



KULANU'S PASSOVER SEDAR READINGS — SEE CENTERFOLD! Meeting Information on Page 6

KULANU'S FIRST BOOK DEBUTS!

KTAV Publishes "Jews in Places You Never Thought Of"

Jews in Places You Never Thought Of is the name of a book to be published within the next few weeks by KTAV Publishing House, in association with Kulanu. Edited by Karen Primack, the 328-page hardback is based on Kulanu newsletters, with expanded articles, new material, and over 30 photographs.

In addition to historical overviews of the Sephardic Diaspora, Jewish Roots in Africa, and the Jews of India, the book contains five parts about lost and dispersed Jewish communities and a sixth part, "Reflections," containing essays about the significance of these communities

Jewry. The volume authors, ranging members of the rabbis and interested

Part I is devoted northeastern India, just beginning to numbers. The part historical chronology of its to Israel.

Part II covers Portugal, Mexico, US, while Part III is Africa – Ethiopians, Africa, and Jews in China.

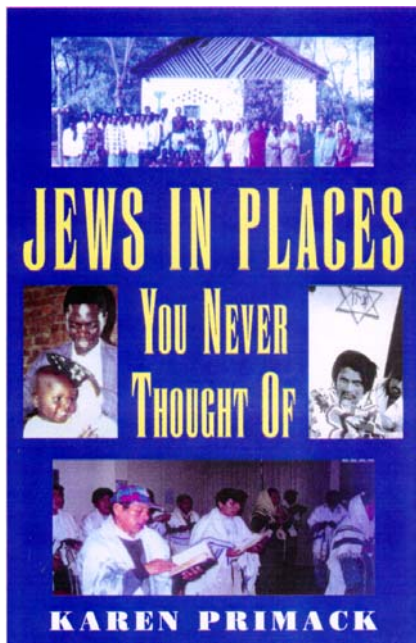
Part V is seeking conversion fascinating story of Judaism. The

Italy, Uganda, Peru, India (Andhra Pradesh), and Ghana.

The closing Appendix lists suggestions for ways individuals and groups can get involved with these inspiring communities as well as organizations active in the field.

The list price of *Jews in Places You Never Thought Of* is \$29.50. It will be offered in some bookstores, and can be ordered directly from Kulanu.

To order, send a check for \$29.50, plus \$3 for postage and handling in U.S. and Canada (\$4 in other countries), payable to "Kulanu" to: Kulanu Book Project, 1217 Edgevale Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910-1612. (Outside the US, postage is by surface mail and may take several weeks.) **Proceeds will benefit Kulanu's programs.**



to modern "mainstream" features the writings of 45 from professors and dispersed communities, to travelers.

to the Bnei Menashe of descendants of a Lost Tribe settle in Israel in small describes the group's background and traces the historic return to Judaism and

"Marranos" in Spain, Brazil, Cape Verde, and the devoted to Jewish roots in the Balemba of Southern Nigerians. Part IV discusses

devoted to five communities to Judaism, each with a how it came to embrace communities are located in

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Crisis in Manipur

By Jack Zeller

Did you know that Bnei Menashe in northeastern India have been killed and injured, and their homes and synagogues burned to the ground in a grim and unrelenting civil war? We have received some alarming news.

According to Elitzur Haokip, secretary of the Bnei Menashe Council in Manipur, from 1975 to 1980, the number of Jews increased to such a degree that the established political forces, including Christians and powerful chiefs, confiscated Jewish property, rendering some Jews homeless. Superimposed upon this expropriation, Jews were identified as supporters of the Kuki tribe by the Naga tribe, who were at war with the Kukis. Nagas completely destroyed villages with large Jewish populations. In response to all of this, two parcels of land were purchased, one each by Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail and Dr. Myer Samra (a Jewish anthropologist from Australia who is married to a Bnei Menashe), in Churachandpur district, which appeared to be a peace zone in the civil war. The intent was to build a synagogue and develop a community for the refugees.

But war came in June 1997 to these areas in Churachandpur and continues today with heavy losses. Two Jewish villages, Phailen in Churachandpur Town and Tuipiphai Village about 100 kilometers away, were completely destroyed, including the synagogues. The Naga forces caused the destruction on the grounds that the Jews are Kuki.

The Bnei Menashe Council of NE India, Myanmar and Chin Hills has purchased about 330 acres of land in a site 15 kilometers from the

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VISIT THE NEW KULANU "STORE"! See page 15

LETTERS TO KULANU

Rabbi's Report on Brazilian Communities

(Excerpts from a letter originally written in September 1997 to Irwin Berg, a Kulanu vice president.)

I visited the different congregations in Brazil where *anousim* were residing and I have to tell you that my visit was most successful. I hope that it will be possible to continue with this work and bring this project to fruition, helping those who have so long ago been forced to leave the fold and now wish to return. I visited the communities of Rio de Janeiro, Recife, Fortaleza, Goiunia, Sao Paulo and Niteroi, and in each of them I found a core of people from whom I am sure genuine Jewish communities may emerge.

Rio de Janeiro and Venetrio: There are a number of families of *anousim* but they are not organized. They have some connection with the local Jewish communities.

Recife: There is a large community with a *chazan* and synagogue and an elected committee. They desperately need a spiritual leader who would also be a *chazan*, *shochet* and teacher. I already have a candidate; at the moment he is preparing for his examinations in the laws of *shechita* and *rabbanut* in Israel. Hopefully, he will arrive in Brazil by Purim.

Fortaleza: There is a community that is composed of Jews, *anousim* and "half-Jews", and a group of non-Jews who come to join in the prayers and activities. They have their own premises, Yaakov House, a store in the business center where they conduct religious and cultural activities. They also desperately need a spiritual leader. A young man there is willing to come to Israel to learn so that he can return and help the community.

Goiunia: They already have a young man from Sao Paulo who has taught himself Hebrew and is now teaching it to others. They very much need a spiritual leader. They would like our candidate, but they need sufficient finance to support him and his family. This community is near Brazilia and is connected to the community there. In Brazilia there are several *anousim* and a local Chabad rabbi.

Sao Paulo area: I met with the journalist Helio Cordeiro, who is himself one of the *anousim*, and he told me that there are a number of *anousim* in the city, and that all those who wish to return to Judaism have found their own way there. Of course, there are many more who have no wish to do so. While I was there a family of eight came to me wishing to return to Judaism and now they are joining in and praying in the local synagogue. Here there is a necessity for a charismatic spiritual leader.

In Miami I found two Marrano brothers, one a university professor, who, in addition to financial support, have agreed to publish a *siddur* according to the instructions I gave them which will be suitable for Marranos in Brazil and Portugal. This *siddur* would contain:

- Prayers in Hebrew, in Hebrew characters
 - Prayers in Hebrew, in Latin characters
 - Translation of the prayers in Portuguese
 - A short version of the "Laws of Prayers" that I am compiling
- Please alert the members of Kulanu for our need for their

financial, moral and technical support.

Rabbi Joseph Sebag

10/8 Harosmarin, Gilo, Jerusalem, Israel 93758

(Editor's note: Tax-deductible donations to Kulanu can be earmarked for Rabbi Sebag's work.)

Shell Out the Shekels!

After spending three weeks in Brazil, including eight days with the Marrano community in Recife, I would like to tell you all that indeed that is a very worthy group of people who deserve our attention.

There are about 40 individuals who congregate around their leader, Odmir Pinheiro Braga. They meet every Shabbat for prayer and study at the old Ashkenazi synagogue in downtown Recife. I had the pleasure of joining them for Shabbat, that lasted from 9 am till 7 pm! It included a great deal of praying, Torah study, singing and eating, and it ended with Havdalah. It was an incredible experience.

I met a young man who is not only proficient in Hebrew and Rashi, but who also wants to go to yeshiva to become a rabbi for his people.

I urge Kulanu readers to help this man find a place in a yeshiva and to fund his travel and living expenses. I estimate that the cost involved would be \$5000; it is a small amount compared to the good it will bring about. It is up to us to help a very worthy young man who wants to study at a yeshiva. Kulanu people, move on this! This newsletter has to be more than only a forum for talk without consequence. I could not make a stronger request for support than I am making now.

Also the community is expecting a rabbi to come from Israel to help their expectation of a formal return to Judaism. The coming of this rabbi happened in part thanks to Kulanu contacts and efforts. It is time now for us to help finalize this project. The community has no means to maintain the rabbi, so it is time for us to shell out the shekels!

Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn <JacquesC@pgh.net>
Sharon, Pennsylvania

Pen-Pal Program Grows

This is a follow-up report on the Kulanu pen-pal project with the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda. Originally, the purpose of the project was to enable Abayudaya teen-agers to correspond with Jewish American teen-agers. Now several Abayudaya men and women in their twenties have indicated that they too wish to correspond with American Jews. I have the names of several of these young people.

