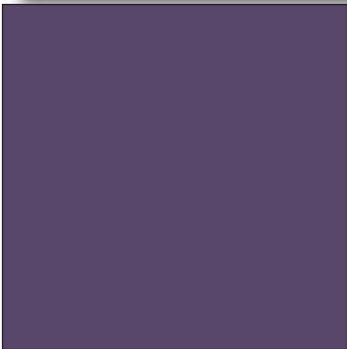
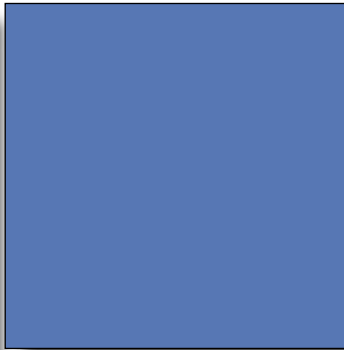


K.J.A. BULLETIN

April 2007



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and Reviews*

*Travel Adventures
Mexico - San Diego - Israel*

Announcements and Updates

Hag Sameach

*Search the Scripture Well
-Karaite Motto*



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ACTING HAKHAM

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OFFICERS

President

Elie Moussa • eliemoussa@sbcglobal.net • 650.591.6183

Vice President

Joe Wahed • jwahed@pacbell.net • 925.631.1231

Secretary

Abraham Massuda • abraham_massuda@comcast.net • 408.274.1064

Treasurer

Marc Khedr • mkhedr50@aol.com • 650.871.9727

BOARD MEMBERS

Joe Abel • jabel4200@yahoo.com • 925.685.5134

Oreett Lichaa • swim961@earthlink.net • 650.312.8616

Joe Moussa • jmoussa@flash.net • 650.593.9507

David Ovadia • davidovadia@sbcglobal.net • 415.661.3643

Joe Ovadia • jovadia@attbi.com • 925.930.9985

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PUBLIC RELATIONS LIAISON

Mourad El Kodsi

EDITORS

Shawn Lichaa • shawnlichaa@gmail.com • 650.245.2461

Fred Lichaa • flichaa@hotmail.com • 650.341.4725

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Nora Massuda • nmassuda@comcast.net • 408.425.4259

WEB MASTER

Michael Ovadia • nirvman@yahoo.com • www.karaites.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members,

It is an honor to have been elected president. I would like to express my gratitude to the KJA Board for having the faith in me to lead our community.

Thirteen years ago, our Congregation was blessed with a place in which we can worship. Although we have made improvements, to the facility, recently a number of items that needed immediate attention have resulted in a number of unexpected expenses.

Leaks in many different areas of the roof made replacement necessary. Marc Khedr diligently acquired a number of quotes from different contractors, and the Board selected the best candidate for the job. In December of 2006 the furnace was no longer functioning and was replaced adding to the increasing number of repair expenses. We thank Joseph Moussa for his hard work in selecting the correct people for the job and having it replaced. Yet, still ahead of us are two essential projects. First, we must replace the awning at the entrance of the Synagogue. Second, we need to replace six large glass windows on the roof.

Friends, your support and donations are greatly appreciated and truly needed at this point. Please support our efforts so that we will continue to have a safe and functional synagogue.

Another area of my focus has been to strengthen the relationship with Israel. We are working with Rav Hayim Levy for advice on different issues and with Rav Moshe Dabah in Jerusalem for help in the Torah reading. I have the Chumash (five books of Moses) on CD with the Karaite melody. If you would like a copy, I will gladly send you one. If you are planning to visit or spend a night at the oldest Karaite Synagogue in Israel, located in Jerusalem, please contact Rav Moshe Dabah; he will be happy to welcome you: Phone 02.585.7935 or e-mail bwd80@bezeqint.net.

I wish you and your family a happy Passover, which traditionally is a time to celebrate FREEDOM while remembering those who are not free.

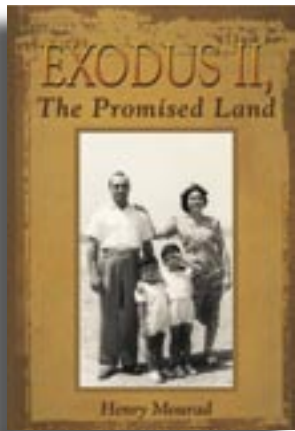
May peace be with Israel and the whole world and let's say Amen!

Elie Moussa
President

EXODUS II: THE PROMISED LAND

HENRY MOURAD HAS RECENTLY AUTHORED A BOOK ABOUT HIS CHILDHOOD IN EGYPT AND THE WAY HE AND OTHER JEWS were treated in Egyptian society.

About Exodus II:



Available through
Airleaf Publishing
www.airleaf.com

A child is born in old Cairo; life does not show him any mercy! At the age of six, in horror, he watches his Jewish school burn down – the brutal act left him with a recurring nightmare. When he was eleven, the Suez War began, his relatives were deported, and the family business was sequestered. At school, his classmates ridiculed him, and his Arabic teacher made his education a living Hell, only because he was Jewish. When he was admitted at Cairo University, he did not dare disclose his true faith. He remained undercover, pretended to be an observant Muslim, avoiding the risk of confrontation. But it was not to be; he was eventually discovered and the resulting mayhem was harrowing. Mid-third year in college, his family’s business was confiscated without reparations. Luckily, his father evaded imprisonment, but the family had no choice but to escape from Egypt. As they attempted to flee, their humiliation persisted and climaxed when they were denied freedom twice at Cairo’s Airport.

Throughout the book, this boy’s life is vibrantly recounted, capturing the readers’ compassion while leaving them in utter shock.

