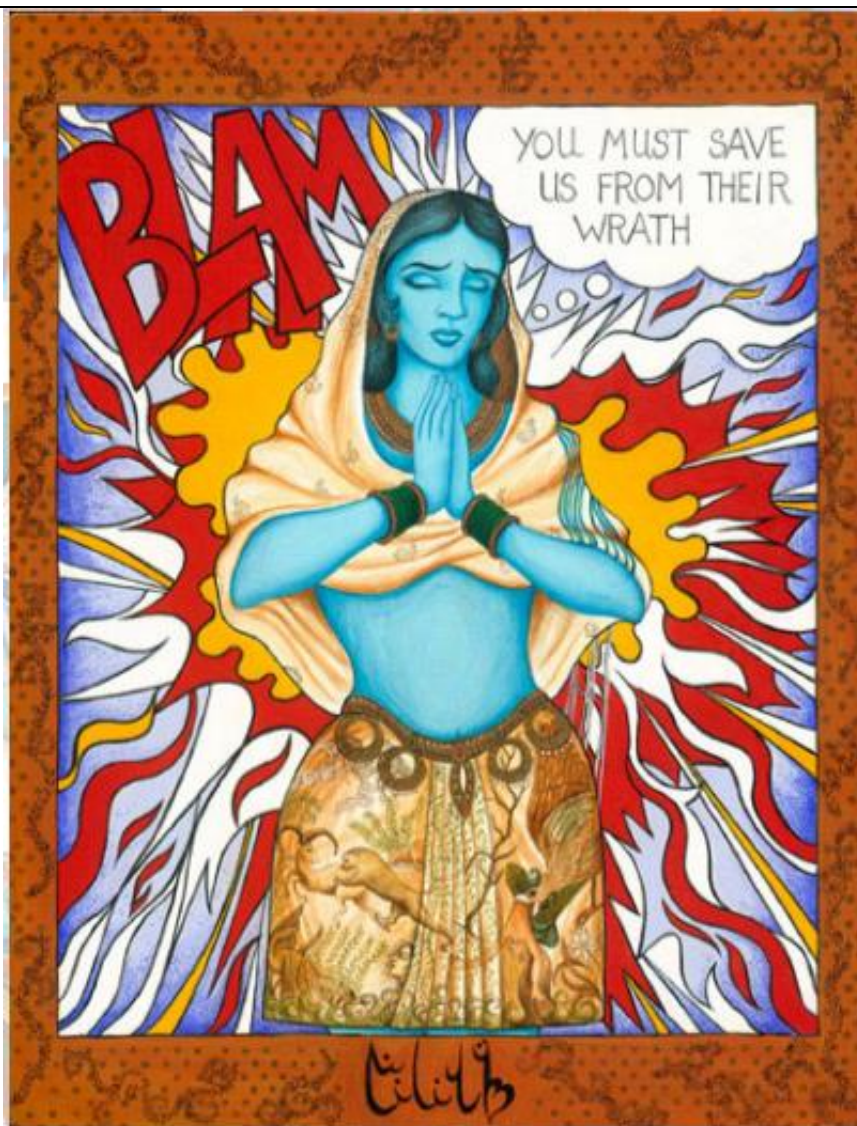




Siona Benjamin Finding, Home #75 (Fereshteh) "Lilith" 30" x 26" Gouache on wood panel 2005

www.artsiona.com, www.BlueLikeMe.com

US - Nehru Fulbright India scholar 2011, Fulbright Israel scholar 2017



From the City of Ashdod, Israel

SHANIWAR TELI **e-Newsletter**

shaniwarteli@gmail.com

(English Marathi & Hebrew)

April. 2021

Vol: 6

***Binding all Bene-Israel Community
Worldwide***

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

ברכת פסח משניוואר טלי
Passover Greetings from Shaniwar Teli



शनिवार तेलीकडून पीएसकअभिवादन

See page 54 where Ronith teaches us cooking quick snack "*Onian Bhajias*" to finish Passover.

Contains

Collections of many short articles related to Bene-Israel community and Judaism

3 Contains & Cover Credit 5 Letters & Corrections 6 Letter from Editor 7 Letter from ST creator 8 Living Legend 10 Cave of Patriarchs 12 Origin- Dry Fruit Malida 14 CRIME: Day light crime committed by Indians on Israeli citizens 15 How much water should be drunk? 16 Changing faces of future (Jails and toilets) 16. What is Oz? 16 Strange Sculptures 17 Mystery of Paus Pirancha Malida! 21 What are "STAN" countries? 22 Cruelty in children; Good Bad & Ugly. 23 A synagogue in an Ethiopian village. 23 Survey Results: <i>If you got a chance, would you change your life?</i>	24 Bene-Israel children touching their parent's feet 25 Haath-Boshee; only a Bene-Israel tradition English /Marathi. 27 Borah/Mango7Olive/Lemon Pickle; the Bene-Israel way. 28 Who are we to Judge the Russian Immigrants to Israel? 30 BOOKS –related Bene-Israel / Siona Benjamin (USA) & Angelica Jacob (Australia) 31 Alibaug or Elibaug? 32 Bene-Israel Mohel's 37 - Adventures of Elkana Bamnolkar Hebrew & English 41 Against all Odds-amazing story of Jewish prisoners. 47 Bene-Israel Gold Maker 48 Ashtami Bene El Synagogue now a school.	<i>Chief Editor:</i> Dr. Shulmith Solomon (Charikar) Ph.D, DHE <i>Guest Editor's</i> Dr. Neomi Solomon (Ashtamkar) Angelica Jacob (Dandekar) <i>Idea & Creator:</i> Elijah (Leo) Daniels (Walwatkar) B.Sc. M.B.A <i>Consultant for Heritage & Bene-Israel History:</i> Dr. Nissim Moses (Talkar) B.Sc. Eng. Expert on BI History <i>Religious Guidance:</i> Rabbi Shmuel Ben-Shalom (Divekar) <i>Manager - Canada:</i> Mr. Abraham Samson (Mapgaonkar) (B.Tech., (IIT) M.M.S (Operations) <i>Manager - Australia:</i> Mr. Solomon Erulkar (Handasi B.Tech) <i>Manager - New Zealand:</i> Mr. Yoel Reuben Samson (Killlekar) MPA <i>Manager - Raigad District:</i> Mr. Herzl Levy Bhonkar (Adv) <i>Manager – Pune:</i> Dr. Reuben Daniel (Pezarkar) Ph.D <i>Manager – Thane</i> Mr. Samuel (Sami) Daniel (Thane) (Respected president of Thane Synagogue)	COVER: In her "Finding Home" series, Siona raises questions about what and where "home" is, while addressing issues such as identity, immigration, motherhood, and the role of art in social change. With her transcultural background, the desire to "find home," spiritually and literally, has been a persistent theme. Her feeling of being unable to establish deep roots anywhere unnerves her yet also pulls her toward a seductive spiritual borderland. www.artsiona.com 
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Don't Miss in this Issue

Page: 94 Rabbi Samuel Divekar guides us as to what Psalm to read when in life. (print & preserve)

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25 Haath-Boshee; only a Bene-Israel tradition English /Marathi.

Page 77: Sorry situation of Panvel Cemetery / reasons/letters



Bene-Israel Nostalgia village in Raigad



Most of the 300 synagogues in Raigad area were built in this shape

Corrections and Letters

Corrections: We are sorry for these corrections in the last issue. Thank you for letting us know.

— Bene Ephraim community (From Assam)

Andhra Pradesh (AP)

Page 109: Assam should be AP.



a) and Mr. Reuben (Shlomo) Benjamin to India during 1931 from Eden when d. Levy's grandfather Asher was working

Page 17: grandfather should be father.

The newsletter is very long. Suggest a max of 15-20 pages. Balance can be used for future issues.

Joey Joseph, Australia

Letters

To Shaniwar Teli,
My visit to Roha, Ashtami looking for our Beth El Synagogue ended in finding a school, where the toilets are placed where Hekhal stood.

Hekhal refers to the holiest room in the synagogue, where Torah scrolls are kept.

There are two rumors about this school's history

1. It is given to the local body by the Jews to run a School and to maintain the Sanctity of the Holy place once a House of Worship.
2. This place was sold by local Post Master Late. Mr. Abraham Ashtamkar to the local body for a price.

Thanks sir, appreciate your guidance on this.
Let's hope may be if we donated, let our Jewish symbols be our Jewish identity in this place.
Thank you so much
Abraham Shalom

We request our BI community to send us information on this matter if you have any.

**Chanukah Completion
Results
Winner of \$ 100**



Winner : Karmiel(Kinneeret) S. Aptekar

From: Saul Aptekar, To: Shaniwar Teli, March 21, 2021

Dear Shaniwar Te

li Team & Sponsor,

Thanks for the cash gift with card. Chag sameach.

Thanks and Regards,

Karmiel S. Aptekar



**Karmiel S.
Aptekar (Age: 19)**



Magen Abraham Synagogue in Ahmedabad.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

We at Shaniwar Teli cover all the developments in Israel and around the world of our Bene Israel brethren. We are designed to inform, educate or entertain our fellow Bene Israel worldwide. We hope to strengthen ties with each and every one. We hope everyone is safe from this Pandemic.

We wish each and every one of you a Happy Passover. Our young and brilliant Mr. Karmiel Aptekar won the Quiz contest which was held by the Shaniwar Teli.

We have taken into consideration the various suggestions that are sent to us. We try our best to cover all the developments in Israel and around the Jewish world of the Bene-Israel's.

Shulmith SOLOMON Charikar Ph.D.



Letter from the e-Newsletter creator

Dear Readers,

In last fifty years I have not seen so many positive activities happening together in the Bene-Israel community.

1. RJA is taking up and completing new projects in preserving our heritage in Raigah
2. Elijah Jacob (ex-president of AJDC) is trying to put an orchestra together of BI singers and musicians to sing Kirtan songs. This group will be traveling around the world doing their programs.
3. Association for Bene-Israel Marathi & English literature preservation in Hebrew (**ABMEH**) under guidance of Avihay Bastekar from Kiryat Arba who has collected hundreds of Marathi & English old BI prayer, songs and customs & tradition books, scanned them and preserved in digital mode.
4. ABMEH realizes for Israeli born BI children it is important to translate these books into Hebrew. The first project they have taken up is to translate H.S Kehimkar's book into Hebrew for digital saving. They need help of \$12 / 40 NIS to translate per page. Please help them.
5. This March IJHC are did a feature on some Bene-Israel soldiers (list created by Mr. Nissim Moses, BI Historian).
6. Pune synagogue takes repossession of the part of the property of the synagogue that was taken from the synagogue by force and starts maintenance of Jewish cemetery.
7. John Perry and his team in New Jersey introduced BI to the US world.
8. Jewish community in Australia sponsored and produced a book on "Kosher Indian Cooking"
9. Shaniwar Teli has started its first effort to reach the Hebrew speaking BI through ABMEH's help while an effort to reach the Marathi speaking BI through Mr. Samuel Daniel Bamnolkar from Thane.
10. Rabbi Samuel Ben-Shalom Divekar has been guiding the community from Jerusalem. With this newsletter we are including

Elijah (Leo) Daniels



Our Bene-Israel Living Legend “*Living Legend*”

This 94 year young man became my friend just a year ago when we started the first issue of Shaniwar Teli. Nissim Moses had introduced us. I have still never met him nor did I even speak to him. But I am so impressed with this unusually special kind personality.

Mr. Samuel Daniel Divekar agreed to become our USA representation as we requested others in other countries. Then on Sam starting sending us amazing information. He introduces us to Siona Benjamin who guided us how to redesign our newsletter and allowed us to use her unique painting images on front pages. In every Shaniwar Teli newsletter you find a lot of Jewish related items where it mentions “*Curtesy: Samuel & Erna Daniel*”. His enthusiasm astonished me. There was never a day when he did not send something interesting.

With his degree in M.S.W (Masters in Social Work) he has won many awards including
“*Awards for increasing the social bonding between Bene-Israel*”.

This is, if not impossible, but a very difficult task and if Sam was awarded for increasing social bonding between ***Bene-Israel***, this man should be an Angel!! ***Only Angels can perform miracles.***

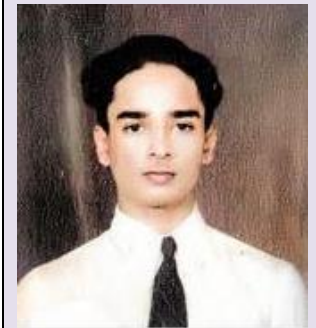
We want to honor our dear angel member of the Bene-Israel community as :

“Living Legend of the Bene-Israel community”.

**Respected
Mr. Samuel M
Daniel Divekar**
March, 9, 1927



“Angel of Miracle”



Samuel (Sam) was born to Lt. Michael Daniel Divekar and Yerusha daughter of Sadick Reuben Penkar on 9th March 1927 in Bombay, India. He is the descendant of a long line of Honorable and Distinguished Army personnel of the Bene Israel Community from the original Commadam Muccadam Family of the Divekar Family Group. This family group were the one who establish **the first two synagogues** of the Bene Israel Community in Mandvi District of Bombay City.

Sam's family then living in Assam; India had him admitted to one of the leading educational institutions in the region "St. Placid's High School, Chittagong, which is now in Bangladesh, India. He registered and studied at two colleges in of the prestigious higher education colleges in Bombay (now Mumbai) -Wilson College and Siddharth College in Bombay University for the Bachelor's degree with Physics as his Major and Mathematics as his minor on 21 August 1951. Later he joint Govt. Law Collage in Churchgate Mumbai but flew to USA to Howard University as he was admitted.

Being a distinguished student Sam went to the USA from India and was admitted for his **{M.S.W. (Master of Social Work) Degree.}** with emphasis on Clinical Social Work- a degree program at Howard University, Washington D.C., U.S.A. which he completed in 1957. He then for his specialization did a follow up training program in **Psychotherapy** at the Jewish Board of Guardians in New York, N.Y. USA.

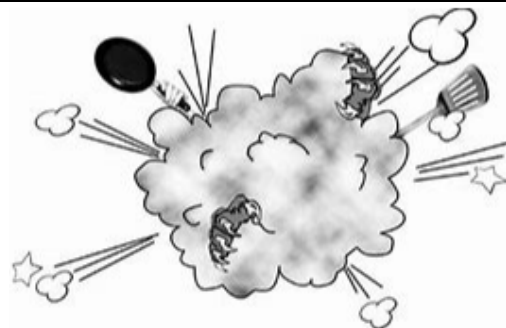
In 1975 Sam met the Love of his Life Erna Weber (of Swedish origin) , who totally captured his heart and he married her. They are a lovely couple who together think benefits they can bring to the Bene-Israel community.

(Above text and pictures on this page are taken from Mr. Nissim Moses's Bio-Brief on Samuel Michael Daniels Divekar)



Awards of Samuel Micahael Daniel Divekar for His and Erna's Activity in Social Bonding of the Bene Israel Community

**Sam !! Sam !! Tell them
to stop throwing Samosas and
Batata Vadas on each other !!**



Maam, why are you calling us??? We are the police. We can not help. If American and Canadian Bene-Israelis are fighting again then call Sam & Erna Daniel. You need their contact number.... ???!



The Tomb of the Biblical Forefathers and Mothers

Cave of Machpela

This holy site is the resting place and shrine of the Forfathers and Mothers of the Jewish people. It is the second-holiest place in Judaism after Jerusalem's Temple Mount

To Organize visits /events call 02-996-5333 (info@hebron.com)



We visited this beautiful place last week.

When Sarah died Abraham buys this land (how in today's Hebron, the Capital city then) from Hitties around 3800 years ago. Only in 1967 Hebron was liberated by the Jews.



First built 2000 years ago by King Herod.



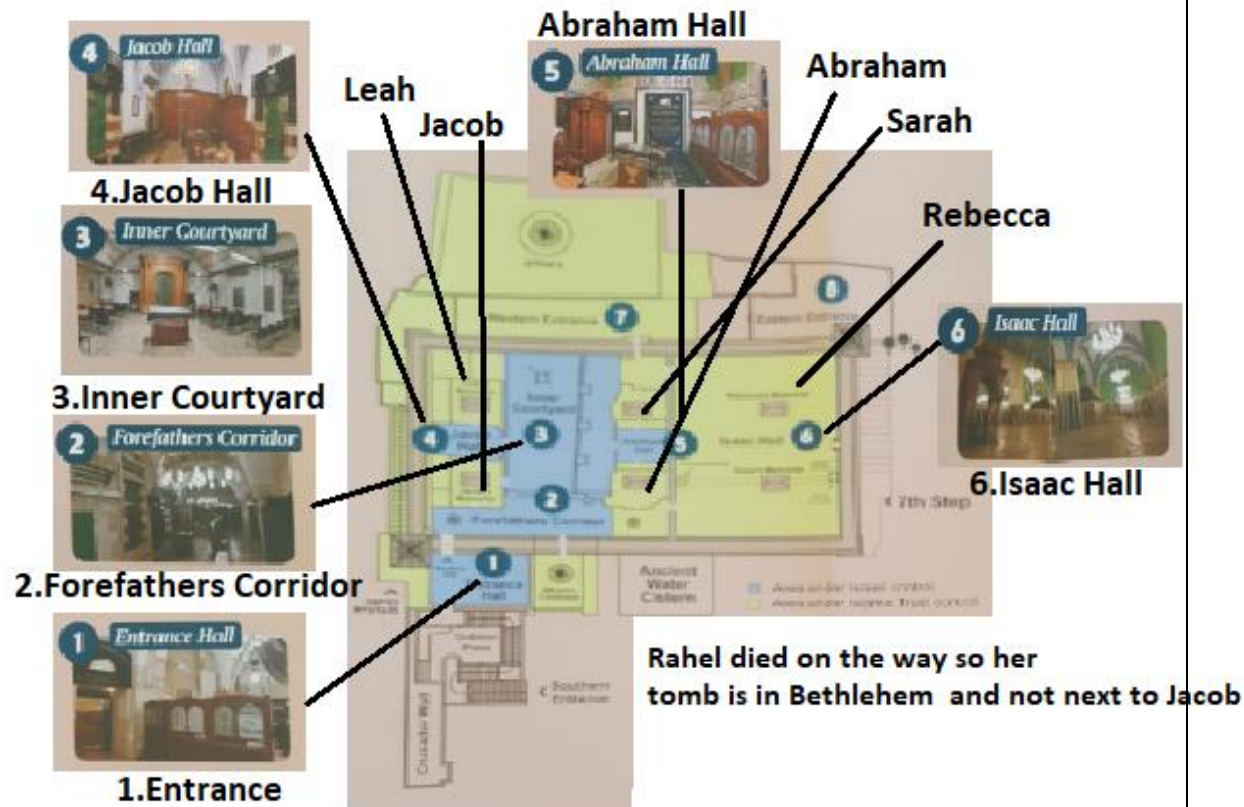
Under foreign regimes parts were built.

The place is also known as the "Cave of the Couples".

The Zohar of the Kabbalah mentions The Cave of Machpela is the entrance to the Garden of Eden.

Adam buried his wife Eve in the cave, later joining her after his death.

A must visit place for every Jew.

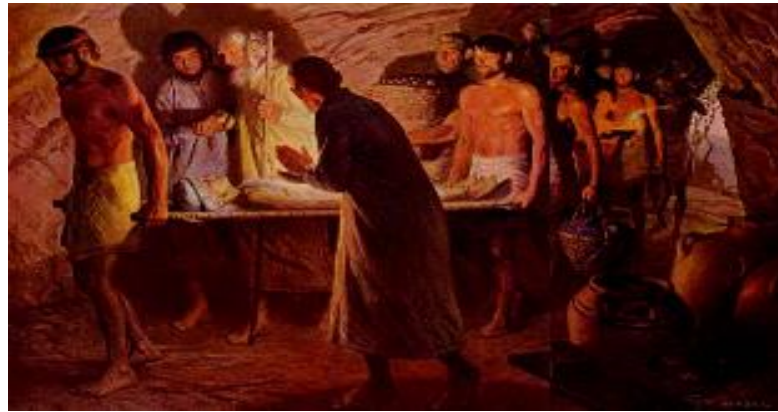


www.hebron.com

Cave of the Patriarchs



Abraham's Tomb



Abraham taking Sarah to her burial site in the cave.

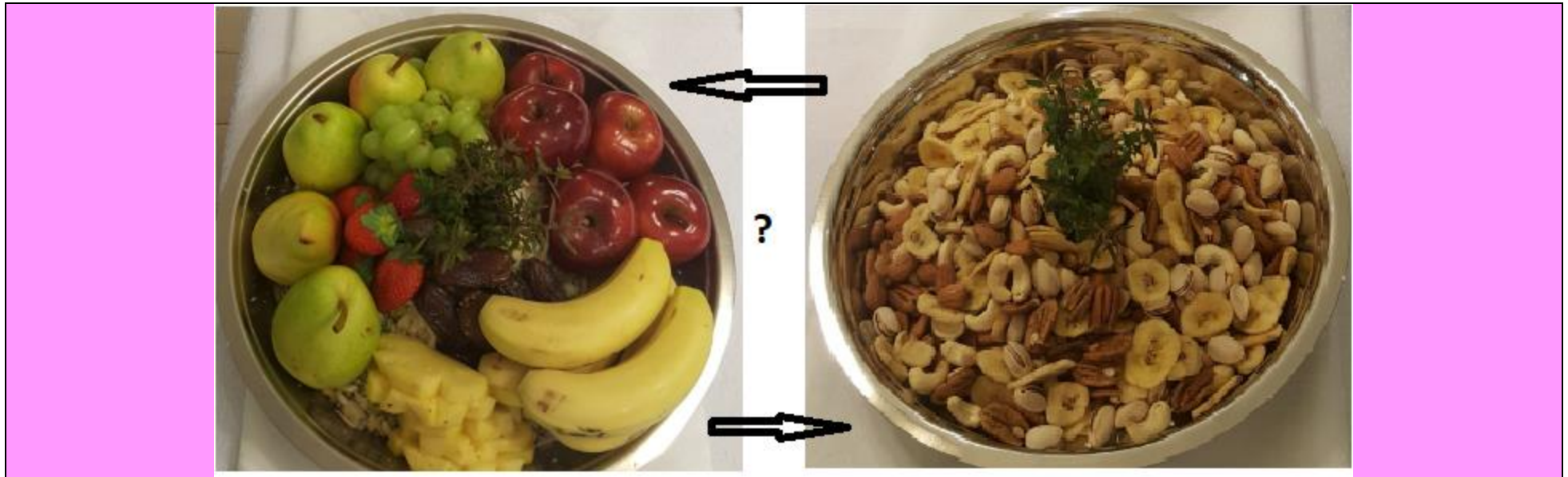


Cave of the Patriarchs (the male head of a family or tribe)

As we saw this wonderful place I asked our guide if Hagar's tomb was also here. He said no. The death place of Hagar is Kaaba, Mecca, in Saudi Arabia. Her son Ismail too was buried next to her after her death.

Please call friendly Guide Ari Singer (English & Hebrew) for visits and explanations and arranging events. Phone/WhatsApp: +972542281569
Instagram: @toursinisrael





Question: How and why did Bene-Israel in Israel start performing Malida with dry fruits?

Answers:

Jerry Kolet: for us malida has become a synonymous with poha (parched rice). It became difficult in Israel to find it...and also rice underwent process to become poha. It became more difficult to find with poha Kashrut. So the brethren in Israel did it with dry fruits (that was respectable alternative). The intent is there so really no issue.

Nissim Moses: There is no such thing as a dry fruit Malidah by itself. But in lieu of the availability of certain fresh fruits like grapes you can have raisin black or white, or wine instead of fresh figs you can have dry figs instead of fresh dates you do have dry dates. Never heard of dry pomegranates, olives are any way salted or in vinegar. For shehiyanu bracha you need any new fruit of the session. For Ha adam blessing you can use any fruit say papaya fresh or dry or even potatoes. And that is for Tubeshbat Malidah. Bit generally one eats dry fruits among the Bene Israel in Passover week and around Shavuoth. There is no such thing as a regular dry fruit Malidah This s concoction of some Dor Ha zair smart alec or maid.

Crime - Eye-Wash Business of Agents to bring Indian Foreign Workers to Israel

After getting through a very complex bureaucratic system to get some help for old parent at home, we approached an official agent who was authorized to bring foreign workers from India as health care workers.

The woman who was bought to us was Seema Sharma (a very Hindu name) but told us she was a Christian. She already had a local mobile phone that we thought the agent may have provided her. As a day passed we noticed she is talking on the phone most of the time in a day. We told her calls can be very expensive to India. She said no, she was talking to her family in Tel-Aviv??!! Then we came to know that her sister and her brother, are already working here her brothers too are here and soon her husband will come.

We lived in Ashdod and her family in Tel-Aviv. After a month she just said good bye and went to live with her family in Tel-Aviv. She said in the contract it says we can ask her to leave her job in one month if we don't like her work and she has the right to leave the job in one month. But she already has been issued stay in Israel for 5 years and on our approval she can work in Israel for five years, while we have no one.



Indian Foreign worker dancing on body of sick Israeli elderly

The agent said this can happen and recommend to re-apply to get another one. So we did the whole process again and in six months another woman Jhasi (again a Hindu name) came who said she was a Christian and again she had a phone talking most of the time in a day to her relatives in Tel-Aviv and in one month she too left to go and live with her family in Tel-Aviv.

We wrote letters and sent three reminders to Israeli Embassy in India and to the Ministry of Internal affairs in Israel but with no response. Later we were told there is a huge Tamil Christian community in Tel-Aviv who have come here as foreign health care workers. These workers get excellent payments working in odd jobs in Tel-Aviv and pay bribes to agents to bring their family members against new approval certified by the government to bring a new health care worker for an elderly member of the family.

We were told these health care workers come after training but the two workers we got did not know anything. From how to take temperature and blood pressure or home glucose tests, we had to teach them every thing. They had no training on how to give bath to elderly or how to change and put on their dippers and how to pick or hold them.

On Saturdays you will find hundreds of Indian Tamil foreign workers playing cricket in the Ha-Yarkon park and their wife's gossiping with lunch and picnic boxes. Their children playing around.

Hundreds of elderly people in Israel are cheated over years while no one cares. They take the approval and the help that arrives just runs away after a month. These same workers when they go to middle-east countries are treated like dogs and dare they cheat any citizen. They would be in jail for their life. They cheat then earn the best salaries doing other jobs get all the benefits while own Bene-Israel agent help them and give them legal advice how to cheat the first employer and then the Israel government by continuing to stay in Israel and bring their whole family.

If anyone is interested in exposing this dirty racket, please contact us and we will give you details of the family.

shaniwarteli@gmail.com

**No no sir, please understand.
Yes we are Bene-Israel Jews
from India but we prefer to be
forigen workers from India
who are working in Israel.**

**They earn more than
Israelis and get money for
all holidays and weekends
and a huge salary and all
social benifites.**



Health - How much water should you drink in a day

Nathan Elijah (Walwatkar)

Director& Partner at Injury Prevention & Rehabilitation Consultants, Melbourne Australia



Studies in Sweden at Uppsala University have shown dehydration causes muscles to Shrink. To avoid getting up at night don't drink 2 or 3 hours before bed except if you do drink small mouthfuls. Avoid tea coffee and certain medications diuretics that get rid of body fluid and send you to the toilet. Not drinking water does not allow the body to flush out toxins bacterial and fungus from the area leading to burning thrush etc.

Each 40 Kg = 1 Liter /day

The formula is 1 liter per 40 kg body weight and follows the ratio e.g. 100 kg 2.5 (you can count thin chicken soup Rasa in but not tea coffee or alcohol because they make you lose water and run to the toilet).

