March 2017 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

May we wish our Jewish readers a Happy Purim, celebrating a holiday that reminds us of our of our endurance throughout history. Do join us for the reading of the Megilah at Kehila Kedosha Janina on Saturday March 11th starting at 5:45pm.

Celebration of Purim

From the collection of Dr. Michael Matsas

PLEASE REMEMBER OUR NEW WEBSITE: www.kkjsm.org and our new e-mails: info@kkjsm.org (President) and museum@kkjsm.org (Museum Director).

This newsletter, our 96th 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).

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE NO LONGER USE OUR PO BOX- ALL MAIL SHOULD GO TO 280 BROOME ST. New York, NY 10002.
We now reach over 8500 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 museum@kkjsm.org

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) 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 mourn the passing of Martin Davis (1939-2017), husband of Belle Negrin Davis who left us on Monday, February 20, 2017. Belle and her husband, Martin, of Blessed Memory, were residents of Chevy Chase, MD. Belle and Martin were married for 45 years. Belle is a proud descendent of the Negrin family and Martin always supported her Greek Jewish heritage.

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We mourn the passing of Yvette Rosenbaum Levy (1921-2017), widow of Morris Levy of Blessed Memory. Yvette is survived by her sons, Jesse (Olivia) and Daniel (April), granddaughter, Gabriella, grandsons, Morris (Daniela), Aaron and Joshua and great grandson, Isaac.

Yvette and Morris Levy
We mourn the passing of Stema Levy, widow of Joseph Levy, daughter of Abraham and Esther Cohen of Ioannina. Stema is survived by her children (Louis Levy, Roberta Liss and Ellen Lichtenstein). May her memory be for a blessing.

Nissim Cohen in Ioannina
Paternal grandfather of Stema Levy

Simchas

We celebrate the birth of Yehuda Leib Smith, great great-grandson of Yehuda (Leon) Colchamiro (and named after him). Yehuda is the great-grandson of Ralph (of Blessed Memory) and Esther Colchamiro, grandson of Rachel Rosen and son of Yitzchok Dovid and Elisheva Smith.
We celebrate the Bat Mitzvah of Noa Messina, daughter of Yvette Nachmia and Elias Messinas, of Jerusalem. Yvette Nachmia is the daughter of Iakov (Jeckos) and Elda Nachmia, and the niece of Eftichia Nachmia Nachman, the author of “Journey to the Past.” Noa is the great-granddaughter of Anna David (Eliezer) and Moses Nachmia and great granddaughter of Eliezer ben David and Zoyia bat Jeuda Dostis.

Holocaust Remembrance

We never forget. This year, because of the timing of our e-newsletters, many of the Holocaust commemorations were not covered in our last e-newsletter. We wish to remedy this in our present newsletter.

Holocaust commemoration of Italian Jewish victims, many of whom were living on what was then Greek soil at the time of the deportations (the islands of Kos and Rhodes). We thank our friends at Centro Primo Levi for these commemorations where all the names of Italian Jewish victims are read each year.

Natalia Indrimi and Rabbi Nissim Elnecave
Holocaust Commemoration in Greece

Arta

On January 27th in Arta the recently published book of Dimitri Vlaxopanou, “The Skullcap,” was presented. The book tells the story of Isaak Mizan (#182641) who was deported from Arta with 351 of his fellow Jewish citizens of the city and survived Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen and other camps, to return to his city of birth, Arta, as a survivor where he would relive the tragedy of the loss of millions of his fellow Jews. The event was attended by the local officials and Moses Eliasof, President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina and General Secretary of KIS (Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece) wrote the prologue to the book. In addition, members of Isaak Mizan’s family, including his son and daughter, their spouses and his two grandchildren, along with his nephew, Benjamin, son of his brother, Samuel, and Benjamin’s children.
Holocaust Remembrance in Athens

On Monday, January 30, 2017, the President of the World Jewish Congress, Mr. Ronald Lauder, visited the Jewish Museum of Greece during his visit in Athens in conjunction with the Holocaust Remembrance Day. Mr. Lauder was accompanied by the President of the Central Jewish Congress of Greece, Mr. David Saltiel, as well as the Vice-President Benjamin Albalas, and the President of the Jewish Community of Athens, Mr. Minos Moissis. They were welcomed by the President of the Board of the Jewish Museum of Greece Mr. Samuel Matsas.