A true story that defies the imagination!

OUR SIX WEEKS IN ISRAEL

*By: The Cohens, The Gazzars,
and The Pessahs*

WHAT A GREAT EXPERIENCE – GOING TO ISRAEL AND LEARNING HEBREW AT THE ULPAN! ODETTE & JACOB COHEN OF Baltimore, Amy & Albert Gazzar of Laguna Niguel, and Remy Pessah had the adventure of a lifetime, as we spent six amazing weeks in Israel. When we arrived in Israel, it felt like home. The Ulpán of our choice was Ulpán Ra’anana because it was geared to English and French speakers, even though the class was conducted entirely in Hebrew. We rented a fully furnished apartment and walked about a mile every day to school. We developed strong friendships and enjoyed every minute of our time.

During our trip, we reconnected with so many friends and family. We sponsored a reception at a banquet hall in Ashdod, at which 200 people attended. At the event, we received the blessings of the local Rav, Rav Hayim. It was so nice to see everyone. We miss Israel tremendously. It would be a great idea if people would consider investing in a time share or purchasing a home there.

Our trip to Israel can be summarized in a few words:

UNFORGETTABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE WITH SUPERB PEOPLE IN AN AMAZING COUNTRY!



Rav Hayim blesses us. From Left to Right: Albert Gazzar, Brenda Gazzar, Amy Gazzar, Remy Pessah, Odette Cohen and Jacob Cohen. In the background: Emcee Yona Firrouz

KARAITES REPRESENTED AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

By: Joe Abel

BORN IN EGYPT, JOE GREW UP PRACTICING KARAITE JUDAISM. JOE HAS BEEN VERY ACTIVE WITH THE KARAITE JEWS OF America and currently serves on our board.

The Karaite Jewish University (KJU) rented a booth in the Exhibit Hall of the General Assembly of the United Jewish Communities and the Federation of North America. The University invited representatives from the KJA to help staff the booth and discuss what it means to be a Karaite. The General

Assembly took place in Los Angeles, November 12 - 15, 2006. Shawn Lichaa represented the KJU. Albert Farag, Fred Ovadia from Los Angeles and I attended the program.

The General Assembly is one of the largest Jewish events in North America. It is attended by Jewish organizations from North America and Israel. According to Shawn Lichaa, about 3,000

people participated in this event. The theme for this conference was the recent war between Israel and Hizballah. Many speakers and sessions focused on this issue and threat posed by Iran's nuclear program.

The KJA prepared a one page brief summary about the Karaite Jews and the KJA. Shawn Lichaa prepared a summary about the Karaite Jewish University and brought copies of the booklet he co-authored to give away at the booth. Jason Sutherland designed the banners. We also brought a copy of our Haggadah. I brought pictures of our Synagogue in Daly City. Albert brought a copy of the Saturday prayer book.

I spent most of my time at the booth. I attended two sessions, one of which was a speech by former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. There were a lot of young people at the event. They are viewed as the future leaders of their Jewish communities.



This poster, designed by Jason Sutherland, was prominently displayed at the booth. The book may be ordered from Amazon.

Jewish organizations and universities had booths. The David Project, which educates people about the Jewish refugees from Arab countries, had a booth next to the KJU. Many participants stopped by the KJU booth. We handed out over 200 KJA and KJU flyers and booklets to booth visitors. Most of the visitors knew about the Karaite Jews. Few had no idea. Many of the Yeshiva University students stopped by and

asked questions about our practice and what we believe in. Noah of Yeshiva University stopped by and inquired about whether Karaites might be interested in sitting on an educational panel at Yeshiva University. With the exception of two visitors, the overall response to our presence was positive.

In 2007, the GA conference will be held in Nashville, Tennessee. I encourage everyone, in particular the young adults, to attend this conference.

THE COMMANDMENT OF LOVING THE LORD

By: Justin Joyner

Justin Joyner is a student of the Karaite Jewish University, an online learning center for those interesting in studying Karaite Judaism. Mr. Joyner grew up in Stockton, California and began his interest in Karaism in 1999. He is currently a graduate student at CSU Sacramento pursuing an MS degree in Speech-Language Pathology. Justin originally wrote this essay as part of his studies with the Karaite Jewish University.

IN DEUTERONOMY 6:4, WE FIND WHAT JEWS REFER TO AS THE *SHEMA* – THE DECLARATION OF GOD’S UNITY: “Hearken O Yisrael, the LORD our God, the LORD One!” (The Schocken Bible). Both Rabbanites and Karaites recite the *Shema* morning and evening. The *Shema* is considered the central portion of the prayer service. However, I believe the *Shema* is only a precursor to the most important *mitzvah* (commandment) of all: “To love the LORD your God.” In the Karaite siddur, the *Shema* is composed of the declaration of God’s unity, followed by three important passages that give us an outline of the Jewish concept of loving God. The first passage is the commandment to love God and to recall His mitzvot (commandments) in our hearts and speech. The second tells us the consequences of loving God in relation to keeping the Torah. The final statement commands us to make a reminder to help us remember to keep the mitzvot.

The first passage of the *Shema* tells us to love the LORD with all our mental faculties including our heart, soul and entire being. (Deuteronomy 6:5). Regarding the heart, Karaite sage Elijah Basyatchi wrote, “*The rational ordinances are the fundamental ordinances established and planted in man’s heart...i.e., they are planted and rooted in the heart, which is the fountainhead of wisdom...*” (Karaite Anthology, 241). The heart, according to Basyatchi, refers to our reasoning centers.

לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
וּלְעַבְדוֹ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּכֶם
וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁכֶם

The passage also commands us to talk about Torah throughout the day: “And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when thou lie down, and when thou rise up.” This is exactly what King David did: “*O, how I love Your Torah! All day long it is my conversation*” (Psalms 119:97, The Stone Edition). If something is our conversation, it implies that it is constantly on our mind and, consequently, in our speech. It is interesting that the first passage after the *Shema* does not refer to performing the commandments of the Torah; rather, it urges us to keep the Torah on our minds.

Historically, Judaism has never separated loving the LORD from doing his Torah. In fact, by doing Torah, we show God that we love Him. This is the meaning of the second passage of the *Shema* found in Deuteronomy 11:13-21. Not only does the second passage refer to the mental and emotional aspects of loving God; but it places them as complements to serving God. These are the conditions by which the blessings or curses of the LORD come forth: “*And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will give grass in thy fields for thy cattle, and thou shalt eat and be satisfied*” (Deuteronomy 11:13-15, JPS 1917).

This passage makes clear that loving the LORD and doing His Torah brings about blessings and security. Ancient Israel, which was an agricultural society, relied heavily on the mercies of the LORD for a successful harvest. Consequently, the LORD tells us that Israel's performance of Torah, coupled with love for God, helps sustain the three major foundations of nature: vegetation, animal, and human. Therefore, when the Nation of Israel fails to love God and observe Torah, vegetation suffers, which in turn causes suffering and starvation for both Man and beast. "...and ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you" (Deuteronomy 11:16-17, JPS 1917).

Converts to Judaism are specifically mentioned in the book of Isaiah as "nilvim" or "joiners"; they have the same duties as those of any Israelite: *"Also the aliens, that join themselves to the LORD, to minister unto Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast by My covenant: Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon Mine altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples"* (Isaiah 56:6-7, JPS 1917). Converts are considered full-fledged Israelites in God's eyes and are subject to the same punishment as any other Israelite which rejects Torah.

The third and final section of the *Shema* is a logical conclusion to the commandment of loving God. This passage discusses the fringes (tsitsiyoth) on the corners of our garments as a physical, visual reminder of keeping the Torah *"Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them throughout their generations fringes in the corners of their garments, and that they put with the fringe of each corner a thread of blue. And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye go not about after your*

own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go astray; that ye may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy unto your God" (Numbers 15: 38-40, JPS 1917). Elijah Basyatchi considers the tsitsith a "practical ordinance". Such ordinances are *"the road and entrance to the reception of the rational ordinances, and scholars have said that the practical ordinances are the preparation for, and the introduction to, the rational ordinances."* (Karaites Anthology, 240). Therefore, there should be no doubt that the tsitsith, as a practical ordinance, is a strong reminder of the rational ordinance to love God with all our hearts and to keep his Torah.

Our Rabbanite brethren should take note of the significance of this passage. It is the only place in the Torah where the Israelites are overtly commanded to make a physical, visible reminder of the mitzvah. It is well known that the Rabbinites have derived the creation of their *tefillin* from the literal interpretation of certain Torah verses. However, Karaites have always understood those texts to be metaphors. The tsitsiyoth have been a constant practice of the Israelites from the time of Moses, whereas the Rabbanite use of *tefillin* is a relatively new innovation.

When reading the *Shema* in the siddur, it should be understood that we are faced with the most important mitzvah in the Torah: loving the LORD. The first paragraph stresses loving God with all our subjective faculties as well as the occupation of the Torah in our daily lives. The second passage reminds us that our prosperity and punishment depends on loving the LORD and doing His Torah. The last passage commands us to create visible reinforcers that remind us to keep the Torah. Whatever differences may appear in Rabbanite and Karaite Judaism, both movements can agree that these three passages set the foundations for all Torah observance.

"to love the LORD your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul"

KARAITE BIBLIOGRAPHY NEARS COMPLETION

By: Barry Dov Walfish

Mr. Walfish is a Judaica Specialist at the University of Toronto Library.

FOR CLOSE TO TWENTY YEARS, I HAVE BEEN OCCUPIED WITH COMPILING A COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE KARAITES. This project is finally nearing completion and hopefully will be published in Israel late this year or early next.

I first became interested in the Karaites while studying for my comprehensive exams in Jewish History in graduate school at the University of Toronto. I had to do a unit on the Karaites and while perusing Zvi Ankori's *Karaites in Byzantium*, I noticed at the head of the bibliography of his book the statement that a comprehensive bibliography of Karaitica was a major desideratum in Jewish studies. This stuck with me and some time after I completed my doctorate I decided to take on the task. I wrote to Leon Nemoy one of the great scholars of Karaitica of the twentieth century. He wrote back saying that this project was indeed worthy and necessary but would be almost impossible to complete due to the magnitude of the task. Instead of discouraging me, Nemoy's response only strengthened my resolve.

I started with the Ankori's bibliography and gradually cast my net wider, moving on to published library catalogues and indexes of periodicals. Every item was verified and the footnotes perused for further references. Gradually my files grew. While on sabbatical in Israel in 1993, I began to realize that there must be a lot of material in Russia and Poland that I was missing. It was around this time that the Ben-Zvi Institute agreed to support my research and eventually publish the finished work. The Institute generously arranged for student assistants to scour the libraries in Russia,

Poland and Lithuania for additional materials. One of these students, Mikhail Kizilov of Crimea, has become a partner in the project and has contributed immeasurably to its success. The sections on Eastern Europe of the bibliography are the largest and include about 40 % of its items. I have not counted but I would estimate that the bibliography contains close to 8,000 items, many of which are annotated.