To any who wishes to write to a teen or "twenty-something" among the Abayudaya, I suggest that you contact me. That way I can give you the name of someone who has not yet received a letter.

I must repeat the caveat which I gave earlier. Abayudaya youngsters feel let down when they answer a letter and then the correspondence stops. Correspondence means much more to the Abayudaya than it does to an American teen. An eagerly-awaited letter from the United States helps to dissolve a feeling of isolation which envelops the Abayudaya. So please remember that being a pen-pal involves commitment.

It would be helpful to enclose International Reply Coupons in letters to Ugandan pen-pals since mailing costs are extremely expensive for the Abayudaya. These are paid for by the sender at the US Post Office and used by the return writer in Uganda.

Irwin Berg <Bergiande@aol.com>
333 West End Avenue, Apt 8C
New York, N.Y. 10023 (212) 724-9887

An Interesting Book Discovery

We recently read in Steven Jacobs's 1971 book, *Hebraic Heritage of Black Africa*, some fascinating examples of the Biblical Hebrew culture and religion in sub-Saharan Africa. "The word for God in Ashanti (the native language in parts of West Africa, including Ghana) is *Yahweh*, the same as in Hebrew. The Ashanti word for Creator is *bore-bore*, the same as in Hebrew. The Ashanti word for law-giver is *toro*, almost identical to the law-giving Torah

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ABAYUDAYA STUDENTS

How To Make a Difference: Let Us Count the Ways

By Karen Primack

The Abayudaya Jews of Uganda are 500 hardy souls. They live at subsistence level in mud huts with no electricity or running water, but they have been practicing Judaism for over 70 years, often at great personal risk. Thanks to Kulanu, more than 100 of their youth are attending primary and secondary school.

In addition, Gershom Sizomu will probably finish his Kulanu-sponsored college education next summer. He serves as one of the community's rabbis and tutors younger students. And Esther Kaliesubula is in Advanced Level (pre-college) and would like to be a lawyer or a secretary of an organization.

Among the secondary students, the talented singer Rachel wants to be a lawyer (but a local teacher is worried about her because of the long journey she makes to school daily without breakfast or lunch), Enosh Waman Samson would like to become a doctor (he is the best in his class in biology), Seth might be a teacher, and Norah opts for being either a banker or a doctor (a top student, she does well in accounts, biology and chemistry). Shirah is thinking of going into politics, and Enosh Keki wants to be a future rabbi of the Abayudaya community (he already leads prayers, tries to mobilize his fellow youth, helps educate the elders, and has composed many songs from the *siddur*). Moses is interested in both Judaism and school studies, and opts for medicine.

Any chance? None without Kulanu's generous donors.

The students are so appreciative of our assistance.

David Hirya writes, "Happily I would like to thank you for funding us to continue with education. Sincerely, it was very hard for me to go to another step in my education as my father was killed by thugs."

Moses Walyombe says, "I'm one of the people who had left learning due to shortage of education funds which were being demanded at school, as I was a total orphan. However, I was very pleased with what the Kulanu office has tried. Since Kulanu started giving us money, my future is assured. It has been news to people to see me at school once more. I had left school long ago. If I were a girl, I would have got married as it's the only life for most poor and orphans, who are helpless in the low-developed community like Abayudaya. So I would like to send my sincere gratitude and greetings."

Esther Kaliesubula writes, "I thank you so much for the education funds. I really appreciate the hard work you are doing for our community. In future there will be very much balanced thinking due to very many people who have gone to school. I think this is a good wealth you are giving to us through education."

How does it work? Well, it costs \$3000 to send about 100 primary and 20 secondary students to school each year. Plus \$500 per year for Esther in Advanced Level, plus \$2000 per year for Gershom's college. A further challenge: There are several secondary students who will soon be ready for Advanced Level, and two more talented young men, Aaron Kintu Moses and Uri Katula, have been admitted to college but need assistance in order to attend.

There are three ways to make a difference in these young lives:

- (1) Buy "Shalom Everybody Everywhere!" the wonderful recording of Abayudaya music (order form on page 15), and give several as gifts. Proceeds go to the Abayudaya.
- (2) Buy some colorful Abayudaya hand-knit kippot (order form on page 15), available in many sizes, colors and styles at only \$10 each. Proceeds go to the Abayudaya.
- (3) Make a tax-deductible contribution to Kulanu and earmark it for Abayudaya education. (Form on page 9)

Their gratitude will be boundless!



Joab Keki (standing), chairman of the Abayudaya Community, advises kippa knitters Sarah and Athalia Deborah as children watch. Some proceeds from kippot sales help students with their school expenses.

WHAT BETTER GIFT FOR PASSOVER?

Not only is it unique, Jewish, aesthetically pleasing, educational, and inspirational. Buying it also enables one to support a worthy cause! Passover is celebrated beginning sundown on April 10 this year. What better gift for your seder hosts than "Shalom Everybody Everywhere!" Kulanu's recently released recording of the music of the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda? (Net proceeds go to the Abayudaya.) One of the songs, "Jerusalem," has the refrain "L'shana haba b'Yerushalayim"!

Please use the order form on page 15.

"It is one of the most wonderful, heartfelt and spiritual collections of music that I have ever listened to. The compilation is very exciting, and I would like to introduce it to the congregations where I serve as hazzan and teacher. I am also one of the members of the Robyn Helzner Trio and could see us introducing some of this music into our repertoire." Michael Stein, Washington, DC

Painter Captures Jewish Vestiges In Portugal

Jewish Vestiges in Portugal: Travels of a Painter by Laura Cesana, published with a grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation, 1997.

Reviewed by Kathleen Teltsch

Until recent years, Portugal's "hidden Jews" were relatively little known to the outside world. Only now are they beginning to emerge from five centuries of isolation, encouraged partly by government efforts to atone publicly in parliament for their persecution during the Inquisition years. Also modest material aid from abroad has helped – it enabled a synagogue to be built in Belmonte in northern Portugal where worshippers gather for prayer and soon will send their children to school.

Now along comes an impressive artbook by Lisbon painter Laura Cesana, written in both Portuguese and English, to help shed further light on this still secretive community of Marranos – a pejorative term meaning swine in Spanish

She spent five years on research and, more importantly, on getting to know Marrano descendants. And she also walked, sketchbook in hand, along the winding streets of the mountain towns of Beira provinces and searched the facades of old buildings in the South.

The artist is a "survivor"; her family was on the last ship of Jews to leave Naples the day before Mussolini entered the war.

"I don't want to dramatize myself as a survivor – compared to others, my story is banal. But yes, I have a feeling of what it can be to be an outsider and to have many roots – but don't we all?"

In her art, she has managed to convey these sentiments and most particularly in her "signature" painting, entitled "Quatro Tempos." Here and elsewhere, she has drawn on the Marranos' perpetuation of their culture in secrecy. The painting shows four doors; the first is shut tight. The second is ajar and the third is open sufficiently so one can see the burning *candela*. Finally, in the fourth, the *candela* has been moved outdoors for all to see.

The book also opens doors to Jewish landmarks in a way not found in the meager guidebooks that tourists usually resort to when they visit Portugal – they are far less informative than those available on Spain. The Cesana book is written in both Portuguese and English on facing pages. It also has a rich supplement of notes. The artist found people who guided her to old buildings not mentioned in the guidebooks. Elderly women recited snatches of poetry or recalled songs they remembered from their grandmothers.

And everywhere she uses the *candela*, the old lamp that was used by the Jews, often hidden in closets and cupboards when they feared its use would be discovered and their secret adherence to their faith would lead them to persecution.

The mix of impressionist art and the textual account of the artist's journey are a sensitive account of a five year search. Still, the full story of the Marranos only begins to be told.

(The book is available through Sephardic House, 212 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.)

A Glimpse of Jewish Life in the Ottoman Empire

The Quincentennial Papers: Studies on Turkish-Jewish History -- Political and Social Relations, Literature and Linguistics, edited by David F. Altabe, et al. (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, Inc. for The American Society of Sephardic Studies, 1996)

Reviewed by Morris Levin

(Dr. Levin is Research Professor at the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute.)

This book reports the proceedings of two conferences: "Sephardic Jewry in the Ottoman Empire and Its Emergent States" (American Society of Sephardic Studies, June 1991) and "Turks and Jews: 500 years of Shared History" (Federation of Turkish American Associations, 1992). They cover similar material and topics, and all articles are extremely well written and documented.

