



### **April 2015 e-newsletter**

**Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,**

**We wish all our Jewish readers a Happy Pessach and all our Greek Orthodox friends a Kalo Pasca. See attachment for Holiday services.**

**Esther & Joseph  
Yohanan**



**This issue is dedicated to the Yohanan (Johanan) family. This is part of our new chapter with our e-newsletters, highlighting a prominent family in our community. The Yohanan family has played**

a prominent role in the Romaniote community in New York and all Yohanans are invited to a special Shabbat on April 25th.

Look for the story of this family at the end of our newsletter. If you want to sponsor your family in an upcoming Shabbat, contact us at [kehila\\_kedosha\\_janina@netzero.net](mailto:kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net).

This newsletter, our 74<sup>th</sup> will, as always, cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. Your feedback is of utmost importance to us. If you missed previous issues, they can be accessed on our website ([www.kkjsm.org](http://www.kkjsm.org)).

We now reach over 6000 households worldwide, with our community of 'friends' continually growing with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at [kehila\\_kedosha\\_janina@netzero.net](mailto:kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net).

As always, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up ([papusoup@mindspring.com](mailto:papusoup@mindspring.com)) so we are sure that our Kiddush (traditional Greek Jewish Kosher foods) is sufficient. If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush for a special occasion or an Adara, contact Sol.

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### Passings

~ We send our condolences to members of the Levy family on the passing of Solomon Levy's wife, Rosalie, on March 12, 2015.

~ We send our condolences to members of the extended Colchamiro family on the passing of Jerry Weber, husband of Jean Colchamiro Weber. Jerry so loved the Greek-Jewish traditions and customs of his wife's family.

~ We mourn the passing of Sylvia Messing, who passed at the age of 89. Our condolences to her son Michael Zacharia. Sylvia and Isaac Zacharia were founding members of the Sephardic Temple in Cedarhurst and Sylvia was a proud member of the Sisterhood of Janina.

~ We send our condolences to Daisy Schaeffer on the passing of her husband, Ralph.

~ We mourn the passing of Beverly Askinazi beloved wife of Sol Askinazi and daughter in law of Esther and Caliph Askinazi.

May their memories be a blessing.

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### Simchas

~ We celebrate the important wedding anniversaries of the following members of our Community:

~65<sup>th</sup> Sol and Terry Lafazan

~65<sup>th</sup> Izzy and Marilyn Negrin

~54<sup>th</sup> Dave and Louise Corito





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**Aikoi Mas, Los Muestros (our own) come home**

We had a very emotional visit from Shosh Adan from Israel whose father lost his family in the Holocaust. Shosh's father was Angel Benozilio, the son of David Benozillo and Rene Revach, both of Salonika. Angel survived the concentration camps, married a woman he met in the DP camps, never returned to Salonika, deciding to immigrate to Israel. Angel lost his family in the Holocaust (including his brothers, Daniel and Jacques, and sister, Sol). Shosh is looking for any information on possible family, cousins, etc, who might have survived.



Shosh shared some family pictures with us hoping that somehow, someone might recognize a face and make the family connection. It would mean so much to Shosh.



**Reina Benozilio and children**



**Reina and David Benozilio and son**



**Not sure**

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**Visitors continue to flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina**

**We welcomed Tassos Mannessis, eyewitness to the saving of the Israel family on the island of Erikoussa off the coast of Corfu. Tassos will be with us this June when we present our Award of Moral Courage to the islanders.**





~We are always overjoyed to welcome synagogue and school groups to Kehila Kedosha Janina



Conservative Synagogue of Westport CT



Reform Synagogue of Westbury Long Island

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### Past Museum Events

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, we were honored to welcome Professor Panos Stavrianides, who presented a very timely program on Ethnic Identity and Integration of Greek Jews in Contemporary Greece: A Sociological Study of their Attitudes and Behaviors as an Ethno-religious Minority in a Homogeneous Society. The turnout was excellent and the fact that our audience, many of whom were born in Greece, were very interested in and receptive to the presentation, was of extreme importance to us.

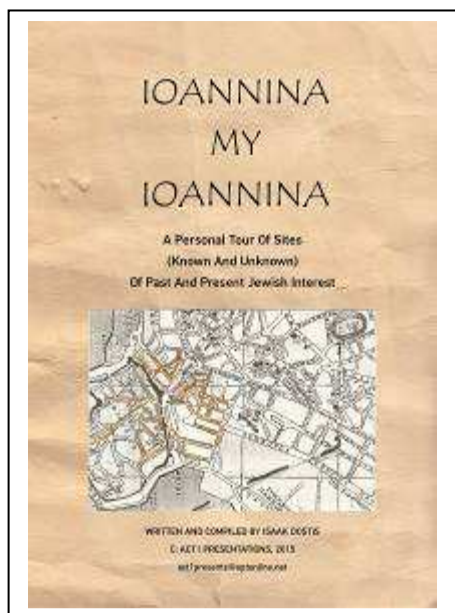


Avram Pengas and Anna Matathia



## Upcoming Museum Events

On April 12<sup>th</sup> Kehila Kedosha Janina is honored to welcome back Isaac Dostis, the founder of our Museum, and his wife Diana. Isaac will be presenting his latest book, "Ioannina my Ioannina," a tour guide of Jewish Ioannina. The presentation will take place between 12-3. For those who cannot make the presentation, Kehila Kedosha Janina will be selling the book for \$25 plus \$5 P&H. E-Mail us a [kehila\\_kedosha\\_janina@netzero.net](mailto:kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net) to RSVP or to order the book.



**Date: April 12, 2015**

**Time 1:00**

**Where: Kehila Kedosha Janina, 280 Broome Street, NYC**

**Refreshments will be served after the presentation**


**Open to the Public**

**Please RSVP**

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On April 19<sup>th</sup>, we will stop and remember Greek-Jewish losses in the Holocaust at our annual Yom HaShoah. This year we will remember the Jewish Community of Corfu and are honored to host the photo exhibit of Viktor Koen, "Sylvia."

