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THE SHOFAR

A PUBLICATION OF KAHAL JOSEPH CONGREGATION



THE FINAL EXODUS:
The Last Iraqi Jews Land in Tel Aviv

THE FINAL EXODUS:

A Woman's Journey to Iraq to Recover the Jews Left Behind

This summer, Kahal Joseph was honored to host a lecture by Rachel Zelon, vice president of HIAS, the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (pictured right). Concerned with the living conditions of Jews in Iraq following the recent war, Zelon traveled to Iraq with her husband photo-journalist Jeff Luterbach on a mission to expedite the immigration of those that wished to leave Iraq and to help those that chose to remain.



Photo by Jeff Luterbach

In Iraq, Zelon met with the 35 Jews that remained of the once prolific community, escorted six to Israel, and helped the rest by providing medicine and other basic necessities. Kahal Joseph thanks Zelon and Luterbach for their hard work and dedication in bringing the last vestiges of this community back together with their family and friends. They are truly inspirational individuals.

Zelon's lecture was accompanied by a slide show of Luterbach's heartwrenching and beautiful photographs of Iraq. Many of these images brought members of our community to tears, including this image of the synagogue in Baghdad some remember from their childhood.



Photo by Jeff Luterbach

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THE SHOFAR

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We apologize for any errors or omissions that may occur in this issue.

President's Message

A Year in the Limelight

The liberation of Iraq from its oppressive regime, and the road map to peace in the Middle East, pushed our congregation into the limelight. When the news reported about the living conditions of the remaining Jews in Iraq, the media became hungry for information about this dwindling and very old community. As the largest synagogue serving Jews of Iraqi origin in the Americas, Kahal Joseph became a great source of information for the media about the history and culture of Iraqi Jewry. Our fame brought us in touch with other Iraqi synagogues and organizations, documentary film makers and playwrights. Our members participated in interviews and presentations.

In the Middle East peace negotiations, the Arabs are demanding a restitution in the amount of \$4.5 billion for the assets left behind by the 300,000 Palestinians who became refugees. There is no mention anywhere of the Jews who escaped Arab lands, 830,000 of them, who left behind assets estimated at \$12 billion. A one-day seminar to increase awareness about this issue and to document our stories and claims was sponsored by Kahal Joseph in conjunction with The World Jewish Congress and the Israeli Consulate. "The Last Exodus, Jews from Arab Land" was held at Kahal Joseph and was very successful in bringing this issue to the Jewish community at large and to the media. One comment that I hear often from our membership is how fortunate we are to live in the land of freedom.

We have had a very busy year, full with social and cultural activities. Our main goals remain to expand our membership of young families, and to strengthen our Jewish education programs for children, as well as adults. We are working very hard to get the young adults of our community involved in Kahal Joseph, we look to them to perpetuate our synagogue's values and heritage. At the same time we encourage

young families to join us and help us grow.

Kahal Joseph welcomes Edna Ovadia as the Director of our youth educational programs. This includes "Mommy and me", "Talmud Torah Classes", "Bar/Bat Mitzvah prep classes", and the "Shabbat children program". Edna brings a breath of fresh air to Kahal Joseph, her expertise in Judaic studies and music is creating lots of excitement. The Talmud Torah classes will be administered and taught by both Edna Ovadia and Marlene Baruch. The new curriculum, designed by Edna, includes music, art, and Jewish and Torah studies.

Rabbi Haim Ovadia has been at Kahal Joseph for one year, and what a difference his presence has made. Our programs and classes have expanded and our synagogue has truly become the cultural, educational, and religious center of our lives. I thank Rabbi Haim Ovadia for his hard work and dedication.

And how can I thank our Hazan Sassoon Ezra? Mr. Ezra's devotion to Kahal Joseph is inspirational.

My gratitude to our Sisterhood and its President Florence Shamash, and to our Board of Directors and its Chairman Ronald Einy for generously giving of their time, energy, and resources. My thanks to Sarah Bouchoucha our administrator, and Melanie Ezerzer our assistant for their loyalty and hard work.

I join my family in wishing you a healthy and prosperous New Year.



Joseph Dabby

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One Step at a Time

Seconds, minutes, hours, days, we start our life with a tiny little pile of these time units behind us and who knows how big of a pile ahead of us, but as we grow older and time passes, or rather flies by, the pile behind us becomes bigger and bigger while the one in front of us shrinks in a frighteningly inevitable certainty. This might be the reason we love to use markers and time-road signs: birthdays, anniversaries, seasons. We count the months to an upcoming spectacle and longingly count one more year since that unforgettable once-in-a-lifetime moment. We need to be able to define and border our time. We want to tell ourselves that we have some measure of control over it. We use our time references to delineate our goals, our hopes, achievements and disappointments.

Rosh HaShana fulfills this function, but with a very heightened sense of self awareness and self control. The rituals and prayers of Rosh HaShana were designed so that we will be able to reflect on our lives, evaluate our past and prepare for the future. The serenity of the prayers allows us to delve deeper and deeper into our inner self, only to be startled by the untamed cry of the Shofar that drags us from thoughtfulness to action. The festive family-uniting meals, with their symbolic foods, remind us to emphasize the positive in our lives and take advantage of what was given to us. Sometimes, though, we fall short of our expectations and promises.

In Deuteronomy, the Torah says: "from the beginning of *the year* to the end of *year*." A great scholar explained that in the beginning of every year we promise ourselves that this will be The Year. We are going to fulfill our dreams, improve ourselves, fix the marriage, be better parents, write that book and so on. As the year ends, though, we look back only to find out that the passing year was just another Year. We shove it in the closet, with all the dusty years of our past and tiptoe out of the room, embarrassed to look back.