The book opens with a 1992 reminder from then President George Bush that at a time when Jews -- in this case Spanish Jews -- were in extreme distress, Turkey "extended a hand of friendship" and that "the world community would do well to recall that example of Muslims and Jews living side by side in a spirit of mutual cooperation and respect." The book also contains tributes to two Turkish diplomats, Necdet Kent and Selahattin Ulkumen, who saved Jews during World War II.

The earlier conference encompassed articles by 20 contributors, including all of the editors. Topics include descriptions of refugee status from Byzantine to post-Ottoman times, investigations of Turkish-Jewish and Turkish-Christian relations, the impact of World War I on Turkish Sephardim, and the development of modern Turkish and Judeo-Spanish language and literature.

The second conference covers the same general area, but with different emphasis, beginning with how Turkey's relations with Israel are the result of mutual needs resulting in mutual benefits. This conference focuses on specific examples, such as the growth of Salonika and its Jewish community (at one point the majority of the population was Jewish), education, the language controversy, and censorship. The discussion of the language controversy raises many issues, including the impact of Ladino on the native Ashkenazi population and the rise of French as the language of the schools founded by the Alliance Israelite Universelle (French was seen as the accepted language for commerce).

The book provides vignettes of life in the Ottoman Empire and examples of literature and poetry, with in-depth analysis of changes in life style and literature in terms of world events. It is exceptionally well written, although it suffers from lack of continuity since so many topics are covered.

The examples and anecdotes will be especially meaningful to readers with a Sephardic background (this reviewer found a photo of his sister's father-in-law in a school in Izmir!) The excerpts from novels and the poems provide a glimpse of life as it developed in the Ottoman Empire from 1492 almost to the present.

The Bonds of Maori and Jewish Culture

It is believed that the Maori, those supposedly indigenous New Zealanders, migrated to that island country in the 13th century from Hawaii. It is also believed that they may have a Jewish connection. Why a Jewish connection? *A Jerusalem Post* article by David Cohen examines the question.

According to an English colonialist in New Zealand in 1819, the Maoris evolved from a Lost Tribe of Israel, given their trading skills, their

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INTERACTIONS WITH INCAN JEWS IN

By Selwyn (Shlomo) Mirkin

I am a psychologist, originally from South Africa, living in the U.S.A., on a business and consulting mission in Lima, Peru. I come from a modern Orthodox Jewish home and have always had a strong Jewish identity. When I arrived in Lima, my natural inclination was to look up Jews living here, and through a combination of circumstances, I came across the Peruvian Inca Indians who have been practicing Judaism for more than ten years.

Since many Kulanu readers are familiar with how these Incans came to Judaism, about their first and second *aliyahs* to Israel, and about the remaining practicing Inca Jews still living here in Lima, Trujillo, and Cajamarca, I will not relate too much about that, but rather will describe my experiences here in Peru. These experiences have been quite phenomenal, and quite an eye-opener to me, from a sociological, psychological and Jewish standpoint.

Like most observers, I immediately wanted to understand both their motivation for practicing Judaism and their strong desire to convert to Judaism.

An opinion widely held here is that their motivation is economic. As one local "mainstream" Jew put it, "Look, these people, especially those living in Trujillo, live in poverty..... converting them to Judaism would right away give them the legal right to emigrate to Israel and immediately improve their economic lot." This particular individual has had absolutely no interaction with the Jewish Inca community. His opinion is very much indicative of some of the stereotypes that many European white Peruvians have towards the Incas in general. Peru is very much a class society. There is very little social interaction between white European Peruvians, who constitute about 10 of the Peruvian population (but control 80% of the wealth of the country), and ordinary native Incans. This is a sociological reality about Peru and is something the Inca Jews are up against.

Prospero Lujan, a retired farmer, is leader of the Trujillo Jewish community. He is shown here with children at a Sunday morning service. Photo by Robert



Lande.

Against this background, I decided on my own to get to know some of the Incan Jews and form my own conclusions. My time devoted to getting to know the Incan Jews has been a bit limited, and therefore my observation not complete, but certain experiences and observations most definitely stand out. I intend at a later time to give a more comprehensive report about my experiences.

So far, I have had in-depth meetings and interactions with a few individual members from all three communities, and one thing has become clear: The groups are not homogeneous. Each one has its own particular needs and overall goals. What they *do* have in common is their desire to practice Judaism within an Orthodox context.

The community in Lima has an impressive leader and whole infrastructure. I met with their leader Blanca Argandona and individual members on a Sunday afternoon. I was amazed by their knowledge of Judaism on an intellectual, spiritual and *halachic* level. Most members have degrees and titles and practice Judaism completely from a *halachic* standpoint. The way these people can *daven* (pray), *bentsch* (say grace after meals), sing Hebrew liturgical melodies and read Hebrew is incredible. Quite an inspiration! I found these people to be 100% sincere. As their Blanca Argandona put it, dismissing the economic motive, "We don't have any needs... all we want is to convert. In fact going to Israel is not our top priority ... after all, we don't want to be burden to the State of Israel. We would not necessarily be able to find jobs in Israel because of language barriers...and to live out there and be on public assistance is not our goal. Therefore only a few single young members would want to go to Israel."

Argandona believes everything is in the hands of God, and at the right time, everything will turn out all right.

The Inca Jews from Trujillo, on the other hand, are perhaps not on the same intellectual and socioeconomic level as their Lima counterparts, but most also practice Judaism -- or at least strive to -- on a *halachic* level. They all read Hebrew and are also very familiar with all aspects of Judaism. In addition, all have friends or relatives living

Their motivation to go to Israel may have some economic motives, but that does not detract from the fact that they are sincere practicing Jews.

in Israel from the first and second Inca *aliyahs*. That helps keep them current with what is going on in the Jewish religious world and affairs in Israel. They are also a very warm, loving, and sincere group of people. It is quite a delight to mix and interact with them. The hospitality that they extended to me was unforgettable. Although the groups in Lima and Cajamarca are more affluent than the group in Trujillo, even in Trujillo no one lives in abject poverty. Almost all have jobs and own some modest home.

On the other hand, their needs differ markedly from the group in Lima in that the consensus among them is that they all want to convert and go to Israel; no question about it. For them *aliyah* is a top top priority. Now, in my opinion, their motivation to go to Israel may have some economic motives, but that does not detract from the fact that they are sincere practicing Jews.

With regard to the 20 or so Incan Jews living in Cajamarca, their situation is a bit similar to both Trujillo and Lima. All the members in Cajamarca also have friends or relatives living in Israel, but most simply just want to convert and stay put. This community, like the one in Lima, did not present me with any real needs.

In light of all my experiences and interactions with the Inca groups up to now, I intend to take up their case with the local Jewish establishment and find out what creative solution can be found to accommodate their needs. I realize full well that their situation is complex -- perhaps not all of them would qualify to convert -- but with creativity and the right approach, constructive things can be done for them that would enable the sincere, talented, and genuine members of these groups to convert and go on *aliyah*.

KULANU BRIEFS

Rufina to Speak in DC and New England

Rufina Bernardetti Silva Mausenbaum, a South African writer, poet, and lecturer about Portuguese Crypto-Judaism, will be in the US in February. **She will speak at Kulanu's next meeting, at Tifereth Israel Synagogue in Washington, DC, on February 15 at 1 p.m.** She will be joined by Dona Austin, of California, who will speak about the Portuguese in Hawaii; Bert Seidman, of the Jewish Labor Committee, on the holocaust in East Timor; Paula deBrito Cohen, on the Jews in Portugal; Prof. Regina Igel, on Brazilian-Jewish writers; and Clara Yael Castelar, on growing up in northeastern Brazil.

Rufina can be heard in New England as well – on February 22 at Temple Emanu-el in Providence, RI, at 10 a.m. and on Wednesday, Feb. 25 at Tifereth Israel Synagogue in New Bedford, MA, at 7:30 p.m. Judith Cohen (see listing below) will also be performing at the New England sites. For details, contact Steve Gorban at 508-997-7006 or sgorban@juno.com.

Bene Israel Wedding Proceeds After Controversy

Kulanu supporters were dismayed to read of a recent controversy over the Jewish legitimacy of a Bene Israel family who emigrated from India to Israel in the 1960s. On the eve of her wedding, Orly Solomon was informed that the Ashkenazi chief rabbi in her home town of Petah Tikva issued an interpretation of Jewish law which cast doubt on whether Indian immigrants and their children were truly Jewish. (The bride grew up in Israel, served in the army, and had "Jewish" identity cards all her life.) In the end Rabbi David Raz, a respected rabbi from the Indian community in Beersheba, mediated the case and received assurances from Israel's Sephardi Chief Rabbi and the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi that the rabbinate in Petah Tikva had been instructed to process the marriage applications of Indian immigrants.