*"Sylvia is a series of photographs shot in the spring of 2004 in Poland at the Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek concentration-camp sites. Sylvia is also my maternal grandmother's name, an Auschwitz inmate and survivor. Sylvia was also at Auschwitz (her third visit since liberation) while I was shooting, guiding the Greek "March of the Living" delegation through the camp. Even though this was an emotional visit with a very personal dimension, the photographs document places and spaces that are completely devoid of people and life. I wanted emotions to rise from the difference between the (now) clean, almost clinical, installations depicted in my images and everything we learned from the dramatic visual materials and testimony that subsequently bore witness to the camps. I felt that this "before- and-after" approach (in which I could only capture the "after") was the only right one for (my sense of) the moment. I mostly looked for the symmetry and order that made these factories function. I looked for the industrial detail that reveals the thought and detail that went into planning these closed systems, built for specific and inevitable ends...."* Excerpted from the Catalog of the Jewish Museum of Greece in Athens for the

opening of the exhibit. Viktor's work has been shown all over the world. We are honored to showcase it in our photo gallery. The exhibit will run from April 19-May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015.



**HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY 2015**

**Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue & Museum**  
 cordially invites you to a Yom HaShoah ceremony, this year commemorating the Jews of Corfu  
 and celebrating the moral courage of the islanders of Ereikousa.  
 The ceremony will be followed by a screening of the documentary *Farewell My Island* by Isaac Dostis.

On this occasion, the KJ Museum Photo Gallery will open the exhibition  
**SYLVIA / AUSCHWITZ, BIRKENAU, MAJDANEK**  
 Photographs by Viktor Kaen, on view: April 19 - May 24, 2015

**Sunday, April 19, 2015, 12:00-3:00pm.**  
 Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue & Museum  
 280 Broome Street (off Allen St.), New York, NY 10002, 212-431-1619

Our Yom HaShoah program will start at 12:00 with our traditional program of prayers and candle lighting. Our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos will highlight the Jewish Community of Corfu, the story of their roundup and deportation and the story of the few who survived. As part of our program we will show "Farewell My Island" by Isaac Dostis.



**Osmos Family 1926**



**Isaac Peretz Family**



**It is so appropriate that we remember the tremendous losses of Greek Jewry.  
Here, at Kehila Kedosha Janina, we never forget.**

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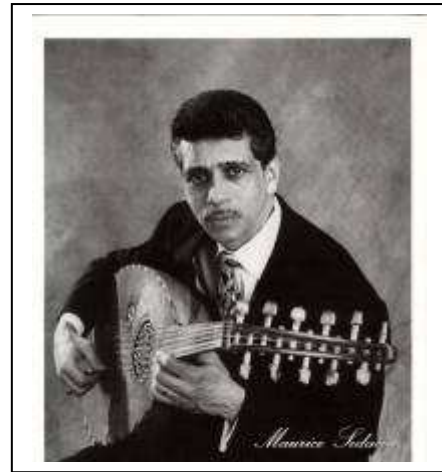
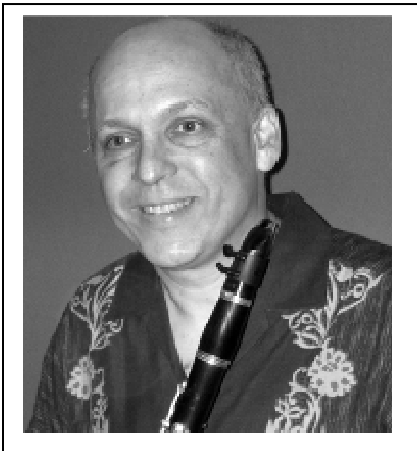
**SAVE THE DATE**

**Join us on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 3:00 for a special concert by the Elias Ladino Ensemble**

**Kehila Kedosha Janina  
280 Broome Street (between Allen and Eldridge)  
New York, New York 10002**

***"Since 1976, The Elias Ladino Ensemble has performed the songs of the Sephardic Jews in venues all over the world. Many of the Jews who were expelled from Spain in the Inquisition relocated to the Ottoman Empire. There they lived in insular communities, practicing their religion and speaking the Spanish language that they brought out of Spain. Over the next 450 years this language evolved into the language we call Ladino, a distinct dialect spoken only by Sephardic Jews. Today Ladino is on the verge of extinction. World War II saw the annihilation of the Spanish Jews in the Balkans; a way of life and a culture were given a death sentence.***

***"We learned these Songs from within the Sephardic Community, so we understand the connection that they had to everyday life.... Many of the songs date back to ancient Spain, while some reveal melodies and rhythms of the Balkan and Middle Eastern communities where we lived in exile. In our hands, the music remains as vibrant as the community once was. The Elias Ladino Ensemble has performed in festivals and concerts in Spain, Turkey, Israel, Canada and throughout North America."***



**Daniel Elias (musical director) is a founding member of the ensemble. The grandson of Rabbi David Elias Cassorla and the son of Joe Elias, he has been performing Ladino music since the age of 15.**

**Maurice Sedacca (guitar and oud) is descendant of the Sedacca family of Chanakale, Turkey. He grew up surrounded by Ladino songs. His mother, Esther Sedacca, was a fine singer and his grandfather, Haim Azar, played the oud. Maurice is also a founding member of the ensemble.**

**Tickets: \$20 by advance check  
\$25 cash only at the door**

**Check to be made out to Kehila Kedosha Janina and mailed to the same at One Hanson Place, Huntington, NY 11743. SEATS ARE LIMITED**



**SAVE THE DATE**

**MAY 31<sup>ST</sup>**


**GREEK JEWISH STREET FESTIVAL**

**See Enclosed Flyer**

**Events of Interest in the New York City Area**

**Jane Elias One Women Show**

"One of the best solo shows I've ever seen."  
— Asif Mandvi, THE DAILY SHOW



do this  
**ONE**  
thing  
for me

A SOLO PLAY

written & performed by  
JANE ELIAS

directed by  
TRACY BERSLEY

**BACK FOR A LIMITED  
4-WEEK ENGAGEMENT!**

written & performed by  
JANE ELIAS

directed by  
TRACY BERSLEY

The poignant story of a woman's  
self-discovery through her  
relationship with her father,  
a Greek Jew who survived  
Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen.  
Now he just wants to dance with  
his daughter at her wedding.  
Not too much to ask, right?