Other events in Athens involved the laying of memorial wreaths at the Holocaust Monument in Athens and remembrance events at the Greek Parliament.
In addition, at the Jewish Museum of Greece there was the opening of an exhibit on the Jews of Ioannina and the poet, Iosef Eliyia.


The two exhibitions are realized within the framework of the new, three-year program of the J.M.G. with the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Athens, which continuously, consistently and successfully supports the Museum’s work.

The attendees had the pleasure to admire authentic objects from the J.M.G. collections, which are presented to the public for the first time, but also with unique artifacts kindly loaned by private individuals and discover the historical aspects regarding the daily life of the old Romaniote Community of Ioannina, combining the information with photographic material.

Furthermore, the visitors had the opportunity to become acquainted with the era, the life and the work of the great scholar and poet from Ioannina, Joseph Eliyia and develop a reciprocal dialogue with him, based on the poems and the translations of the holy texts, which he bequeathed us.

The director of the JMG Ms. Zanet Battinou welcomed the attendees, while the President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, Mr. Moissis Eliaosof, who opened the exhibition, and the President of the JMG’s BOD, Mr. Samuel (Makis) Matsas delivered short addresses. Afterwards, Ms. Zanet Battinou presented the musicians that filled the Museum with traditional songs and music from Ioannina.

The event was attended by the Ambassadors of Israel and the Czech Republic, and representatives of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Athens.

The aim of the periodic exhibitions and the related cultural activities is to present the public with elements from the life and traditions of one of the smaller, but yet oldest Jewish communities in Greece, and also to explore its individual and collective contribution to the enrichment of the local urban and social transformations.
The exhibitions are accompanied by a bilingual catalog, as well as educational programs specially designed for students.

The exhibitions will be hosted by the Jewish Museum of Greece from January 23 until September 25, 2017.

We, at Kehila Kedosha Janina, proudly display the photo of Iosef Eliyia in our museum. The photo is of the Negrin branch of Iosef’s family and was taken when he was three years old. We thank Belle Negrin Davis for this photo.
In Thessaloniki, the Holocaust Remembrance Day was marked by events attended by David Saltiel, President of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, Yiannis Boutaris, Mayor of Thessaloniki, and the President of Nea Dimotikia, Kiriakos Mitsotakis. The events were culminated by the opening of an exhibit at the Museum of the Jewish Presence in Thessaloniki called “The Aftermath of the Holocaust,” which addressed the difficulties that Jews returning to Thessaloniki from the camps and hiding experienced. David Saltiel addressed the issue in his speech. “The Jews (after surviving the camps) suffered when returning to their country. In the place where their synagogue once stood, there was a taverna, their homes occupied by refugees and the stones from their cemetery used as construction material. The museum exhibit was created by Dr. Evagelo Xekimoglou.

On February 16th an article was published in Kathimerini (the Daily) with the title “The Angelic Brides of Auschwitz,” on photographs of weddings of survivors from Thessaloniki. The exhibit is at the Museum of the Jewish Presence in Thessaloniki.
In Larissa, the events were attended by the President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities (KIS), David Saltiel, the President of the Jewish Community of Larissa, Morris Magrizos and local dignitaries, including the last survivor from Larissa, Naki Bega, laid wreathes on the Holocaust Memorial. Services followed in the synagogue and songs, including Addio Querida, were sung in memory of those who perished.