It shouldn't be like that. We should be able to look back with pride, with joy, with a sense of fulfillment and achievement, and Rosh HaShana is here to

help us. How do you do it?

Well first of all, define yourself. Who am I? What are the most important things in my life? What do I care most about?

Then, go on to define your goals. Divide them into categories, based on your fields of interest and life cycles. What are the professional and what are the personal goals. What are my goals as a human being, an American, a Jew, a parent, etc.

It would be helpful to work on short term and long term goals. It is also important to set reasonable goals. A sworn couch potato in his fifties, for example, might want to start jogging but breaking the decathlon world record may be a bit too much.

If I may, here are some suggestions: First of all, as human beings, we should care for the planet and its inhabitants. Try to fight pollution. Recycle. Fine tune your car. Teach your kids about the ecology and protecting the environment. (Think again about that SUV). Then don't forget the people, be nicer to them. Start with family, friends, employees and co-workers, then move on to strangers. For beginners, add a smile a day, one good word a week, and one good deed a month. As your system gets used to the routine you may intensify it without consulting a physician.

Apply the same process to your other definitions: American, Israeli, Californian, liberal, a parent, a friend, etc.

As a Jew, think about what could you do to strengthen our Jewish identity, how to preserve our millennia old values and keep them alive and vibrant today. Take advantage of the insights Judaism has to offer. Attend a class or read a book. Get to know the great history of the Jewish people and the contributions it made to culture and science. Take time, even



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Message continued from page 4

once a day to utter a prayer. If you frequent the synagogue, try to make your prayers more intensive, more personal and moving. Be thankful for what you have and try to find ways to share it with others. It is not much different than what I have suggested under the rubric of Human Being, but after all this is what Judaism is all about, becoming a better human being and making this world a better place.

After having said all that I should have said as the Rabbi, Kahal Joseph is the place that will help you achieve all of the above, but I will not, because it is not the truth. The truth is that it is all up to you, if you want you'll achieve it anywhere, and if not, nowhere. But it is true that Kahal Joseph could help. In Kahal you will find, as I have, loving and devoted people who see the congregation as their family. You will find talented and learned men and women and a warm authentic Sefaradi atmosphere. Belonging to a group of same minded individuals, attending classes to enrich and heighten your Jewish awareness, volunteering and taking part in acts of kindness can definitely pave the road to fulfillment. Our scope of activities is wide ranging, from hosting Japanese kids who work to promote peace and amity to a concert of Iraqi western fusion music; we host young family get togethers and outings, commemorative events, as well as a special Purim talent show and comedy night. Read all about these activities in this issue of The Shofar and on our website. But even if you attend another synagogue, or none at all, remember: Rosh HaShana is about taking charge of your life, changing and improving it one step at a time. Let us do what ever it takes now, so next Rosh HaShana, when we look back we could say without hesitation that this passing year was The Year.

Shana Tova VaHatima Tova.

Rabbi Haim Ovadia

Hazan's Message

To all our dear members and friends of Kahal Joseph, may each and every one of you enjoy the best of health and success this year.

The coming year should be for us a new beginning of a new life, of new challenges to strive to become better parents, better friends and greater supporters of the State of Israel. May G-d bless us with clarity of vision and an understanding heart, to be merciful, as we ask Our Father in heaven to have mercy on us. I'd like to thank Rabbi Haim and Edna Ovadia, our President, our Chairman of the Board, the Board of Directors and the Sisterhood for their dedication to our synagogue. From our entire family and myself, we wish you all *Tizkoo Le Shanim Rabot.*

Sassoon Ezra



Greetings from the Sisterhood

It's hard to believe that we are once again preparing for the High Holy Days! The year has been busy and has flown past. The Sisterhood committee continues its hard work on behalf of the community to foster the connection of our members to Kahal Joseph and to each other through our coffee evenings, children's parties and outings.

We look forward to your continued support and hope the next year endows our community with strength and prosperity. On behalf of the Sisterhood committee, I wish you a happy and healthy New Year.

Florence Shamash



Greetings from Mrs. Vera Levi

May the Almighty grant each one of you His blessings of health, serenity of mind and fulfillment of your desires. We pray that mankind will unite in its search for peace, and righteousness prevail in our day. May all people of good will acknowledge the Sovereignty of G-d in a true and faithful spirit.

Tizkoo le Shanim Rabot.

Vera Levi




W I N D S O R

Best wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year

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A Cuban Minyan

With 1,500 Jews left and not a Rabbi in Cuba, the community is thriving

By Nadine L. Dabby

Seven men and three Torahs make for a Cuban Minyan. The saying arose as a result of decreased attendance and activity of the underground Jewish community in Cuba following the victory of the revolution in 1959. With about ten percent of the Jews remaining in 2003, the Jewish community in Cuba is thriving in a way that is unfathomable to the likes of Jews in more developed countries.

This past summer, despite parental objections for my safety, I went to Cuba with a group of university students to study the social and economic effects of communist or state-centered development in Cuba as compared with the development of the rest of Latin America. What I found there was astounding—it was not the highly oppressed and tattered society I imagined, but neither was it a shining utopia of socialist ideals. Instead, I found Cuba to be a land of remarkably educated individuals with a lot of time on their hands and little mobility.

Having spent a few weeks learning about the society, its culture, and its people and their religion—the majority of Cubans practice an African-descended religion called Santería—I began to wonder about what had happened to the rest of the religions that had once made for the diversity of the fledgling colony.

In this sea of Santería and dilapidated architecture the Beth Shalom synagogue (one of three synagogues that remain in Havana) sits as a beacon of the North American way. Founded in 1953 and remodeled in 1999 with funds from Jewish organizations in Canada and the U.S., the brand new synagogue is eye-candy for Habaneros.