As normal urine is acidic it kills most stuff down there. As a result of drinking less the kidneys reabsorb water concentrating the urine which causes irritation due to being concentrated. People try to get to the toilet and it's painful or burning with very little coming out. In time the bladder which is a muscle called detrusor shrinks and becomes weak leading to more problems. One needs to continue to drink mouthfuls of water more in the morning. This is only if you wish to stay healthy and live long. I hope you all will, as it's no fun if there will be no one to talk to.

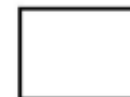
Gosalkar, my doctor told me the best way to check you are drinking enough water is by checking the color of your urine. It should be colorless like water.



Wow Palkar!!
Thank you for sharing!
So how do we check the urine if it is colorless?
##?!!**

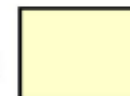
NO COLOR. TRANSPARENT

You're drinking a lot of water



PALE STRAW COLOR

You're normal & well hydrated



TRANSPARENT YELLOW

Normal



DARK YELLOW

You need to drink some water soon



AMBER OR HONEY

Your body isn't getting enough water.

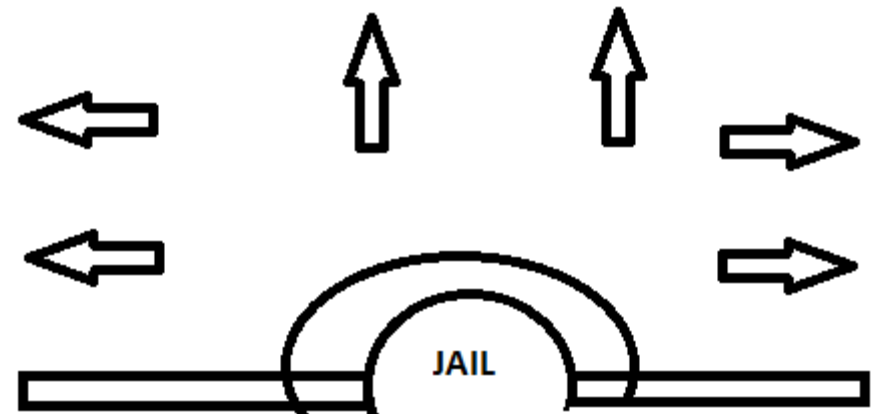


SYRUP OR BROWN ALE

You need to drink water. NOW & A LOT!



Future of Toilets & Jails



Jails will have to be divided as their toilets.

What is Oz?

When Aus or Aussie, the short form for an Australian, is pronounced for fun with a hissing sound at the end, it sounds as though the word being pronounced has the spelling Oz. Hence Australia in informal language is referred to as Oz.



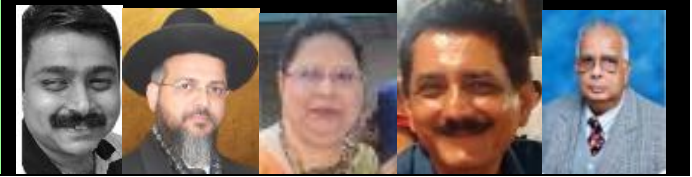
The Strange Sculptures in Victoria's Way park.

Victoria's Way park is a private park near the village of Roundwood in Ireland, which attracts people with its unusual sculptures. Strangle the park also has many Ganapati sculptures playing various music instruments.

[The strange sculptures in Victoria's Way park » Tripfreakz.com](http://Tripfreakz.com)



Pos Peer Malida-(PAUS PIRANCHA MALIDA)



Amazingly no one today knows the origin of “Pos Peer Malida”. There are families who still perform this Malida annually but have no idea why they are doing it.

Suggestion: of its origins: We tried to investigate this subject; however, the replies we received explained only how it is done, but not why? Except some vague explanations. When we found no source in the BI community, we approached our dear friend Mr. Raamesh Gowri Raghavan (see below his details) who is an expert on the Bene-Israel community. We were also helped by Rabbi Shmuel Ben-Shalom (Divekar), Mrs. Sinnora Kolatkar from Borivili and Mr. Benhur Bhastekar from Mumbai. Finally, we got the exact explanation from Mr. Nissim Moses, our resident Bene-Israel historian.

Below are the explanations given by each contributor. Also, Leora Pezarkar, along with Mr. Raghavan, traveled to the Pezari village to take photograph this place; sadly, this proved impossible due to the Coronavirus. We hope to source, and publish, some pictures in the future. Meanwhile, if any of our Bene-Israel members travel to Pezari village, please take some pictures, get some historical details and send it to shaniwarteli@gmail.com.

Mr. Raamesh Gowri Raghavan (reference below) wrote: (We thank Raamesh for his help)

One of the unique traits and identity of the Bene Israeli community is the practice of offering the *Malida*. A traditional practice perhaps adapted from their Persian/Islamic brethren in the neighbourhood, it represents a blend of two cultures - being Jewish and Bene Israeli Jewish. The use of rice flakes, coconut and fresh fruits are the local ingredients of the region and ones that the community adopted these practices/customs into its cooking. Presenting it to invoke the name of Prophet Elijah is a unique Bene Israeli “Jewish” aspect.

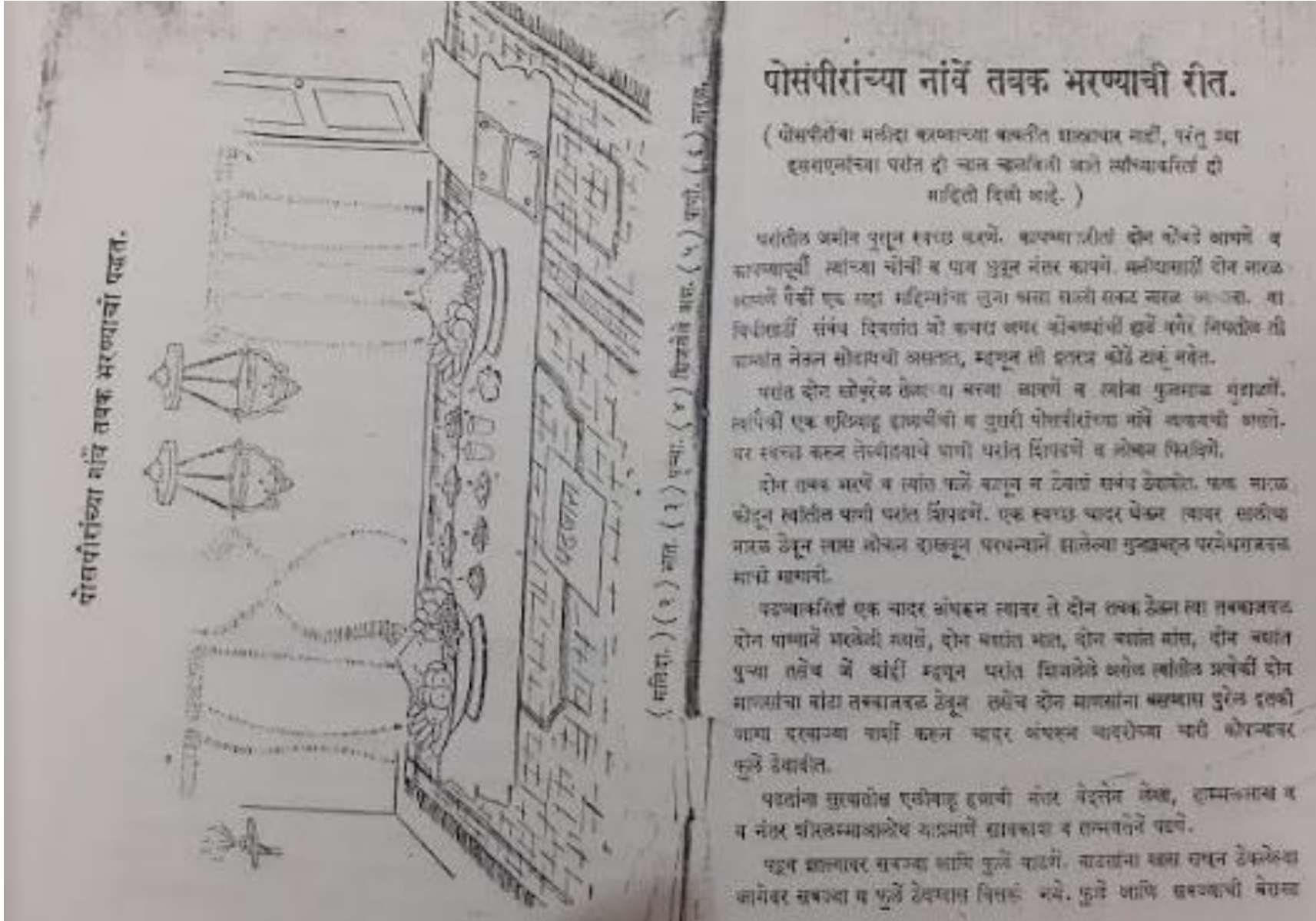
One such *Malida* that is practiced by only a few families of the community interestingly finds its association with a Peer from Pezari village in Raigad district of Maharashtra. There is no concrete evidence of what may have led to a *Malida* prayer performance at memorial of a *Peer* (Holy Man in Islam); whether he was a Jewish or not may be part of further study. Since very little is known about the *Peer*, there are various legends and oral histories associated with it.

It is believed that the first *Malida* at this particular *Peer* memorial was performed by the Bhastekar family, followed by the Pezarkar’s and then a few others. This *malida*, conducted in the Marathi month of ‘Paush’ (December - January) points to the etymology behind it - originally the *malida* would have been known as ‘*Paush Peer cha malida*’ which would later been corrupted to ‘*poz peer cha malida*’.

According to an oral legend, the Bhastekar family was the first one to start this *Malida* as an offering to a *Peer* to overcome certain illnesses. It is believed that on this day, every year, a tiger comes to the *Peer Dargah* (Muslim shrine) and cleans the *dargah* (shrine/grave) with its tail. This may not be seen at the *dargah* today, but it’s a belief of yore.

Though these beliefs may not have any concrete history to back it up, it remains an important *Malida*-offering practice in the select few families of the community. It is important because it narrates an important aspect of cultural adaptation and its evolution while still in keeping to the key tenets.

Rabbi Shmuel Ben-Shalom (Divekar): Sent us the below scanned pages from an old Marathi prayer book



Mr. Raamesh Gowri Raghavan (Continued)

According to an oral legend, the Bhastekar family was the first one to start this *Malida* as an offering to a *Peer* to overcome certain illness. It is believed that on this day, every year, a tiger comes to the *Peer Dargah* (Muslim shrine) and cleans the *dargah* (grave of a with its tail. This may not be seen today at the *dargah* but it's a belief of yore.

Though these are beliefs and may not have any concrete history to back it up, it is still an important *Malida*-offering practice in the select few families of the community. This practice is important as it narrates an important aspect of cultural adaptation and its evolution while still in keeping to the key tenets.

Mr. Benhur Bhastekar assisted by Mrs. Sinnora Kolatkar wrote:

We decided to ask some of my Bhastekar friends around the world about the origin of this practice. Although no one could explain its origin, they all confirmed they still perform this *Malida*.

The only one who could help us was Benhur Bhastekar assisted by Sinnora Kolatkar, both from Borivili, Mumbai. We sincerely thank them both.

Benhur wrote: PAUS PIRANCHA MALIDA

There is a grave (more a kind of memorial) of Paus Pir at Bhastey Gaon near Indapur Gaon towards Roha in Maharashtra. Over time, a Hindu family seized the entire plot. When you visit the place, you have to carry *chuna* (lime) to put on the grave, perform the *Malida* ceremony and break a coconut. This *Malida* is done for family prosperity. The *Peer* is a famous Rabbi of that period. *Peer* or *Pir* (Persian) is a title for a Sufi spiritual guide (also referred to as a Hazrat in Islam).

Date:

The said *Malida* has to be done within 15 days from the fast of Teves. There must be a *minyán* of 10 men present to perform this *Malida*.

Procedure:

1. Take a chair and cover it with a white cloth (*chaddar*) fully and place a rose on it.
2. Next to the chair, place the table and cover it again with the cloth. Place a cooked, white broiler chicken (*kombda*) in a *thali* to be eaten only by the family members. This is to be neither served to anybody else nor given away if left over.
3. Next to the abovementioned table, take another table and place a box of good quality *mithai* or else any homemade *halva* beside it. Keep a *tamba* (vessel?) filled with water above that. Place one coconut and tie the coconut and *tamba* with orange and yellow thread.
4. Start the *malida* as usual.
5. After *Malida Hamotsi*, serve the food.
7. Recite the *birkat hammazon*.

Important point:-

1. The water of the coconuts used to make the *malida* should not be consumed but sprinkled around all the rooms in the house.
2. All the above are to be placed facing West.
3. Once you start this *Malida*, you can never discontinue it.

Another Explanation:

A Bastekar family started this tradition as there was an illness in the villages and their child was at the risk of death. They took the child to this *Peer*, who helped them to save the child and eliminate the disease from the area.

Pos Peer Malidah-(PAUS PIRANCHA MALIDAH), Nissim Moses
Historian Indian Jewish Heritage and Bene Israel Genealogy Research

As in every Religion, the Bene Israel's have strictly abided by the guidelines and commandments of their religion and their religious leaders – with one exception. In Judaism, a person, especially a parent or next of kin, will do everything s/he believes it necessary to save a life - “Pikuach Nefesh” - and give thanks unto the Lord for directing him or her along the required path to save that life.

It is the belief among the Bene Israel, and the Jews in general, that The Lord Almighty uses Elijah the prophet, who lived amongst their ancestors in the Holy Land in the Tribal region of Zebulun, to guide and direct them in the path to perform their good deeds.

It has always been the strong conviction of every Jew that there are good people and righteous people in every religion who perform their righteous deeds for the benefit of mankind. The foremost example was, and is, Elijah the Prophet. Although he lived amongst the ancestors of the Bene Israel, (and a Tishabite by birth, not an Israelite), Prophet Elijah was widely accepted as a Holy, Righteous and God-Fearing person - the messenger of the Almighty.

Often many a family were struck by a serious health or other crises. To overcome that crises, they, and sometimes their family's descendants, make a *Neder* (commitment or vow) to the Almighty: if given the Guidance to follow a certain path, especially for the purpose of “Pikuach Nefesh”, to perform a specific Thanksgiving deed for generations to come. Here, I shall give a specific example of the family of author and historian Nissim Moses himself. His grandmother, Leahbai Daniel Moses Talkar, conceived many children; unfortunately, many of her earlier children died during childbirth or shortly thereafter. Out of her 10 children, only three survived, one of whom was his father Menachem. That is why, when her own children got married, she made a *Neder* (vow) - known as the “Nazarite Vow” - that every first-born male child of her male descendants would not have his hair cut for five years. Further, they would undergo a “*Pidyon Ha Ben Ceremony*” in a synagogue for a formal redemption ceremony from a Cohen. This explains why the author had long hair for five years and why his redemption ceremony was performed at the Etz Ha Haeem Synagogue, established by his maternal great-grandfather in Bombay. This ceremony is generally followed by a *Malida* Service; where prayers of the “Eliyahu Ha Navi” Prayer Sequence are recited, thanking the Lord through Elijah the Prophet for his Merciful Kindness.



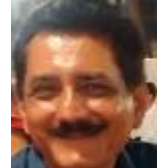
Hence, it is understandable that, in order to Perform “Pikuach Nefesh” on a newborn child, the Bhastekar family sought the Guidance of Elijah the Prophet. They believe that he guided them to the Holy Person that performed the required cure - either through medicine or through prayer and meditation, which brought about a full recovery of the child. The Thanksgiving Ceremony is generally performed as per the commitment made by the person at the time of making the Vow-Neder. Among the Bene Israel, it could be a family gathering of at least 10 persons attending a *Malida* Ceremony, called the *Minchat Hodayah*. If at the time of making the *Neder*, the family made a commitment that its male members and descendants would commemorate the Thanksgiving annually, then that is the legacy generations of the Bhastekar family honour today.



The *Shaniwar Teli* team would like to thank **Mr. Raamesh Gowri Raghavan** who gave us more information on *Pos Peer Malida* than any Bene Israel. Mr. Raghavan was also mentioned in our 2nd issue - his team discovered the old Bene-Israel graveyard. Read more about him at [Raamesh Gowri Raghavan](#).



We would also like to thank **Sinnora Kolatkar** and **Benhur Bhastakar** from Borivili, Mumbai. Our sincere thanks also to **Rabbi Shmuel Ben-Shalom (Divekar)**, Jerusalem, www.indianjudaica.com, for sending us the copy of the procedure in Marathi to conduct this *Malida* service.



PS: As you have noticed according to Raakesh the Peer memorial is in Pezari village while Bhastekar tells us Bhastey Gaon near Indapur Gaon towards Roha. Overall we are still waiting for some Bene-Israel family to give us complete information on this topic.

Do you know the origin of “Stan” Countries

The etymological origins of the suffix "-stan" are in the **Sanskrit** word "**sthan**", which means "place". The Sanskrit word. In the heart of Central and South Asia, there is a group of seven countries known as the “Stan” countries.

They are called that because they have a “Stan” suffix. The ending comes from the Sanskrit root word “**sistan**”, meaning land.

The suffix **–stan** is Sanskrit for “place of,” or “where one stands.” It is found in the names of seven **countries**:

*Afghanistan,
Kazakhstan,
Kyrgyzstan,
Pakistan,
Tajikistan,
Turkmenistan,
Uzbekistan.*

(India or **Hindustan** is a given name to “**Bharat**” by Islam)





The 1966 movie, of the same title of this article, was perhaps my first English movie. Since then, I always thought The Good and Bad was ok but why Ugly? While Good and Bad described the level of goodness / badness in the character, Ugly was more an expression of appearances. The words that should have replaced Ugly were Dreadful, Nasty, Dangerous or Repulsive.

Years have passed. Now I think the correct name should have been The Nasty, the Bad and the Good, in that order, because that is how God has created humanity. Have you ever heard of any parents telling their children ***“Don’t be bad”***? Children already know how to be bad!

Without an ability to appreciate another person's feelings, elementary school children can appear cruel and cold-hearted. It is never entirely clear whether such cruelty is innate or in response to harsh, abusive upbringing. For the most part, however, young children's apparently cruel behaviors grow out of curiosity, and not out of malice.

Kids are just cruel, because basic human nature is cruel. Kids have to be taught kindness and empathy— they don’t know these things by default. Some kids naturally have a bullying personality, with lower levels of natural empathy, and others are the types that are going to be bullied.

Baby: 0-12 months: Most Cruel / Demanding / Self-Centered

Toddler: 1-3 Years: Cruel / Understands how to get what he/she wants

Preschool: 3-5 Years: Cruel / Learning in preschool socializing

Grand schooler: 5-12 years: Cruel to Mean / understands sex vaguely and knows self-interest.

Teen: 12-18 years: Mean, selfish, confused, nasty and merciless – realizes social laws and boundaries.

Young Adult: 18-21 Years: Learns and understands humanity, mortality and learns mercy.

In conclusion as age of children grows, they start appreciating others.



A Synagogue near Gondar, Ethiopia



Curtsey: Rahel Bhankar

LIFE Survey Question

We had asked 100 Bene-Israel

*If you got a chance, would you change anything in your life?
Please answer in Yes or No.*

Following are the results

Yes: 27%

No : 18%

No replies: 54%

Disqualified: 1%

Note:

1. One replied "Don't Know". We realized this was a 22 years unmarried girl so for her the answer was correct. But we had to disqualify this answer as this was not an answer requested.
2. Those who could not reply a simple question are assumed people who have a problem making decisions in their life.

Five Years IndiaTrade With Israel

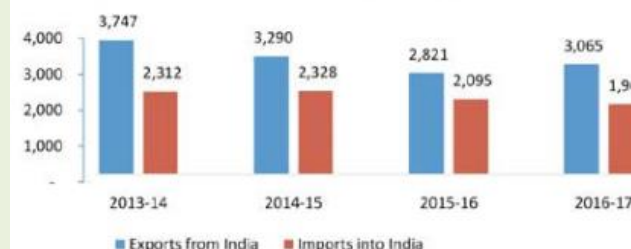
TOP EXPORT ITEMS

- Petroleum oil
- Raw diamonds
- Organic chemicals

TOP IMPORT ITEMS

- Raw diamonds
- Electrical machinery and equipment
- Fertilisers

India- Israel Bilateral Trade (USD mn)



Culture: **A Brief History Lesson on Bene-Israel for New Generations**

Nissim Moses

Historian Indian Jewish Heritage & Bene Israel Genealogy Research



This is applicable to many Situations Such as The Younger Generation Groups who being born or for the most part brought up abroad, do not know the ***Fundamentals of Bene Israel Culture in India***, nor do they know our ***Traditions or Most Important As To Why when and how they originated***.

Yet they want to dance around trying to create their own baseless and wrong versions without knowing the background of ***Humanistic Concepts and Traditions*** of the ***Kind Indian People*** among whom we lived for over two thousand years.

Yes they are the future generation, but in no field; law, medicine, engineering, accountancy, technician, etc. is granted a license to practice ones profession unless one does a reasonable period of internship. Yes, we may be from the ***Older Generation***; but one thing we have learned is to be responsible for our actions, statements and most of all in the ***true Indian Tradition to respect our Elders***.

I remember the days as a youngster in India seeing often grown men & women bending over and touching the feet of their seniors like Grandfathers, Grandmothers, parents, uncles, aunts, and others.

Why-?? Was this Tradition & Custom wrong-?? I say no because, Humility breeds Understanding & Friendship and not Haughtiness and Ignorance.

What has the Supposedly younger generation done to retain and correct the impression of our Indian Jewish population in Israel, besides spin yarns, create supposed facts out of fictional culture impressions of our heritage and a whole lot of other false statements made in public.

Nissim Moses, Historian Indian Jewish Heritage & Bene Israel Genealogy Research



THE "HAATH-BOSHEE" "THE KISS OF PEACE"

by Elijah E. Jhirad

The Bene Israel have preserved an ancient mode of greeting used at the conclusion of services in the Synagogue and on festive occasions in the home and elsewhere. This is the "Haath-Boshee", a Marathi word meaning a kiss transmitted by hand, and often referred to by historians as the "Kiss of Peace".

Perhaps the best description of the greeting is that given by the Rev. J. Henry Lord in a book that was published in 1907 by the Mission Press, Kholapur, India, entitled "The Jews of India and the Far East" (Reprinted in 1976 by the Greenwood Press Publishers, Westport, Connecticut.). "It is performed as follows: Emanating from the chief minister, who bestows it on the elders nearest to him, it passes throughout the congregation. Each individual seeks it as far as possible from his senior or superior. Extending the arms with the hands flattened out, and in the position of the thumbs being uppermost, the person approached takes the hand between both of his own, similarly held, and the junior then probably places his remaining hand on the outside of one of those of the person already holding his other hand. The hands of each are then simultaneously released and each one immediately passes the tips of his fingers which have touched those of his neighbor to his mouth, and kisses them. He then passes on to receive the same from, or to bestow the same on, another; and so on, till all in the Synagogue have saluted one another. Two or three minutes may be occupied in the process. A movement is going on all through the Synagogue, and a distinctly audible sound of the lips is heard through the building, till all is finished. See also, *Encyclopedia Of Ethics And Religion*, Vol. II, page 173.

The Jews of Cochin also use this mode of greeting.

According to Rev. Lord, this greeting is identical to the greeting known as the "Kiss of Peace" among the early Christians and both modes of greeting have possibly a common origin in a still more ancient past. This custom apparently prevailed also amongst the Jews of Persia, especially those of Kurdistan. It is in vogue among the Syrian Christians in South India who trace their origin to the first century of the current era when St. Thomas went to India.

The custom is so distinctive that it cannot possibly be confused with the greetings used by the Hindus and Moslems. It is a misnomer to describe the "Haath-Boshee" as an Indian mode of greeting, for no other Indian people use it.

It is our bounden duty to preserve this very special Bene Israel custom so steeped in our tradition and so expressive of the warmth and unity of our people. Of late we have tended to be neglectful of this tradition. I sincerely hope that all of us will make a concerted effort to maintain this greeting as our forebears have done for over two millenia.



"Haath-Boshee"



Courtesy : Sam & Erna Daniels

"हात-बोशी" "शांततेचे चुंबन"

बेने इस्त्राईलने सभागृहामधील सेवांच्या समाप्ती वेळी, घरात आणि इतरत्र सणाच्या प्रसंगी अभिवादन करण्याचा एक प्राचीन प्रकार जपला आहे. "हात-बोशी" हा मराठी शब्द आहे ज्याचा अर्थ हाताने प्रसारित केलेले चुंबन असा आहे आणि अनेकदा इतिहासकार त्याला "शांततेचे चुंबन" म्हणून संबोधतात. कदाचित या अभिवादनाचे उत्तम वर्णन रेव्ह. जे. हेनरी लॉर्ड यांनी १९०७ मध्ये मिशन प्रेस, खोलापूर, इंडिया यांनी प्रसिद्ध केलेल्या "भारतीय आणि अति पूर्वेतील यहूदी" या पुस्तकात दिले होते, (हे पुस्तक १९७६ मध्ये ग्रीनवूड प्रेस पब्लिशर्स, वेस्ट पोर्ट, कनेक्टिकट यांनी पुनर्मुद्रित केले होते). सदर कृती खालीलप्रमाणे केली जाते: मुख्यमंत्री सुरवात करतात आणि ते प्रथम आपल्या जवळच्या वडीलधाऱ्यांना त्यानंतर ते संपूर्ण मंडळीत प्रसारित केले जाते. प्रत्येक व्यक्ती आपल्या शक्य तितक्या वरिष्ठ व्यक्तीकडून स्वीकारण्याचा प्रयत्न करतात. बाहू लांबवून हाताचा अंगठा वरती ठेवून हाथ सरळ धरताच अभिवादन स्वीकारणारी व्यक्ती तो तळवा त्याच्या स्वतःच्या दोन्ही हातात घेवून समान रीतीने धरून ठेवतो आणि कनिष्ठ नंतर आपला उरलेला हात आधीच्या व्यक्तीच्या बाहेरील बाजूस धरतो. नंतर प्रत्येकाचे हात एकाच वेळी सोडले जातात आणि प्रत्येकजण आपल्या स्पर्श झालेल्या हाताचे ओठाने चुंबन घेतो. त्यानंतर तो तसाच पुढील व्यक्तीकडे अभिवादन प्रसारित करण्यासाठी जातो आणि पुढे ही प्रक्रिया सभागृहातील प्रत्येकाला अभिवादन मिळेपर्यंत अशीच चालू राहते. दोन तीन मिनिट त्या प्रक्रियेमध्ये एक व्यक्ती या कार्यात व्यस्त राहते. सभास्थानात सर्वत्र हि प्रक्रिया चालू असताना इमारतीतून ओठांचा आवाज ऐकू येऊ शकतो. हे देखील पहा, नीतिशास्त्र आणि धर्मकोश, खंड. दुसरा, पृष्ठ 173.

कोचीन मधील यहूदी देखील अभिवादन करण्याची ही पद्धत वापरतात. रेव्ह. लॉर्डच्या म्हणण्यानुसार, हे अभिवादन देखील ज्याला पूर्वीचे ख्रिश्चन "शांततेचे चुंबन" म्हणून ओळखतात त्यासारखेच आहे आणि या अभिवादन

करण्याच्या दोन्ही पद्धतीमध्ये कदाचित एक प्राचीन दुवा आहे. ही प्रथा पाहता फारसी यहूदी लोक विशेषतः कुर्दिस्तानमधील लोकांमध्येही दिसून येते. सेंट थॉमस जेव्हा भारतात गेले तेव्हा पहिल्या शतकापर्यंत दक्षिण भारतातील सीरियन ख्रिश्चनांमध्ये हि प्रथा त्यांना आढळून आली.

