

עלינו ALEINU

TISHRI 2025 - 5786

The magazine of the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue of Montreal



Anwar M. Shahin ❧ Jamil A. Nabi ❧ Albert M. Shahin

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ALEINU ^{עלינו}U

TISHRI 2025 -5786

The magazine of the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue of Montreal

FEATURE

**The Community of
babylonian iraqi jews
of Montreal**

MAGEN DAVID ADOM

**Heroism in Operation
Rising Lion**



RABBI SOTO
*Les 10 jours de
pénitence*

AMJQ
DR. LIOR BIBAS
Interview

RABBI SEBBAG
*You shall rejoice
on your Festival*



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Congratulations, Mazal Tov

Mike Yuval

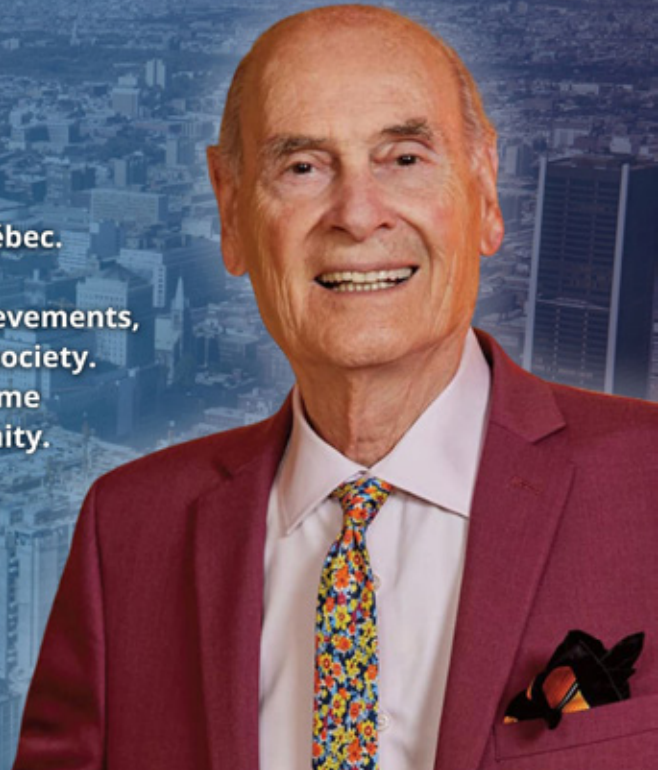
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This honour is a significant recognition of achievements,
vision, service and contribution to Quebec society.

Mike Yuval is a distinguished and longtime
supporter of our synagogue and community.

We all share this honour together
with the general Jewish Community
of Montreal and Quebec.

SHANA TOVA U'METUKA
HAPPY NEW YEAR 5786



HAPPY NEW YEAR 5786

To our dear Rabbis, members of the clergy,
President, members of the Executive and Board,
Trust officers and our office employees and volunteers.

Many thanks for your hard work and dedication
to our synagogue and community.

You continue to lead us from strength
to strength.

SHANA TOVA U'METUKA

שנה טובה ואמטוקא

To all our members and friends of the synagogue
and the community.





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President David Gabbay

We all need to pray

AS WE ARE APPROACHING the High Holidays there are many things to be thankful for for all that we have received this year and at the same time there are many things we need to pray to Hashem for the coming year. The first thing that comes to mind is the situation in Israel. The IDF spectacular victories over its enemies on seven fronts cannot be explained as just military victories, the fighting spirits of the soldiers, the love of their country and the belief in Hashem were as vital as the military hardware. We must pray that this terrible war would be the last and that Israel can live in peace with the other countries in the area.

Antisemitism has raised its head again in almost every corner of the world. I believe that it was always festering under the radar and October 7 was the catalyst that brought it to the front. We should hope and pray this ugly phenomenon will end soon and the people of the world come back to their senses and recognize that the Jewish people were and still are a light to the nations.

Our beloved synagogue is moving in the right direction, although a lot has been achieved but also a lot more has to be done. Our clergy are very dedicated and determined to keep trying to increase attendance not only on Shabbat but also in the daily Torah studies with Rabbi Betsalel Soto. We are hopeful to start very soon

a separate Shabbat services for the young families and youth activities under the guidance of Rabbi David Sebbag. I ask everyone to encourage our clergy and help our synagogue to be at the forefront of the great synagogues in Montreal.

One of the main prayers on Yom Kippur is Kol Nidre where every one of us asks Hashem to forgive us and release us from any Neder (vow) that we made but didn't keep. We also give *Mehila* to one another on the evening of Yom Kippur, which is the first thing we do when we begin our fast. If there's any place that this should apply first, it is in our congregation. There are many congregants who don't talk to each other whether because of arguments related to synagogue affairs or because of something said that hurt their feelings. I am not here to decide who is right and who is wrong but the spirit and the principles of Yom Kippur have to be followed in the synagogue first. We are all brothers and sisters and above all, we are friends. Let's do what Hashem wants us to do on Yom Kippur.

I would like to take this occasion to thank each and every one of you for your continuous support. I would like to thank our Clergy for their love and dedication to our members. I would like to thank all our office and maintenance staff for their hard work and dedication. I would like to wish each and everyone of you and your families a Happy and sweet New Year. May Hashem grants us all health, Nachat and Parnassa Tova. Amen.

Shana Tova U'metuka.

Shana Tova



Hazan Reverend Daniel Benlolo

Choose Life !

AS WE STAND TOGETHER at the threshold of a new year, we carry with us the weight of recent times. For some, this year has been marked by personal struggle; for others, by the heaviness of world events. Yet here we are, gathered once again as a community, ready to pray, reflect, and begin anew. That in itself is a blessing: the ability to return—to God, to family, to ourselves, and most importantly, to one another.

The High Holidays are not only about private reflection; they are about communal renewal. Judaism teaches us that Teshuvah, Tefillah, and Tzedakah—return, prayer, and acts of kindness—have the power to change the course of our lives. But they are not abstract concepts. They live in the way we show up for each other: a phone call to someone lonely, a smile that lightens another’s day, an open heart that says, “I see you, I care.” In a world that often feels cold and divided, our tradition reminds us that the truest measure of faith is found in compassion and connection.

I believe this is what the High Holidays are asking of us this year: to strip away what is superficial and return to what is real. To place people before possessions, relationships before resentments, and kindness before judgment. When we live with this clarity, we rediscover the strength that has always carried the Jewish people through every challenge—our capacity for mutual

responsibility, for looking out for one another, for building a community bound by love and respect.

The Torah teaches us: “Uvacharta ba’chaim”—choose life. Choosing life means more than just surviving another year. It means actively creating a life filled with meaning, family, and friendship. It means seeing each day as a gift, each relationship as sacred, and each opportunity to give as holy. When we choose life, we are not only securing our own future; we are shaping the future of our children and grandchildren, strengthening the bonds that will keep our people alive for generations to come.

This year, let us commit to choosing life together—not in grand gestures alone, but in the small, consistent acts of love and care that transform a community. May we greet one another with warmth, extend a hand to those in need, and fill our synagogue with the light of kindness. And in doing so, may we enter the new year not only renewed in spirit, but strengthened in our unity as one family.

My family and I wish you all a Shana tova tikatevu v’tchatemu—may this year bring health, peace, and above all, deeper caring for one another.



Rabbi Menachem White - Chevra Shaas

Shana Tova !

DEAR EMBERS OF CHEVRA SHAAS, SHEARITH ISRAEL, AND READERS OF ALEINU. After I was approached to submit an article for the Aleinu, I had trouble concentrating in my prayers, as my mind kept reflecting from topic to topic: what should I write? Until... until I came to the concluding supplication, which appears after the main body of the “`amidah” prayer (aka “shmoneh `esrei.”) After all the praises and requests and thanks to God, that we make in the `amidah, we have a request: “my God, guard my tongue from bad.”

For how many times do we say things when we mean well, but we don’t think of the consequences. [When we were young, we may have said or done foolish things, but they could have been excused because neurologists tell us that the teenage brain is not fully developed. But now?]

I am reminded of what I wrote in the Aleinu two years ago:

The patriarch Abraham, Avraham Avinu, plays a major role in the Rosh Hashanah liturgy. The Torah readings for both days are the story of Abraham, including the banishment of Yishmael. There is a midrash known as Pirqei deRabbi Eliezer, which states that eventually Abraham traveled to Yishmael, to reconcile with him.

At the time, I continued writing as follows: That’s what I wrote in the summer of ‘23. Shortly after writing those words, I happened to travel to Israel for a few weeks, before October 7. I saw for myself the divisions among the Jews of Israel, and said to myself that certainly the Hamas must be seeing these things also, and could be interpreting as a convenient time to attack.

And then, Oct 7 happened. And sadly, my premonition turned out to be correct.

As we begin the New Year, let us pay close attention to the words of our prayers, let us be careful in our words and actions, and may we see a year of good health and peace for all of us, for Canada, for Israel, and for the world.

Shana Tova u-metuqah; a happy and healthy year to all, be happy to hear from you. I can be reached at whitemenahem@hotmail.com or call/text at 551-206-0395.



The Community of Babylonian Iraqi Jews of Montreal

*With heartfelt gratitude and
appreciation of our past*

Hazanim

Anwar Shahin,

Albert Shahin,

Famil Abdulnabi

for their dedicated service

and devotion during our

High Holy Days.

**Tisku Leshanim
Rabboth**



The Community of BABYLONIAN IRAQI JEWS of Montreal

A Tribute to Our Pillars

Mr. Emile Fattal shares his personal memories of three pillars of the Babylonian Iraqi Jews of Montreal whose tireless dedication helped safeguard this rich Jewish Iraqi heritage and traditions.

.....□ *By Emile Fattal*

MY FAMILY ARRIVED IN CANADA IN 1957. At the time, Montreal had very few Iraqi Jews—none that I knew— and I spoke only a few words of English or French, certainly not enough to hold a conversation. Like everyone in our community, we had fled persecution and upheaval, but we were too proud to call ourselves refugees. Still, that’s what we were. And like all refugees, we clung to our faith, to our memories, and—of course — to each other. Our language was Arabic, even if some among us were already fluent in French or English. But beyond the language, it was our culture—deeply rooted in the traditions of Babylonian Jewry—that defined us. I think a lot of Ashkenazim had some reservation about our authenticity as Jews. To begin with, if we were real Jews, how come we didn’t speak Yiddish? Why do we speak Arabic?

So, in Montreal, we found ourselves transplanted into an unfamiliar landscape—cold, both literally and culturally. But every Shabbat, we found warmth at the Young Israel Synagogue, where the late **Albert**

Shahmoon and the late **Harone Kattan** negotiated the use of a small side chapel. From that humble beginning was born The Congregation of Sephardi Jews of Montreal. Primarily Iraqi Jews, but mixed with Egyptians, Syrians, and Lebanese Jews, all of us trying to find our place in this snowy, foreign land. Our services were led by **Hakham Abdallah Hillel**, respectfully known as Abou Abie. He was a man of learning, humility, and a voice that carried the haunting, melodious tones of old Baghdad. He taught me my Bar Mitzvah, bless his soul. Shabbat wasn’t just about



prayer—it was social. The synagogue or at least the small chapel, was our refuge and our living room, and on the High Holidays, it felt more like Baghdad than Montreal. People came to pray, yes—but also to speak Arabic, share a laugh, and feel a sense of home and community. We said Shebbath Shalom and not Good Shabos and we said Teskou leshanim rabboth and not Good yontif. In 1963, the Young Israel Synagogue summarily asked us to leave. So off we went to the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, which offered us the Horace Joseph Chapel. It was modest, but it worked. However, three or four families went directly to the main sanctuary, I suppose it was more upmarket.