Lighting Design: RENEE MOLINA    Production Manager: FARRAH CRANE  
Press Rep: BECK LEE/MEDIA BLITZ    Graphics: MICHAEL THOMAS/HOLMES

**April 9 – May 3, 2015**

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Monday at 8PM				9	10	11	12
	13			16	17	18	19
	20			23	24	25	26
Saturday at 2PM Sunday at 3PM	27			30	1	2	3
						MAY	

**THE TBG THEATRE**  
312 West 36th Street (bet. 8th & 9th Avenues), 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10018

Tickets: \$25 | \$50. Opening night performance & post-show reception  
Saturday, April 11

FOR TICKETS: [dothisONEthingsoloplay.brownpapertickets.com](http://dothisONEthingsoloplay.brownpapertickets.com)

[dothisONEthingforme.com](http://dothisONEthingforme.com)

**Lina Orfanos and Maria Farantouri**

THE MODERN GREEK STUDIES PROGRAM, THE HELLENIC CULTURAL ASSOCIATION AND THE ELYTIS CHAIR FUND OF  
**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**  
IN COLLABORATION WITH SYN-PHONIA ENTERTAINMENT INC. PRESENT






**MARIA  
FARANTOURI**  
SONGS OF GREECE & THE WORLD

WITH LINA ORFANOS  
MUSICAL DIRECTOR: ACHILLEAS WASTOR

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25 • 7 PM**

NICHOLAS MUSIC CENTER, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY  
85 GEORGE STREET, NEW BRUNSWICK  
FREE PARKING ON THE PREMISES


**Celebration of Greek Independence Day**



**“A CONGRESSIONAL SALUTE TO  
GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY”**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2015 – 6:00-8:00 P.M.**

**RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 2123**



**PRESENTED BY  
THE AMERICAN  
HELLENIC  
INSTITUTE**

**IN COOPERATION WITH:**

**REP. CAROLYN MALONEY (D-NY)**

**REP. GUS BILIRAKIS  
(R-FL)**

**CO-CHAIRS OF THE  
CONGRESSIONAL HELLENIC CAUCUS**

**RSVP REQUESTED BY MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2015 VIA EMAIL TO  
GEORGEA POLIZOS @ [GEORGEA@AHIWORLD.ORG](mailto:GEORGEA@AHIWORLD.ORG)**

SAVE THE DATE: Exhibition Official Opening: "Greek Jews in the National Resistance"



AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTE

**AHi**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**March 10, 2015**

*Save the Date*



**Official Opening of Exhibition**

***SYNAGONISTIS***  
**GREEK JEWS IN THE  
NATIONAL RESISTANCE**

**Presented by the Embassy of Greece in Washington, D.C.**

**Tuesday, April 21, 6 p.m.**

**at the Washington Hebrew Congregation**

**3935 Macomb St. N.W. & Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20016**

*This is a joint exhibition by*

*the Jewish Museum of Greece and the Secretariat General for Communication*



**The annual Greek Independence Day Parade in New York City took place on March 29<sup>th</sup>**



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**Athens**

***ATHENS, Greece (AP) - Thousands of Greeks lined a main central Athens avenue despite rain on Wednesday to watch the country's annual Independence Day military parade, with spectators allowed along the route for the first time in about three years.***

***The crowds at the parade, where tanks rolled down the street and fighter jets and military helicopters flew overhead, were in stark contrast to last year's event, which took place under heavy security. Spectators had only been allowed near the end of the route.***

***Authorities limited public access to national parades after protesters had heckled officials attending such events over the handling of Greece's financial crisis and austerity measures imposed in return for billions of euros in international rescue loans.***

***Parliamentary elections in January saw the radical left Syriza party form a coalition government with the nationalist right-wing Independent Greeks.***

***The two had been among the most vociferous critics of previous governments' handling of the financial crisis, and came to power on pledges of ripping up the bailout agreement which stipulated austerity measures in return for funds from other eurozone countries and the International Monetary Fund.***

***But the new government, faced with an increasingly severe credit crunch and strained relations with its European partners, has had to roll back on some of its pre-election promises. March 25 marks the start of Greece's 1821 uprising against the Ottoman Empire. The end of Wednesday's parade was followed for the first time by traditional Greek folk dances in the street outside Parliament.***



## Athens



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## Greek Independence Day in Thessaloniki



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## News From Jewish Greece

### Thessaloniki

Residents of Greece's second-largest city on Sunday placed flowers on train tracks and inside old cattle wagons in solemn remembrance of nearly 50,000 local Jews who were transported to Nazi death camps during World War II. About 2,000 people joined together at Thessaloniki's Freedom Square for the 72nd anniversary of the roundup and deportation of the Jews. Some held banners that said: "Racism Kills, Let's Learn from History," and "Never Again."

Among them were more than 200 supporters of Syriza, Greece's new radical left ruling party that wants to revive claims for war reparations amid fraught negotiations over Athens' debt crisis with EU paymaster Germany and other creditors.

A locomotive believed to have been used to transport Jews, and four carriages that normally would carry cattle and in which people spent nine days locked up on their way to the extermination camps, were at the station. The crowd laid flowers on the wagons and the tracks. "It was a horrible, mournful, rainy day. Even the skies were weeping," recalled Heinz Kounio, 87, one of fewer than 100 surviving Greek Jews who made it back from the camps. "Normally, the



carriages held 50 people. There were 80 of us to a wagon, and they had us locked up throughout the nine-day trip."



