125TH

ANNIVERSARY OF MAGHAIN ABOTH SYNAGOGUE

24TH NOVEMBER 2004



PROGRAMME

7:00PM Cocktails

Piano presentation by Marc Iserlis

Open Gallery: "From strength to strength"

7:30PM Guests to be seated

Welcoming note

Master of ceremony: **Mr. Steven Shalowitz**

Arrival of Guest of Honor :
His Excellency President SR Nathan & Mrs. Nathan

Singing presentation #1: **Young boys of the community**

Singing presentation #2 : **Young girls of the community**

Prayer for the community. Speech: **Rabbi Mordechai Abergel**

Opening speech: **Mr. Frank Benjamin**, President Jewish Welfare Boarc

Gift presentation to His Excellency President SR Nathan
By **Mr. Frank Benjamin**

Presentation of Community Service Award

8:00PM Dinner is served

Ongoing Music Entertainment **Yosi Levy and the Sabras Band**
Los Angeles, USA

Song of Chazanut, **Chazan Mair Rosh**

Dessert is served

Lucky draws (10 draws in all)

1st prize: Trip to Israel on EL AL

2nd prize: Exclusive Jean Richard timepiece

3rd prize: 2N weekend getaway

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2026



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I would like to extend to the Jewish community of Singapore my warmest congratulations on this very special occasion. I would like to thank The President of the Republic of Singapore, His Excellency Mr. S.R. Nathan, and Mrs. Nathan for gracing this occasion.

A little historical background will give us an interesting perspective. The Jewish Community in Singapore dates back to 1841. This is when six Baghdadi Jews wrote to the Colonial Government and petitioned for two plots of land: one for a synagogue and the other for a cemetery.

The synagogue was in a shop-house at Boat Quay, in a street still known today as Synagogue Street. It had an Hekhal (Sanctuary) where the Torah Scroll was kept, a bimah, where the Rabbi or Hazan (cantor) would intone the prayers, and benches for the worshippers.

As the community grew, a larger synagogue was necessary, and Sir Manasseh Meyer, a leader of the community, in 1873 arranged for a piece of land in Waterloo Street. And in 1878, the Maghain Aboth Synagogue was inaugurated.

Today we celebrate the 125th anniversary of this most precious and beloved building where generations of our community prayed and celebrated life. We give thanks to our forefathers who had the vision and the foresight to build this magnificent building which they bequeathed to their descendants.
From a strength of 2500 souls at its height, the community, after the 2nd world war gradually dwindled to 200 souls. But the merits and blessings of Maghain Aboth, which means "the shield of our fathers", will not allow for of our community to fade away. As of late we have experienced a sense of renewal. Jews from Israel and from many parts of the world are gradually adding to our numbers. We now have approximately 550 Jews, and we are hopeful that this number will continue to grow steadily in the future.

The Jewish Welfare Board is ready for this. We have all the facilities for all aspects of a full and rewarding Jewish life. In addition, by January 2005, we will commence construction of a 6-story building next to the Maghain Aboth synagogue --- a center which will further enhance the quality of Jewish life in Singapore.

This new center, which will be completely funded by the Estate of the Late Mr. Jacob Ballas, will be known as The Jacob Ballas Centre and will be donated to the community. The Jacob Ballas Centre will be a beautiful building following closely the architecture of Maghain Aboth, and will incorporate all the religious and social activities of the community. Mr. Ballas' generosity ensures continuity of Jewish life in this country, which was our forefather's most ardent wish, as well as the vision of our leaders today for future generations.

We look forward to celebrating the next milestone of The Maghain Aboth Synagogue.

Frank Benjamin

RABBI'S MESSAGE



It is with gratitude to G-d that we celebrate the 125th anniversary of our congregation. Indeed, we are privileged to be able to commemorate this special milestone in the history of our Community.

Ever since our Community was founded in the early 1800's, each generation has played a vital role in the unfolding of our history. The late Manasseh Meyer, David Marshall, and Jacob Ballas and so many others contributed in a meaningful way to the development of Singapore with faith, dedication and perseverance. We know that our generation is committed to walk in the footsteps of its ancestors and to perpetuate the living legacy of our spiritual heritage.

