

# KOL MEVASSER

## Message from the Rabbi

### Weekly Series on the Ben Ish Hai

In the first cycle of readings in the Ben Ish Hai, Parashat Toledot is paired with the laws of washing one's hands in the morning. As explained by Rashi, the Talmud says:

נביא, רבי נתן אומר: בת חורין היא זו (רש"י - הרוח השורה על הידים לפני נטילה)  
מקפדת עד שירחוץ ידיו שלש פעמים. - שבת קט:

*"It was taught that Ribbi Natan said: [the aura of impurity that settles on the hands until one washes in the morning] is a free agent, and remains until one washes his hands three times."*  
- Shabbat 109b

This statement appears in a discussion of the busyness of human hands, which can come into contact with impurities during our sleep at night. Our Sages reasoned that if we don't know exactly what our hands are up to while we are resting, we should wash our hands immediately after rising in the morning to avoid transmitting these impurities to ourselves and our surroundings. The Talmudic glossators in the medieval period accepted this logic, which became the basis of a halakhah that was codified at the beginning of the Shulhan Arukh (OH 4:2-3):

ידקדק לערות עליהן מים ג"פ, להעביר רוח רעה ששורה עליהן. לא יגע בידו, קודם  
נטילה, לפה ולא לחוטם ולא לאזנים ולא לעינים.

*"One must be scrupulous in pouring water over the hands three times, to remove the aura of impurity that settles on them. Before washing, one must not touch his mouth, nose, ears, or eyes."*

Drawing on this discussion, the Ben Ish Hai (Toledot 1:10) makes the following recommendation:

יהיה כל אדם לצוות את אשתו שתעשה כל יום נטילת ידים לילדים הקטנים, אפילו  
שהם יונקי שדים, מפני שלפעמים פושטים ידם ונוגעים במאכלים ויטמאום... וגם  
מנהג זה הוא סגולה טובה לקטנים כדי שיגדלו בטהרה ויהיו גדולי הקדש.

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## Parashat Toledot

*Torah:* Genesis 25:19–28:9, 106 pesukim

Hertz 93–101; Stone 124–143

*Haftarah:* Malachi 1:1 – 2:7

Hertz 102–105; Stone 1137–1138

*Tefilot:* Mashib Haruah

## KJ Schedule

### Ereb Shabbat

Shabbat Eve

Friday, November 13th

Minha.....4:30 pm

**Candle Lighting .....4:32 pm**

Arbit / Kabbalat Shabbat...5:00 pm

## Yom Shabbat

Shabbat Day

Saturday, November 14th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer 8:30 am

Keri'at HaTorah..... 10:15 am

Musaf ..... 11:30 am

Minhah ..... 4:30 pm

Women's Tehillim ..... 4:30 pm

Se'udah Shelisheet..... 5:00 pm

Arbit ..... 5:25 pm

Habdallah..... 5:35 pm

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"One should remind his wife to wash the hands of even very small children every day, since they may touch food and render it impure... Moreover, this custom can serve as an omen that the children will grow up in purity and mature in sanctity."

This is a sweet piece of advice that captures many of the positive values of our tradition. Children are often better at remembering the things that they have *done* rather than the things that they have been *told*, and helping them wash their hands every day is a shared experience with their parents that they might look back on fondly. Not only do they learn the spiritual and sanitary benefits of good grooming, but they are placed in daily contact with loving mothers (or fathers) who are sharing the beauty of an ancient and meaningful religion. With the encouragement of such nurturing parenting, they might indeed grow to become fine examples of our people, the exact vision that the Ben Ish Hai had in mind when he wrote this passage.

May we all merit to raise families where the loving care of our children forms a strong basis for their independent spiritual growth and satisfaction,

Rabbi Melhado

### Refuah Shlemah

Abe Abraham • Moselle Amron • Sylvia Cohen  
Mordechai Cohen • Esther Duke • Sassoon Ezra  
Miriam bat Yetta • Tilda Levy • Maurice Ovadia

## Shabbat Kiddush

is being sponsored  
in memory of

Mary Saleh, z"l  
& Haim Saleh, z"l

by  
Viva & Charles Rabbie

Norma & Sam Dabby Jewish Education Center

## KJ Talmud Torah & Sunday School



Friends  
Creativity Jewish  
Learning

To enroll or for  
information contact  
Mrs. Hanna Elkouby  
Talmud Torah Director



## KJ Schedule (continued)

### Weekdays

*Sunday, November 15th*

Shaharit ..... 7:30 am  
Talmud Torah ..... 10:00 am

*Monday to Friday, Nov. 16 to 20*

Shaharit ..... 6:25 am

### Next Week / Ereb Shabbat

*Friday, November 20th*

Minha ..... 4:30 pm  
**Candle Lighting ..... 4:28 pm**  
Arbit / Kabbalat Shabbat ..... 5:00 pm

## In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries November 14 to 21, 2015. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services.

