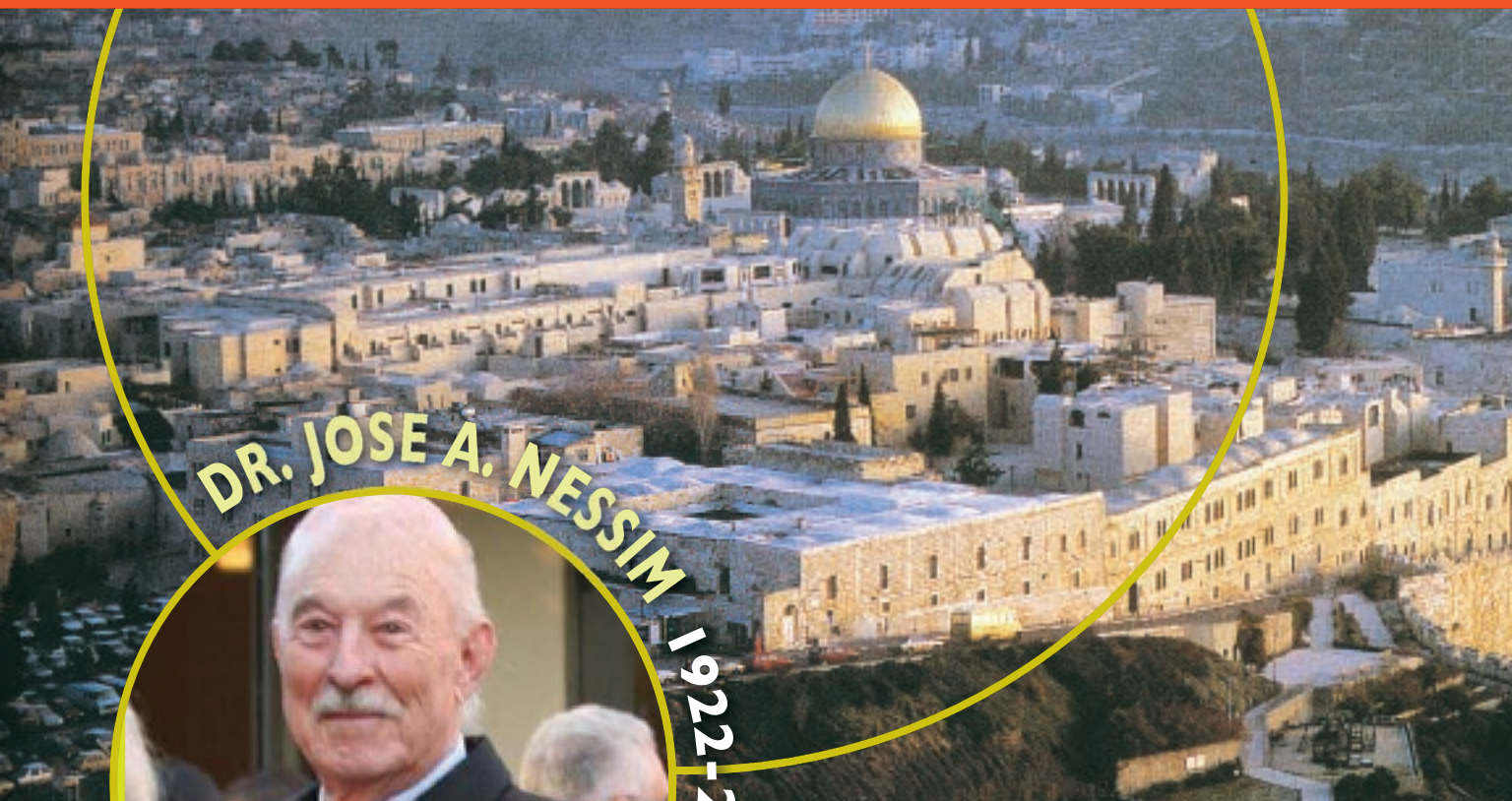


HAMERKAZ

A PUBLICATION OF THE SEPHARDIC EDUCATIONAL CENTER

DR. JOSE A. NESSIM
1922-2014



YEHORAM GAON
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



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Rabbi Bouskila, SEC Director
email: rdb@secjerusalem.org

Los Angeles

World Executive Offices
6505 Wilshire Blvd • Suite 320
Los Angeles, CA 90048
phone: 323.272.4574 fax: 323.592.3113
email: info@secjerusalem.org

SEC Jerusalem Campus

Israel Shalem, Manager

SEC Jerusalem - Educational Headquarters:
Batei Machasseh No. 1
P.O.Box 14326
Old City Jerusalem 91142, Israel
tel: 02-628-2344 fax: 02-628-4480
email: ishalem@secjerusalem.org

SEC MISSION

The SEC is dedicated to strengthening Jewish identity for youth and young adults, and to building a new generation of spiritual and community leaders. From our historic campus in the Old City of Jerusalem to our various diaspora branches, the SEC's philosophy of Classic Sephardic Judaism offers Jews an opportunity to connect with their roots in a warm, friendly and positive environment. At the SEC, tradition meets modernity, and the timeless values of intellect, unity, compassion and tolerance blend to create a meaningful connection to Judaism, Israel and the Jewish people.



Opening Day 1980

DR. JOSE A. NESSIM IN MEMORIAM

"Dr. Jose A. Nessim passed away peacefully at his home on Shabbat, July 26 (Tamuz 28) surrounded by his loving family. His long, beautiful and productive life here on earth was a blessing to his family, his friends, his multitude of medical patients and the thousands of Jewish students around the world whose lives he touched and transformed in ways much deeper than words can describe. A dreamer, a visionary and a man of action, Dr. Nessim was one of the 20th century's most influential Sephardic Jewish leaders. Through his brainchild and baby - The Sephardic Educational Center - he established a permanent home in the heart of Judaism's most sacred space - the Old City of Jerusalem -- for Jews of all backgrounds to come and experience the beautiful traditions and tolerant mode of the Sephardic Judaism that he so cherished. His positive spiritual influence reached Jewish communities all over the world, and he will be remembered and missed by thousands worldwide. His signature "thumbs up" philosophy on life helped him achieve his dreams, and will continue to inspire us in carrying on his legacy."