ही प्रथा इतकी विशिष्ट आहे की हिंदू आणि मुस्लीम समाजामधील अभिवादन अभिवादन करण्याच्या पद्धतीपेक्षा फार वेगळी असल्याचे स्पष्ट जाणवते. म्हणूनच "हात-बोशी" पद्धतीचे अभिवादन हि एक भारतीय पद्धत म्हणून वर्णन करणे चुकीचे आहे, कारण इतर कोणतेही भारतीय ते वापरत नाहीत.

आपली हि परंपरा आपल्या लोकांच्या एकजूट आणि एकात्मतेची अभिव्यक्ती जतन करणारी असून ही खास बेने इस्त्राईल प्रथा जपणे हे आपले कर्तव्य आहे. फार दिवस आपले या प्रथेकडे दुर्लक्ष झाले आहे. मला आशा आहे की आपण सर्वजण हे अभिवादन टिकवून ठेवण्यासाठी एकत्रित प्रयत्न करू कारण आमच्या पूर्वजांनी दोन सहस्र वर्षांपासून ते केले आहे.

We thank Mr. Samuel (Sami) Elijah Daniel Bamnolkar, President of Shaar HaShamaim (Gate of Heaven) Synagogue for getting this Marathi translation done.

We were made aware by Mr. Daniel of a small mistake in this translation as it was done by a Non-Bene-Israel person. In Israel we do not have any possibility of correcting it so we have left it as is. But it can be understood well.





*Borah Pickle & Borah Preserve

Nissim Moses

Historian India Jewish Heritage and Bene Israel Genealogy Research

The Author Acknowledges the Assistance of Mr. Ralphy Kandlekar, Ms. Sally Varughese and Ms. Molly David in the Whole process of preparing the Pickles and the supply of the material. *[Borah/Olive/Mango/Lemon Pickle](#).



*Here we see a world famous and only Bene-Israel Historian cooking; we mean real cooking, not cooking History!!
(Pun intended please!!)*

Borah/Olive/Mango/Lemon Pickle : Nissim Moses' Recipe

Quantity- 150 large size Green Boras or Olives or an equivalent weight of Green Raw Mangoes or Lemons. Care should be taken to check that the fruit has no damage marks on the skin or it has not fallen to the ground.

Preparation of the Fruit: Wash the fruit well & dry it. Then Make a slice at the top of the fruit and with a narrow sharp knife remove the pit/seed.

Preparation of the Bottle: Take a large sized bottle or more than one if necessary & wash it & dry it completely very carefully. Very important that it is absolutely dry otherwise the pickle will spoil. Now spread a thick layer of salt on the inside base of the bottle.

Preparation of The Preserve: 1st Stage: Stuff the fruit on the inside with salt & lay carefully inside the bottle. When one layer of fruit is finished sprinkle more salt over the fruit inside the bottle and create a second base. On this lay another layer of salted fruit. Continue this till the whole bottle is full. Then seal the bottle with a double nylon sheet to create a tight fit for the cap resulting in a hermetical seal. Put the bottle aside in a room temperature dry environment. Shake the bottle every day for the salt & water released by the fruit to uniformly spread around the jar. Do not be stingy on the salt when starting to preserve. After about 12 weeks drain away the salt and water and lay the fruit out in a bowl. Prepare a second bottle in the same way as above by washing & drying it completely. One can hasten dehydration process by putting the bottled salted fruit for about 4 weeks in the sun but shaking the bottle so that the salt again gets evenly distributed around the fruit. When ready for pickling wash the base material above with white vinegar till it is salt crystal free by pouring into a metal sieve. You may reuse the vinegar over & over again for removing salt.

Preparation of the Masala for Pickling:

Ingredients:

0.5 Bottle (0.5 liter) Olive oil.

100 gm. Chili Powder

150 gm. Turmeric Powder

60 gm. crushed/ ground Methi (fenugreek) seeds

1 teaspoon Hing (Asafetida) powder.

1 Bottle White Wine Vinegar (250 ml) better some fruit vinegar.

100 gm. Mustard Powder

250 gm. whole or paste garlic and 250 gm ginger paste.

100 gm. black pepper

60 gm. jeera (cumin) powder

About 20 corns of cloves

2 Table Spoon Dhania (coriander) Seeds

1 Table spoon Onion seeds

Note: In India spices are always cooked on a hot frying pan before use in order to prevent or kill all bacteria that may be latent inside the spices due to a variety of reasons. That is why Indians rarely get sick from such sickness as E.coli or other bacteria due to unhygienic handling by the manufacturer and/or supplier.

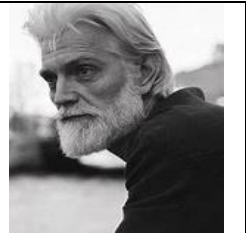
Heat the Oil in a stainless-steel vessel and add the above ingredients to the oil after it cools slightly. Then let the mixture cool to room temperature then when the mixture is absolutely cool, add the vinegar to the mixture. Now pour in some of the mixture into the bottle. & lay out unsalted fruit layer by layer adding the mixture to the fruit in the bottle. Fill the bottle till just below the top. Now add more vinegar to fill all the empty space. But do not over fill the bottle. Again, seal the bottle with a double sheet of nylon. Store the bottle, shaking it every few days, rolling it around & even turning it upside down to mix the pickle Masala into the fruit. The pickle will be ready after another 3 months.

Who are we to Judge?

Around two million Jewish citizens from the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) immigrated to Israel from 1992 to 1999. Suddenly Israel was filled with a huge white/Caucasian population who only spoke Russian. As time progressed, from 1992, every city was turned into a jungle of new buildings. Here in Ashdod, seven new areas were rapidly built where only Russians bought homes. In these Russian areas, non-kosher shops were opened, including butcher shops that sold pig meat, and they became popular. The Israeli public objected seriously to this. I also had a strong objection to white meat in the land of Israel. However, the need to feed two million people who wanted white meat made it impossible for the Government not to approve.

It was in 1999 that our company hired a Russian helper. Boris, 61, was an aircraft mechanic from the Russian army. He had learnt to speak Hebrew as he had lived in Israel for five years. He had to take a mortgage at his age to buy a small apartment for his wife and his married son, who had one child. They all worked and lived together to jointly pay for the mortgage, though the mortgage to all the Russians then was interest-free (but linked to inflation).

Boris was relatively older compared to us and really did not fit in our company. As his salary was paid by the government for the first two years, the company had agreed to hire him. Slowly, we started to get to know Boris. It was amazing to listen to his stories. Being from India, I did not know these kinds of things could happen to humans. I will mention below the things he told us. The background is the USSR during communism (an ideology created by a Jew - Vladimir Lenin).



Work: Boris was born in 1938 during the regime of Stalin, who took power in 1924 (until 1953). At 14, he joined the army school and worked all his life for the Russian army as a warrior plane mechanic. There was no food for the army and Boris, along with hundreds of other soldiers at freezing temperatures of -40 degrees centigrade, were served two dry pieces of bread and pig's oil in a bowl. You dip the bread in the oil and eat it, then drink the remaining oil. This was the only thing that would give them heat in the body. Day after day they would get the same food. The pig's oil was always the same, but the bread would be replaced by different kinds.





Police & Social Discipline: No one ever dared to go to the police. The first person who went to the police was considered right and the other person was put in jail, where the prisoners were treated like stray dogs. For this fear, no one ever went to the police. A strong environment of self-discipline existed. No one was right or wrong for the police – they wanted no nonsense and followed this tyrant’s ways, winning awards and promotions for disciplined regions.



Religion: In Israel, one finds Israeli synagogues, but also Indian, Moroccan and Gorgonian synagogues, but never a Russian one. The reason is in the Soviet Union, atheism was the widespread practice and forced by the authority. Citizens of the USSR were guaranteed freedom of conscience. No Sabbath prayers, no festivals, no socializing. Sunday was a holiday to spend with, or visit, family or clean the home. Stalin did not like this one-day holiday; he claimed an idle mind is the devil’s workshop – one man, one argument; no man, no argument. Kill them.



Egg Party: Sometimes during weekends, people wanted to party. The most common party was an Egg Party. Guests had to be informed 2 weeks in advance so that they could buy their one egg. Eggs were scarce and not available. Only those who had an egg would come to the party. All who came placed their egg in one pot. When everyone had arrived, the eggs were counted to make sure there was one egg for each person. Then the water was boiled – all the eggs were boiled in it for 5 minutes, then left in the pot for 2 minutes with the fire turned off. Afterwards, everyone would sit around a table with their eggs, shelling, cutting and eating the eggs with salt and pepper. The eggshells were sold to manufacture calcium tablets; money was kept by the family where the party was held.



Summary: Boris told us so many strange stories about how they survived in the USSR. And these suppressed 2 million people looking for their right for freedom now live in Israel. Those who ate pig oil and dry bread all their life, who are we to judge them? These are people who never saw a synagogue in their lifetime - how do we expect them to know kosher laws and who are we to judge? For people who had to save to buy an egg, who are we to judge them? They are humans like us. ***We have no right to judge anyone!***

Books

Siona Benjamin's "The blue girl Hava"

Siona's first official Childrens book; the Blue Girl and the evergreen Hebrew song ;

Hava nagila, hava nagila, hava nagila

Ve-nisma-cha, ve-nisma-cha

Hava na-ranana, have na-ranana, hava na-ranana

Ve-nisma-cha, ve-nisma cha



Angelica Jacob

The inspiration behind writing "Finding Home: Memoir of a Jewish Bene-Israel Girl"

Over thirty-six years of my life in **Australia**, I collected innumerable books, articles, interviews and snippets about the Bene Israel. When my dear Dad sadly passed in 1987, I brought back to Australia his many diaries, notes, letters, leather-bound Hebrew prayer books (he was a Hebrew scholar from St. Xavier's College), their wafer-thin pages fraying between my fingers, my parents' magnificent *ketubah*, an assortment of Judaica and old family photos. These inspired me to write three or four chapters on my family and the history of the Bene Israel. Then, life, children and career took precedence, and the chapters were relegated to a folder in the storeroom of my Sydney home.

At Amazon \$9.90



Bene-Israel in 1695

ALIBAUG or ELIBAUG?

Admiral Kanoji Angre
you see this is my
beautiful baug spread
over acers of land. I
will donate it in the
name of we Bene-
Israel people.



During 1695

So shall it be witten

BUT

The idiot British miss spelt *Elibaug* as Alibaug

@Rabbi Sad Sack cartoon

Mr. Elisha Jacob
Walwatkar of Walvati
village, I name this
baug as ELIBAUG!!



Curtesy: Maxim Moshe Shapurkar.

Mohel's in Bene-Israel Community

Unfortunately a dying profession amongst Bene-Israel Jews, when we started researching it, we thought there should be many Mohel's in our community. We were surprised to know that there are only two currently practicing Mohel profession in Bene-Israel community; one in India and one in Israel!!!

India:

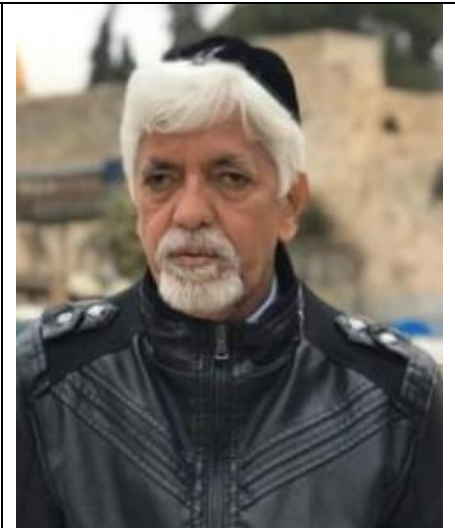
Dear Brotheren,

On several requests from our friends, I pen down certain information about our great friend **Mr. Moses Abraham Phansapurkar (Mohel)** for our Jews from India, Israel, UK, USA, Canada and all over the world.

Mr. Moses, son of Late Mr. Abraham Jacob Phansapurkar was born and brought up in Nagpada area, J. J. Hospital, Mumbai. This area was full of Ben-Israel families at that time. As a child he attended prayers in **Magen Hassidim Synagogue** with his father and brothers. His father Late Mr. Abraham Jacob Phansapurkar **was very religious and very good reader**. Moses was trained under him.

Moses passed S.S.C. examination from **Sir Elly Kadoori** high school, Mazgaon and joined **Income Tax Department of India** in 1969 as a Jr. Clerk. Due to his intelligence, dedication and blessings of his parents, Moses cleared all the departmental examinations with flying colors. Although, only S.S.C., he was promoted to higher positions and finally and successfully retired as a **Senior Income Tax Officer**.

Mr. Moses, being very **religious** and knowledgeable Jew, he assumed various positions of responsibilities within the community. He was closely associated with **Etz Haeem Synagogue** during 1970s and thereafter served as a **trustee of Shaar Hashamaim Synagogue**, Thane for last 35 years. He, by popular demand and request of Thane Jewish Community is now serving as President. Moses has thorough knowledge of prayers and a Jewish religious practice readily advises and guides people in the community who approach him. He not only solemnizes the **religious weddings** but also performs **naming ceremonies, Bar/Bath mitzwah and House warmings ceremonies and conducts burial rituals**. He also conducts **high-holiday prayers** for last many years and reads **Sefer-Torah very fluently with clear accent**. He takes pleasure in **training youngsters** in prayers and **preparing them for Bar-Mitzwah, weddings, and reading**



Mr. Moshe Phansapurkar (Mohel)
944 Brith in 50 years worldwide



Parashot and Haftarot.

Moses learnt circumcision from Late Mr. Haeem Eliezer Kolet in 1970 and since then he performed **944 circumcisions** not only in **Mumbai-Thane but also in Israel, Pune, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Kolkata(Calcutta), Kochi(Cochin) and rural areas of Raigad district**. He recently **completed 50 years as Mohel** and kept complete record of all the circumcisions. Moses, sincerely feels that this achievement is just because of almighty's blessings. ***He also feels that some youngsters to come forward and learn the art and science of performing circumcision so that they will be available to our community.***

Moses and Sinora have been blessed with **three daughters**. Two are settled in Israel with their family and his only son Israel, too have settled recently in Israel.

In the end we all wish Moses and his family all the best for their future success, prosperity, and their health and well-being. Amen. (Raymond S. Benjamin 91-8605045799)

Israel



Mr. Abraham Ashtamkar from Yavne, Israel is well known Bene-Israel Mohel in Israel. In our discussion with him he said he has stopped keeping track of how many brith ceremony has he has conducted. It is assumed he has conducted more than 1000 briths. Abraham said there is a lot written about him and suggested to look him up on Facebook and other related sites. Follow link below:

[\(17\) אשטמקר אברהם | Facebook](#)

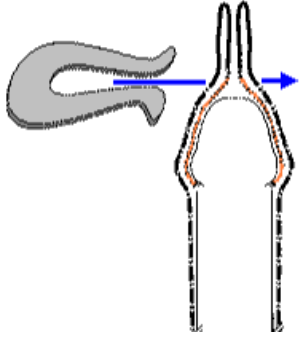
Female Mohalot

According to traditional Jewish law, in the absence of a Jewish male expert, a woman that has the required skills is also authorized to perform the circumcision, provided that she is Jewish. Non-Orthodox Judaism allows female *mohels*, called *mohalot* (Hebrew: מוֹהֵלוֹת, plural of מוֹהֵלֶת *mohelet*, feminine of *mohel*), without restriction. In 1984, **Dr. Deborah Cohen** became the first certified Reform Jewish mohelet; she was certified by the Berit Mila Program of Reform Judaism.



Mr. Abraham Ashtamkar, Israel





Adventures of Elkana Bamnolkar

Thank you Shaniwar Teli for remembering me that I did hundreds of brithmilahs. I send you my mohel and shochet certificate. I did many brithmilah in all over India Cochin Bangalore Ahmadabad Gujarat Bhopal Bangkok. Many a times I was called by American Jewish community a "Flying Mohel". As a mohel I did many brithmilah for poor people free of charge. I also performed many brithmilas in Migdal HaEmek in Israel (where we live) for the various Jewish communities here and in surrounding areas.



Ancient Mohels Kit

For this issue we had decided to review details on all the current Mohel's of our community. This project is handled by Dr. Naomi Solomon Awaskar. While researching we came across Mr. Elkanah Abed Bamnolkar who is now a BI retired Mohel. However while listening to his stories we started wondering how one person could have so many adventures in his life. He writes in Hebrew for us all his adventure's that includes quick-sand, electrocuted, being on a flight that crashed, saving families in accidents and qualified in Jerusalem to be Shoahet and Mohel for the Bene-Israel community.

English Translation below

מעשים טובים שזכיתי לעשות מאז שהייתי צעיר. כדלקמן:



1959 – 1960: כאשר למדתי בכיתה ז' (שביעית) הלכתי עם חבר שלי הודי קוראים לו ראמש תלקר, בנו של דייג. אני והוא עלינו על סירת דייגים קטנה במאגר מים עמוקים אבל מלא בוצ' בחוף המאגר. ראינו ילד קטן בן שבע או שמונה טובע בבוץ עמוק, כמעט שני שלישי גוף בבוץ. לו לא היינו שם בזמן הנכון, ריבונו של עולם מה היה קורה לו, אף אחד לא היה מגלה את זה והיה טובע. אבל אני וחבר שלי לא ברחנו אלא התקרבנו על יד הבוץ והמים ועם עזרת מקל במבוק נתנו לו וביקשנו להחזיק חזק ומשכנו מחוץ לבוץ והרמנו אותו לסירה שלנו. ברוך ה' סוף טוב.



1965 – 1966: חופשת קיץ. אני וחבר שלי מיכאל סנקר היינו באים בימי חופשת קיץ לאולם של בית כנסת "שער השמים" בתהנה (Thana) לשחק. רק שנינו כי היינו חברים טובים. יום אחד בערך ב 10 – 11 בבוקר אני וחבר שלי נכנסים לשער בית הכנסת, רואים שאשתו של שמש בית הכנסת תולה כביסה על חבל ופתאום ראינו שהיא מתחשמלת. לו היינו מתעלמים מזה היה קורה אסון. רצתי מהר וחיפשתי משהו עץ יבש. ביקשתי מחברי מיכאל לנתק זרם חשמל ראשי. באותו רגע לקחתי מקל עץ יבש והיצמדתי לגופה של אישה וזהו היא ניצלה. אשתו של שמש בית הכנסת ניצלה בזכות עזרה שהיגשתי לה. ואני מזמן שכחתי מזה בכלל. אבל האישה ובעלה השמש של בית הכנסת לא שכחו אותי בכלל. גם לאחר שנולדה לה בת. לאחר שהבת גדלה והורים סיפרו לה על הסיפור התחשמלות של אמא שלה בזמן הריון שלה. כאשר אחר כמה שנים הם עלו לארץ ישראל. במקרה לפני בערך עשר שנים נפגשנו באיזה שהוא מצוות ברית מילה נכד של שמש שנולד לבן של נכד. ואז כששמעתי הבת שאלקנה נמצא כאן, שהציל את אמא שלה לפני לידה שלה היא ואמא שלה זכו חיים חדשים. הבת כמוכן ניגשה אלי ואמרה האם אני אלקנה מתהנה (Thana) מהודו. אמרתי לה כן, למה? אז אמרה לי אני בת של שמש בית כנסת וכשאמא שלה התחשמלה ואני היצלתי את חיי אמא בהיותה בהריונה. היא הייתה כל כך שמחה לראות אותי שחיכתה הרבה שנים מזה אלקנה הזה ורצתה לפגוש אותי

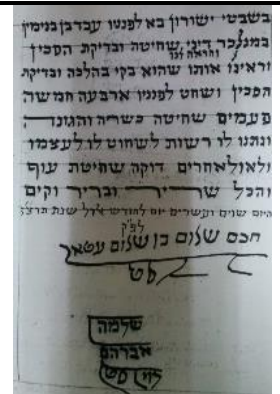
1969-1972: שנת הלימוד בירושלים. הגעתי לארץ ישראל, ירושלים עיר הקודש. ב 5.6.1969 - י"ט לחודש סיון תשכ"ט הגעתי ללמוד ב"מכון גולד" ירושלים.



למדתי ב"אולפן עציון" כל בוקר בירושלים ואחר כך למדנו ב"מכון גולד". אחרי כמה חודשים היית פגישה עם עיתון דתי "הצופה" ושאלו כל אחד שבאו ללמוד במכון גולד מה המטרה שלנו. כששאלו אותי אז אני אמרתי "אני אלקנה במנוקד מהודו, באתי ללמוד להיות מורה-שוחט-מוהל. במקרה, ללא שום מחשבה קודם אלא פליטת פה. והרב שלי של ישיבה הרב הורוביץ משה צחק בזלזול כזה, אבל הרב פוקס דוב זצ"ל שלימד אותי כתב רש"י וגמרא הוא לא ויתר עלי, תמך בי ודאג לי בלימודים. לאחר שנה קיבלתי זימון ללמוד אצל הרב הלפרין יוסף זצ"ל ללמוד מוהל ולמדתי איתו ביחד בבית חולים הדסה עין כרם ירושלים, וגם במקביל אצל אבר של הרב יוסף הלפרין - ר' יצחק הלפרין כהן זצ"ל והוא מוהל יושב ראש המוהלים בירושלים וחתם גם על הזמכה של מוהל שקיבלתי לאחר שנה - שנה וחצי של לימוד. מוהל מוסמך. ובמקביל- גם למדתי אצל הרב ששון גרדי שיחיה ימים רבים עד 120- למדתי להיות שוחט עופות- גסה ודקה ובודק. ואכן הצלחתי ללמוד שוחט עופות - גסה ודקה. (ראו צילום תעודות שוחט ומוהל). חזרתי להודו בחזרה בינואר 1972.



דבר ראשון שעשיתי כשוחט ובודק מוסמך- בדקתי שוחט וגם הוא חזן של בית הכנסת "שער השמים" בתנה (Thana) וגיליתי שהוא פשוט שחיטה- לא סכין מתאים לשחיטה ולא תקין בכלל (אוכל שחיטה לא כשר ואוכל נבילות וטריפות). בכל זאת הבאתי לידיעה של נשיא בית הכנסת וקהילה בעיר תהנה, איפה שאני גרתי. והוא נתן לי סכין של שחיטה. אני השחזתי ובדקתי כמה פעמים ולאחר שהסכין תקין ומוכן לשחיטה נתתי לו. ולקחתי את זה לפי דרך ארץ. והתחלתי ללמד את החזן שהוא גם שוחט (לא מוסמך) מספר שולחן ערוך "יורה דעה" מעברית לשפת הודית כמה שבועות, אבל זה לא עזר. ואחר כך הרב אפרים אליעזר שהגיע מירושלים להודו והוא ביקר כל שחיטה בהודו בבומבי- פונה- קוצ'ין- קולקוטה וכל איזורים שהיו גרים יהודים- "בני ישראל", בגדדי וקוצ'ין- לבנים ושחורים. ואז סגר להם כל הודו שחיטה של הייתה כשרה בכלל וביקש מראש הקהילה יהודי הודו איפה הרב אלקנה במנוקד. וקיבלתי הזמנה לבקר את הרב אפרים אליעזר. ואכן באתי אליו לביקור עם כלי מילה וכלי שחיטה כולל כל שלוש סכינים של גסה - דרה ועוף וכלי שחיטה שלי והזמין אותי לבית השחיטה ובדק אותי וגילה שרק אני מוסמך לשחיטה כשרה. ואז ביקש מיושב ראש הקהילה הודו שרק הרב אלקנה במנוקד מוסמך לשחיטה כשרה ולא אף אחד. יהודי בני ישראל- לא כיבדו אותי, אבל יהודי בגדדי ויהודי קוצ'ין לבנים ושחורים (לבנים שבאו לפני 500 שנה מגירוש ספרד בשנת 1492 להודו וגרים בקוצ'ין עד היום נקראים לבנים. וקוצ'ינים שחורים שבאו להודו כמו ה"בני ישראל" מאז הבית הראשון שנחרב ובאו להודו)- הם כיבדו אותי מאוד. ראו צילום מכתב של ראש קהילה יהודי הודו הדפיס מכתב של ראש קהילה יהודי הודו לכל בתי הכנסת בהודו, שרק אלקנה רשאי לשחוט כשוחט מוסמך ולא אף אחד. עסקתי בהודו ובמזרח הרחוק- בנקוק- קוצ'ין- בנגלור-כולכותה- כל הודו איפה שיהודים נמצאים כשוחט ומוהל.אני קיבלתי עיתון Jerusalem Post וכתוב מאמר : ש- Flying Mohel של הודו זה הרב אלקנה.





כשעליתי לישראל בשנת 1975, ב 11 ליוני, במטוס של Air France, והמטוס בעת ההמראה התפוצץ ונשרף כאשר אנחנו במטוס והספקתי להגיד "שמע ישראל" וביקשתי מכולם להגיד "שמע ישראל". ברוך השם המטוס נשרף אבל כולם ניצלנו. ואני ואישתי מרגלית שתחיה עד 120 באנו למגדל העמק, יחד עם אמא שלה ואח שלה באנו למגדל העמק. אמא שלה נפטרה לפני שש עשרה שנים בגיל 90 שנה. וכשנולד לי בן "אורן שמואל" בשנת 1977 בחנוכה ולא אמרתי לאף אחד במקום עבודה שלי בבנק פועלים שאני מוהל מוסמך ושוחט מוסמך. הזמנתי כולם מהעבודה לברית מילה לבית שלי יום אחרון של חנוכה ויום ערב שבת. ושאלו אותי "אלקנה איפה המוהל?" ואמרתי "יבוא עוד מעט". ואחר כך כמה דקות גיס שלי אבנר- אח של אשתי, סימן לי להתחיל לשיר שירים של ברית מילה. ואז אומר לי מנהל- "איפה המוהל, עוד לא הגיע, למה אתה מתחיל", ואז אמרתי לו אם לא בא מוהל- אני לוקח סכין וחותר. ואז פתחתי קופסה של כלי מילה שקניתי שוב לעשות למול את בני ברית מילה. אז עובדי בנק הפועלים והאחרים הופתעו לראות שפקיד בנק הפועלים הוא גם מוהל. עובדת אחת התעלפה שראתה שאני מוהל. אחרי זה התפרסם בכל העיר מגדל העמק שפקיד בנק הוא גם מוהל ואז התחילו לבוא אצל מנהל הבנק פועלים וביקשו לשחרר את אלקנה לעשות ברית מילה, שאז לא היו מוהלים במגדל העמק. ואכן עשיתי הרבה בריתות במגדל העמק ללא כסף. לא ביקשתי כסף ולא כלום- נתנו לקחתי, לא נתנו לא שאלתי כסףאבאאבא

1972 – 1975: בשנת 1972 עד 1975 הייתי בהודו מוהל ושוחט מוסמך וכן עסקתי בזה. לא שאלתי כסף לאחר ברית מילה כי זה מצווה גדולה. נתנו לי לקחתי, לא בדקתי כמה נתנו לי. לא נתנו לא ביקשתי. אחד המקרים שמלתי בבית כנסת בבומבי (קורלה). לאחר ברית מילה נאמר לי שיש בן אדם אחד נמצא כאן בבית הכנסת ונולד לו לפני חודשיים בן בכור אבל לא מל אותו כי הוא עני מאוד אבל יהודי בגלל שאין לו כסף לתת למוהל ולארגן מסיבת ברית מילה. לאחר ברית מילה ניגשתי אליו ואמרתי לו לפי "דרך ארץ" מזל טוב – מזל טוב נולד לך בן, מי היה המוהל של בן שלך? במקום לשאול למה לא מלת את בינך? אמרתי לו בוא תביא בן שלך עכשיו מיד ואני אמול אותו לא צריך כסף, לא צריך כלום אל תתבייש. אז הוא התבייש וביקש ממני יום יומיים ואני אכן מלתי אותו כעבור יומיים באותו בית כנסת ונתתי לו כמה חיתולים מתנה ומתנה כספית. ואני שכחתי מזה בכלל אבל האיש הזה לא שכח אותי. לאחר כמה שנים גם הוא ומשפחתו עלו לארץ ישראל וגרים ברמלה. הבן גדל, למד ועובד. לא עברו כמה שנים בערך לפני עשר שנים אני נסעתי לרמלה לאחותי פלורי וחיפשתי את הבית שלה. ניגש אלי האיש ההוא שמלתי את בנו בהודו. ואני לא זכרתי אותו בכלל. אבל הוא לא שכח ושאל אותי האם אני אלקנה המוהל מהודו? והזכיר לי את המעשה טוב שעשיתי לו בעניין בנו שמלתי אותו ללא תמורה אלא גם נתתי מתנה ומסיבת ברית מילה שדאגתי שתהיה, ושכחתי מזה אבל הוא לא שכח אותי עד היום הזה.