### 3 Kislev / Shabbat, November 14th

Rebecca Benbeniste *Rivka bat Dudu*  
Rachel Jacob *Rahel bat Salha Mattana*

### 5 Kislev / Monday, November 16th

Elias Ezekiel Isaac *Eliyahu ben Yehezkel Itzhak*  
Silas Moshe Kadoorie *Silas ben Moshe*  
Flora Sassoon *Farha bat Simha*  
Nassim Reuben Suleiman

### 6 Kislev / Tuesday, November 17th

Maggie Dabby *Marjorie bat Sam*

### 7 Kislev / Wednesday, November 18th

Eliyahu Ezer *Eliyahu ben Yoseph*

### 9 Kislev / Friday, November 20th

Isaac Joseph *Itzhak ben Yoseph*  
Ezra Yitzhaki *Ezra ben Reuven*  
Sholkat Zekharia *Sholkat bat Zekharia*

### 10 Kislev / Shabbat, November 21st

*Ruhama bat Chana*

# How Iraqi Jews Vanished

by Joe Samuels

I was born in "Taht El Takia" in the Jewish quarter of the old city of Baghdad in December of 1930. My mother tongue is Arabic. My education included the Islamic culture and history. Baghdad was my home and Iraq was my only country. I am 84 years old.



On May 6, 2003, members of the United States Armed Forces were looking for Weapons of Mass Destruction in Baghdad's secret police headquarters known as the Mukhabarat. Instead, to their surprise, what they discovered in the heavily damaged and flooded basement of the building were Iraqi Jewish artifacts. These included 2,700 books, some dating back to the 1500's. They found Torah scrolls, prayer books, and tens of thousands documents. The Ba'ath Party, headed by Saddam Husain, looted and confiscated public and personal items from dozens of synagogues, schools and community properties. After their discovery, with the approval of the then- provisional Iraqi government, these nearly destroyed remains of the once thriving, millennia-old Jewish community in Iraq were brought to the United States in frozen containers. After spending some three million dollars, the US government has restored and preserved these artifacts. They have been exhibited in Washington D.C., New York City, Kansas City and in the Los Angeles area at the Nixon Library, Yorba Linda.

The moment I stepped into the 2,000 square foot exhibit, the history of my childhood came alive. On display there was a high school diploma in Arabic; it reminded me of my diploma in June of 1948. It was the first step on the ladder of my dream to be a nuclear physicist.

A Haggadah, a Passover booklet, from 1902 reminded me of our Seder when my parents, six brothers and my sister sat for the festive dinner after reading the Passover story. The aroma of the chicken rice with slivered almond and raisins and the taste of sweet and sour, lamb stew with apricots still linger in my mind.

The Torah scroll, unfortunately stripped from the silver or gold that had covered its wooden casing, reminded me of my Bar Mitzvah when I carried the Torah. It was so heavy.

Other Arabic documents included letters from the Chief Rabbi, Sasson Khaduri, to members of the community board. They reminded me of how close I felt to others in this old, Jewish community, how much solidarity we had as we helped each other, and how rich our culture was.

It was a bittersweet encounter; seeing the exhibits brought tears to my eyes. At other moments the exhibit filled me with joy. I was grateful to the American government for making my Iraqi Jewish heritage come alive again. Congress, in Bill 113, voted to renegotiate with the Iraqi Government to allow the artifacts to stay in the U.S. This bill came to fruition after numerous petitions from many Iraqi Jews, our children, and our grandchildren to U.S. government officials,

pleading with them not to return the artifacts back to Iraq. The visit to the exhibit truly brought my nineteen years of life in Baghdad alive.

Throughout the 1940s, Jews numbered about 150,000 and represented roughly 3% of Iraq's population. Baghdad itself was approximately 25% Jewish. We were a major economic force in the country.

Jewish and Muslim communities generally had a congenial relationship. But, regrettably, with the rise of Nazism, anti-Semitism began to take hold. During the Farhud riots of June 1 and 2, 1941 a Middle Eastern pogrom occurred. Muslim mobs, aided by police and soldiers in plain clothes, stormed the Jewish quarters in the old city of Baghdad. They looted and burned Jewish homes and businesses. They murdered some 180 Jews and left hundreds injured. Many women were raped. I was eleven. This trauma never left me.

By November 1947, anti-Semitism and discrimination by government officials were regular occurrences and implemented in earnest. Following the United Nations vote to partition the British mandate of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, the oppression increased drastically. Iraq was one among five Arab nations that attacked Israel and unexpectedly lost. Zionism was added to the Iraqi criminal code as an offense punishable by death, and every Jew was a suspect.

After graduating from AL Aadadiah High School in Baghdad, I was accepted to three universities in the U.S. Because I am

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Jewish, I was denied an exit visa to leave Iraq. To be considered for an exit visa, I needed to deposit 3,000 dinars. At the time, an Iraqi working class family income was between 4 to 5 dinars a month.