"I first became interested in the Karaites while studying for my comprehensive exams in Jewish History in graduate school at the University of Toronto."

The bibliography is classified and is divided into three main sections: history, religion and culture. There are also three general chapters. In all there are a total of thirty chapters in the book. Once the bibliography is closed, it will still have to be indexed. The plan is to have indexes for authors, subjects, titles of Karaite works, places of publication for Karaite works, and manuscripts cited.

It is hoped that the bibliography will be an important resource for scholars and students of Karaism and will stimulate research in this growing area of Jewish Studies. In the course of my research I have had many contacts with members of Karaite communities in Israel, Poland, Lithuania and the United States. They have all been very helpful to me in my research. I hope that my work will contribute to a deeper understanding of the Karaite phenomenon in Judaism and will promote closer ties between- the Karaite and Rabbanite communities.

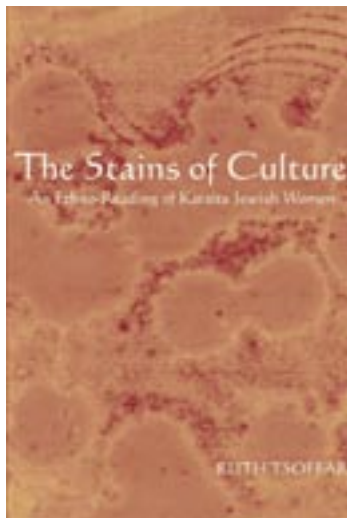
BOOK ON KARAITE WOMEN EARNS PRAISE

THE STAINS OF CULTURE: AN ETHNO-READING OF KARAITE JEWISH WOMEN, authored by Associate Professor Ruth Tsoffar of the University of Michigan, was named a finalist and runner-up in the Jewish Book Council's National Jewish Book Award Competition.

About The Stains of Culture:

A minority within Judaism, the Karaites are known as a 'reading community'—one that looks to the Bible as the authority in all areas of life, including intimate relations and hygiene. Here Ruth Tsoffar considers how Egyptian Karaites of the San Francisco Bay Area define themselves, within both California culture and Judaism, in terms of the Bible and its bearing on their bodies. Women's perspectives play a large role in this ethnography; it is their bodies that are especially regulated by rules of cleanliness and purity to the point where their biological cycles—menstruation, procreation, childbirth, lactation—determine their place in the community.

As Tsoffar notes, the female body itself becomes a richly encoded text that reveals much about the Karaites' attitudes toward the interrelated issues of gender, sex, food, procreation, sacred traditions, time and space, as well as identity. The author illuminates the cultural strategies used by Karaite women to sustain their religious ideologies yet find personally meaningful ways of reading. Of all known minority groups in early Jewish history, only the Karaites have survived, continually contemporizing their culture. Through a study of the rich, animated ritual experience of niddah (menstruation and purity codes in Leviticus), we see how the Karaite women seek to imagine and narrate a new history of purity through their bodies.



*The Stains of Culture can be ordered directly from the publisher:
Phone: 1-800-978-7323
ISBN: 0-8143-3223-4
Price: \$27.95*

The Stains of Culture presents issues of meaning and interpretation in a way valuable to students of women's studies, minority cultural production, and Judaism, especially to those interested in exploring Judaism's diversity.

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abraham_massuda@comcast.net

phone: 408.274.1064

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE WELCOMED THESE BUNDLES OF JOY INTO THE WORLD:



Aaron Jonah Daniel, son of Maurice and Mira Daniel, born October 27, 2005
(photo left)

Jordan Jacob Lichaa, son of Oreett and Daniel Lichaa,
born May 23, 2006



Aaron Matthew Ovadia, son of Robert and Debbie Ovadia,
born October 12, 2006 *(photo right)*



Malaina Paige Naizmand, daughter of Collete and Arsalan Naizmand,
born February 20, 2007 *(photo left)*

WE CONGRATULATE THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS ON HAVING COMPLETED THEIR B'NAI MITZVAH:

Danielle Saleh, daughter of Joe and Susan Saleh, February 18, 2006
(photo right)



Adam Mourad, son of Tewfik and Nelly Mourad, September 2, 2006

Ian Pessah, son of Roger and Lori Pessah, September 30, 2006

Shelva Rachel El Gazzar, daughter of Soliman and Lisa El Gazzar, March 24, 2007

Aaron Ovadia, son of Albert and Doris Ovadia, March 24, 2007

WITH HAPPINESS TO THE NEWLY ENGAGED COUPLES:



Michael Ovadia, son of Isaac and Magda Ovadia, Engaged to Kimberly Moglen
(photo left)

Victor Khedr, son of Marc and Bella Khedr, Engaged to Gabrielle El Gamil,
daughter of Fortunata and Zaki El Gamil

Mike Abel, son of Joe and Amira Abel, Engaged to Lilach
Partouk who were introduced by David and Rachely Pessah *(photo right)*



Daniel Benjamin Allen, son of Victor and Laila Allen, Engaged to marry Rach-
eline Balassiano, daughter of Victor and Denise Balassiano of Alexandria, Egypt

LOTS OF LOVE TO OUR NEWLYWEDS...



David Ovadia, son of Feryal and Alan Ovadia
Married Stephanie Fenoy, August 6, 2006 - California *(photo left)*

Ray Marzouk, son of Joyce and the late Walter Marzouk
Married Ilanit Rochverger, August 27, 2006 - California
(photo right)



Aaron Abraham Marzwell, son of Josette and Neville Marzwell, Married
Cazzie Emily Leschen, September 16, 2006 - New York

CONGRATULATIONS!!!



