

Jottings

The newsletter of Etz Hayyim Synagogue
- Hania, Crete

Romance in Hania



David and Nicole

We have had two weddings at the Synagogue this summer. In June, Nicole Lazar and David Sidore were wed in a traditional Greek Jewish manner by Rabbi Isaak Mizan of Athens. Nicole is a citizen of Israel, Canada and the US. David is a citizen of the US. Nicole is an Associate Professor of statistics at the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, and David is an Assistant Professor of English and Film Studies at Macon State University, Macon, Georgia.

Their attachment to and choice of Etz Hayyim was through the parents of the bride, Morty and

Rita Lazar of Ra'anana, Israel who have been long-time friends of Etz Hayyim.

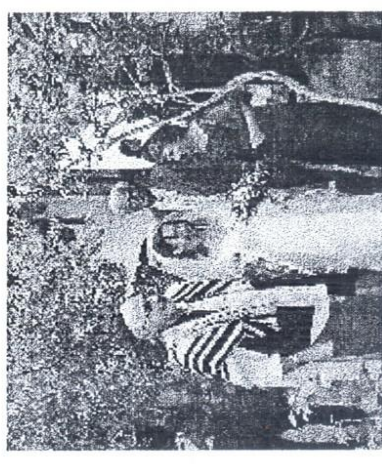
The wedding party completely filled the synagogue, with guests from the US, Europe, Israel and Crete. The bride's mikveh took place, as is the custom at Etz Hayyim, in our mikveh to the accompaniment of much laughter and screaming as the bride herself (and some of her friends) later commented on it being the coldest mikveh in Greece!

Rabbi Mizan was assisted by Mr Leon Gavrielides of Ioannina-Athens, who is the Director of the Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece and also a hazzan.

A second wedding took place in early June - that of David and Claudia Friedman of London. The wedding was planned well in advance after a visit to the Synagogue last year during which the bride indicated her wish to be married through religious blessing in our Kal. It was decided well in advance to have a rabbi friend officiate and so not long before their arrival R. Mark Solomon arrived

in Hania - even prior to the arrival of guests. He is the rabbi of the St. John's Wood Synagogue in London, which is one of the largest congregations there, and his presence was a delight for us all. The guests were an almost bewildering mix from various parts of Europe - Germany, France, Rumania and the UK as well as from Africa.

After the wedding a quite lavish banquet was served at the nearby Mirovolo Restaurant, which now has become accustomed to Jewish events sponsored by the Synagogue hence the menu (determined by the bride) was replete with Romanian (Judaean-Greek) and Sephardic holiday recipes.



The New JOTTINGS

We have been fortunate in seeing some of the work here at Etz Hayyim reach some fruition in the form of two grants and several generous contributions. Through the Hanadiv Foundation we have been able to develop especially our publications and our programme of lectures on the history of religions that we will begin again in late September.

Due to the summer schedules of most of our participants it

was decided to suspend the lectures until a more favourable time in the Fall. We now have a very good TV set-up that can handle both Audio-cassettes as well as DVD and according to both us as well as European specifications. It was necessary last year to suspend the publication and mailing of Jottings and people were directed to our web site. We had many queries about Jottings and through the Grant we are able to bring it out again in an en-

larged format though it will be bi-annual and not quarterly.

Through another grant given by Dr. Murray Pepper of Beverly Hills Cal., we are now at work on creating a database for entering the names of Cretan Jews and their descendants. In the course of the past three years we have made contact with a great number of Cretan Jews now living in Paris, London, Argentina the US and Israel.



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ETZ HAYYIM SYNAGOGUE - HANIA, Crete - The search for a renewed identity.

The Future of Jewish Heritage in Europe - An International Conference in Prague / The Czech Republic/24-27 April 2004.

The following paper was read by the Director of Etz Hayyim Synagogue, Nicholas Stavroulakis, at a recent conference held in Prague sponsored by the Hanadiiv Charitable Foundation, The World Monuments Fund, and the Cahnman, Rich, Charles & Andrea Bronfman Foundation in conjunction with the European Association for Jewish Culture. The plenary session at which he spoke was chaired by Dr. Ruth Gruber and was titled - Judaica without Jews: Presenting Jewish Heritage in a non-Jewish setting.