"The first train to Auschwitz-Birkenau set off on March 15, 1943," said Thessaloniki Jewish community leader David Saltiel.

"Part of such a locomotive is here today as a reminder of the dark moments and feelings of Thessaloniki residents targeted by the Nazis simply because they were Jews," he said.

Greece's government has decided to include among its demands for German World War II reparations a sum, today equivalent to 50 million euros (\$53 million), paid as a ransom to Nazi occupiers in 1942 to free about 10,000 Jewish men used as slave laborers in Greece. They were freed, but still sent subsequently to death camps. Berlin argues that the issue of reparations to Greece was settled in 1960 as part of an agreement with several European governments.

Jews, mostly Sephardic refugees from Spain and its Inquisition, formed the majority of Thessaloniki's inhabitants from the 16th to early 20th centuries. Their numbers dwindled in the early 20th century.

Of the 46,091 Thessaloniki Jews sent to the camps, 1,950 survived. Others avoided the camps by either joining the partisan resistance or escaping to Turkey by boat, with the help of residents, and making it to the Middle East. Today, the Jewish community in the city of nearly 800,000 numbers fewer than 2,000.

The Associated Press and AFP contributed to this report.



**Map of the first transport from Thessaloniki To Auschwitz on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1944**

### **Commemoration in Kastoria**

***"Never Again" loudly called out a group of citizens from Kastoria who had gathered on the "route of memory" on March 22, 2015, in order to honor the memory of the Jews of Kastoria who were deported by the Germans to Auschwitz-Birkenau on March 25, 1944. In attendance was the Vice President of KIS (Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece), Solomon Parente, who is also a member of the General Committee of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki. Mr. Parente's wife, Toli, descends from Kastoria.***

***"This is the first time, after so many years that we decided that we must honor the memory of our fellow citizens who were tragically taken from our city after centuries of living here."....***

***The ceremony began in front of the Ethniki Bank, where the marketplace of the city was located at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It continued to Plateia Omonia, where there had once been the Jewish Synagogue. Poetry mentioning the Jews of Kastoria was read and the ceremony ended at the Holocaust Memorial located at 15<sup>th</sup> Merarxias Street. A wreath was placed on the memorial.***

***"I am the son of two parents who, before the war, were married to other spouses. They were taken to the concentration camps and returned alone, without their spouses and children. I am especially moved to be here today because I understand very well what it means to lose family in the concentration camps," said Solomon Parente.***



*The event ended with everyone singing the traditional song, Evraiopoula (Greek Jew).*



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**BERLIN (AP) — It was 1943 and the Nazis were deporting Greece's Jews to death camps in Poland. Hitler's genocidal accountants reserved a chilling twist: The Jews had to pay their train fare.**

**The bill for 58,585 Jews sent to Auschwitz and other camps exceeded 2 million Reichsmark — more than 25 million euros (\$27 million) in today's money.**

**For decades, this was a forgotten footnote among all of the greater horrors of the Holocaust. Today it is returning to the fore amid the increasingly bitter row between Athens and Berlin over the Greek financial bailout.**

**Jewish leaders in Thessaloniki, home to Greece's largest Jewish community, say they are considering how to reclaim the rail fares from Germany — with seven decades of interest. "We will study the law and do our best to claim," the community's president, David Saltiel, told The Associated Press.**

**Such a move would suit the new government in Athens, which is trying to shift the public focus from Greece's current debt crisis to Germany's World War II debts ahead of Monday's first visit to Berlin by Greece's new Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras**





While war reparations have been a staple demand of previous Greek governments, Tsipras' radical left government has made the issue a central part of the bailout negotiations with Germany. The Germans have dismissed such demands, saying compensation issues were settled decades ago in post-war accords.

Read more: <http://www.businessinsider.com/jewish-leaders-in-greece-want-germany-to-pay-millions-in-reparations--with-7-decades-of-interest-2015-3#ixzz3VbwVwxHS>

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### Third Edition of Heinz Kounio's work

March 16, 2015

Originally posted on Facebook in Greek by Hella Kounio Matalon. Translated into English by Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos.

*"Thank you to all who found the time yesterday to come to the presentation of the book of Heinz Kounio (my father), "I Lived Death." In a packed hall, you could not even hear the breath of the people. All those who took part in the presentation gave wonderful speeches. Mr. Tsiskalos enchanted the audience with his rhetoric. Mr. Kounio moved everyone with his speech and his belief in freedom and democracy. His voice saying "Never Again, Never Again" moved everyone's heart. The following photos are courtesy of Petros Parakiriakou's.*




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### Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival

On March 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, the film, "Following Shira's Journey-A Greek Jewish Odyssey" was shown. The documentary was filmed in Greece, directed and produced by Carol Gordon of Australia. Click below to follow link. Kehila Kedosha Janina and our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos, were honored to be part of the making of this documentary and look forward to showing it at Kehila Kedosha Janina.