Adela Dworin, vice president of Beth Shalom, sits calmly in the library of the synagogue, a matriarchal figure that gives candy and games to the children that wander in and out of the room. According to Dworin, whose father emigrated from Pinsk in 1924, the first



(Left) Beth Shalom Synagogue in Havana. (Top) Two Cuban girls in uniforms display a flag and flowers in front of a memorial in Santiago.

practicing Jews came to Cuba from the United States when Cuba became a republic in 1902. Although history books maintain that Jews and many other nationalities and ethnicities had been represented in Cuba since its inception, Spanish influence following the inquisition prevented organization among Jews before 1902.

After that date, waves of immigration from Turkey in 1910 and Eastern Europe in the 1920s (because they could not get visas to go to the United States) created a bustling community of 15,000 Jews by the 1950s. “Back then there were five Jewish elementary schools, one Jewish high school and many different Jewish organizations in Havana,” Dworin said. Now there are 1,500 Jews in all of Cuba.

The story of Diaspora here is like many others we have heard. After the beginning of the revolution, many people left and those who remained didn’t want to be in the community since membership in the Communist Party precludes religious involvement.

Despite tremendous pressure to squelch the community, this one thrives in part due to the limitations and lack of mobility in Cuba itself. After the fall of

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Israel in Our Hearts and Minds

By Ambassador Yuval Rotem

This year, the world was presented with a new film, a new lens through which we can remember. This lens was the film called *The Pianist*, winner of international acclaim for its depiction of the true story of a young Jewish musician struggling to survive during the Nazi onslaught. *The Pianist* depicts the torment undergone by Jews with nowhere to turn. However, in my view, the *Pianist* is at its most compelling when it employs nuance to show how the Nazi nightmare gradually crept into the reality of normal society. A family sitting down to a Shabbat dinner, with no concept that, within a month, a distant threat would arrive at their doorstep and wipe out their entire way of life, culture and, eventually, their existence. Once the full dimensions of the evil became apparent, escape was all but impossible. As I watched the development of the impending doom on the screen, I was struck by the absence of a single word, a word not mentioned even once during the entire film. It was the word "Israel."

This year Israel is celebrating its 56th year of independence. Israel is a stronghold of democracy, freedom, and Judaism and is the ultimate proof of the triumph of the Jewish people. The nation of Israel has endured scores of terrorist attacks and suffered unimaginable pain. Fathers and mothers. Sons and daughters. Loved ones and friends. Our mourning for them will never end. Never. During the past year, there was yet one more hero taken from us. Colonel Ilan Ramon was Israel's first astronaut. In his final mission, aboard the Space Shuttle, he lifted the spirits of our entire nation. We were moved to tears when Ilan broadcast to our nation: "I want to say that from here, in space, Israel looks like it appears on the map, small, but beautiful." As Ilan soared, we soared with him. As he died, a part of each of us died with him. May he and his fellow astronauts now rest in peace. And may Ilan, who protected us for so many years in this world, continue to protect us from above.

During the past year, we shared the tension of the people of Israel as they donned gas masks in preparation for a possible strike from Iraq. Glued to the news, we wondered if this would be a repeat of the first Gulf War when Israel was shelled. And we waited with

hope as Saddam Hussein's despotic regime fell, opening further possibility for change in the Middle East. We consoled each other as our brethren fell victim to terrorism and inspired each other with hope as world leaders gathered in Aqaba to start the implementation of the "Road Map." Israel has long held fast to the principle that peace can result only from diplomatic negotiation.

Our success will be measured by the degree of unity of the Jewish people. As we make resolutions for the New Year, I encourage you all to consider how you can play a role in bringing the people of Israel closer together. While the past three years of violence kept our hearts focused on Israel, it prevented many of us and our children from experiencing the beauty of our homeland firsthand. There is no better guarantee of continued Jewish strength than being in the land of Israel. There should not be a single Jew who has not experienced firsthand the wonders of the Western Wall or the power of Masada. There should not be anyone who cannot take pride in having seen the majesty of Jerusalem, the mysticism of Tzfat, or the beauty of Eilat. We come closer when your children spend time at our world-class universities, our institutes of art, science and research. We need to see you with us. We need to know that we are not alone. When I look back at the past year's accomplishments, I am inspired with hope. Together we can realize a new hour for Israel—an hour that will justify the suffering and the long road we have traveled.

When you go to synagogue this Yom Kippur, remember where you were on the exact same day thirty years ago. Remember how you felt on that fateful October 6, 1973 when you first learned that Arab armies had taken advantage of the holiest Jewish day to launch a bitter offensive against Israel. Remember what was at stake as the State of Israel fought for its survival. And as you recite the sacred prayer:

*"May the one who makes peace in the heavens,
make peace for us and for all Israel."*

Reflect on what we as a people must do to prevent the world of the *Pianist*, a world without a safe-haven for Jews, from ever becoming a reality again.

Ambassador Yuval Rotem is the Consul General of Israel in Los Angeles.

A Child Speaking to his Parents

By David S. Dallal z"l

Give me food to nourish me, but do not be angry or sad when sometimes I do not like to eat. My body doesn't need it—do not bribe me to eat. Give my instincts a chance to function.

Give me warmth with your presence, comfort and security with your love. Give me your love freely, do not measure it or exchange it for things you want of me; it is in the free bounty of your love that I can learn to give to others. Be consistent so I may know where I am. Things change so quickly and appear so strange without your being so changeable.