Kafka, in one of his 'Paradoxes' noted tersely - 'a bird-cage went in search for a bird'. Even before being invited to attend this conference there have been occasions on which his words have come vividly to mind as our synagogue in Hania is in many ways a synagogue that has been searching for its own 'bird'. Our synagogue in Hania, Etz Hayyim, has strangely drawn to itself a community that while being essentially different than would have been imaginable 50 years ago; consisting of Jews, Christians, Muslims and even a few Palestinians. The renovation of our synagogue has offered challenges quite different from those expected in a traditional synagogue in Greece: its contemporary life is not typical. The matter of specifically addressing the question of Jewish identity has arisen quite naturally from the make up of this community and I believe has wider implications than simply our experience

in Hania. Neither the question of how we embrace our non-Jewish neighbours nor 'who' we are as Jews have been addressed either realistically or creatively in Greece. Most of our Jewish communities in Greece survived the horrendous effects of the 2nd ww with some form of traditional observance - but it is, for the most part, little more than this.

Jewish life in Greece is significantly lacking in coming to terms with the changes in contemporary secular life, much less



what this means to either our Jewish heritage in the southern Balkans or more relevantly perhaps to ourselves as Jews living in a secular environment in which we appear to be an anachronism at best or a sad remnant of the Holocaust at worst.

What is not being addressed with either imagination or courage is the question of what essentially defines the Jew within the context of the Jewish heritage as a whole. Is it culture? Language? tradition? or values? Renan once said that what unites

all nation states is a common sense of history that is fundamentally erroneous and accompanying this a sense of common enemies. The transformation of Zionism into a nationalism that differs little from that of any other nation state should be problematic to us as Jews. Our experience at Etz Hayyim synagogue which is simply a Jewish house of prayer that accommodates Jews of every variety of self identity as well as non-Jews, is that what unites us are values that may be framed in different cultural and even linguistic terms but that constitute the very fabric of a creative and meaningful contemporary society.

I am going to address my presentation to the specific responses that have been made to challenges that have arisen in the past four years since the re-dedication of our synagogue. But before doing this I must bring to mind some image of Etz Hayyim as it was six years ago and to note what makes this building of singular importance in Crete - and perhaps even the wider Jewish world.

The Jews of Crete represented perhaps the very oldest settlements of Jews in Europe in antiquity and mention of them is found in the 1st Book of the Maccabees as well as in inscriptions found on the island of Delos. Their communities survived centuries of change on Crete which had a history quite different than that of Greece proper. Hellenistic rulers, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Venetians and then Ottomans all occupied the island for long periods of time and the Jews represent a tangible thread of continuity that runs through this complex historical continuum.

In 1944 the last formal Jewish community came to a tragic end in a Nazi 'action' of the war when 267 Jews from Hania were arrested and subsequently

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drowned. At the end of the war all that remained of this ancient Cretan Jewish presence that once boasted four synagogues in Herakleion alone, was the empty shell of Etz Hayyim synagogue in Hania - essentially a monument to the success of Hitler in eradicating Jewish life, culture and presence. It was with the support and commitment to what seemed to many a wasteful endeavour, that the International survey of Jewish Monuments, The World Monuments Fund, the Rothschild Foundation and the Hanadiv and Lauder Foundations saw fit to support and assist in restoring the site in its present form. It is once again a synagogue- albeit in different circumstances than those that saw its creation and in a quite different world.

The contemporary life of EH began in 2000 when it was rededicated and the Siphrei Torah were installed in the presence of some 400 people who had arrived from Greece, the UK, US and Israel - and elsewhere. Most were quite naturally Jews and those who were not were not necessarily dignitaries - many were in fact quite ordinary people from Hania who had once known the synagogue when it was the centre of a numerically diminished community that was still reeling from the horrendous changes that Crete had undergone for some 100 years. The 'event' did not occur without exciting some local antagonism. For three consecutive weeks a series of article on Jews appeared in the local papers. They were signed by 'Six Anonymous Priests of Sphakia'.