Isabel Khedr, daughter of Marc and Bella Khedr, Graduated from Samuel
Merritt College, December 2006. She passed the California Nursing Board
Exam in February 2007. *(photo left)*

- Save the Date -

**The Karaite Jews of America
Is Planning
The First Ever North American Conference on
Karaite Judaism
Labor Day Weekend 2008
Keep Your Eyes Peeled for More Information!**



KJA DESCENDS UPON MEXICO, AGAIN!

IN WHAT IS BECOMING A FAVORITE EVENT OF THE KARAITE Jews of America, roughly 30 people attended this year's excursion to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Our families enjoyed renewing old friendships and spending time with each other. We even continued our tradition of holding services at our resort. This is one of the largest gatherings of Karaites in the history of Mexico. We hope that more families can join us next year.



Front row from left to right:

Albert Farag, Benjamin Pessah, Josette Marzwell, Feryal Siahou, Sarine Pessah, Fifi Pessah, Amin Pessah

Back row from left to right:

Elie Moussa, Mourad Lichaa, Habib Siahou, Nellie Marzwell, David Ovadia, Sara Moussa, Neville Marzwell, Fourtunee Saddik, Marc Khedr, Feryal Ovadia, Bella Khedr, Marie Mourad, Alan Ovadia, Joe & Amira Abel

Not shown in the picture:

Rachel Cohen, Marcelle Lichaa, Elie and Emma Pessah and Rachel Lany.

SINGLE IN SUNNY SAN DIEGO!

By: Nora Massuda

THIS PAST AUGUST WE REVIVED THE 21 AND OVER SINGLES RETREAT AND HELD IT IN SUNNY SAN DIEGO. We had participants from Boston, Wisconsin, Baltimore, Israel, Virginia as well as the Bay Area and did a variety of activities including a wine tour at the local wineries in Temecula. Jeanne Massuda and Lillian Pessah were masters in the kitchen and cooked up a storm every day. We were thankful to be blessed by many guest visitors and special thanks to Joe and Mona Khedr who opened up their home to us for dinner and discussion.



Thank you Jack Ovadia, Mira and Ben Pessah, Jeanne Massuda, Lillian Pessah, Marc Khedr, Elie Moussa, the KJA Board, and all those who participated to make this happen. The retreat was a huge success and we look forward to hopefully having another one in 2008.

Pictured: Steven Sciammas, Joel Massuda, Victor Masliah, Rina El Kodsi, Gabrielle El Gamil, Victor Khedr, Ron Hefez, Jeffery Sciammas, Joshua Marzwell, Joseph Allen, Nora Massuda, Neria Haroeh, Lillian Pessah, Mira Pessah, Sheila Pessah, Jeanne Massuda, Miranda Lishaa, Ryan Pessah, Ben Pessah, and Elie Moussa

JOSEPHS FOR OUR COUNTRY *By: Shawn Lichaa*

“AND THEN AROSE A NEW KING OF EGYPT WHO KNEW NOT OF JOSEPH.” (EXODUS 1:8). THE ENSLAVEMENT OF THE JEWISH people in the land of Egypt finds its roots in this one line of the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Scriptures teach us that Joseph earned the respect of the pharaoh of Egypt by interpreting the pharaoh’s dreams. Joseph told the pharaoh that there would be seven years of feast followed by seven years of famine. Joseph advised the pharaoh to save twenty percent of the crops from the years of feast so that the Egyptians would not starve in the years of famine. Because of Joseph’s wisdom, the Egyptians survived their famine, and the pharaoh invited the Israelites to live in the land of Egypt. However, soon the pharaohs forgot about what Joseph had done, and they enslaved the nation of Israel.

I write this on my way home from this year’s AIPAC Policy Conference. AIPAC is the most influential organization affecting relationships between the United States and Israel. The lesson of AIPAC is the same as the lesson of the Torah: If our government knows not of the Jews or of Israel’s friends, we are not guaranteed that the United States will support Israel in her time of need. About seventy years ago, American Jews went to the president to convince him to bomb the railroad tracks that the Nazis were using to transport European Jews to their deaths. They failed. This weekend, the Vice President of the United States came to us to speak.

My parents and their families grew up in Egypt and suffered mightily under the hand of a Gamal Abdel Nasser, someone whom I can only describe as a modern day pharaoh. Despite the fact that the Jewish population of Egypt approached 80,000 in the early to mid 1900s, Jews were essentially barred from serving in the Egyptian government. They were prevented from being a modern Joseph and adding their insight to the policies of their country. Sadly, Nasser, like the pharaohs of old, imprisoned Jewish males over the age of eighteen during the Six Day War. Although the war lasted only six days, my family’s internment lasted three years.

My parents raised me to believe that the United States is the best country in the world. I fondly remember driving with my father in his car, when a country music song came on the radio. The song was “Have You Forgotten,” by Daryl Worley. It reminds us of the September 11th

attacks and how we need to continue to fight terror until terror is defeated. My father became misty-eyed and with a quiver in his voice said, “There is a lot of patriotism in country music.” He then made sure I knew how lucky I was to live in the land of opportunity. I saw the pain of his childhood in his eyes. At that moment I had two epiphanies. First, I promised myself that I would never again take for granted the opportunities we have in the United States. Second, I promised myself that I would work to make sure Israel and America continue to be safe havens for the Jews of the world.