In Volos, the events were attended by the Jewish Community led by the President, Marsel Solomon, President of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki and President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities (KIS) in Greece, David Saltiel, the Mayor of Thessaloniki, Yiannis Boutaris, the Mayor of Volos and local Metropolitan Bishops.
In Ioannina, the events for the International Day of Commemoration of the Holocaust, was highlighted by a presentation on January 28th. The Ambassador of Israel, Irit Ben Aba, along with the Mayor, Thoma Begka and the President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina and Professor of Pathology at the University of Ioannina, Dr. Moses Eliasof, paid respects to the victims of the Holocaust and discussed the rise of anti-Semitism throughout the world and the importance of learning about the world before and after the Holocaust so that it would not be repeated. An exhibit called “The Passing” was the highlight of the events.
In Italy, the Holocaust was commemorated by a visit of Pope Frances to the Jewish Synagogue of Rome.

Turkey commemorated millions of people who were killed during the Holocaust in Nazi Germany, with a commemoration ceremony held at Ankara University with the participation of Deputy Prime Minister Tuğrul Türkeş.

"We commemorate the millions of people who lost their lives during the Holocaust with respect," said the Turkish Foreign Ministry in a statement. "Being aware of its responsibility, Turkey will resolutely continue its fight against anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia, which unfortunately have regained ground in today's world,"

The statement underlined that Europe's rising racism, extremism, and anti-Semitism before World War II had caused one of the major tragedies of history, the Holocaust.

"Millions of innocent people, primarily Jews, were exterminated in an organized and systematic way by the Nazi regime and its collaborators," the statement added.

"Today, it is our duty to do whatever it takes to avoid the recurrence of the Holocaust, one of the darkest periods of human history. This is a common responsibility for all humanity."

"Since 2008 Turkey has actively participated in the activities of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance as an observer and continues its efforts for the Holocaust not to be forgotten and to pass on the lessons learned to younger generations," it said.

The statement added that in 2005, a UN resolution co-sponsored by Turkey and passed by the UN General Assembly made Jan. 27 International Holocaust Remembrance Day.
"January 27 marks the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Death Camp on that date in 1945, which became one of the symbols of the World War II era," the statement said. Turkey has around 20,000 Jews according to the Turkish Jewish community. In recent years, Turkey has taken a number of steps for the Jewish community. Many properties have been returned to the Jews and other minorities, decades after their forceful confiscation by the state, while the government also pursues a policy of restoring abandoned historical buildings such as synagogues and other monuments.

In New York City, the play "Golgotha," written by Shmuel Refael and performed by Victor Attar was favorably reviewed.

Christians know Golgotha as the Greek name for Calvary, the site of Jesus’s crucifixion. But to Ladino-speaking Sephardic Jews with Spanish and North African ancestry, the name came to mean "suffering." Shmuel Rafael’s one-man play Golgotha lays bare the raw suffering of a fictional but emblematic Holocaust survivor.

I happened to see the show’s current adaptation (by Haim Idissis, translated by Howard Rypp) on International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2017, a day when, coincidentally and with horrible and unbelievable irony, official religious discrimination was reintroduced in the United States. The play’s message is important every day, though.

Decades after the war, Albert Salvado (Victor Attar) recalls in painful fits and starts his time at Auschwitz Birkenau as he struggles with the pressure of being tapped to light the symbolic torch at the annual remembrance ceremony at Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust memorial. He reminds us that, as his friend and fellow survivor told him back then, “we have to carry on so someone will be left to recount what went on there.” With fewer and fewer survivors and witnesses remaining alive, and given the natural human inclination to forget our history, it’s going to be up to storytelling – historical, biographical, and fictional – to keep the flame of memory alive so that we might not experience further genocides like Hitler’s Final Solution.
As Albert tells us, some of the Spanish Jews who fled the Inquisition settled in Salonica in northern Greece, where for centuries they maintained their old language, Ladino, an old Spanish dialect written in Hebrew letters. (Ladino is to Spanish as Yiddish is to German.) At Auschwitz, some of these Sephardic Jews were conscripted to operate the killing factory, leading naked victims into the gas chambers, then taking out the bodies and loading them into the crematoria. The memory of this service has seared Albert permanently; he complains wretchedly of a furnace burning up the organs inside his body, and speaks not of God but of the Devil keeping him alive to suffer “as punishment.” Even the ouzo he drinks to ease the pain causes flare-ups of terrible heat inside him.