[Following Shira's Journey: A Greek Jewish Odyssey](#)

A documentary which explores the little-known history of Greece's Jewish communities and their near extinction during the Holocaust. Directed by Carol Gordon...  
youtube.com

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**News of Interest To Greek Jews**

**Rabbi Pessach of Volos To Be Honored At Yad Vashem**

**For the past thirteen years the B'nai B'rith World Center and the Jewish National Fund have co-sponsored a unique Holocaust Day (Yom Hashoah) ceremony, marking the heroism of Jews who saved fellow Jews during the years of torment in Europe. To the best of our knowledge this event is the only one in the world dedicated to recognizing the heroism of those Jews who tried to avert the genocide by ensuring - through individual and collective efforts - that Jews could escape to safety or survive on the European continent during the Shoah.**

**This year's event will memorialize the rescue activities of Arch Rabbi Moshe Pessach of Volos z"l (1869 – 1955) whose brave actions - together with those of the Metropolitite of Demetrias Archbishop Joachim Alexopoulos (recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 1977) and other members of the Greek Orthodox clergy of Volos, the mayor, chief of police and members of the resistance – led to the survival of most of the Jews of Volos.**

**After the war Arch Rabbi M.Pessach z"l returned to serve his community and was decorated by the Greek and British governments for his role in the Greek resistance.**



Our event will be held at the Martyr's Forest – a joint [Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael KKL – JNF - B'nai B'rith] project which memorializes the victims of the Holocaust in 6 million trees planted in the Jerusalem Mountains near Moshav Kesalon. At the pinnacle of the forest stands the "Scroll of Fire" by the renowned sculptor Nathan Rappaport, which invokes the destruction of the Jewish People in the Holocaust and their redemption in the State of Israel in a moving base relief. The event will commence with personal testimonies by Holocaust survivors to groups of soldiers and students.

The event will also be an opportunity to express the gratitude of the Jewish people to Archbishop Alexopoulos and other Greek Orthodox clergy for their heroic rescue efforts during the Holocaust.

Attached the concerning invitation.  
B'nai B'rith World Center



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### Tsipras Visits Holocaust Memorial in Berlin

While visiting Berlin for meetings with Angela Merkel, Alexis Tsipras, the new Prime Minister of Greece, visited the Holocaust Museum (Museum in Memory of the Murdered Jews of Europe). We hope he saw the family exhibit of a Romaniote Jewish family from Ioannina (the family of Eftihia Nachmias Nachman. Kehila Kedosha Janina is especially proud that we were instrumental in helping the Berlin Museum tell this story.



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### Heinz Kounio Visits Germany and Speaks to German Students

*The Greek newspaper Kathimerini (March 29, 2015) reported the following interview with Heinz Kounio. The headline read "In Auschwitz it snowed the ashes of human flesh." The interview took place after Heinz had visited Germany and had spoken to a group of German students. There was absolute silence while Mr. Kounio spoke.*

*This is what he said to them:*

***"In truth, I do not wish to hide anything from you. He told them how the SS Alois Brunner came to his house and how they loaded whatever they could take with them into the cattle cars and how they arrived in the middle of the night at Auschwitz and how it was snowing the ashes of human flesh from the furnaces of Birkenau. I did not want to hide anything from them."***

***As difficult as it was, the 87 year old Heinz Kounio relived the Holocaust for the German High School students in Berlin.***



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#### **WJC Meeting in Washington DC**

**On the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of March, there was a meeting in Washington DC of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) with more than 60 representatives of Jewish organizations from around the world. Representing Greece was Moisis Konstantini, President of KIS (Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece). The main topic of discussion was anti-Semitism and the attacks that took place in France, Denmark and Hungary.**





**Shalom to one and all!**

**Gershon Harris  
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel**



**Shalom one and all!**

**We are now in the Hebrew month of Nissan and will celebrate Pesah – Passover – this year from April 1st – the Seder night -through April 10<sup>th</sup> in Israel and April 11<sup>th</sup> outside of Israel. However, since this year the last day of the holiday occurs on a Friday, even in Israel in practical terms, we will celebrate a kind of 8<sup>th</sup> day – Shabbat. And while almost everyone is familiar with the symbolism of the Seder night or nights, and especially the idea of the People of Israel gaining freedom from slavery and entering the next stage of our history as a nation, how familiar are we with the context of the holiday within the month of Nissan and the great significance of each day of the month. So let's run through the entire month to see how important and significant all of Nissan is to Jewish history and religion.**

**First of all, in the Jewish calendar, the month of Nissan is considered the first month of the year in terms of months, and as such, the lunar onset of the month of Nissan, then as now, actually determines the onset of the subsequent months and the entire cycle of holidays for any given year. Secondly, our Sages call Nissan the "month of redemption", teaching us that just like the first redemption from Egypt and slavery occurred in Nissan, so will the final Messianic redemption that we eagerly await. Third, it was the first of Nissan when the Tabernacle – the predecessor to the Temple in Jerusalem – was completed and dedicated in the desert not long after the Exodus and giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. This ceremony took 12 days, since each day, in celebration of the Tabernacle's completion and the onset of the Priestly service on a daily basis, each head of the 12 tribes brought special sacrifices. Immediately the next day, the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, the people were commanded to rid themselves of any leaven in anticipation of the offering of the Paschal sacrifice and the Passover holiday, culminating with the search and removal of bread and any other leavened product that night. The following day, the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan in the late afternoon, each family would bring its Paschal lamb to be sacrificed, and that night, which in the Hebrew calendar would be the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup>, the Seder is held, the Paschal sacrifice eaten and the 7-day holiday begins. The actual Exodus from Egypt was during the day of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nissan.**

**The people walked- and worshipped - for 3 days and then, at least according to what had been agreed with Pharaoh, were supposed to return to Egypt – and slavery – after having performed their religious rites and celebrations. However, after those three days the Israelites continued their journey, and Pharaoh's agents who had accompanied the "freed" slaves, rapidly informed him that his slaves were fleeing. This prompted Pharaoh and his army to pursue the fleeing Israelites, reaching them on the 6<sup>th</sup> day after their departure. With the Egyptians behind and the Red Sea in front of them, G-d performed the great miracle of the splitting of the sea on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, allowing the Israelites to cross the river, while drowning the Egyptians. Therefore, the 7<sup>th</sup> day of Pesah, like the first, is a full holiday, while the 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> days corresponding to the Israelites wandering in the desert being considered "intermediate" days of the holiday where work and creativity is not forbidden, but rather restricted in order to ensure that people will not treat these days like ordinary week and work days. Interestingly, though considered a full holiday, only a limited version of "Hallel"(Psalms of Praise) is said because though we celebrate the miracle of**

the splitting of the Red Sea, our joy is tempered by the fact that G-d had to destroy other human beings – the Egyptians – who were also created in G-d's image.