- Rabbi Daniel Bouskila, SEC Director

"From when I first met Dr. Nessim, I saw a man who was unique and special; he was a leader who cared first and foremost about the values of Judaism, unity and wholeness of our People. He was a man of vision and action...He wanted to educate a generation of Jewish leaders to be familiar with their glorious Sephardic heritage and he dedicated his life to this goal. How sad that such a great man whose contribution to Am Yisrael and the legacy of Judaism has left us."

— Moshe Nissim (Israel), SEC Counselor, Former Minister of Justice, Finance, Industry and Trade and Deputy Prime Minister for the State of Israel

"It's too difficult to talk about our beloved José in the past because he deserves that we only speak of him in future tense. He will remain in the rich history of our Jewish People, and our Sephardic family in particular, as a visionary who anticipated in his time the need to make guidelines to strengthen Jewish identity; he fought hard for our young people sometimes in the face of opposition, carelessness and discouragement of many community leaders; he devoted his immense intelligence and its unmatched power to imbue us with his ideals of balance and common sense that the world today needs; and above all, he placed himself at all times in the service of God, His People and His land which he so loved. Jerusalem was his dream and there will always shine his name as a memorial to future generations and to make everyone remember that there was once a man to whose Biblical personality transformed his fleeting visions into deep thoughts, thoughts into clear words, and words into actions which translated for thousands of young lives an authentic spiritual revolution.

Few people manage to leave their positive imprint on so many thousands of souls. Dr. Nessim not only attained it but that imprint will mark the path for future generations."

— *Rabbi Benito Garzon (Spain), Founding SEC Educational Director*

"We send our condolences on the passing of Dr. Nessim. It was my great fortune to have met and conversed with such a special and dear man. May his soul be bound up in the bonds of eternal life."

— *Aki Avni (Israel), Israeli Academy Award winning actor.*

"What a great man who did so much for so many generations to come. We were lucky to have been touched by his great vision, a vision which he invested in with time, effort and capital. His impact will be felt for generations."

— *Yosi Avrahamy (LA) SEC Board Member, Past President SEC-LA Young Adults*

"Of course I am filled with sadness and yet with love for Dr. Nessim, for his dreams, for his vision, and for his accomplishments in every aspect of his life. I feel like I have known Dr. Nessim all my life. I loved learning from him."

— *Janet Levy Pahima (Israel) SEC Executive Board Member*



With President Yitzhak Navon



Jose and Freda



Leadership Retreat in Santa Barbara with Dr. Ichak Adizes



1984 SEC International Gala- Los Angeles

DR. JOSE A. NESSIM IN MEMORIAM

"Dr. Nessim was a great man! His life story is truly inspirational, selflessly dedicating himself to the practice of medicine, his family and the Jewish people. As both the founder and long-time Chairman of the Sephardic Educational Center in Jerusalem, Dr. Nessim was also a visionary who understood the necessity of translating his dreams into action. The SEC facility in the Old City is an invaluable resource for Jews the world over, recently opening its doors to individuals and families impacted by the current war in Israel. On behalf of Congregation Ezra Bessaroth, please accept our condolences and convey them to Dr. Nessim's family."

- Rabbi Ron-Ami Meyers, Co-Presidents: Joseph Agoado, David E. Behar, Steven Hemmat (Seattle) Cong. Ezra Bessaroth

"Dr. Nessim not only was a great doctor in his profession, he was also a great visionary establishing the Sephardic Educational Center in Jerusalem in 1980. May his memory be blessed."

- Elias Harari (Mexico), SEC Alumnus

"I am sure many couples are forever grateful to Dr. Nessim and the SEC for finding each other. I am!! May his memory be blessed."

- Sandra Malek-Assouline (Miami), "SEC Couple"

"Dr. Jose Nessim, of blessed memory, made the world more whole. His vision, generosity, kindness, and wisdom are a blessing."

- Sandy Barsky (Washington, DC), SEC Alumnus and Past SEC-D.C. Young Adults President

"His kindness touched many families, including ours, in a very positive way and he was a great inspiration to many."

- Michael and Vivian Ezekiel (Florida), "SEC Couple"

"A giant of a man has been summoned to Gan Eden to receive rewards so deserving. To have known Dr. Nessim (and Freda) was to have touched a piece of heaven."

- Rabbi Hayyim Kassorla, Cong. Or Ve'Shalom (Atlanta, GA)

"When I used to meet with Doc at the then Beverly Hills Hospital, I saw him juggling responsibilities between serving as Chief of Staff at the hospital and his duties and thoughts about the SEC. He was a fantastic man, one of a kind."- Rabbi Dr. Robert Rome (LA)

"Dr. Jose Nessim was a great man and a great visionary. He had a passionate love for all human beings, for Am Yisrael and for his Sephardic Heritage. He has brought many people together and has changed many lives for the better through both his philanthropic actions and his medical practice."- Rabbi Haim Ovadia (NY)

"We want to express our appreciation to have witnessed his contribution to his profession, community and most especially to his family. We are so honored to be in the presence of the SEC family."

- Jack and Joelle Rimokh (LA), Sephardic Community Leaders and SEC supporters



Freda and Doc with
Clement & Esther Cohen



2010 SEC Summer Institute

"Dr. Jose Nessim was my mother's obstetrician and he delivered me on August 11, 1955. He was always so kind to our family in countless ways. He was an inspiration to me."

- Jacob Segura (Beverly Hills) President Sephardic Magen David Cong.

"We are all going to miss you Doc. Your SEC dream touched so many of our lives that you will forever be in our thoughts and in our hearts."

- Vivian Mahlab Kron (NY), SEC Alumna and Past Pres. SEC-NY Young Adults

"He lived a long life and made a difference in so many lives. How many times did he give the thumbs up with his positive attitude and twinkle in his eyes!"