Albert has been planning to go to Yad Vashem with his old friend from the concentration camp, who has been given the honor of lighting the torch. But when happenstance flips the actual honor onto Albert, he is faced with a crisis, feeling that because of the horrible deeds he was forced to commit, he doesn’t deserve such an honor. In desperation he turns to the spirit of his wife, who was murdered in the camps along with their daughters. But her photograph has no definitive answer for him.

"Searing” describes Attar’s performance, too. There is a slow build to the final horrific detail of Albert’s past, but he doesn’t mince words along the way, and all the depths of his emotions are written in his elastic expressions, his shouts on the phone, even his slow diabetic shuffle. The details of his life and dilemmas speak volumes. Shoes in the outside world, slippers and then a foot bath in the apartment. The numbers on a survivor’s arm, which he insists must not be removed when the body is prepared for burial – “Let the world eat it!” Which jacket to wear to the torch lighting ceremony?

And through a wider-angle lens, there is Albert’s sense of isolation as a Sephardic Jew among a community of survivors dominated by Ashkenazi culture. In truth, we read little of the fate of Sephardic Jews during the Holocaust.

Directed by Attar’s wife Geula Jeffet-Attar, Golgotha is a stunning solo piece, so emotionally draining there were moments when I had to look away from Albert’s pleading face. Yet looking away from the horrors of our history is exactly what we must not do, as Golgotha chillingly, breathtakingly, burningly reminds us. It concludes its four-day run at La Mama January 29.

Past Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

On February 22nd we were honored by the visit of Rav Elia Richetti, former Rabbi of Venice and Trieste, who performed Chazanut from Norther Italy. The program was brought to us by our friends at Centro Primo Levi as part of the Italian Chazanut Roundtable, a project of Italian Jewish music and liturgy established in memory of Erna Finci Viterbi z’l whose love for tradition and dedication to learning have profoundly contributed to shape the Centro Primo Levi’s principles. This year, Kehila Kedosha Janina was honored to be chosen the venue of this event.

Ashkenazi Songs from the North of Italy presented by Rav Elia Richetti and Dr. Francesco Spagnolo.

This program featured one of Italy's leading cantors, Rabbi Elia Richetti, performing a selection of Ashkenazi synagogue songs from an array of Jewish communities in Northern Italy. Throughout his life, Rabbi Richetti has preserved the music of Gorizia, where part of his family came from, and learned the traditions of Trieste and Verona. The performance, presented in
conversation with musicologist Francesco Spagnolo (UC Berkeley), also included excerpts of other Italian traditions of Ashkenazi origin, such as Venice and Casale Monferrato. Ashkenazi Jews settled in Italy since the early modern period, and preserved original musical traditions documented in written and recorded sources since the 18th century.

Elia Richetti (Milan, 1950) was trained as Rabbi, Cantor, Sofer, and Mohel in Italy and Israel. Rabbi Richetti has been the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish communities of Trieste (1979-1989) and Venice (2001-2010), and Deputy Chief Rabbi of Milan (1989-2001). He served on the Milan Beth Din, as president of the Italian Rabbinical Assembly, and as a member and sofer of Beth Din of Central and Northern Italy. He is a leading expert on many Italian liturgical traditions, with a particular focus on the Ashkenazi minhag.

Francesco Spagnolo (PhD Hebrew University, 2007) works at the University of California, Berkeley, as the Curator of The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life and an Associate Adjunct Professor in the Department of Music. His research focuses on the musical history of the Italian synagogue. He is the author of *Italian Jewish Musical Traditions* (Rome-Jerusalem, 2001) and, most recently, of *The Jewish World* (Rizzoli, 2014).