The first article was based on biblical authority using the text of Gen. 6: 1-4 in which the daughters of men cohabited with the B'Nei Ha-Elohim and Nephilim and bore them offspring. According to this article, Jews are descendants of these 'demonic' unions and hence of inferior humanity. The second article was for all practical purposes an abridgement of the protocols of

the Elders of Zion and the third narrowed in on the contemporary Zionist Jewish conspiracy. Following these articles appeared two others on the eve of the dedication of the Synagogue - one by the Nomarch of Hania Department and the other by the Bishop of Hania. The former was based on the articles by the 'seven priests' and included a reference to myself as the Hania agent of Zionism and citing the syna-

all that remained of this ancient Cretan Jewish presence that once boasted four synagogues in Herakleion alone, was the empty shell of Etz Hayyim synagogue

gogue and my house (complete with a photograph of the latter) as the centres of intrigue.

Despite this negative atmosphere the re-dedication of Etz Hayyim took place without further incident and its new life began. Not long after the re-dedication of Etz Hayyim, several locals began to make their presence noticeable at the somewhat stark services that were held in the Synagogue. The bishop of Hania had made public on the eve of the dedication that Jews could perhaps have a museum but they were not to be allowed to pray in the synagogue and that its existence could only foment social unrest and that it would become a source of contention. In fact his remarks were made in ignorance of changes in Greek law since 1933!

Hence it was only natural that I ensured that every morning Shahrith prayers were recited in the synagogue and in the afternoons, Minhah and Arvith. On Friday nights, alone or in the company of visiting Jews I inaugurated the Shabbath - and so it went on. A number of local Christians

asked if they could at least be present and on occasion there were visiting Jews who participated. Thus began a rather strange association of Jews and Christians (and eventually a few Muslims) that eventually demanded some form of association if not commitment. Out of this evolved the Havurah or Fraternity of Etz Hayyim, the members of which have undertaken to work and dedicate time and energy in its endeavour to enable the Synagogue to be an authentic Jewish spiritual presence. The Havurah resembles very much the Hellenistic Jewish experience in the period prior to the destruction of the 2nd Temple. Jewish communities were hardly representative of a monolithic 'orthodoxy' and in many instances were no less contentious than are they today. What was especially noticeable about them was their active and creative inter-action with non-Jewish culture and society about them.

Seen from this perspective what is being done at Etz Hayyim has well documented precedents. What was somewhat difficult for us was finding a point of reference that would provide all of us with a shared root and it naturally evolved that Abraham was seen as our common father and in a sense Etz Hayyim became his tent of welcome open to anyone who came. I think that much of the relatively recent success of the synagogue in establishing a spiritual presence in Hania has been through this spirit of 'openness' - to the stranger and to those in various conditions of need.

Of course, much has changed since the 1st century and Christianity and Islam have grown out of the tree of Abraham at Hebron where he entertained the three strangers who appeared so mysteriously. It was an easy temptation that a comparative approach be taken in our dialogues until it became more and more apparent that in fact each of the three traditions are deeply marked and divided by history,



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Language, local custom and visual imagery...and hence need be approached from perhaps another perspective if dialogue is to be achieved. In our case we found that by seeking to find how we complement each other was a more creative and deepening experi-



ence in understanding the obvious spiritual validity of both Christianity and Islam, both of which have for centuries provided the means of access to the inner life for millions...

The Havurah is especially active in organizing three Jewish Holidays at which we are commanded to embrace non-Jews: Pesah, Sukkoth and by extension TuBeshvat. For all three Festivals special service books have been created. Hebrew is used for all of the Berachot though, again relying on the tradition of ancient Hellenistic Jews, our services have large portions in Greek and in English. Active participation is characteristic of these services and we now annually have the presence of the nearby Franciscan monks for Passover and at its termination we are invited to their monastery where they offer us 'hametz' in the form of yeast rich bread.