- Sandy Benchimol (Toronto), Former SEC Young Adult Director

"When I met Doc over 20 years ago I saw a man with such drive and devotion to an ideal that I knew nothing would stop him.... Every convention and trip he wanted to be among the youth- his driving force. He would tell us we were the future or give us kind words of encouragement. We learned so much from him"

- Grace Haber Timsit (NY), SEC Alumna and "SEC Couple"

"I had the zekhoo of joining Dr. Nessim and the SEC team in Jerusalem for 10 days, where we learned, prayed and dined together. The word "Sephardim" was constantly projected by him, as if God was with him and did not let this word fall to the ground. He was truly a beacon of hope, and a man of vision who saw his dream come true."

- Moussa Shaaya (Beverly Hills), Past President Kahal Joseph Cong.

"He was a great and kind man and such a great influence on all of us."

- Lulu Hamaoui-Megidish (Israel), SEC Alumna

"Dr. Nessim was a giant of a person; a spiritual leader. People die twice; once physically and then when no one remembers them anymore. He will never ever die. His deeds will keep him alive forever."

- Dr. Ichak Adizes (Santa Barbara)

"So many sit by and watch the world go by but Dr. Nessim seized life by the reins and inspired Judaism in so many that would have been lost. He was a shepherd to us all, and at a time when Sephardim were downcast and ashamed, he affiliated and strengthened us with pride and the love of Torah. He was the true founder of his own Birthright and has done so much for the Jewish people and our Sephardic customs. May his name continue to live on forever as well as his life's work. I feel blessed to have known this legend and tzaddik in our times."

- Ruthie Gabay Goykadosh (NY), SEC Alumna

"What he was able to accomplish in a lifetime is extraordinary. His work has and will continue to benefit countless people for generations to come. Let his life be an inspiration to all of us."

- Dana Behar (Seattle), SEC Alumnus

"What an incredible, beautiful man with extraordinary vision way ahead of others. Wonderful memories of his gentle yet powerful ways stay with me forever."

- Alisa Shamah Sutton (NY), SEC Alumna

"Thanks to his merit & his ability to translate his vision into a reality, I had many opportunities to enjoy beautiful Shabbatons & amazing trips to Israel."

- Andre Rotchel (Montreal), SEC Alumnus and Past President SEC-Montreal.

"A loss for the world at large, not just Sephardic, which will only be felt in time. Tsaddikim pass on Shabbat."

- Dr. Elie Levy (Seattle), SEC Alumnus, Past President Sephardic Bikur Holim

"Dr. Jose Nessim, one of the very impressive Jewish leaders of our generation...Through his tenacity, generosity, and grand worldview, he established this center in historic buildings of the Old City of Jerusalem. Dr. Nessim thought big. He wanted to revitalize Sephardic life and to connect new generations of Sephardim to their heritage. An ardent lover of Israel, he wanted young Jews to experience Jerusalem and the land of Israel.

Many people express grand ideas, offer pointed criticisms, but don't have the persistence and skill to realize their goals. Dr. Nessim was one of those rare individuals who not only had a grand vision but who actually worked to turn that vision into a reality.

Dr. Nessim had a classic Sephardic outlook that called for worldliness coupled with respect for tradition; healthfulness; a sense of responsibility for the Jewish people; concern for the wellbeing of humanity. It was an honor to know Dr. Nessim, and to see the tremendous pride and joy in his eyes as he spoke of the Sephardic Educational Center in Jerusalem. The Jewish world in general, and the Sephardic world in particular, has lost a great man, a man of determination and idealism, a man who made good things happen. May his family be consoled in the many wonderful memories they have of this special man."

— *Rabbi Marc D. Angel (NY), Director Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals; Rabbi Emeritus Cong. Shearith Israel.*

"I am so very sorry to hear about the passing of Dr. Nessim. I know he was a light and a pillar in the community. I also know what a tremendous legacy he left."

— *Emmanuelle Chiqui (NY/LA), Actress and Recipient of Cinema Sephard Award*

"Dr. Nessim was a dear friend for over 30 years, and mentor of mine, both in his role as an accomplished physician as well as a leader in the Sephardi community. He was an inspiration to me as a young rabbi who shared his goals of revitalizing Sephardi life and connecting the younger Sephardi generation with their noble heritage. It is due to his vision, optimism and hard work in establishing the Sephardic Educational Center that the Sephardi culture will live and flourish well into the future. We are all indebted to him for that and so much more.

His love of Judaism in general and his work on behalf of the State of Israel also serves as an example to others of dedication to the community. With all this, he also had enough time to have an exemplary medical career and dedicate time to his loving family. I remember very fondly my first trip in 1983 as a counselor at the SEC in Jerusalem. It was the beginning of a long and productive friendship with Dr. Nessim in support of his vision and goals of the SEC. Dr. Nessim will be sorely missed by all of us who admired, respected and indeed loved him. His smile, wit, and wisdom will be remembered forever and engraved in our memory... Yehi Zikhro Barukh."

— *Rabbi Elie Abadie, M.D., Edmond J. Safra Synagogue (NY)*



Dr. Salvador Sarfatti, President, SEC Argentina



Dr. Nessim, Morris Y. Angel meet Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu



Film Festival Committee Party



Jerusalem Day Parade in Old City

"It's a real loss to Sephardim. My life is completely different because of the SEC." — *Rabbi Jonathan Benzaquen (LA), SEC Alumnus*

"Doc was a man who truly made a difference in the world and impacted so many of our lives. His vision, generosity, and kindness were unparalleled. I am honored to have known him."

— *Elizabeth Mitrani (Miami), SEC Alumna, Former SEC-Miami Young Adults President*

"A man of vision, a man of dreams, a man of actions and a man of deeds; a man of faith and a man of devotion; an inspired man who was the source of inspiration for so many. He championed unity among Sephardi communities; he loved people and believed in educating and developing young leadership. He accomplished much during his lifetime, he helped so many people and definitely left a lasting mark for posterity."