1983: בשנת 1983 בחודש ינואר נסעתי להודו בומבי. הגעתי אצל אחי הגדול פנחס יחיה עד מאה ועשרים. בבוקר מוקדם ובגלל שעות ההפרש של שלוש וחצי שעות בין הודו לישראל קודם הלכתי לנוח. לקראת ערב זמן הודו קמתי ויחד עם אחי פנחס יצאנו לנסוע באוטובוס או מונית לאחותי דינה שתחיה עד מאה ועשרים. ממתינים בתחנת אוטובוס, פתאום אני רואה משאית נוסעת מהר והעיפה אופנוע ועליו איש, אישה ושתי תינוקות. נהג המשאית לא עצר ולא הגיש עזרה למשפחה. כולם ברחו מהתחנה אבל אני לא ברחתי, אני ניגשתי למשפחה שקרתה להם תאונה איש ואישה ושתי תינוקות. ניגשתי ועזרתי להם לקום ובדקתי אם הכל בסדר. הרמתי את הקטנוע וראיתי שרגל האישה והתינוק תקועים בקטנוע. עזרתי כמה שיותר לקחתי דלי מים מחנות של "פאן" וזרקתי על האישה והתינוק ודאגתי שירגיש טוב. עשיתי מסאז' לתינוק ולאישה כאשר אחי פנחס צועק רוץ משמה, עוד מעט משטרה מקומית יכניס אותי בצרות. אמרתי לו אל תפחד וביקשתי ממנו תרשום מספר המשאית ולמסור את זה למשטרה. כולם הופתעו לראות איך אני מושיט עזרה ראשונה ללא פחד והמשפחה גם הופתעו לראות שאני לא נראה מקומי ולא מדבר שפה מקומית אלא עברית בלבד. הם הודו לי. באה משטרה נתנו לו פרטי פרטים של נהג בורח ומספר של המשאית. ואז אח שלי גם למד ממני שלא לעזוב מקום אלא לתת עזרה ראשונה. לא קורה כלום. סך הכל הצלתי חיים של משפחה שלמה.

ככה אני גם היום. אני מתנדב בכמה מקומות: 1. יד שרה 2. ביטוח לאומי לקשיש 3. שעת חירום – עזרה ראשונה וכולי 4. בבית ספר האר"י מגדל העמק.

Good deeds I've been privileged to do since I was young.

Ex-Mohel Elkana Bamnolkar (English translation of above article)

1959-60: Seventh grade. My Indian friend Ramesh Talkar, the son of a fisherman, and I boarded a small fishing boat in a deep, mud-filled reservoir on Reservoir Beach, city/town? We saw a little boy of seven or eight drowning – almost two-thirds of his body was in the mud. Had we not been there at the right time, no one would have found him and he would have drowned. My friend and I approached the edge of the bank, and with the help of a bamboo stick, pulled him out of the mud and lifted him onto our boat. Baruch Hashem, happy ending.

1965-66:

Summer vacation. My friend Michael Sankar and I often met at the hall of the "Gate of Heaven" synagogue in Thana to play. Just the two of us, because we were good friends. On one such day, at about 10:00 am, Michael and I entered the gate of the synagogue, only to see the pregnant wife of the synagogue *samas* (helper at the Synagogue), who was hanging laundry on an electric wire, being electrocuted. I asked my friend Michael to cut off the main power, while quickly looking around for dry wood. I picked up a dry wooden stick nearby and clung it to the woman's body. That was it. The wife of the synagogue *samas* was saved by the help we gave her, averting a disaster.

I had long forgotten about it at all. But the wife, the *samas* and the owner of the synagogue haven't forgotten about me at all. Even after she had a daughter with whom she was pregnant at the time we saved her. When their daughter grew up, her parents related to her the story of her mother's electrocution. A few years later, they immigrated to Eretz Israel.

Coincidentally, about ten years ago, we met at a circumcision team – a grandson of a son born to the son of a grandson??. And When the daughter heard that the man who saved her mother, she came up to me and said:

"Are you Elkana Thana from India?"

I said I was, why did she want to know?

She told me that she was the daughter of a synagogue sun? when her mother was electrocuted, and that I saved her mother's life when she was in her genius? (delete? Does he mean in her womb?) She was so happy to see me, and had waited so many years to meet *the* Elkana.

1969-72: The year of study in Jerusalem, 5 June 1969 - 11 Sivan 5769. I came to Eretz Israel, Jerusalem, the Holy City to study at the Gold Institute in Jerusalem.

I studied at Ulpan Etzion every morning in Jerusalem, and then at the Gold Institute. After a few months, we were meeting

with *The Observer*, the religious newspaper, which was asking students at the Gold Institute what our goal was. When they asked me, I said:

"I'm Elkana Bamulkar from India. I came to study to be a teacher-Shohet-mohel."

I spoke so coincidentally, and without forethought, that my Rabbi of Yeshiva, Rabbi Horowitz Moshe, laughed with contempt. However, Rabbi Fox Dov Zetzel, who taught me Rashi and Gamra reporter?, he did not give up on me. He supported me and took care of me in my studies.

A year later, I received a summons to study Mohel with Rabbi Halperin Yosef Zetzel, with whom I studied at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital in Jerusalem. I simultaneously studied with Rabbi Yosef Halperin' organ? and R. Yitzhak Halperin Cohen Z"l, Chairperson of the Mohelim in Jerusalem. I also signed the certification of Mohel, which I received after a year and a half of study. From Rabbi Sasson Gardi, who will live for many days until 120 years, I learned to be an avian (bird) slaughterer – to distinguish coarse and thin what? on an astute examination. In January 1972, I returned to India a Certified Mohel.

The first thing I did as a slaughterer and certified tester was to check a *Shoheth*, who also is a cantor at the "Gate of Heaven" synagogue in Thana. I discovered that he was using a knife unsuitable for slaughter (non-kosher slaughter food and eating serialations' and predations) (briefly explain). Nevertheless, I brought to the knowledge of the president of the synagogue and of the community in the city where I lived. The President? gave me a slaughter knife. I sharpened and checked the knife several times. After the knife was ready for slaughter, I gave it back? to him. And I took it by country road. I started teaching *Shulhan Arach* that he was also butchering (unqualified). I even edited table number Yoreh Deah (briefly explain) from Hebrew to Marathi for a few weeks, but that didn't help either.

Then Rabbi Ephraim Eliezer came from Jerusalem to India. He visited every slaughter in India in Bombay, Pune, Cochin, Kolkata and any areas where Jews lived – "Israelites," Baghdadis and Cochins, white and black. Then he shut them all down. India slaughter was not? kosher at all. He asked the head of the Jewish community of India of my whereabouts in Manulkar; soon after, I received an invitation to visit Rabbi Essim? (same as Ephraim?) Eliezer. I met with him the slaughterhouse with word and slaughter tools, including all three knives with different levels of coarseness. On examination, he discovered that only I was qualified for kosher slaughter. Then he declared to the community Chairman to confess? that only Rabbi Elkana Bamulkar was qualified for kosher slaughter.

The Jews of Israel did not respect me, but the Baghdadi and Cochini Jews, did.? The latter came to India 500 years ago following the expulsion of Spanish Jews in 1492 and live in Cochin to this day. (*See photo: A letter from the head of the Jewish community of India sent to all synagogues in India*). In India, I dealt with Cochin, Bangalore, Kolkata, and indeed, all of India

where Jews are as slaughterers and mohels?; and in the Far East, Bangkok. The *Jerusalem Post* newspaper even ran an article titled "That Flying Mohel of India". That flying mohel is Rabbi Elkana. (Suggest: is me)

June 11, 1975. I immigrated to Israel on an Air France plane. During takeoff, the plane exploded and burned. I said *Shema Yisrael* and asked everyone on the plane to say *Shema Yisrael*. Although the plane burned down, thankfully everyone was rescued. My wife Margalit and I, who will live to 120?, came to the Migdal HaEmek (briefly explain what it is, a place, an institution?) along with her mother and brother. Her mother died sixteen years ago at the age of 90. When my son Oren Shmuel was born in 1977 during Hanukkah, I did not tell anyone at my workplace at the Bank HaPolim in Migdal HaEmek that I was a certified mohel and also a certified butcher. On the last day of Hanukkah, a Saturday night, I invited my work colleagues home for his circumcision. They asked me: "Elkana, where's the Mohel?" I said: "Coming soon."

A few minutes later, my wife's brother Avner, signaled to me to start singing the circumcision songs. Again, a manager asks me: "Where's the Mohel? He's not here yet, why are you starting to sing?" Then I told him if a mohel doesn't come, I will perform the circumcision. I then opened the new box of the mohel's tools that I had bought (the first were destroyed in the Air France accident).

At first, my colleagues thought I was acting, but later they were surprised to see that the bank teller they knew me as, was also a mohel. One of my colleagues passed out on learning I was a mohel. After that, I became famous as the bank teller who was also a mohel in the entire city of The in Migdal HaEmek. Then the requests began from the bank manager and workers: as there were no mohels in the city, could Elkana be released from work duties to perform circumcisions?

I made a lot of alliances? in the Migdal HaEmek. I did not do it for the money. When people offered to pay, I accepted, but if they did not offer, I never asked.

1972–75: I was in India a certified mohel and butcher. I still did not ask money because I believe it is a great *mitzvah*. I was given a share of what?, I didn't check how many they gave me. We didn't ask. I remember a case at a synagogue in Kurla, a suburb of Bombay. After the circumcision, I was told that there was a Jewish person who had a firstborn two months ago. He did not say it was because he was poor, but because he has no money to give the mohel and organize a circumcision party. After the circumcision, I approached him and congratulated him on the birth of his son. "Who was your son's Mohel?" I asked, and told him to get his son at that moment so I could perform the ceremony. I don't need money, I stressed. "And don't be shy." He was clearly ashamed and asked me for a day or two to decide. Later, in the same synagogue, I (state that he

performed the circumcision) presented him with a gift for his son for a party afterwards?. I forgot all about it, but the man did not forget about me.

A few years later, he and his family also immigrated to Eretz Israel to live in Ramla. The son grew up, studied and worked. Ten years ago, I went to Ramla to help my sister Fleury look for a house. I was approached by the same man whose son I had circumcised in India. I didn't immediately recognise him, but he had not forgotten me. "Are you Elkana the Mohel from India?" He then reminded me of my good deed, my gift and the circumcision party, and ensured that he did not feel shy. Amazingly, he didn't forget me until this day.

1983: I travelled to Bombay, India, and arrived at my older brother Pinhas's house, who will live to 120 years? in the early hours of the morning. The three-and-a-half hour time difference between India and Israel had made me weary, so I went to rest. Once my body clock had adjusted to Indian time, Pinhas and I decided to visit my sister Dina who will live to 120 years. While waiting at the bus stop, I suddenly see a truck travelling at full speed and kicking out a motorcycle with a man, a woman and two babies on it. The truck driver did not stop to help the family. Everyone ran away from the bus station; except me. I went to a family that had been hit, helped them up and checked to see if everything was okay. I picked up the scooter and saw that the woman's leg and baby were trapped in the scooter. I took a bucket of water from the *pan* (betel leaf) store and threw it at them to make them feel good/refresh them? I tried to disentangle the baby and the woman when my brother Pinhas yells for us to run before the local police arrive. I told him not to be afraid, and asked him to write down the truck number and hand it over to the police. Everyone was surprised to see how I was reaching out for first aid without fear. The family was also surprised – I did not look like a local or speak the local language; I knew only Hebrew. They thanked me. The police gave him? (the family) registration details of the runaway driver. My brother also learned not to leave the scene of an accident but to give first aid. There's nothing going on??. I just saved an entire family's life.

That is how I am today, too. I volunteer in several places; among these are Yad Sarah; Social Security for the elderly; Emergency – first aid; and the Ari Migdal HaEmek Scho. (brief explanation for those who don't know what these are)

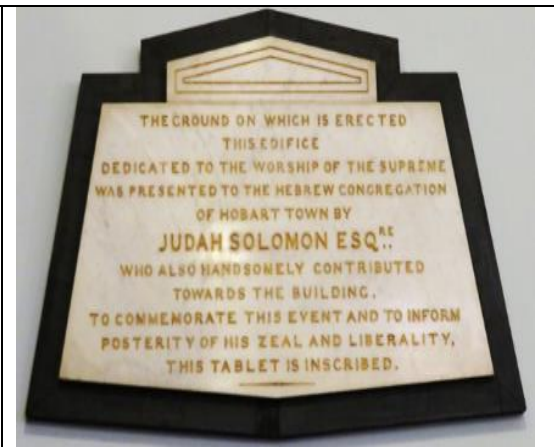


Against All Odds, Australia's oldest synagogue, Hobart Hebrew Congregation

Tasmania. Nestled on the south-east corner of the Australian continent, the Apple Isle as it is colloquially known conjures up images of vast acres of national forests, beautiful wines, unique wildlife, fresh seafood and yes, succulent apples.

What is not so widely known is that Hobart, on Tasmania's south eastern coast, is home to **Australia's oldest surviving synagogue**. The Hobart Hebrew Congregation (HHC) synagogue was consecrated on **July 4, 1845**. The building, situated in the heart of Hobart city, remains the home of Jewish worship.

The island's spectacular natural beauty belies the brutal genocide of its Indigenous inhabitants and convict past. About 70,000 British convicts were transported to Van Diemen's Land (renamed Tasmania in 1856) once they received Pardons or "Tickets of Leave". Of those, **218 males and 15 females were Jewish**. A further one hundred possessed the "characteristics" (names, aliases, places of birth and trades) of the Jewish convicts. Perhaps another 10 percent of transportees hid or ignored their Jewish identity and "quietly joined the Christian majority in the hope of better treatment." Records show that Jewish convicts, like other British convicts sent to Australia, were transported for committing **non-violent crimes**.



Jewish convicts had mixed feelings about their captivity. In 'Israel in Captivity' written by someone only known as L.L., poignantly reads:

*There silent sits a captive band
Mid woes that sleepless vigils keep;
And sadly, in a stranger land,
They think of Zion - think and weep...*

*Yet sometimes would their griefs unbend,
And tones of brighter feeling flow,
As faith reviv'd, in smiles, to blend
Exulting hopes with tears of woe.*

Jewish numbers in the Apple Isle grew steadily. The Jewish population at its peak numbered approximately 435 in 1847. In the 2016 census, 248 people in Tasmania, which has a population of 510,000 today, said they were Jewish.

Hobart prospered, and many Jewish people made their mark on the town's early colonial-era history. Notably, one person made a remarkable contribution to Jewish religious and spiritual life. **Judah Solomon** arrived as a convict in Hobart in 1820 with sixty pounds—a lot of money at the time.

Within a year, Judah Solomon and his brother Joseph were in business as general merchants. By 1840, the two brothers had acquired considerable property, making them among the most affluent citizens in Hobart.

The movement towards building a synagogue began as early as the 1840s. Jewish settlers organised services in a section of the garden of Judah Solomon's home in Temple House on the corner of Liverpool and Argyle Streets. Today, Temple House is heritage-listed and forms part of the headquarters of Tasmania Police.

It was clear Hobart's Jewish community now needed a dedicated place of worship. The congregation was formed to supervise the arrangements, and the synagogue's foundation stone was ready to be laid in August 1843. Although the Jewish community struggled to counter anti-Semitic claims of the public, Hobart Jews and non-Jews contributed to the building fund. Despite this, then Tasmanian governor John Franklin refused the request for a grant for land to build the synagogue on the grounds it was an "unchristian activity".



Judah Solomon stepped in and donated a piece of his backyard—and substantial resources—on 59 Argyle Street in the heart of Hobart city. The synagogue still stands proudly here today and is classified by the National Trust.

The Hobart Hebrew Congregation Act 1958 was created as an Act of Parliament by Royal Assent. It is the only formally constituted Hebrew Congregation in Tasmania. The *shul* threw its doors open and the first Torah scrolls were heralded into the building to the recitation of Psalms.

The Hobart Town Hebrew Proprietary School was simultaneously incorporated with the synagogue. Jewish children were taught “how to pray and commune with God, enjoy the fruits of knowledge and spread the seed for culture”.

HHC President Jeff Schneider said Judah Solomon’s descendants are scattered all over Australia—some are actively involved with the Jewish community. Those descendants who remain in Tasmania are no longer practising Jews.

Jews made significant contributions to public and commercial life of that time, he said. Notably, HHC founding member Abraham Rheuben, served as an Alderman of Hobart Municipal Council at various times between 1855 and 1876. Rheuben’s approximately 75 descendants were scheduled to attend the HHC’s 175th anniversary last year, which had to be cancelled due to Covid.

The arrival in 1842 of enterprising young free settlers, many under 20, was pivotal in the growth of the Jewish consciousness. They encouraged the more established Jewish merchants and businessmen to set up a congregation. Among the synagogue’s founders were Louis Nathan and Samuel Moses¹, both successful businessmen in Hobart from England. Shortly after arriving in Hobart, Louis Nathan was elected the first ‘President of the Congregation’ and served in that office for a decade; Judah Solomon was Treasurer. **Samuel Jacob Moses** succeeded Nathan as President of the Congregation. He was the first—and for a long time, the only—Jew in Australia or New Zealand authorised to perform the *mitzvah*; he travelled extensively for these duties. He was the first Jewish Justice of the Peace in Australia and New Zealand.

Not all members prospered. For them, the Tasmanian Hebrew Benevolent Society, HHC’s philanthropic arm established as early as 1847, provided a safety net. Views on life for the early Jewish women settlers are divided. The title of Israel Getzler’s book *Neither Toleration Nor Favour* (Melbourne, 1970) could be applied to the plight of Jewish women. Many fell prey to their masters, and also to the chaplains’ missionary zeal and were forced to convert. The paucity of Jewish women forced many Jewish convict men to marry outside their faith. However, Australian historian Hilary Rubinstein perceives “a not insignificant amount of Jewish camaraderie and resolute manifestation of Jewish feeling”.²

¹ “The Samuel Moses family in Van Diemen’s Land”, <https://deutscherandhackett.com/samuel-moses-family-van-diemen%E2%80%99s-land>.

² This was part of an address to mark the synagogue’s 175th anniversary celebrations, which were cancelled due to Covid. The author, Stefan Petrow, Emeritus Professor of History and Classics at the University of Tasmania, kindly made its contents available.



Exterior

The synagogue's architecture is designed by James Alexander Thomson. A Scot, (not Jewish), Thomson embraced the Egyptian Revival style, which was fashionable at the time. Launceston's synagogue also has elements of Egyptian Revival. Other theories for the popularity of this architectural style abound. Research by a Sydney University researcher claimed the revival style was a concerted effort by the Jews to make a point of difference to Christian architecture.

Two sculpted pillars that support an architrave and a cornice, flank the entrance to the *shul*'s façade. A carved Hebrew inscription from the Book of Exodus, reads:

“B’chol hamakom asher azkir et sh’mi avo aleicha uveirachticha.”

“In every place where I shall cause my name to be remembered, I shall come to you and bless you.”

Conspicuous by its absence on the exterior is the Star of David; this custom was not traditional at the time, knowledgeable tour guide Daniel Albert explains.

Interior

The ark is home to three impressive Torah scrolls. The age of the scroll that the HHC owns and uses is unknown. It is handwritten on parchment

with a particular formula of ink. I was intrigued to learn the scroll in an exquisite silver case, was generously donated in 1951 by Lady Rachel Ezra of Calcutta, India. The plush burgundy velvet textile of the ark dates back to the 1930s.

The many Bene Israel-sounding names—Reuben, Hyams and Solomon—on the plaques recording donations and bequests resonated with me. President Schneider informs me of the English heritage of these surnames. Interestingly, a prayer for the welfare of Queen Victoria and the royal family is recorded on a large plaque on the northern wall of the synagogue. As Stefan Petrow, Emeritus Professor of History and Classics at the University of Tasmania reiterates, the Jews of Hobart were definitely British Jews, holding allegiance to Queen Victoria.

The rich interior woodwork is predominantly original cedar, which was transported by ships from New South Wales (NSW). The original intricate chandelier, which cost 60 pounds, may have used oil other than whale oil, as it is not kosher. Electricity replaced the original gas lights in 1918. Above the impressive *bimah*, beautiful ceiling roses made from plaster of Paris, adorn the interior.

Wooden display cabinets and shelves at the back of the *shul* contain prayer books, memorabilia and Judaica. Another glass-door cupboard near the entrance houses an impressive scroll acquired from the Memorial Scrolls Trust, London. This is one of the 1,564 sacred Scrolls³ gathered in Prague from synagogues by the Nazi official in charge of the Czech "Protectorate." Most of these historic and remarkable scrolls were repaired over 20 long years by scribes. However, the Torah in the Hobart Synagogue was considered too damaged to repair. It is now kept on display as a memorial to the Jews who died in the Shoah."

Numbered benches placed behind the pillars at the back of the synagogue arouse interest. The then new **Head of Prison Services** for the colony ruled **convicts "of Jewish persuasion" could attend Shabbat services on Friday night and Saturday morning**, Daniel explains. The Hobart synagogue is believed to be the only place of Jewish worship in the world with seats reserved for convicts.

The women's gallery upstairs boasts the original carpeting. Historic photos line its walls. Sadly, there has been a decline in numbers since its opening. Today, the HHC offers both Orthodox and Progressive services. Women now join the men in the main hall.

Judaism is a bottom-up religion, Daniel explains, and the role of the Rabbi is that of teacher. In recent decades, consulting Rabbis from Melbourne or Sydney visited the synagogue annually to serve its 50-member strong congregation. This has fostered a "strong do-it-yourself spirit" in the community; support and help are readily available. Members derive great satisfaction from baking their own *challahs*, Hanukkah doughnuts and other traditional treats. The Congregation organises the supply of kosher *Pesach* foods from mainland Australia.

The first Jewish cemetery, on the top end of Hobart's Harrington Street, was organised by one Bernard Walford. The only functioning consecrated Jewish graveyard in Tasmania is a section of Hobart's inner-suburban Cornelian Bay cemetery. Jews can be buried there with the permission of the Board. The Congregation oversees the funeral process by ensuring halachic requirements are met. It also liaises with private funeral parlours so Jewish funeral customs are respected.

³ The Czech Memorial Scrolls, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-czech-memorial-scrolls>.

The HHC synagogue is now heritage-listed. Funds are sourced predominantly from donations, which are welcomed and greatly appreciated.⁴

Jewish legacy in Australia

Australia remains the only country in the world, other than Israel, whose founding members included Jews. As a result, Jews were treated as equal citizens from the outset. In contrast to contemporary Europe, incidents of anti-Semitism were rare in Australia. Jews participated, and played an important role, in the development of Australian economic and cultural life. There have been two Jewish Australian governors-general and several Jewish Australians have served in senior leadership positions in the country's military.

Modern Australian landscape

Australia, along with the United States, was one of two nations in the world that sided with Israel's safety and security in a UN vote in December 2014. Benjamin Netanyahu became the first sitting Israeli prime minister to visit Australia on February 22, 2017. Josh Frydenberg, Australia's then Energy and Environment Minister (now Treasurer), who is of Hungarian-Jewish descent, signed a Declaration of Intent with his Israeli counterpart Ze'ev Elkin in 2016, which called for co-operation on multiple environmental issues.

Today, there are 81 synagogues, 18 day schools in Australia, and several Jewish newspapers and periodicals. More than 50 percent of Jewish students are enrolled in Jewish schools, the highest rate anywhere in the world with the exception of Israel. Australia also has a low rate of inter-marriage compared to other diaspora countries.

Archiving for posterity

Commendably, the process of digitizing the HHC's archives⁵, including meeting minutes and newspaper articles, held by the State Library of Tasmania, is well-underway. President Jeff Schneider converted more than 475 separate documents into an online archive that can be accessed from the synagogue's website.⁶

Remarkably, the Hobart Hebrew congregation has survived against extraordinary odds. Many successful Jewish settlers are known to have returned to England when the opportunity arose. Numbers also dwindled during the gold rush in Victoria from 1851, as well as the opening up of the rest of Australia. It was not until refugees fleeing World War II arrived that numbers boosted again. Despite these odds, **the synagogue doors always remained open.**

From early settlement times, Tasmania has always been promoted as an attractive tourist destination for overseas visitors and mainland Australians.

⁴ Donations to the synagogue are greatly appreciated. <https://www.hobartsynagogue.org/donate/>.

⁵ Hobart Synagogue Digital Archives, https://www.hobartsynagogue.org/ca_library/pawtucket/.

A visit to the historic Hobart synagogue will surely add a spiritual dimension to Jewish visitors from around the world. Visitors to Hobart can arrange a tour or attend a service at the synagogue by contacting the Congregation through its website: <https://www.hobartsynagogue.org/tours>.

Angelica Jacob, Author, *"Finding Home: Memoir of a Jewish Girl"* (Amazon KDP)

To read more about the synagogue, HHC's book, *A Few From Afar: Jewish Lives in Tasmania From 1804*, (Hobart, 2003) by Elias, P. and A. (eds) is also available from its website.

Pictures from Tasmania:



Meet Simon Davidson Ashtamkar 's **Gold Maker** for Every Youth who wants to work.

Amazing Ashtamkar's as we call him, we met him during a story we were researching on Beth-El synagogue from Ashtami. He has agreed to sponsor a BI monument at Ashtami school. Please see pictures on next page 38.

Simon is a self-made businessman who sells all around the world and deals in millions. However he expresses disappointment that Bene-Israel community would rather prefer to take a job than open their business. He has been all around the world lecturing on how to open your own business and succeed while working with him.

He welcomes young men around the world to contact him if they are interested in starting their own business with NO INVESTMENT.

Interview with Simon: https://youtu.be/vHE_DWtRZ8k

Email: simondavidson1410@yahoo.com

Phone/WhatsApp; +91 98200 22336



Ashtami Beth El Synagogue now a school



Ashtami
Beth El
Synagogue
now a school



**Mr. Simon Davidson
Ashtamkar of Bandra** has
kindly agreed to sponsor a
memorial stone in this school
to represent donated BI
worship place along with
Raigad Jewish Association
(RJA)



Agarwalkar: Oh Bhoropkar..
what are you doing here. Sick?