The Italian Chazanut Roundtable was established through the generous support of Sara Wolf Hallac, Toby Wolf, Jeff Keil and Danielle Pinet.

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**Past Events of Interest in New York City**

The Sixth Street Synagogue, Congregation Edes Israel Anshei Mesrich, reopened and our President, Marvin Marcus was there to wish them good luck. This synagogue was frequented by our past president of Blessed Memory, Hy Genee.

The synagogue is a 1910 Orthodox synagogue in the East Village of Manhattan, New York City. It was built by a congregation established in 1888 consisting of immigrants from Międzyrzec Podlaski, a city in Biała Podlaska County, Lublin Voivodeship Poland, which was known as a center of Jewish learning. It was designed by Herman Horenburger in the Neo-Classical style, and is located at 415 East 6th Street between Avenue A and First Avenue.

Pesach (Paul) Ackerman served as Rabbi from 1969 until his death on June 14, 2013. The congregation, founded in 1888, originally worshiped in a building on Clinton Street. The building which now houses the synagogue was originally built in 1841 as a 2 1/2-story house for J. B. Murray. Herman Horenburger designed the conversion into a synagogue in 1910. The synagogue is unusual in being a very small, urban congregation on a narrow lot that has an extremely
beautiful Neo-Classical facade, and is the last operating "tenement synagogue" in the East Village. Andrew Berman of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation called it "an intact historic gem."

Architectural historian and New York University professor Gerald R. Wolfe describes the synagogue's "most attractive interior... The unusually narrow building has balconies which extend almost to the middle of the sanctuary, and through the intervening space, broad rays of light from two overhead skylights seem to focus on the Ark and on a large stained glass panel above it. The soft-yellow-colored panes of the two-story-high window are crowned by an enormous Mogen David [Star of David] of red glass which seems to dominate the entire room."

In October 2012, the Landmarks Preservation Commission created the East Village/Lower East Side Historic District, which included in its boundaries the Meserich Synagogue. The present synagogue is in the lower levels of the residential building.

**Upcoming Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina**

Our calendar is particularly filled for the month of March. See below for all our events.
Kehila Kedosha Janina is honored to host the presentation of a newly released historical novel for children set on the island of Rhodes

**WE ARE IN EXILE**

**ESTAMOS EN GALUT**

**BOOK PRESENTATION & SIGNING**

Sunday March 5th at 2:00pm
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street New York, NY 10002

Author Mara W. Cohen Ioannides will be present for book signing. Refreshments will be served

Special discounts will be offered on all children’s books and books on the Jews of Rhodes

Autographed copies of the book will be on sale for $15. If you cannot attend and want an autographed copy, contact us at museum@kkjism.org for price including shipping

*We are in Exile – Estamos en Galut* takes place between WWI and WWII on the island of Rhodes in the city of Rhodes during a world-wide depression. Here the Christian and Jewish Greeks lived together in relative harmony under Italian rule. However, families were forced to send their sons and husbands off the island to earn money for their families back home. Ultimately, the community was destroyed by the Holocaust. This story attempts to revive with lost world of the Rhodesis, the Jews of Rhodes, a Jewish community with unique traditions.
KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM WISHES YOU A

**Happy Purim!**

חג פורים שלם
חג סמחא
Purim Alegre I Dulce

**You are welcome to join us for services on Saturday March 11 at 5:45pm**

Mincha, Arvith and Megillah Reading
Traditional Greek Jewish Dinner Following Services

"The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor"

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
280 Broome St NYC
KKJSM.ORG
Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum
is proud to present

**EPIROTIKI and REBETIKA**

**CONCERT**

Vasileios Kostas
Beth Bahia Cohen
Lefteris Bournias

**Sunday March 12**

**th at 7:30pm**

**Kehila Kedosha Janina**

**280 Broome Street (between Allen and Eldridge)**

**New York, NY 10002**

Over the course of the last few years, Kehila Kedosha Janina has become a popular venue for concerts highlighting the music of our community (Greek, Israeli, and Ladino).