Meanwhile, the community kept growing. We were joined by more Lebanese Jews, and later, Iraqi Jews who had been trapped for years and made their way out through Iran and elsewhere. Some families thrived quickly in Canada, others took time, and some continued to struggle. But together, we witnessed the slow metamorphosis of Montreal’s Iraqi Jewish community—from simple

refugees to proud Quebecers and Canadians and strong contributors to the city’s Jewish, professional and commercial life. Indeed, Iraqi Jews though relatively small in number, achieved remarkable and sometimes extraordinary success around the world, be it in India, China, Israel, the UK, Switzerland, Canada, the USA and elsewhere. At the Spanish & Portuguese, our services moved to the much larger Lawee Hall and on the High Holidays it was standing room only. The Teba would be surrounded by six or seven men, each with his own

specialty in the rich oral tradition of Iraqi liturgy. Those were our golden years—not because life was easy (it wasn't), but because we became a critical mass and we were building something beautiful, a community. Our minhag—the distinct Iraqi custom—flourished. Our voices lifted us, reminded us who we were, and rooted our children in a tradition far older than Canada itself. But time passed. The Lebanese went off to their own chapel at the Spanish & Portuguese. People aged and passed on, families dispersed, and other families began to gradually drift toward the main sanctuary. Our numbers thinned. Yet a few men held fast, and because of them, the heart

of our prayer tradition kept beating. Actually, **Maurice Peress** who initiated the event of honoring **Dr. Sabah Bekhor** last year (Maurice also personally honored him at the Babylonian Heritage Centre in Israel), reminded us of the three men who stood out as principal pillars: **Anwar Shahin, Albert Shahin, and Jim Nabi** (a.k.a. Jamil Abdel Nabi). Maurice actually invited them to the photo studio where this momentous picture of them together was taken. They were the custodians of our sound, our cadence, and our spiritual rhythm. We owe them an immense debt of gratitude, and we honor them today:



Anwar Shahin

He arrived in Canada in 1962. I can still picture him at the Teba on Yom Kippur, instructing everyone – kindly be "**rayez**" and kindly be seated. His rich baritone chanting *Assei Lemaan Yitzhak we-Yaacob... Assei...* In essence, Anwar became our Secretary-General—for nearly six decades. Anwar was the operational backbone of our community. At weddings, milas, funerals, or other life cycle events, everyone consulted Anwar. He knew our traditions inside out, and he guided us with humility and wisdom. Until his final days, he remained the anchor of our community and there is so much more to tell about him.



Albert Shahin

Another stalwart of the Teba, brought a different musicality. His voice was lighter, more melodic, a bit like the violin and he was very proud of standing at the Teba and reading to the congregation and preserving our minhag. He had his own unique readings, often delivered with a smile and a twinkle in his eye. His son Michael says that his father used to practice the passouks he would read ahead of time and would often record them. Today, his wife Sylvia still listens to them.



Jamil Nabi

He left Baghdad in 1941 to go to university in Cairo, to study Structural Engineering, then to London to complete his Masters. He came to Canada in 1955 and established his own structural engineering firm. In Baghdad, he used to accompany his father to synagogue every morning. So, from an early age, he knew our prayers, our rituals and minhag with full proficiency. He was blessed with a very melodic fine voice. When it came to certain parts of the prayers, we looked forward to hearing Jimmy reading it. It was as if this belonged to him.

Each of these men, in his own way, preserved our minhag. They ensured that our Iraqi melodies didn't disappear into history. They taught, they led, they gave of themselves. And for that, we remember them and honor them with love and gratitude.

May God bless their souls. May their memory be a blessing. And may we, their children and grandchildren, continue to sing their songs.



I wanted their memory to live beyond them

Maurice S. Peress initiated the cover photo for this edition of *Aleinu Magazine*. A longtime member of the community who personally knew the Shahin brothers and Jimmy Nabi, he brings a valuable perspective on the establishment of the Babylonian Iraqi Jews of Montreal.

ASKED ABOUT HIS EARLIEST MEMORIES of Montreal, *Maurice S Peress* vividly recalls his arrival in 1958: "After a short stay in New York, at the border the authorities gave me a hard time because my passport was due to expire the following month; in the end, however, they allowed me to stay for six months!" He adds with a touch of nostalgia: "Like many of the newly arrived members of the Iraqi community I soon made my way to the Jewish Community Office and met the late *Albert Elia Shahmoon Z'L*—an extraordinary figure who left a deep impression on all who met him. Without the help of the late Albert Shahmoon Z'L, the others would never have made it to first base. Albert was the youngest son of the late Elia Shahmoon Z'L—a prominent member of the Jewish community, a wise philanthropist, and a man held in the highest respect. Albert Shahmoon and his wife, Mavis, had an open house every Friday night to welcome friends and newcomers: It was there that I met *Jimmy and Ruth Nabi*. By attending the synagogue, I quite soon had the pleasure of meeting the *Shahin brothers*. It is said that Elia Shahmoon left Baghdad after his daughter Rahel passed away on her wedding night. He entrusted funds to his uncles, the Khazma brothers, to build a school and a synagogue in her name. The project was carried out successfully.

How did this photo come about? What was its original purpose?

I thought that when these people pass away, our history, our culture would go with them. It came to me that a picture is worth a thousand words. I wanted to have them together, so I called a studio and asked: 'When would it be possible to have a portrait of three valued members of our community?' '5 PM on a given date,' they said. I immediately called the three of them: 'Please bring your Tallit and come to the studio.' The three gentlemen attended with no questions asked. They were there on time.

The purpose? I wanted their memory to live beyond them. With their unfortunate passing, the pure Iraqi services I used to enjoy have passed with them. Three Iraqi refugees who, besides their daily business, took on the task of maintaining our religious culture.

What about the services?

For the Tishri holidays, the Lawee Hall (S&P) was rented and transformed into a synagogue for the occasion, and the entire Iraqi community participated in the services. Some of us had begun at that time to become members of the S&P Synagogue, but for the holidays they would leave the main sanctuary to join the Lawee Hall (this is still the case today), where we could enjoy the chants, prayers, and Torah readings recited by the Shahin brothers, Jimmy Nabi, and sometimes others. ■

CONTRIBUTE TO THE FUTURE OF THE

*Spanish & Portuguese
Congregation*



Yahrzeit



KIDDUCH



TZEDAKA

Dedicate, memorialize, honor, or celebrate a loved one, or simply thank someone or say you care. Sponsor a Kiddush, Seudah, Breakfast or consider a donation to the Tzedaka fund.

Rivers of Babylon

Streets of Montreal

The story of Iraqi Jewish migration

Sami Sourani highlights the arrival and settlement of the Iraqi Jewish community in Montreal in the 1950s, while recalling its ancient roots in Babylonia. His narrative shows how faith, knowledge, and resilience shaped their identity through the challenges of exile and renewal.

..... □ *By Sami Sourani*

Arrival of Iraqi Jews in Montreal

Prior to 1950, Canadian immigration law did not favour immigrants from certain countries. The Department of Immigration followed a list of countries, mostly Middle Eastern countries, and Iraq was one of them. The intention of this policy, as the authorities explained, was to preserve the European image of Canada. By the mid-1950s, this policy was gradually relaxed, accepting immigrants from the Middle East if the Canadian economy could benefit from them. Accordingly, a handful of Iraqi Jewish families arrived in Canada in the last quarter of the 1950s and the early 1960s. Finally, in 1962, Canada changed its immigration policy, and immigrants were accepted on the basis

of education if it could contribute favourably to the Canadian economy. At this point, Iraqi Jews started coming to Canada from Europe, Iraq, Iran, the USA, and Israel. At the beginning, those Iraqi immigrants were strangers in a strange land. They felt that they had missed something and actually yearned for the good life they had in Baghdad. They easily rallied around the idea of getting together at the Synagogue, "Young Israel," that gave them a nook for practicing their Iraqi rituals. The spiritual leader was Rabbi Abdallah Hillel Z"L, who gracefully chanted prayers in an Iraqi Hebrew accent, in Babylonian style. He was then supported by the brothers "Shahin, Anwar and Albert, and by Jimmy Nabi."

They spent a short while attending this synagogue until they found a more favourable synagogue, "The Spanish and Portuguese," that gave them more favourable accommodation. In the new place, they could practice their traditional rituals. The Shahins carried in their voices the way they used to pray in Baghdad. They followed in the footsteps of the patriarch of the family, their father, the late Menashe Shahin, who had a farm in an agricultural town called "Al-Nasiya." This town is adjacent to the Biblical city of Ur Kasdim, the birthplace of Abraham and Sarah. Jimmy Nabi learned the Babylonian rituals by going to the synagogue with his father and chanting in the traditional way.

It is interesting to mention that there were 50 synagogues in Baghdad in 1950. They were within walking distance for many people. All those synagogues were run by volunteers and not by rabbis or cantors. It was an honour to volunteer and to attend services every day. The late Anwar Shahin, who served the Iraqi Community in Montreal, was a man of great charisma. He loved to help people and people appreciated his sincere attitude. He was very instrumental in attracting people and

encouraging them to contribute to the modification of the sanctuaries of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue. The writing on the walls of those sanctuaries is solid proof of his efforts. The names of the contributors will always be read, cherished and remembered for eternity. That spiritual generation—Rabbi Abdallah Hillel, Anwar and Albert Shahin, and Jimmy Nabi—is now gone. They were unable to prepare replacements to take over. This was not their fault, but there were many reasons for this. Some young men had to leave Montreal after getting jobs in other provinces. Young couples living in the city had to take care of their children and were unable to spare time for spirituality. However, the most significant factor was a lack of understanding of the meaning behind the prayers. For people who do not understand what they are reading, spiritual services become boring. They turned indifferent to it and eventually stopped attending the synagogue, drifting away from the orbit of their ancestors. In this context, future interest in spirituality will continue shrinking, putting the future of this community in danger. Needless to say, this situation is a challenge for our leaders today as they face the reality of the future.



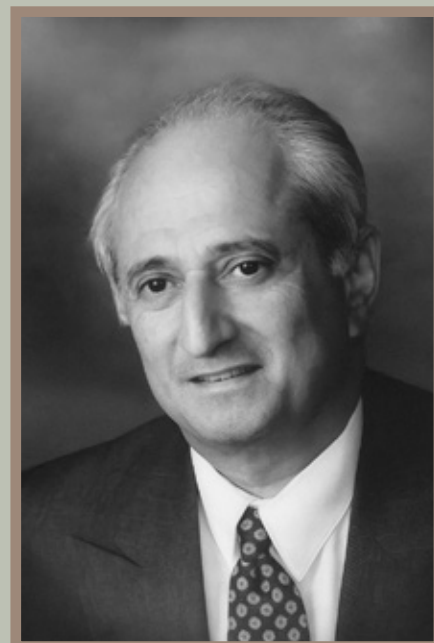
The first presidents of the S&P Congregation from the Iraqi community



Harone Kattan



Alfred Lawee



Victor Mashaal



Who Are The Babylonian/Iraqi Jews ?

This ethnic group consists of Jews who were exiled from the Holy Land about 2,600 to 2,700 years ago. They were exiled to new places far away from home. This was the first ethnic dispersion in the history of mankind. It began after the split of the Jewish Kingdom into Samaria in the north and Judea in the south. In 721 BCE, the Assyrian king captured Samaria and exiled the Jews to Nineveh. Their new location was a valley surrounded by mountains, and they were somewhat isolated from their surroundings. This area is now part of northern Iraq and is called Kurdistan. The Jews of Kurdistan spoke Aramaic, and their language hardly changed since the times of King David and Solomon. The reason is that they were isolated and less exposed to foreign invaders.

In 586 BCE, Nebuchadnasser II, king of Babylon, captured Jerusalem, destroyed King Solomon's Temple, and exiled the Jews to Babylon. They were settled in ten agricultural districts, and their king was made a tax collector for the king of Babylon. The Jews also spoke Aramaic, but over many generations and exposure to various cultures, their dialect—though called "Judeo-Arabic"—is full of words from other cultures, such as Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Greek, and Mongolian. This diaspora ended in 1950/51 when the Iraqi government expelled the Jews from Iraq, taking away their assets. The Kurdish Jews had 2,700 years of exile, and the Babylonian Jews had 2,600. During this period, many cultures ruled Babylon: the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Persians again, the Arabs, the



Mongols, the Ottomans, the British, and the Hashemite Arabs who finally expelled them. Despite these changing ruling cultures, the Babylonian Jews kept their ethnicity, their religion, and their tradition. They survived all those changes and did not assimilate into the ruling cultures.

Now, the question is: what is the secret of their survival?

The events that followed their dispersion show that good dedicated leaders put the foundation for this survival:

The Prophet Ezekiel bin Bouzi Hacohen: He is buried in southern Iraq not far from the ancient city of Babylon. The Jews called him "Al-Kiffel," the Guarantor, because he firmly predicted the return of the exiles to their homeland. His ideas of survival served not just the Jews of Babylon, but all the Jews of the world. First and foremost, he established "THE Synagogue" as a gathering place for the exiles. They could talk and open their hearts. Sometimes if one farmer had a good crop, he could help those who had a bad crop. This way he developed a feeling of community among them. The synagogue was a sort of substitution for the Jerusalem Temple, and he added two letters to the name of the synagogue: K, K, which means Kehila Kedusha, encouraging people



**The Babylonian Exile
586 BCE**

>> to treat it with respect. Ezekiel introduced the prayer by selecting inspiring sentences from the Bible to be chanted by people. He encouraged the feeling of hope and expectation for the future. He promised that Hashem would send big eagles to carry the Jews back on their wings to the Promised Land. He encouraged people to study to develop the Tree of Knowledge.

The Prophet Ezra the Scribe: He decided to document the Bible on calf skin so that it will be available for future generations. Prior to documenting the Bible, it was recited by the Kohanim (the priests) in Jerusalem. When they lived there, the Kohanim were protected. Now they are in the diaspora and open to danger. Therefore, it is important to write it to make it available for future generations. He wrote the Bible in a method used by persian called "Avista" a religious document written on calf skin.