So why are you wasting
time here?
You should ask a *Politician!*



No, not sick. Just want
to ask the doctor
when will this
COVID19 *get over!*

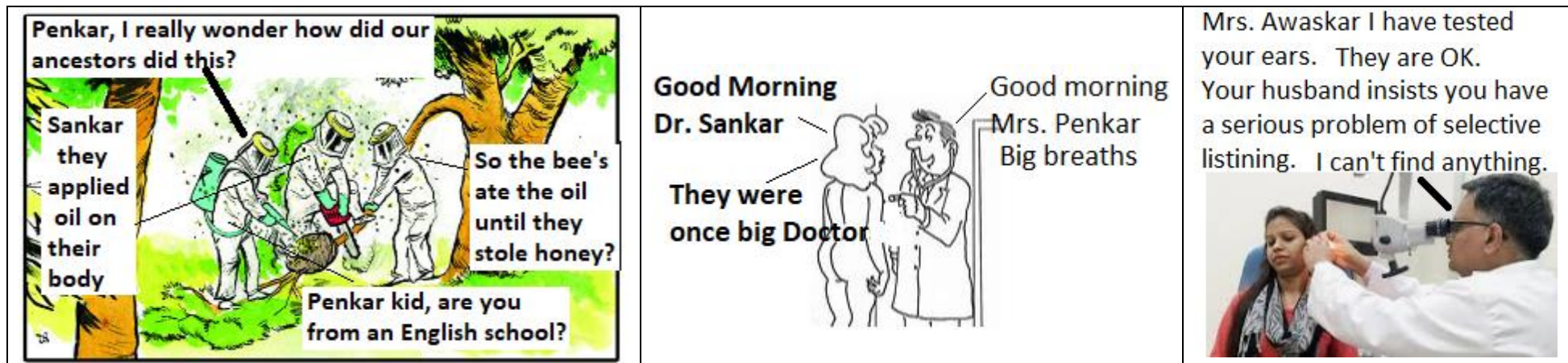
Ramrajkar: Listen Diveker, I think
it will rain very heavy tomorrow.

Divekar: How do you know?

Ramrajkar: Our Koletkar who
works at the Indian weather
bureau, he said there was no
need to take umbrella
tomorrow.

Bene-Israel Jokes

Dandekar why are you drinking so much today? What? Impossible What did he say? Awaskar because my son told told me today "What kind of a father are you if you don't drink?" This is what he said "I mean, Woh Kaisa Pita Hai, Jo Pita Nahi Hai?"		Ashtamkar: I am going to the bank Bhonkar. Let us go together. Bhonkar: No, no I don't want to go to the bank. Last night I saw in my dream a beautiful girl was hitting me with her sandals. Ashtamkar (surprised) So what has it to do with going to the bank? Bhonkar: Did you not see the sign on the bank "We make your dreams come true"!!
Asitivkar: I was thinking of visiting USA. How much should it cost? Penkar: It should cost nothing. Asitivkar: Cost nothing? How? Penkar: Thinking still does not cost anything.	Digodkar: You are looking troubled. What happened? Jetakar: I am going to become a father. Digodkar: So that is good news. Jetaker: Yes I know, just that my wife does not know!	Killekar: Why is divorce more expensive than the marriage? Dodkar: Because it's worth it. Killekar: Oh. It is worth it for me? Dodkar: No silly, for your lawyer.
Nagavkar was driving the BEST bus and saw Sankar standing at the bus stop. He did not stop the bus but Sankar ran and caught the bus. He rushed straight to the driver and asked Nagavkar; Sankar: Is this bus your mother? Nagavkar: No Sankar: Is this bus your sister? Nagavkar: No Sankar: Is this bus your wife? Nagavkar: No Sankar (Fuming): Then why don't you let me catch her ##88?!!##	Koletkar: All the churches have a confession box. Ramrajkar: So? Koletker: Synagogues should offer confession box. Ramrajkar: Why? Koletkar: So that we can confess? Ramrajkar: But we are Bene-Israel Jews? Koletkar: (surprised): So? Ramrajkar: Have you ever heard of any Bene-Israel Jew admitting he has done anything wrong? Koletker: No Ramrajkar: So? Koletkar: I understand. Why waste space....	Pezarker: Rabbi are we children of Kain or Arbel? Rabbi: What do you think? Pezarker: I don't know but I hope I am decedent of Arbel. Rabbi: So you must be? Pezarkar : Rabbi but what does the holy book say? Rabbi: About you? Pezarkar: No about us, whose decedents are we? Rabbi: Don't you know? Pezarkar: No, how would I know? Rabbi: If you don't know about your ancestors how would I know?
Bamnunkar: When did the breaking glass ceremony start? Pingle: After we lost Jerusalem Bamnunkar: But there was no Jerusalem then. It was Palestine. Pingle: Ok. So when we lost Palestine.	Bamnunkar: But Palestine is not Jewish. It is Arabic. Pingle: Why are you asking all these questions? Bamnunkar: I am confused as there was no glass in olden days to break. Pingle: Well, in olden days there were no marriages too.	



Sogoakar Dudkar and Bandarker all die on the same day and meet Prophet (Pr) Elijah.

Pr. Elijah says, "We only have one rule here: Don't step on the ducks, as they are God's favorite creation." They enter heaven and see ducks everywhere, and it's almost impossible not to step on a duck. Accidentally one steps on one, and soon here comes Pr. Elijah with the ugliest woman you've ever seen. Pr. Elijah chains them together and says, *"Your punishment is to be chained to this ugly woman forever."*

The next day the second guy steps on a duck, and sure enough, Pr. Elijah comes with another real ugly woman and chains them together.

Seeing this, the third guy is very, very careful. He goes for months and doesn't step on any ducks. Then one day, Pr. Elijah comes along with this beautiful woman, a blue-eyed blonde, very young and very sexy. He chains them together and leaves without saying a word.

The man remarks *"Wow! This is great! I wonder what I did to deserve this."*

The Blonde says, *"I don't know about you, but I just stepped on a duck."*

Until today Sogakar Dudkar and Bandarkar families are fighting as to who's ancestor was not with the blond!??

Doctor Talkar and his wife were having a heated argument at breakfast.

As he stormed out of the house, the man angrily yelled to his wife, *"You aren't that good in bed either!"*

By midmorning, he decided he'd better make amends and phoned home. After many rings, his wife, clearly out of breath, answered the phone.

Talkar: *"What took you so long to answer and why are you panting?"*

Wife: *"I was in bed."*

Talkar: *"What in the world are you doing in bed at this hour?"*

Wife: *"Meanwhile I am getting a second opinion and perhaps later a third one."*

Bene-Israel Nostalgia

By Samuel & Erna Daniels Divekar – New Jersey

Next few pages we cover the scanned pages saved by Samuel & Erna and were mailed to Shaniwar Teli. It is small but very interesting collection printed in the publication "India Worldwide" dated Feb. 1988. The first letter (below) by respectable Late Mr. Elijah E. Jhirad explains the following pages and the pictures in them. Enjoy reading. **(Zoom to increase size to your continence).**

ELIJAH E. JHIRAD
85-15 139TH STREET, APT. 1M
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LEGEND OF PICTURES IN COVER STORY INDIA NURTURED JEWISH HERITAGE WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Cover page: Picture taken after wedding ceremony in 1911 of Ephraim Joseph Jhirad and Mary Samuel Haeem Kehimkar, the parents of Elijah E. Jhirad.

In 1927 the Viceroy of India conferred upon Ephraim J. Jhirad, who had risen to high rank in the Military Accounts Department of the Government of India, the title of Khan Sahib as a mark of personal distinction. A few years after his retirement, he settled in Karachi in 1935, where he was soon elected to the Municipal Council as the representative of the Jewish Community, a position he held until he died in 1946. For several years he also was the president of the Shri Shivaji Mandal of Karachi, a society of Maharashtrians settled in Karachi.

Mary, an alumna of the Bene-Israel School, and Wilson College, Bombay was a Hebrew scholar who imparted early education in Hebrew and judaic studies to many who rose to be learned Hebrew scholars among the Bene-Israel of the last generation.

Page 7: Portrait taken circa 1881 of the family of Joseph Solomon Jhirad (fifth from the left at center)- Elijah Jhirad's grandfather- on the occasion of the marriage of his son Issac, standing at the back, third from left. Joseph Jhirad's mother, the widow of Subedar Major Sirdar Bahadur Solomon Israel Jhirad, Order of British India (First Class), is seated in the center at the right hand side of Joseph Jhirad. His wife Hannah is seated at his left.

Page 9: from left to right, Vilma Haeem-Ladani, Chaya Haeem, Ellis Haeem. and Benjamin Haeem. Vilma's children, Sabrina and Natalia are in front.

Page 35: Wedding ceremony picture of Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Joseph E. Jhirad and Joyce Solomon. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Jhirad of the Gharwal Rifles, the youngest brother of Elijah Jhirad, was killed in action in the India-Pakistan armed conflict, on September 17, 1965.



"Excuse me, Awaskar, is this the Nostalgia Club?"

"Yeah Koletkar, but let me tell you, it ain't what it used to be!"

Jetkar, why is nostalgia like grammar?

Jhiradkar because we find the present tense and the past perfect.

\$15.53/mo

A vintage studio portrait of a man and a woman. The man, on the left, has a mustache and is wearing a dark suit with a vest and tie. The woman, on the right, is wearing a long, light-colored, high-collared dress. They are standing in front of a draped studio backdrop.

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INDIA WORLDWIDE, February 1983

India Nurtured Jewish Heritage Without Prejudice



A Family Heirloom: A formal portrait of the Jhiradkar taken 107 years ago.

By Renu Mehra

In the days of the British Raj, during one of the wars with Tipu Sultan of Mysore, some East India Company officers and soldiers were captured by the Islamic ruler's army, one of them being the Native Commandant, Samuel Ezekiel Divekar. Tipu was a fanatic Muslim. Moreover, he regarded any one engaged in war with him as being guilty of high treason. A captured enemy soldier could be put to death but was sometimes given the option to be converted to Islam to save his life.

When Samuel Divekar was brought before him, he told the Sultan, "My name is Samuel Divekar; I am a Bene-Israel."

The Sultan's mother, the Begum Sahiba, watching from her balcony called out, "This man is a Bene-Israel, a religion referred to in our holy books. Our prophet has given us a positive injunction to honor the Bene-Israel. He must be saved."

Mentioning of Bene-Israel saved Samuel's life. In due course with the intervention of the Cochin Jews he was set free. Samuel Divekar was a man of wealth and he vowed to build a synagogue in Bombay. However, it was not given to Samuel to witness the inauguration. He had gone to Cochin to bring the scrolls of law and he died there.

It is said that when the synagogue was formally opened, the first blessing was given to

Begum Sahiba of Mysore, whose benign intervention had made it possible for that first synagogue to be established and ultimately for the Jewish faith to flower and flourish in India.

Indeed, Jewish communities have flourished in India for two thousand years. Despite their long and fascinating history, few in the West know about their existence. Last year, the Jewish Museum in New York City held an exhibition on the Jews of India.

People deeply nurtured in the Jewish faith, who have through the ages inimitably blended with and absorbed the cultural heritage of India

affording a rare glimpse of their life, lore and legends, and their customs and traditions. The museum worked closely with Congregation Bina, an organization of Jews from India living in the United States.

The presentation made by the congregation gave the rest of the Jewry an opportunity to witness some aspects of religious observance and rituals of the Jews from India, hear their liturgical and folk music and to under-

stand and appreciate the story of their existence in the ancient and hospitable land of India.

The documentary films of Benjamin Hayem, an Indian Jew of Baghdadi origin, and of Dr. Johanna Spector, a historian and an anthropologist, along with some unique photographs of their lifestyle by Carmel Berkson, an American Jewess living in Bombay, increased the awareness of the Americans of the glorious past of these people.

Congregation Bina, which has put this exotic community on the map, is a singularly unique society in world Jewry, representing a people deeply nurtured in the Jewish faith, who have through the ages inimitably blended with and absorbed the cultural heritage of India. It is made up of people from all walks of life, including doctors, lawyers, scientists, engineers and businessmen. This organization was formed seven years ago, a brainchild of Samuel M. Daniel Divekar, a social worker in the Board of Education of New York. Incidentally, it was one of the Divekars who built the first synagogue in Bombay.

Elijah E. Jhirad has been its president from its very conception. A law degree holder from Britain and a former senior advocate of the Supreme Court of India, he was for many years the Judge Advocate General of the Indian Navy. During World War II, he served

India Nurtured Jewish Heritage Without Prejudice

with distinction in the Royal Indian Navy, attaining the rank of Commander. For his meritorious services, both on shore and sea, King George VI appointed him a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Jhirad says, "Our object is to preserve and foster the ancient traditions, customs, liturgy, music, melodies and folklore of all segments of the Jewish people settled in India. In joining the mainstream of world Jewry, we wish to enrich it with our unique heritage."

Last year Mayor Edward I. Koch of New York honored the Jews from India at the Hanukkah Candle Lighting Ceremony at the City Hall in Manhattan. The atmosphere was emotion charged as the president of Congregation Bina delivered a touching invocation the choir chanted the blessings in the full-throated strains of traditional Indian Jewish melodies. Koch said he had chosen to honor the Jews from India on this occasion, because, despite being separated for centuries from the mainstream of world Jewry, they had tenaciously maintained the Jewish heritage in its pristine purity.

"One of the most fascinating aspects of the life of the Jews in India is that they lived free from persecutions that have plagued them elsewhere in the world," says Jhirad. "In fact, we are the only Jewish community in the world which has not experienced anti-semitism."

Jhirad's family dates back to early times. The Jhiradkars, together with the Ragupurkars and the Shupurkars were for nearly 800 years

the hereditary "Kajis" (judges) of the community, their powers being confirmed by sanads and firmans (official orders) issued by the then rulers from time to time. Coming to comparatively more recent times, Jhirad's maternal great grandfather was Haem Samuel Kehimkar, the noted historian whose "History of the Bene-Israel in India" is a great source book on the subject. His paternal great grandfather was Subedar Major Sirdar Bahadar Solomon Israel Jhiradkar who was decorated for valor by the grant of the Order

"One of the most fascinating aspects of the life of the Jews in India is that they lived free from persecutions that have plagued them elsewhere in the world."

of British India First Class, which in his time was equivalent to the Victoria Cross given to the British forces. For his services he was also given a jagir of valuable land in Pune.

The Bene-Israel Synagogue in Pune is built on that land.

The Jews of India evolved as three different communities with separate origins and traditions. They were the Bene-Israel, the Cochin Jews and the group called compendiously as Baghdadi Jews. The first two communities have been in India for over two mil-

lennia. The Baghdadi Jews, which term here includes Jews not only from Iraq but also from other Middle East countries such as Iran, Afghanistan and Syria, went to India during the last two hundred years or so.

The Bene-Israel constitute the largest group. They settled in the Konkan region in Western India. According to their tradition and the better scholarly opinion, they fled from Galilee in Israel to escape the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes. They went to Egypt and sailed from there through the Red Sea bound for the flourishing port of Chaul on the Konkan coast. However, they were shipwrecked near Navgaon, and only seven men and women landed ashore. The bodies of the dead that were washed ashore were buried in two mounds. At the site of these mounds a memorial has been recently erected.

The inhabitants of Navgaon showed hospitality to the newcomers and allowed them to settle on the land as farmers and oil-pressers. They came to be known as Shaniwar-Telis (Saturday oil-pressers) because of the fact that they rested on Saturday. They were thus distinguished from some Hindu oil-pressers who rested on Monday and were called the Somwar-Telis.

In course of time, the Bene-Israel became oil merchants as well, and because they continued to observe the Sabbath strictly, no oil was sold on a Saturday. This tradition became so strong, that today although there is only perhaps one Bene-Israel family in the business of coconut oil, no oil is sold in the Konkan on a Saturday.



Elijah Jhirad delivering the invocation at the Hanukkah Candle Lighting ceremony in City Hall in New York while Mayor Edward Koch looks on.

The Bene-Israel had lost all their holy books and artifacts in the shipwreck. As time passed, they forgot Hebrew, but the one verse in Hebrew they never forgot was the verse proclaiming the unity of the God-head, that the Lord the God of Israel was one - the Shema Yisrael. It was a verse they recited on all occasions of their prayers, for any birth, marriage or death, or any other religious occasion. In addition to observing the Sabbath strictly, they observed all the principal tenets of the Jewish religion, the rite of circum-

The Bene-Israel had lost all their holy books and artifacts in the shipwreck. As time passed, they forgot Hebrew, but the one verse in Hebrew they never forgot was the verse proclaiming the unity of the God-head, that the Lord the God of Israel was one - the Shema Yisrael. It was a verse they recited on all occasions of their prayers, for any birth, marriage or death, or any other religious occasion. In addition to observing the Sabbath strictly, they observed all the principal tenets of the Jewish religion, the rite of circum-

dition, the Kashruth (eating only kosher food), the High holidays, and the major festivals. What helped them in their observance was that the Hindu calendar was, like the Jewish calendar, a luni-solar calendar, the difference being a matter of twelve hours. Until the first religious revival, they used Marathi names for the high holidays and festivals. After the religious revival, both Hebrew and Marathi names were interchangeably used.

Living as they did in Konkani, among Maharashtrais, Marathi became their mother-tongue. Their first names were Biblical names, but additionally they also had Hindu names. The middle name was the father's first name. They took the family name from the name of the village to which they belonged. Thus, Haseem Samuel Kehimkar designates Haem, the son of Samuel of the Kehimkar family, Kehim being the village of his domicile.

A David Rahabi is credited with the revival or rather revitalization of the Judaism of the Bene-Israel. When he visited their villages, he readily recognized them as truly belonging to the seed of Israel, for they maintained the tenets he administered. He taught them to do their prayers in Hebrew. There is much speculation as to when he came. The Bene-Israel place his coming to a date some eight to nine hundred years ago. Possibly, although this is not established, he was David Maimonides, the brother of Moses Maimonides, the great interpreter of the Torah, philosopher and physician to Saladin. In a letter to the Yemenites, Moses Maimonides referred to the group of Jews in India who followed the tenets of the Torah although they did not have a copy of it. David Maimonides was a dealer in precious stones. It is known that he perished in the Indian Ocean, and it is quite likely he visited India on business. Some scholars put David Rahabi's coming to a date some two hundred years ago.

To continue his good work, David Rahabi chose persons from the leading families of the Jhadraks, the Shapurkars and the Rajpurkars as his disciples, taught them the tenets of the Jewish faith and gave them Hebrew Manuscripts of the prayers. He ordained them as the hereditary Kajis, the judges and religious mentors, of the community. Their powers were confirmed from time to time by the local rulers, the Angriars, the Peshwas and the nawabs by the grant of Sanads or Firmans (government documents or warrants of

Choir chanting the blessings
(authorisation).

Paradoxically, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Christian missionaries did a great deal to reinforce the Bene-Israel's Jewish identity. They established schools where they taught Hebrew and English, and in those days they were surprised

This tradition became so strong, that today although there is only perhaps one Bene-Israel family in the business of coconut oil, no oil is sold in the Konkani on a Saturday.

to find that not only boys but girls rushed to join these schools.

Perhaps the greatest boon they conferred upon the Bene-Israel was by translating the Bible into Marathi, thus making the scriptures

available to every man, woman and child to read and study in the mother tongue. They encouraged the Bene-Israel to translate their prayer books into Marathi, and a printing press for publishing Hebrew and Marathi books was set up in 1846.

Apparently, there is an affinity between being a farmer and being a soldier, and the Bene-Israel were no exception to this rule. In course of time the Bene-Israel adopted the ancillary profession of being soldiers, and because they made good officers, the Peshwas, the Angrias and other rulers appointed them as such. In the 15th century, two members of the Churikar family were appointed by the Angrias to the command of the Navy.

In 1485, Vasco De Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and came to India, and soon after the Portuguese began to establish a colonial empire. They occupied Bombay, Goa and a number of other areas in South India. So long as they were in Bombay, the Bene-Israel refrained from venturing into Bombay, the Bene-Israel refrained from venturing into the city for fear of forcible conversion. The Portuguese gave Bombay as a dowry to Catherine of Braganza when the married King Charles of England.

King Charles sold Bombay to the East India Company for five pounds sterling. The news of the

religious tolerance of the British quickly spread. In 1746 the first two bene-Israel families, the Awaskars and the Divekars moved to Bombay. The five Divekar sons came to be enlisted in the British army of the East India Company, soon to be followed by other Bene-Israel. The East India Company was constantly involved in waging wars to establish a colonial empire.

Dr. Ezekiel Barber who has recently done valuable research into the history of the Jews of India, notes that by the mid-nineteenth century at least 20 percent of Bene-Israel men served in the East India Company Armies. At the time of the so-called Indian Mutiny, in 1857, British Archives reveal that 50 percent of the Indian officer class of the British Army in the Bombay Presidency, were Bene-Israel.

After the Mutiny, when the government of India was taken over by the British Crown, there was a large scale reorganization of the Indian Army maintained by the British. To avoid some of the problems that had arisen, the British Government decided that Indian regi-

Please turn to page 51



Congregation Ilma Choir chanting the blessings

Canal from area 5

ments would be organized on the basis of recruitment of distinct homogenous classes. The Bene-Israel were not numerous enough to form a regiment and so, in spite of their great tradition, they were no longer enrolled in the Army. The Bene-Israel then joined the ancillary services, such as the Army Medical corps, in the railways, posts and telegraphs, and supply units. When World War I broke out and recruitment to the officer class was thrown open, the Bene-Israel as well as some members of the other Jewish groups flocked to join the Army, Navy and the Air Force and reached high positions. The Jews of India have had a rear-admiral in the Navy, and two officers who attained the rank of Lieutenant-General in the Army.

The history of the comparatively small community of Cochín Jews is even more spectacular. Local tradition holds that they came to India in King Solomon's fleet in the tenth century B.C. The ships used to call every three years. The trade was in spices, ivory, gold, precious stones, peacocks' feathers and pearls. In many languages the words translated into Hebrew, The words for rape, ivory, elephant's tooth, and peacock are all old Tamil words. A linen merchant Malabar Christian tradition has it that Habban, a Jewish merchant was sent by Royal decree to fetch a man who could build a temple more beautiful than that of King Solomon. Habban accompanied by St. Thomas arrived in Canganore in the middle of the first century of the current era. He was well received by the king, a Jew, who was playing the flute. She took him to the Jewish center where they were celebrating a Jewish wedding. St. Thomas sang hebrew songs. He

In the film industry, in which India leads the world today in the number of feature films produced every year, Jews have played a prominent part.

stayed at the home of the Rabbi. Apparently a few Jews were hantized by him.

The Jews in Cranganore were well treated by the Hindu rulers. In course of time, one Joseph Rabban rose to political eminence, and King Bhaskara Ravi Varma granted him princely rights in a deed of gift engraved in copper plates which are preserved to this day in the Paradesi synagogue in Cochin. Scholars differ as to the actual date, some placing it as early as 376 C.E., and some as late as 1012 C.E. The fame of this principlity spread far and wide. The city of Cranganore was known to the Greeks as Muzhiris, and to the Chinese and Jews as Shingly. A fourteenth century Hebrew poet, Rabbenu Nissim sang thus (in translation) which loses somewhat in

INDIA WORLDWIDE, February 1988



A traditional Jewish wedding ceremony

I travelled from Spain,
I had heard of the City of Shingly
I longed to see an Israel King,
Him I saw with my own eyes.

In the early sixteenth century this Jewish kingdom was destroyed by the Moors and the Portuguese who had brought with them the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition. The Jews fled to Cochín and were given shelter in a choice site for a town by the side of his own palace and family temple. There the Jews built a synagogue, which has been standing there for more than 400 years. A few years ago, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi inaugurated the 400th anniversary celebrations, speaking feelingly of the contribution of the Jews of India.

The Baghdadi Jews arrived in India towards the end of the 18th century, and set up their business in Calcutta, then in Surat and Bombay. They were engaged in business, a few of them becoming the veritable merchant princes of India. The family of the Sassoons in particular built not only synagogues, but established reformatory schools, libraries, institutes of science, hospitals, docks and textile mills.

The Jews of India have made sizeable contributions. In a country which gave them shelter for centuries, they in turn were ever prepared to serve it to the very perils of death. Additionally, they integrated fully into Indian society. It is believed that the Bene-Israel women evolved the draping of the sari in a manner which today is considered the most elegant. In Bombay presidency, the Bene-Israel women were pioneers in the nursing profession. As doctors too, they were in the forefront. One of the women to be qualified as a doctor in the early part of this century was Dr. Jeorusha Thirai who qualified in Bombay in 1912, and later got the M.D. degree in London. She became the head of the Cama Hospital, and gave of her services freely to the poor and needy. She made valuable contributions

to the development of medical education in India, and she received recognition for her work by the honors bestowed on her both during the British Raj and after Independence.

The Jews in India have contributed to various professions. They have been judges and lawyers and university professors.

The Jewish poet, Nissim Ezekiel, is regarded as the poet laureate in the English language in India, and who just recently received the award of Padma Bhushan from the Government of India.

The contributions of W.M. Haffkine to the field of pharmacology are considerable.

In the film industry, in which India leads the world today in the number of feature films produced every year, Jews have played a prominent part. Among the screen stars there was the most beautiful Ruby Meyers with the screen name Sultichana. She acted in over a hundred pictures. There was the inimitable Rose, Mismasleah in private life; Pramilla (Esther Abraham) who was elected Miss India in 1939; the spirited and vivacious Ramota (Rachel Cohen) who starred in Bengali and Hindi films, winning the coveted "best actress award" from Bengali film journalists; Fleur Ezekiel, Miss India of 1959; Arti, the tough girl; Lillian, the dancing star; Nisha, the mermaid; and many others. Among them there was David Abraham, who was decorated by the government; Elize whose performance was a box office hit; Eddie Sopher, the Boxer; Joseph Moses, presently the Executive Vice President of Congregation B'nai Jai (Levy Aaron Joseph) who played the Elephant Boy in "Tarzan goes to India". Among the producers was Ezra M. who was also associated with Hollywood

They were proudly conscious of the fact that throughout their sojourn in India they were never the object of discrimination

Bunny Reuben and David Fershon, who helped found the Bombay Film Laboratories

When Israel was established as a state, the Jews of India began to migrate to Israel. They did not go to Israel because they were oppressed or ill treated or unwanted. They were proudly conscious of the fact that throughout their sojourn in India they were never the object of discrimination. They began to migrate to Israel because the biblical prophecy of the ingathering of the Jews from the four corners of the earth in the fullness of time was etched on their hearts and minds. But wherever they may be, they will never forget India which will continue to be to them a spiritual home. *(This article was written in consultation with Elijah E. Jhond, president of Congregation Bina and an authority on Indian Jews.)*

The Best Poems & Poets of 2001

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You Graced This Earth

You graced this green Earth with your being
And now you are no longer here
But knowing you are omnipresent
I feel your sweet presence is near
And soon when we both are together
And it won't be a very long while
When you greet me with love—your wonderful love
I'll be home in your beautiful smile

Evelyn Stark

New York, September 11, 2001, with Postlude

Morning light and autumn hint of early crisp splendor

All of a sudden an interruption on
Slant wing perilous flights
Aimed two silvered planes
Into their targets
Two concrete skyscraper icons
Towers of America's capitalistic society
Swallowed by bomb blast orange
Flames these silvered planes
Met death, caused
Falling destruction

In suicidal pact the terrorist
Hijackers of these planes on
Mad trajectories met the devil promptly
Their passengers met
God in Heaven instantly!

June Elliott

Faces—Faces

Faces—faces walking together.
In unity, shock, anger, and pain.
Their eyes speaking volumes!
Unseeing, they walk together with tears.

Ears attuned for the slightest sound!
The sound of hope.
They walk, heads held high;
Around them an invisible chain,
One that will never break!

With hearts of steel, they cry internally—
There will be a tomorrow—
In their humanness, their thoughts,
Questions remain:
Why did our loved ones have to die?
And from the innocent minds, eyes and lips of children:
Why! Why!

Mary Nichols

Untitled

Windswept roads covered
with leaves of golden brown

The moon full like a mirror
reflects humanity
the waves are still . . .
waiting for the frost
and green trees stand
naked in the sun

Summer's done
roses and daisies hide their pretty faces
your grave, beloved
is covered with green wreaths and hope . . .
the seeds we planted
while we were together
will bloom again someday . . . like our love
our bond is endless . . .

Love never dies.