Help me enjoy my potentials. Allow me to enjoy my five senses. Give me things to handle, to manipulate, to feel, to touch, to hear, and some that I may break. I need all the love that you can give, and still some more. Do not resent me when I resent your loving of my brother and sister. I am compelled to manipulate and push them aside to get all your attention and love. I am selfish and self-centered but I'm trying to learn to accept my brother and sister. We may fight but I'll learn to share with them. Let me solve my problems with them and just watch how my play, work, words, fears and behavior are instances of my tedious task of growing up.

When you want me to behave, be patient with me; I learn better when I make mistakes. When you want me to do this or that, do not shout or scream at me, tell me why—I'm trying to learn. When I am difficult, do not give up on me—I cannot help it. Do not punish me for being angry when I have been frustrated, disappointed, deprived or disciplined—it is bad enough as it is. Let me feel that I am wanted, see that I am important, so I can continue to want to please you. Treat me with dignity as an individual so that I can learn to feel my individuality. Be friendly and loyal to me that I may know how to be the same to others. Please do not break your promise to me—it is a bad start for me to develop a trust in people.

Please don't keep me your baby when I want to feel grown-up. Don't make me afraid of losing your love. Know when I am ready and help me enjoy my growing up—do not push me. Do not implant your own fears into me—my own are difficult enough for me. When I am afraid, do not be baffled; it is my way of telling you I want more of your love, assurance and comforting presence. Help me not to lose control when I am angry—stop me when I strike, hit or destroy, but do not make me feel so evil for being angry that I may be afraid to feel strongly.

Let me try out my new powers as my body devel-

ops—to sit, to creep, to hold, stand, walk, climb and jump when I am ready. Let me learn bit by bit to bare pain, to want and to postpone. Do not make me experience too much, too many, too long, too early. Give me something to look forward to—pleasures of tomorrow, dreams of growing up.

Speak to me with your heart, your hands, your action—I do not understand your words. Do not lecture to me—I do not hear you. Surround me with kindly and sensitive people. Give me as honest an answer as you know. Let me experiment; let me find out things for myself. Let me explore nature—collect rocks, insects, butterflies, and leaves. Do not stifle my curiosity. Let me stay sensitive to nature, truth and life.

Let me have fun out of little things no matter how foolish they may seem to you. Encourage my efforts to do things even when I do not do them very well. Be patient with my little messes—I am learning. Allow me to enjoy my childhood. Tell me how to be grown-up but do not expect me to do it—let me watch you—and, oh boy, how I can see a lot of me in you!

David S. Dallal was the director of a psychiatric clinic for children when he wrote this article. Dallal passed away a year ago, and he is sorely missed.

To our Granddaughter Elana Jablon
Mazal Tov on your Bat Mitzvah,
we are very proud of you.

To our Family:

Sharon, Elana and Eden
Lisa and Rebecca
Benedicte, Jeffrey and Claire

And all our friends at Kahal
Our best wishes for a happy and healthy
New Year and Well over the Fast

Ruby and Joe Samuels

Meyer Jonah

A Toast to 95 Years

By Joe Samuels



Usually, when a man celebrates his birthday he takes a day off. But when a woman celebrates her birthday she takes a year off. Once I asked Meyer, "What is the secret of your longevity? Is it genes, food, faith, love, hope, good deeds, or is it mental attitude?"

His answer was, "all of that." I also asked him, "What is your message to the young?" He replied, "Be honest, have a good goal and work hard at it."

In Jewish theology, practically everything is based on three pillars:

The world is based on, justice, peace and truth. The Jewish religion is based on G-d, Torah and Israel. We wish the Bar Mitzvah candidate to be able to study Torah, to be fortunate to marry and privileged to do good deeds. Meyer's secret of eternal youth is also based on three pillars. They are: **GRATITUDE, FAITH AND HOPE.**

Gratitude: is the pillar of happiness. When you are grateful you can face any difficulties in life, with patience and valor. Meyer is always grateful. He is grateful for his health, he is grateful for the love of his family and friends. And above all he is grateful to G-d for the things he has and the things he doesn't have.

Faith: is the pillar of spiritual fulfillment. Rabbi Ele'ezer from Modiin says, "Physical existence is dependent on spiritual health." You don't get old by accumulating number of years, you get old by deserting your ideals and loosing your faith. Meyer has faith in a merciful God. He has faith that things will turn out all right. He has faith in the community. He even has faith in his fate.

Hope: is the pillar of youth. When you have zest for living and your goal is to try to make someone happy, it always rubs off on you. Meyer's unbending enthusiasm of life is contagious, his radiant smile is refreshing, his warm love is uplifting and his cheerful thoughts are inspiring.

All this makes Meyer a well-balanced person. If you know Meyer well you will always detect a wireless station in his heart with antennas always up catching signals of hope, beauty, cheer and courage. He is the oldest young man I have ever known. At his age he thinks he can get away with many things, especially with the ladies. He actually does. He is known as **Meyer the Tiger.**

He is a one-man welcoming committee of our community. Armed with mini roses on Saturday mornings, he greets the ladies with a warm smile that no one escapes. Always he gets a return smile, thank you, and sometimes he gets a hug or a kiss. Everybody loves Meyer. He is the most admired of men. Meyer Mazel Tov on your 95th birthday. May you be blessed to continuously bring sunshine to everybody you come in contact with.

Minyan continued from page 7

the Eastern Bloc in 1990, Cuba underwent many economic and social changes and since then it has once again become a secular country. People began to practice religion more and the temple reopened its Sunday school.

Now, with 380 Jewish families in Havana, and no Rabbi to be found, the community is stronger than most in North America, with a tight network of highly educated individuals and a few synagogues that act as true community centers.

"More young people are coming back to the religion," Dworin said. "When they come back to the community they see that they can send their children here."