Great pains are taken to adapt the traditional Haggadah and its reading and other Jewish holidays to contemporary conditions and even crises. This year, for example, we chose an especially harsh injunction from Deuteronomy that we not cut down the trees of our enemies. This text was considered from many points of view during the Seder that we have for TuBeshvat. This seder

especially has become an intense evening in which we assess our lives simply as humans and turn to nature as a source of wisdom and communion.

For Pesah this year we had present with us several young Palestinians who are students at the Agronomic School in Hania. Our theme concentrated on Exile and the human condition as one of 'exile' from nature, self, and society. We began by considering the fact that the account of Genesis makes clear that the entire human race is in Exile and that if we are not aware of this we will never leave Egypt. What does 'Egypt' mean? What are the terms that were set at Sinai for being 'chosen' - what are the obligations? How is it that we alternate in being both Pharaoh and slave?

Though at another point in the Jewish Year, Sukkoth is treated almost as an extension of TuBeshvat and our communal Sukkah is kept open on all sides symbolizing the tent of our common father Abraham that was open to all who came to him. On the first night of Sukkoth neighbours, visitors and tourists - Jews, Christians and Muslims alike, eat together and share the riches of the earth. We ask ourselves questions about the exploitation of resources, of plants and animals as a sign of a serious departure from our unity with our world. As at Pesah and TuBeshvat we recite the Berachot together and all participants, Jews and non-Jews, men and women alike wash their hands prior to eating.

As a resource centre Etz Hayyim is already involved in providing an important cultural presence in Hania. Monthly there is a CD concert of classical music that is well attended and we have thus far had three important exhibits - one in the form of an 'event' that was created by an Israeli artist David Beja-Perahia a sculptor who took as his theme our mikveh. Titled 'The Living waters', it incorporated multimedia - music and sound effects as well as images cast on the

external walls of the synagogue and its interior from several projectors.

Another exhibit consisted of over 200 musical instruments from the Near East, south-east Asia and the Far East. Most of the instruments were from the private collection of Ross Daly, a somewhat seminal figure in the study of Cretan music and folklore.

Perhaps the most important of these events is the series of weekly lectures on the History of Religions that are very well attended. These lectures are on audio-tapes and have been researched and presented by well known authorities on Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism - each subject has twelve sessions and members of this study group receive full lecture notes, bibliographies, and glossaries. The lecture proper takes approximately 50 minutes after which there is a break for wine and biscuits and then we resume to have a discussion.

From a vertical point of view these differences tend to disappear.

Central to discussions that might arise with students, visitors and amongst ourselves is the awareness that we must be sensitive to questions that arise from non-Jews. The approach taken to these discussions has been determined by the needs of our own Havurah which, as noted previously, is not entirely made up of Jews. Pains were taken at the offset of the lectures to establish a common approach to what could devolve into a matter of comparative religion. Religion as an intellectual and spiritual edifice can be looked at from two perspectives - horizontal and vertical. Seen and studied within the framework of time and contemporary context all religions are bound to be di-

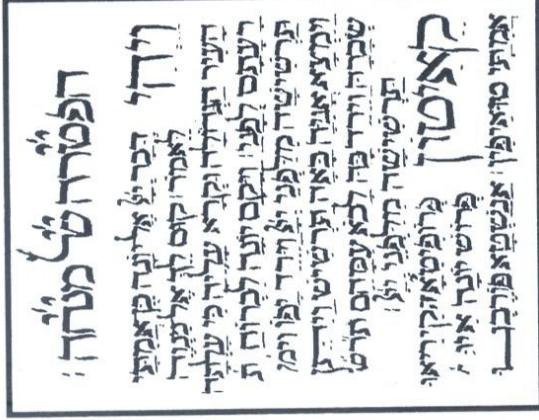


vided from each other by historical context, contemporary surrounding culture and even language.