We are overjoyed to present our first concert of 2017.

On March 12th from 7:30-9:30pm our sanctuary will resound with the music of Epirus (Epirotiki) from where so many of our congregants have their roots, and Rebetika (Greek Blues).

Tickets are $20 each and can be bought in advance or paid cash only at the door. Send your checks (made out to Kehila Kedosha Janina) to Kehila Kedosha Janina, 1 Hanson Place, Huntington, NY 11743
Join us for a special showing of the critically-acclaimed film

**Cloudy Sunday**

Sunday, March 19 at 1:00pm
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street New York, NY 10002

Entrance Fee $10

The film will be screened in our communal room and museum simultaneously. There will be no tours during the film showing. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

“Cloudy Sunday” unfolds the forbidden love story between a Jewish girl and a Christian boy during the German occupation in Thessaloniki in 1942. The racist laws have been implemented and the only place to escape the hatred and inhumanity is a small club, where Vasilis Tsitsanis fills the hearts and minds of people with the beautiful rebetika folk music. Despite the resistance, the persistent hunt for the Jews gradually spreads and suddenly simple choices become life-changing decisions.

“Cloudy Sunday” was filmed in Thessaloniki with the cooperation of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki. Members of the Community, including those from the Ladino Choir, are in the film.

Join us for a movie you do not want to miss. Our showing is timed to coincide with the arrival in Auschwitz-Birkenau of the first transport from Salonika (March 20, 1943).

“Cloudy Sunday” by Manoussos Manoussakis
Awards & Festivals:
Official Selection in Melbourne and Edinburgh, Asian Premiere @ Shanghai IFF (Spectrum Section), Italian Premiere @ Fipergi Family FF, Best Director and Best Cinematography @ Slemani Film Festival

Based on the book “Ouzeri Tsitsanis” by George Skarbadonis, inspired by real events.
We are excited to announce a new class at Kehila Kedosha Janina.

New Weekly Class

Romaniote & Sephardic Insights for Life

Teachings and Traditions from Spain to the Balkans and Beyond

Led by Rabbi Nissim El necavé

Class topics include:
Sephardic perspectives on the Torah
Ladino songs and Romaniote & Sephardic Liturgy from Greece & Turkey
Romaniote & Sephardic Traditions throughout the year, and much more

Every Tuesday night at 8pm
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome St NYC

Food will be served

Open to Young Adults in their 20’s & 30’s
RSVP to GreekJewishYPN@gmail.com
Sunday, March 19th • 3:00pm
at Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust

POET & HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

Iossif Ventura

Please join us as Iossif Ventura, the last surviving Jewish male child born in Chania and one of the only surviving members of the Jewish community in Crete, shares his personal story and the history of the Cretan Greek Jews.

Iossif Ventura survived the Holocaust as a child in hiding. As a poet in his adult life, his poetry expresses his traumatic experiences in reflective and moving language.

*Pictured on left: Iossif with Athina, his caretaker, who hid him during the war.*

Please RSVP at michael@lamoth.org

Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust
IN PAN PACIFIC PARK
100 S. The Grove Drive, Los Angeles CA 1 323.651.3704
www.lamoth.org
Holocaust Memorial Center of Michigan is Highlighting Our Dear Friend Sarah Aroeste

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

Sounds of the Sephardic Sea
Songs, Stories & Sweets from the Mediterranean Coast
featuring Sarah Aroeste

- A multimedia presentation by international award-winning singer Sarah Aroeste, with stories and songs from her family roots in Spain and Greece. Using sound clips, videos and live music, Aroeste will demonstrate the Sephardic Ladino music culture that survived the Holocaust and is being revitalized today.

- Traditional Greek desserts.

- Two performances, at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. (please select one).

- A Leadership Circle Brunch at 12:15 p.m., for members at the $1,000+ levels.