— *Sephardic Cong. Em Habanim (LA)*

"Dr. Jose Nessim—his name alone evokes such admiration. His was a life defined not only by great potential, but by enormous accomplishment. The scope of his dreams stretched across all domains of human endeavor. He believed passionately in the cause and values of the organization which he founded, the Sephardic Educational Center. It is a vision rooted in meaningful ideals, and with his untiring commitment and leadership, he understood that an organization of international standing must not only unite and inspire, but transform.

You can't duplicate a legacy. Dr. Nessim's passing brings to a close a brilliant and unrepeatable chapter in our Sephardic history. His influence and the reverberations of his life's work, for each successive generation, will prove more enduring. The benefits are immeasurable, and in the end we all reap them. He will always live in the hearts and minds of this synagogue.

Dr. Nessim endowed our Sephardic future with a compassion the likes of which we may never know again. The ripple effect of such a life and spirit widens and stretches on forever."

— *Ronald Einy, President, Kahal Joseph Cong. (LA)*

"Dr. Joe Nessim lives on with us...His dreams have become our dreams. Those who worked closely with him will remember him with deep adoration. His tireless and endless time and effort to see the Sephardi tradition and culture be revived and made to flourish will continue to inspire us all to reach those goals. - May his soul rest in Peace."

— *Reuben Shellim (Australia/Israel), Former SEC Educator.*

"We must all continue his dream!!!!"

— *Violet Behar-Abrebaya (Miami), SEC Alumna*

"Doc was an amazing Man. I am fortunate to have known him."

— *Liz Edery (Toronto), SEC Alumna*

"I remember the Center in Jerusalem when it opened and was always proud to see it flourish. It's all about vision and courage. Doc had both. A true Ben Adam."

— *Rabbi David Adatto (LA) Cong. Shaarey Yerushalayim*

"Doc brought me into this world; and thru his vision of the SEC brought David and I together."

— *Miriam Behar Kassin (NJ), SEC Alumna and "SEC Couple"*

"I remember that summer at the SEC and how life changing the experience was and how fortunate I feel to have been part of it."

— *Michelle Attias (Gibraltar), SEC Alumna*



SUPPORT THE SEC!

HELP BUILD JERUSALEM AND **SECURE** OUR JEWISH FUTURE!

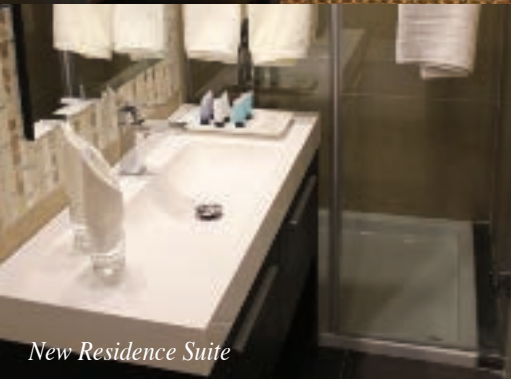
Join the SEC in making this dream a reality! Numerous naming, dedication and endowment opportunities are available. Help us revive and promote the beautiful, inspirational, and tolerant teachings of Classic Sephardic Judaism. You can be part of creating a permanent home for the much-needed Sephardic voice for the Jewish people worldwide. Support the SEC... help build Jerusalem and SECure our Jewish future.

A newly remodeled home for the SEC is finally here! We are proudly completing the remodel of one of the three historic buildings on our beautiful campus in the Old City of Jerusalem. The remodel of the charming "Sephardic Courtyard Building" that housed the historic Talmud Torah Sefaradi and Tiferet Yerushalayim Rabbinical School (once the most important Sephardic institutions of higher learning in the Old City) is near completion, and is poised to once again become the leading center of Sephardic learning. When the remodel is complete, this building will serve as our main educational wing, with a beautiful new library, a classic Sephardic synagogue, a community social lounge, a Sephardic Museum & Visitors Center, office suites and completely remodeled luxurious residence rooms. The building will include all of the modern amenities necessary to run educational programs in the 21st Century, but will retain the warm Mediterranean look and feel of the original historic structure.





New Residence Suite



New Residence Suite



Main Reception Lobby



Main Reception Lobby



Sephardic Synagogue

SEC JERUSALEM CAMPUS

DONOR OPPORTUNITIES & DEDICATIONS

| | | |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Dormitory Building</i> | \$1,000,000 | Available |
| <i>Courtyard Building</i> | \$1,000,000 | Dedicated |
| <i>Spanish Courtyard</i> | \$600,000 | Dedicated |
| <i>Courtyard Fountain & Garden</i> | \$180,000 | Available |
| <i>Sephardic Museum & Visitor's Center</i> | \$750,000 | Available |
| <i>Sephardic Library</i> | \$250,000 | Dedicated |
| <i>Sephardic Synagogue</i> | \$360,000 | Available |
| <i>Synagogue Heichal</i> | \$100,000 | Dedicated |
| <i>Community Social Lounge</i> | \$250,000 | Available |
| <i>Multimedia Room</i> | \$250,000 | Dedicated |
| <i>Beit Midrash</i> | \$250,000 | Available |
| <i>Main Reception Lobby</i> | \$180,000 | Available |
| <i>Rishon Le'Zion Historic Lobby</i> | \$180,000 | Available |
| <i>Educator's Offices</i> | \$50,000 | Available (2) |
| <i>Conference Room</i> | \$100,000 | Available |
| <i>New Residence Suites</i> | \$26,000 | Available (15) |

MEZUZOT

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Main Courtyard Mezuzah</i> | \$36,000 | Available |
| <i>Reception Lobby Mezuzah</i> | \$18,000 | Available |
| <i>Residence Room Mezuzot</i> | \$1,800 | Available (36) |

For more information or to donate contact Rabbi Daniel Bouskila
phone: **323.272.4574** • email: **info@secjerusalem.org**

SEC CAMPUS





Teen Summer Camp 2015

Sephardic Adventure Camp is a warm, welcoming, modern orthodox camp outside of Seattle, WA.

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And small enough to know every camper by name.

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Strengthening Jerusalem

Ensuring Jewish Identity

Creating tomorrow's leaders

SUPPORT THE SEC AND JOIN US

For more information, visit our website at

www.secjerusalem.org



SEC VISITORS

Visitors to SEC Friends of Israel Air Force visit the Center.