During the dispute, the bride's father, whose great-grandfather was a rabbi in India, was quoted as exclaiming, "How dare our Jewishness be questioned by some fanatic?" A good question.

Wanted: Treasurer, Grantwriters

Kulanu has urgent need for a **treasurer** and **grantwriters**. Experience preferred. Please call or e-mail the office (301-681-5679, fax 301-681-1587, kulanu@ubmail.ubalt.edu) or send a letter or CV. C'mon, be a *mensch*!

Save November 8, 1998, For Kulanu Day!

November 8, 1998, is the tentative date of a Kulanu Day conference, initiated by the Am Kolel Judaic Resource Center, to be held in the Washington DC area. The conference will include a keynote speaker, panels of authorities on the various international communities Kulanu has assisted, food, and entertainment. Please volunteer your ideas, energy, and money!

DaCosta Has a New Project

Yaffah DaCosta, honored with an invitation to join the Dallas Jewish Historical Society, will undertake two historical archive projects for the Society. She will chair a committee to document Jewish-Christian relations in the Dallas/Ft Worth area both presently and historically over the past decade. She hopes these discussions will assist in the planning of future interfaith events in

the area and elsewhere. She has offered to help other communities to pursue similar programs. She will also chair a second committee to document for the archives any commemorative events in Dallas for the 500th anniversary of the Portuguese *anousim*.

New York Chapter Meets

The Greater New York chapter of Kulanu met at the 92nd Street "Y" on January 25, 1998. Guest speaker was Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, who spoke on "Pepper, Silk, Ivory – The Exotic Jews of the Far East." For information about future chapter meetings, contact Irwin Berg at bergiande@aol.com or 212-724-9887 or Gladys Schwarz at GladysSch@aol.com or 973-696-2941.

Press Covers Abayudaya CD

The *Atlanta Jewish Times* ran an article about the new Abayudaya recording with a headline that read "Jewgandans? You betcha – an African Jewish community creates a delightfully exotic album." And the *Connecticut Jewish Ledger's* story was titled "Music from Abayudaya Jews of Uganda." Similarly, *The Jewish Exponent* in Philadelphia ran an article called "From Faraway Uganda, Familiar Words, Vibrant Sounds." These articles always result in many CD orders, for which Kulanu and the Abayudaya are grateful. We have sent many press releases to Jewish papers across the country. If your local Jewish press hasn't picked up this exciting story and wants information, please ask them to contact Karen for information – primack@mindspring.com.

Ethnomusicologist Offers Catalog

Judith R. Cohen, Ph.D., ethnomusicologist and performer, has an impressive array of CDs and cassettes of Sephardic, Balkan, French Canadian, Yiddish, Medieval Iberian, Galician, Provençal, and Latin music available for sale. Your editor ordered two and has been enjoying the exotic, modal Medieval sounds! For a copy of her one-page catalog, contact Judith by e-mail at judithc@yorku.ca, or by tel-fax at 416-533-2666, or on the web at http://www.fusionmill.com/core/judith_cohen, or by regular mail at 751 Euclid Ave., Toronto, Canada M6G 2V3.

Kulanu Thanks Its Youngest Supporters

Temple Israel Religious School in Memphis, Tenn., has donated a portion of its weekly *tzedaka* collections to Kulanu. As Temple educator Barbara Mansberg put it, "In this way Temple Israel Religious School not only helps you fulfill the goals of your program, but also helps us have a share in creating a better world." *Yasher koach*, teachers and students!

Rabbi in Bombay

Rabbi Emanuel Forman started a 12-month appointment to work with India's Bene Israel Jews in Bombay in November. His appointment is through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Forman has served Jewish communities in Jerusalem, Netanya, Siberia, California, and Toronto.

A Death in Uganda

Kulanu shares in the grief of the Abayudaya community at the passing of Enosh Wamani, the chief rabbi at the Pallisa synagogues, at the age of 69. Rav. Wamani, one of the elders of the Abayudaya, was especially respected because of the way he stood up for the community during the brutal regime of Idi

KULANU BRIEFS

Amin. His father taught him to read the Bible in Luganda and to translate it into Lugere, the local language in Pallisa. He supported the youth who are today's leaders by providing space for them to study and food to eat. He encouraged marriages between members of the community. Contrary to the prevailing custom, he did not ask for a dowry for his daughters when they married Jews.

May his memory be for a blessing.

Gorban, Castelar, Daniel Speak

Steve Gorban spoke on "Unexpected Links between the Cape Verde, Madeira, Azores, and Iberian Jewish Communities" at a meeting of the North Shore Jewish Historical Society in Swampscott, Mass., in November. The comprehensive program, arranged by Richard Winer, also included Prof. Robert Waxler's discussion of the Azores synagogue, Donald Wahnnon's talk about his discovery of being Jewish, Fernanda Rodrigues' discovery of her Jewish ancestry in Madeira, and Mary DeMarco's search for Jewish roots in the Azores. Derek Burrows, a musician with the group Voice of the Turtle, performed songs in Ladino and Hebrew. A photograph exhibit was also presented. A video tape of the program is available for \$18; call 781-593-2386 for details.

At Kulanu's December 25 meeting, **Clara Yael Castelar** delivered an informal talk about her research on her crypto-Jewish family in northeastern Brazil. She first heard about Jews when she was 13, and through almost two decades of research has discovered that her nominally Catholic family observed Jewish rituals such as packing meat in coarse salt and draining before cooking; shunning shellfish, game and imperfect animals; refraining from eating in the houses of strangers; observing a holiday in the woods in shelters made of greenery; and refraining from grooming, music and playing following a death in the family, as well as leaving pebbles on a gravestone. Her complete story of her nonconformist, "quirky" family will appear in a later newsletter.

Romiel Daniel's topic was "Jews in the Cradle of India" on February 1 at the Queens Museum, NY. As part of the museum's ongoing observance of the 50th anniversary of India's independence, Daniel's talk, which included the showing of videos, focused on the relationship between that anniversary and the 50th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

Kulanu Offers Certificates

Want to honor someone at a special occasion or memorialize a loved one? Kulanu will send an attractive certificate, acknowledging your donation (minimum \$25) in honor of or in memory of someone. Send check and information to the office.

Xu Xin at Harvard

Xu Xin, professor of English and Judaic subjects at Nanjing University in China, is on a six-month grant at Harvard University provided by Harvard's Center for Jewish Studies. He is writing another book on Kaifeng Jewry as well as raising funds and preparing a curriculum for his Center for Judaic Studies at Nanjing U.

A Jewish Heritage Tour to Turkey

Rachel Amado Bortnick, president of the Dallas Jewish Historical Society and a Sephardi Jew, will lead a Jewish Heritage Tour of her native country, Turkey, May 28-June 11, 1998. The DJHS-sponsored tour includes visits in Ankara (where the group will celebrate *Shavuoth* with the local community) Capadoccia, Izmir, Ephesus, Sardis and Istanbul. The tour includes visits to Jewish sites and synagogues, briefings by Rachel on these and

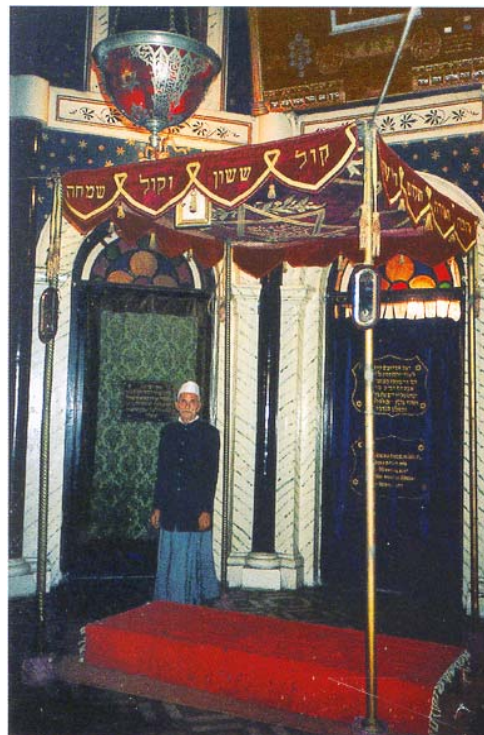
on the past and present of Turkish Jewry, contact with local Jews, and services of a professional Turkish tour guide for general sight-seeing. The cost of the tour is \$2390 from New York (low add-on fares from other cities) with an optional Israel extension for an extra \$300. For a brochure call Troy Tours at 1-800-748-6878.

A Sephardi Literary Contest

IVRI-NASAWI Jewish Multicultural Association is holding its first annual National Sephardi Literary Contest. Cash prizes will be awarded for fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. The deadline is April 10, 1998. For complete rules and information on the jury and prizes, see Ivri Nasawi's website at <http://ivri-nasawi.org/> or call (213) 650-3157 or (310) 441-9361 or (212) 339-6921.

