



From the City of Ashdod, Israel Photo credit: Yarnit Daniels

SHANIWAR TELI

שניवार תלי ईन्यूजलेटर בשבת עובדות שמן שאין e-Newsletter

<https://www.facebook.com/wbwo.daniels.1>

Contact us at:

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July 1, 2026

Something good is happening in Jabalpur!

Let us be part of this positivity and God's blessing

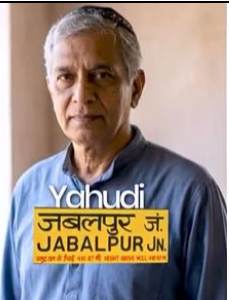


Mr. Daniel Abraham
Koletkar
Cemetery Caretaker



Mr. Kovid Verma
Historian & Author

New blood has started flowing in the old veins of our Jews Jabalpur heritage!



Alma Judah



General Simon Judah
Ashtamkar



Adv. R. Gadkar

Before we understand what is happening in Jabalpur, we need to know Mr. Kovid Verma.

Mr. Kovid Verma

Kovid is currently an administrator professional at "Sukh Sagar Private Medical College & Hospital" based in Jabalpur (MP) earned his MBA from Indian Institute of Forest Management (Bhopal, MP) and specialized in Development Management. His major interest is in local Jabalpur heritage that introduced him to the history of Jews in Jabalpur.

Kovid writes:

My interest in pursuing Jabalpur's history started during the Covid-19 period when the city's public spaces were rather empty so one could, with some effort, notice the layers of history that makes up this city what it is today. I realized that since there is limited and scattered literature in this regard so I took it on myself to *write a book on* this subject. A book which is rather accessible to the common folks of Jabalpur, something which is missing at present.



With this intent Kovid invented a new term for his book title; “A Jabalipuraan” that will cover most of the encyclopaedia of Jabalpur, based on research in the history on the subject matter.

Kovid realized that reels on social media can be an effective means to communicate Jabalpur's history. In a short span of 9 months, he has amassed around 37k followers in Insta and Facebook combined. Visit site below;

[Jabalipuraan - Heritage of Jabalpur](#)

They make meaningful and researched content that could shape narratives of heritage conservation in Jabalpur.

Introduction to the Jewish History

It was during this research that Kovid came to know about the Jewish community of Jabalpur. In order to research extensively on the subject, he came in contact with many Jabalpuriya Jews in India and abroad. These contacts have helped him in his research, but have made him dive deep into their Jewish lives and made him resolve, of *conserving the Jewish heritage and their stories ever firmer*.

Kovid has taken the following initiatives, so far:

- 2 reels for the conservation of Ranital Cemetery

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/18a8FQZqjB/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1EbLxQ7R1u/>

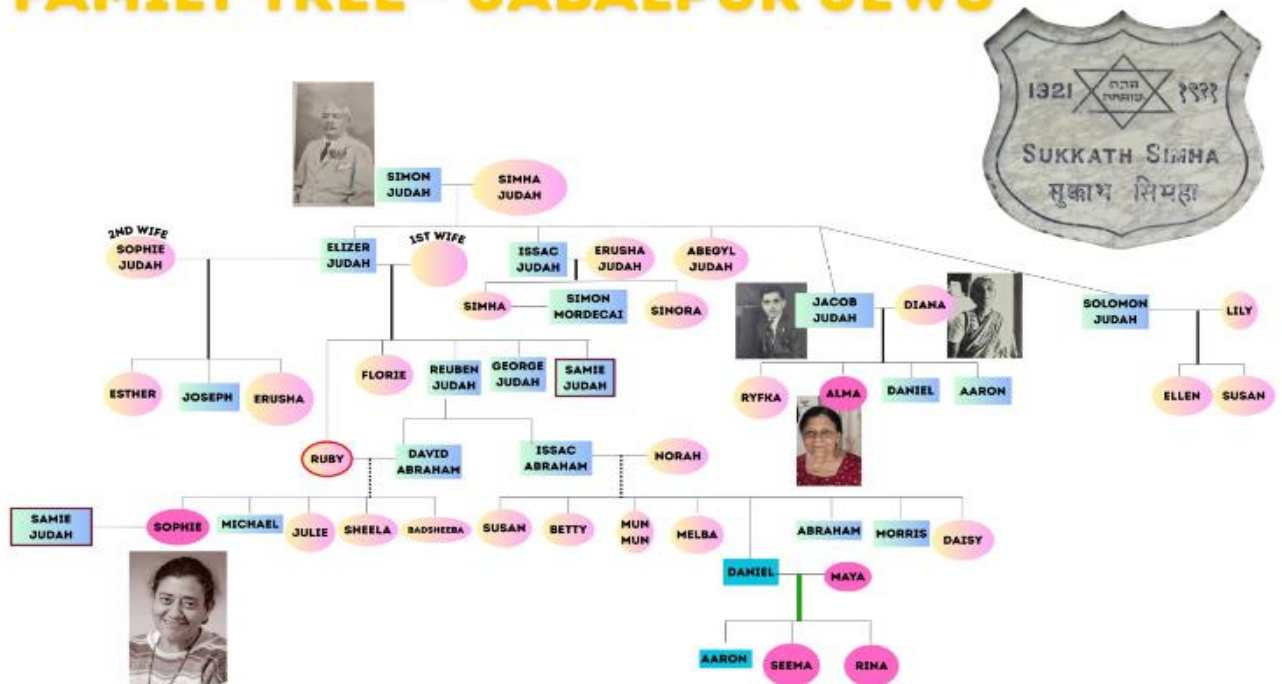
- Organized Shalom Jabalpur on 5th January 2026