Visitors in Los Angeles



Miriam Shamah (L) and Rabbi Moshe Shamah (C) of New York visit Los Angeles during Dr. Nessim's memorial services. R. Shamah was the first Educational Director for English Speaking Students at the SEC.



Prof. Zvi Zohar, author and Professor of Sephardic Law & Ethics at Bar Ilan Univ. speaks to Young Family Havura on his new book of Sephardic Responsa at the home of Nir and Tere Weinblut



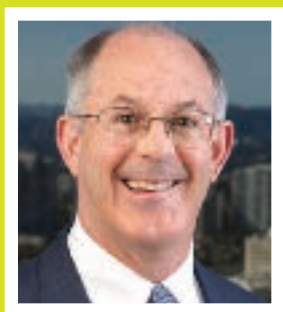
Adina Bar-Shalom, daughter of the late R. Ovadia Yosef and recipient of the 2014 Israel Prize at the home of Steve and Veronica Nessim

SEC FILM FESTIVAL

12TH LOS ANGELES Sephardic Jewish Film Festival OPENING GALA

NOVEMBER 9, 2014

PARAMOUNT PICTURES STUDIOS



Ronald J. Nessim
Maimonides
Leadership Award



Yehoram Gaon
Cinema Sepharad
Lifetime Achievement Award



Joelle & Jack Rimokh
Sephardic
Legacy Award

Screenings November 10-16 at Laemmle's Music Hall Theater

Films depicting the Sephardic Jewish experience from
all over the world.

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Film Festival Committee 2014



SEATTLE SEC SEPHARDIC INSTITUTE

2014

By Lela Franco, Board Member

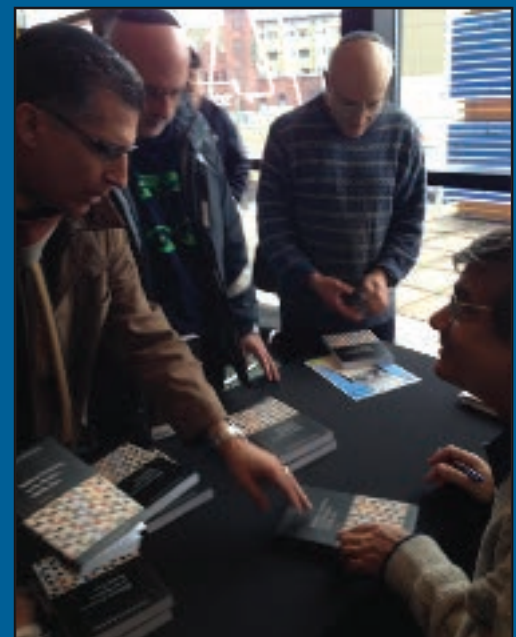
Seattle's Sephardic community was thrilled to host the SEC's Rabbi Bouskila and his special guest Prof. Zvi Zohar, author and Professor of Sephardic Law and Ethics at Bar Ilan Univ., last February for a very meaningful Shabbaton.

The weekend started with an intimate Thursday evening cocktail party at the Winston Wachter Art Gallery where Rabbi Bouskila and Neil Sheff were able to meet with a diverse section of the Sephardic community including University of Washington's Professor Devin Naar and folks from all of the local synagogues.

Over 250 community members shared a lovely Shabbat dinner at the Sephardic Bikur Holim Synagogue followed by a thoughtful presentation by Professor Zohar on Hanukkah lights and the unique Sephardic rituals pertaining to them. After a moving sermon from Rabbi Bouskila on Shabbat morning, we shared a delicious Kiddush luncheon prepared by Dalia Amon. Professor Zohar then tackled the complicated question of conversion and presented historical Halachic arguments, which reflect Sephardic thoughts on conversions. The topic was provocative to say the least, but Professor Zohar gave everyone enough interesting facts and statistics to keep the community discussing the subject for weeks after.

Sunday morning Kenny and Marlene Alhadeff's Majestic Bay theatre hosted a showing of the inciteful Rabbi Uziel documentary previously aired on Israeli television. While attendance was a bit affected by a sudden fall of snow the night before, there was still a substantial crowd at the theatre. Additionally, folks were able to meet Professor Zohar and get autographed copies of his book.

The Shabbaton was a great success, and truly an example of Dr. Nessim's vision of the Sephardic Educational Center serving as a way to "connect the four corners of the Sephardic world." We are excited to see programs like these grow in the future as we share ideas, customs, scholarship and friendship and the SEC ties it all together.





Rabbi Bouskila greeting Chief Rabbi Lau at SEC



Rabbi Abraham Shalem (center) was one of the last surviving students of Chief Rabbi Uziel. He loved to teach at the SEC and sadly he passed away a few days before Roshana



Former Chief Rabbi Bakshi-Doron Addresses the Conference at the SEC

MERHAV RABBINICAL PROGRAM & CONFERENCE

מופְּרָח שְׂמֵשׁ
Our Treasury of Sacred Knowledge
Founded by Avot Chochmei and Shemesh Chochmei

On October 20, 2014, SEC Director Rabbi Daniel Bouskila will deliver an address to a gathering of over 100 Israeli rabbis, at the opening conference of this year's MERHAV rabbinical program. The MERHAV rabbinical program represents a now one-year old partnership between the SEC and Memizrach Shemesh/Alliance. Together with our partners, the SEC is proud to be at the forefront of this cutting edge style of post-rabbinical training, where we train a select class of rabbinic fellows towards increased social consciousness, all through the lenses of the books and teachings of Sephardic sages. The current MERHAV class of rabbis is entering the second year of the two-year cycle of the program. Like last year, this year's conference features a host of distinguished speakers, including the Chief Rabbis of Israel. This is the second year that the MERHAV Conference takes place at the SEC, and the second year that the MERHAV program is co-sponsored by the SEC and taught in the SEC's Beit Midrash on its Jerusalem Campus.