Examined from a vertical point of view, however, one finds that these differences tend to disappear and become unified in a single quest that is the real determining factor in the religious life - the search for meaning and reality. How this search is aided by values is one of the main points of unity in our Haverah. In these discussion periods there is ample opportunity for us to share stories as well as our own specific traditions. For example recently when we discussed the question of 'Revelation' we found that on a horizontal level Christians, Jews and Muslims are seriously divided as to 'how' Truth is revealed in the world - and even by whom? It was in the course of this discussion that mention was made of the rabbinic view that Revelation or the Torah was given in two manifestations - the one in a written form but also that the Torah in another form is the very substance of creation itself. This view was very dramatically expressed in the story of St. Anthony of Egypt who was visited by a group of bishops from Alexandria whose intent was to denigrate his solitary life in the Thebaid of Egypt. One of the bishops castigated him for having no book of the scriptures in his cave to which Anthony replied by taking the bishops to its entrance and there with a great sweep of his arm pointed to the stark desert around them and said - 'All of this is my scripture.'

In the past year and a half several public schools in Hania have put on their annual agendas student visits to our synagogue. Usually a special welcome is given to them and they are quite fascinated to find how anciently rooted Jews are - how the mikveh is the origin of the baptism, that the Sepher Torah is written on a scroll and retained as it was in antiquity, standing upright in its 'tik' - or that we

to this day pray wrapped up in the 'chlamyda' or talloth that was worn by most urban male populations.



As a resource centre the Synagogue now has a library that is open to the public. With over 1700 books, the library has a good basic and balanced collection of primary and secondary sources dealing with ancient, medieval and modern history as well as special sections on Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

In the past two years the Synagogue has begun to bring out a number of small books on Cretan Jewry. To date there are three - the first two contain out-of-print articles on the History of the Jews of Crete and the third is a memoir by Chief Rabbi Abraham Evlagon of Hania that was written shortly before he died in 1933. Appended to it is a small text that was written as a response to a Blood Libel that arose in the mid-20's in Hania. We are now in the process of editing and preparing a facsimile copy of the Book of Jonah in Greek that is kept in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. It was until very late the custom of Romaniot (i.e., Greek Jews) to read many religious texts in Greek as opposed to Hebrew as was the custom in the ancient world when Greek was the lingua franca of Jews. Though at the moment beyond our resources it is our hope that we may be able to publish for the use of the

Synagogue the entire Romaniot Greek siddur that was in common usage amongst Cretan Jews until as late as the 16th century.

Though still in its formative stage of a new and complex identity, Etz Hayyim and its Haverah have at least proven to this date to be an important statement that clearly states that our heritage as Jews is not simply that of keeping and handing on a moribund collection of holidays, recipes, ramblings, and misfortunes and that what is at the root of Jewish identity is a creative application of values that determine how we are to be a light to those around us. Diane Pinto in a recent article entitled 'European and Israeli Jews: a reconciliation between distant cousins', (IHT -20 Feb. 2004) notes 'The Jewish world cannot find a lasting 'normality' without a reconciliation with a continent that can no longer be conceived solely as the continent of historical antisemitism and as the continent that spawned the Holocaust. It is also a fact that Israel at times constitutes a problem for the political and moral coherence of the Jewish citizens of Europe. Only as Europe comes to terms with creating a creative pluralism will Jewish life be able to function creatively. The real challenge for us is how we can forge an identity that is capable of interesting itself in the fate of 'others'.

Our experience in Crete at Etz Hayyim has been that there are many people, as in antiquity, before we became withdrawn into a rabbinically defined cocoon, who seek to share our values through proximity and not necessarily through conversion. We have had a tendency, reinforced by our own mythology, to see our exile as the only exile and to perhaps lose sight of the fact that 'exile' and alienation is the human condition: a return to Eden is impossible and all other 'returns' can only be relative. It is understanding this condition that can lead persons to achievements of lasting value



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in seeking means of reconciliation through compassion and at times quite daring solutions that need be taken alone.

Especially is this true in Europe - a Europe that is now heavily secularized and in the process of implementing an ever growing complex and expanding pluralistic society in which Islam has to be considered as a co-current tradition with our own and that of Christianity. In many ways for the past 50 years Jews have not had a vibrant and creative identity if only because we have not reconciled ourselves adequately to conditions that require more than responses dictated by simple acceptance, or even time honoured clichés, and that demand critical awareness and even daring creativity.