Our magnificent Synagogue is a source of tremendous pride and satisfaction to us and, together with the adjacent Jacob Ballas Center, they will serve the needs of our Community for generations to come. But Maghain Aboth is more than a building, it is a living and vibrant community. It is a place of prayer and a place of study, a place of Communal activity and gatherings.

As we celebrate this historic high point, we are more committed than ever, not only to maintain, but further expand and develop the spiritual, educational and cultural life of our Community so as to make Maghain Aboth the oasis of Jewish life and hospitality in the Far East.

May the almighty inspire us to achieve this vision by contributing each in our own way and to ensure the continuity and vitality of Maghain Aboth for generations to come.

The next 125 years begins with you!

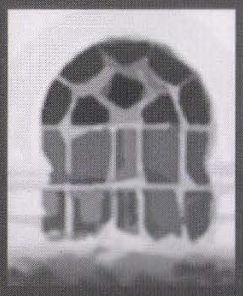
Rabbi Mordechai Alergel

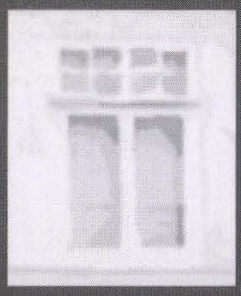
PAST PRESIDENTS
OF THE JEWISH WELFARE BOARD

Mr. D. S. Marshall	1949-1952
Mr. S. E. Sherida	1953
Mr. E. E. Nathan J.P.	1954
Mrs. S. E. Meyer	1955-1958
Mr. I. Solomon	1959
Mr. V. A. Levy	1960
Mr. Jacob Ballas	1961
Mr. E. E. Nathan J.P.	1962-63
Mr. E. M. Akerib	1964
Mr. F. J. Isaacs	1965-1966
Mr. D. S. Marshall	1967
Mrs. Felice Isaacs	1971-1972
Mr. E. S. Lejeune	1973-1975
Mrs. Felice Isaacs	1976-1977
Mr. Frank Benjamin	1978-1981
Mr. Elias M. Elias	1982-1983
Mr. Alec Manasseh	1984-1985
Mr. Charles Simon	1986-1988
Mr. Jacob Ballas	1989-1999
Mr. Frank Benjamin	2000-present

PAST RABBIS
OF THE MAGHAIN ABOTH SYNAGOGUE

Rabbi Shababo	1948 - 1974
Rabbi Benzakin	1974 - 1992
Rabbi Shohet	1992 - 1994
Rabbi Abergel	1994 - present





THE JEWISH WELFARE BOARD
2004-2005

President, Frank Benjamin
Vice-President, Joseph Benjamin
Chairperson, Simcha Abergel
Honorary Secretary, Victor Sassoon
Honorary Treasurer, Jacob Isaac
Asst. Honorary Treasurer, Neil Reines
Committee Members: Douglas Benjamin
John Isaac
Reuben Khafi
Moshe Mirilashvili
Bruce Rosengarten
Simcha Sharon

THEME SONG
125TH ANNIVERSARY OF MAGHAIN ABOTH

(Tune of 'Yerushalayim shel zahav')

We are the children
And here we stand
Wishing we were here when
They build your walls and you
Became what you are today

So many tunes, so many songs
We hear on Shabbat day
We sing and follow our cantor
And hear our rabbi pray

(Chorus)
Maghain Aboth, Maghain Aboth
Shield of our fathers Maghain Aboth
125 years of our life story
Live in your walls Maghain Aboth

(Chorus
Maghain Aboth Maghain Abot
Shield of our fathers Maghai
Abot
You are truly the crown of glor
Of our communit

Our wish is that you'll be standin
For many generations mor
And may you remain in our mids
And let the legacy transm

Our hope is that we come togethe
In another 25 year
And still see you standing ther
Full of glory and full of splendo

Most importantly may you alway
Be full of Jews that come to pra
May our congregation always thriv
And grow from day to da

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"125 YEARS... & STILL GROWING"

COMMUNITY BEGINNINGS

In 1819, the Sultan of Johore permitted English businessman Sir Stamford Raffles and the East Indian Company to establish a trading post in Singapore. At the time, Singapore was a small, swampy fishing village on the Malay Peninsula. Nevertheless, with grand prospects ahead, several Jewish traders from Baghdad migrated to Singapore and established the highly successful trade center Change Alley.