In addition to his annual address at the conference, Rabbi Bouskila is a formal faculty member on MERHAV, and lectures to the rabbinic fellows 4-6 times a year, specifically focusing on the teachings of Rav Uziel, z"l, Israel's first Sephardic Chief Rabbi. The MERHAV program is headed by Rabbi Yitzchak Chouraqui and Rabbi David Zeno, who, together with Rabbi Bouskila, work closely with Alliance Israélite Universelle (KIACH) Executive Director Yehuda Maimran and Memizrach Shemesh Executive Director Eli Bareket to create this dynamic and unique rabbinical program.



THE LEADERSHIP AND TRADITION OF SEPHARDIC SAGES IN THE MODERN ERA

by Rabbi Yitzhak Chouraqui

Sephardic culture throughout the ages developed in concurrence with general culture, thus continuing the tradition of the Golden Age of Spain, in which the internal Jewish world recognized the wider world without losing its own uniqueness. The Sephardic Sages of recent generations were aware of current events and changes in the world around them. This is especially true in more recent years, since modernism in its European version arrived in the Eastern lands. The Sephardic reaction to the changes of the new age was quite different from the Ashkenazic response. On the one hand, the educational model of the Sephardic sages approved of general studies, and even considered them as worthy endeavors in addition to a Jewish education; and in the spirit of this approach, the Sephardic sages did not withdraw from modern society in the way that some Ashkenazic Orthodox elements did. On the other hand, with the deepening of European rule in Muslim countries, the pull towards secular culture was in opposition to tradition. Yet interestingly, the response of the Sages to protect the community's traditions was not to develop the model of strict, isolationist Orthodoxy. Instead, they emphasized the principles that strengthen faith -- especially those that have guarded Jewish identity and communal unity -- all with the goal of keeping the members of the community connected to the Jewish world as much as possible.

What characterizes the legal/interpretive methods of the Sephardic sages as it relates to *halakha* (Jewish Law)?

One of the characteristic principles of the Sephardic sages is the way they determine halakha. Sephardic Sages utilize the basic legal principle known in rabbinic language as *kohah dehetra adif* - the power of the lenient path is the preferred. This principle praises the greatness of the *Hakham* (wise sage) who delves deeply into an issue and finds a lenient halakhic solution.

Knowledge of life experience often accompanies and guides halakhic decision-making, together with a realistic viewpoint, according to which a harsh position would apply to only a small part of the public. In the view of Sephardic Judaism, the responsibility of the Hakham is to the whole community, to all of the Jewish people, perhaps for all future generations. Therefore it would not be responsible to set an excessively stringent standard of halakha that would cause a great portion of the community to be lost if they cannot abide by it.

Deciding halakha stringently does not reflect the greatness of a Hakham, and many times it attests to some theoretical educational theories taught in yeshivot, or to an outright fear of deciding the halakha. Such concerns prevent the Hakham from choosing the lenient path over the stricter one. Harsh halakhic decisions and the desire to accommodate all opinions have caused an accumulation of stringencies that makes it difficult for a later *posek* (Rabbinical decider) to weigh, maneuver, and navigate the halakhic process in the directions needed for a specific case that comes before him. Thus, fear of God pushes aside the true dynamic force of halakha.

Thus, between the strict and the liberal positions, the Sephardic Sages established a third path in which their great humility before God and their commitment to serve God brought them to adopt original halakhic stances in order to deal with new situations, without fearing lenient decisions, rulings or originality in the halakhic process.

Rabbi Yitzhak Chouraqui is the Director of MERHAV, the Joint Rabbinic Leadership program of Memizrach Shemesh and the SEC. He also serves as the Rabbi of Yad Ramah Synagogue in Jerusalem.



COLLEGE STUDENTS!!

INTRODUCING MERKAZ

THE SEC'S NEW

"Alternative Winter Break" Program in Israel

WINTER BREAK/DECEMBER 2015

Merkaz is a unique SEC Israel Experience offering college students the opportunity to spend a meaningful winter break in Israel.

ON MERKAZ YOU WILL:

- Meet inspirational Israeli leaders & innovators
- Engage in social action projects
- Learn the inside story of Israeli society
- Make a true difference in the lives of Israelis
- Live on the SEC's Campus in the Old City of Jerusalem
- Spend Shabbat a few moments from the Kotel!!



The Library

The Estate of Robert Geskin donated a tremendous Judaic and Sephardic library which is being shipped to the SEC Campus for inclusion in the Emquies Family Library.



Libi Be'Mizrach: The SEC's Newest Outreach to Israeli Youth

This year the SEC proudly launched our newest educational venture: Libi Be'Mizrach. Inspired by the lyrics from the classic Sephardic poem Libi Be'Mizrach (My heart is in the east) by Yehuda Halevy, the Libi Be'Mizrach program is, like the SEC, rooted in Jerusalem.

On its inaugural pilot Libi Be'Mizrach program, the SEC hosted 41 pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah 6th graders from the northern Israeli City of Beit Shean. Designed as an outreach program for Israeli youth from development towns, whose schools often do not have the budget to take their students on a field trip to visit Jerusalem, Libi Be'Mizrach seeks to strengthen the identity and pride of Sephardic youth from development towns all over Israel. The 41 students from Beit Shean spent two days and one night at the SEC's campus in Jerusalem, and with Rabbi Bouskila as their guide, they visited the City of David, the Kotel Tunnels, all of the Jewish Quarter's main sites, hiked on the Old City's walls, prayed at King David's tomb, studied and prayed at the Four Sephardic synagogues, and completed their two-day visit with a beautiful ceremony at the Kotel. Each student received a sweatshirt with the unique Libi Be'Mizrach/SEC logo, and they ate all of their meals at the SEC. Sponsored entirely by the SEC and generous donors, Libi Be'Mizrach is a transformative experience that goes a long way towards connecting young Israelis to their roots and heritage.