With so few Jews in Cuba, the community has a very high rate of inter-marriage—more than 90 percent, but most spouses opt to be converted.

Although they have no rabbi, prayers and Hebrew school services are managed by a couple sent by the American Joint Distribution community for two year terms.

Donations from Jewish foundations around the world have supplied the community with medicines, food for Passover and other basics since 1961.

Although Cuba broke relations with Israel in 1973, the Cuban Government has recently agreed to allow for the Aliyot of Cuban Jews to Israel, and an Israeli intersection resides in the Canadian embassy.

Gowns, Tuxes and a Jaguar

The "Legacy of Kindness" Dinner was a Hit



Just one please!



Looking dapper in his tux, Adam Kelly poses for the camera.

By Ronald Einy

On March 3, 2003, Kahal Joseph held its annual "Legacy of Kindness" gala dinner. As more than 550 guests arrived on the red carpet looking dapper in their cocktail gowns and tuxes, the Regent Beverly Wilshire was transformed into a French country garden.

Such an event could only be made possible with the hard work and commitment of our honorees.

Manachi Kemareh, whose passion and dedication to our synagogue remains boundless, brought an international contingent of family and friends to share in his being honored.

Honorees Hannie and David Kelly, whose talent for social, religious and business machination have endeared them to our congregation since their arrival in Los Angeles.



Donning gowns and suits, the Kahal Joseph choir dazzled the audience.



And the winners are... Jeannot and Rochelle Acoca!

Our Hessed Award was presented to our past president Joseph Sassoon and his wife Kitty, who were as gracious and warm as a couple who have played such an important part in our synagogue's history.

The Reuben Berci Orchestra provided some of the most glamorous music in town; there's nothing like seeing our community happy on a dance floor!

To cap off a grand night, a fully loaded Jaguar X-Type was raffled. The winning ticket was held by our board member Jeannot Acoca and his wife Rochelle. They drove home in style after such an ultimate night.

Our "Legacy of Kindness" fundraising dinner of 2003 proved once again how happy our congregation, its members and friends, feel to be part of such a fun and uplifting evening. Organized and perceived with imagination and flair, this labor of love was as gratifying and successful; and everything about it felt right.

Our Honorees



MANACHI KEMAREH

Born in Basra, Iraq, the youngest of twelve children, Manachi was destined to lead a tumultuous life that led him to Kahal Joseph after years of involvement in the Jewish communities of Iraq and Iran. Since his arrival to Los Angeles in 1980, he has been a dedicated member and an avid supporter of our community.



HANNIE & DAVID KELLY

Born in India and married in London, Hannie and David found their way to Kahal Joseph in 1979. When our community's children are the focus, Hannie and David are always at the forefront. The couple's dedication and support to Kahal and other Jewish organizations has no bounds.



KITTY & JOSEPH SASSOON

Our Hessed Award was presented to our past president Joseph Sassoon and his wife Kitty. Married in Calcutta in 1944, the couple ultimately immigrated to America. Since 1953 they have been integrally involved in Kahal Joseph and continue to be involved in its day-to-day business. Congratulations to Kitty and Joe on the graduations of their grandchildren Adam and Jeanne.



A Year in Pictures:

A Retrospective of Kahal's Recent Events and Celebrations

By Rabbi Haim Ovadia

After an inspiring **Rosh HaShana**, we gathered on September 11 to commemorate the innocent victims of the murderous terror attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. The timing of that anniversary, between Rosh HaShana and Kippur, served as an opportunity to examine our lives in light of the passing year's events. The climax of that highly emotional evening was when Steven Kerekes read a letter to a friend who was killed in the attack.

The Synagogue was packed on **Yom Kippur** and the atmosphere was one of spiritual elevation and unity.

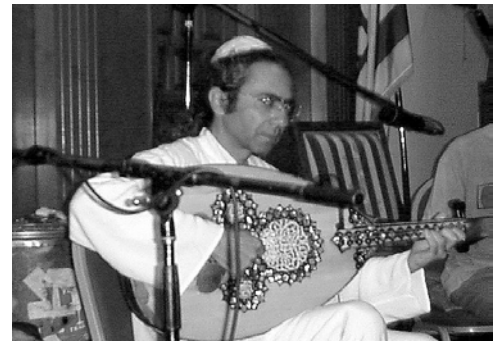
After the High Holydays we sprung into a happier mood as Rabbi Haim Ovadia and his wife

Edna opened their house, or should we say their Sukkah, for all members of Kahal during **Suk-koth**. The joy and happiness were further nurtured by an Iraqi Hafla hosted in Kahal. Don't miss this year's Open House and **Iraqi Hafla on Sukkoth**.

The winter started with a fruitful cooperation with the SEC which presented its **Classes for the Masses** series at Kahal. The speakers included R. Haim Ovadia, R. Daniel Bouskila, R. Dr. Abner Weiss, R. Dr. Nathan Lopez Cardozo, Dr. Gerald Schroeder and R. Levi Meyer of Cedars-Sinai.

Shabbat Luncheons were interesting and enjoyable. Besides singing traditional Piyyutim and enjoying great food we listened to guest lecturers. Mr. Kurtz, father of Kahal member Stan Kurtz talked to us about the Jewish Ghetto in Shanghai. We also welcomed all the guests and honorees of the Legacy of Kindness Gala Dinner, and marked with a special Israeli Fruit and Song Luncheon the holiday of **Tu BiShvat**.

The Iraqi community was always known for its solid musical



tradition. Truthful to that reputation, not only did we have a hafla on Sukkoth and started a Piyyut class on Saturdays, but we also hosted the renowned contemporary Iraqi musician **Yair Dallal**. Yair, who dedicated his concert to his late uncle David, a long standing member of our community,



Pictures Continued on page 15

uses a unique blend of musical traditions. The audience was mesmerized by his rendering of the traditional Ya Ribbon Olam and the instrumental solos. We look forward to hosting him again in the near future.