In 1824, the Sultan ceded the 200 square mile area to Great Britain, and by 1830, historical records indicate the Jewish population totaled nine Jewish traders living in Singapore. In 1840, the wealthy Sephardic Sassoon family established business interests in Singapore, and the Jewish population soon increased. The Jewish community managed to build a 40-person synagogue on a street still called "Synagogue Street."

The Jewish population, mostly Sephardim, migrated mainly from Baghdad and other communities in the Near East. The community also included Sephardim from Persia and Ashkenazim from Eastern Europe, searching for both religious freedom and economic opportunity. Some went first to Malaysia, and then on to Singapore when Malaysia did not offer the freedoms and opportunities they had originally sought. The Orthodox Singapore community was small but tight-knit, strengthened by religious bonds, common geographic origins, and years of close marriages.

Maghain Aboth Synagogue,
literally "Shield of our Fathers",
was the pride of our Jewish forefathers in Singapore
and remains as such 125 years later.

"The celebration was not only for tl
but also for the spirit whic

THE MAGHAIN ABOTH SYNAGOGUE

By 1879, the community population totaled 172 members, 116 males and 56 females. With the steady increase in population, the 40-person 'Synagogue Street' synagogue was clearly no longer suitable. On April 4, 1878, the new Maghain Aboth Synagogue on Waterloo Street was consecrated. It was a single story building. Shortly thereafter, Manasseh Meyer erected a simple gallery for the women, at his own expense. A few years later, a more solidly constructed women's upper gallery was added, which is still in use today.

Menasseh Meyer, supposedly the richest Jew in Asia, contributed funds to build the new synagogue. He had arrived in Singapore at age 15, poor but ambitious, and eventually owned nearly half of Singapore's property. He grew wealthy as a real estate dealer and as a trader of opium, legal under British rule. Some Jews of the Maghain Aboth Synagogue bear nameplates for Menasseh Meyer and his son Rueben Menasseh (it was the practice for the eldest son to inherit his father's first name as a surname). The Queen knighted Menasseh Meyer for raising the cultural level of the city.

By 1905, there were roughly 500 Jews in Singapore. The community numbered close to 600 Jews in 1911, and 832 Jews in 1931. The 1931 census also indicated that there was a significant Arab population as well, which together with the Jews, were the largest property owners in the city.

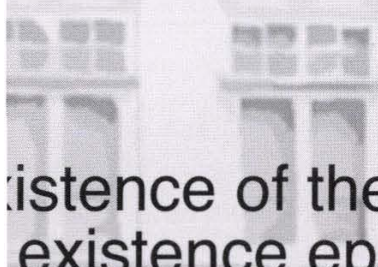
WORLD WAR II TO TODAY

In 1939, on the eve of World War II, there were 1,000 Jews in Singapore, most of whom were interned by the Japanese during the war. During the war, the Maghain Aboth Synagogue served two purposes. Prior to the arrival of the Japanese, many used the Synagogue as a bomb shelter. During the Japanese occupation, however, the Japanese used the Synagogue as an ammunition dump, namely because across the street, St. Joseph's Institute (where today stands the Singapore Art Museum), was used as a hospital, which they assumed safe from being bombed.

After the war, many of the Jews left for Australia, England, the United States, and Israel. David Marshall, however, remained in Singapore. He was born in 1908 to a Baghdad-Persian Jewish family and studied law in England before he joined the British Army as a volunteer and traveled to Singapore. When the British granted Singapore partial independence in 1955, Marshall was appointed as the first Chief Minister. But when Great Britain denied Singapore full sovereignty, David Marshall, Singapore's "Father of Independence," resigned from his post in protest. Singapore joined Malaysia in 1963, but withdrew two years later and became independent. After full sovereignty was finally attained, he was elected to the legislature and later served as Singapore's ambassador to several European countries.

