezekiel 1015 to 1016

Shabbat Shalom & Hag Sameah

In Memoriam

We remember yearzeit anniversaries for April 19 to 26, 2014. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend services the preceding Shabbat.

21 Nisan / Monday, April 21st

Abraham Asher Ezra Atraghji Avraham Asher ben Ezra

22 Nisan / Tuesday, April 22nd

Ester Avrahamy Ester bat Baila
Hanini Horesh Suleiman

25 Nisan / Friday, April 25th

Frederick Tizabi Yehezkiel ben Avraham

Refuah Shlemah

Rahel bat Marcel

Mordechai Cohen / Mordecai ben Avraham

Moselle Amron/Mazal Tov bat Salha Matana

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



David Kelly YOUTH CHOIR

Rabbi Batzri, Director

Passover Break

Next Meeting Sunday, April 27@11:30 am

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Weekdays

Wednesday to Friday, April 23 to 25

Shaharit 6:30 am
Sefirat Ha'Omer Ninth to Eleventh Nights

Erev Shabbat

Friday, April 25, 2014

Shaharit 6:30 am
Shir Hashirim 6:45 pm
Minha and Arbit 7:00 pm
Candle Lighting 7:14 pm



Passover in Baghdad

By Joe Samuels

Spring was always a welcome guest. The winter was wet, muddy and the nights were bitterly cold. The streets in Baghdad's old quarter (Taht el Takia) where I was born in December of 1930 were narrow, twisted and unpaved. Sanitary conditions were poor or non-existent. There was no sewer system and central heating was unknown. Drinking water and electricity were intermittently cut off. When the weather warmed up in March and April and the smell of orange blossoms filled the air, I knew Passover was coming.

Of all the holidays, Passover was the one I waited for impatiently. I usually got a new pair of trousers, white shirt, a new pair of shoes, socks and underwear. I was happy as a lark and looked like a monkey. The trousers were too long, the shirt was too big and my feet were swimming in my shoes. To prepare for Passover, my mother baked matzah at home. The helpers had to scrub,

clean and wash the drapes, sheets and everything else. All pots and pans had to be dipped in boiling water. On the first night of Passover, the table was set lavishly with fine china, fancy cutlery and individual wine cups on an elegant tablecloth. I dressed up in my new clothes.

To start the Seder, Dad blessed the wine and blessed us. We all kissed his hand. We gathered around to read the Haggadah, the story of the Israelites' exile that took place some 3,500 years ago. We read and sang in Hebrew, a language I didn't understand, but was translated into Arabic. We read about the ten plagues and the parting of the sea, and always wished "next year in Jerusalem". I was the seventh of eight children and had a beautiful voice- at least I thought so. I always sung with zest and patiently waited for the Charoset, made of date juice and crushed walnut, and eaten with romaine lettuce and matzah. After that we had a festive dinner followed by a variety of sweets. Passover was the most joyous time of the year.

The Farhud (free looting and killing) of Passover 1941 was different. I was eleven years old. We had moved to a bigger house near the Tigris River a year earlier. On April 3rd, a pro Nazi coup overthrew the government. King Faisal II and the Regent escaped. Rashid Ali Algailani became the prime minister.

General anxiety overcame the Jewish community. Some Jews were singled out, picked up, tortured and imprisoned. Passover fell on April 12th. My father and my older broth-

ers looked sad. Our Seder was cheerless and gloomy. I was frightened and scared.

On May 31st, British troops arrived at the outskirts of Baghdad. Al Gailani and his accomplice, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin Al Husaini, and their clique fled the country. On June 1st, crowds aided by police soldiers stopped buses, singled out Jewish passengers, robbed them, killed the men, raped the women then slit their throats, and threw babies into the Tigris River. We locked and bolted our doors and prayed. We somehow escaped the violence.

On June 2nd, British troops aided by two brigades loyal to the king entered Baghdad and stopped the rampage. The official government count showed that 180 Jews were murdered and 240 wounded. Hundreds of homes were looted and businesses burnt. There wasn't any act of resistance or fighting back. The disaster would have been greater if it were not for the acts of kindness and heroism by some Muslims who protected and sheltered their Jewish friends.

Life went back to normal, or so it seemed, but future Passovers were never the same. The Farhud of 1941 proved that there was no guarantee for the future or for the safety of Jews in Iraq. I, too, felt there was no future for me in Iraq. I studied hard and dreamt of going to America after finishing high school.

Passover 1944 was an exciting and a happy one. I was 14. A month earlier, a family with

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two gorgeous girls had moved next door. One of them was about my age. She had white skin, blue eyes and black hair—a beauty in my part of the world. The first time I saw her I was drawn to her like iron to a magnet.

One day I saw her walking down the street. She looked frightened and distressed. She was with two Muslim boys. One was holding her by the arms and the other was fondling her. In a stern voice I screamed at them to leave her alone. One of them shouted at me the common Arabic insult, “go away, you son of a dog”. Dogs are dirty animals in Islamic culture. Whether it was hormones, stupidity or both; I punched one of them in the face. The other pulled a knife, and both of them ran after me. I ran at the speed of light. A month later we moved to another house in Al-Alwiya district. I never saw the girl again or learned her name. She was like a distant beauty untouched by the world.

Passover of 1948 fell on April 24th. It came like a thick black cloud over dark skies. The United Nations had voted on November 29, 1947 for the partitioning of the British Mandate called Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish. While the Jews accepted the compromise, the Arab countries rejected the decision. All the Arabic newspapers and radio stations called for the destruction of the Jewish people and the liberation of Palestine. Zionism was declared treason. On May 15, 1948, the Iraqi army together with the armies of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt went into battle against the newly sanctioned, modern state of Israel. While we celebrated in our hearts the establishment of an official Jewish state after 1800 years, we were terrified and uncertain whether Israel would survive the overwhelming assault.

Against all odds, Israel survived. And, after the Iraqi army failed to eliminate tiny Israel, in shame and humiliation, the Iraqi government turned against its Jewish citizens, and especially against Jewish youth. Many teenagers and young adults were arrested without cause, accused of Zionism, tortured, and imprisoned. This harassment culminated in the indictment and public execution, of a prominent Jewish merchant, Shafiq Adas. When I saw, on the front page of the newspaper, the picture of his body hanging, I became frantic and hysterical.

I kept a low profile and worked hard. It took me over a year to get my student visa to the

United States, but I could not get an exit visa to leave Iraq. Things were getting worse, with more arrests and disappearances. It was time for me to get out.

In December of 1949, I travelled with my younger brother, Nory, to the port city of Basra, and from there I was smuggled out to Iran. The journey was treacherous and tragic at points. But, the Iranian government of that time, headed by Prime Minister Said Maraghai, was gracious enough to allow me and thousands of Iraqi Jewish refugees to pass through Iran enroute to Israel. On March 2, 1950, one day before the festival of Purim, I kissed the ground when I landed in Tel Aviv.

I left my home in Baghdad; I left my culture and history of 2,500 years; I left behind my faithful friends, among them Muslims and Christians; I left behind memories of fun and fear, of hope and despair. I left behind my past and future dreams, never wanting to look back. I was certain of one thing: that I was lucky to be out and alive from the unpredictable heaven and hell of Iraq.

I became a homeless and penniless refugee, among hundreds of thousands of others who arrived in Israel from Arab lands. The only thing I had was my youth, my love of life and the determination to succeed. Had I allowed nightmares of my past in Iraq to enslave my future, I would have become a victim.

Instead, on April 1, 1950 I truly celebrated Passover as a free man in Jerusalem.