On November 24 the Sisterhood presented the annual **Hanukkah Party**. After eating donuts, lighting the Menorah, listening to the kids choir and receiving cool gifts, convincing the kids to go back home was not an easy job.



In the previous millennia, the Sisterhood started a tradition of marking **New Year** with an international night, complete with exotic (kosher) delights from the Indonesian, Indian Iraqi and many more cuisines. This tradition entered its second millennia with rigor and next year looks promising with exquisite Japanese and Balinese dishes.

On March 17 we gathered to listen to the **Megilah reading**, following the Sisterhood's annual **Purim** celebration (clown, gifts and Haman Taschen included, but alas, no Zangoola). The crowd was cheerful and voiciferous and the Hazan had to struggle to finish the reading without fainting. But the effort was worth it as everybody sat down, or rather set out



to devour a luscious dairy meal catered by the new Kosher restaurant Koshushi (Thank you Ruben Benhamou). Food is not all, though, and the crowd was entertained by a display of artistic and comic talent which is rampant in Kahal. Karaoke, stand up comedy and more mesmerized the audience.

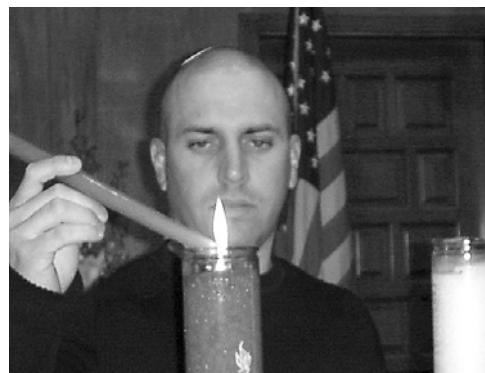
On March 2 all members and friends of Kahal Joseph were treated to an unforgettable evening at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel as we celebrated the annual **Legacy of Kindness Banquet**.

Living comfortably in these great United States does not mean that we forget our origins or the plight of those who are still suffering under evil regimes. In two special occasions we have strengthened our ties to our Iraqi and Sefaradi past and present.

On May 4, during the **Forgotten Exodus Conference** we learnt about **Jimena** (Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa), an organization that deals with Jewish refugees from the Middle East. We listened to testimonials of people who were imprisoned and tortured in Iraq, Iran, Libya and Egypt for no crime other than being Jewish. Testimonials were then recorded by a special crew offered by Blazer Communications to help document these stories.

On August 5, Kahal Joseph hosted Mrs. Rachel Zelon, who was responsible for bringing to Israel some of the last Jews who remained in Iraq. Her story brought tears to the eyes of many who remembered the people, the sights and the places which they called home.

Yom Haatzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, was marked this year in an unprecedented manner. With over five hundred in atten-



dance, seven men and women lighted candles in memory of Israel's wars. The **L.A. Shir Choir** began the program with a medley of beautiful Israeli songs. Traditional prayers were recited simultaneously with an audio-visual presentation of the history of the State of Israel, the Israeli Army and the unique Human tapestry of Israeli citizens.

Young Adults and Couples have a special place in Kahal and starting last July they have also special events. Already into its third month, the Friday Night Dinner should not be missed. With great food, Aerobics and games for the kids, and stimulating conversations with guest speakers, no wonder people would rather be at Kahal on that Friday.

Pictures continued from page 15



Many of our congregants opened their homes to host Havurah meetings, morning classes for the ladies and evening classes for young professionals. And don't forget our on-going activities: **Coffee Night** every first Tuesday of the month, **Israeli Dancing** on Wednesdays, and **Genesis** and

Kabbalah classes on Tuesdays.

On June 5 we celebrated **Shavuot** in an extraordinary way. After prayers we enjoyed a traditional dairy meal and then joined in a discussion on the Book of Ruth, exploring the delicate issues of the status of women and converts in the Bible and in Judaism.

On August 10, fifty of our members gathered in a cultural excursion to the **J. Paul Getty Museum** for a docent-guided



tour of the museum's architecture. The trip was so successful that a second one is in the works to visit the Huntington gardens and museum in San Marino.

Our heart and synagogue is open to all and even more so to those who open their heart for us. We were proud to host on July 25 the **Little Hands group from Japan**. Watching 14 Japanese kids, in traditional garbs, singing in Hebrew and delivering a message of international peace was indeed heartwarming. Before leaving the synagogue to have Shabbat dinner with their hosting families a multilingual surprise hit the audience as the director of the group addressed us in fluent Hebrew and in return was greeted by one the congregants in fluent Japanese.

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Sol Basha



Behind the Mic

KJ Members Hit Center Stage

Our own Marlene Ezra Baruch has just released her first CD *First Breath*, a compilation of soft rock music written and produced by Marlene and Jarrett Michaels. The album highlights her vocal talent. Copies of *First Breath* can be purchased at our gift shop, a portion of the proceeds will benefit Kahal Joseph.



Cousins Jonathon Jonah (left) and Brian Judah (right) are pursuing careers in their life-long love of music, but taking different paths in their drive toward success. Both write and arrange their own music. Brian has focused his energies on becoming a solo recording artist, while Jon has formed a four-piece band called "F L", and is intent on presenting his music to the public through live performances.