An event conducted by Jabalipuraan, with support from Sanjeevan Hospital (Jabalpur, to welcoming Jews of Jabalpur origin on the death anniversary of their ancestors in the cemetery.

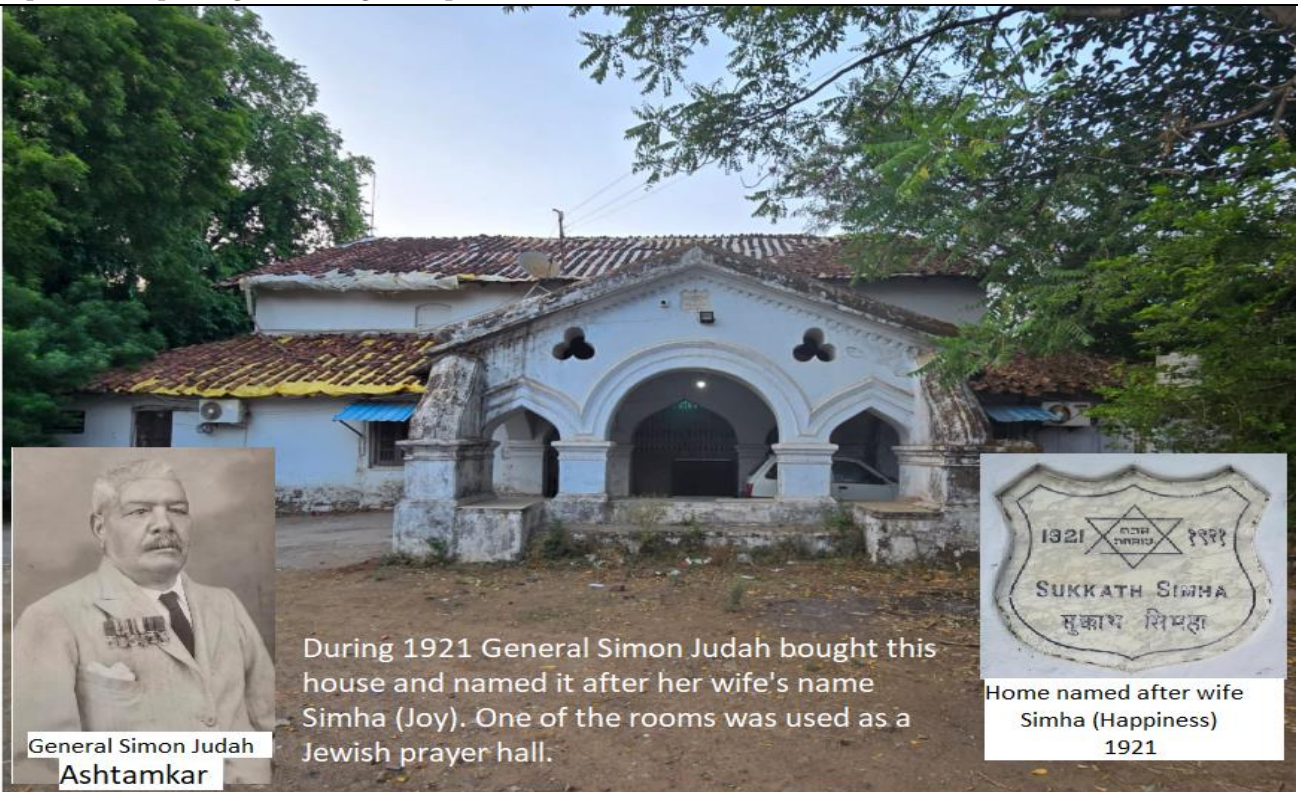
- Started drafting a family tree of Jabalpuriya Jews.