Hagaon Mar Samuel: The head of a Yeshiva in Babylon. There were three Yeshivas in Babylon called **Sura**, **Pompadita**, and **Nehar Dea**. In those institutions, students learn the Torah. The Babylonian Talmud was done by those Yeshiva and it took 500 years to finalise it. Hagaon Mar Samuel served as the head of one of those Yeshivas. He taught a doctrine that affected the life of the entire Jewish community in his time, but the impact continued for many future generations.

- He preached that Jews in the diaspora should respect the traditions of their host country.
- He introduced the written "Ketuba" or marriage contract, traditionally drafted in Aramaic. He outlined the right of a wife and the obligation of a husband.
- He advised people to seek refuge outdoors in forests during epidemics. He explained that forests, with their abundance of trees, purify the air and make it healthier to breathe.
- He preached that health problems are not caused by the evil eye. Instead, he argued, they result from invisible organisms that enter the human body via the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat.

The Babylonian Jewish diaspora survived many cultures. They rose with the tide when there was freedom and prosperity, but fell down miserably when they were persecuted. Their golden age was during the Abbasid Empire. Their number was estimated at 2.00 million. Their rock bottom situation was reached after the Mongol invasion of that empire and their number went down to about 140,000 in 1950/51 when the Hashemite regime forced them to leave Iraq. History shows that faith in Hashem, our thirst for knowledge, and our communication with the world may lead us to survival in the harsh paths of life. ■

Baghdad: Meir Tweg Synagogue



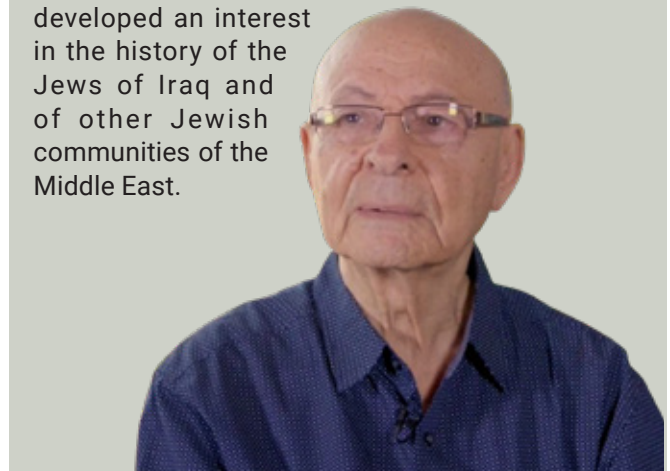
Sami Sourani

Sami was born in Baghdad, Iraq, and left for Israel in 1950. He studied at the Hebrew University and then moved to Canada in 1963. He stayed in Montreal for a little over a year, and then moved to Ottawa, Ontario, where he worked for the Federal Government in the Department of Defence Production as an Economist/Statistician. He continued his service for about 38 years before retiring.

The Governor General of Canada awarded him the Confederation Medal for his contribution to NAFTA—the trade agreement between the USA, Canada, and Mexico.

After retirement, and after being away from Montreal for about 46 years, he moved back to join his daughter who had settled in the city. During those years, he often visited Montreal, since his wife's late parents lived there, as did his own late parents.

Following his retirement, he developed an interest in the history of the Jews of Iraq and of other Jewish communities of the Middle East.



Magen David Adom Heroism in Operation Rising Lion



Magen David Adom's exceptional mobilization during the June 2025 conflict with Iran highlighted its indispensable role in safeguarding lives, supporting national resilience, and leading Israel's emergency response. Looking back on those twelve days of intense fighting, one thing became clear: the vital importance of Magen David Adom's actions on the ground.

.....□ *David Benamou*



FACING UNPRECEDENTED ATTACKS, Iran unleashed a formidable campaign, launching hundreds of ballistic missiles and at least 200 drones, with whatever couldn't be intercepted still causing devastation. MDA stood at the center of the response, ready to receive mass casualties and trauma cases and to search through rubble for survivors — far beyond its day-to-day mandate.

When Operation Rising Lion began on June 13, MDA deployed around 35,000 staff and volunteers and mobilized 2,000 state-of-the-art vehicles, including ambulances, medical buses, mobile ICUs, and medicycles. A national campaign to ensure steady blood supplies kept donation centers operating through the chaos. Within the first 48 hours, teams treated 204 casualties—including fatalities, serious injuries, and hundreds affected by trauma. By June 16, that number rose to 708, and by day ten, teams had treated 1,213 people, many of whom were stabilized on-site without hospital transfers.

Coordination with hospitals, military services, and local authorities was comprehensive and highly efficient throughout Operation Rising Lion. At the Ministry of Health's request, MDA organized the transfer of vulnerable patients—including premature infants, ventilated patients, and residents of nursing homes—using specialized ICU buses, mobile intensive care units, and ambulances to protected hospital wards across the country. This ensured continuity of care despite ongoing missile threats. MDA teams also worked closely with the Israel Defense Forces and Home Front Command to provide rapid medical response at numerous impact sites, conducting search and rescue operations and stabilizing casualties on-site before evacuation. Protected MDA command centers maintained seamless communication with hospital emergency departments and military units to coordinate treatment priorities, resource allocation, and patient distribution. This integrated collaboration was key to managing large-scale casualty flows and delivering life-saving care under extreme conditions.

According to Eli Bin, Director-General of Magen David Adom: "With the outbreak of Operation Rising Lion, MDA reached peak preparedness, with full staffing of thousands of emergency vehicles across the country. Our EMTs and paramedics were dispatched to multiple scenes and have acted with determination, professionalism, dedication, and speed to provide lifesaving medical assistance to more than 1,300 people across all levels of injury, in full coordination with the Home Front Command, Israel Police, Fire and Rescue, and local authorities" (afmda.org).

A System Under Fire

Amidst these efforts, the conflict exposed key vulnerabilities in the national emergency structure. Hospitals like Soroka in Be'er Sheva were hit hard and overwhelmed within hours, forcing staff to evacuate patients underground before resuming care outside normal capacity. Widespread communication failures compounded the situation, underscoring the need for robust, redundant systems. Amid blackout zones, MDA relied on specialized backup infrastructure and underground command centers to maintain operations.

Another critical challenge: evacuating elderly, disabled, or isolated residents without pre-arranged transport. MDA deployed designated vehicles in coordination with local authorities to move these vulnerable populations safely. Learning from these gaps, MDA accelerated investment in forward-looking solutions:

- Secure Command Hubs: Leadership and critical blood services operate from underground facilities like the Marcus National Blood Services Center.
- Drone logistics: Following successful 2022 trials, MDA scaled up drone delivery of blood and medical supplies to isolated areas during the conflict.
- AI-assisted Dispatch: MDA's tech-driven dispatch system—used to geolocate callers and





dispatch responders—now includes triage prioritization based on live missile alerts, casualty severity, and hospital capacity.

- Community Preparedness: MDA’s “Magen Project” trained civilians and midwives for on-site emergency response and births during disruptions.

Courage, Recognition & the Road Ahead

MDA staff showed extraordinary bravery. Paramedic Nitzan Oren recounted: “A rocket exploded hundreds of metres away, damaging our ambulance... If we hadn’t acted that way, we wouldn’t be here today.” EMT Daniel Stein lost his home in a strike but returned to the field to help evacuees.

National leaders took note. Following the war, on June 23, 2025, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu paid a visit to the Magen David Adom National Headquarters in Ramla.

He said “MDA is the best emergency service in the world, and it’s because of people like you. I want to express heartfelt thanks, on behalf of the Government of Israel and the citizens of Israel, to the thousands of EMTs and volunteers in Magen David Adom.” President Herzog praised Magen David Adom (MDA) as central to Israel’s national emergency framework, declaring: “We

came to MDA’s command center together with the talented Director General Eli Bin, who is doing an outstanding job, along with the

organization’s leadership, staff, and tens of thousands of dedicated volunteers.” That same day, reflecting on the operation and the challenges faced, MDA’s senior leadership—under Eli Bin’s guidance—expressed confidence in their preparation: “We have trained for this scenario for many years—we were ready, and no situation caught us off guard. We are prepared for every scene and every scenario.” They also reiterated their commitment to improve surge capacity, communications, and evacuation strategies for those most at risk.

The priority for Magen David Adom is preparing itself on a daily basis—not waiting for something to happen and then prepare. MDA Chief of Staff Uri Shacham declares: “Preparedness proved itself. You had time to prepare for it and you prepared your teams. This showed and at the end of the day it saved lives because you could see Magen David Adom responding fast, responding efficiently while all the people of Israel had to wait in the shelters. It was Magen David Adom teams that ran out of the shelters risking their lives, that’s our role. We are protecting life in Israel and this is what we do because this is our mission.” He further states, “The first one is keep preparing. June 24th might be the last day of the war with Iran. It was the first day for Magen David Adom preparedness for another war. We have to make sure that Magen David Adom teams are prepared, that communities in Israel are trained, that we have the equipment and the knowledge to respond and we are doing this right now.”

Crisis Mental Health Program

Magen David Adom launched a pilot program in January 2025, in collaboration with the Israeli Ministry of Health,



We are protecting life in Israel and this is what we do because this is our mission

MDA Chief of Staff Uri Shacham



Drone delivery of blood and medical supplies by Magen David Adom, the sole organization authorized to collect, process, and transport blood products across Israel.



>> to improve emergency responses to mental health crises and prevent suicides. This initiative addresses the increasing number of patients suffering from anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and panic attacks following the traumatic events of October 7, 2023. The program initially launched in the Tel Aviv district, integrating specially trained paramedics, mental health professionals, and telemedicine psychiatrists to provide rapid and effective crisis intervention. It aims not only to respond to immediate mental health emergencies but also to facilitate long-term care and support. Nevertheless, MDA operates at its highest level of alert, mobilizing all its capacities due to the escalating conflict

between Iran and Israel, integrating these mental health provisions into its daily operations. Its teams are tasked with addressing both urgent physical medical care and the increased psychological care needs arising from the current situation.

Operation Rising Lion's twelve days tested Israel's systems; they passed, but not without revealing where resilience can be strengthened. Through rapid mobilization, innovation, and unwavering commitment, MDA emerged not just as a responder to crises but as an institution that will shape Israel's readiness for whatever comes next.





We believe strongly in political neutrality in the healthcare space

The Association of Jewish Doctors of Quebec has over 550 members, including 400 practicing physicians and around 150 medical students, residents, or fellows. Its members regularly speak out in the media against antisemitic acts on campuses and in the medical field. To get to the heart of the AMJQ, we met with its president, Dr. Lior Bibas.

Aleinu : There are many medical associations in Quebec. Why a Jewish Association of Doctors? When and how was it founded?

Doctor Lior Bibas : We were founded after October 7th. There was no Jewish Physician Association of Quebec or in Canada prior to October 7th. We felt—as a group of doctors—we felt immediately after October 7th that the environment would likely be very tense, specifically for students and residents at hospitals or on university campuses. And we anticipated what would happen, especially when we compared it to the last war against Hamas in 2021, which was short, but there was a lot of antisemitism. We decided to form [an association]. Initially, we were just a group of doctors who wanted to make sure to be there for residents and students and help them. But we decided—and we realized the big job that we had at hand—and we decided to form a formal association. So it officially came into existence in

November 2023. We were the first ones. There are now medical associations in Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba that have since formed. We have all been meeting together and we formed the Canadian Federation of Jewish Medical Associations, the CFJMA, in order to better represent Jews in healthcare across Canada.

According to a report published by Israel Ministry of Diaspora Affairs on May 6, 2025, anti-Semitic incidents in Canada have increased by 670%. According to one of your surveys, 45% of doctors said that they had experienced anti-Semitic incidents in hospitals since October 7. What is now, today, is the current situation in hospitals in light of this rise in antisemitism?

What we observed in our survey and what we've seen across Canada is an increase in anti-Semitic incidents or incidents that are perceived as hateful by our

physicians. There have been many incidents, including isolated incidents that sometimes come from other healthcare workers and, more rarely, from other patients. Since October 7th, the initial wave was very difficult. Since then, over the past few months, things have quieted down somewhat. However, we do feel that antisemitism has created a new wave that we need to fight against. Our concern is that antisemitism might become institutionalized within healthcare, which we absolutely do not want. We believe strongly in political neutrality in the healthcare space, specifically in Quebec. We want to ensure that Jews are well represented and that Jews who support Israel—which all of our members do—are well protected and do not face discrimination.

You once mentioned that some patients fear being treated by doctors who harbor hatred toward Israel and Jewish people. Could you please elaborate on that?