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To all our family and friends

*We treasure the happy moments
we have shared from year to year
and hope
that this coming year
brings the best of everything to you*

SHANA TOVA

Yvette & Joseph Dabby
Sharon, Lisa and Nadine

Rachel & Jeannot Acoca
Cecile, Miky and Rachel Leah Acoca
Yossi and Karen Acoca

Wish all their family and friends
at Kahal

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To Our Families and Friends:

We Wish You a Happy and Healthy New Year

Shana Tova
Gmar Hatima Tova
Manachi Kemareh
**Merna, Dror, Danny &
Dennis Ironi**
**Abe & Ourite Kamara
& Family**

*Rabbi Haim and Edna
Ovadia and Family*

*Lulu and Allan Fensten
and Family*

*Flora & Judah Sassoon
and Family*

Claire & Naji Assia

Lily Judah & Family

*Harry & Elsa Singman
and Family*

*Joseph & Kitty Sassoon
and Family*

*Mr. & Mrs. Shaoul Moshi
& Family*

*Isaac, Suzy, Nathalie and
Jonathan Assia*

May your homes be filled
with the sweet sounds of
happiness and peace.

**Caroline & David
Azouz & Family**

Shana Tova
From our Family
to Yours!

**Diane & Hal Cohen
and Family**

*Marcelle & Joseph E.
Joseph and Family*

Ezekiel Ezra

Saul Bar

Sophie Aslan and Family

Hilda Sassoon and Family

*Fred & Evelyn Salem
and Family*

*Michael & Moselle
Amron and Family*

May you be inscribed in
the Book of Life for a
wonderful year filled
with good health and
abundance of joy.
Warmest wishes.

Marsha Levine

*Florence Shamash
& Sally Joseph*

Letizia & Ronald Einy

*Rita Hanin
Jeffrey Hanin*

*Ronit & Samuel Tevet
and Family*

*Norman & Mollie
Konigsberg*

*Lily Sassoon
and Family*

*Emma & Gershon
Shapiro*

*Charles, Teresa
& Chas Dabby*

*Jack, Helen, Rebecca
and Jonathan Jonah*

Member Happenings

Graduates



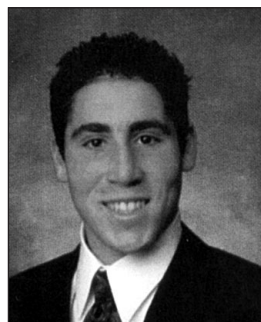
Jeanne McHale
Yale Law School



Abraham Menashy
UC Santa Barbara
B.A. Economics



Nadine L. Dabby
UC Berkeley
B.A. English with honors
& Biochemistry



Adam Sassoon
UC Berkeley
B.A. Molecular and Cell
Biology with honors



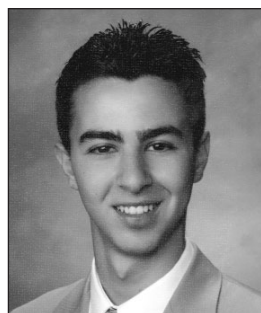
Michael Salem
U. Pennsylvania
B.A. Politics, Psychology &
Economics with honors



Dan Zion Muhtar
UCLA
B.Sc. Biochemistry
with honors



Michelle Youssefzadeh
UC Berkeley
B.A. Anthropology



Cameron David Lazerine
Calabasas High School



Shayna Fensten
Shalhevet High School



Solomon Rohjani
Beverly Hills High School

Newborns

- Ronit & Jerome Wozniak, Baby Boy **Yonathan Ziv** • Ladan and Tony Khalili, Baby Girl **Ariana Daniela**
• Shaun & Mitch Jacobs, Baby Boy **Zachary Irving** • Helen and Ronnie Sassoon, Baby Girl **Rachel Rina**
• Sarah & Eyal Fellah, Baby Girl **Kathleen Khatoon** • Cecile and Miky Acoca, Baby Girl **Leah Rachel**
• Stella and Omid Ezer, Baby Boy **Mathew Eli** • Victoria and Nico Tabibi, Twins **Leah and Yair**
• Rachel & Neil Sheff, Baby Girl **Rivka** • Sharon & Yossi Chammou, Baby Girl **Maya Michal**
• Selina & Meyer Dallal, Baby Boy **Daniel** • Davina & Brett Wiley, Twin Girls **Emma & Hanna**
• Joy & Moise Danielpour, Baby Girl **Kelly Elizabeth** • Miriam & Shirwin Azizadeh, Baby Boy **Yehouda**
• Orly & Saul Maslavi, Baby Girl **Sabrina Elisa** • Nathalie & Gaby Gabypour, Baby Boy **Ilan**

B'nei Mitzvot

Liana Glicksman

(Photo not available)



Daniella Kamara



Melissa Yaghoubian



Elana Jablon



Oliver Azouz



Jacob Levy

Weddings

Shani Medina & Yoel Stoler

Lisa Joseph & David Volvovic

Dalia Shaaya & Robert Nemzer

Joy Dabby & Joel Ball

Adele EL Ani & Jack Mussry

**Norma & Sam
Dabby**



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Ages 11 - 13 years

November 2003 - April 2004

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• Hebrew/Judaic Studies

Tuesday/Thursday 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

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Ages 8 - 10 years: Class B

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Additional children at \$100.00 per month

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In Memoriam

Isaac Amron

Farhan Besharat

Sumner Blank

David Dallal

Helen Ezra

Norman Ezra

Simon Iny

Matty Joseph

Rachel Joseph

Eliza Maslavi

Saul Masliah

Norman Ezra

When I think of Norman Ezra's life I think of the story of Job. Norman was born in Baghdad in 1914. He immigrated with his family to America in 1953. In early 1954 he was in a car accident that killed his wife and daughter and plunged him into a coma for three months. His one-year-old son was thrown to the sidewalk and survived. He then concentrated upon the upbringing of his son. He worked as a waiter in different restaurants and hotels. In 1986 Norman faced another devastating tragedy. His son died of AIDS. He was 33. Despite the tragic events that befell him, he remained optimistic and continued to believe in the unexplained destiny of God. His work and the synagogue became his only purpose for living. He was very charitable in helping underprivileged students and extremely generous in giving to Kahal Joseph. Norman died on March 23, 2003 at the age of 89. He will be missed.