THE NEW TIFERET YERUSHALAYIM RABBINICAL PROGRAM: RESTORING THE SEC'S CROWN TO ITS FORMER GLORY

By Rabbi Daniel Bouskila
SEC International Director

SEC International Director

When I first started working for the SEC, I was looking through some files in our Los Angeles office, and I chanced upon a marvelous document written by Dr. Jose Nessim, of blessed memory, our beloved SEC founder. The document outlines the “long term goals and purpose of the Sephardic Educational Center.” At the very top of the list of goals, the document reads: “Rabbinic School: the program would be designed to train Sephardic rabbis to meet the needs of Sephardic communities throughout the diaspora. The main diet of religious courses would be supplemented with general courses in community organization, public speaking, history and psychology. There would also be a division for the training and education for teachers in yeshivot, Talmud Torahs and Jewish Day Schools.”

Shortly after finding this document, I traveled to Israel to work at our SEC campus in Jerusalem. While at the SEC, I found an old book that tells the history of the Sephardic communities of the Old City of Jerusalem. The book contains a chapter called “The Sephardic Talmud Torah.” This chapter tells the story of a famous Sephardic Talmud Torah whose classes were held on the ground floor of a two-story courtyard building in the Old City, and of a Sephardic Rabbinical School named “Yeshivat Tiferet Yerushalayim,” whose classes were held on the second story of that same courtyard building. As I read through this chapter, and looked at the pictures of the building that housed these institutions, I discovered something remarkable and exciting: these two schools were housed in the courtyard building that today houses our Sephardic Educational Center! I was moved and inspired to find out that the very same vision that Dr. Nessim laid out for the SEC had actually taken place in this very same building, between the years 1850-1930.



Students and faculty of the original Yeshivat Tiferet Yerushalayim

It is now time to act upon Doc's vision, and to restore the SEC courtyard building's crown to its former glory. That is why I am pleased to announce that in the fall of 2015, the first class of students will commence their rabbinical studies at the renewed Yeshivat Tiferet Yerushalayim at the SEC in Jerusalem. Together with our dear partners Memizrach Shemesh/Alliance Israélite (KIACH), the SEC will embark upon the journey of training a new generation of rabbis, educating them in the Classic Sephardic methodology and philosophy. At Tiferet Yerushalayim, our doors will be open to Israeli and Diaspora students, and together they will engage in studying the halakhic and philosophic texts and writings of classic Sephardic Sages such as Rav Yosef Messas, Rav Shalom Messas, Rav Benzion Meir Hai Uziel, Rav Haim David Halevy, Rav Avraham Shalem, Rav Ovadia Yosef, and many other classic Sephardic rabbinic scholars. Our students will be exposed to a wide range of thinkers, professors, rabbis and lecturers, and will engage in writing projects and community activities. We look to make Tiferet Yerushalayim an institution devoted to the research, study and promotion of classic Sephardic texts, because we believe that these texts have much to say – on a host of contemporary issues and problems -- to the entire Jewish world today, Sephardi and Ashkenazi, Israel and Diaspora.

When I read the chapter about Tiferet Yerushalayim, it listed as one of its teachers a “young scholar” named Benzion Uziel. This “young scholar” would rise to become Israel's first Sephardic Chief Rabbi, and one of the most prolific writers and creative rabbinic thinkers of the twentieth century. Because of their depth and traditional/modern outlook, Rav Uziel's brilliant books will form a core component of our studies. To know that he actually taught at Tiferet Yerushalayim, and was in our building everyday teaching Torah, is awe-inspiring, and serves as an additional inspiration towards our renewal of this once illustrious rabbinical institution.

The SEC looks forward to opening the doors of Tiferet Yerushalayim, training a new generation of rabbis in the Classic Sephardic tradition, and – through these new rabbis – spreading the positive and unifying message of Classic Sephardic Judaism for the entire Jewish world.

SEC ISRAEL

Amuta SEC Israel Board meets in June



*SEC Attorney and former Justice minister
Moshe Nessim and Chairman Neil Sheff*



*Israel Shalem with
Executive Board Member Nira Sayegh*

SEC HAMSA TEEN SUMMER

The Ultimate Summer Break Experience!

Attention Teens (and their parents!)

SEC HAMSA ISRAEL Summer 2015!!!

SEC Hamsa Israel, the hottest teen Israel trip around! Watch your e-mail for specific dates and information, coming your way VERY SOON!!!

For more information, visit our website at www.secjerusalem.org

SEC Hamsa Teen Trip to Israel December 2013





SEC HAMSA TEENS

SEC HAMSA TEENS NIGHT OUT LA

SEC Hamsa Teens meet at the home of Rachel and Neil Sheff for dinner, movie and discussion



SEC HAMSA MOVIE NIGHT LA

Dinner and a movie night sponsored by the Bouskila Family Foundation.



SUKKOT PARTY

At the home of Michael and Martine Ezekiel



SHAVUOT IN PALM SPRINGS





SHAVUOT IN PALM SPRINGS





SEC FAMILY BEACH DAY LA





Our New Board Members 2014

SPOTLIGHT ON NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Brigitte Dayan

Brigitte Dayan Afilalo has worked in the Jewish community as a professional and now as a lay leader. Formerly with the Wexner Foundation, she now sits on the boards of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, The West Side Sephardic Synagogue in Manhattan, the Sephardic Educational Center, and she is a member of the Gen I Task Force of UJA-Federation. She has a dual background in Jewish Studies (an MA in Bible from Yeshiva University) and Journalism (a BS and MS in Journalism from Northwestern University). Formerly the Managing Editor of JUF News in Chicago, she has also taught adult education classes in a variety of Jewish settings. A native of France and of Moroccan background, Brigitte lives in Manhattan with her husband, Ari Afilalo, a professor of law at Rutgers University Law School, and their children Liora and Rami. She is dedicated to the flourishing of Sephardic life in New York City, both through her synagogue, which is a center for Sephardic ex-pats in NYC, and in the general community, and she is passionate about the plethora of new Sephardic initiatives (synagogues, schools, media awareness) in American Jewish life.



Edward Sabin

"I am an alumnus twice over of the SEC summer trip, 1981 and 1982. I got to know my wife Diana, who also went on a SEC summer trip, on a weekend SEC High School program that Neil Sheff led. So we are a true SEC couple!! I owe my family to the SEC!"