FAMILY TREE - JABALPUR JEWS



We are also tracing all the descendants of the Jabalpuriya Jews living across the world. Once we have all the names and numbers we would inform them personally about the graves of their ancestors in the Jabalpur Jewish Cemetery.

Early History of Jews in Jabalpur



Kovid further writes:

My Book:

When I read about the Ranital Jewish Cemetery in the book - "Jabalpur: A Past Revisited" (authored by Dr Mahesh Chandra Choubey) I tried finding it over the internet but could not.

Finally, I went to a Muslim Graveyard located in Ranital. There after a few inquiries with the local staff I was able to locate a "Yehudi" Cemetery just next to the Muslim Cemetery. This was 18th Apr 2025 (see page 6).

From there I got to know that an aged madam takes care of the cemetery but she has not come to the cemetery for quite a while.

In absence of any further lead, I could not pursue the subject any further. However, while discussing the matter with one of the prominent residents of Jabalpur I came to know that one Jewish person who lives in Jabalpur is Dr Ellen Judah. She, along with her husband, owns a hospital - Sanjeevan.



So, I went to Sanjeevan Hospital. There I met Dr Jagdish Gour - Dr Ellen's husband. Dr Ellen Judah has been Dr Ellen Gour post her marriage. She has contracted a neurodegenerative disease because of which she was unable to take care of the cemetery for a few years now. Her husband now takes care of both the cemetery and his wife.

After a long conversation with him I got to know that the cemetery has been eyed by a land mafia and a legal dispute was being fought at a local court which had recently passed a judgement in **favour of the Jewish community**.

I got curious if there were any more Jewish residents in the city. He said there are 2 more - Daniel Abraham Koletkar and Alma Judah. I met both of them and got further clarity over the issue. This is how I met Daniel Uncle, the caretaker of the cemetery.

I planned and invited for a the program Jewish people, that was named "Shalom Jabalpur"

In the meeting we welcomed a group of 4 Jewish people (2 from Israel and 2 from Mumbai) at the cemetery. Their ancestors of 2 of them were buried here.

We gifted them a Marble memento - with "Jabalpur" written in 3 languages (Hindi, English and Hebrew) and a star of David.

They met the only 3 Jewish residents of Jabalpur :

Daniel Abraham

Almah Judah

Ellen Gour (who changed her last name from Judah post marriage to a Hindu)



Legal Battle

The Jews of Jabalpur along with Kovid needs to arranged funding for legal consultancy for replying to urgent petition by the land mafia claiming ownership of the cemetery. ***The lower court has given a judgement that the cemetery land belongs to the Jewish community. But the land lord has appealed in the high court and to fight this case. The Jewish people in Jabalpur and Kovid need financial help.*** See video below.

[जबलपुर में है मध्य प्रदेश और छत्तीसगढ़ का इकलौता यहूदी कब्रिस्तान, भू माफिया क्यों बता रहे निजी संपत्ति](#)



3 से 4 यहूदी परिवार संभाल रहे ऐतिहासिक विरासत (ETV Bharat)



ब्रिटिश शासन ने कब्रिस्तान के लिए दी थी 5 हजार वर्गफीट जमीन (ETV Bharat)

<https://www.etvbharat.com/hi/state/mp-chhattisgarh-only-one-jewish-cemetery-jabalpur-land-mafia-attempting-to-take-over-matter-reached-high-court-mps26061603285>

Currently, we need funding for constructing family trees and making a documentary on the issue, legal matters and research for my book.