EVENT GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:
Nancy & Sam Shamie and Family in Honor of Rabbi Sasson Natan
Meyer & Anna Prentis Family Foundation
Karolyn & Arie Leibovitz

This event is exclusive to members of the Holocaust Memorial Center.
CLICK HERE to become a member and join us on March 19.
Membership begins at $50, includes a year of free museum admission for your household, and is tax deductible.

RSVP by March 14 to 248.536.9605
or rsvp@holocaustcenter.org
Space is limited. Dietary laws observed.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL CENTER ZEKELEMAN FAMILY CAMPUS
28123 Orchard Lake Rd. • Farmington Hills, MI 48334 www.holocaustcenter.org
The Shabbat before Purim is called "Shabbat Zachor" [Remember], because in addition to the regular Torah portion, a second Torah is taken out of the Ark to read a small section from the Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 25, verses 17-19, which begins "Remember what Amalek did to you...." The reference is to the battle Amalek initiated against Israel just after the Exodus from Egypt, when we were still a multitude of confused, weak and shell-shocked slaves, just recently released from bondage. Israel was victorious, but as a result, we are commanded to not only remember this incident for all time, but also to literally and figuratively "erase" the very name of Amalek.

Yet what is so unique about Amalek's aggression against Israel, as opposed to so many other long-forgotten Biblical nations, that warrants such "special mention", and even a specific mitzvah to never forget what this nation did to Israel?
The answer lies in the fact that Amalek, as opposed to other nations, attacked Israel only because they were Israel, or in more contemporary terminology: Jews. Some attribute Amalek's motive as being a desire to actually attack G-d, for whom Israel was seen as proxy, but the fact is that Israel at the time presented no strategic, economic, cultural, political or military threat of any kind against anyone, let alone a nation of warriors like Amalek. Amalek's hate is therefore apparently pathological, inborn, irrational and incurable, as opposed to all other nations who, whether justified or not, had specific claims, fears, designs and anger against Israel.

Being Amalek's direct bloodline descendent, Haman's hatred of the Jews and his nefarious scheme to physically annihilate the Jews of the Persian empire is of the same nature. The Jews presented no challenge to Haman's authority, or to the kingdom's economy, culture or society. Yet Haman's personal anger and hate toward Mordechai the Jew, who refuses to bow to him, is immediately applied to the entire Jewish nation. The Jews' loyalty and assimilation into Persian society meant nothing to Haman. His pathological and inbred Amalekite hatred of Israel was all that mattered and motivated him.

Yet the Talmud tells us that the Babylonian conquest of the region known as the Middle East led to enormous population transfers, migrations and a total intermixing of many nations, including Amalek. Therefore, a true "Amalekite" could no longer be identified, allowing one to argue that the original Torah-mandated mission was accomplished: Amalek was gone forever, making any commandment to "remember" its nefarious deeds and to "wipe out its name" rather superfluous to say the least.

However, vicious, murderous, and irrational Amalekite Jew-hatred has more than survived the evil Amalek, and has definitely spread among all too many peoples. If so, "Amalek" is not only a distinct DNA entity, but also a conceptual category, as was explained by Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik, and his grandson, Rabbi Josef B. Soloveitchik, of blessed memory. The latter used this idea to explain how the most vicious Jew haters, like Hitler, enthusiastically adopted the Amalekite worldview, essentially becoming Amalekites, even though no one could prove any direct bloodline to Amalek.

But there is the flipside: If one can conceptually "join" Amalek, then it must be possible to "leave" Amalek as well. And in fact, the Talmud clearly states that even direct descendants of Amalek did join the Jewish nation: "Naaman was a resident alien; Nevuzaradan was a righteous proselyte; descendants of Haman learned Torah in B'nei Brak; descendants of Sisra taught
children in Jerusalem; [and] descendants of Sancheirev gave public expositions of the Torah" (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 96b). These are all direct descendants of the original Amalek, and yet they "abandoned" their "family heritage" and even succeeded in entering the Jewish nation. So much the more so, then, for even the worst anti-Semite of the "Amalekite" type, who is not only redeemable, but can even convert and join the Jewish nation.