I am blessed to live in the United States of America, where the First Amendment to the Constitution protects our right to petition our government for change. Today, over five thousand activists lobbied their senatorial and congressional representatives in support of a strong relationship between the United States and Israel. But as Jewish Americans, this is not enough. If we want to continue our prosperity in the United States we need to partake in greater civic involvement. We must not only lobby our government, but we also must serve in all levels of our government. We must volunteer in our schools and in local societal organizations.

Let it never again be said that any government know not of what the Jews have done for its country. Let us never again return to the days when the Jewish people are under attack and the world sits by idly. Let us never again wonder how a holocaust could happen. Let us make sure the next holocaust does not happen. Let the Jewish people be seen as Josephs for our country.

A MEMORIAL BETWEEN YOUR EYES:

HOW TWO OF THE “TEFILLIN” VERSES ARE ACTUALLY A
REMINDER OF OUR EXODUS

By: Eliezer ben Efraim HaKohen

Eliezer ben Efraim HaKohen holds a law degree from Western State University College of Law. Born to an observant Rabbinite family, Eliezer adopted Karaite Judaism in 1998. He has been instrumental in founding the Karaite Jewish University, an online learning center for those interested in Karaite Judaism.

EVERY SO OFTEN, KARAITES ARE ACCUSED OF BEING “LITERALISTS”. IN FACT, NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. Karaites look for the plain meaning of the text. One of the places where Karaites find a metaphorical meaning is in the so-called *Tefillin* verses. There are four *Tefillin* verses in all, and this article focuses on the first of them. This verse demonstrates that what many people interpret to be a commandment to wear *Tefillin* is really a commandment to remember our Exodus from Egypt.

Most readers view the first of the *Tefillin* verses to start at Exodus 13:9: “And it shall be a sign upon your hand and a memorial between your eyes.” By isolating the verse from the rest of the passage, some people feel compelled to wear *Tefillin*. However, to really understand this verse we must place it in its proper context.

This passage really starts a few verses earlier. God is telling the Israelites that He brought them out of Egypt in the Month of Aviv. He continues by commanding them not to eat leavened bread and to make sure that leaven is removed from their property as well. God then says, “And you shall tell your child on [the anniversary of the Exodus]: This is done because of that which the LORD did for me when I came forth out of Egypt. (9) And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon your hand, and for a memorial between your eyes, that the Torah of the LORD may be in thy mouth; for with a strong hand has the LORD brought thee out of Egypt. (10) Thou shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year” (Exodus 13:8-10).

This *Tefillin* passage actually begins with a poetic device with God commanding us to tell our children that God brought us out of Egypt, and the reason we are not eating leavened bread is because of the Exodus. Importantly, the verse is not instructing us to wear *Tefillin* when we pray. Rather, it refers to a commandment that we are supposed to keep every year at the anniversary of the Exodus, i.e. at the time of Passover. The second *Tefillin*

verse, Exodus 13:16, located just a few lines after the verse cited above, also clearly relates to the Exodus from Egypt.

Karaites have never worn *Tefillin* because we understand the language, taken in the context of the entire Tanach, to be metaphorical. There is also Rabbinic support for this position. Encyclopedia Judaica notes that Rabbi Samuel ben-Meir (also known as the Rashbam) understood the *Tefillin* verses to be figurative as well. The Encyclopedia quotes the Rashbam’s commentary on Exodus 13:9 as saying: “according to its literal meaning it means ‘it shall ever be as a memorial as though it were written upon thy hand,’ as in the verse: ‘Set me a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon your arm’” (Song of Songs 8:6).

We ask whether King Solomon who lived around 970-931 b.c.e. possibly could have interpreted the four *Tefillin* verses literally when he wrote: “My son, heed the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the Torah of your mother; For they are a graceful wreath upon your head, and a necklace about your neck” (Proverbs 1:8-9). Why is Solomon binding the law metaphorically around his throat if he is donning *Tefillin* on a daily basis? Wouldn’t he have referenced this practice in the practice of *Tefillin*?

This year as we sit around the Passover table, remember that we are eating unleavened bread as a memorial for the fact that God took us out of Egypt.

WHO ARE THE KARAITE JEWS?

By: Henry Mourad

PRINCIPLES, IDEOLOGY AND BELIEFS OF KARAISM

1. Faith alone determines the adherence of an individual to Karaism. Therefore, he or she who practices the great traditions and beliefs of the principles of Karaite Judaism and diligently studies the Torah is by definition a Karaite.

2. In order to guide humanity towards the ultimate salvation, God revealed the Holy Scriptures to Moses as adequate and sufficient instrument and therefore our job is to meticulously study the Torah and precisely follow the Torah's guidance. No other documents are necessary. The same is true for the Books of the Prophets and Writings.

3. It is only with repeated study that one could interpret the Torah correctly. Even after continual learning, some Karaites believe that it is impossible without divine inspiration to attain the absolute meaning of the Holy Scriptures. By abiding to the teachings of the Torah we can look forward to achieving Holiness.

4. In admitting a diversity of opinion, Karaism opened the way to individual thinking, which made the Karaites achieve great status. Of course, any opinion has to be moderated with a great respect for tradition and the text.

5. Our responsibility before God is absolute and crucial. Therefore there can never be any intermediary in between. Rabbis and Karaite Sages are only facilitators and should not be viewed as a conduit to our relationship with God.

6. We have a free will and we are ultimately responsible for our own actions. The idea of free will removes any beliefs in guided destiny. Everything that happens in our life is a result of our own deeds. Predestined

occurrences have no place in our life nor can we blame bad occurrences on devilish beliefs. We don't subscribe to mysticism (Kabbalah).