The Quiet Story of the Jabalpur's Jewish Cemetery. A forgotten cemetery at "Rani Tal" quietly holds the untold story of the Jews of Jabalpur – Article by Mr. Kovid Verma. 3/3/2026

[Jabalipuraan - Heritage of Jabalpur](#)

The cemetery as seen on 18th Apr 2025 in the video link



Kovid Verma making a video on the Jewish cemetery

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/18a8FQZqjB/>

General Simon Judah Ashtamkar from the British army is known for his bravery in the war of Boer war. Meaning of Boer is farmers. It was a war with African farmers to get control of the gold mines. **The Boer Wars were conflicts between the British Empire and the Boer republics (Africans) in South Africa, fought over independence, control of resources, and British imperial ambitions. The fight was to get control of the gold mines of South Africa.**

First Boer War (1880–1881)

Second Boer War (1899–1902)

In June 1884, British imperial interests were ignited in the discovery by Jan Gerrit Bantjes of what would prove to be the **world's largest deposit of gold** ore at an outcrop on a ridge 69 km (43 mi) south of the Boer capital at Pretoria.



General Simon
Judah Ashtamkar



General Russell Jacob Mordecai, also known as Lt. General Russell Jacob Mordecai, is a distinguished figure in the Indian Army. He served as the highest-ranking Bene Israel Officer in the Indian Army and was a Combat Engineer. His military career spanned over 42 years, during which he achieved the rank of Lt. General and served as the Director General of the Border Roads Organization. He retired as Commandant of the College of Military Engineering in March 2001. General Mordecai is a graduate of St. Aloysius College and has been recognized for his exceptional service and contributions to the Indian Army.



An event conducted by Jabalipuraan, with support from Sanjeevan Hospital (Jabalpur), to welcoming Jews of Jabalpur origin on the death anniversary of their ancestors in the cemetery Jan 2025

Now that we know Mr. Kovid Verma, please read his article below:

Jabalpuriya Jews

By Kovid Verma

From Jabalpur to Israel: Remembering the Jabalpuriya Jews

There are some places that do not speak loudly, yet they refuse to be forgotten.

In Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, one such place lies near ***Rani Tal, at Aga Chowk — an old Jewish cemetery*** enclosed by a wall and gate. To an ordinary passer-by, it may appear to be just another neglected deserted burial ground. But to the descendants of Jabalpuriya Jews now living in Israel, India, and across the world, it is something sacred. It is the resting place of their ancestors. It is the last visible archive of a small Bene Israel community that once lived, prayed, celebrated, served, and finally faded from this central Indian city.



This is the story that Jabalipuraan now wishes to preserve.

The Jewish story of Jabalpur belongs mainly to the Bene Israel community of India. Historically associated with the Konkan and Bombay region, many Bene Israel families

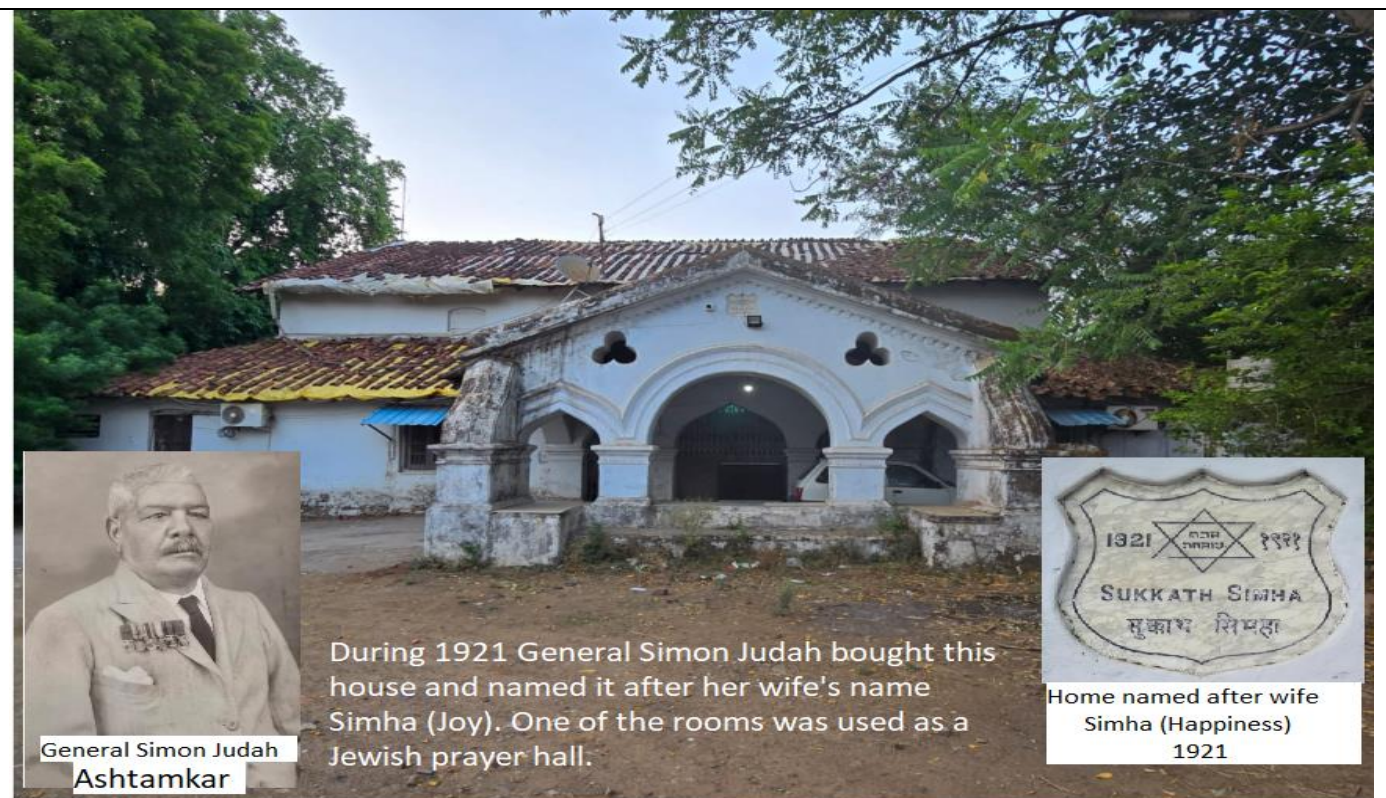
moved inland during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through **military service, railways, factories, administration, and education**. Jabalpur, being a cantonment and service town, became one such home.