Based on all of the above, according to Jewish tradition for both Ashkenazim and Sephardim, no penitential prayers are said for the entire month of Nissan, no eulogies are offered at funerals, and in general, no graves are visited during this time. May everyone have a happy healthy Pesah!

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### News of Interest To All

#### The Restoration of the Synagogue in Edirne Turkey

The restoration of the Great Synagogue in Edirne has finished and it was opened with a ceremony held on March 26<sup>th</sup>. We thank our friend Paul Hagouel for these pictures. Paul attended the services in Edirne.



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### A Haggadah From Catalonia Spain (A Special Article For Pessach)

In the 14th Century, Catalonia was the home of one of the most cultured Jewish communities in the world. It is here that some of the most famous illuminated haggadahs were commissioned. However, when in 1492, the Catholic monarchs issued the Alhambra Decree, Jews were officially expelled from the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, and the Jews there had two choices: either convert to Catholicism, or flee.

Although Catalonia's haggadahs left with their Jewish owners in 1492, from March 26 through July 5 some of these famous liturgical works will be on display at "home" in an exhibit at the Barcelona Museum of History.



Illuminated manuscripts are texts written by hand, and decorated with enlarged letters, ornamental borders, and miniature illustrations. Originally, only those manuscripts that were

ornamented with gold and silver were considered “illuminated” or “lit up.” In modern scholarship, any manuscript that is embellished, from both the Islamic and Western traditions, is considered illuminated.

The oldest illuminated manuscripts originated in Italy and the Eastern Roman Empire in around 400 CE. They were preserved by the monastic orders, whose monks copied them. Most of the illuminated manuscripts that have survived are from the Middle Ages and initially these manuscripts were created for religious use. In the 1100s, the ancient classics, and texts about science, were also produced in the Iberian Peninsula. Precise illustrations were needed to accompany this written material and these texts were used to teach in the first universities of Western Europe.

Beginning in the 13th century, secular manuscripts were also illuminated. Wealthy patrons commissioned manuscripts for their personal libraries. This included some of Catalonia’s most prominent Jews.

Medieval illuminated manuscripts were written on vellum and the whole page was planned in advance on parchment cut to the desired size. Lines were lightly ruled with a pointed stick and then the words were added, written with a quill pen or sharpened reed, and ink. Blank space was reserved for the illustrations and decorations. The design for the drawings was delineated on a wax tablet, then traced onto the vellum, sometimes with pinpricks.

There was an order to creating illuminations: First, the drawing was outlined with a silver wire, then gold leaf was glued to the parchment. Gold was applied before the drawing was painted because gold would stick to any paint, potentially ruining the design. The process of gluing the gold leaf included polishing (burnishing) the gold once the glue was dry. This vigorous action could smudge any paint that was already there. Once the gold leaf was in place, natural pigments, made from plants, insects, and minerals, were applied with brushes to the rest of the design. Finally, the decorative border was painted.

Up to the 1300s, the painstaking writing and drawing of each manuscript were both done by monks. In the 14th Century, the text was written by a scribe, and the illustrations were executed by secular artists. Secular workshops were created, with artisans so skilled, that by the 15th Century the monasteries outsourced their work to them. In France, much of the artistic work for the manuscripts was done in these workshops by women.

The illuminated manuscripts commissioned by the Catalan Jews were of the Gothic style, which developed in the 1100s. It was naturalistic, showing emotions in faces and gestures, leaves cascading along the borders of the page, sketches in the margins and grotesques (now called drolleries). The haggadahs on show in Barcelona were collaborative projects between Jewish scribes and Christian artists.

When Charlemagne completed his reconquest of Catalonia from the Muslims in 1150 CE, Catholic censors began reviewing Jewish books. Usually recent converts from Judaism to Catholicism, these censors knew how to read the books and were tasked with finding blasphemous passages. Some of the Catalan haggadahs bear the inscription of the censors. One example, which is unfortunately not included in this exhibition, is the Barcelona Haggadah, currently owned by the British Library. Luigi da Bologna, a Jew who had converted to Catholicism, worked as a censor for the Inquisition. On the bottom of a page of the haggadah it is written, “Seen by me, Brother Luigi of the order of Saint Dominic on 1599.”

**This Barcelona exhibit is in response to a trend called “the recuperation of memory” among some Catalans. Some vaguely knew about the Jewish origins of their families, including in some cases a “Jewish” last name. Others have discovered evidence of crypto-Judaic observance among their ancestors.**

**There is tremendous ignorance about Judaism in Catalonia and Judaism was considered by some a forbidden subject until very recently. Incredibly, it was technically illegal for Jews to live in Spain until 1968, when the Alhambra Decree was formally revoked.**

**Now, there is a renaissance of interest in Catalonia’s illustrious Jewish past, as seen in the illuminated haggadahs exhibit. This exhibit will bring together the Rylands Haggadah, currently at the University of Manchester; the Graziano Haggadah from the Jewish Theological Center in New York; the Mocatta Haggadah, from the University College London, the Bologna-Modena Haggadah from the University of Bologna & Biblioteca Estense, Modena; the Cambridge Catalan Haggadah from Cambridge University, the Kaufmann Haggadah from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; and the Poblet Haggadah from the Poblet Monastery in Catalonia.**

**The only haggadah that currently resides in Catalonia is the Poblet Haggadah. The story of its return was recounted to The Times of Israel in consultation with Frai Xavier Guanter, the librarian of the Poblet monastery.**

**The Poblet Haggadah was written in the 14th century in Catalonia and taken to Italy by its Jewish owners in 1492. In 1672 it was purchased in Italy by Pedro Antonio de Aragón, the Viceroy of Catalonia, who brought it back to Catalonia and donated it to the Poblet Monastery. Throughout its history, the monastery of Poblet always had a good relationship with the Jews living in the area. The monks, some of who were converts from Judaism, preserved the haggadah, sometimes at great risk to themselves.**