By Joe Samuels

David Dallal

Dad was a good and loving father. He raised us to think for ourselves. He made suggestions, but didn't push. He accepted our decisions even when it hurt and disappointed him. He wanted us to feel confident and sure of ourselves. He gave us what we needed to develop ourselves. He respected other people and their right to think differently. I will never forget the short times we learned Torah together. He was a very keen study partner; he thought deeply into what we learned and related the teachings to his own life experiences. Another important quality was his acceptance of pain and suffering and his love for life. I hope we can learn from Dad's great qualities to change our lives for the better, like Dad would have wanted.

By Steven Sassoon Dallal

Farhan Besharat

Mama was a woman with dignity and strength, she was softspoken, yet she could fill up a room with her simple presence. It was the love of her family that she cared for, that's all that she wanted, was to be around them as much as she could. Having the opportunity to be with my Grandmother has been an absolute blessing. I hope that one day I can be like you Mama. I miss you so much. I miss your warm smile and your golden touch. I miss your love-filled meals and your remarkable wisdom. Thank you Mama for everything; you have touched our lives in an inexplicable way. You continue to watch over us today, I am so grateful to have had you in my life. Your love will never diminish in our hearts. My most precious gift in the twenty years that I have been on this earth, was knowing you. I love you Mama.

By Candace Ezer

Rachel Joseph

Born in Rangoon, Burma, my mother, Rachel Bahar, married Reuben Joseph and lived in Rangoon until the start of World War II. Our Family was evacuated to Poona, India, during the Japanese occupation of Rangoon, where we resided until my father took ill and died, leaving my mother a widow at 36 years of age with seven children ranging from 3 to 15 years. Soon after my father's death, my mother left India for England with her children. Until her recent death at the age of 95, my mother provided us and all those who knew her with an extraordinary example of faith, strength, intelligence, independence, dignity, humor and resilience. She will be sadly missed. We are profoundly grateful that she died with grace and dignity, surrounded by her family fully aware that the love and care bestowed on them during her life was returned in full measure. My mother was blessed with 18 grandchildren and 35 great-grandchildren.

By Florence Joseph Shamash

SEPTEMBER 2003

ELUL 5764

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
24 Elul 21	25 Elul 22	26 Elul 23	27 Elul 24	28 Elul 25	29 Elul 26 <i>Selihoth, followed by Shaharit & Hata- rat Nedarim 6:15 am Minhah 6:15 pm</i> EREV ROSH HASHANA	1 Tishrei 27 <i>Shaharit 8:30 am Minhah 6:15 pm</i> ROSH HASHANA
2 Tishrei 28 <i>Shaharit 8:30 am Minhah 6:15 pm</i> ROSH HASHANA Second Day	3 Tishrei 29 FAST OF GEDALIAH	4 Tishrei 30				

OCTOBER 2003

TISHREI 5764

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			5 Tishrei 1	6 Tishrei 2	7 Tishrei 3	8 Tishrei 4 SHABBAT SHUVA HA'AZINU
9 Tishrei 5 <i>Kol Nidre 6:15 pm</i> EREV YOM KIP- PUR	10 Tishrei 6 <i>Shaharit 8:00 am Mussaf 1:30 pm Minhah 4:00 pm Neilah 6:15 pm</i> YOM KIPPUR	11 Tishrei 7	12 Tishrei 8	13 Tishrei 9	14 Tishrei 10 <i>Minhah 6:00 pm Candles 6:09 pm</i> EREV SUKKOT	15 Tishrei 11 <i>Shaharit 8:30 am Class 4:30 pm Minhah 5:30 pm Arvit 7:00 pm Candles 7:11 pm</i> SUKKOT 1st Day
16 Tishrei 12 <i>Shaharit 8:30 am Class 5:00 pm Minhah 6:00 pm Arvit 6:45 pm Yom Tov over at 7:09 pm</i> SUKKOT 2nd Day	17 Tishrei 13 <i>Shaharit 6:30 am Minhah & Arvit 6:00 pm</i> First day Hol Hamoed SUKKOT	18 Tishrei 14 <i>Shaharit 6:30 am Minhah & Arvit 6:00 pm</i> Second day Hol Hamoed SUKKOT	19 Tishrei 15 <i>Shaharit 6:30 am Minhah & Arvit 6:00 pm</i> Third day Hol Hamoed SUKKOT	20 Tishrei 16 <i>Shaharit 6:30 am Minhah & Arvit 6:00 pm Study Session 10pm</i> Fourth day Hol Hamoed SUKKOT	21 Tishrei 17 <i>Shaharit 6:30 am Minhah & Arvit 6:00 pm Candles 6:00 pm</i> HOSHANAH RABBAH	22 Tishrei 18 <i>Shaharit 8:30 am Class 4:30 pm Minhah 5:30 pm Arvit 7:00 pm Candles 7:02 pm</i> SHEMINI ASER- ETH
23 Tishrei 19 <i>Shaharit 8:30 am Special children's reading 10:00 am Hakafot following prayers Class 5:00 pm Minhah 6:00 pm Arvit 6:45 pm Yom Tov over at 7:00 pm</i> SIMCHAT TORAH	24 Tishrei 20	25 Tishrei 21	26 Tishrei 22	27 Tishrei 23	28 Tishrei 24	29 Tishrei 25

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