A point recently made in one of our meetings as a Havurah was that Jewish history has a somewhat blatant habit of revealing the faults of its heroes. They are revealed in scripture as weak, vacillating, angry, given to errors and even vices. Despite the rabbinic tendency to gloss over them and to find a guiding hand at work behind their occasionally bewildering behaviour, there is also the very distinct call that Judaism makes that we be conscious of our human tendency to error and consequently be aware of our volatile and vacillating natures as well as cautious and open to betterment. Our values are not necessarily invalidated due to our imperfections. As 'Chosen' we are called to be free and to be co-creators and if we do not heed

that call we turn into pillars of salt, or our light is in fact hidden from the nations. We are called upon with severe conditions attached to the 'calling' - and in this context this means that we must share our experience as a people - to incarnate values of mercy, justice, love and compassion into the world about us - otherwise we have become bells without tongues. We must turn ourselves to forging an identity that is capable of interesting itself in the fate of 'others', to the needs of the world - to the totality of all beings in the Unity of Life of which we are a part.

Web Site

www.etz-hayyim-hania.org

The secretary of the synagogue, Desi van den Berg, has been hard at work ironing out some problems that have been brought to our notice on our site. Along with her companion Alex Correia they have restyled some of it but also have made some necessary additions (and depletions). In its expanded form the site will now be able to better address itself to the quite complicated questions of visitors. Of course one weakness that we continue to have to adjust to is the lack of a private line for the Synagogue computer which creates some hardships for all of us as access to the modem is restricted due to the expenses. We would be most grateful and, of course delighted to have a donor undertake to helping us to keep a special line for the Synagogue. Please contact either the secretary or the Director for details and approximations of cost.

Etz Hayyim Synagogue. Hania, Crete.

By *Elena Narinskaya*

My first impression of Hania was somewhat surprising. I kept on getting flashbacks of Jerusalem walking along the narrow streets of the old city of Hania with shops and dining places on both sides.

Etz Hayyim Synagogue is in the very centre of the old part of the town, close to the harbour. Entering the Synagogue area one first comes into the Biblical garden with many trees and plants of Palestine. Usually there are one or two volunteers greeting the visitors and offering to give them the tour around the synagogue.

I have come to the synagogue to participate in the scholarly Factotum project that was funded by Levintis Foundation. The idea of this project is to attract people interested in Greek and Jewish studies to come and participate in the life of the Synagogue. There is a fellowship of people around the synagogue. This fellowship is called 'Havurah', and consists of people who are passionate about the restoration of the Synagogue, maintaining the spirit of ecumenism, openness and mutual respect among its members.

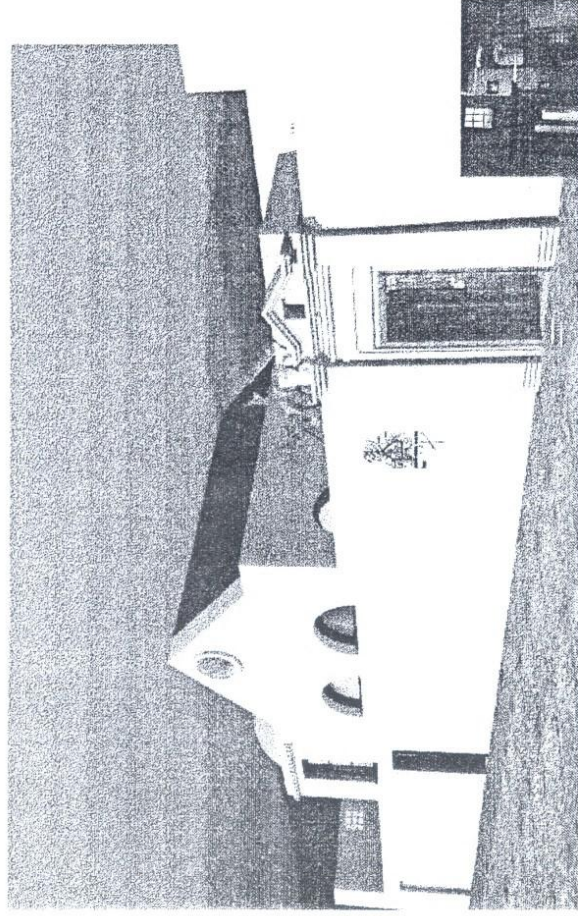
The idea of the 'Havurah' is quite unique, but not alien to the history of Jewish communities. Havurah in Etz Hayyim Synagogue consists of Jews, Christians, and members of other world religions. They are united by their loyalty to the synagogue and mutual desire to make it a place of prayer and community spirit.