More recently, in February 1998, Maghain Aboth Synagogue was gazetted as a national monument. This was an auspicious accomplishment considering the stringent criteria required, such as the building must be deemed of national significance, and it must have architectural merit.

Today, the Jewish population in Singapore numbers around 600. Religious life at the Maghain Aboth Synagogue is active, with daily services, weekly Shabbat meals, a Kosher shop, activities and services for children, adult education, social functions, and more.



istence of the building,
existence epitomizes."

- David Marshall, in addressing the Jewish community at the centennial celebration of Maghain Aboth Synagogue

From Strength 125




















Strength

"That I shall **dwell**
in the **House of G-d**
all the days of **my life**;
to behold the **pleasantness** of G-d
and to contemplate in His Sanctuary"

(Psalms 27)

Anonymous

“

Congratulations

on the 125th Anniversary
of the Maghain Aboth Synagogue.

We wish both the **synagogue** &
the entire **Jewish Community**
of Singapore much continued

success, growth & peace
in the years ahead.

”

FJ Benjamin Holdings

“Congratulations
on this Very Auspicious Occasion”

Harry & Thelma Elias

"**Mazal Tov**
on your 125th Anniversary.
May you go
from strength to strength!"

Lara, Mark and Zack Myerson
(In memory of our fathers Anthony Schewitz and Ivor Myerson)

"**Best wishes**
for the **continued growth** and **success**
in the community,
& **congratulations on your 125th Anniversary**
of the Maghain Aboth Synagogue"

Maggie, Maya, Kelly, Li-yam, Ronny, Izik Davidov
& the staff of Derocks

"We would like to wish
all members of the community
our **heartiest congratulations**
& Mazal Tov in reaching this **important milestone**.

May the community grow from
strength to strength,
with harmony, unity, and shalom."

Khafi Family

"Mazal Tov
& best wishes
on this auspicious occasion!"

Simcha, Jennifer, Jonathan, Karen, & Benjamin Sharon

“Happy
are those who dwell in Your House...

Happy is the people for whom
Ado-nai is G-d.”

(Psalms 84)

Morton, Denise, Tedd, Nora & Henry Joselson

Mazal Tov
on this special occasion

Mr. & Mrs. Joe Benjamin & Family

Congratulations
on the **125th Anniversary**
of the Maghain Aboth Synagogue!

With all our best wishes for
the next **125 years**

Mr. & Mrs. Nash Benjamin & Family

"With **Tremendous Thanks**
to Maghain Aboth & My Fellow Jews in Singapore
For your **Warmth & Hospitality** over the years"

Rabbi Kalman Packouz, Aish HaTorah

"We would like to extend our
best wishes
to everyone in the community for the
125th Anniversary
of the Magain Avoth Synagogue."

Mr. and Mrs. Sameyeh

A heartfelt congratulations
to the Maghain Aboth Synagogue
and the entire **Jewish Community** of
Singapore

Leon, Julia, Laura, Claudia, & David Codron

Congratulations
on this wonderful anniversary.

We look forward to celebrating
many more joyous occasions
in the beautiful
Maghain Aboth Synagogue.

The UHC Community

Mazal Tov
on this momentous occasion.

We wish you continued **growth & success**
in the community.

Seth, Sheila, Dan Dov and Gavriella Jutan

Thanks
for all the **warmth & hospitality**
from this special community
during our stay in Singapore.