**When in 1836 the Spanish government embarked on a program of confiscating church lands to finance itself, the monks were forced to flee Poblet, and monastery’s library was dispersed. Eventually, the Poblet Haggadah was acquired by Jaume Mans I Puigarnau, a professor of canonic law at the University of Barcelona. Upon his death in 1983, he left instructions that the haggadah was to be returned to the monastery and 20 years ago, a priest delivered it there. This museum exhibit is a fleeting experience, which will be over on July 5. However several academics have embarked on a project whose goal is to reclaim the Jewish history of Catalonia’s haggadahs for posterity and are creating a documentary that will go back in time to 14th Century Barcelona.**

**From Times of Israel**

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### **Articles of Interest**

**The following article has been prepared by our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos.**

### **THE YOHANAN FAMILY**

**The surname “Yohanan” means “Yahu is gracious,” Yahu being an ancient name for G-d. The name Yohanan is very ancient recorded as Johanan, High Priest of the Second Temple in 400 B.C.E. As with so many Romaniote surnames, Yohanan most likely originated as a male Hebrew first name.**



The Yohanan family stands as one of our founding families. Warmly remembered was Joseph and his wife, Esther, who sponsored a torah scroll from Ioannina for the synagogue. Joseph and Esther were cousins, a not unusual occurrence among Romaniote Jews. Esther's family came from Ioannina while Joseph's family came from Arta. Esther's mother, Simchoula, was born in Preveza. These three Greek-speaking Romaniote communities were closely connected. While we can find numerous Yohanans in the Arta birth records, none appear in either the Ioannina or Preveza records.

Joseph Yohanan and his brother Ralph were the sons of Haim ben Solomon Yohanan and both came to the United States. Joseph was the first to arrive in 1907 (August 20, 1907) and Ralph followed him in 1909. Initially, Joseph went uptown into Harlem, as did many of the early Yanniotes; the Schinasi Tobacco Company offering work for new arrivals, but in 1930 we find the family living on the Lower East Side at 66 Rivington Street (Joseph, Esther and their three daughters, Estelle, Sophia and Anne). Joseph was a foreman working in a factory making ladies underwear. Joseph and Esther were respected and much beloved members of the community of



Spiranza Johanan



1937  
Yohanan women on LES

Kehila Kedosha Janina. The Yohanans were typical of the early Yanniote immigrants who founded Kehila Kedosha Janina. Joseph and Esther came to the United States in the early 1900s. They were third cousins, a not unusual arrangement with marriages of the first generation of immigrants. According to family lore, Joseph was quite young when he came to America and was entrusted with the care of his cousin Esther, who would eventually become his wife. Theirs was a true love story. The Yohanans settled on the Lower East Side, living on Delancey Street, a short walk to Kehila Kedosha Janina. Joseph, as was the case with many other Yanniote immigrants, found his niche in the garment industry by selling women's housecoats and aprons. His business was Success Apron Company located at 51 Allen Street.



Estelle, Esther & Stu



Sophie & Elaine



Serge & Anne

Esther and Joseph had three daughters (Estelle, Sophie and Annie) and each of the daughters had one child, all growing up on the Lower East Side. As his grandson Len Neuhaus conveyed to us, "My grandparents and family were devoted to the Kehila, having dedicated a Sefer Torah and being steadfast members in the congregation and community." We, at Kehila Kedosha Janina, are extremely grateful for the legacy Joseph and Esther Yohanan passed down to their children and grandchildren. The "apple does not fall far from the tree. Len Neuhaus, the youngest grandchild of Joseph and Esther, absorbed much of what his grandfather embodied. *"My grandfather would always say 'tov shem meshemen tov, vyom hamavet meyom Hevaled'— having a good name is more important than having good oil (worldly possessions) and leaving the earth with a good name (that one has achieved over a lifetime—yom hamavet is the day of death) is more important than the day you are born (as you have no reputation then).*

Join us at Kehila Kedosha Janina on April 25<sup>th</sup> as we celebrate the life of Zander Neuhaus and honor the Yohanan/Johanan family. Please RSVP at [kehila\\_kedosha\\_janina@netzero.net](mailto:kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net)

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As always, we continually look for additional information. If you are from any branch of the Yohanan/Johanan family and you wish to add info to the family trees or other information such as the date of arrival, where your family lived in New York or other pertinent information relating to these families, please send it to us at [kehila\\_kedosha\\_janina@netzero.net](mailto:kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net).

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### Answers Found

From Rifka Nachmias in response to the following photo:



Photo at end of top row left to right my Aunt Mollie Battino and Aunt Tehru Eskononts, bottom row left to right is Thea Mazaltov sister to my nuna Esther Battino Levy, wife of my papoo Moshe Kolev Levy. (My Nuna Esther is mother of my aunt Rose Citron and sisters and uncle Bobby Levy.) Little boy may be Ralph Battino, not sure, but not Bobby Levy.

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### Looking For Our Help

We are looking for information on the Havoulas family from Ioannina. Please contact us with any information.

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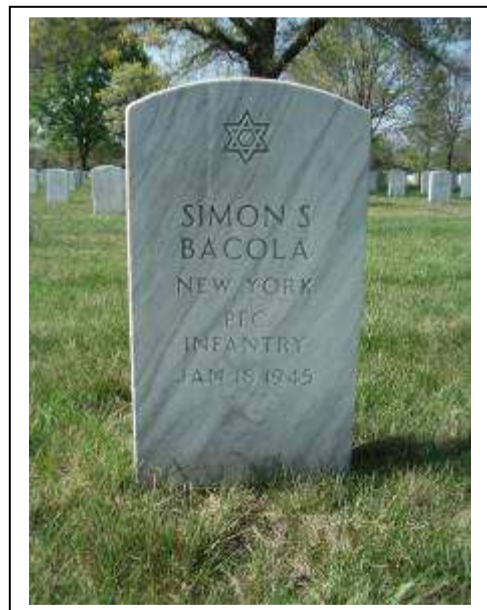
*"Josh Rosenthal suggested that I get in touch with you. I am writing a book for W. W. Norton & Co. on the music of Epirus. I was wondering if you knew anyone at your synagogue that would be willing to be interviewed regarding life in Ioannina before WWII. Generally, I am interested in the interactions of Greek Jews and Orthodox Christians. Specially though I am interested in the type of secular music that was enjoyed by the people in Ioannia. Could you let me know if you know of anyone?"* Please let us know if you have any information to help this author.