Edward Sabin is the Group COO for Discovery and TLC Networks, as well as Science Channel and Velocity. In this role, Sabin has direct oversight for all strategy, network operations, talent management, research, financial and business matters for Discovery's two U.S. flagships, Discovery Channel and TLC, as well as Science Channel and one of the fastest growing networks in the United States, Velocity. Prior to joining Discovery in 2007, Sabin was with Fox Television Studios for seven years, where he served as Senior Vice President, Business Development and Operations, and, before that, Vice President, Business and Legal Affairs. In these roles, Sabin oversaw the business operations for domestic production groups, and he structured the company's new media production business model. Edward received both his Juris Doctor and Bachelor of Arts degrees from UCLA. Limore Shalom has been involved with the SEC since 1994, when she attended her first convention in Toronto. She was president of the SEC Young Adult Chapter in Los Angeles from 1996 to 1998.



Lela Franco

Lela Franco grew up in Los Angeles California and her parents are of Syrian-Jewish background by way of Mexico. A graduate from UCLA with a degree in History, she left her job as a voice over talent agent in Los Angeles to marry and join her husband Harley Franco in Seattle, Washington. Lela has been involved in the Jewish community both in Los Angeles and in Seattle. She was an early participant (1980, 1981) and builder of the Sephardic Educational Center in Jerusalem, spearheading teen and young adult programs in Los Angeles and throughout the Sephardic world. Her brother Edward Sabin and sister, Celia DeMayo were also participants.

She served on the board of the Seattle Jewish Day School for 8 years, Congregation Ezra Bessaroeth for 4 years and the Patrons of Cystic Fibrosis for 20 years. Additionally, she has taken a position on two board committees at Seattle Academy, an independent preparatory school in the Seattle area. Lela currently sits on the University of Washington Jewish Studies advisory board and serves as chair of the Sephardic committee on that board. She has chaired a variety of fund raisers in the Seattle area from charity auctions to golf tournaments. Together with her husband, she has received achievement awards for Cystic Fibrosis, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund and the Jewish Day School. In 2005 she won Jewish Day School Commitment to Community Award for volunteerism. Lela continues to have a passion for education, Jewish and otherwise and has a personal commitment to sustainability and the environment.



Limore Shalom

Limore Shalom has been involved with the SEC since 1994, when she attended her first convention in Toronto. She was president of the SEC Young Adult Chapter in Los Angeles from 1996 to 1998. Limore is involved with the SEC because of the warm SEC community, wonderful friends she's met all over the world and her love of the Sephardic traditions and customs. Limore is a CPA and currently Chief Financial Officer of Texollini, Inc., a fully vertical textile mill in Long Beach, CA.



Board Member Isack Fadlon & R. Bouskila meet Jewish Agency Chairman, Natan Sharansky



Board member Dee Meles visits SEC



Israel Programs Cte. meet to plan Israel programs for 2015

*SEC...making a difference
in the Jewish world*



From the **EDITOR:**

Dr. Jose A. Nessim -- our "Doc"

Doc was a father figure to me, especially since my own father died when I was a baby; he was a mentor who taught the values of living healthy and "walking with God" and being a "Ben-Adam"; he taught me the value of humility and charity; he taught me the importance of being a leader through actions and not words; he taught me through his example and relationship with Freda how to treat my wife with love and friendship as a true life partner; he taught me to be calm and not let bad thoughts and words affect my character; he taught me a love of Israel and the importance of unity among the Jewish People. He meant so much to me and my family and it will be very

hard, though we must try, to emulate his example and uphold his legacy for our children and grandchildren, and for the entire Jewish People.

How did one individual have such a profound effect on so many thousands of people around the world, people we don't even know, from India to Turkey to Buenos Aires to Mexico to Israel? How did one man alone bring a renewed pride in our heritage, a Sephardic voice come to life again, unity among diverse groups, opening our eyes once again to a golden past. And yet he reminded us constantly that we were a "Center for All Jews" - stressing unity of the Jewish People while not losing sight of our goal to strengthen the Sephardic "weak arm" of Judaism by invigorating and reviving our communities. Our generation has been profoundly changed by this one life.

Dr. Nessim was a firm believer in democracy and felt the SEC, its young adult programs and all our events be led not by one person along but by groups of leaders. He did not want to be the only person to lead the SEC. He longed for a new generation of leaders. He loved to read and study the lessons of the Torah and was especially fond of the story of Moses appointing leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds and leaders of tens, to create a leadership network that didn't mean Moses was the only one to lead. Dr. Nessim didn't want to be alone at the top and he certainly encouraged me to lead and make our own decisions among our young adult committees and never interfered or overruled. He felt the youth needed to make their own decisions, programs and be responsible for their future. They did and under this model, we flourished. He wanted us all to be soldiers in this army and loathed the model of Sephardic communities of the past led only by "generals" with an uninvolved and apathetic community.

While he envisioned the SEC creating a university level Rabbinical and Lay Leadership training program, and we will God willing see this begin in the next year, he started the SEC to cater to young people. He said he "wanted to create the SEC to teach the beauty of Judaism in a language and method that our generation understands." He really did love young people.



He wrote: "It is no longer possible to expect our young people to remain Jewish and marry within the faith simply because they were born of Jewish parents".

He wrote: "We must think and deal well with everyone we come in contact with-Jew or Gentile. Isolation from other Jews or Gentiles is not necessary. We must continuously strive to mature more spiritually by studying the Torah and the sacred writings for the purpose of becoming more human, more humble, more giving of ourselves with time and money, and more G-d like." What words to live by!!

If you dream big, love your fellow man, walk humbly with God and know that you were put on this earth to make a difference, you can. He admonished us, saying: "Don't wait for something to happen, make it happen!" That is the message he left to all of us. Take up the challenge and know that you can make a difference with your life. Join us to insure his legacy will always live on in future generations.

Thank God for sharing this special soul with us. We will never forget him.

Neil J. Sheff, SEC Chairman