Gal, Shlomit, & Roni Naor

“Best wishes
on this
momentous occasion”

Philip D. Izaac Pte Ltd

“Congratulations
& best wishes”

Mrs. Hilda Isaac, Mr. Jacob Isaac and family,
Mr. & Mrs. Abe Isaac and family,Mr. Michael Isaac and family

GREETINGS

Our heartiest Congratulations. Mazel Tov!
Mrs. Felice Isaacs & Family

Heartfelt congratulations to the synagoue and the
entire community on reaching this milestone.
Edward Benjamin

Mazal Tov and Best Wishes
Sunny, Rita, Michelle, & Jonathan Elias

Best wishes to our beloved Maghain Aboth Synagogue
on this momentous occasion
Anne Hill and Tots & Kids

Best wishes
Mr & Mrs. Moshe Hai Sion & Flexie

Mazel Tov!
Brian, Casey, and Zoe Denenberg

Mazal Tov!
May this community continue to go "m'chayil el chayil"
– "from strength to strength" (Psalms 84)
Yishai, Tammy, & Netanel Klein

Congratulations.
Jerry's BBQ & Grill Restaurant 92 Club St. & 277 Jalan Kayu

Mazal Tov wishes to the Maghain Aboth Community
on this memorable occasion
Michel, Axelle, Jeremy and Nathan Sznajer

Mazal Tov on this wonderful occasion.
May you continue to grow in spirit and strength.
Rosengarten Family

Wishes for continued happy gatherings
Mary Kogan

Mazal Tov to the entire community on this wonderful occasion.
We hope to see only continued growth and success in the community.
Tsipora, Moshe, Dorin & Eleen Mirilashvili

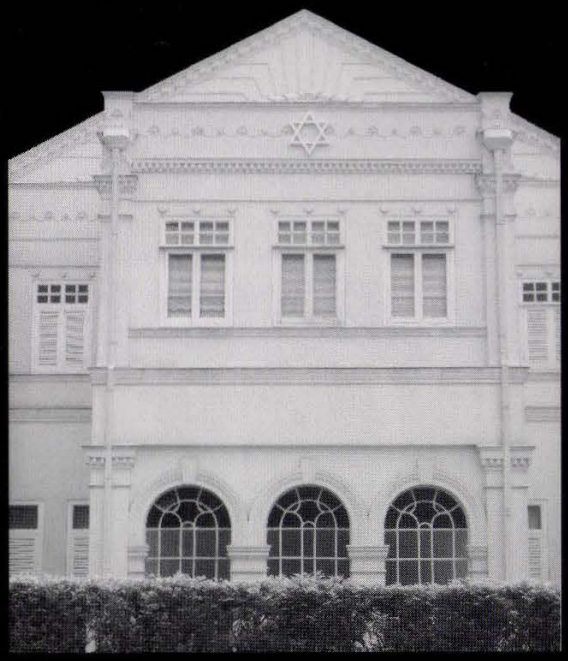
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With deep appreciation to the following organisations, families, and individuals for their generous contributions to the dinner celebration in honor of the 125th Anniversary of Maghain Aboth Synagogue.

Ben Optik Pte Ltd
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Derocks Trading Pte Ltd - Singapore
El Al Airlines
F J Benjamin Holdings Pte Ltd
Joe Grimberg
Khafi Family
Mr. & Mrs Frank Benjamin
Nokia
Tedd Joselson
Yosi Levy and the Sabras Band
Sara Khafi
Jetspeed Travel

& special thanks to the Dinner Commitee:
Simcha Abergel, Frank Benjamin,
Mavis Benjamin, Maggie Davidov, Tammy Klein,
Lara Myerson, and Dalit Shoham

COMMUNITY CONTACTS



For further information about the community, please visit www.singaporejews.com

SYNAGOGUES

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Fax: 6336-2127
Services: Thrice daily (incl Shabbat)

CHESED EL SYNAGOGUE
2 Oxley Rise Singapore 238693
Services: Monday mornings

EDUCATION

GANENU JEWISH LEARNING CENTER
71 Oxley Rise
Tel: 6737-9746
Mobile: 9673-9184
ganenu@singnet.com.sg

TALMUD TORAH HEBREW SCHOOL
71 Oxley Rise
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KOSHER SHOP
Located at Maghain Aboth Synagogue
24/26 Waterloo St.
Tel: 6337-2189
Open daily

MIKVAH
Opened upon request
For details, contact Simcha Abergel:
9673-9184

MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH
COMMUNITY OF SINGAPORE

CONGRATULATIONS

ON THE CELEBRATION OF

THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE MAGHAIN ABOTH SYNAGOGUE



Tiger Beer

Devils™ BAR