Video on Jews in Calcutta Available

A new video recalling the past glories of the Jewish community of Calcutta and capturing its fast-disappearing existence is available in NTSC (US) and PAL (UK) versions. To order the NTSC version of *The Last Jews in Calcutta*, send \$39.99 per copy plus \$4.99 postage and handling; for the PAL version, send 29.99 £ per copy plus 3.99 £ postage and handling. Make checks payable to "RBIS" and send to RBIS, 500 Bloomfield Ave., Verona, NJ 07044 USA.



*Albert Jacob visiting a synagogue, one of the Jewish sites featured in the video *The Last Jews of Calcutta*.*

The Traditional Kulanu Passover Reading:

**HONORING THE RETURN OF A LOST
TRIBE**

In 1995, Kulanu first introduced "Honoring the Return of a Lost Tribe" as a new Passover reading. The ritual includes the reading of a poem about the crossing of the Red Sea reportedly used by the Tribe of Manasseh for 26 centuries following their expulsion from Israel by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.E., as well as a modern response by Jonina Duker.

Here is a reprint of the text, which is suggested as a Seder reading just before the recitation of Dayenu:

From the time of the Assyrian Exile in 722 B.C.E. until the present, segments of the Jewish people have been forcibly separated from us through persecution and expulsion.

One such segment previously lost to the Jewish community is a people now known by at least three names: Bnei Menashe (since they trace their ancestry to the tribe of Manasseh), the Shinlung (after caves in which they once found refuge), or the Chikimi (after the Chin, Kuki and Mizo ethnic groups from which they spring). The Bnei Menashe believe their ancestors were exiled in 722 B.C.E. and wandered across many lands. They live now in a mountainous region on the India-Burma border. Knowledge of various ritual observances was handed down orally for 26 centuries. Since 1993, approximately 300 Bnei Menashe have immigrated to Israel, worked to support themselves, and studied for conversion (back) to Judaism under the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate in Israel. We recite a poem that, according to tradition, accompanied the Bnei Menashe throughout their migrations:

*We must keep the Passover festival
Because we crossed the Red Sea on the dry land
At night we crossed with a fire
And by day with a cloud
Enemies pursued us with chariots
And the sea swallowed them up
And used them as food for the fish
And when we were thirsty
We received water from the rock*

We pause to reaffirm our unity with the Bnei Menashe and with K'lal Yisrael, all the Jewish people:

*As we have wandered, so have they
As we have suffered for our beliefs, so have they
As we have retained our faith, so have they
As we have clung to our precious identity, so have they
As we long to lead Jewish lives, so do they
As we believe in the Promised Land, so do they
As we pray "You are One," so do they*

© 1995 J. Duker

May those among the Bnei Menashe, and anyone else who desires to return to or turn to Judaism, celebrate Passover Seders next year in peace and tranquillity. L'Shanah Haba B'Yerushalayim!

Introducing a New Kulanu Passover Reading:

**RECOVERING THE AFIKOMEN -
AND RECOVERING LOST JEWS**

By Jeri Roth Lande

(To be read after the children search for and find the hidden afikomen.)

Reader:

Before the Seder can continue the *afikomen* is eaten in memory of the Pesach offering. Another name for this part of the service is *tzafun* or, literally, the "hidden". Many interpretations have been given for the custom of breaking the *afikomen* and hiding a portion of it for the children to find and ransom.

All together:

One interpretation is that the hidden portion of the *afikomen* represents those parts of the Jewish people who have become lost or separated from us.

Reader:

One such group is the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, who became separated from the rest of the Jewish nation after the Assyrian conquest of Israel in 722 B.C.E. Another such group consists of Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity during the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, but who secretly maintained some part of their Jewish heritage.

Just as we recover the hidden *afikomen* during this part of the Seder, in recent years some descendants of each of these groups have discovered their hidden Jewish roots and returned to Judaism. For example, the Shinlung in India believe that they are descended from Menashe, one of the Ten Lost Tribes. More than 5,000 are now practicing Judaism, and more than 300 have made *aliyah* and formally converted back to Judaism. Recently, some descendants of "Marranos" or "Anousim" in Portugal, Mexico, Brazil, the United States and elsewhere have also begun reclaiming their roots and returning to Judaism.

All together:

Let us welcome each returning Jew with warmth, enthusiasm and joy. Their return to Judaism completes our community as the *afikomen* completes our Seder meal.

SUPPORTER APPLICATION

€ I/WE WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A SUPPORTER OF KULANU (MAIL TO KULANU, C/O HANTMAN, 3520 TARKINGTON LANE, SILVER SPRING, MD 20906)

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE(S): () _____ (DAY); () _____ (EVE)

INTERESTS AND AFFILIATIONS USEFUL TO KULANU'S WORK

In Recognition Of a Martyr

By Schulamith C. Halevy

(This period marks the 401st anniversary of the martyrdom of Luis de Carvajal el Mozo. Martyrdom comes from the Greek and means "to bear witness," and by remembering and reminding, we extend his martyrdom into our time. May his memory be blessed).

Luis de Carvajal el Mozo was the nephew, namesake and heir-designate of the first Governor of Nuevo Reino de Leon. Possibly the largest land tract granted anyone by Spain, it stretched from eastern Mexico, through the Southwest of the US. When Luis learned that he was a Jew, the impact on him was tremendous. A man of culture, letters and verse who knew how to play the harp and sing, knew several languages and possessed a great spirit, Luis was unable or unwilling to conceal his faith. He went about convincing anyone he could to observe the "law of Moses."

He was arrested, and in the cells of the Inquisition converted his cell mate, a monk, to Judaism. There he also changed his name to Joseph Lumbroso -- Joseph after the biblical dreamer, since Luis also had inspired dreams, and Lumbroso meaning the Enlightened. After his first arrest, torture and incarceration -- knowing full well that a second arrest meant the stake -- he did not relent.

Joseph-Luis was denounced again by a would-be proselyte. His second arrest was marked with religious pride and steadfastness that left its mark even on his tormentors. He attempted suicide, hoping thus to escape denouncing others under torture. He debated those sent to convert him with eloquence, knowledge and spirit. Seymour Liebman, in his seminal book *The Jews of New Spain*, translated the words of Padre Contreras, who walked Luis to his fate:

He was always such a good Jew and he reconciled his understanding, which was very profound and sensitive, with his highly inspired Divine determination to defend the Law of God -- the Mosaic -- and to fight for it. I have no doubt that if he had lived before the Incarnation of our Redeemer, he would have been a heroic Hebrew and his name would have been as famous in the Bible as are the names of those who died in the defense of their law when it was necessary.

Prayers attributed to him were recited to Inquisitors a century after his death by subsequent victims.

EL LUMBROSO

By Schulamith Chava Halevy

That night I was so radiant
You could barely see me for my light.

Now in the incandescent dawn
I am paraded before your helpless eye.
The stakes are high
enough for me to see my angel cry.
Padre Contreras, frail and vulnerable
Murmurs why?
Listen! the flames' voice is cracking
Hear them sigh...
My flesh imploding in the fire
Together we witness it reduce to ashes
Together watch it fly.

You and I,
How we danced ever closer to the flames
--to my flesh, to its demise
Your old soul knows I could not die,
but your mind is young,
Cannot yet read the milestones of the sky.

Cloistered in my afterglow
Shawled in me
You stood in prayer
That the light I have become
Be bestowed
Upon you.

My apparition soars
Carried in your dreams.
Four hundred years in the abyss
Cannot erase
the seal
our memories
call
I can still embrace
can enter you
Breathe my eternity into your soul.

Of Andhra Pradesh and The Jewish Maggadim

By Irwin Berg

In the State of Andhra Pradesh on the southeast coast of India approximately 200 people rest on Saturday, eat only foods permitted by Jewish law and observe the rest days described in the *Chumash* (the first five books of the Bible). They refer to themselves as the B'nai Ephraim; they are often referred to by their neighbors as "the Hasidim," and are known to the government as the Council of Eastern Jewry. Their history and customs were related to me by Dan (Dinakar) Yacobi and his father Shmuel (Rajo) Yacobi on a recent Sunday afternoon in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

Dan Yacobi came to the US on a temporary visa from India about a year ago to study Hebrew, *halacha* (Jewish law) and Jewish customs and prayers. The purpose of his trip was to educate himself as much as possible in these subjects so that he could be a teacher to the small community

(Continued on page 16)

Crisis in Manipur (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Manipur capital of Imphal. The intent is to create a Jewish village with about 100 houses, but finances are not available. Mr. Haokip feels ashamed to ask for outside help. Anyone interested in more information is encouraged to contact Elitzur Haokip at tel/ fax 0091-385-229716. His mailing address is Amishav House, Jail Road, Old Lambulane, Imphal 795001 Manipur, India.