We're working on different ways to quantify that and trying to come up with a survey to actually have the data. But we have heard from many Jews in the community that since October 7th, doctors have been more present on social media and have posted discriminatory, hateful, and even anti-Semitic comments on their personal social media accounts. We've heard that patients are doing more research before contacting their doctors. They are worried about being treated by doctors who espouse these sentiments. But we are working on a way—I don't want to say too much—but we are working on a way to try to quantify that and really get more data regarding the patient experience.

Depuis le 7 Octobre, l'AMJQ est intervenue à plusieurs reprises, notamment en réponse à une lettre ouverte d'un collectif de médecins du Québec en soutien à Gaza. Pensez-vous que certains médias québécois sont orientés et reprennent sans vérification les chiffres ou la version des faits du Hamas ?

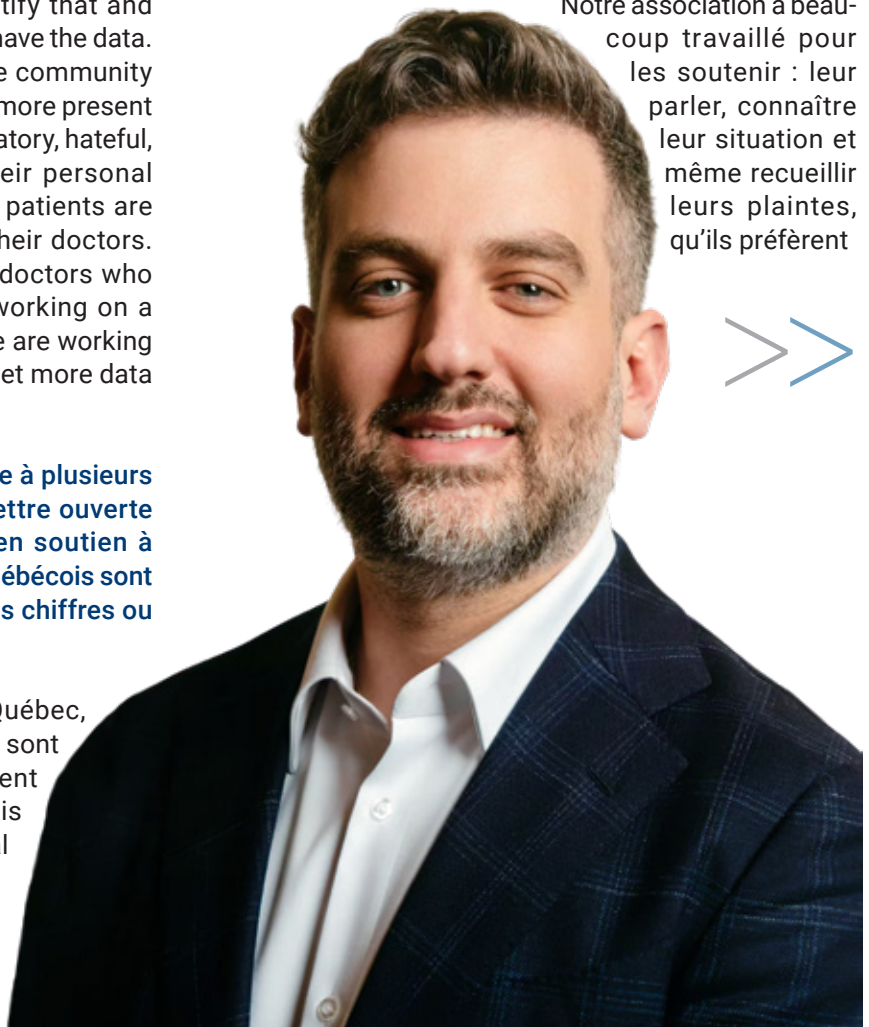
Ce n'est pas un phénomène propre au Québec, mais international. Les données du Hamas sont rarement vérifiées, pourtant elles devraient l'être avant toute diffusion. En 2023, j'étais à Ottawa, après l'explosion dans un hôpital de Gaza. On a d'abord accusé Israël, avant d'apprendre plus tard qu'il s'agissait d'une roquette du Jihad islamique qui avait atterri sur le stationnement de l'hôpital. Même le Premier ministre Trudeau a com-

mencé par dénoncer Tsahal sans vérifier. La désinformation nourrit la haine et alimente les attaques contre nos hôpitaux et nos écoles.

L'antisémitisme gagne aussi les campus universitaires. Vous qui connaissez les étudiants juifs en médecine, quelle est la réalité aujourd'hui ? Certains envisagent-ils de partir étudier ailleurs, voire de quitter le Québec ?

À ma connaissance, les étudiants juifs ne souhaitent pas quitter leur campus. Ils ont travaillé dur pour entrer dans ces facultés, et je ne pense pas qu'à mi-parcours ils veuillent partir étudier ailleurs. En revanche, je crois qu'ils souffrent du climat parfois hostile entretenu par certains étudiants, collègues ou futurs collègues. J'ai constaté que le fait d'avoir été marqués par le 7 Octobre les a rendus plus fiers de leur identité juive, plus solidaires les uns envers les autres et plus attachés à leur communauté.

Notre association a beaucoup travaillé pour les soutenir : leur parler, connaître leur situation et même recueillir leurs plaintes, qu'ils préfèrent



Doctor Lior Bibas

>> parfois nous adresser, craignant certaines escalades et leurs répercussions. Nous respectons leurs choix et restons à leur écoute pour les accompagner dans les périodes difficiles ou les aider dans leurs démarches s'ils souhaitent déposer une plainte officielle. Nous sommes toujours présents pour les étudiants dans les facultés où surviennent certains incidents isolés. Notre objectif est de les soutenir, de les aider à réussir leurs études et de les accompagner tout au long de leur parcours.

En mai dernier, vous aviez contacté et fait parvenir certaines demandes aux facultés de médecine suite à des discours antisémites sur le groupe *Discord* tenus par certains futurs étudiants en admission dans une faculté de médecine du Québec. Avez-vous eu des réponses, des réactions ?

Nous avons rencontré les doyens des facultés de médecine et le Collège des Médecins, qui nous ont dit être au courant de ces incidents. Il nous ont assuré qu'il n'y a pas de place pour la haine dans les universités, qu'ils condamnent les propos inappropriés. Nous attendons une nouvelle rencontre suite à cette publication sur le groupe *Discord* qui devrait avoir lieu au début de l'automne. Nous voulons envisager avec eux des solutions qui permettraient d'éviter que des personnes qui profèrent des discours antisémites ne soient pas admises en faculté de médecine. Mais au-delà de ces mesures préventives, comment s'assurer que la relève médicale québécoise soit sensibilisée aux problèmes de l'antisémitisme ? Ou

encore informée de l'histoire des Juifs au Québec, qui fait partie du patrimoine québécois. Cela nous paraît primordial. Nous savons que c'est un travail de longue haleine et que cela ne va pas se faire en quelques jours, mais c'est un but que nous désirons atteindre : faire disparaître l'antisémitisme des facultés de médecine du Québec.

Au-delà des facultés de médecine, n'est-ce pas l'affaire du gouvernement, des autorités, des associations... de chaque québécois ?

En 2024, nous avons rencontré des membres du cabinet du ministère de la Santé, du ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, et du secrétariat à la Lutte contre le racisme. Notre message principal était de rapporter les témoignages, les expériences que certains de nos membres ont vécues depuis le 7 octobre 2023. Concernant les hôpitaux, nous avons insisté sur le fait qu'il fallait faire respecter le principe de neutralité politique. Au Québec, il serait inapproprié d'importer des conflits internationaux dans le milieu médical où se côtoient et sont traitées des personnes de nationalités, d'origines ou de religions différentes. On nous a signalé, par exemple, que certains résidents portant des emblèmes pro-palestiniens travaillent à l'hôpital et interagissent avec des patients juifs ou des parents juifs d'enfants hospitalisés. Ils ne sont pas forcément malveillants, mais il faut comprendre que chaque patient a droit à des soins sécuritaires mais aussi confortables dans le respect de ses valeurs et du principe de neutralité politique. Les drapeaux palestiniens ou israéliens n'ont pas leur place dans le réseau québécois. Seuls les drapeaux canadiens et québécois devraient y



**Jun 2024.
Voyage en Israël.
Une mission en
partenariat avec
le CJA.**

être présents et portés par les professionnels de la santé. Cette règle vaut pour toutes les guerres dans le monde.

Êtes-vous en relation avec le ministère de la Santé du Québec ?

Nous n'avons pas rencontré personnellement le ministre de la Santé, M. Christian Dubé, mais des membres de son cabinet, qui nous ont semblé réceptifs et très sensibles aux problèmes rencontrés dans le milieu de la santé, où l'antisémitisme n'a pas sa place. Ils ont approuvé notre discours sur la neutralité politique, reflet des valeurs de la laïcité québécoise. Nos messages ont ainsi été transmis jusqu'au ministre lui-même. En revanche, des mesures concrètes ont-elles été prises depuis ? Je n'ai aucune information.

En tant que président d'une association de médecins juifs, avez-vous des contacts ou des échanges avec d'autres organisations de médecins au Canada, ou, en tant qu'association, vous sentez-vous isolé ?

Depuis notre création, juste après les événements du 7 octobre 2023, nous nous sommes concentrés sur les dossiers concernant nos membres. Nous aimerions par la suite établir des contacts avec d'autres associations médicales, culturelles, religieuses, etc. Mais, d'un autre côté, personne ne nous a contactés depuis près de deux ans d'existence.

L'association mène-t-elle d'autres activités ?

Nous avons envoyé deux délégations en Israël, en juin 2024 et en mai 2025, avec une quinzaine de nos membres à chaque voyage. Nous avons rencontré des survivants des événements du 7 Octobre, des soldats en réadaptation, des parents d'otages ainsi que le chef du corps médical de Tshal, qui nous a expliqué le déroulement de la prise en charge des blessés, etc. Sans oublier le responsable du Bureau du Québec à Tel-Aviv. Nous avons beaucoup échangé avec des professionnels de la santé, notamment dans les hôpitaux, afin de créer des liens entre eux et l'AMJQ. Nous avons écouté leurs



témoignages, admiré leur résilience et découvert leurs innovations après les attaques terroristes, car beaucoup de choses ont changé. Bien entendu, la francophonie est très développée en Israël, ne serait-ce que par le nombre important de Français qui y habitent.

Souhaitez-vous partager un dernier message ?

Je reste optimiste pour l'avenir. Nous devons prendre notre place, défendre nos intérêts et nos valeurs, car nous faisons partie intégrante de la société québécoise. Tel est l'objectif de l'AMJQ. Ensemble, les membres de notre association soignent plus d'un million de patients chaque année, ce qui démontre l'importance de notre rôle et de notre travail dans le système de santé au Québec. ■





Le Temple de la rue Buffault

Le trésor HISPANO- PORTUGAIS de Paris

Présent depuis plusieurs siècles à travers le monde, le rite hispano-portugais s'est implanté dans des villes comme Montréal, New York, Londres, Amsterdam, Paris, Florence, Bordeaux, Aruba, Panama... Une trentaine de synagogues se revendiquent de rite ou d'origine hispano-portugaise, certaines portant explicitement le nom de "Spanish and Portuguese". D'autres, comme le Temple de la rue Buffault à Paris, possèdent une identité liée à leur histoire et aux pays qui les ont accueillies. C'est l'histoire de cette synagogue parisienne que nous vous invitons à découvrir.

..... □ *David Benamou*

Expulsés de Paris en 1182 par le roi Philippe Auguste, les Juifs n'y revinrent qu'après la Révolution (1789). Les premiers à revenir furent les Séfarades hispano-portugais (certaines familles avaient cependant réussi à s'installer plus tôt). Les Ashkénazes d'Alsace et de Lorraine suivirent rapidement. Il fallut attendre l'émancipation des Juifs de France en 1791 pour qu'ils puissent s'installer légalement où ils le souhaitaient. À cette époque, la grande majorité des Juifs français vivait dans l'Est du pays (plus de 50 %, principalement des Juifs ashkénazes). Le reste était concentré dans les communautés hispano-portugaises du Sud-Ouest (comme Bordeaux et Bayonne) et du Sud-Est dans le Comtat Venaissin et la région d'Avignon (des Juifs apparentés aux Séfarades). En 1808, **Napoléon I^{er}** créa le Consistoire israélite de France dans le but d'organiser et d'administrer le culte juif en France. À cette époque, on ne comptait encore qu'environ 3 000 Juifs à Paris.

Une tentative d'unification des rites

Au XIX^e siècle, la communauté juive de France cherche à unifier ses pratiques religieuses. Une commission est créée en 1865 pour développer un rite spécifiquement français, surnommé "Tsofat" ("France" en hébreu) destiné à remplacer les traditions allemandes et portugaises. Ce nouveau rite doit être inauguré à l'ouverture de la future synagogue de la rue de la Victoire, alors en construction. Ce projet se heurte à un obstacle majeur : les conclusions de la commission ne satisfont pas la communauté hispano-portugaise, qui craint de perdre sa spécificité culturelle et religieuse. Le Consistoire israélite de Paris décide finalement de maintenir le rite allemand pour la Grande Synagogue de la rue de la Victoire.