The River Flows

At the edge of the grass, the river flows.
Nobody knows why the river flows.
It's free, it's free.
Oh, how I'd love to be as free
as the river, when the river flows.
It twists and turns, goes over and under,
nothing can stop it oh, when the river it flows.
Why, oh why can't I be as free
as the river, when the river flows?

Jason Trafion

Empathy under the Moonlight

The moonlight shone in my room through the window,
It reflected a silver whiteness on the shadow.
The moon also lighted my old home when I was a child;
I always threw myself to bathe in the milky shine.

I have been traveling around the whole world;
She visited me any place where I abode.
Tonight, I am alone in this lonesome lodging;
She joins me as usual to be my smitten companion.

I have encountered many wars in my life;
I escaped the brutal killers under her bright guide.
Finally, I set sail to the land of covenant
Where I eagerly worked for a living.

When I just finished composing these verses,
The news erupted that terrorists had attacked us!
God! What a skeptical fact happened again this moment!
Moonlight! Please hurry to white off the black stragglers!

Diana Chang

Erna Weber Daniel

Ever openhearted, your presence enlivens every room,
Rose of wondrous roses are you, forever in full bloom.
Nobility, elegance, and grace adorn your life sublime,
Angelic presence and charm do thrive in every clime.

Woe you have the esteem and admiration of all around,
Enchanting as ever you are, wherever you are found.
Beauty everlasting is your holy gift from Him on high,
Evening star, bright and shining in the western sky.

Richly endowed with a most bountiful heart and mind,
Divinely blessed are you with a spirit that's ever so kind.
At all times, you have been to Sam a caring loving wife,
Navigating, too, the springs and streams of our busy life.
Integrity supreme of your stands recorded in your files;
Ever heedful, you've for transient sorrows and simple wiles.
Lament, praise, blame, warnings, kisses, tears and smiles.

Your concern for others ever displays a most elegant style.

Elijah Jhrad

Mortality

The ticking clock sounds like thunder in my ears.
The lamplight flickers and my eyes fill up with tears.
The curtains at the window do a playful dance,
Waving as if to give him another chance.

Soft somber music is playing a mournful tune.
We know that his end is coming soon.
The sky outside is lit up with sunset fire
I can almost hear the heaven-sent angelic choir.

The last chapter in his book of life is spent
His mortal dance is over as it is meant
To be, for all enter this world through the womb
And leave this earthly plane at the tomb.

God's plan for us is that we become immortal.
He sent his Son to provide salvation's portal.
So believe in Him and be kind to those you meet
And mortality becomes eternity at Jesus's feet.

Nostalgia

By John Perry (Pezarkar) – New Jersey



Memories: The possible origin of Bene Israeli Community-based Eliyahoo Hannavi 'Malida' ceremony. I am writing it in view of several forthcoming webinar Malidas that are being held to celebrate Tu B'Shvat.

We lived in Dongri, which together with the neighboring streets that comprised Noor Baug, J.J. Hospital, Sandhurst Road, Umerkhadi, Mazgaon and Char Naal had a majority of Bene Israeli community, much more than those at Jacob Circle (Saat Rashta) and Parel in the 1950s.

Hence, the local synagogue, the Etz Haeem Synagogue in Umerkhadi together with Gate of Mercy Synagogue (Juni Mashid) and Shaare Ratzon Synagogue (Navi Mashid) were not enough to accommodate the large number of Bene Israelis. So the High Holiday prayer services: Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah would be held at Sir Elly Kadoore School in Mazgaon. In fact, the Chanukkah festival would have entertainment, dramas and competitions for eight nights in the school auditorium.

The community members were well acquainted with the happenings in Israel through news, relatives who had settled in Israel and various organizations including the Bombay Zionist Association, the Indian Zionist Organization that also promoted Aliya to Israel.

I had the fortune to be one of the founders of the Jewish Youth Association and still vividly remember the various tasks we undertook including Hebrew classes on Sunday mornings, entertainment program etc. Most of us from the youth group had broken away from the Bombay Zionist Association and joined hands with M.D.Japeth, a well-known journalist and editor to form the Indian Zionist Organization.

Hence when the Six Day War broke out on June 5th, 1967 we were worried about the Jewish State and our family members there. The war was fought between 5th and 10th June 1967 by Israel and the neighboring states of Jordan, Syria, and Egypt. Not content with the news reports in the newspapers and there was very little of it on All India Radio (in the absence of electronic media) we relied on M.D.Japeth, due to his association with the media and relations with the Consulate General of Israel in Bombay.

From the second night of the Six Day War, over a hundred Bene Israelis would attend a meeting at the large terrace of our Chinwalla Building, courtesy my father, Isaiah Aaron Perry who was the President of the building association and hence could use it freely. Around the fourth or the fifth day of the war, keeping in mind the typical Bene Israeli practice of having an Eliyahoo Hannavi Malida, we resolved to have a community Malida if Israel won the war.

Of course, like always, Prophet Elijah heard our prayers and a grand Malida ceremony was held at the Sir Elly Kadoorie School in Mazgaon which was attended by over 400 men, women and children. Our Jewish Youth Association did not have the finances to bear the cost and hence we collected Rupee One from each individual. That was the beginning of Bene Israeli community Malida. Later, some very rich members of the community would give an open invitation to the whole community and would offer Biryani to all those present. Our association had offered the basic food needed. But we were the pioneers!

I still remember the names and faces of those associated with the Jewish Youth Association and their activities that included: Elijah Waskar, Sammy Shapurkar, George Nagavkar, Abraham Waskar, Noah Massil and of course, quite a number of our girls some of whose names I still remember, as they were known before marriage: Sarah Pezarkar, Esther Sankar, Olivia Moses, Eliza Perry.

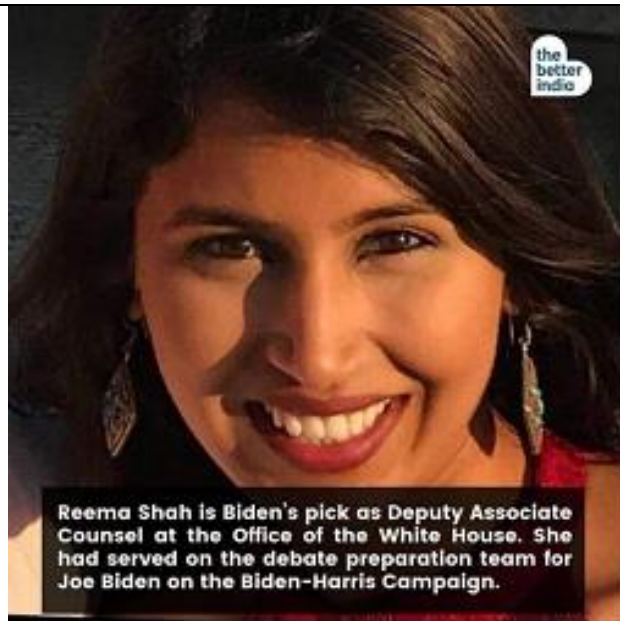
(Sincerely apologize if I have forgotten the names of some members of our committee).

Indian's in Joe Biden's Admiration









Secrets of Elvis Presley

curtesy Samuel & Erna Daniels



Gladys Presley told her son **Elvis that they were Jews**, she also warned him to keep it to himself, because "some people don't like Jews." Elvis Presley was a lifelong member of the **Memphis Jewish Community Center**, to which he was given free admission while still a relatively poor youth.

Presley never forgot the JCC when the annual fund drive rolled around, and when he was tapped for a \$1,000 donation to the Memphis Jewish Welfare Fund, Presley surprised them with a check for **\$150,000**.

When Gladys died in 1958, at the young age of 46, Elvis was only 23, his father, Vernon Presley, a vicious Jew-hater, oversaw the design of her gravestone, including the image of a cross on an upper corner. A few years later, Elvis, determined to honor his beloved Jewish mother had a Star of David added to the opposite corner of her grave marker to balance out the cross and to acknowledge his mother's Judaism.

Elvis always surrounded himself with Jews. Almost all of his song writers were, in fact, Jews. For his hits, he hired Wally Gold, Ben Weisman, Florence Kaye, Aaron Schroeder, and the songwriting duos of Mort Shuman & Doc Pomus and Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller, all Jewish. The latter duo wrote six Top 10 hits for Presley, including "Hound Dog," "Jailhouse Rock," and "Don't" (as well as supplying hits to the Drifters, the Coasters, the Clovers, Ben E. King, and dozens of others).

Elvis was deeply hurt by the Jew-hatred of the South. He told Larry Geller — one of the Jewish members of the Memphis Mafia and the one who served as Elvis's "spiritual advisor, with just a hint of bitterness: "Man, it used to confuse the hell outta me as a kid. In church all they talked about was how great all the Jews were, Abraham, Moses, Ezekiel, and all those other prophets. They were all Jewish. But outside of church, they would talk about **'those damn Jews.'** They would put them down. I just couldn't understand it."

Elvis responded by letting the entire world know that the King of rock and roll was a Jew--and damn proud of it. He never missed an opportunity to wear his beloved "Star of David" and "Chai" so the whole world could see he was a Member of the Tribe. While his managers wanted Elvis to wear them under his shirt, Elvis kept his shirt wide open. This and more is recounted in the new book **"The Jewish World of Elvis Presley,"** by Roselle Kline Chartock



Why is Women's Day celebrated? *Therasa Serber Malkiel (1874-1949)* from Ukrainian

रशियातून अमेरिकेत स्थलांतरित झालेल्या या बाईंमुळे जागतिक महिला दिन साजरा होतो.. वाचा त्यांचं कार्य काय आहे..

थेरेसा सर्बर माल्कल!

हे नाव तुम्ही पूर्वी कधी ऐकलं आहे का? नाही? आज आपण जो जागतिक महिला दिन साजरा करत आहोत त्याचा आणि या नावाचा घनिष्ठ संबंध आहे. कसा तो आम्ही सांगतो...

मंडळी, एखादा दिवस साजरा करण्यामागे नेमके काय कारण आहे, त्याचा इतिहास काय आहे, हा पायंडा कुणी पाडला हे जाणून घेणे महत्वाचे असते. जर ही माहिती तुम्हाला असेल तर तो दिवस साजरा करण्याचा आनंद द्विगुणित होतो. आता आजच्या जागतिक महिला दिनाचेच उदाहरण घ्या ना.. सर्वांना माहीत आहे की आज महिला दिन आहे, पण याची सुरुवात थेरेसा सर्बर माल्कल या महिलेने केली हे कुणालाच माहीत नाही. दुर्दैवाने थेरेसा आज विस्मृतीत गेल्या आहेत. चला तर मग आजच्या दिवसाचे निमित्त साधून आपण त्यांची ओळख करून घेऊया...

थेरेसा यांचा जन्म १ मे १८७४ ला रशियातल्या बार नावाच्या शहरात एका ज्यू परिवारात झाला. जन्मापासूनच ज्यू विरोधी वातावरणात वाढलेल्या थेरेसा यांना आणि त्यांच्या परिवाराला रशियाच्या त्सार राजवटीत प्रचंड त्रास सहन करावा लागला. त्यामुळे अनेक कुटुंबे तिथून स्थलांतर करून अमेरिकेत गेली. त्यात थेरेसा यांचेही कुटुंब होते. १८९१ साली अमेरिकेत दाखल झाल्यावर थेरेसा यांनी इतर ज्यू लोकांप्रमाणे चरितार्थासाठी मिळेल ते काम केले. प्रथम एका बेकरीमध्ये, नंतर एका कपड्यांच्या कारखान्यात त्यांना काम मिळाले. त्यांचा मूळ स्वभाव चळवळ्या आणि बंडखोर असल्याने त्यांचे लक्ष कामगार स्त्रियांच्या प्रश्नांकडे वेधले गेले. थेरेसा फक्त प्रश्न बघून गप्प बसणाऱ्या महिला नव्हत्या... त्या प्रश्न सोडवण्यासाठी काय करता येईल याचा विचार करू लागल्या आणि त्यातूनच कामगार स्त्रियांच्या संघटनेची निर्मिती त्यांनी केली. या स्त्री संघटनेतून स्थलांतरित कामगार स्त्रियांचा आवाज उठवण्याचे काम त्या करू लागल्या.

लवकरच त्यांच्या असे लक्षात आले की, फक्त संघटना चालवून भागणार नाही. महिलांना पुरुषांच्या समान हक्क हवे असतील तर राजकारणात उतरण्याशिवाय पर्याय नाही हे त्यांनी ओळखले. आता त्यांनी कामगार स्त्रियांच्या प्रश्नांसोबतच एकंदरीत स्त्री-पुरुष समानतेवरही लक्ष केंद्रित केले. सोशालिस्ट पार्टीमध्ये प्रवेश करून त्यांनी राजकारणात शिरकाव करून घेतला. त्यावेळी सोशालिस्ट पार्टी ही एकमेव अशी पार्टी होती ज्यात महिलांना प्रवेश

थेरेसा सोशालिस्ट पार्टीकडे आकर्षित झाल्या होत्या. परंतु दुर्दैवाने लवकरच त्यांना सत्य समजले की पार्टीचा नारा फक्त दिवाळी स्वरूपाचा होता. निर्णय घेण्याच्या प्रक्रियेत महिलांना नगण्य स्थान मिळत असे. थेरेसा यांनी यामुळे निराश न होता असे ठरवले की, पार्टी न सोडता आपली समांतर विचारधारा चालवून आपले ध्येय साध्य करायला हवे. त्यांनी सोशालिस्ट महिलांची एक वेगळी चळवळ सुरू केली आणि महिलांसाठी राजकारणात एक वेगळे स्वतंत्र व्यासपीठ असायला हवे असे जोरदार मत मांडले.

शेवटी सोशालिस्ट पार्टीने त्यांचे म्हणणे मान्य केले आणि अमेरिकेच्या इतिहासात प्रथमच महिलांसाठी वेगळे डिपार्टमेंट बनवण्यात आले. त्यांच्या अध्यक्षपदी थेरेसा विराजमान झाल्या. मंडळी, त्या काळी ही गोष्ट अजिबात सोपी नव्हती! एक तर महिला, त्यात अमेरिकेबाहेरील स्थलांतरित कामगार... ही एका नव्या पर्वाची सुरुवात होती!

या पदावर बसून थेरेसा यांनी महिलांच्या हक्कासाठी लढा दिला. त्यातलाच एक हक्क म्हणजे महिलांना मतदानाचा अधिकार! तोपर्यंत अमेरिकेत महिलांना मतदानाचा अधिकार नव्हता. तो मिळायलाच हवा हा मुद्दा थेरेसा यांनी सर्वासमोर मांडला आणि बरेच प्रयत्न करून त्यासाठी समर्थन मिळवले. या सोबतच महिलांचे अनेक प्रश्न त्यांनी यशस्वीपणे हाताळले. महिलांमध्ये शिक्षणाविषयी जागरूकता निर्माण केली.

थेरेसा यांनी जगाचे लक्ष महिलांच्या समस्यांकडे वेधले जावे म्हणून एक कल्पना मांडली. वर्षातला एक दिवस 'महिला दिन' म्हणून साजरा व्हावा हीच ती कल्पना... सोशालिस्ट पार्टीने त्यांना या बाबतीत साथ दिली आणि अमेरिकेत पहिला 'राष्ट्रीय महिला दिन' १९०९ साली २८ फेब्रुवारी रोजी साजरा झाला. ही कल्पना नंतर युरोपियन देशांमध्ये सुद्धा पसरली आणि नंतर जगभरात लोकप्रिय झाली. आज सर्वानुमते जगभरात एकाच दिवशी म्हणजे ८ मार्च रोजी 'जागतिक महिला दिन' साजरा होतोय या मागे मूळ कारण थेरेसा सर्बर माल्कल या आहेत.

थेरेसा माल्कल यांचे १७ नोव्हेंबर १९४९ मध्ये निधन झाले. एक स्थलांतर होऊन अमेरिकेत आलेली मुलगी ते अमेरिकेच्या राजकारणातील बलशाली महिला असा त्यांचा थक्क करणारा प्रवास होता. त्यांचे निधन झाल्यावर हळू हळू लोक त्यांना विसरले. आज आपण महिला दिन साजरा करतो पण थेरेसा यांचा उल्लेख कुठेही होत नाही हे दुर्दैवी सत्य आहे. जागतिक महिला दिनाच्या सर्वांना शुभेच्छा आणि थेरेसा माल्कल यांना सलाम!



Bene-Israel Community Match Maker's

101th

Arranged Marriage

In India Canada & Israel



March. 18, 2021 Noa Gentmann & Eliroy Corley got married on which was 101th arranged marriage of Match Maker Rezina Daniels





שניואר טלי - בישולים
מאת רונית אלון קנדלקר
शनिवार तेली – स्वयंपाक
रोनीथ अलोन कांदळेकर

Shaniwar Teli - Cooking

Ronith Allon Kandlekar



Onion Fritters/Pakorاس פקורה בצל कांदा भजी

Happy and Kosher Passover to everyone

**Bene-Israel
prepare this
snack to
finish
passover**

- ✓ **You will need:** 2 large onions, green chillies as per your taste, bunch of coriander leaves, half a tsp of each: turmeric, red chilli powder (if needed), coriander powder, freshly grounded garam masala (optional), 1tsp cumin powder, salt to taste. 3/4th cup of rice flour and 3-4pcs of powdered matzos. 1-2 eggs and water as needed.
- ❖ **Directions:** Mix in all the ingredients apart from the flour matzos and egg. Mix gently massaging the onions with the spices so it releases the moisture. Make sure not to break completely the slices of onion. Then add in the rest of the ingredients and bring to one nice mixture. Add egg and water only as needed little at a time.
In a deep pot or kadhai, preheat the oil for deep frying. Now simply drop some of the mixture in the oil, as you desired shape and size, or just freestyle frying as on the streets of Mumbai... amazing, right?
Fry the fritters on medium flame until nicely golden brown and crunchy from both sides. Enjoy with your desired chutney or ketchup.
For recipe video, please click on the link to my YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/UtjsAPwx2-M>

חג פסח כשר ושמח לכולם!

מצרכים:

2 בצלים גדולים, פלפל ירוק חריף לפי הטעם, מלא כוסברה טרייה, תבלינים חצי כפית כל אחד: כורכום, כוסברה טחון, פפריקה חריפה (אם יש צורך), כפית כמון טחון, מלח לפי הטעם. 3/4 כוס קמח אורז, 3-4 מצות טחונות, 1-2 ביצים ומים לפי הצורך.

אופן הכנה:

בקערה גדולה להוסיף את כל המצרכים חוץ מהקמח, מצות, ביצים ומים. לערבב טוב טוב בעזרת היד ולמעוך בעדינות שהבצלים ישחררו את המיצים יחד עם התבלינים. להשתדל לא לשבור את הרצועות הבצל לגמרי. עכשיו להוסיף את שאר המצרכים, אם צריך אז רק ביצה 1 קודם. מים יש להוסיף לאט לאט רק לפי הצורך. יש לערבב לתערובת אחידה. בסיר או מחבת עמוק יש לחמם שמן מראש. בזהירות ועדינות יש לשים את התערובת לפי צורה וגודל הרצוי או פשוט חופשי יש ליצוק לשמן בחתיחות קטנות. יש לטגן את הפקורה על אש בינוני עד ששחומים וקראנצ'י משני הצדדים. תהנו עם הצ'אטני הרצוי או אפילו קטשופ.

לסרטון יש להיכנס לערוץ היוטיוב שלי בלחיצה על הלינק שמטה: <https://youtu.be/UtjsAPwx2-M>

**בני ישראל
מכינים את
החטיף הזה
לסיום חג
הפסח**

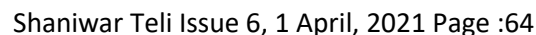
पेसाक संपवण्यासाठी
बेन-इस्राएल हे अन्न
शिजवतात

१ मोठे कांदे, आपल्या चवीनुसार हिरव्या मिरच्या, कोथिंबीर बारीक चिरून घ्यावी, प्रत्येक अर्धा चमचा: हळद, लाल तिखट (आवश्यक असल्यास), धनिया पावडर, गरम मसाला (पर्यायी), १ चमचा जिरेपूड, चवीनुसार मीठ . तांदळाचे पीठ 3/4 कप आणि 3-4 मॅजोस. आवश्यकतेनुसार 1-2 अंडी आणि पाणी.

पीठ, मॅड्रॅस आणि अंडी सोडून एका वाडग्यात सर्व साहित्य मिक्स करावे. कांद्याला हळूवारपणे मसाल्यांनी मिक्स करावे म्हणजे ते ओलावा सोडते. कांद्याचे काप पूर्णपणे तोडू नयेत याची खात्री करा. नंतर उर्वरित साहित्य जोडा आणि एक छान मिश्रण बनवा. आवश्यकतेनुसार अंडी आणि पाणी घाला.

दोन्ही बाजूंनी गोल्डन ब्राऊन आणि कुरकुरे होईपर्यंत मध्यम आचेवर भजी तळा. आपल्या इच्छित चटणी किंवा केचअप सह आनंद घ्या.

रेसिपी व्हिडिओसाठी, माझ्या YouTube चॅनेलवर क्लिक करा: <https://youtu.be/UtjsAPwx2-M>



I.O.B.I - Bene-Israel in the USA

Courtesy : Sam & Erna Daniels



Bene Israel Museum in Monmoth, USA **Presentation by John Perry** <https://youtu.be/3820ZKKhrMo> **(Comments by Nissim Moses)**

This is a very nice Pictorial Presentation very well presented by Mr. John Perry but the Problem with all our Displays in Museums is that they are nothing more than a display of artifacts through pictures rather than a display of our culture. In this virtual Tour I did not see a display of our Celebration of Festivals either at home or in the synagogue in three dimensions. The following are a few examples-

1. How we Observed Sabbath Eve.
2. Table setting for Simchath Torah.
3. Display of Passover Plates
4. A Display of The Various Malidah Plates -Minchat Brith Mila, Minchat, Shalom-Peace Offering, Minchat Hodayah-Thanksgiving offering, Minchat Tubeshvat.
5. A Seder Plate and Table Setting for Passover and the group making of the

Tubeshvat.

5. A Seder Plate and Table Setting for Passover and the group making of the unleavened bread for Passover in a Bene Israel Family Home, A Display a Display how it was hung from the roof in the middle of the roof during Passover week.
6. The Observation and performance and the Seder Plate arrangement for Tubeshvat in a Bene Israel Home.
7. The Observation of Yom Kippur
8. How a Bene Israel Sukkah was built never of Cloth but always of Palm leaves and Why. Till Today. Why the Sukkah was always in a synagogue & not in a private Home.
9. The arrangement of a Bene Israel Wedding and The various Ceremonies connected with it such as Mehndi night, Wedding Day, Hath Ukadna Ceremony and their significance.
- 10 The Process of lighting the Hanukkiah and the difference between the Bene Israel Custom of lighting as per the

Israel Custom of lighting as per the directive in the prayer chants and the Ashkenazi method which is not in conformance; but a result of availability of only bees wax and the unavailability. Alternative Vegetable oils to replace Olive oil; in Europe.

11. There is no mention of the Origin of our names and the real origin of its roots being in ancient Israel.

12. There is no mention of our genealogical roots at all.

Nissim Moses

Historian Indian Jewish Heritage & Bene Israel Genealogy Research

Finally we refer to much on Western Socio-Anthropologist who besides interviews with people know nothing about our real Bene Israel Culture

Reply from Mr. John Perry : Hi Leo,

We did it in our small way. It was a beginning. Now that Nissim Moses got in touch with me, I have introduced him to the executives of our Jewish Museum. Hopefully he will be able to provide with more material and information.

Our museum has added information since it is about half an hour drive from Lakewood, New Jersey, that has a very large Orthodox Jewish population as well as perhaps the biggest Yeshiva in the world.

There are scores of synagogues and a Jewish school in the neighboring towns which makes this museum an ideal place to exhibit our Bene Israeli culture and heritage.

John (Yohanan) Perry

IOBI Israel arranged a web seminar **“Ways to put yourself on the roads of success”**
on Jan 17, 2021 by **Mr. David Birwadkar.**



We have approached IOBI but nothing was sent of what they have been doing for last three months for the Bene-Israel community. As always it is more of a chat group. They have been planning to meet in Israel since before Corona but still it is not known why do they want to meet? What is the agenda to help Bene-Israel through this meeting? If it is just to socialize and have a picnic, and then no purpose is served. An international meeting should have set agenda pre discussed and pre-approved by members; an agenda that contributes towards the advancement of Bene-Israel community requirements as lined out by the BI leaders.



Indian Embassy in Israel

(Also see page 98)



The Indian Cultural Center of Indian Embassy had a Tu B'Shvat celebration on 27-28 Jan 2021.



Know India Program (KIP) – “Visit India Free”

Know India Program (KIP) of the Ministry of External Affairs is a three-week orientation programme for diaspora youth conducted with a view to promote awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields e.g. economic, industrial, education, science & technology, communication & information Technology, culture. KIP provide a unique forum for students & young professionals of Indian origin to visit India, share their views, expectations & experiences and to develop closer bonds with the contemporary India.

Guidelines for KIP are at <https://kip.gov.in/home/guidelines> (בקרר בהודו ללא עלות)

Australia Solomon Eurlkar



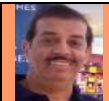
BENEDICTION. The robed priest blesses the groom. The groom wears a silk, striped and knotted "shawl", a prayer shawl worn by all Jewish males after an initiation ceremony at the age of 13, during any form of prayer. The bride combines the Indian sari with the Western wedding veil. Below: (captioning the marriage). The groom gives the bride a drink made from the juice of grapes when the wedding ritual is over.



Hope you all are doing OK as life is getting back to some sort of normality. Been spending time looking through some paperwork and documents that my mum and dad collected over the years. I was very fortunate as my mum helped me find a published article in "The Illustrated Weekly of India". It goes back over 50 years ago (October 19, 1969) and a few articles published regarding our Jewish communities in India. I have scanned a few pictures related to a Bene Israel wedding. There are a few more articles related to our Jewish lives and it was a very fascinating read.

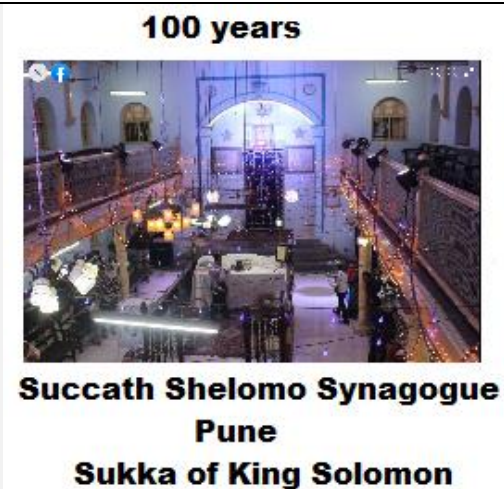
"Chag Pesach Samech"





100 years celebration

During the first quarter of 2021, many interesting events took place in Pune's Succath Shelomo Synagogue which was supposed to celebrate its Centenary year on a grand scale with guests planning to come to Pune from all over the world but due to the Corona Pandemic not abating even after one year the celebrations had to be postponed by another year till 2022. Succath Shelomo Synagogue located in the heart of Pune city in Rasta peth was constructed by the Bene Israeli community in the year 1921 with the help of donations from the Jewish community from all over world. Some members also donated pieces of land to the Synagogue. Two such properties were donated to the Synagogue. Both the properties are in close vicinity of the Synagogue. One property is used for residential purpose given on rent to our Jewish brethren and the other was used as a community hall named **Noar (נוער- youth)** **Memorial Hall** used for various functions like engagement ceremonies, community malida, birthday celebrations etc., of our community members.