What made Jabalpur important for British in India

Jabalpur's strategic importance was due to its location as a crossroads of trade routes and its status as a military and administrative center. The city's development as a military cantonment and its role as a military headquarters for the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories made it a key location for British military operations and administration. The city's historical significance as a stronghold of various dynasties and its cultural heritage also contributed to its importance in British India.

americahistory.github.io+4

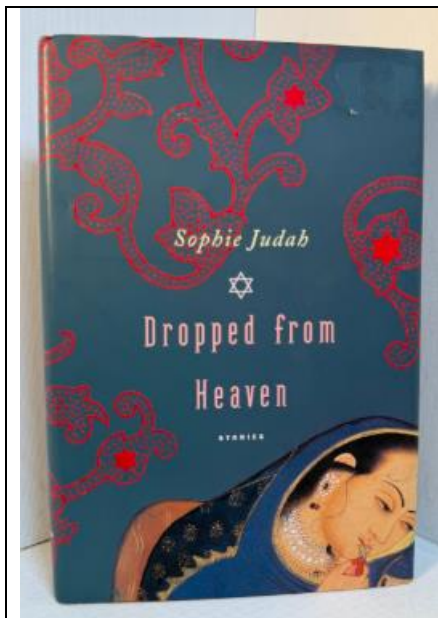
Local accounts suggest that Jewish families began arriving in Jabalpur around 1896. Among the early remembered names are Simon Judah Kolatkar Jacob. Around 1918, Simon Judah is said to have helped establish Judah Compound in Ghamapur, which became the heart of Jewish life in the city. Later memories connect the compound with Rosh Hashanah gatherings around 1921.



Jabalpur did not have a formal synagogue building. Instead, rooms inside Judah Compound became the community prayer hall. That simple detail says a lot about the Jabalpuriya Jews. Their religious life was intimate, domestic, and deeply Indian. Festivals were celebrated in a home. Prayers were recited in rooms. Children grew up among cousins, elders, Hebrew prayers, Indian food, saris, stories, and discipline. The community was small, but it was alive.

Old accounts remember Shabbat, Pesach, Rosh Hashanah, Bar Mitzvah preparation, and the arrival of the Torah from Bombay. One of the most beautiful memories is of the Torah being brought by train to Jabalpur. Hindus and Muslims joined the Jewish families in respect, covered their heads, and walked with them from the railway station to Judah Compound. This image is not only Jewish history; it is Jabalpur's history — a reminder of a city where different communities could honour each other's faith.