Création du Temple Hispano Portugais de la rue Buffault

En réaction, la communauté portugaise vexée par cette décision, choisit de construire sa propre synagogue séfarade dans le même quartier et avec une architecture similaire ! Le coût de ce projet est si élevé que, malgré de nombreux dons, sa réalisation reste incertaine jusqu'à l'intervention de Daniel Iffla Osiris, qui permet de le mener à bien. Grand financier, mé-

cène et philanthrope juif d'origine séfarade, issu d'une famille marocaine installée à Bordeaux, il finance aussi d'autres synagogues, des hôpitaux, des écoles et autres monuments commémoratifs. Le Temple est inauguré le 3 septembre 1877 en présence de nombreuses personnalités comme le propriétaire des lieux Daniel Iffla Osiris, le grand Rabbin de France Zadoc Kahn, les membres du Consistoire de Paris mais aussi le Baron Alphonse de Rothchild, le Baron Gustave de Rothchild, le Sénateur Adolphe Crémieux, etc. Bien qu'indépendante la synagogue reconnaît l'autorité du Grand Rabbin de France et du Consistoire de Paris. Le monument de la rue Buffault est un chef-d'œuvre, conçu par Stanislas Ferrand, l'un des grands maîtres du Paris architectural du XIX^e siècle. La population juive s'élève alors à 30 000 personnes à Paris. En 1905, la loi de séparation des Églises et de l'État interdit tout financement public des cultes et impose que les lieux de culte soient gérés par des associations culturelles ou, pour le judaïsme français, par le Consistoire israélite. Comme la synagogue Buffault était jusqu'alors privée, elle est cédée au Consistoire Israélite de Paris pour garantir sa pérennité et son fonctionnement légal dans le cadre républicain.

La pérennité du rite hispano-portugais

En échange, la cession prévoit que le culte selon le rite hispano-portugais, dit "séphardi" (et non sefaradi), sera assuré perpétuellement dans le Temple, et que son administration sera confiée à une commission spéciale appartenant à ce rite. Il est même stipulé : « *Aucune administration israélite présente, ou future, ne pourra modifier ou atténuer sous aucun prétexte ce qui concerne le rituel...* » Aujourd'hui, les descendants de ces familles sont rares, pour ne pas dire inexistantes. Les fidèles sont majoritairement des Juifs originaires d'Afrique du Nord. Ils sont les nouveaux gardiens de la tradition hispano-portugaise toujours en vigueur. Lors d'un prochain passage à Paris, venez visiter ce trésor, et si vous montez à la Torah, ne soyez pas étonné si l'on vous appelle « hermano » (frère) et que l'on vous souhaite « Y Muchos Años de Buena Vida y Sanidad » — une longue vie et une bonne santé ! Amen. ■





עשרת ימי תשובה

Les 10 jours de PÉNITENCE

Rav Betsalel Soto

Les Dix Jours de Repentance, de Roch Hachana à Yom Kippour, représentent l'une des périodes les plus spirituellement significatives du calendrier juif. Durant ce temps sacré, la tradition juive enseigne que le jugement divin peut être tenu en suspens, offrant une occasion unique de réflexion et de renouveau. Dans cet esprit, le rabbin Soto partage ses réflexions.

Aleinu : Certains trouvent paradoxal, voire anachronique, le fait que Roch Hachana, qui est le jour du jugement où D-ieu évalue les actions de chacun, soit célébré 10 jours avant Kippour, jour des expiations, pendant lequel nous demandons à être pardonnés.

Rabbin Betsalel Soto: En effet, la logique aurait voulu que Kippour le « jour du grand pardon » précède Roch Hachana « le jour du jugement ». Cependant, si on fait l'analyse de ce que représente fondamentalement la Téchouva, on peut mieux cerner pourquoi ce calendrier. La Téchouva est un cadeau du ciel pour le peuple d'Israël. Une personne qui a fauté en allant à l'encontre des commandements divins peut se présenter le jour de Yom Kippour pour faire Téchouva, se repentir sincèrement, regretter pleinement ses méfaits. Non seulement Hachem lui pardonnera, mais il est possible que ses méfaits puissent devenir des mitsvot! Oui, certaines mauvaises actions dont la personne est responsable et « coupable » peuvent

se transformer en mérites. La Guémara nous explique que le jour de Roch Hachana, l'ensemble de l'humanité est jugé et sera fixé pour chacun d'entre nous de tout ce qui constituera l'année à venir : la vie, la santé, la richesse, etc. Nous sommes jugés sur les éléments qui sont d'ordre matériel et physique. La Guémara précise, au nom de Rabbi Yo'hanan, que le jour de Roch Hachana, il y a trois livres qui sont ouverts : le livre des Tsadikim (les justes), le livre de ceux qui ne le sont pas du tout et le livre des Bénonim. Ces derniers, que l'on peut traduire par des personnes « intermédiaires », représentent la plupart d'entre nous, souvent tiraillés entre faire de bonnes actions ou pas... Chacun à son niveau essayant de faire pencher la balance du côté des mitsvot. Le jour de Roch Hachana, quand une personne est jugée par le Créateur, et qu'elle se trouve dans cette catégorie de Bénoni, Hakadoch Baroukh Hou lui accorde un sursis et la possibilité d'inverser la tendance. Ainsi, chacune des actions qu'elle va entreprendre à partir de Roch Hachana jusqu'à

Des travaux de rénovation sous la supervision de **Ron Mashaal** ont été entrepris grâce à la générosité de **Zuki Lawi** et de **Ronald Reuben** les **Parnassim** du dernier Gala du Beit Hamidrash : peinture, moquette, luminaires, petite cuisine, nouveau mobilier (grande table de réunion, nouvelles chaises)... Les cours du jeudi soir remportent un franc succès et on compte environ 20 personnes chaque semaine pour suivre les cours du Rav Soto qui nous confie : « *Après les fêtes de Tichri, nous espérons avec l'aide d'Hachem créer d'autres chiourim !* » Nul doute que cette rénovation matérielle sera suivie d'une autre plus spirituelle... Venez nombreux !

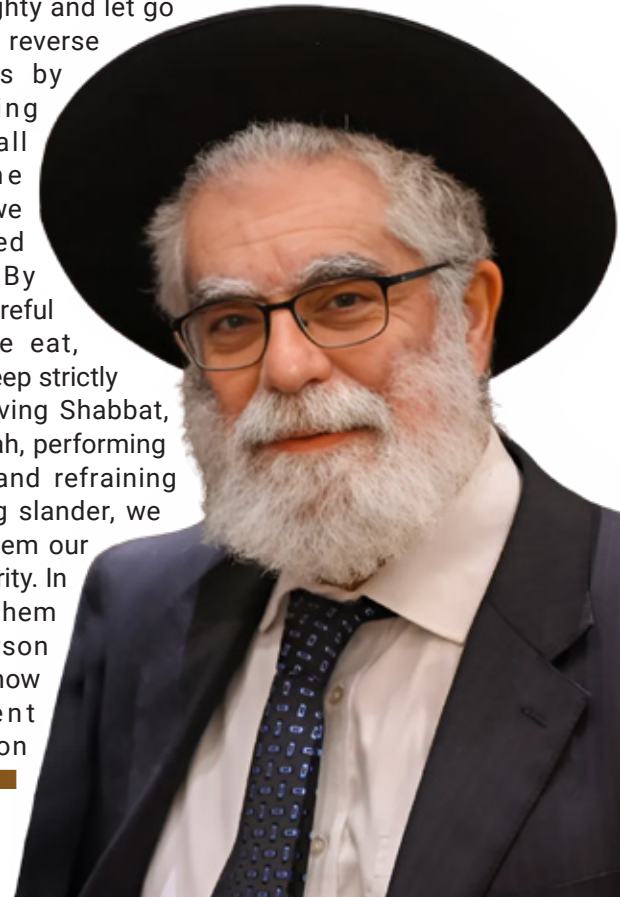
Yom Kippour, où le verdict final sera énoncé, aura la possibilité de faire basculer la balance du côté des mérites : faire en sorte que cette personne qui aurait pu être en mauvaise posture se retrouve complètement « innocente ». De fait, chaque petite mitsva, y compris celle qui nous semble facile, peut changer le destin d'une personne. C'est la raison pour laquelle il fallait que Roch Hachana précède Yom Kippour pour offrir l'opportunité aux gens, leur donner le privilège de réaliser que pendant la période qui sépare ces deux fêtes, leurs actions sont primordiales et qu'il est toujours temps d'agir pour obtenir un verdict final positif à Yom Kippour. Rabbi Akiva dans le Talmud (Traité Avot) proclame : « *Ashrékhem Israel! Mi métaher etkhem? Avikhem shé-ba-chamayim* » soit : « Heureux êtes-vous, Israël ! Devant qui vous purifiez-vous et qui vous purifie ? Votre Père qui est dans les cieux ! » La signification est claire, c'est Hachem qui nous purifie, notamment le jour de Yom Kippour. Grâce aux 10 jours de pénitence, chaque action, chaque petit pas en avant que nous faisons vers notre Créateur, peut transformer notre destinée. Il s'agit donc d'un privilège, voire d'un vrai miracle, que la Téchouva permet et qui n'est possible que dans la mesure où Roch Hachana précède Yom Kippour. Fort de ce pouvoir, de ce cadeau du Ciel qui est entre nos mains, sachons utiliser ces 10 jours, agissons pour obtenir une année 5786 à la hauteur de nos attentes matérielles et spirituelles.

So what specific messages and actions should we focus on and undertake during these 10 days to prepare ourselves spiritually for Yom Kippur?

During the Ten Days of Repentance, a person must recognize that the scales are now in balance. It is upon each of us to make sure that we tilt the scales to the right side. One should make a conscious effort to improve the way they observe the mitzvot, to be more meticulous, and to give more Tzedakah. And we know how important Tzedakah is, as we say in the prayers of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur: "*u'teshuva, u'tefila, u'tzedakah ma'avirin et ro'ah hagezerah*", "Repentance, prayer and charity avert the evil of the decree". Tzedakah has the potential

to reverse a decree against a person. That is why, during these days, every act of Tzedakah carries the utmost weight, for it has a direct impact on the person's life for the year to come. We must keep in mind that on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, HaKadosh Baruch Hu judges each of us "*Asher hu sham* – according to the way we present ourselves before Him on that very day".

Even though the Almighty knows that in a month, two months, or three months a person may sin again, if at that very moment one is sincere, authentic, and truthful before G-od—truly desiring from the depths of the heart to reconnect with Him—then Hashem will accept that person's Teshuvah. He will accept the prayers, respond to the pleas and grant blessings for the year to come. On that very day, we have the potential to reconnect with the Almighty and let go of the past, to reverse our missteps by demonstrating through small but genuine actions that we are committed to change. By being more careful with what we eat, ensuring we keep strictly kosher, observing Shabbat, giving Tzedakah, performing good deeds and refraining from speaking slander, we prove to Hashem our renewed sincerity. In this way, Hashem judges a person according to how they present themselves on that very day. ■



Rav Betsalel Soto



Regarding the festival of Sukkot, the Torah tells us: "Vesamahta behagekha" — You shall rejoice on your Festival. But can anyone truly be commanded to feel joy? After all, emotions aren't something we can just switch on at will. How do we understand this mitzvah to rejoice on Sukkot? And how can this message speak to those who face difficult lives, with financial or family struggles, for whom joy may seem distant or difficult to feel, to experience? A thoughtful response from Rabbi David Sebbag.

THERE ARE THREE HOLIDAYS: Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot. Pesach is called Zman Herutenu (in the Amida, the Kiddush, etc.), which means the Festival of Freedom. For Shavuot, it is referred to as Matan Toratenu, the time of receiving the Torah. However, we only received the Ten Commandments at Har Sinai, and we did not receive the entire Torah. That's why Moshe Rabenu went up to Har Sinai. When it comes to Sukkot, we have something different: we say Zman Simchatenu, the time of being happy! On Pesach, we received our freedom, which makes us very happy!

On Shavuot, we receive the Torah, so we can also be very happy! What greater joy is there than receiving the Torah? It should also be called Zman Simchatenu! So why, then, is Sukkot alone called the season of our joy? We need to understand what Sukkot is about. It represents the Clouds of Glory that protected the Jewish people when they were in the Midbar (desert). These clouds symbolize the Sukkah. This is a simple explanation: the People of Israel lived in the Sukkah for 40 years and were protected. So, what is real simcha? The Talmud states that if you never saw the "water

libation" in the Bet HaMikdash, you have never seen simcha. This simcha was the highest of all simchot, and it happened during Sukkot. That simcha was the highest of all smachot! So why do we feel joy? The real joy, of course, is found during Sukkot, when HaKadosh Baruch Hu communicates this to us. There is a distinct joy in engaging in such activities. However, the true elevation of water represents the joy we are discussing. This joy is the essence of Simchat Beit HaShoevah, which is celebrated during Sukkot, the season of our joy (Zman Simchatenu). However, how one can experience such joy in the face of personal struggles or an unhappy life. This is indeed a challenging question, as it delves into sensitive psychological aspects that require careful consideration. I would like to provide an example. On Simchat Torah, the events of October 7 occurred. At that time, I was a Rabbi in New York, and I had synagogue members whose sons were called in the morning to go to the airport and fly to Israel for military service. This situation took place during the celebration of Simchat Torah In Israel...