In this light, the significance of Shabbat Zachor is more relevant than ever. On the one hand, we must remember what Amalek did and still does to us, whether the original Biblical nation or those who have conceptually and philosophically joined that nation over history. To those types of pathological anti-Semites, we must show no understanding and give no sanction, and we must continue to publicly and aggressively fight against all institutional and individual anti-Semitism. However, to be truly effective in this endeavor we must further strengthen our own Jewish identity and faith so that we understand what we are fighting for and understand the righteousness of our mission, which is not only the right to be proud and practicing Jews without fear or apologies, but also to motivate us to continue to spread Torah and Jewish values to more and more people to further reduce the influence and power of more contemporary "Amalekite" forces, which are unfortunately still with us. "Remember what Amalek did to you....!" Happy Purim to one and all!

This week, the 17th of Shevat marked the 149th anniversary (Meldado) of the passing of Rabbi Haim Palachi, one of the most outstanding figures in the Sephardic Rabbinate of the 19th century. Rabbi Palachi was born in Izmir under the Ottoman Empire in 1788. His father was Rabbi Yaakov Palachi and his mother was a descendant of the illustrious Hazan family. He obtained his training from his maternal grandfather, Rabbi Yosef Hazan and also from Rabbi Yishak Gatneyo and was ordained as a Rabbi at the age of 25. He was a very prolific writer, he wrote a number of responsa, commentary to the Torah, Talmudic commentary, a number of books on morals and ethics and many others. Rabbi Palachi went on to become the head of the Beth Din in Izmir at the age of 40 and in 1854 was appointed as Chief Rabbi of Izmir, a position that he held until his death in 1868.
Richard Solomon is looking for help in finding the identities of these people in his Elhai family photos. The Elhais were from Crete but the Diaspora now extends across the USA, Israel and Greece.

Applications deadline has been extended to March 12\.  

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**DEADLINE APPROACHING**

**26\textsuperscript{th} Annual Kaplun Essay Contest**

**Level 1 Essay:** My Favorite Jewish Hero or Heroine, Biblical, Historical or Contemporary and His or Her Influence on Jewish History, Jewish Values and Me (Grades 7, 8 & 9)

**Level 2 Essay:** The Influence of the Hebrew Bible and Jewish Values on the Founding of Democratic Nations and Their Adherence To Democratic Ideals (Grades 10, 11 & 12)

**Prizes:** $1,800 for 1st prize in each level. $750 for 5 finalists in each level.

**Rules:**
1. Essays are to be typed, double spaced. Up to 1,000 words Level 1 and 1,500 words Level 2.
2. Name, address, telephone number, email, school name, grade and date of birth on page 1 of essay. Name on subsequent pages.
4. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for list of contest finalists.
5. All entries become the property of the Foundation.
6. Entries to be sent to: Morris J & Betty Kaplun Foundation Inc. Essay Contest Committee P.O. Box 234428 Great Neck, New York 11023
7. No certified or registered mail accepted.
8. Prizes to be awarded by June 30, 2017.
For my lucky participants who will be joining me on the June/July tour this year which includes Cyprus, it is truly bershet!

The Ambassador of Israel in Cyprus Ms. Yael Ravia-Zadok and Minister of Defence Mr. Fokaides addressed a delegation of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations visiting Cyprus.

They addressed an official ceremony at the site of a monument installed at the BMH Military Camp, honoring the around 2000 children born to Holocaust survivors detained in Cyprus during the 1946-1949 period.

“The assistance offered by Cypriots to the Jews in the camps and the kindness they showed towards the refugees, planted the seeds of the alliance between our people.”
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) made out to Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum, 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.

PLEASE REMEMBER: WE DISCONTINUED OUR POST OFFICE BOX
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280 BROOME STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10002

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