If one feels the need to discover the ways of expressing religiosity, or to have the experience of the community life within the Jewish context, then Etz Hayyim Synagogue is the right place to be. Dialogue and respect, openness and curiosity, challenge and spirituality - these are the means and ways by which people are trying to build their experience in Etz Hayyim Synagogue in Hania, Crete. These are essential values that people of different religions or cultural backgrounds can learn to appreciate.

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World Monuments Fund Grant



New Mehitzah

Etz Hayyim has been awarded an initial grant by the World Monuments Fund in New York. Etz Hayyim Synagogue as it stands at the moment was initially funded by the WMF and Lauder and Rothschild Foundations. The new grant has been awarded for the purpose of assisting us to complete one part of the project that was left in abeyance - the 'mehitzah' or women's gallery. This was completely destroyed in the bombing and strafing of Hania by the Nazis in 1941 and its remaining rubble eventually was scattered out over the desecrated graves in the south courtyard.

originally the women's gallery was entered through a separate door on the south flank of the synagogue and consisted of a ground floor that connected directly to 1) the synagogue proper 2) the mikveh and 3) the area where the graves are located. Access was also provided by a large gate that led from the common courtyard that was shared with Beth Shalom Synagogue (destroyed completely in 1941). As almost all of the Jewish houses in the Ovraiki (Jewish quarter) were equipped with mikva'oth the mikveh of Etz

Rothschild Gate

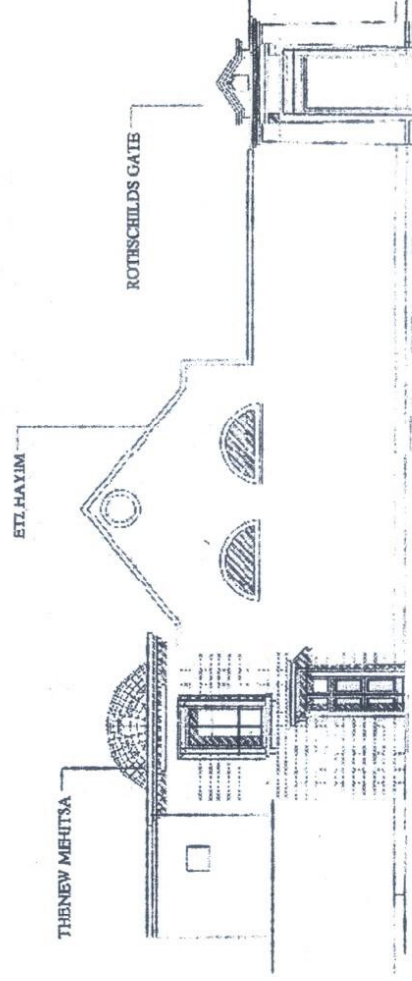
Hayyim was probably used mainly for special purposes - weddings etc..

From work done on this area prior to the reconstruction of the synagogue it was determined that most likely it was the base of the belfry attached to the building when it was originally a church. In his memoir written in 1932 R. Abraham Evlagon mentions the mehitzah specifically and especially notes that it had a dome.

It was in this area, well hidden under the stair that led to the upper floor (from which one could look into the Synagogue), that we found the grave of R. Hillel Eskenazi - noted as a tzaddik, hasid and mystic. Evlagon noted in his memoir that the grave had been 'lost' which indeed it was and perhaps it was hidden intentionally at some point as it is known that Eskenazi was a Shabbataean of some repute and importance.