Pune's growth and its impact on the Synagogue

Over a period of time Pune city which was a pensioner's paradise because of its slow moving pace of life became a throbbing metropolis with multi storied buildings and fast paced life with many malls, night clubs and many multiplexes cropping up all over the town. Simultaneously the cost of land in and around Pune increased by leaps and bounds. Land became scarce and whatever was available was fetching very high premium to the owners who had purchased at dirt cheap rates many years ago or were ancestral properties of their forefathers. This situation saw the increase of Land Mafia which started grabbing properties of innocent ordinary people with threats and coercion. Succath Shelomo Synagogue was finding it difficult to run the Noar Hall on their own hence decided to give on leave and license to one of our own community member who had migrated back from Israel. For a few years everything went well with the Synagogue getting rent on time which was required for the maintenance of the Synagogue.

Illegal Possession

Then things got ugly with this Jewish tenant from Israel becoming greedy and with the help of some committee members constructed a two floor building illegally on the Noar Hall premises without the required permissions from the Pune Municipal authorities or the knowledge of the members (Jamat) of the Pune Jews. Some committee members supported him in this illegal act. The Jamat then decided that it was time to act and bring down this illegal construction and get back the Hall vacated as the tenant stopped paying rent and refused to vacate. The members of Pune community decided to hold a Jamat meeting on the 31st January 2021. But these people did not allow the meeting to take place. Letters to the authorities to demolish the illegal structure were stonewalled by the authorities for obvious reasons. But the Jewish community of Pune were determined, and with the help of Solomon Sopher, trustee of David Sassoon Trusts who was kind enough to allow the meeting to take place at *OHEL DAVID SYNAGOGUE* premises (this is also located in Pune) and by the Grace of God the meeting was

held successfully and the erring committee members removed from their posts. Resolutions were also passed to demolish the illegal structure and get the Noar Hall vacated from the illegal possession of our own Jewish brethren from Israel. He is also hand in glove with various builders to construct on this Prime Property belonging to the Succath Succath Synagogue. For this endeavor the Jewish community of Pune has come together leaving their differences aside to fight the land mafia and get back possession of our prime property.

Cemetery

The second event concerns the Cemetery in Pune at Koregaon Park an earlier article in Shaniwar Teli dated January 2021 mentioned the deplorable state of Cemeteries in Western Maharashtra including the one in Pune. How efforts made by Lt. Gen. Russel Mordecai PVSM ,AVSM, who was emotionally attached to this place as he had lost his beloved son Ruel who was just 31 years old and Dr. Zimra Israel had a personal connect as their loved ones were buried at Pune Jewish cemetery. They took it upon themselves to restore the Cemetery in Pune to its past glory, in spite of innumerable obstacles and problems. They have done a **Marvelous** job and cleared the whole cemetery of all the undergrowth, grass and garbage strewn around the premises in less than three months. A few photographs here in this article show the tremendous amount of efforts undertaken by this team of four volunteers to make the resting place of our beloved ones spick & span.

Now that everything has been cleaned we see that a lot to achieve still like; laying of water pipe, constructing a shed where prayers for the departed souls can be said, bathroom, to make approach road, perimeter wall is broken at two places we need to put glass on wall recruit a contractor who will maintain the cemetery. Still a lot more work needs to be done people who have personal connect with this cemetery can get in touch with the volunteers and help in whatever way they can.

Pune Residents (Past & Present)

If your families have used this synagogue and cemetery, please help out.

The synagogue requests from families from Pune now living in Canada USA and Israel to please send this synagogue \$ 100.00 per year so that the synagogue and cemetery can be RESPECTFULLY maintained.

Please offer your help and speak to;

1. Lt. Gen. Mordecai : ruthrussel2000@yahoo.com
 2. Dr Zimra email : zimraisrael@gmail.com
 3. Yosef Nowgaonkar : yosef.nowgaonkar@gmail.com
 4. Dr. Reuben Daniel at email: reuben_daniel@rediffmail.com/drreubendaniel@gmail.com
- WhatsApp:+9197655-13838



News from Shaar HaShamaim (Gate of Heaven) Synagogue, Thane

If you were / are using Thane synagogue, please help them out:

Establish 1879)
Reg. No. D-1

שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם

G : (022) 2534 8117
Fax : (022) 2540 8117
Jewish Cemetery Thane : (022) 2542 8117
E-mail : gateofheaven@rediffmail.com

SHAAR HASHAMAIM (GATE OF HEAVEN) SYNAGOGUE

Please address all letters to the Hon. President / Secretary

"SYNAGOGUE CHOWK"
Opp. Beth Shalom Apartment,
Near Civil Hospital,
Jambetji Maneckji Road,
Tembhi, Thane - 400 601,
Maharashtra (India)

Please visit us at <http://www.shaarhashamaim.com>

ב"ה

Date : 22/12/2020

Respected Sister's, Brother's and Well wishers,

SHALOM ALEKHEM

This is Wishing you all **CHAAG CHANUKAH SAMEACH**, with a prayer that all should be happy and healthy at all times.

As you all are aware that our Synagogue Major Renovation work was completed in 2009 and since then we have been doing our best to maintain the Synagogue building in good condition with timely maintenance. As you see the Synagogue structure today, it definitely needs some major repair works and painting from the inside and outside to prolong the life of the structure.

We the Trustees and general body have decided to go ahead with the renovation work on the basis of long lasting support from our members and well wishers.

The following work need immediate attention.

- 1) Major renovation work of the terrace as there is leakage in the structure.
- 2) Scrap down painting of the interior and front of the Synagogue.
- 3) Beautifying the Arch where we have the Heakhal area.
- 4) Erecting roof over terrace to protect from the onslaught of heavy rains and further leakages.
- 5) Replacing the Public address system which has not been working properly during festivals.
- 6) Repairs and replace of Air-conditioners which are beyond repairs.
- 7) For safety inside the synagogue we need to improve quality of wiring to all electrical units.
- 8) Repairs and replacement of sheds at the Thane Jewish Cemetery.

Establish 1879)
Reg. No. D-1

שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם

G : (022) 2534 8117
Fax : (022) 2540 8117
Jewish Cemetery Thane : (022) 2542 8117
E-mail : gateofheaven@rediffmail.com

SHAAR HASHAMAIM (GATE OF HEAVEN) SYNAGOGUE

Please address all letters to the Hon. President / Secretary

"SYNAGOGUE CHOWK"
Opp. Beth Shalom Apartment,
Near Civil Hospital,
Jambetji Maneckji Road,
Tembhi, Thane - 400 601,
Maharashtra (India)

Please visit us at <http://www.shaarhashamaim.com>

ב"ה

9) Miscellaneous expenses

As we all are aware that this year we could not conduct the festivals* and thus could not generate donations from our esteemed members, it is important to ensure our Jewish identity is maintained as has been for well over 141 years.

We humbly request and appeal to each one of you to kindly donate for the above cause of the Synagogue and the Cemetery. All donations above INR. 10,000 will have their names displayed suitably in the stairways of our Synagogue and walls of Cemetery hall respectively.

Kindly make your donations payable to:

Shaar Hashamaim (Gate of Heaven) Synagogue.
Saving A/c no. 006810100008178,
Bank Of India, Panch Pakhadi,
Thane (West) - 400602
IFSC code: BKID00000068

Thanking you and God Bless.

Hon. Secretary

President

Treasurer

PRESIDENT
SHAAR HASHAMAIM
GATE OF HEAVEN SYNAGOGUE
THANE



News From Thane

<http://shaarhashamaim.com/>
Mr. Samuel Elijah Daniel (Bamnolkar)



Mr. Samuel Daniel informed us that the community activities are still restricted in Thane.

Ashdod

Independence day celebration
at HOUSE, 35 HaAvoda Street,
Ashdod 15.4.2021 20:30



https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=4141673762588006&id=154944954594260

Hadassah Hospital Jerusalem writes:

Congratulations outstanding Deputy Dr. Nofit Samuel as she is the first doctor in the history of State of Israel in the Paratrooper Division

10th February, 2021

Dear Community members,

A unique sculpted memorial is being built in Tsfat, Israel, on Jerusalem Street adjacent to the Municipality building. This memorial will hold names of righteous Jews from all over the world.

We have been approached to provide names of Indian Jews who have played an important part in saving lives of Jewish brethren, sometimes, at the risk of their own lives. The memorial has limited space so some names will be placed in the golden book instead.

Please send us information including names, place of incident and details of how they helped in saving lives of other people. Please send the information to ijhercenter@gmail.com

Deadline for sending the information is March 30th, 2021.

The Indian Jewish Heritage Team

IJHC have activities on Zoom but as we cover only items related to Bene-Israel Jews, there are few activities at IJHC for Bene-Israel community. Below see tow one of them.



The complete list of our brave Bene-Israel soldiers who fought in India and in Israel wars can be found in the articles and books written by Mr. Nissim Moses, Historian expert on Bene-Israel Community. These are only some of them there IJHC has picked. Please do not be confuse as our fighters are some alive, some of them.

The conflict between IJHC and Bene-Israel Community



[Nevatim \(jewishvirtuallibrary.org\)](http://jewishvirtuallibrary.org)



Nevatim was established at a south Israel location in 1954 by Cochin Jews, who had immigrated from Cochin, India. Nevatim (Hebrew: נִבְטִיִּים) is a moshav in southern Israel. Located in the northern Negev desert around 8 km (5 mi) south-east of Beersheba, it falls under the jurisdiction of Bnei Shimon Regional Council. In 2019 it had a population of 996. No Bene-Israel's live there.

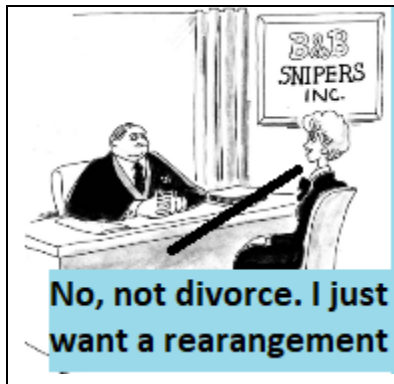
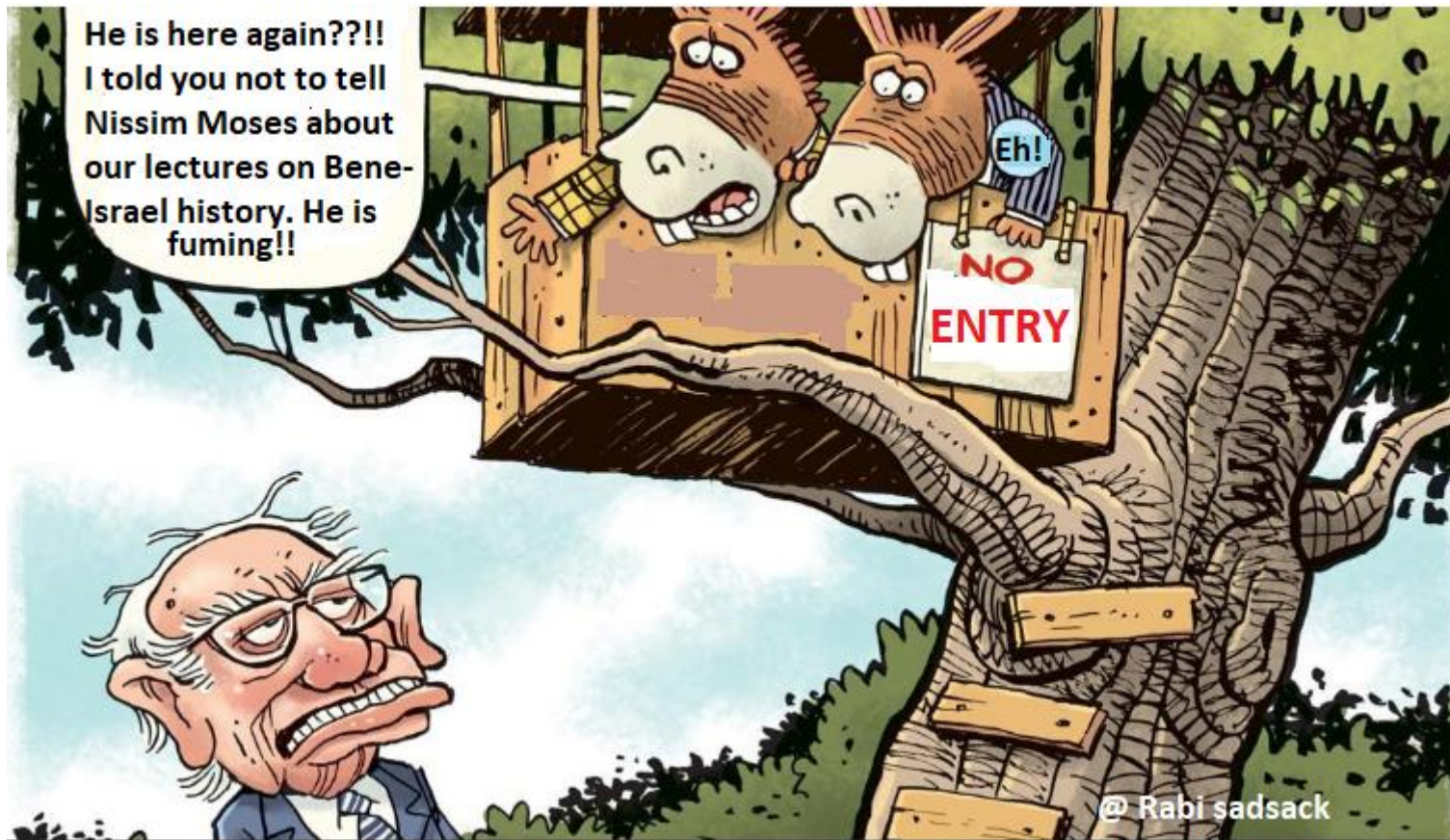
The nearest settlements are the Bedouin towns of Tel as-Sabi to the north and Shaqib al-Salam to the south. At a greater distance to the northeast lies Nevatim Israeli Air Force Base, named after the moshav. ***IJHC's effort is in building an Indian Heritage Center in the current Cochini kibbutz in Nevatim.***

As per our discussion with various leaders of Bene-Israel community **they strictly do not support IJHC** as they feel this whole effort will **only benefit the Cochini Moshav**. All the three communities (Bene-Israel, Bagdadi and Manipali jews) **do not live in Nevatim** and **therefore it will only benefit** the Cochini Kibbutz and the Cochini community living there.

The ideal place for a BI community Museum and community center should include place where Bene-Israel's can have Malida and other ceremonies like Birth, Henna Ceremonies, Bar/Bat Mitzva and Community get to gathers. No Bene-Israel will travel to Nevatim to do all this. The ideal place for it would be in Lod or Ramle. An excellent example is "**Amuta Sitar**" opened by Bene-Israel community in Eilat where BI people come to play carom, chess, learn Hebrew, children classes. The place is used for BI community functions.

IJHC expects the tourists can be attracted to Nevatim to a Goa like "**spice garden**", but once again, only the Cochini will have to manage it as it is their Moshav land and they will take benefit of it. Further IJHC is not registered independently but uses the registration of the Cochini Moshav. So even more it is clear that this whole effort will only benefit the Cochini community. Our donations go to the Moshav and not to IJHC.

Our community leaders think the Cochini Moshav management is ***making a fool our young*** Bene-Israel youth who are being used to promote this project without thinking logically. The thoughts of the Bene-Israel community is to have their own community Museum and community center and that the youths of Bene-Israel should work on this project rather than IJHC which does not benefit the Bene-Israel.



Dear Friends and Colleagues it gives me great pleasure in bringing to your attention the progress in the career of a new rising professional and a star among our Women folk our community. A person who has already begun distinguishing her self as a competent and professional capable Obstetrician and Gynecologist.

Due to the current situation all over the world of the Corona virus there has been created a shortage of attendant on duty doctors at hospitals all over the world. During this time many a hospital has had to rely upon the dedicated service of on duty interns for immediately responding to hospital patients. One such case in a Maternity ward in Ahmedabad India Resulted in Dr. Amita daughter of Mrs. Sarith and Mr. Austin-Ariel Haeems (Bamnolkar) successfully delivering her first Baby independently.

We congratulate her and wish her many more successful deliveries in the Future.

Pictures Posted on Facebook Article



Picture-1

The Shy Little Lady Amita Austin Haeems



Picture-2

Dr. Amita Austin Haeems in her consulting room at the Hospital



Picture-3

Dr. Amita Austin Haeems at the Entrance to the Hospital



Picture-4

Dr. Amita Austin Haeems with her First independently



Picture-5

Delivered Baby-“Siman Tov Ve Mazal Tov ve Mazal Tov”

Additional News from Pune (see also page 68)

Dear community members you will be happy to see below the notice issued by Pune Municipality for demolition of illegal construction done by Mr. Oren Penkar at Noar Hall which is the property of Sukkoth Shelomo Synagogue.

Background:

- *Noar hall was given on Leave & License(rent) to Mr. Oren Penkar from 1st June 2011 for 33 Months.*
- *Rent was delayed many a times and during this period Mr. Oren Penkar constructed illegal building behind Noar hall and one at first floor of Noar hall.*
- *After the end of the term he was told to leave which he did not do.*
- *The general body of the synagogue appointed community members comprising Dr. Nathan Ashton, Dr Irene Judah, Dr. Ruben Daniel Penkar, Dr. Zimra Israel, Lt. Gen (Retd.) Russell Mordecai, Mr. Herzel Simon for freeing up of Noar hall from illegal procession.*
- *A letter was written to PMC by Sukkoth Shelomo Synagogue for bringing down the illegal structure.*
- *Many community members and the secretary did lot of correspondence in the matter for bringing illegal structure down.*
- *We thank deputy chief minister Mr. Ajit Pawar for fast action in the matter, also Chief Minister Mr. Uddhav Thakre for fast action.*
- *I would like to thank the Noar hall action committee for taking efforts on this. I would also thank Him. Secretary Mr. Yosef Nowgaonkar for all the running around.*
- *We hope and pray that illegal structure will be brought down by PMC.*
- *After the leave & liscence term is over the hall is given to s footwear shop by Mr. Oren Penkar which is illegal.*
- *How the illegal building got water and electricity connection is also a point of investigation for police to see if this is organized crime.*
- *Mr Oren Penkar runs paying guest business in the illegal building.*
- *Sukkoth Shelomo has already written letters to PMC and Police*
- *This is one of the best example of community members coming together to save community property.*
- *Herzel Simon of Sukkoth Shelomo Synagogue (This message was sent on WhatsApp during Jan 2021)*

Pune's Bene Israel Community Gears Up To Celebrate 100 Years



Sorry situation for the Bene-Israel Panvel Cemetery

Beth El Synagogue in Panvel being one of the most popular synagogue's for Bene-Israel community, it is excellent cared for under Secretary Moses Jacob Korlekar . On the other hand the BI cemetery in Panvel is in the most sorry situation as seen in some pictures below by **Maxim Moses Shapurkar**.



ज्युईश सिमेटरी ट्रस्ट (पनवेल)
JEWISH CEMETERY TRUST (PANVEL)

(Trust Regd. No. : D-21 - Raigad) RAIGAD.

FINAL PLOT NO. 217, NEAR ISRAELY TALAV, BEHIND HOTEL PANCHRATNA, PANVEL
DIST. RAIGAD (MAHARASHTRA), PIN - 410 206. PHONE : 022 - 27458126.

OFFICE :- BETH EL SYNAGOGUE, 909, M. G. ROAD, TAPAL NAKA, PANVEL - 410206.

Date : 22/03/2021.

No. :



बेने इसराएल बांधव
भारत - इसराएल - अमेरिका - इंग्लंड - ऑस्ट्रेलिया
तुमच्या माहिती करिता

आपल्या बेने इसराएल समाजाचे पनवेल मध्ये "ज्युईश सिमेटरी ट्रस्ट" यानांचे दफन भूमी आहे.

दफन भूमीच्या अगदी जवळ "इसराएली तलाव" यानांचे मोठे लेक आहे. या तलावाजवळील पाणी आपल्या कबरस्थानात येत असल्यामुळे, सखल भागात भरणी (Filling) करण्याबाबत पनवेल म्युनिसिपल ऑफिसरांना कळविले होते. त्यानुसार सखल भागांमध्ये भरणी करण्याचे काम सुरु आहे. एक दोन दिवसात भरणी झाल्यावर रोड रोलर आणि JCB मशीनद्वारे लेकलींगचे काम होणार आहे.

लेकलींग म्हणजे सपाटीकरणाचे काम पूर्ण झाल्यावर आपली ज्युईश सिमेटरी सुरु होईल आणि नयत कार्य करता येईल.

या भरणीच्या कामामुळे कोठल्याही जुन्याकबरीला नुकसान होणार नाही याची पाहणी आणि काळजी ज्युईश सिमेटरी ट्रस्ट पनवेलचे कार्यकारिणी मंडळ सदस्य घेत आहेत.

भरणीचे आणि लेकलींगचे काम पूर्ण झाल्यावर आपल्या गुपवर फोटो आणि व्हिडीयो सादर केले जाईल.

कॉमन हाशकाबा दिल्यानंतर सदर कबरस्थान कार्यासाठी सुरु होईल असे आश्वासन ज्युईश सिमेटरी ट्रस्टचे कार्यकारिणी मंडळ आपणा सर्वांना देत आहेत.

सर्व ज्युईश बांधवांना विनंती करण्यात येते कि सदर कामात सहकार्य करावे.

आज मिती पर्यंत ज्युईश सिमेटरी ट्रस्ट पनवेलच्या नांचे देणज्या घेतलेल्या नाहीत आणि या पुढेही देणज्या घेणार नाही असे कार्यकारिणी मंडळ जाहिर करीत आहे.

सदस्यांची लिस्ट आपल्या सर्वांच्या माहितीसाठी पाठवित आहे.

शालोम,



11/4/21
22/3/21

सदस्यांची लिस्ट आपल्या सर्वांच्या माहितीसाठी पाठवित आहे.
शालोम,



(54.5.जे.के.व.कार्ड)
JEWISH CEMETERY TRUST PANVEL
Reg. No. D-21-Raigad
Office : Beth El Synagogue
909, M.G. Road, Tapal Naka,
Panvel - 410206, 022-27458126
ज्युईश सिमेटरी ट्रस्ट पनवेल
सेक्रेटरी / ट्रस्टी
22/3/21

Translation (online) by Google: (May not be 100% accurate)

Response from the synagogue committee in Panval.

Brothers of the Community of The Bene-Israel in India - Israel - USA - England - Australia -Canada. For Your Information.

The Community of the Bene-Israel has a burial place in Panvel called the Jewish Cemetery Trust. There is a large lake called "Lake Israel" right next to the burial grounds. When the water from this lake reached the cemetery, Panval city inspectors were notified of the flooding of the low-lying areas. Accordingly, filler work is carried out in the lower areas. Leveling will be done by road roll and ICB machine after filling of a few days. Leveling means that once the water level work is done, Jewish cemetery repair will begin and the work will be done.

Members of the Executive Committee of the Panve Jewish Cemetery are concerned that no damage will be caused to an old tomb due to these filling works.

Photos and videos will be submitted to your after the completion of the filling and alignment work.

The Executive Committee of the Jewish Cemetery Trust assures us that the cemetery will operate after the common layer. All Jewish brothers are asked to cooperate in this work.

To date, the Jewish Cemetery Trust **has not received** any donations in the name of Pavel Cemetery and **will continue not to receive** donations for this purpose.

תגובה של ועד בית הכנסת בפנואל.

ניסיתי לתרגם לעברית

האחים של קהילת בני ישראל בהודו - ישראל - ארה"ב - אנגליה - אוסטרליה לידיעתכם,

לקהילת בני ישראל יש מקום קבורה בפנואל בשם "נאמנות בית הקברות היהודי". ישנו אגם גדול שנקרא "אגם ישראל" ממשי ליד שטח הקבורה. כשהמים מהאגם הזה היגיעו לבית הקברות, הודיעו לפקחי העירייה של פאנבל על הצפת האזורים הנמוכים. בהתאם לכך, עבודות מילוי מתבצעות באזורים הנמוכים. פילוס ייעשה על ידי גליל הכביש ומכונת ICB לאחר מילוי של כמה ימים. פילוס פירוש שברגע שעבודת המפלט תסתיים, בית הקברות היהודי שלך יתחיל והעבודה תיעשה.

חברי הוועד המנהל של בית הקברות היהודי נאמנות פנואל דואגים שלא ייגרם נזק לקבר ישן עקב עבודות מילוי אלה.

תמונות וסרטונים יוגשו לסודכם לאחר סיום עבודות המילוי והיישור.

הוועד המנהל של נאמנות בית העלמין היהודי מבטיח לנו כי בית העלמין יפעל לאחר השכבה המשותפת. כל האחים היהודים מתבקשים לשתף פעולה בעבודה זו.

נכון להיום, נאמנות בית העלמין היהודי לא קיבלה תרומות על שם פאנבל ותמשיך לקבל תרומות.

To : The Jewish Cemetery Trust (Panvel)

The water and leveling issue is not what is of concern to the concern Bene-Israel who sent the pictures.

What is of concern the graves of our ancestors are made in to roads, gutters, roads and residents homes are built on graves of our ancestors. The concern Bene-Israel thinks the Panvel Synagogue gets huge donations from visitors all around the world but still the graves of our ancestors are walked over and insulted (see pictures above).

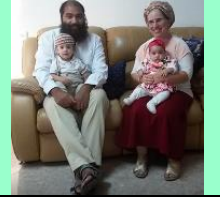
What had the committee planned to do about it?
ShaniwarTeli e-newsletter (shaniwarteli@gmail.com)



Magen Hassidim Synagogue 23.3. 2021 Celebrated their 90th year of existence



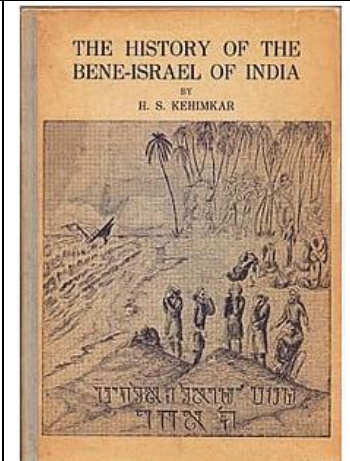
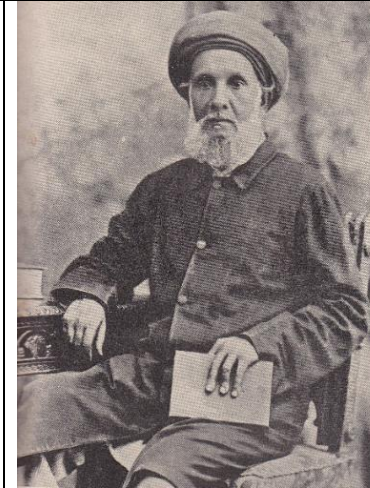
(ABMEH) Association for Bene-Israel Marathi & English literature preservation in Hebrew Avihay Bastekar & family



Avihay Bastekar born in Israel to Bene-Israel parents and married to a girl born off parents from USA, living beyond green line near Hebron with four children ages 5,4, 3, and 1 is an ideal example of a true Zionist dream coming true!

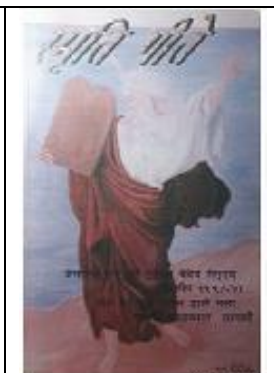
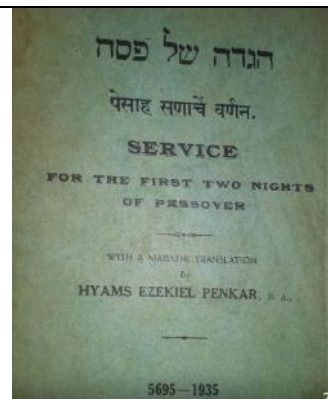
Of all the Bene-Israel children we have met in Israel, Avihay's concern for preserving our Marathi & English written history and heritage is very impressive. Though he himself cannot speak or read Hebrew, he has collected hundreds of Marathi & English book that include Bene-Israel prayers, songs, kirtan songs, festivals, food and culture.