7. Even though the ancient Karaites exhibited ascetic tendencies and they rejected honorific titles, they still believed in the enjoyment of life's pleasures and fulfilled their sexual needs. They obeyed God's commandment "Be fruitful and multiply." Interestingly, though, Karaites very strictly observe the laws of ritual purity. Egyptian Karaites have vigorously prohibited sex on Shabbat.

8. The Karaites also consider that the Holy Scriptures is the source of all laws, and that God was direct and precise in dictating specific commandments. The Kashrut laws are derived also from the Torah regarding what is allowed from game to fowl and fish. To illustrate the point, the command: "Thou shall not boil the kid in its mother's milk" has multiple interpretations. The Orthodox Rabbinite Jews prohibit eating dairy food with meat dishes (to the extent that some strict Jews use different dishes and utensils for dairy and meat), while others are less strict about its observance. On the other hand, the Karaite Jews view the command differently. God's command was directed to evoke our human feelings, teaching us to be kind and compassionate towards all animals, for it is totally cruel to slaughter a calf and prepare a meal using the mother's milk—a truism in farming communities.

9. Being unshod is an absolute requirement upon entering the synagogue. This was dictated when God ordered Moses to remove his sandals, for the mountain grounds he stood upon were holy.

MY SEARCH FOR THE AVIV

By: Ivan Labombarbe
"Yochanan Ben Eneke"

In the Torah, God instructs the Nation of Israel that our calendar begins in the Month of Aviv, the month which God took us out of Egypt. This is the month in which Jews celebrate Passover, which occurs 15 days after the biblical New Year. The Month of Aviv begins with the first new moon after semi-ripe barley, or Aviv, is found in Israel. This article describes the author's race to find Aviv before the new moon in March of 2006.

Yochanan has been an active member of the World Karaite Movement since 1999. He has contributed to projects such as <http://faithstrengthened.com> which is an online version of the book written by Isaac Troki. He is a board member and faculty member of the Karaite Jewish University.

In the beginning of the secular year, the notice came out from Hakham Nehemia Gordon: "Aviv Searchers Needed!" So many times in the past I have simply sent a donation for the effort. This year was different. I started to inquire as to how I could participate. I checked into airfare, rental cars, and hotels. After making sure I had the funds, I promptly booked everything. I was so excited. I was traveling to Israel. I would be searching for Aviv. I had done extensive studies on the calendar for many years. I had theorized about how one would actually look for and identify Aviv. But this year, I would learn first hand.

I spent my plane ride studying the papers Hakham Gordon gave me in anticipation of my arrival. He was going to hold a training session for us, and I wanted to be exceptionally prepared. The new moon was only a few days away. If there was Aviv in Israel, we needed to find it soon, so that we could properly set our Holidays. As you know, the calendar used by most Jews is set by the Rabbis. This calendar fixes the beginning of the months by using old calculations as to when the new moon would be seen in Israel. We know from numerous, actual new moon sightings that the calculated calendar can be off by up to two days in any given month. Additionally, in some years the calendar set by our Rabbinic brethren has a "leap month." A leap month is similar to the secular calendar's leap year, except that instead of adding an extra day, the calendar adds an extra month. In the Rabbinic system, there are 7 leap years, *i.e.* extra months, randomly distributed over a 19 year cycle. Karaites, on

the other hand, naturally have leap months when it takes longer for the Aviv to be found in Israel.

So what exactly is Aviv? Aviv is a word that describes a certain stage in the development of the barley. At the stage of Aviv, the barley is not entirely ripe. Many biblical verses provide us with insight on this stage of the barley. For example, in Exodus 9:31-32, we learn about the how the plague of hail affected the crops. The hail destroyed the barley and the flax, because the barley was "Aviv" and the flax was exposed, or literally "cup-like". However, the hail did not destroy the wheat and spelt because they were still dark.

We know from our agricultural studies that barley remains a dark green color throughout its early stages of development. While in these early stages, the barley is more flexible. This flexibility explains why the hail did not damage the wheat or the spelt. As the head of the barley grain starts to emerge, it literally looks like it is in a cup. After fully emerging from the cup, the head develops even more. As the barley is ripening, the green color turns to yellow. At this stage, the barley is more brittle. This is why the barley was damaged by the hail. Other places in the Scripture, such as Leviticus 2: 14, demonstrate that at the stage of Aviv, the barley has enough mass for it to be parched or roasted. So to summarize, on our Aviv expedition we were looking for barley that has reached a certain stage of development, where it is yellowish, brittle, and has enough mass that it can be roasted.

I knew before I came to Israel that there was a chance that I would not find the Aviv; however, as a Karaite, I believed it to be my duty to search for the Aviv. After all, on Yom Kippur and other holidays, Karaites recite the Tuv Ta'am. The Tuv Ta'am is the Karaite declaration of faith. One of the lines of the prayer, in accordance with the biblical command, is, "And the Aviv which is found in the Land of Israel in its time, in its manner, in its nature, is a valid sign and an indication for the beginning of years for pilgrimages, feasts, and holidays, according to the word of the God of Hosts." I was eager to do my part to help perform the commandments of the Lord.

After I landed in Israel, I gathered all of my belongings, hopped into my rental car and called Hakham Gordon who was already in the northern part of Israel. I drove up to an area west of the Lake Kinneret, called Afula. I joined Hakham Gordon, Ferrenc, and Rivka who were already searching for Aviv.