It is not our custom at Etz Hayyim to relegate women to a separate and cordoned off part of the Synagogue, hence the wish to reconstruct this area is to a) complete the building much as it was prior to 1941 but also b) to provide us with additional space that we can well use which will include a guest room and kitchen facilities. We hope that by October of 2005 we will be able to have the necessary permits and funds in hand to begin work. At the moment we have plans and a design of the restored mehitzah (see photos).

Anyone wishing to participate in this important project are asked to contact the Director.



Partial view along Kondilakis street



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Summer Docents

Our volunteer staff at the synagogue has been added to and we have been able to keep it open during most of the day save for Saturday. We continue to have Kabbalat Shabbat and Havdalah as usual. Our docents are quite a mixed lot and include Konstantin Fischer (Psaras), Paola Nicotera, Anne Delargy, Lauren Lesko, Ahuva Amar, Benjamin Naylor and Lea Ventura. The duties of our docents go far beyond simply acting as guides and information sources as increasingly the synagogue demands attention to budgetary needs, fundraising possibilities and public relations. This summer Konstantin has been in Botswana where he is volunteering at the centre for AIDS orphans. We were also especially blessed with the arrival of Miss Elena Narinskaya who will be with us through the High Holidays. She is the recipient of a scholarship that was obtained through a personal grant privately given to Mr Peter and Dr. Doris Naylor. Under the terms of the grant her official title is 'scholar in Residence' and she has well blended in well with our staff at the Synagogue. She is Russian by birth but has been studying for her PhD degree at Durham University in England. She is deeply committed to Israel, speaks fluent Hebrew and is at present doing special work that she plans to continue in Syrian studies that will inevitably involve a focused knowledge of Antique Near Eastern as well as Hellenistic and early Christian and Jewish History.

Colophon

Director-Parnas: Nicholas Hannan-Stavroulakis
Secretary: My Desiree van den Berg
Docents and Volunteers:
Ahuva Amar, Anna Delargy, Konstantin Fischer,
Lauren Lesko, Elena Narinskaya, Benjamin Naylor, Paola Nicotera, Lea Ventura

Forthcoming Events

Concert of Greek and Turkish Music

- 8. Sept. 2004

This concert has been organized by Suzanne Brennan who is a cellist and also expert on Greek music. The concert will be a performance of regional traditional Greek music as well as selections of music from varied traditions in Anatolia (modern Turkey). Of special interest will be the inclusion of music of the Alevis who hold as an especially sacred instrument the 'saz' which is rarely heard even in Turkey today. (More details as well as an article on Alevi and Bektashi Dervish music will appear on the web site shortly).

Jewish Weekend at Ety Hayyim

The last weekend of October has been set aside for the arrival of some 100 people from various Jewish Communities of Greece. This 'event' is part of a programme of such outings for retired Jews to visit and participate in Jewish life in other parts of Greece and are well organized and prepared.

The person responsible for this series of outings is Haiim Ishakis of Athens, assisted by his wife Eva. Mr Ishakis is a trained and experienced hazzan, having studied in Eretz Israel, and is also highly active in youth programmes in Greece. We were very fortunate to have him lead the Memorial service for our Community on the 10th June of this year when he was in Hania to make preparations and lay the groundwork. The weekend in Hania will see the arrival of the participants on the Friday and then assembling in the synagogue for a special Kabbalat Shabbat service. A banquet welcome dinner will follow that. Sabbath prayers for Shahrith will begin quite early as it is anticipated that a great number of the men will be honoured by being called to make aliyah. In the late afternoon there will be a Havdalah service following Mincha and Arvith prayers...and by late Sunday they will all have begun to return with hopefully good memories of their days in Hania with us. Mr Ishakis is preparing a special service book for the weekend in Hebrew and Greek that will serve as a remembrance gift to all.

Bar Mitzvah

We will have our second Bar Mitzvah on the 13th November of this year. Daniel Avram of Boston MA. will be arriving with his parents Sam and Dorothy - and siblings, to perform this important rite of passage. As his father originates from Salonika we expect a quite large gathering from both there, Athens and quite naturally Boston. Rabbi Isaak Mizan will call Daniel to the Law and will be assisted by Leon Gavrielides who will act as Gabay and Hazzan.

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