Another source of information is Michael Menashe, a Bnei Menashe living in Israel. Michael is in the Israeli army and when on leave can be reached by phone or fax in Israel at 011-972-2-9971185 and is able to answer questions to help us understand this situation. From Michael's view, Manipur is a complex place in which divide-and-conquer is the ruling strategy. He has given me a detailed list of attacks and killings. Every week there is a killing spree by the Kukis or the Nagas. Peace accords are made and broken in record time and because foreigners are allowed into the state of Manipur for only 24 hours and even then movement is limited, the world knows very little.

I have hesitated to talk about the death and destruction occurring in Manipur because our vocal and powerful foes will argue that the Bnei Menashe are not really Jewish but are just claiming to be so to escape a civil war. That is simply not true. The truth is that the Bnei Menashe have been victimized in a civil war because they are a minority that is easy prey when law and order are in abeyance. If anything, the civil war has diminished the interest of some who are fearful of the consequences of Jewish identity.

In the middle of the war in Manipur, what does a Jew think about when he has the time to catch a breath? "Books," says Elitzur Haokip. His list includes such books as *Popular Halachah; The Jewish Woman and Her Home*; and *The Midrash Says*. And for those of you in America and elsewhere who come from synagogues with more Torahs than the *aron kodesh* can hold, eight communities still do not have a Torah. (For advice about donating books and Torahs, please contact Rabbi Avichail in Israel by phone or fax at 011-972-2-642-4606). Mr. Haokip asked me to remind Kulanu supporters that he has to service 17 communities (Imphal, Tuibuong, D.Phailien, Headquarters Veng, Tuipiphai, Petatikvah Buoljol, Patlien, Ortsion, New Dampi, Peyandg, Tuilaphai, Mateejandg, Kangpokpi, Motbung, G Phalbung, Loibuel, and Moreh), which include the two that were burnt to the ground.

Despite the war, Rabbi Avichail is under intense pressure to send a teacher for the 17 communities. Initially there was a delay since not enough money had been raised by Kulanu/Amishav for this teacher; then it was too dangerous. Yoel Illan and his young family would like to go to teach at an opportune moment, even with insufficient funds. Kulanu and Amishav continue to raise funds to keep Yoel in Manipur for a year or more. Diane and I spent several days with Yoel in Israel before his wedding and, although we worry and pray for him and his family, we are very proud of the work they are doing.

Rabbi Avichail, who has brought 300 Bnei Menashe to Israel over the last few years, has also been raising money for these refugees in India, who are in acute need of housing, clothing, and food. There are 200 families from Churachandpur whose houses were destroyed. People were injured and they remain destitute. Some money has been sent, but we must continue to help them. Rabbi Avichail had raised \$20,000 for the next group of Bnei Menashe to travel to Israel (it takes \$700 per person), but half of this precious money was needed for emergency assistance to the refugees. As a consequence, fundraising efforts have to be redoubled to cover these significant travel costs.

The eminent documentary film producer Simcha Yacobovici described our responsibilities with eloquence in a letter to the Chief Rabbinate, excerpted in a companion article below.

In the summer issue of the Kulanu newsletter, I asked supporters to write to President Weizman, 3 Hanassi St, Jerusalem Israel 92188. Or, phone 011-972-2-26707211. If you have not yet written, do so now. And if you already wrote, please try again. **Please ask the President to grant visas to this endangered community.**

(Tax-deductible contributions to Kulanu can be earmarked for Bnei Menashe programs.)

“IN MORTAL DANGER”

(This letter was sent to Israel's Chief Rabbi in July 1997)

Honorable Rabbi:

Allow me to introduce myself. I was born in Israel and emigrated to Canada with my parents. I returned to Israel to do military service, and completed my service as an officer. I hope to return to live in Israel, with God's help. I completed university in philosophy, and have been producing documentary films for the past few years. The company which I head produced many important films, among which are films about the Ethiopian Jews and about the descendants of the Marranos, and with great success. We were awarded internationally acclaimed prizes for our work. I recently became a *baal tshuva*, observing *mitzvot* to the best of my ability. I founded a synagogue in my neighborhood for families who are far from Judaism, and many became *baalei tshuva*.

Our goal is to produce films on the dispersed of Israel. We are in the midst of preparing a film about a group called "Bnei Menashe," who seem indeed to have an Israelite past. Before Passover we filmed this tribe in the states of Mizoram and Manipur in India. In the short time that we were there we became enthusiastic supporters of these people, especially those who live as Jews. We were very impressed by the strength of their belief. They have synagogues where they pray in Hebrew from prayer books they printed for themselves. They pray with prayer shawls which they made. They circumcise themselves, keep the Sabbath and the holidays, and fulfill the *mitzvot* to the best of their knowledge and ability. Judaism was not brought to them from the outside. Rather, they decided to return to Judaism over 25 years ago, and today there are 3500 observant "Jews". To the best of my knowledge, the *bet din* responsible for their conversion sees them as possible Jews, and does not require that they make a blessing upon immersion in a *mikveh*.

I trust that you know of these excellent people. We spoke with other tribes in the area, and they know them as honest people, dedicated to their religion.

All this I write to you, because this group is now in mortal danger in India, and there is a halachic duty for anyone who can to do his utmost to try and save them, since in *pikuach nefesh* we must do for even a small minority within a large majority of gentiles.

When we were there, Bnei Menashe were being killed daily by the Naga tribespeople, who were persecuting them for many years, claiming that they are strangers in India, sitting on the Naga lands. Two weeks ago, the town of Churachandpur was attacked by the Naga. Many were killed, houses were burned down, and though most were able to escape the enemy, about 5000 are now living as

(Continued on page 12)

LETTERS (CONT.)

(Continued from page 2)

of Judaism. Most West Africans (prior to influences of Christianity and Islam) observed Saturday as their Sabbath just as in Judaism. The Ashanti priests wear a twelve-part breast plate and a gold-embled turban, both found together only among the biblical priests of Judaism.”

Mindi Cohen and Paul Zeitz
Lusaka, Zambia

Parallels in Fiction

Dear Mrs. Tosie:

I read about you in an old issue of National Geographic – the one with the long story about the Navajo Nation. It said you were a member of the Bitter Water Clan, which was also the clan of my grandmother....

I am one-fourth Navajo by blood. My grandmother told me she was all Navajo, but she married a white man and so did my mother. But I feel I am a Navajo, and I would like to see what can be done about becoming officially a member of the tribe. I would also like to come out to Arizona and talk to you about my family....

Sincerely, Henry Highhawk
(from the novel *Talking God* by Tony Hillerman, Harper & Row, 1989)

“IN MORTAL DANGER” (Cont.)

(Continued from page 11)

refugees in an army camp, with almost no food. Others escaped to Mizoram and to other places, but they are still in danger.

In my dealing with the Ethiopian Jews in the past I knew of the letter written by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt”l to Rabbi Tendler, saying that “Regarding the Jewishness of the Ethiopians, though there is a doubt and they require true conversion before joining the Jewish people, yet even before their conversion there is a *mitzvah* to save them from danger or destruction like any of Israel. And one must know that even if according to *halacha* they are not Jews, because they are willing to be killed for their belief in Judaism, we are obligated to save them.”

Honored Rabbi, you head Am Israel in matters of conversion. To the best of my knowledge, in matters regarding immigrants whose Jewishness is in question, the Interior Ministry is completely guided by you. Therefore you, sir, must also be instrumental in hastening the *aliya* of Bnei Menashe who are living as Jews. Especially where there’s no danger that they will try to assimilate into Israel, and it is possible to place them within observant communities, as is already done today in Gush-Katif and in Quiryat-Arba.

Honored Rabbi, do we not all have the obligation to save these people according to *halacha*, so that their blood is not on our head?

Simcha Yacobovici, Toronto, Canada

Quote from an African Conservationist:

WE WILL CONSERVE ONLY WHAT WE LOVE.
WE WILL LOVE ONLY WHAT WE UNDERSTAND.
WE WILL UNDERSTAND ONLY WHAT WE ARE TAUGHT.

INTERNET NOTES

Kulanu Participates in Jewish Web Week

Kulanu’s popular web site, coordinated by David Turetsky, is one of the 613 Jewish web sites featured on the Internet during Jewish Web Week, February 22-27. It was anticipated that 600,000 Jews (the number counted at Sinai) would “assemble” at Jewish web sites during the week. In case you’ve forgotten, our web page is at <http://www.ubalt.edu/www/kulanu>, and a special connection there brings the reader to the Jewish Web Week site.