This was a sight to be seen. Here were two compact cars racing around the north of Israel to find those fields that provide "wild" barley and field barley. We drove past Mt. Carmel and went up and around Tiberias. I left my car there. We all got in one car and drove to see a ruin of the synagogue at Korazim. We then met up with the other searchers (two more cars). By this time, they had already covered the northern part of Israel.

We started moving south. Deep in the barley fields, there was no Aviv to be found. We did find Aviv by the roadsides; however, because the heat emanating from the asphalt artificially ripens the barley quicker than would occur naturally, we could not count this as "true" Aviv. So we continued our search. We kept moving southbound. Every once in a while we would stop, wade into a field, and take a sample measure of the grain. The grain was noticeably not ready, as it was still too green. We stopped for the first day, and headed back to Jerusalem. After getting to know everyone and having a meal together we all settled into our hotels. We were only two

days from a potential new moon sighting and we still had to search much of Israel.

The next day, we set out for the south of the country. We headed down to Ofakim where we joined a group of Karaites to search the local fields. There we saw grain heads in the boot or cup stage, which means that they were just emerging from the stalk. We also saw some barley in the flower stage, with the anthers outside the grain head. We continued to search all day and by splitting up we covered more ground. There was still no Aviv to be found. Lastly, we stopped at Mordecai Junction. It was getting dark by then. We had searched every area of the country where barley grew and came up empty. At this point we returned to Jerusalem. The new moon was one night away. Hakham Gordon would write up a notice letting everyone know we did not locate the Aviv.



Barley in the flowering stage

The next night we all watched for the new moon from the Old City. It was a cloudy night and we were worried that we would not see the moon that night. Then suddenly there was a break in the clouds and everyone saw the new moon. It is one thing to get a new moon report, but quite another actually to sight the new moon in Jerusalem.

After this, we all had dinner together and then returned to our hotels. The next day we departed for home. It was sad to leave Israel. But I was determined to come back the next year and do it again.

The barley reached the stage of Aviv in the next month, signifying the beginning of the Jewish year. If you would like to learn more about the Aviv, new moon sightings, or the Jewish calendar, please visit <http://karaite-korner.org>. You can subscribe to monthly new moon sightings and the Aviv report at <http://karaite-korner.org/subscription.shtml>

KJA IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA KARAITE COMMUNITY HAS CONTINUED FURTHERING THE GOALS WE ESTABLISHED IN EARLY 2005. During the past year the community has provided a variety of religious and social activities in order to further unify the membership.

Members gather monthly for Shabbat and holiday services, led by Roger Lisha and Albert Farag, followed by a delicious meal organized by Joyce Marzouk and Feryal Ovadia. The group also meets to celebrate weddings and simchot. Below are some highlights of the past year.

In May, David Ovadia and Elie Moussa, officers from the KJA, visited Southern California to commemorate the publishing of *The Abbreviated Shabbat Prayer Book* revised by Albert Farag and Fred Ovadia. During their visit, the KJA leaders provided guidance and support regarding how to strengthen the community. In June, religious services were held in honor of Shavuot. Over the summer, we were privileged to have Rav Moshe Firrouz of Be'er Sheva and Eliezer Ben Efraim from New York visit us and observe the Sabbath with us. We gathered for Yom Teruah (the Rabbanite Rosh Hashanah) and Sukkot in the fall. We celebrated the High Holiday season together with a fun-filled party and sleep over. Finally, the group also assembled to mourn the passing of Walter Marzouk and Alice Mangoubi.

Members of the local community also discussed a variety of religious topics. Different individuals presented on such issues as Karaite weddings, the brit milah ceremony, the mitzvot, the Ten Commandments, holidays from a biblical/Karaite perspective, and the significance of the Shema.

The Southern California Chapter has made strong efforts to revive the community and build momentum during the past year. Every family is contributing to the mission of our community and we look forward to further collaboration and growth in the year ahead.

For more information regarding upcoming events, please contact Feryal Ovadia at feovadia@yahoo.com or Albert Farag at albertfarag@yahoo.com.

HAPPY PURIM!

CHILDREN IN COSTUMES, GREAT FOOD, THE CANDLE LIGHTING, GAMES AND of course the raffle: The KJA annual Purim celebration was a success! Sunday March 4th, those who could gathered at the synagoge to observe the holiday of Purim. We mingled, gathered around for the candle lighting led by Joe Pessah and enjoyed an array of wonderful home cooked food. The day was complemented by a blackjack tournament, four \$100 winners in our card lottery, and our raffle where a multitude of prizes were awarded including an all in one printer. Thank you to all those who helped make this day possible and we'll see you all next year!

"The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor" (Esther 8:16)



IN MEMORIUM

Emil Kbeder (California)

A loving father and grandfather who we loved and will be missed by all
*It has been a year since he left this world and we miss him more than anything.
We will love you father always and cherish all of our memories together.*

David Elie Elishaa (California)

Mr. Elishaa will always be remembered as the man who put together the Family Tree
for the Karaite Jews of America. His Tireless work and dedication to our community has reunited many families

Eugene Massouda

Wife of the late Dr. Baroukh Massouda
Born in Cairo, Egypt, she was able to practice as a midwife for 27 year.
She was licensed in December of 1935 as a midwife and helped in the delivery of many
Karaite Jews of Egypt until she immigrated to America in 1962.
She touched the lives of many Karaite families.

Esther Daniel

wife of Albert Daniel, she will be truly missed

Ms. Flore Massuda (November 2006)

Donations

PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
THE KARAITE JEWS OF AMERICA

\$25.00

\$50.00

\$100.00

\$200.00

Other _____

PLEASE DETACH AND PLACE IN ENVELOPE PROVIDED

THANK YOU!