It is quite fascinating to recognize that when we examine our struggles, we have the option to perceive them through the lens of pain and anger or to approach them with acceptance and simplicity. How do we navigate this? When individuals face struggles, do we truly understand the reasons behind these challenges in our lives? Everything in this world serves as a Tikun, a process of "spiritual repair".

The story of the Baal Shem Tov

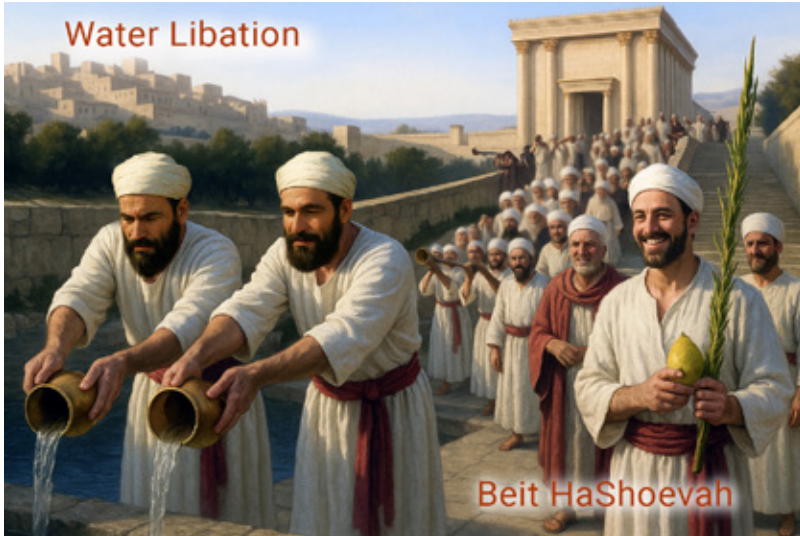
Let me tell you a beautiful story of the Baal Shem Tov. A couple who had married had no children. So they went to the Baal Shem Tov and said, "Rebbe, we need a blessing." The Baal Shem Tov replied, "You should be rich." And indeed, the couple became wealthy. They grew richer and richer—unbelievably rich—but still had no children.

The husband returned to the Baal Shem Tov and said, "Rebbe, I don't care about money. I want a child—someone who will say Kaddish for us after 120 years." Once again, the Baal Shem Tov answered, "You should be rich." And again... they became even wealthier. Finally, the couple went back to the Baal Shem Tov, this time insisting, "We are not leaving your

study until you give us a blessing for a child. We want a child!" The Baal Shem Tov said, "I will give you a blessing for a child—but you must promise to accept this child, no matter what happens. You must accept the child completely." The wealthy couple, blessed by the Baal Shem Tov with a son, were told to accept him no matter what. The boy grew up silent—never speaking a word. At his Bar Mitzvah, when he still had not spoken, two great rabbis debated whether something was kosher or not. Suddenly, he stood, banged the table, and declared, "Yes, it's kosher!"—then fell and died. Shattered, the parents returned to the Baal Shem Tov, who explained: "You were not destined to have children. But a great rabbi's soul needed a tikkun (spiritual rectification). In his lifetime, a poor woman came to him with her only chicken, asking if it was kosher. He was busy and did not take the time to check it carefully. Choosing the quickest response, he said, "Not kosher." It was, in fact, kosher—but the woman, who had nothing else to eat, went home hungry and died of starvation. His soul returned in your son only to correct that mistake, to say "kosher"! Once his mission was complete, he could rest in peace. Every trial has a purpose.



Rabbi David Sebbag



fulfil the Torah's commandment to be joyful. Refusing to be happy on Sukkot because of our problems is, in a sense, selfish – it places our feelings above what God asks of us. There is a certain simcha on Yom Tov that nothing can break, no matter what a person goes through. It can be hard, but that joy remains within you. Personally, when I take the Lulav and shake it, when I sit in the Sukkah with friends and family and we sing, I feel something – a joy that runs through my veins. Every year.

When G-od says to be happy, be happy. If you're able to overcome your struggles and be happy, you've done 50% of your "battle". You can either sit there and destroy yourself in misery, or you can be besimcha and overcome the struggle with simcha. A smile, a bit of joy, is like a broken line that makes everything okay. When you smile, you break the line – and it makes everything better. It will; it has to. Even Tzadikim strive to reach this level. So it's hard to go through such struggle, but when you know that the reason you're happy is because G-od asks it of you, it's a different story. That's my philosophy, that's my understanding: don't be selfish! To be besimcha on Sukkot is a Torah commandment! ■

>> We don't always know why people suffer, and perhaps some struggles are necessary. But what will we do – sit and mope, or choose to be besameach (joyful)? There is something profound about being joyful even amid pain: it's as if Hashem sees us dance despite our troubles and rejoices. That's remarkable. If we can thank Hashem for hardship – difficult as that is – imagine how we will respond when He blesses us with good. Sukkot is Zman Simchatenu, the time of our joy. Even if we face personal difficulties, if we accept that they serve a divine purpose, we must still



T I D A N

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HAZAN ET BAAL KORÉ

La combinaison parfaite ?



BENJAMIN HARROUCH, *Benji* comme on aime l'appeler affectueusement, occupe la fonction de Hazan chéni, mais également celle de *Baal Koré*, c'est-à-dire de "lecteur de la Torah" ou "Torah Reader" en anglais. Mais la traduction littérale de Baal Koré est "maître de lecture" : il s'agit en effet d'une véritable maîtrise, précise, particulière et primordiale ! Cela implique une connaissance parfaite de la cantillation, une prononciation exacte des mots, et ce, face à une page de parchemin où ne figurent ni voyelles, ni ponctuation, ni signes de notation musicale pour la mélodie. Être Baal Koré est un honneur et une immense responsabilité au sein de la communauté, car une erreur de lecture peut invalider la mitsva de l'écoute de la Torah pour tous les fidèles présents. La tradition nous enseigne que pendant la prière, nous parlons à D-ieu, mais lorsque vient la lecture de la Torah, on se tait pour écouter la parole d'Hachem.

Benji a une histoire étroitement liée à la Spanish & Portuguese. À l'âge de 7 ans, il intègre la chorale de la congrégation et rejoint son frère Dove, aujourd'hui devenu rabbin du Olami Center. Il a toujours fréquenté la congrégation et, au fil des ans, a parfaitement maîtrisé le répertoire ainsi que les airs de la liturgie de la S&P pour Chabbat et les jours de Fête. Il précise : « Mon oncle, notre cher Cantor Dany Benlolo, m'a beaucoup inspiré. Nous étions nombreux à vouloir lui ressembler, à savoir chanter comme lui ! Il a été mon premier mentor, sans oublier mon grand-père Moché Benlolo Z'L. Pour ma formation, je dois aussi mentionner le chef de la chorale Yitzhak Betan, qui nous a enseigné les rudiments pour bien répondre et participer aux prières, mais aussi les techniques pour bien ouvrir la bouche, prononcer les mots correctement, etc. »

Plus tard, Benji déménage à Côte Saint-Luc. Il participe alors aux offices à Bet-Rambam avec le rabbin Lévi, et le Hazan Shimon Sibony, aujourd'hui installé en Israël et qui est devenu un Hazan et un chanteur de renommée internationale. « Il m'a beaucoup inspiré. Je me suis dit : il est

le Hazan, alors je serai le Baal Koré ! Shimon Sibony, très exigeant et professionnel, m'a appris notamment à bien différencier la prononciation de certaines lettres (comme Khaf et Khet) ou à être irréprochable sur la cantillation et la prononciation lors de la lecture de la Paracha. » Benji a également une expérience acquise aux É.-U. : « Pendant pratiquement 15 ans, avec mon ami d'enfance Ariel Krispine (Hazan à la S&P pendant quelques années), nous avons été engagés en Floride pour animer les offices des grandes Fêtes de Tichri : prières et lecture de la Torah. » Beaucoup de Hazanim maîtrisent encore le rite de la Spanish and Portuguese ? « Nous sommes une poignée à Montréal à connaître toute la liturgie et les chants de la S&P : le Cantor Benlolo, le rabbin Hazan Yéhouda Abitan (qui vit désormais en Israël et avec qui j'ai aussi beaucoup appris), Ariel Krispine, et les membres de la chorale qui perpétuent aussi certains airs initiés ou revisités par le regretté Hazan Salomon Amzallag (connus aussi sous le nom de Samy El Maghribi). »

Alors Hazan et Baal Koré, la combinaison parfaite ? « Je suis Hazan de formation, mais mon expertise est vraiment la lecture de la Torah. J'ai commencé à pratiquer à l'âge de 13 ans notamment grâce à Abraham Ifergan (au Rabbinat), qui nous encourageait à lire, à apprendre, à répéter, à comprendre, à faire des efforts... Et j'ai continué à apprendre sans cesse ! Sans relâche ! Aujourd'hui, je révise la Paracha une ou deux fois dans la semaine avant de la lire le Chabbat. Sur la Téva, il y a toujours une personne à ma gauche (souvent le Cantor Benlolo) qui, à l'aide de signes, peut m'aider si j'oublie un air ou si je commets une erreur de prononciation lors de la lecture. On ne sait jamais ! » ■



Le Kuzari

La recherche du divin

Au XII^e siècle, Yéhouda Halévi écrit "Le Kuzari" pour défendre le judaïsme face aux attaques philosophiques de son époque. S'inspirant de la conversion historique des Khazars au judaïsme, cette œuvre magistrale résonne aujourd'hui avec une acuité particulière, alors que le judaïsme fait à nouveau l'objet d'attaques renouvelées.

.....□ *Edmond Elbaz*

CE GRAND CLASSIQUE DE LA LITTÉRATURE JUIVE, que Rabbi Juda Halevi acheva au terme de sa vie, est une défense du judaïsme au cœur d'une Espagne médiévale où l'islam, le christianisme et la philosophie se disputent la prépondérance. Intitulé *Apologie de la religion méprisée* (Kitab al-Khazari) et publié en français par les Éditions Verdier, cet ouvrage n'est pas seulement une œuvre de controverse religieuse, mais un vibrant plaidoyer pour l'âme juive, son rapport à Dieu, à la tradition et à la vérité révélée.

Pour mieux comprendre l'impact de ce livre, il est essentiel de connaître son auteur et le contexte dans lequel il a été écrit. Il y a plusieurs années, cet ouvrage m'a été offert par l'Alliance israélite universelle. Ce don, loin d'être anodin, m'a ouvert à une lecture exigeante, une lecture qui demande attention et réflexion. Les pages, aujourd'hui jaunies par le temps, portent les marques de mes nombreuses lectures. Certaines sont cornées, discrètement pliées, comme autant de rappels silencieux d'un passage marquant, d'une pensée à revisiter.

Par exemple, les sections traitant des dialogues entre le rabbin et le roi khazar m'ont particulièrement interpellé, car elles illustrent la profondeur de la réflexion spirituelle et intellectuelle de Halevi. Ces marques sont les témoins d'un dialogue intérieur constant, nourri par les échanges profonds entre un prêtre, un imam et un rabbin, mais aussi par la voix singulière de Rabbi Yéhouda Halevi, tendue entre foi et raison. Ce livre, toujours à portée de main sur mon étagère, continu de m'interpeller. Il émane de ses pages une sagesse intemporelle, une force tranquille qui dépasse les dogmes. Bien plus qu'un simple ouvrage, c'est une ode aux valeurs humaines universelles, portées ici à travers le prisme du judaïsme. Son auteur, Rabbi Yéhouda Halevi (1075-1141), fut poète, philosophe et médecin. Il représentait l'une des grandes figures du judaïsme médiéval. Il vécut en Andalousie à une époque de grande effervescence intellectuelle et religieuse.



Rabbi Yéhouda Halévi

Dans *L'Apologie de la religion méprisée*, Halevi met en scène un roi khazar en quête de la vraie religion, interrogeant tour à tour un chrétien, un musulman, un philosophe, puis un rabbin. Ce dernier finit par le convaincre que la révélation, telle qu'exprimée dans la Torah et vécue par le peuple juif, est supérieure à la raison seule. Ce livre, rédigé en arabe puis traduit à travers les siècles, se distingue par la clarté de son argumentation, la beauté de son style et l'équilibre entre spiritualité et rigueur intellectuelle. Halevi y célèbre une foi incarnée, vécue collectivement et historiquement, et s'élève contre l'idée d'un D-ieu réduit à une abstraction philosophique. Dans une époque où les crispations identitaires gagnent du terrain, ce livre offre un contrepoin salubre. Il nous rappelle que la foi peut être un levier de paix, de dialogue et d'humanité.