At its peak, one account records about 22 Jewish families in Jabalpur. **Sophie Judah** later remembered that the Bene Israel population of Jabalpur may once have been around 200 persons. Whatever the exact number, the truth is clear: the community was small, but its presence was meaningful. ***Its members served in the army, railways, schools, factories, administration, and public life. Lt. Gen. Russell Jacob Mordecai, PVSM, AVSM, one of the most distinguished Bene Israel officers of the Indian Army, had a strong Jabalpur connection.***



The nineteen pieces in Sophie Judah's debut collection, *Dropped from Heaven: Stories*, are inspired by her experiences growing up as a member of the [Bene Israel](#), a tiny Jewish community in central India. Though Jews have been present in India for centuries, their numbers are very small and Judah's family, which moved often because of her father's position as an army officer, was often the only Jewish family in town. This background, according to a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly*, provides Judah with rich material for fiction.



[By George! Meet Judah, the inspirational b-school guru. - YouTube](#)

Squadron Leader George Judah, born in Jabalpur, served in the Indian Air Force and later became an important academic figure. Watch the video: [Bing Videos](#)

Immigration

Then history changed. After the creation of Israel in 1948, many Bene Israel families gradually migrated. Over time, the prayer rooms became silent. The large family gatherings reduced. Names moved from Jabalpur to Israel, Mumbai, Pune, Canada, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere. What remained in Jabalpur were a few families, scattered memories, Judah Compound, and the cemetery at Rani Tal.

Deserted Heritage

The Rani Tal Jewish Cemetery is now the most important physical reminder of this community. Jewish General Online Worldwide Burial Registry records it as the Rani Tal

Jewish Cemetery at Agha Chauwk, Jabalpur, with 26 burials and 22 photographs. Official inspections during the recent legal proceedings recorded Jewish graves within a walled and gated area, with some visible dates including 1937, 1986, and 1987. One inspection counted 37 graves. Community memories suggest that the historical number of burials may be higher.

This is why the work ahead is so important.

Legal Proceedings

This legal journey is important, but it is only the beginning.

Jabalipuraan's first aim is to secure the right to conserve the cemetery respectfully. The graves must be protected. The boundary must be preserved. The site must be cleaned, documented, and safeguarded from damage or encroachment. But once this is achieved, the larger work will begin.

Memorial / Museum

The next step is memory restoration.

Jabalipuraan wants to photograph every grave, read every inscription, translate names where necessary, collect old family photographs, gather oral histories, and connect cemetery records with descendants. The goal is not only to preserve the dead, but to ***reach the living — especially those in Israel and across the Bene Israel world who may not know that their ancestors rest in Jabalpur.***

Imagine a family in Ashdod discovering that a great-grandparent is buried in Rani Tal. Imagine an elderly descendant seeing a photograph of a grave that carries a family name heard only in childhood. Imagine young Indian Jews visiting Jabalpur not as tourists, but as returning descendants for pilgrimage. Imagine a prayer at the restored cemetery, a stone placed on a grave, and a name spoken after decades of silence.

The Vision

This is the vision.

This journey has many stakeholders. The local Jewish families and descendants remain the emotional foundation. Daniel Abraham, Alma Judah, Dr. Alan Gaur, Dr. Jagdish Gaur, and others have carried memory and testimony through difficult years. Municipal and revenue authorities have a vital role in clarifying records and protecting the site. Lawyers and courts have become essential in securing lawful protection. The media has helped bring the issue before the public. Researchers, historians, and genealogists can help connect names, records, and families. Most importantly, the Bene Israel diaspora in Israel and across the world can help complete the missing story.

Bridge

Jabalipuraan stands in this journey as a bridge — between Jabalpur and Israel, between graves and descendants, between memory and documentation. It does not claim ownership of the story. It seeks to serve the story.

We now appeal to the Bene Israel community, Indian Jews, Jewish organisations, genealogists, historians, and descendants across the world: please help us.

- ✓ ***Help us identify names.***
- ✓ ***Help us read inscriptions.***
- ✓ ***Help us trace family trees.***
- ✓ ***Help us find descendants.***

Help us collect photographs and memories of Judah Compound, Rosh Hashanah gatherings, weddings, funerals, and the old Jewish life of Jabalpur.

Help us bring the children of Jabalpur's Jewish ancestors back to the graves of their forefathers.

The fight today may appear to be about a cemetery wall, a gate, or legal rights. But beneath it is something deeper. It is a fight against forgetting.