Abayudaya Recording Available Online

“Shalom Everybody Everywhere!” the recording of the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda recently released by Kulanu, has been placed on Tara Publications’ online Jewish music store, accessible at <http://www.jewishmusic.com>. (The recording is also available through the order form on page 15 of this newsletter.)

Rufina on the Web

A web site dedicated to Portuguese history and culture throughout the world features an article by Rufina Bernardetti Silva Mausenbaum, a descendant of Portuguese Crypto-Jews now living in South Africa (one of her articles appeared on page one of the last Kulanu newsletter). Go to <http://www.lusaweb.com/> and then scroll down to “comunidades”. She will be placing regular notices on this site.

Jews in Cuba, India and Kobe on the Web

An interesting web site focusing on the Jews of Cuba can be visited at <http://www.freedomnet.com/~menorah>.

Visit <http://members.aol.com/fmoon101/jews.html> for a fascinating look at three Jewish communities in India – the Cochins, the Baghdadis, and the Bene Israel.

For a view of the history and current information on the Jews of Kobe, Japan, try <http://xenon.stanford.edu/~tamar/Kobe/Kobe.html>.

Karaite Home Page

Confused about who the Karaites are? A home page on the web at <http://www.euronet.nl/users/sota/karaim.htm> describes the history and culture of these people, who are related to the Essenes, the people of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Sephardic House on the Web

The web site for Sephardic House, an Institute for Researching and Promoting Sephardic History and Culture, is http://www.sephardim.org/Sephardic_House/index.html. The site features a calendar of cultural programs, publications, and newsletter excerpts.

Spanish and Portuguese Parasha Lists

There are weekly *Parasha* lists in Spanish and Portuguese aimed at beginners. To join, send message to listproc@virtual.co.il with either “subscribe judaismo firstname lastname” for the Spanish one, or “subscribe judaismo-p firstname lastname” for the Portuguese one.

Portuguese and Brazilian Genealogy

To subscribe to the Portuguese Genealogy list serve, send a message to PORTUGAL-L-request@rootsweb.com with the word “subscribe” on the text. To subscribe to the Brazilian Genealogy list-serve, send a message to BRAZIL-L-request@rootsweb.com with the word “subscribe” on the text.

New Tri-Lingual Sephardi Web Site

The European Sephardic Institute has a tri-lingual (French,

INTERNET NOTES (CONT.)

Books of Note

(Continued from page 12)

English, Ladino) web site based in Brussels that posts articles and offers activities and research facilities. Check it out at <http://users.skynet.be/ise>.

Kulanu List-serve Archives Available

Did you know that you can obtain monthly archives of messages to the Kulanu List-serve? Simply send an e-mail message to: fileserv@ube.ubalt.edu containing the single line: SEND Kulanu-L.yyyy-mm. (Note that yyyy is the year, and mm is the two-digit month).

Erensia Sefardi Web Page

<http://members.aol.com/erensia/erensiasefardi.index.html> is the web site for Erensia Sefardi, which is presented in English and Ladino.

Sino-Judaic Institute Web Site

<http://www.rickshaw.org/sino-judaica.htm> will take readers to the web site of the Sino-Judaic Institute. The site includes historical background about the Jews in Kaifeng, Shanghai, Harbin, and Tientsin, as well as information in the Institute's projects and publications, including a Jewish travel guide to China.

Crypto-Judaism for AOL Subscribers

AOL has agreed to include a Message Board on Crypto Judaism in its Jewish Community. AOL members can access it by going to Keyword (Ctrl K) then typing "Jewish" When the welcome screen appears, click on "Boards" Then click on "Arts and Culture" then scroll to "Crypto Jews" Here is a shortcut to it for AOL Members: `Crypto-Jews`

Translation Service on Web!

The following Alta Vista website will help to translate Portuguese and Spanish into English (or vice versa) – and other languages as well. This could be an invaluable tool for Kulanu activists! <http://babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate>.

A New Ladino Dictionary!

Not only is the revised third edition of Al Passy's new *Ladino-English Dictionary* a valuable resource, but you can help Kulanu by ordering it. Passy has generously offered to send a \$10 donation to Kulanu for every dictionary ordered by a purchaser mentioning this newsletter. The *Sephardic Folk Dictionary English to Ladino-Ladino to English* contains a collection of the most-used words from everyday speech and correspondence of the American descendants of Sephardic Jews. To order, send a check for \$32 to Al Passy, 9700 Monte Mar Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90035. For further information, he can also be contacted at apassy@aol.com

Regina Igel Publishes

Dr. Regina Igel, a Brazilian Jewish scholar at the University of Maryland and a Kulanu vice president, is the author of a new work, *Imigrantes Judeus/Escritores Brasileiros (O Componente Judaico na Literatura Brasileira)*. Prefacio de Rubens Ricupero. Sao Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1997. The English translation of the title is *Jewish Immigrants/ Brazilian Authors (The Jewish Component in Brazilian Literature)*. There is no English translation of the book as yet.

A 100-Year Odyssey

Marguerite: Journey of a Sephardic Woman, by Gloria Sananes Stein, recalls the 100-year odyssey of the author's mother, who grew up in the Ottoman Salonica at the turn of the century, worked as a reporter there during WWI, and emigrated to Brooklyn, NY. This historic/sociological document is filled with folklore, humor, songs, recipes and Ladino expressions. To order, send \$12.95 plus \$3 shipping for first book (50 cents for each additional book) to: Marguerite, PO Box 103, Holtwood, PA 17532-0103. Mention Kulanu with your order, and we will receive a donation from the author. For further information, contact Gloria Sananes Stein by e-mail at amglory@epix.net.

A Novel about Secret Kabbalists In 1506 Lisbon

Richard Zimler, an American living in Portugal, has written a best-selling (in Portugal) novel entitled *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon* (Overlook Press, 1997). Set during the Lisbon massacre of April 1506, it involves Jewish forced converts to Christianity who were secret kabbalists. Distributed by Penguin Putnam Inc., it has also been selling well in Brazil and Germany and will be available in the US (ISBN 0-87951-834-0) in April.

Two Bios of Barros Basto Published in Portuguese

Ben-Rosh, by Elvira de Azevedo Mea and Inacio Steinhardt, is the biography (in Portuguese) of Captain Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto, an influential Portuguese republican and war hero of crypto-Jewish ancestry who courageously initiated a proselytic movement with the aim of bringing descendants of Crypto-Jews back to Judaism. He is sometimes referred to as the "Apostle of the Marranos." Published by Edicoes Afrontamento, Rua Costa Cabral, 857, Porto, Portugal, the book is also obtainable via Internet at: <http://www.liv-arcoiris.pt>. Inquiries from publishers interested in an English language edition should be addressed to Inacio Steinhardt at inacio@cheerful.com.

Another biography of this colorful figure, *O Resgate dos Marranos Portugueses (Rescue of the Portuguese Marranos)* (in Portuguese with parts in English) was written by David Augusto Canelo. The author can be reached at Apartado 25, 6250 Belmonte, Portugal, tesc0658@mail.telepac.pt, on the web at <http://www.terravista.pt/Guincho/1573/>. Obtainable also via Internet at: <http://www.liv-arcoiris.pt>.

Kulanu wishes you a
Happy Passover!

A Visit with the Jews of Rusape, Zimbabwe

By Mindi Cohen and Paul Zeitz

In a recent edition of the Kulanu newsletter, a brief story ran about the Rusape congregation in Zimbabwe was mentioned. We are currently living in Lusaka, Zambia. During the recent holiday season, our family traveled to Rusape and here is a brief description of our experiences.

We arranged to stay with Shlomo Guwazah and his family. He has three older sons (David 18, Tesfah 17, and Daniel 13) from a British wife and one 2-year-old son (Kudzi) from his Zimbabwean wife, Monica. We were welcomed into their home like family. We stayed for two nights and by the time we left we felt like family. It was the first time we were welcomed to live in an African home.

Shlomo shared a lot about his past journeying into Rastafarianism, Christianity, and Judaism for the last 15-20 years. The Jewish congregation he attends practices "prophetic" Judaism, which originated in Virginia about 100 years ago; it is affiliated with African American Beth El Congregations. They define prophetic in the sense of their leaders and the fact that each one of us is truly a prophet of God. Shlomo described how he and the Rusape Jews feel a connection with Judaism that harmonizes with their historical Shona heritage of a belief in one God. They described the need to reconnect to their ancient past in order to find the strength and the framework to take control of their lives and fulfill the vision of the African Renaissance. Individuals are trying to buck centuries of oppression by traditional leaders, colonialists, and modern-day cultural imperialism to assume ownership and control of their own destinies. Shlomo believes that Judaism is the path.