Shanah Tova Oumétouka. **שנה טובה ומתוקה**

Edmond Elbaz, B.Sc, M.Ed
Président honoraire
Officier des Arts et des Lettres de France

Surnommé le "Chantre de Sion" (1075-1141) Yéhouda Halévi était un rabbin, philosophe, médecin et poète séfearde né à Tudela (Espagne). Auteur du célèbre ouvrage "Le Kuzari", Halévi composa également près de 800 poèmes, dont le fameux chant "Tsion Halo Tichali" (ציון הלא תשאלי) - "Sion, ne demandes-tu pas..." - qu'il aurait écrit en contemplant le Mont du Temple à Jérusalem. Il est considéré comme l'un des plus grands poètes juifs du Moyen Âge et une figure importante de la philosophie hébraïque.

Après avoir exercé la médecine à Tolède et Cordoue, il mourut vers 1141 en Égypte ou lors d'un voyage vers la Terre sainte. Selon une autre version largement transmise, il serait mort à Jérusalem, tué par un cavalier alors qu'il récitait un poème face aux murailles de la ville. Aucune de ces hypothèses n'a pu être confirmée de manière définitive, et sa tombe n'a jamais été retrouvée.

Renewal and Resilience at Rosh Hashanah

As we approach Rosh Hashanah, we carry with us the memory of a difficult year. The events of October 7 left an indelible mark on our hearts. Yet in the rhythm of the Jewish calendar, we are reminded that even after hardship, the world renews itself. Rosh Hashanah, the Head of the Year, is not only a time for reflection, but for hope. The shofar's sound is a call not only to awaken, but to rebuild — gently, steadily, together.

"Let the year and its curses end; let the year and its blessings begin." Our traditional Sephardic blessing at the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation. To all of Am Yisrael — in Israel and around the world — may this be a year of healing, of community, and of sweet beginnings. Shanah Tovah u'Metukah — a good and sweet year to you and your loved ones B.H. *Edmond Elbaz, B.Sc, M.Ed - Président honoraire - Officier des Arts et des Lettres de France.*

Article dédié à Zouki Levy un homme de foi, de générosité et d'intégrité toujours disponible pour répondre à autrui.

ESHET HAYIL & HATANIM 5786



The Religious Services Committee of the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue is proud to nominate our Eshet Hayil and Hatanim for the coming New Year 5786. On behalf of the Executive, the Board of Trustees, and the Trust Officers, we wish to congratulate them and wish them a big Mazal Tov.

GILDA ABDULEZER ESHET HAYIL

Born in Bagdad, Iraq, I was a year old when my parents were fortunate to obtain passports and emigrate to Montreal at a time when Jews could leave without too much hardship. Growing up in a loving home, my parents always kept the beautiful traditions of Iraq.

Tradition was very important in our lives, with Shabbat kiddush on Friday night and Saturday lunch always sung in the melodious Iraqi way. The High Holidays were also always a special time, with family gatherings, delicious meals, and memories of my precious grandmother encouraging us to wear new clothes of light colours to welcome the New Year. My late father, Anwar Shahin (z"l), was passionate about maintaining the Iraqi customs for the High Holidays, and to this day, I still hear his voice singing the tunes and calling up the many members of our community when it was their turn to have an Aliyah on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. The Spanish & Portuguese synagogue has always been our spiritual home. My husband Morris served on the Board & Executive for many years and was



אשת חיל

President from 1999-2002. Our three children had their Bar/Bat mitzvahs at the Spanish and we feel blessed to have held the Briss of our first grandson there too. Our S&P Synagogue is very special, the oldest synagogue in Canada and I am truly honoured to have been chosen this year as the Eshet Hayil. I am grateful to have been, and continue to be, an

active layperson volunteering for many organizations, and to have worked as a community professional at Israel Bonds, JNF, and now the Jewish General Hospital. I have a passion for Israel and our Montreal Jewish community and feel that it is a privilege to serve our community in any way. With the numerous challenges facing the Jewish community in the world today, strengthening Jewish identity through connections to our Synagogue is one very important component that can help to reinforce support for our beloved homeland of Israel. Every one of us should feel proud of being part of our wonderful Jewish community, here at the Spanish in Montreal, in Israel and all over the world.



חתן תורה

DAN SEQUERRA - HATAN TORAH

Originaire de Casablanca (Maroc), Dan Sequerra a pris la décision en 1982 de s'installer au Canada pour y poursuivre ses études supérieures. Cette migration était motivée par la recherche d'un environnement offrant davantage de sécurité et de liberté d'expression que son pays natal ne semblait pouvoir garantir à l'époque.

À Montréal, il rencontre Ann-Margaret Malka, qui deviendra son épouse en 1986. Leur union sera couronnée, Baroukh Hachem, par la naissance de trois enfants, Olivier/Reuven, Cedric/Haim et Jade/Myriam. Diplômé universitaire, il oriente sa carrière professionnelle vers le secteur immobilier, collaborant d'abord avec plusieurs entreprises de renom avant de franchir le pas de l'entrepreneuriat. Il fonde sa propre société spécialisée dans l'immobilier commercial, développant une expertise pointue dans la gestion d'immeubles, les acquisitions et le développement de projets commerciaux. Aujourd'hui, aux côtés d'Ann-Margaret, il savoure son rôle de jeune grand-père auprès de leurs petits-enfants qui illuminent leur quotidien : Zoe/Sarah, Liam/Asher, Ava-Léa, Sadie/Noa et Mia/Sarah, qu'Hachem les protège.

Son engagement au sein de la Spanish & Portuguese témoigne d'une fidélité remarquable : plus de trois décennies de service, que ce soit au conseil d'administration ou dans diverses activités liées à la congrégation.

Cette institution représente bien plus qu'un simple lieu de culte pour sa famille : elle constitue une source de fierté profonde et un pilier de leur identité communautaire. Amateur de pêche sportive, il a progressivement délaissé cette passion au profit du golf, sport qui occupe désormais une place privilégiée dans ses loisirs.

Ceux qui le côtoient décrivent Dan comme un homme au caractère affable, perpétuellement souriant, d'une générosité naturelle et animé d'un optimisme communicatif qui marque tous ses interlocuteurs. Si vous venez tôt les jours de fêtes ou le Shabbat, vous aurez la possibilité de l'écouter participer à l'office alors qu'il entonne la lecture chantée de Mizmorim ou de la prière du Chéma !



ALBERT MANN HATAN BERESHIT

Albert Mann est né à Beyrouth. L'entreprise familiale travaillait avec le Canada, ce qui l'a naturellement conduit à immigrer à Montréal en 1967. Avec quelques jeunes Libanais, il rejoint les offices des Irakiens pour les grandes fêtes, avant de devenir membre de la Spanish & Portuguese en

1968, où le rabbin Franck célèbre son mariage. En 1976, avec l'arrivée à Montréal des Juifs libanais fuyant la guerre civile, il participe à la création de la congrégation **Maghen Abraham** de Montréal, dont il a été président pendant plusieurs années au début des années 80, à une époque où cette communauté était déjà présente dans les locaux de la S&P. Après les travaux de rénovation, la congrégation Maghen Abraham intégrera la chapelle située au niveau inférieur du bâtiment de la rue Saint-Kevin, à laquelle elle a contribué financièrement.

Cette chapelle deviendra par la suite la Chapelle Iny. Albert s'est beaucoup impliqué au sein de la S&P au sein du conseil d'administration et de l'exécutif, avant d'occuper la fonction de président de 2008 à 2010. Il a été fortement engagé lors de moments clés de l'évolution de la S&P, comme la construction de la cuisine, les grandes rénovations, notamment sous la présidence de Morris Abdulezer, ainsi que dans les travaux du sanctuaire Mashaal.

Au-delà de la congrégation, Albert Mann s'est également impliqué dans la communauté juive au sens large : il a été président de la campagne séfarade du CJA, membre de la CSUQ, de l'école Maimonide, et a même initié la venue du grand rabbin de France Yossef Sitruk Z'L. Il se sent bien dans toutes les communautés, séfarade, ashkénaze et même hassidique. Après une vie professionnelle intense, il est toujours le dirigeant de la compagnie Anglo-Canadienne. Notre cher Albert est le père de deux fils et d'une fille, ainsi que grand-père de 16 petits-enfants et d'un total de 5 arrière-petits-enfants, dont certains résident à Jérusalem. Qu'Hachem les bénisse !

חתן בראשית

Join, Connect, and Make a Difference with the Sisterhood

THE SISTERHOOD of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of Montreal, unites women from diverse origins—Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Turkey, and Canada—around a common mission: enriching synagogue life while supporting organizations that strengthen the Jewish community at large.

Past and Upcoming Activities

Over the past year, the Sisterhood has offered members both cultural enrichment and warm camaraderie. Highlights included guided tours at the *Montreal Museum of Fine Arts*, a delightful excursion to *Bleu Lavande* in the Cantons de l'Est, with a stop at *Parc de la Pointe Merry* and a visit to the *Tulip Festival in Ottawa* among other memorable outings. These gatherings reflect the Sisterhood's commitment to building

friendships while celebrating culture and heritage.

Looking ahead, the calendar promises even more exciting opportunities. Instead of Purim baskets, fundraising activities will take center stage again this year. Members can look forward to book reviews—with schedules and titles to be revealed in the synagogue's weekly bulletin—as well as hands-on baking classes with pastry chef Sandra Suissa Moghrabi - not to mention guided museum tours led by Ruth Khazzam. Several group trips are also being planned to foster discovery and connection.

Stay Informed

All upcoming activities, schedules, and details will be published in the synagogue's weekly bulletin. Make sure to keep an eye on it so you

don't miss any of the Sisterhood's vibrant programming. By joining, you become part of a dynamic group of women dedicated to strengthening Jewish identity, supporting meaningful causes, and bringing joy to synagogue life.

Sukkah Decoration

On Sunday, October 5, 2025, join us for the *Sukkah Decoration*, a cherished annual tradition where community spirit shines brightest.

Together We Give

The Sisterhood raised over \$13,000 in Purim donations to go to Israel. Together with Mariam Mintz's Chevra Chaas, the Sisterhood also raised \$6,935 through the sale of the Yizkor booklet. ■



"Our purpose is to nurture our synagogue and extend our support to causes that uplift Jewish life beyond its walls."

BE PART OF SISTERHOOD

Annual membership: \$38

Lifetime membership: \$220

Contact: 514-737-3695

*In honor of Rabbi Soto
Wishing everyone a Shana Tova U'Metukah*



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MIRACLE AT THE UN

1947 and the Future of Jewish Statesmanship

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik spoke of the configuration of events preceding the UN vote for partition as war, diplomacy and miracles. After the vote this pattern repeated itself in reverse. Following years of underground war against the British as their presence betrayed the Balfour Declaration, Moshe Sharett asked Abba Eban to develop a diplomatic corps and help write a report to the UN in preparation of the UN vote. Also reaching out to the world but employing another medium was Hillel Kook, head of the Bergson Group. Committed to rescuing Jews, the Group contacted the most notable screenwriter of all time, Ben Hecht, to write a play exposing the public to the plight of Jews in Europe. With profits from the play *A FLAG IS BORN* starring Marlon Brando, a ship was bought to take 900 Jews to Palestine.

Providence seems apparent when UNSCOP's first visit to Palestine coincided with the planned hanging of three Irgun members. The Committee's plea to Britain to treat them as POWs was ignored. When the Irgun retaliated by kidnapping and hanging two British soldiers, anti-Semitic sentiment raged across the UK. However, by meeting secretly with the British Mandate's most wanted man, Menachem Begin, many UNSCOP members sympathized with the Jewish cause. Reinforcing this sympathy was UNSCOP's witnessing the forced return to Europe of a shipload of refugees when Eban, foreseeing this, had persuaded UNSCOP

members to visit Haifa. Refusing entry of asylum seekers resulted in world outrage. Antisemitism, expenditure and lives lost led Britain's parliament to agree finally with UNSCOP's report to partition.