Fearing for my life after some of my friends were arrested, I was fortunate to be smuggled out in December 1949. My father, an importer of cloth, had to leave behind our family villa in the Al Alwiya district. His office and a warehouse full of merchandise were confiscated.

Nearly all Jews from Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon Libya, Tunis, Algiers and Morocco had similar experiences. These ancient Jewish communities have in the 20th century virtually vanished from Arab lands. From a population of nearly one million Jews, today there remain some 5,000, mainly in Morocco (3,500) and Tunis (1,100). They were stripped of citizenship; their properties and assets were confiscated. About 600,000 ended up in Israel. The rest are scattered around the world.

With the exception of the Jews from Iraq, the history of Jews from other Arab countries has vanished with them. Their artifacts were stolen, confiscated or destroyed. There are few records to show how they lived, their contributions to Arab culture and civilization, their influence and effect on their societies.

The only way these communities are remembered is through the occasional autobiography, oral history, or word of mouth from those who once lived there. In this sense, my Iraqi Jewish community heritage was preserved. The irony was that Saddam Husain ended up keeping the best and most accurate documented testimony to the existence of Jews in Iraq. Although we have vanished, the last vestiges and artifacts of our community have not vanished. They are digitized and available to be viewed on the Internet at [www.ija.archives.gov/exhibit/exhibit](http://www.ija.archives.gov/exhibit/exhibit)

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**The Sisterhood of Kahal Joseph**  
invites the children of our community to a

# **Hanukkah Celebration**

**Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 11:00 am**  
*featuring wonderful entertainment*



**Clown & Balloon Art**



**Amazing Magician**

*Sweets & Treats for the Children*

**Fun for the Whole Family**

**RSVP Requested by Dec. 11th**

**Elsa at 323.934.3439**

**Louise 818.884.0120**

**Hannie 310.247.0220**



**Hag Sameah! ♥ Happy Hanukkah!**



## Thank you Rabbi Daniel Bouskila

for giving a Shabbat talk at Kahal Joseph last week on the subject of  
**"Israel: What's Really Going On?"**



Rabbi Daniel Bouskila, International Director of the Sephardic Educational Center, who returned from Israel just over a week ago, gave a special sermon and report last Shabbat during morning services at Kahal Joseph. He described his recent three week stay in Israel and offered an insightful firsthand view of what's really happening in Israel these days.



*Rabbi Bouskila at the Grand Opening Conference of the SEC's new Beit Midrash Shaarei Uziel Rabbinical Program*



*Rabbi Bouskila and IDF Soldiers who are being housed at the SEC's Campus in the Old City of Jerusalem*

## Sephardic Music Festival

Sponsored by LASHA (Los Angeles Sephardic Home for the Aging)

**November 22, 2015 from 1 to 6 pm**

Please purchase tickets at [www.lashaonline.org/musicfest](http://www.lashaonline.org/musicfest)  
Or call the LASHA office at 818-348-3331



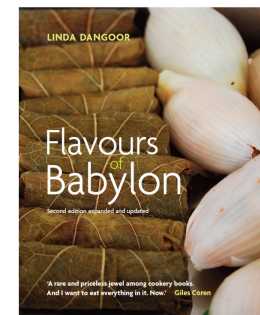
## A Perfect Hannukah Gift Flavors of Babylon

2nd edition, Reserve a Copy at KJ



Linda Dangoor was born in Baghdad and settled in the UK in the 1960s. Although she left Iraq when only ten years old, the link to her roots through food has always been very strong. She started cooking at a young age with her mother and grandmother. Linda Dangoor has always been interested in cooking.

Her Middle Eastern background and travels enhanced the discovery of dishes and inspired the creation of new ones. As an accomplished and experienced cook, recognizing a need in the market, she resolved to put down her favorite recipes from her native Iraq in modern book form.



To order a copy call Kahal Joseph's office at 310.474.0559 or send a \$30 check to:

Attn: Flavours of Babylon Cookbook  
Kahal Joseph Congregation  
10505 Santa Monica Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90025



# Kahal Joseph on the Road: The Iraqi Jewish Archives

at the Richard Nixon Library in Yorba Linda

*Over sixty-five of our members joined us for a wonderful day of viewing the Iraqi Archive exhibit with our own private docent tour of the Richard Nixon Library. It was educational as well as being a moving experience to view the many pieces of ephemera that have been salvaged out of Baghdad.*

*My special thanks to Joseph Dabby for organizing the trip so it would be a first class experience for our members. I thank our councilman Paul Koretz for providing us with a beautiful bus to transport us to and from the exhibit. My special appreciation to Majdoline Mussry who so generously sponsored the admission at the library for all of us to enjoy such a wonderful day together.*

*We look forward to more events like this in the future.*

*Ronald Einy*



*We thank Stan Kurtz for the wonderful photographs of our trip.*