1. The first thing Avihay does is scan these books and store them in digital form.
2. But the most important thing is that Israeli born children do not understand Marathi and therefore it is most important to translate these books in to Hebrew.
3. As first step Avihay wants to translate the Bible of Bene-Israel the H.S. Kehimkar's book in to Hebrew to be saved digitally (the English version is already scanned and preserved).
4. Please help Avihay with \$ 12.00 / 40 NIS charges for translating per page.



Please help Avihay and family finish this important project by sending your donation of \$ 12 per page / 40 NIS per page to Bank Hapolim (52) Branch (186) Account (789380) or paypal.me / TraditionalBneiIsrael / send email or call 054-3046072

Some of the many books collected scanned and preserved by Bastekar family



אתם מוזמנים להיות שותפים בטוב הזה בתרומות, כדי לקדם את הפרוייקט הזה . בנק פועלי אגודת ישראל בנק 52 סניף אשדוד 186 מס חשבון 789380 אגודת אליהו הנביא וינון. לציין עבור פרוייקט תיעוד יהדות הודו בני ישראל. אביחי בסטקר.	שלום ליוצאי הודו בומביי והסביבה. בימים אלו אנחנו עובדים על פרוייקט תרגום הספר "ההיסטוריה של בני ישראל מהודו" של חיים שמואל קהימקר. חשיבות הספר גדולה משום שרוב המחקר על יהדות הודו בני ישראל מגיע מהספר הזה. היסטוריה מנהגים תווים ושירה
אפשרי גם בפייפל: paypal.me/TraditionalBnIsrael או ביט 0543046072 Shaniwarteli.hebrew@gmail.com bestekeer@gmail.com לשליחת חומרים וספרים אביחי בסטקר קרית ארבע מיקוד 9010000 ת"ד 2044	הספר בהתחלה פורסם והודפס ב1897 במראטי עוד בחייו של חיים שמואל קהימקר . ובשנת 1937 הודפס ותורגם לאנגלית מהדורת דייג תל אביב. ובפרט משום שהוא מסתמך על מחקרים של 200 שנה לפניו. אנחנו רוצים בפעם הראשונה לתרגם לשפה העברית. כדי שיהיה נגיש לצעירי הדור וסטודנטים. אתם מוזמנים להיות שותפים בטוב הזה בתרומות, כדי לקדם את הפרוייקט הזה . בנק פועלי אגודת ישראל בנק 52 סניף אשדוד 186 מס חשבון 789380 אגודת אליהו הנביא וינון. לציין עבור פרוייקט תיעוד יהדות הודו בני ישראל. אביחי בסטקר.
Avihay's collection of Bene-Israel Marathi songs. Follow the link. https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLY-9VGdd9t10iSAgm7Hqeu6uoYgsosVbN	אפשרי גם בפייפל: paypal.me/TraditionalBnIsrael או ביט 0543046072 לשליחת חומרים וספרים אביחי בסטקר קרית ארבע מיקוד 9010000 ת"ד 2044
Avihay Bastekar: Bank Hapolim No. 52, Branch 186, Account No. 789380 בנק פועלי אגודת ישראל בנק 52 סניף אשדוד 186 מס חשבון 789380 אגודת אליהו הנביא וינון. IBAN: IL350521860000007893804438290 Or by paypal: paypal.me/TraditionalBnIsrael	To send materials address: To : Avihay Bastekar 137/3,Harav Zvi Yehuda kook street, Mail box 2044, Kiryat Arba 9010000, Israel. bastekeer@gmail.com

Gabriel Project Mumbai **Emergency Nutrition for Starving Families!!**

URGENT APPEAL for Donation of only \$70/- (On-line Donations)

Follow the link: [Urgent campaign to prevent the spread of Corona virus in the slums \(rootfunding.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_jTTke9Es)



Urgent campaign to prevent the spread of Corona virus in the slums

Jacob Sztokman

jacob@gabrielprojectmumbai.org

DEATH SENTENCE!! (see this video)



'GPM' HELPS INDIANS IN TIMES OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_jTTke9Es



New Zealand, Wellington

'Yoel Samson (Killekar)'



This is the first report I'm doing from this beautiful little capital of New Zealand. In Wellington we are the only Beni-Israel family so are members of the Orthodox Synagogue Beth-El Synagogue. We are pretty active in the community and our daughter is at present sitting on the Religious Committee of the Synagogue. Our 2 boys lead a few of the services including the holidays. The older son does the Torah reading for the first to Aliyot for every new book, besides the full Torah reading for Shabbat Bereshit. The younger son is the Rosh Beni Akiva for Wellington. In 2019 he represented New Zealand at the Torah Quiz in Yerushalim.

We have heard that there are Beni-Israelis living in other parts of New Zealand and would love them to get in touch with us. They could make initial contact with us through the Beth-El Synagogue in Wellington or the Wellington Rabbi. Would love to hear from you and form a link in this beautiful country. More about the country and the Jewish life here in New Zealand next time. Shalom



Beth-El Synagogue

Canada
Abraham Samson Mab



No BI activity as a community as yet

IJF – Indian Jewish Federation
Advocate David Talegaonkar



No activity during Corona

Eilat
Moshe Digodkar



"Sha'are Shalom"

News Received on 15.3.21

There is get together for Pessach (before Pessach) and then after Pessach for Mimuna. The other Synagogue Shaare Shalom has started the prayer for Friday and Saturdays. There are two Bene Israel Synagogues; one is at Sitar Amuta and second is Shaare Shalom where I go and my family goes. Sitar Amuta has opened recently few years. It's Bene Israel community hall and also next to it they recently made small Synagogue about maximum 25 to 30 people can sit .Men and Women together. Sitar is Amuta for Bene Israel and Aarba Emahot is the Synagogue next the hall. It's big ground floor structure with big hall and few rooms.



Sha'are Rahamim Prayer Hall

From Sunday to Thursday few people come to play Carrom board or chess or table tennis. And few children come to learn Hebrew from Professor Isaac Shapurkar. But from last year because of coronavirus everything was stopped. Now they will start after Pessach.

ORT (Organization for Rehabilitation through Training)

Johnny Jhiradkar



This time we are reporting the background of ORT- India and Ort India and its work with **Bene-Menashe** community (Bene Menashe is the name given to Judaizing groups from northeast India mainly in the two Indian states of Mizoram and Manipur).

World ORT is the largest Jewish non-governmental education and training organization in the world. The story of ORT is one of the most remarkable in modern Jewish life, for it was an organization born of necessity that endured and flourished because of its ability to adapt to change. The history of ORT began officially in **1880** and continues to grow in strength into the present day.

ORT India opened its doors in **1960**. Through International Cooperation programmer, ORT supports non-sectarian economic and social development in different parts of the world, with vocational training and the provision of technical assistance.

Ort India, Mumbai

City	Mumbai , Maharashtra , India
Locality	Worli Hill Road
Established	1960
Affiliated to	University of Mumbai, Mumbai
Address	68, Worli Hill Road, Worli, Mumbai - 400 018.
Phone	91-22-24962350, 24968423
Website	Visit Website

The purpose of ORT India Educational Scholarship is to provide encouragement to students to pursue education in primary, secondary, middle, higher secondary school and graduation, post-graduation and professional courses. During Covid-19 ORT India kept their good work on by encouraging and providing scholarship for online education.

ORT India is involved and connected with Bene Menashe community from last 40+ years. During last 18 years ORT have opened its Computer Education Unit in Churchandpur first and then during 2008 in Imphal-Manipur. This unit is to serve Bene Menashe community which is one of the lost tribes of Jews. So far more than 1500 Bene- Menashe students have benefited by way of free computer education with the help from ORT. These activities are also being carried out apart from scholarships for school, college, professional and online Education and this year the cost of laptops will also be compensated for students requiring computers for their studies.

JP's Jewish Minority Leader in Maharashtra

Sassoon Phansapurkar



Adopt a Family:

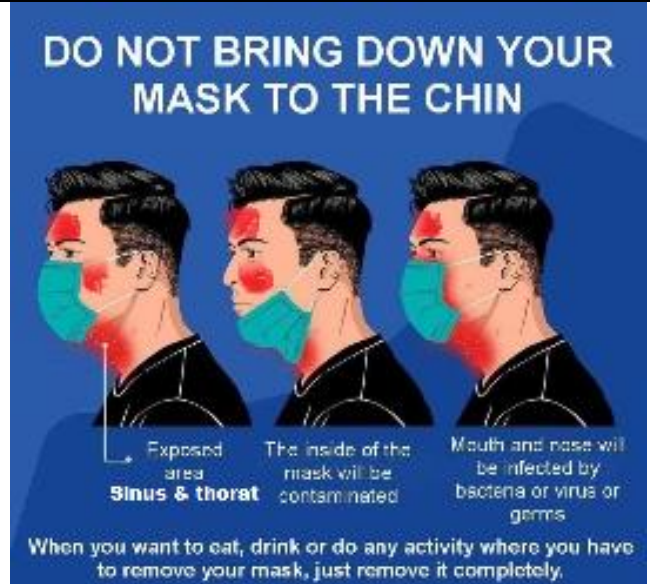
This month six months of this project are over. Some helped families in India for 4 months and some 6. This project was initiated by the thoughts of Mr. Phanspurkar. Hundreds of families were helped in Mumbai Pune and Ahmadabad. We thank all those who helped BJP and Shaniwar Teli make this project successful.

Corona:

We have been helping Bene-Israel people get admissions in to packed hospitals. Unfortunately during corona we are also helping getting Bene-Israel dead bodies back for the families for giving them respectable burial.

As you know, Mumbai is crushing under the COVID Crisis. There is lack of ambulances, leading to long arrival times (up to 12 hours!) and thousands of preventable deaths every day. To help with this situation, students and alumni of IIT Bombay have started an initiative called **HelpNow**.

HelpNow provides sanitized and well-equipped ambulances with ventilators, within 15-20 minutes across Mumbai. Our 24x7 network is available to patients, healthcare workers, hospitals, testing labs and Government bodies through the **helpline 88 99 88 99 52**.



Wawakar: You keep saying you will make a Taj Mahal in the memory of your wife. But where is it? So many years have passed.

Virulkar: That is correct Wawadkar but my problem is that she just does not die!!

Mrs. Pingle (on phone to her husband) Dear come home early today. I and children and you will all have Muglia biryani today for dinner

Mr. Pingle reached home before time, his mouth watering.

He entered home when his wife shouted "OK children Dad is here!! He is taking us to the Kosher Biryani House today!! Get ready!!

News from Beth El Synagogue, Panvel

Mr. Moses Jacob Korlekar (Secretary of the Synagogue)



On 19th March 2021 there was a mock police drill around Beth El Synagogue, Panvel, Raigad. All synagogues receive police protection these days. Especially with the bomb threat near Embassy of Israel, New Delhi this activity has intensified.

पुढारी

पनवेल टपालनाका परिसरात अतिरेकी; मॉकड्रिलने चुकविला काळजाचा ठोका

नवीन पनवेल : पुढारी वृत्तसेवा

पनवेल परिसरातील टपाल नाका येथील एका प्रार्थना स्थळात दोन अतिरेकी घुसले ही बातमी गुरुवारी ता. १८ रोजी सायंकाळी वाऱ्यासारखी पनवेल आणि परिसरात पसरली. शिग्र कृती दल, क्यू आर.टी. दहशतवादि पथक, तसेच स्थानिक पोलीस ठाण्यातील अधिकाऱ्यांची टीम पोलीस व्हॅन आणि इतर वाहने एकापाठोपाठ सायरनचा आवाज करीत टपाल नाका परिसरात दाखल झाले. नागरिकांच्या काळजाचा ठोकाच चुकला. पोलीस आणि इतर यंत्रणांची धावपळ सुरू झाल्याने परिसरात भीतीचे वातावरण होते. अतिरेकी घुसल्यावर व आपत्कालीन परिस्थिती कशी



हाताळायची यासाठीचे हे मॉकड्रिल असल्याचे कळल्यानंतर नागरिकांनी सुटकेचा निश्वास सोडला.

पनवेल तालुक्यातील टपालनाका येथे नागरिकांची वर्दळ असताना नवी मुंबई पोलीस

आयुक्तालय त्याचबरोबर पनवेल शहर पोलीस ठाण्यातील फोन खणखणतो. येथील एका प्रार्थना स्थळात दोन अतिरेकी घुसले असून या अतिरेकींनी प्रार्थनास्थळात असलेल्या बंदी केली असल्याची माहिती अशी खबर मिळाल्याने पोलीस यंत्रणेची धावपळ सुरू होते. अशी माहिती नवी मुंबई पोलीसाला नियंत्रण कक्षाला देण्यात आली. त्यानंतर परिमंडळ पोलीस उपायुक्त, सहाय्यक पोलीस आयुक्त, वरिष्ठ पोलीस निरीक्षक यांना यांना याबाबत कळविण्यात आले. यावेळी पोलीस आयुक्त, सहपोलीस आयुक्त, पोलीस उपायुक्त अशोक दुधे यांच्या आदेशानुसार तात्काळ घटनास्थळी शिग्र कृती दल, क्यू आर.

टी, दहशतवादी पथक, तसेच स्थानिक पोलीस ठाण्यातील अधिकाऱ्यांची टीम पोलीस व्हॅन आणि इतर वाहने एकापाठोपाठ सायरनचा आवाज करीत टपाल नाका परिसरातील घडलेल्या घटनास्थळी दाखल झाले. शीघ्र कृती दल, दंगल नियंत्रण पथक, पनवेल फायर ब्रिगेड, ॲम्ब्युलन्स पोलीस पथकासह अवघ्या पंधरा मिनिटांमध्ये घटनास्थळी पोहोचल्या. अचानक एवढ्या मोठ्या प्रमाणात पोलीस परिसरात आल्याने येथील रहिवाशांमध्ये घबराट पसरली. त्यानंतर काही तासातच हे अतिरेकी नसून मॉकड्रिल असल्याचे लक्षात येताच नागरिकांनी सुटकेचा निश्वास सोडला.

Raigad Edition
Mar 19, 2021 Page No. 3
newspaper.pudhari.co.in





पनवेल : टपाल नाका येथील ज्यू प्रार्थनागृह परिसरात मॉकड्रिलचे आयोजन करण्यात आले होते.

दहशतवादविरोधी पथकाचे मॉकड्रिल पनवेलमध्ये आपत्कालीन परिस्थिती नियंत्रणाचे प्रात्यक्षिक

पनवेल, ता. १८ (प्रतिनिधी) : टपाल नाका परिसरात असलेल्या ज्यू समाजाच्या 'बेथ एल' या प्रार्थनागृहात दोन अतिरेकी घुसले असून त्यांनी काही नागरिकांना बंदी बनवल्याची माहिती पोलिस नियंत्रण कक्षात गुरुवारी सकाळी १० च्या सुमारास मिळाली. घटनेचे गांभीर्य ओळखून क्यू आर टी, एटीएस, बीडीएस तसेच स्थानिक पोलिस ठाण्यातील

अधिकाऱ्यांचे पथक डॉग स्कॉडसहित घटनास्थळी दाखल झाले. पथकातील जवानांनी दोघा अतिरेक्यांना ताब्यात घेत ओलीस ठेवलेल्या नागरिकांची सुटका करताच उपस्थितांनी सुटकेचा निश्वास सोडला.

आपत्कालीन स्थितीत दहशतवाद्यांनी हल्ला केल्यास परिस्थिती कशी नियंत्रणात आणायची, याची रंगीत तालीम असल्याचे लक्षात

येताच उपस्थितांच्या चेहऱ्यावरील उत्सुकता कमी झाली. हल्ला केल्यास परिस्थितीवर कसे नियंत्रण मिळवायचे, यासाठी पोलिस, दहशतवाद विरोधी पथकातील विशेष पथकांमार्फत विशेष मॉकड्रिलचे आयोजन करण्यात आले होते. अचानक घडलेल्या या तालमीबाबत स्थानिकांना पूर्व कल्पना नसल्याने काही काळ वातावरण तणावपूर्ण बनले होते.

सकाळ १९ मार्च २१



Join Bene-Israel Orchestra that plans to travel around the world



Join Bene-Israel Kirtan Group

Elijah Jacob (ex-Director of AJDC) is planning to put together a Bene-Israel Kirtan Group that will travel in India and abroad where Bene-Israel communities live today to give recitals and live performances.

Elijah is looking for volunteers who would like to be a part of this group :

Singers – Ladies & Gentlemen fluent in Marathi

Instrument players – Tabla, Harmonium, Casio Synthesizer

Payments will be made to each member of the team after every program once the final cost/price will be settled with the organizers that will invite the Kirtan Group in different countries. Necessary to attend practice regularly once a week or more.

Interested participants may please contact Elijah at email : elijahjacob@gmail.com



(See related article below)

This article was guided by Mr. Elijah Jacob.

THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

WATCH A TRADITIONAL PURIM 'KIRTAN' STRAIGHT FROM MUMBAI

COVID 19 restrictions prevent holiday synagogue performance in Mumbai, but members of India's largest Jewish community Bene Israel are still passing on the Hindu inspired art form

By RENEE GERTZLAND | 26 January 2021, 5:55 am | 10 min

Jewish Indian women elders spearhead revival of Purim musical tradition

See the link below:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/jewish-indian-women-elders-spearhead-revival-of-purim-musical-tradition/>





Oren Benjamin

Aliyah to Israel

(The printed part of this message is printed as received. No changes are made)

*Jewish Agency Official representatives Shirley Palkar & Oren Benjamin
via WhatsApp +972-54-760-9799.*



Shirley Palkar

Though there are still no flights, Oren & Shirley claim they are working on several Aliya files and interviews on zoom. They claim besides the Jewish Agency files, they also work on many other social work in and outside the community. However they do not wish to do publicity of their social work. They wish Passover greeting to all the readers.

AJDC Mumbai EPJCC Virtual Events this year



Session on significance of Tu B'Shevat, 25th Jan

Tu B'Shevat Malida Seder, 27th Jan

Session on significance of Tu B'Shevat, 25th Jan

Tu B'Shevat Malida Seder, 27th Jan

Advance Hebrew Class (every Sunday)

Beginners Hebrew class (every Monday)

Kabballah Class (every Tuesday)

Weekly Torah portion Class (every Thursday)

Womens' Orot Ha Torah session every Rosh Chodesh

Raigad Jewish Association

Advocate Herzl Levy Bhonkar (President, RJA)



Raigad Kurul Bene-Israel cemetery compound wall is the next project RJA will be taking up. The gate has already been repaired.

RJA has already finished the project of placing the candle box at Elijah Taap and the rebuilding of Ambepur synagogues is in progress (see step by step picture below).

Once the Ambepur project will be over, the wall of Kurul cemetery project will start.



Ambepur Sanayogue:

If you and / or your ancestors have used services of this synagogue, please send RJA donations towards complete the outer & internals of the synagogue.

Kurul Cemetery:

If your family and ancestors are buried here, please send your donations to RJA to help build this wall.

Please write to shaniwarteli@gmail.com to guide you whom to talk to send your donations.



Shaar e Shalom synagogue, Borli

Curtesy Raigad Jewish Association - Ambepur Synagogue Jan 2021



Ambepur (continued):



Also see page 98

Tehillim should be recited for which Occasions and Events

[Indian Judaica](#)



Shaniwar Teli eNewsletter for Bene-Israel Community presents

When to read what Psalm?

Rabbi Samuel Ben-Shalom Divekar guides us Print and Keep these pages with you.

Following is a list of Psalms which are recited on special occasions

Occasions and Events	Psalm
To find a mate (Shiduch)	32, 38, 70, 71, 72, 82, 121, 124
On the day of a wedding	19
For healthy childbirth	4, 5, 8, 20, 35, 57, 93, 108, 142
Upon the birth of a child	20, 139
On the day of a circumcision	12
For recovery from illness	6, 13, 20, 22, 23, 30, 32, 38, 41, 51, 86, 88, 91, 102, 103, 121, 130, 142, 143
For livelihood	23, 34, 36, 62, 65, 67, 85, 104, 121, 136, 144, 145
For peace	46
For success	112
For the Jewish People	43, 79, 80, 83
For thanksgiving	9, 21, 57, 95, 100, 116, 138
For Divine guidance	139
For repentance	51, 90
For help in troublesome times	20, 38, 85, 86, 102, 130, 142
Prayer recited when traveling	91
Psalm of thanksgiving for a miracle	18
Psalm of thanksgiving upon being rescued	124
In a house of mourning	49

Psalm**Occasions and Events**

1. For miscarriages problems
2. Getting stuck in a storm at sea
3. From relief pain in the head and shoulder
4. Beneficial for achieving all one's desires
5. Saving oneself from evil spirits
6. Relief from eye diseases
7. To drive away from one's enemies
8. For finding favor in one's eyes
9. For a sick youth
10. For one who has enemies
11. For destroying enemies
12. To prevent weakness
13. For salvation from an unnatural death
14. For fear
15. To kill demons
16. To disclose a thief
17. To say on a journey
18. For salvation from kings
19. For wisdom
20. Beneficial for judgment
21. To stand before the authorities
22. For every sorrow
23. For a questioning regarding a dream
24. For salvation from a flood of water
25. For every trouble
26. For calamities and danger
27. Saving oneself from wild animals
28. For prayer
29. Saving from evil spirits
30. For every bad thing
31. For an evil eye
32. A supplication for mercy
33. For a woman whose children die
34. For one who is walking on his way
35. If foes rise against you

Psalm**Occasions and Events**

36. To eradicate the wicked
37. For a drunkard
38. If others are plotting against you
39. For one who is fasting
40. For salvation from evil spirits
41. If you have been dismissed from your profession
42. For building a home
43. For building a home
44. For salvation from the enemy's hand
45. For one who has an evil wife
46. For a man who hates his wife
47. For repentance
48. To make your enemies fear you
49. For fever
50. For salvation from thieves
51. For one who is impure due to adultery
52. To prevent one from speaking slander
53. To intimidate your enemies
54. To take revenge upon your enemies
53. To intimidate your enemies
54. To take revenge upon your enemies
55. For anything bad happening
56. For one chained in iron shackles
57. For success
58. For an evil dog
59. For an evil inclination
60. To go to battle
61. For one who dreads sitting in his home
62. To say after Minchah and Arvit
63. For success in business
64. To cross a river
65. If you desire something from someone
66. For one who has a spirit - (to save oneself)
67. For chronic fever
68. For evil spirits

<u>Psalm</u>	<u>Occasions and Events</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>Occasions and Events</u>
69.	For an adulterer and one who covets	101.	For evil spirits
70.	For war	102.	For a barren woman
71.	To find favor	103.	For a barren woman
72.	To find favor and approval	104.	To send away harmful influences
73.	For salvation from fear	105.	Saving oneself from the fourth step of (malaria) fever
74.	If one has enemies	106.	Saving oneself from the third step of (malaria) fever
75.	To lower one's pride	107.	For chronic fever
76.	For salvation from fire and water	108.	For success
77.	To avoid falling on an evil day	109.	If your enemy oppresses you
78.	To find favor and approval in the eyes of the monarchy	110.	For your enemies to make peace with you
79.	To conquer enemies	111.	To increase your friends
80.	To avoid practicing heresy	112.	To be mighty in your strength
81.	To avoid practicing heresy	113.	For heresy
82.	For success in your mission	114.	For a seller and a buyer
83.	For war	115.	To debate with heretics
84.	For one whose body is emaciated due to illness	116.	To avoid dying an unnatural death
85.	To appease one's friend	117.	For one who was unfairly informed upon
86.	For salvation from evil spirits	118.	To answer a heretic
87.	Beneficial for liberating the city	119.	Please see below.
88.	Beneficial for liberating the city	120.	To establish peace
89.	For a person who loses his limbs	121.	To go out alone at night
90.	Suddenly seeing a lion	122.	For a servant who has escaped
91.	For evil spirits	123.	To pass over in a boat
92.	To see great miracles	124.	To pass over in a boat
93.	To defeat one's opponent	125.	For enemies
94.	If your enemy oppresses you	126.	For a woman whose children die
95.	To prevent the people of your city from misleading you	127.	To save newborn baby
96.	To gladden one's family members	128.	For a pregnant woman
97.	To gladden one's family members	129.	For performing a mitzvah
98.	To establish peace between man and his fellow man	130.	To pass over in a boat
99.	To be righteous	131.	For an arrogant person (to calm down)
100.	To overcome one's enemies	132.	Not fulfilling an oath and to get rid of it
		133.	To establish love between lovers

<u>Psalm</u>	<u>Occasions and Events</u>	<u>Psalm 119 Occasions and Events</u>
	134. To say before learning 135. For one who has thoughts of idol worship 136. For admitting malicious sins 137. For releasing hate 138. For releasing pride 139. For establishing love between a man and his wife 140. For animosity between man and his wife 141. For heart pains 142. For leg ailments 143. For arm ailments 144. For a broken arm 145. For fear 146. For a blow of the sword 147. For snakebite 148. For a fire 149. To prevent a fire from spreading 150. To praise Hashem for all his works	א - For one who wishes to acquire a mitzvah ב - For forgetfulness ג - For pain in the right eye ד - For pain in the left eye ה - For protection from sin ו - To intimidate a ruler ז - For the spleen ח - For the upper stomach ט - For pain in the left and right kidneys י - For kindness יא - For swelling of the right nostril יב - For judgment יג - For pain in the right hand יד - For going on a journey טו - To ask for one's needs טז - For pain in the left hand יז - For swelling of the left nostril יח - To destroy one's enemies יט - For pain in the left leg כ - For pain in the right ear כא - For pain in the head כב - For pain in the left ear

We can be contacted as follows: Rabbi Shmuel Ben-Shalom (Divekar) Director Binyan Israel Institute P. O. Box 5866, Jerusalem - 9105801. ISRAEL.	Website : www.indianjudaica.com Email : beshalom@netvision.net.il Mobile / WhatsApp : 054-7409055.
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Late News

Indian Embassy Scholarship

Ambepur; Plaster work has started



**ICCR Scholarship Scheme
for Indian Culture (2021 - 2022)**

ICCR is pleased to announce 100 scholarship slots under the ICCR Scholarship Scheme for Indian Culture at Indian Universities/ institutes for the academic year 2021 - 2022.

Study
Indian Classical Music,
Dance,
Painting,
Theatre,
Yoga and
Sculpture

To apply please visit:
<http://a2ascholarships.iccr.gov.in>

Last date of submission - 30 April 2021
Open for all Nationals.

09:43 ✓



We are looking for help in Hebrew and Marathi articles. More writers are also welcome.

Thank you to all who sent us the matter to make this issue possible

To Our Readers

1. Please send us your letters and articles to email: shaniwartali@gmail.com
2. Write to us about any BI business you run and would like to advertise free
3. Please send us matrimonial to add to the classified poems and stories (Marathi English Hebrew)
4. All your suggestions are welcome
5. Not every letter or articles or other items received by us can be printed.
6. We are BI Family e-newsletters. No criticism please. We only appreciate work of all BI.
7. No disputes. If there are differences of opinion, that will always remain and respected.
8. Please excuse us if you find any mistakes. We tried our best.

Disclaimer

No one of us who are offering this voluntary service in creating this Bene-Israel Family Newsletter is responsible for any wrong or misleading information. All has been done only with good intention. No money is involved. This is only for private circulation. Only purpose of creating this newsletter is to increase communications between Bene-Israel's in the world.

**Coming Dead Line to submit matter for next issue:
15th June. Tuesday 2021**