The miraculous appears too when the only time the East voted with the West was that one critical time. Stalin soon regretted his decision, ordering an embargo of arms to Israel. Fortunately, most of the arms had already been sent. Furthermore, since the UN has proven itself biased against Israel, many wonder if it had been created just for the purpose of this historic vote. Another striking fact transpired after Secretary of State George Marshall convinced Truman to make Palestine an American trusteeship instead of a sovereign nation. Upon learning this, the Zionist leaders sent Chaim Weizman to Truman but he was refused access. Eddie Jacobson, former Truman business partner, was then sent to intervene. Reneging on his promise not to address the Palestinian issue to gain entrance, he pleaded with Truman to convene with Weizman. Angered by the treatment he had endured at the hands of American Zionist spokesmen, Truman turned his back on Jacobson. Espying a small statue of the President's hero, Andrew Jackson, Jacobson was prompted to speak of Weizman, the greatest Jew he had ever met, as a most respectful man who had heroically travelled thousands of miles in fragile health for his people, for Jacobson's people. When Truman then turned back to Jacobson, two unassuming, unsuccessful business venturers from middle America made history: Truman agreed to Israel's sovereignty. ■



Barbara Shahmoun and Sandra Koukou

CHAIRING THE WOMEN'S LEARNING GROUP was a privilege and honor that for personal reasons, must now pass. Thanks go to *Gladys Mooallem*, who assembled a vibrant group of Adult Banot Mitzvot with *Rabbi Shachar Orenstein* for a 17-year journey, to our Moderator *Jack Sachs* and our illustrious Guest Speakers, kind Office Staff, ZOOM Operator Ksenia and wise Leaders. The overwhelming question in 5786 is what spiritual and political future awaits world Jewry. It was addressed in WLG's Series 31 with TIKVAH's JEWISH POLITICAL GREATNESS. Our *Gigi Bitton* observed: "The true Jewish statesman must perceive the role and pattern of war, diplomacy and miracles in Jewish history and, above all, believe in the eternity of the Jewish people." Enjoy her abridged summary of Lecture 11!

Sandra Koukou

TUNES AND TOGETHERNESS



Building Community Through Music and Play

Tunes & Togetherness is a warm and welcoming program that we created to bring families with young children together through music, laughter, and play. Each session features an engaging children's animator (rotated regularly to keep things lively) who leads interactive sing-alongs that get everyone moving and grooving!

But music aside, at the heart of this program is connection amongst kiddos, parents, and grandparents! Whether celebrating holidays, birthdays, or simply the joy of being together, Tunes & Togetherness nurtures a sense of belonging and community - something we are so lucky to have at Spanish and Portuguese.

With the support of generous donors and dedicated volunteers, the space is filled with toys, a baby playpen, and hands-on games like mini basketball and foosball, offering fun for toddlers and their older siblings too.

We also love marking milestones and traditions. Holiday-themed sessions for Channukah, Tu B'Shevat, and Purim add extra fun to our gatherings. And after the music winds down, families stay to enjoy pizza,

snacks, and play. What truly makes this program special is the people who bring it to life: the volunteers who show up week after week, the families who come with open hearts, and the donors who make it all possible. We were on pause for the summer, but we look forward to picking things back up in the fall. Whether you've joined us before or are brand new, we can't wait to welcome you!

Looking ahead, we're excited to expand the program with more themed events, and varied performers. Tunes & Togetherness is more than just a morning activity—it's a growing network of friendships and support. As we sing, dance, and play together, we're building memories that last far beyond the final note.

So come sing with us, connect with others, and be part of something joyful and lasting! Until then, we wish you and yours a Shana Tova U'metukah. May this year be filled with sweetness, good health, true happiness, and lasting peace. ■



The Tunes and Togetherness Team



Behind the Diet Desk

Registered dietitian Jennifer Abdulezer, P.Dt., Nutr., opens up about her professional journey, her daily practice, and her favored approaches. She highlights the most common cases she encounters and shares the guidance that helps her patients thrive.

Aleinu: Can you tell me a bit about your background and what led you to become a nutritionist-dietitian?

Jennifer Abdulezer P.Dt- Nutr: Growing up, I was always interested in health and the human body. I developed a passion for healthy lifestyle choices such as nutrition and regular physical activity, and I saw the benefits firsthand. When it came time to choose a field of study, dietetics and nutrition felt like the natural fit. I was drawn to how healthy habits and good food choices can positively impact both physical and mental health. I completed my degree in Dietetics and Nutrition at McGill University, where I gained both academic knowledge and hands-on experience through Stages in a variety of settings—including hospitals, outpatient clinics, and community centres.

What does your work involve on a daily basis, and what kinds of cases do you usually deal with?

As a dietitian in private practice, I have the benefit of working with clients who actively choose to seek help, which often means they're more motivated to make positive changes. Every consultation begins with a thorough evaluation of the individual. Together, we review key information such as health history, medications, reasons for seeking nutritional support, current eating habits, and overall lifestyle choices. After gathering all the relevant information, I do a full assessment to identify the client's specific needs. From there, we work together to pinpoint where changes can be made, and I help them create a realistic, personalized plan that supports their goals and fits into their lifestyle. In my practice, I work with a wide range of clients—from children and adolescents to adults and seniors. I really



enjoy the different clientele, as it keeps my work both interesting and challenging. I often see clients with common cardiovascular concerns like high cholesterol, hypertension, and diabetes. Others come for general health check-ins or weight management support. I also work with cancer patients, helping them manage side effects of treatment and maintain their nutritional status. More recently, my focus has been on women's health—I support women dealing with infertility, navigating pregnancy, and going through menopause. It's an area I've become especially passionate about. I also offer

workshops where organizations or businesses invite me to speak on various nutrition-related topics. More recently, I've been visiting senior living facilities to talk about nutrition for older adults and how to overcome common challenges related to healthy eating as we age.

How do you approach helping someone—whether it's for weight loss, improving their diet, or managing a health condition? What methods do you use?

When helping someone, I take a whole-person approach. A client may come in with one specific concern, but through our conversation, other physical or mental health factors often come to light—and we work together to address them.

My philosophy is that true health is built on five core pillars of wellness: Healthy eating, Adequate hydration, Daily movement, Quality sleep and Stress management. By focusing on these areas, I help clients create simple, lasting habits that support their overall health and lifestyle. ■

CHABBAT POUR LES JEUNES ADULTES



Depuis quelque temps la Spanish & Portuguese organise le "Chabbat des jeunes". De jeunes adultes sont appelés à se réunir de temps en temps autour d'un bon repas de Chabbat! Un concept qui évolue comme nous l'explique le Rabbin David Sebbag, animateur du projet.

LE CONCEPT DU "CHABBAT DES JEUNES" s'adresse aux 18–40 ans. Pourquoi un tel écart d'âge ? Bien entendu, il existe la possibilité de réaliser des *shidoukhim*, des rencontres directes mais aussi indirectes ! Par exemple, une jeune fille de 18 ans pourrait mentionner à un homme plus âgé qu'elle a une sœur aînée à lui présenter. Il s'agit aussi de créer des connexions d'ordre professionnel ou communautaire. Les possibilités sont nombreuses, sans oublier le plaisir de se retrouver dans un cadre juif, au sein d'une magnifique congrégation, d'écouter des Divrei Torah, de célébrer Chabbat entre jeunes, de chanter et de prier ensemble.

60 à 100 personnes participent au "Chabbat des jeunes" le vendredi soir lors des repas que nous organisons parfois. Le service du Chabbat matin demeure pour nous primordial. Certains jeunes redoutent la longueur des offices et souhaiteraient qu'ils soient plus courts. Ils désirent apprendre, découvrir ou redécouvrir nos prières. Ainsi, béézrat Hachem, après les fêtes de Tichri, nous organiserons dans la chapelle Iny un office dédié aux jeunes adultes, le Chabbat matin de 10 h à midi. L'office inclura les prières et la lecture de la Torah, accompagnées d'explications, de discussions permettant de

mieux comprendre et de progresser. Nous sommes là pour les accompagner durant la prière, les montées à la Torah; peut-être qu'un jour certains liront la Haftara ! L'office sera suivi d'un grand Kiddouch. Parmi les jeunes, nous comptons autant de filles que de garçons, des anglophones comme des francophones, et si la majorité est séfarade, nous avons également quelques jeunes ashkénazes.

À partir de septembre, le programme prévoit chaque mois un office le vendredi soir, suivi d'un excellent repas et tous les quinze jours un office du Chabbat matin, suivi d'un Kiddouch. Deux fois par mois, nous organiserons des soirées *Sushi Shiour*, combinant cours de Torah et dégustation de sushis ! Les jeunes sont venus nombreux aux activités que nous avons déjà organisées. Le bouche-à-oreille, les réseaux sociaux et nos infolettres restent nos principaux moyens de communication. Nous valorisons la jeunesse car elle représente la relève, l'avenir de notre congrégation ! Ceux qui le souhaitent pourront s'impliquer davantage dans les activités de la synagogue et, pourquoi pas, dans dix ans, l'une ou l'un d'entre eux pourrait devenir président-e de la S&P !

Rabbi David Sebbag

Announcements

Bar & Bat Mitzvot

- ◆ Irina Lekhtman & Albert Bensimon, in honour of the Bar Mitzvah of their son, *David Ari*.
- ◆ Hirut Asmare, in honour of the Bat Mitzvah of her daughter, *Rahel*.
- ◆ Mariam & Leonard Mintz, in honour of the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, *Michel Mintz*, son of Rabbi Matthew & Jenna Mintz of Modiin, Israel (August 8).
- ◆ Lyson & David Haccoun, on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, *Tyler David Salis*.



Wedding Congratulations



♥ Rita & Emile Fattal and Leslie & Michael Szirt, on the wedding of their children, Elisha Szirt to Philippe Fattal.

Kol Hakavod to

- ◆ *Louis Philippe Lafrance*
- ◆ *Mike Yuval*, on receiving the prestigious Médaille de l'Assemblée nationale from the CAQ government, in recognition of his personal achievement, service, and contribution to Quebec society!

Our Condolences



Lisette Shashoua Ades, on the loss of her husband, **Albert Ades z'l.**

Shoula & Raymond Gabbay, on the loss of her brother, **Albair Moshe Abraham (Abu Al Thalj) z'l.**

Ruth Nabi & Family, on the loss of her husband, **Jamil (Jimmy) Nabi z'l.**



Heskel Schemtob, and Jane Schemtob Barnes, on the loss of their father, **David Schemtob z'l.**

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Marina Mashaal, on the loss of her father, **Morris Mashaal z'l.**



Sandy & Albert Mashaal & Families, on the loss of his brother, **Morris Mashaal z'l.**

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Myriam & Emile Mashaal & Families, on the loss of his brother, **Morris Mashaal z'l.**



Sue & Kamal Gabbay, on the loss of her brother, **Morris Mashaal z'l.**

Danielle Benchimol Mashaal, on the loss of her brother-in-law, **Morris Mashaal z'l.**

Drs. Edmond Shahin & David Shahin, in memory of their brother-in-law, **Morris Mashaal z'l.**



Jennifer & Emile Hakim & Families, on the loss of his mother, **Suzette Hakim (née Shirazi) z'l.**

Dina & Moshi Nathan & Families, on the loss of his mother, **Nelda Mowlem z'l.**

Mathalon Family, on the loss of **Solomon (Sol) Mathalon z'l.** (Toronto)



George & Yvonne Saleh and Saleh Families, on the loss of his brother, **Richard Saleh z'l.**

Martha Tapiero Lawee, on the loss of her brother, **Charles Salomon Tapiero z'l.** (Paris)

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 Victor & Edna Mashaal, in honour of the birth of David Gabbay's grandson, Benji, son of Rina & Joe Flynn.
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 Raphael Uzan, Pessah campaign for families in need by Rav Soto.
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Clifford Noonoo, Deepest Condolences on the loss of Morris Mashaal z'l.
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Jonathan Pinsler, in memory of Morris Mashaal z'l.
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Sylvia Mashal, in memory of her husband, Maurice H. Mashal z'l.
Lisette Shashoua, in memory of her beloved parents, Mouzly & Menashy Shashoua z'l & in memory of her dear sister, Hilda Shashoua Rejwan z'l and her beloved husband, Albert Ades z'l.

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Raphael & Rachel Lallouz, in memory of his mother, Alice Lallouz z'l.
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Sylvia, Huguette & Eddie Malka, in memory of their beloved brother, Albert

Malka z'l.
Sylvia, Huguette & Eddie Malka, In memory of her mother, Perla Rouah z'l.
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Stanley Goldstein, in
honour of Mother's Day
and his birthday.
Stanley Goldstein, in
memory of his father, Dave
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Jacob & Iris Haimovici, in
honour of his Bar Mitzvah
and for the freedom of all
the hostages!
The Langleben Family, in
memory of Prof. Philip
Langleben z'l.
Louis Philippe Lafrance,
in thankfulness to
everyone's support &
encouragement during my
conversion journey, which
contributed to a great
sense of belonging to the
community.
Maggy Cohen & Michael
Rubin, in honour of
Passover.

Maggy Cohen & Michael
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grandfather David Isidore
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father, Jacob Cohen z'l.
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Leonard Rubin z'l and in
honour of Louis Philippe
Lafrance's conversion.
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