

AMERICAN SEPHARDI FEDERATION

OPENNING OF THE SEASON 2010 – 2011

**“ 2000 OF JEWISH LIFE IN MOROCCO : AN EPIC JOURNEY ”**

THURSDAY OCTOBER 14 TH 2010

**LOOKING BACK : JEWISH LIFE IN MOROCCO**

ART EXHIBITION

AND

ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR **NORMAN STILLMAN**

**DISTINGUISHED AND HONORED GUESTS**

**“ 2000 YEARS OF JEWISH LIFE IN MOROCCO : AN EPIC JOURNEY “**

WHAT A POWERFUL STORY TO TELL OUR CHILDREN AND TO TELL THE WORLD

Vibrant and bursting at the seams with energy are our Moroccan Jews in the world today!

***HIS MAJESTY MOHAMMED VI, KING OF MOROCCO***

Understood this vibrancy and graciously lent His High Patronage to our year-long conference on the Jews of Morocco.

American Sephardi Federation wishes to express our deepest gratitude to his Majesty Mohammed VI for offering us such a prestigious honor.

We wish to take this opportunity to convey our greatest appreciation to Mr. **Andre Azoulay**, counselor of His Majesty.

We entrusted him with a delicate mission and he accomplished with brio.

*“When we know and connect to our past...we can see our future”,*

**Said Rabbi Benchimol**

The spirit of connecting to our past has paved the road and built the stage of our conferences. Every month we will have the opportunity to connect with specific areas of our past :

Historically, spiritually, intellectually , emotionally, through music and through art.

Among the many episodes, just to capture one example, we will stage a tableau vivant to show the different traditional ways we dress the bride, in many colorful and symbolic costumes and jewelry: in the tradition of Judeo-Espagnol, in Judeo-Arab, and in Judeo-Berber.

We will conclude the year, in the month of May with a 2 day symposium. We are inviting scholars and speakers from France, Morocco, Israel, the US, and Canada.

We will tell about our vibrant communities, located in the Tafilalet, in the Atlas mountain villages, in the north costs such as Tetouan or in the Atlantic coast such ancient Rabat-Sale.

Mostly, we uncover the Jewish cultural and spiritual contributions to our Moroccan Judaism

as well as to the Universal Judaism. *Our vision is to harness this energy and make it shine through. So that we can tell, WITH PRIDE, of our vibrant culture to our children AND TO THE WORLD.*

Last but not least I wish to invite you all to our Gala Benefit dinner, which will take place December 13<sup>th</sup> 2010, at THE PIERRE. It will be a brilliant evening with international guests.

Before I conclude I wish to say How I cherish the enormous contributions of my committee from the US, Raquel Benatar Laredo, Stella Levi, Jane Gerber, Norman Stillman, and from abroad Nicole Serfati, Moshe Bar Asher, and Sonia Fellous. They all bring their brilliant minds but mostly their PASSION. And of course we could not make it without the immense support of our staff, Stan Urman, Lynne Winters, Ellen Cohen and Shelomo Alfassa. And the ultimate ASF president, David Dangoor.

So dear friend you have come numerous tonight, OVERSOLD audience to hear professor Stillman a major contributor to our conference. You are in for a treat. Professor Stillman is a brilliant scholar, a raconteur who is steeped in Moroccan Judaism, he studied it, he lives it and he married into it ... and... he speaks Judeo-Arab like a native.

You may read his enormous biography, but now it is better to listen to him, telling us our history. Ladies and Gentlemen please welcome Professor Norman Stillman