If the cemetery is lost, we lose more than stones. We lose names, stories, family lines, and the proof that a small Bene Israel community once lived in Jabalpur with dignity and faith. But if the cemetery is conserved, it can become a living bridge — from Rani Tal to Israel, from Jabalpur to the Jewish world.

Jabalpur is ready to remember.

Now, we ask the world to remember with us.

We need to thank so much

Mr. Mukul Modi

who is a partner with Mr. Kovid Verma partner in
Jabalipuraan.

Mukul is the one who makes all the videos.



We need to thank so much

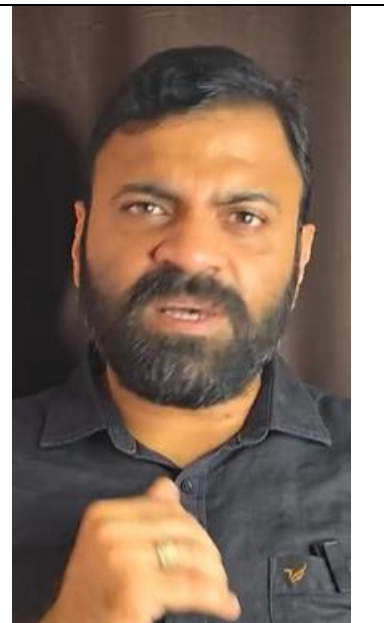
Mr. Kovid Verma

For letting new fresh blood flowing in to the old
Jewish Jabalpur heritage veins.

Kovid writes

I have been busy at a family wedding and today I had
my baby's first haircut. So, I could not get appropriate
time to sit and just write everything down.

MAZAL TOV



Meet **Adv. Surendra Pal** - a staff member at the
Sanjeevan Hospital. He is an advocate by
qualification and has pushed forward our case in the
SDM Court and Sessions Court. He has been active
on the ground at the cemetery. The land mafia has
been vehemently against him throughout the
conflict, but he has managed to let the Jewish
community stand its ground.

Thank you, Surendra,



We thank **Adv. Surendra Pal** for his kind help and contributions towards the
Jewish community

Now we are planning a major get-together of Bene-Israel people from all over the world to come to Jabalpur to help us push the decoration of Jewish heritage while enjoying lovely tourist sites and attractions in Jabalpur!

Meeting in Jabalpur in Oct. 2027

Jabalpur, located in Madhya Pradesh, India, is known for its rich history, cultural heritage, and stunning natural beauty, including the famous Marble Rocks and Dhuandhar Falls.

Following are the dates and we are working on a plan.

Save Jabalpur Jewish Heritage & Relax One Week in Beautiful Jabalpur

**Let us all Bene-Israel meet in Jabalpur for Sukkot 2027
begins at sundown on Friday, October 15, Friday, and ends at nightfall on
Friday, October 22, Friday.**

Hotel Name: 4 star hotel

Hotel address:

Hotel Phone:

Hotel email:

Double Room 8 days stay = Rs.

(Terms: Bed \$ Breakfast)

All Prayers will be held in the sukkah that will be outside the hotel building

Conference room: Every morning after breakfast one hour meeting will be held to discuss Jabalpur Jews.

The invited speakers will be senior government officials who will help us in our projects.

Spa Massage swimming pool are provided, not included in the stay cost.



Program

Monday 18th Oct 2027 – Visit to the Rani Tal Cemetery

Wednesday 20th Oct 2027 – Visit to

Every day one hour meeting after breakfast

Please contact me at following details:

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WhatsApp : +9171571355

Please contact me for the following:

1. Those interested in coming to Jabalpur for a vacation & helping the community, please send me an email.
1 Adult air return ticket Mumbai/Pune – Jabalpur – Mumbai = Rs. 20,000 averages
1 Train ticket (15. 30 hours Puna/Mumbai Rs.2000 return
1,063 Km from Mumbai to Jabalpur 15 hours' drive.
Taxi Mumbai to Jabalpur Rs. 14,000 one way.
Bus service Mumbai to Jaipur Rs. 4000 one way
Hiring a bus by group of 55 people is the cheapest. Bring you all on 14th and return on 23rd. Oct. 2027
Hotel: Once we know the number of people who will be coming, we can get a good deal for bus, hotel with breakfast, tours and other arrangements.
A sukkah will be prepared as per Jewish law where families can say prayers and eat their food.



2. We need financial help for the legal purpose to fight our case in the high court. Please contact me to donate. We will let you know how to donate for the “Preserving the deserted Jewish heritage Cemetery”