On Sabbath morning, we went with Shlomo and his family for whole day (9 am-4 pm), an experience that we will never forget. The tabernacle (synagogue) sits on the side of a small mountain by a lake. It was spectacular. The tabernacle was filled to capacity with over 100 people. The rabbi welcomed us and described the origins of their belief and their delight in sharing their rituals and customs with us. This was a cultural mind blowout! You cannot imagine how enchanting it was to hear 50 Africans in a choir singing a new version of the *Shema* (the most sacred prayer in Judaism) in a combined English, Hebrew, and Shona. They sang *Adon Olam*, *David Melech Yisrael*, and many other songs in English and Shona. The music and chanting was revivalist in nature and Judaic in spirit! The Shona songs were our favorite, even though we don't know what they meant. The kids played outside, drew water from the well, ate pomegranates, and chased turkeys. After the morning service the congregation had lunch together followed by singing and announcements. During the announcements the rabbi said something in Shona and then they sent a collection around and gave the money to Monica. Later we learned the money was to help feed us.

After we left the tabernacle we went with Shlomo and Daniel to the village that he grew up in and where his mother still lives. The village was about 20 minutes outside of Rusape. Her house was well developed for a village home, with several rooms in the main house. She had traditional rondovels (round huts) -- one was the kitchen and another was where her maize is stored. As we approached the house, Shlomo's uncle and grandmother welcomed us. His grandmother took an immediate liking to Paul, flirting with him. She had been drinking way too much of their homemade brew and she was stumbling through the maize fields. We were given a traditional welcome inside her living room where she and three other relatives bent their knees and clapped their hands. We then had drinks outside since she has no electricity and it was quite dark inside. Outside her house she had a large maize field and beautiful rock-formed hills. The children ran around chasing her goats.

Several days later we rejoined the Rusape tabernacle for the

celebration of the Convocation of the Feast of Tevet. This gathering recalls the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the migration of Jews into Africa. This is one of their high holidays. The tabernacle was even more crowded than before, and the choir was complete, with about 70 people. The energy was overwhelming! The whole congregation stays together for eight days with prayers beginning at 4 am. Each day they pray in a different position, beginning with standing; on the last day they are lying flat on the floor.

Rabbi Ambros Makuwaza told the congregation how appreciative he is of all the different people he has met through Kulanu and the gifts that the tabernacle has received. We are now working with the Rusape tabernacle to help them develop a proposal and get a sponsor to produce a CD and a tape. We are hoping that Kulanu will get involved.

The Rusape tabernacle welcomes donations of Judaic items (tallit, kippot, books, etc). Please send them to Rabbi Makuwaza, Rusape No. 1 Tabernacle, PO Box 207, Rusape Zimbabwe.

The Bonds of Maori and Jewish Culture (cont.)

(Continued from page 4)

concept of God, and the similarity of roles between Maori elders and rabbis. Other 19th century Christian missionaries compiled 38 factors that tied the Maoris to Jews, including menstrual, death and war customs. (Their Jewish noses were also specifically pointed out.) In the 1830s, influenced by the Old Testament of the Bible the missionaries had brought, a Maori warrior named Te Atua Wera founded a movement characterizing the Maoris as a Lost Tribe of Israel chosen by God. Another Maori warrior who identified with the Jews, Te Ua Haumene, spared the lives of the (mainstream) Jewish traders in the towns he captured.

A Judaism-based Maori religion, the Ringatu Church, provided the inspiration for a recent best-selling novel, *The Season of the Jew*, by New Zealand author Maurice Shadbolt. The Ringatu Church (the word Ringatu means "the upraised hand," after the hands in a blessing by Jewish priests) is waiting for the messiah, requires memorization of lengthy biblical passages which must be recited perfectly, and holds services on the 12th day of each month.

It is true that the Maori are interested in Judaism and Israel. An official of the Israeli Embassy in Wellington is quoted as saying, "From both sides, Maori and Jewish, it's obvious that we share common beliefs and historical myths. Ours is a close friendship." As part of the Jerusalem 3000 observance, the Maori queen was among the Israeli officials who planted commemorative olive trees in New Zealand. Three Maori settlements are named after Jerusalem, and other hamlets are called Judea, Canaan, and Babylon.

A few newly urbanized Maoris are converting to Judaism, some with a view toward reclaiming part of their history, others not. Cohen interviewed one such Maori convert, Steve Daniels, 34, who had always "felt an empathy with things Jewish" and described his conversion to Judaism "like coming home."

Other Maoris are identifying with the Jewish people in their movement for national self-determination and for a revitalized Maori language.

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Of Andhra Pradesh and the Jewish Maggidim (cont.)

(continued from page 10)

of believers when he returns. His passage was paid by a Philadelphia family who had heard of the B'nai Ephraim and had corresponded with Shmuel Yacobi. Through the intervention of an American rabbi who met Shmuel Yacobi in Cochin, India, Dan was permitted to stay at Hadar Hatorah, a Lubavich yeshiva for *baalei teshuvot* (religious returnees) located in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. It is important to note that Dan "was permitted to stay" at the yeshiva because, in the eyes of his hosts, Dan was not Jewish according to *halacha* and therefore he could not be considered a "student." During the course of the year, Dan's devotion to Judaism and his desire to join *Klal Yisrael* (the Jewish Community) was noted and arrangements were made for him to convert by a recognized Orthodox *bet din*. He is now a "student" at Hadar Hatorah.

The B'nai Ephraim live in India in the city of Vijayawada and in two nearby villages, Chebrole and Yerajerla. They speak Telugu, the Dravidian language of the people of the State of Andhra Pradesh. They belong to a clan known locally as the Maggidim. There are seven million Maggidim in Andhra Pradesh. They trace their ancestry to a king known as Matanyahu who was forced to leave Assur (Assyria) with his followers about 2,700 years ago for Kashmir. After a short period of peace in Kashmir (known to them as *Jambu*), they were slaughtered by the local people (the "Aryans") and forced to move on to Magada (now known as Patria) near Calcutta. There they took their clan-name from the town of Magada. From Magada, their journey continued southward until they reached their present location in southeastern India.

The Maggidim traditionally ate meat and dealt in skins and leather goods. For this reason they became outcasts in the eyes of their Hindu neighbors. Over time, their economic condition deteriorated so that by the time the British ruled India the Maggidim were sharecroppers -- tillers of land owned by scheduled-cast Hindus; and as sharecroppers they were permitted to keep only a portion of what they grew. They were the poorest of the poor, shunned and living separate from the rest of the population in ghettos known as *keris* or *cheris*.

The condition of the Maggidim improved somewhat under the British, who offered them civil service jobs. Many became Christian,

especially during a particularly terrible famine when the foreign missionaries led their Christian flock ("the rice Christians") while the Hindu population starved. The legacy which the British left the Maggidim was that they learned skills by which some could leave sharecropping and live and work in the cities and towns.

Since independence, the situation of the Maggidim has become more complicated. According to these informants, to the extent that the Maggidim classify themselves as Hindu outcasts, they receive certain privileges from the government. If they identify as Christians or Jews they lose these benefits, although the Christians and Jewish Maggidim are shunned no less than their Hindu counterparts. In the overall, the condition of the Maggidim whether Christian, Jewish, Moslem or Hindu -- and the condition of other outcast clans -- are far more desperate than that of the scheduled-cast Hindus who make up the majority of the population of Andhra Pradesh.

Shmuel Yacobi has studied old records left by the Hindus and, before them, by the Buddhists. He claims that those records report that the origin of the Maggidim (and a sister clan, the Malmadim) is Assur. The records also report on certain of their customs which are unmistakably Jewish, namely (i) they bury their dead in separate cemeteries rather than cremate, (ii) the dead are buried so that the head falls toward Jerusalem; (iii) they eat meat but not that of a pig. Shmuel believes that before they were Christian and before they were Hindu or Buddhist, the Maggidim and the Malmadim were Jewish. And that belief is widespread among the seven million Maggidim and the four million Malmadim of Andhra Pradesh.

Today the Jewish Maggidim have three synagogues; the one in Vijayawada is called Beth Hagodish; the one in Chabrote is called Beth B'nai Yaacob and the one in Yerajerla is called Beth Hasidim. Although they are only 200 in number, they are closely watched by their non-Jewish clan members, who are sympathetic to their efforts to return to the religion of their ancestors.

KULANU ("ALL OF US") is a tax-exempt organization of Jews of varied backgrounds and practices dedicated to finding lost and dispersed remnants of the Jewish people and assisting those who wish to (re)join the Jewish community. Kulanu is undertaking a variety of activities worldwide on behalf of these dispersed groups, including research, contacts, education, conversion when requested, and relocation to Israel if desired.

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Edited by Karen Primack

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