## Searching for information on Simon Bakola and his family

There are stories that haunt you. David Colchamiro, one of our best researchers, came across the story of a young man from our community who died during WWII and was awarded the Silver Star for his heroism.

*A time to remember. A number of years ago, Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue & Museum opened an important exhibit called "Our Gang," honoring Greek Jewish men who served in the US Armed Forces during WWII. This exhibit can be accessed on our website ([www.kkjsm.org](http://www.kkjsm.org)). We now, thanks to the work of David L Colchamiro, have an important story to add. In January 1945, Simon S. Bacola's 12th Armored Division came under "the most violent fighting in the history of the 12th, during 8 to 10 January and 16 to 17 January 1945." He would die in France on the 18th of January, 1945, buried in France and then re-interred in the National Cemetery in Farmingdale, LI, NY. Simon was awarded the Silver Star for "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy, while serving with the 12th Armored Division, during World War II." Thank you Simon.*

Additional research has shown that Simon's father, Sadik, arrived in the USA in August of 1909, married Esther Israel in 1921, and welcomed the birth of his first son in 1922. We are now looking for additional information about Simon Bacola and this branch of the Bacola family.



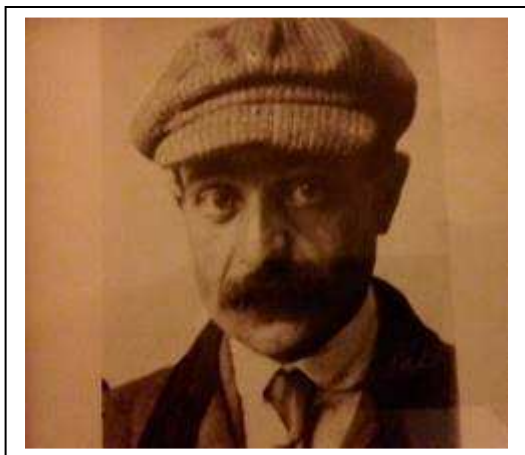
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We are always looking for new photos for our archival collection. Many of our readers are now taking our advice and going through those old boxes filled with photos. We recently received photos from the collection of Annette Politis Binder and will be highlighting them in our next e-newsletter. In this issue we are grateful to Wendy Josephs and Rose Attas Ferrara for their photos.



**Mollie and Jacob Josephs**

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**Chaim Attas passport photo**



**Joseph & Stamoula Attas**

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- **Websites of interest**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch...>  
Salonika

<http://www.jta.org/.../in-southern-italy-long-lost-jews...>  
South Italy

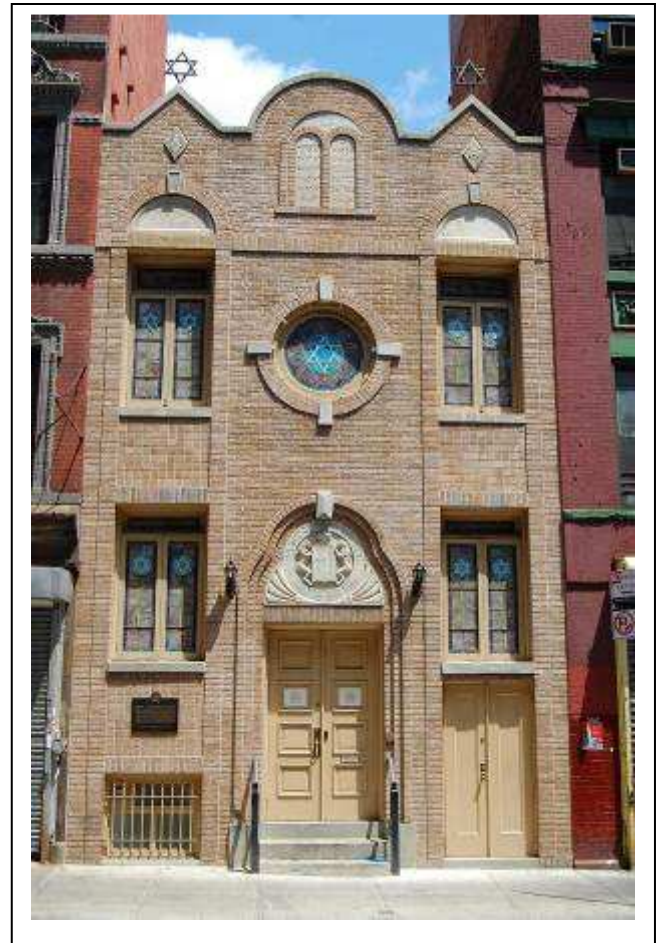
[http://www.dailysabah.com/nation/2015/03/09/edirnes-synagogue-soon-to-serve-turkeys-jewish-community Edirne](http://www.dailysabah.com/nation/2015/03/09/edirnes-synagogue-soon-to-serve-turkeys-jewish-community-Edirne)



**So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.**

**If you would like to make a contribution to Kehila Kedosha Janina, please send your check (in US dollars) to us at 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 (attention Marcia). Your donation will enable us to continue to hold services and preserve our special traditions and customs, and to tell our unique story through our Museum.**

**When you are in New York, visit us on Broome Street. We are open for services every Saturday and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11-4 and, by appointment during the week.**



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