



Delicious Peace Spreads to Poorest Villages

By Laura Wetzler

Kulanu has been doing farmer development projects since 2002 in an effort to fight poverty in Uganda through the dignity of work, the highest form of mitzvah. Workshops have been sponsored in fruit drying processes, irrigation methods, vanilla curing, organic growing, beekeeping, appropriate rural farm technology, and more.

Our Peace Kawomera coffee project is a success. But Arabica coffee cannot be grown in the low-lying, remote Abayudaya villages of Namutumba and Nasenyi, and so last year Kulanu connected farmers with a strategic partner, African Organic/Amfri Farms, run by Gulzar and Amin Shivji, processors and exporters of high quality organic fruits and vanilla, to develop alternative strategies.



Delicious Peace Vanilla workers in Uganda

JJ Keki, who is a master farmer, has always immediately utilized every resource from Kulanu's farmer workshops and, characteristically, had already begun growing organic vanilla, a high value crop. Cantor Mike Stein of Los Angeles (a friend of Rabbi Gershon Sizomu) enters the story with a huge mitzvah: he introduced JJ Keki and African Organic/Amfri Farm to his brother Herb Stein, who owns Natural Flavors, one of the largest purveyors of gourmet organic vanilla in the world. A sample test shipment passed with flying colors. JJ Keki, organizer extraordinaire, then began sourcing a huge order of 22 tons of organically grown vanilla from the Peace Kawomera Farmer Cooperative in the Mbale area for Herb Stein at Natural Flavors, who agreed to pay farmers twice the going market rate! African Organics/Amfri Farm is curing it all in a meticulous 90-day traditional process and says JJ has sourced some of the best vanilla grown in Uganda.

Kulanu was asked to help facilitate this project and is working closely with Mike, JJ, Peace Kawomera manager Kakaire Hatibu, and Gulzar and Amin to insure its success. The Stein family mitzvah, JJ and his cooperative, and African Organic's hard work have paved the way for a major new enterprise. On the basis of this work, JJ and his cooperative board at Peace Kawomera have been able to expand and welcome Namutumba and Nasenyi, the poorest distant villages, into

the Peace Kawomera Farm Cooperative family to grow organic vanilla (it takes three years for vanilla plants to mature to first harvest), peanuts, and other crops that will be brokered by Peace Kawomera Cooperative for sale in local and export markets.

Mazal tov to Abayudaya leader JJ Keki, a brilliant farmer and a Moses to his people, and to all the Peace Kawomera interfaith farmers, to the Steins, and to Gulzar and Amin at African Organics. Thanks to them, Kulanu supporters have the hope of one day in the future seeing an end to the grinding poverty that has gripped Abayudaya farmers and their neighbors for so long. May it be so in our lifetime!

Remembrance and Solidarity For the Mumbai Massacre

By Romiel Daniel

(The Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, The Queens Jewish Community Council, The Indian Jewish Congregation of USA and other organizations had an Evening of Remembrance in solidarity with Mumbai on Thursday, December 4, 2008 at the Queensborough Community College. Representatives from the Councils, Chabad Rabbis, Dr. Uma Mysorekar from the Hindu Temple Society, UJA, NY Board of Rabbis, and the Sikh Federation spoke on the carnage which took place November 26th to 29, 2008. The following speech was delivered by Cantor Romiel Daniel.)

I was born in Mumbai, India, and I am Jewish, both of which I cherish equally and dearly. Whilst we Jews have lived in India for more than 2,000 years, a life of harmony and co-existence with all faiths, this peaceful existence has been shattered and the rich history has become bloody.

What did the terrorists want? First they wanted to hurt and embarrass India. They wanted to hurt India's economy, jealous of India's growing prosperity. India is a success story with millions of educated forming the backbone of the country. They have been educated at some of the finest educational institutions in the world. In this realm of terror, guilt is not easy to determine and retaliation is even more difficult.

So they attacked Indians, Americans, British and others from successful democracies unlike their own societies at hotels, hospitals and railway stations. These were all easy targets for cowards that struck Mumbai to kill people. Can you reason with such madness?

But why strike Chabad House, a modest building housing Rabbi Gavriel Noach Hotzberg, his five months pregnant wife Rivka, two other children, Israeli Bension Kruman, a grandmother Yocheved Orpaz, and Norma Rabinowich. Again, the reason is hatred. Kill the Israelis, attack other Jews. Break the good relations between India and Israel.

This building was described by the *New York Times* as “an accidental hostage scene” and by BBC as an office building. Having been born and educated in Mumbai, I know that area well. It is not accidental that a nondescript building was found by the terrorists where hostages who became victims were tortured, mutilated and killed.

We do not fear these warped terrorists and their masters who will

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our Gratitude

By Harriet Bograd

December is a heartwarming time for Kulanu. Many friends responded to our year-end solicitation letter. Many included lovely cards or notes thanking Kulanu for the work we do. Many reached out to others in creative ways. I was especially moved by the ways that parents and grandparents engaged their children in *tzedakah* (charity) as part of their Chanukah celebrations. Here are some of the messages we received:

"My name is Aaron Posner. I'm Joshua's little brother. I am giving 10% of my Chanukah money to Kulanu." (Josh Posner raised funds for Kulanu as part of his bar mitzvah project last year).

Marcia Kaplan donated generously and wrote: "Given in honor of Jen and Brian Primack and their children, who agreed to this donation instead of Chanukah presents."

Lionel Okun, age 91, wrote that he is organizing a program to introduce the 10 Jewish residents of the senior housing community where he lives in Southern California to Kulanu.

David Wise, a high school math teacher at a private school who has spent two summers volunteering in Uganda, sent a note to his students' families saying that instead of Chanukah or Christmas presents, he'd prefer to have people make donations to Kulanu in his honor. Several parents sent generous donations.

Rabbi Joseph Prouser and Dr. Ora Horn Prouser gave Delicious Peace Coffee from Uganda (deliciouspeace.com) as holiday gifts to their children's teachers.

Shereen Sarick wrote, "We are raising our son . . . with the tradition of giving instead of receiving on Chanukah, to teach the real meaning of the holiday, rededication. Every year since he was old enough, he gets to choose the eight recipients of *tzedakah*. We honor and dedicate the night's new candle to that organization, and talk about the work they do for *Tikkun Olam*." Her son chose Kulanu for the fourth night of Chanukah.

Mumbai Massacre (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

finally fade into oblivion and never remembered.

One of the greatest Emperors of Mysore, Tipu Sultan, was a Muslim governing a large Hindu population with absolute fairness. During the 2nd Mysore war in 1780-1784 against the British East India Company, several prisoners were taken including the Bene Israel (a community I belong to) who were part of the British Army. They would have been put to the sword but were released when Tipu Sultan's mother told her son to spare the lives of the Bene Israel as they are the people of the Book and spoken of in glowing terms in the Koran. Samuel Divekar, who was one of the released prisoners, came back to Bombay, and built a synagogue called *Shaar Hashamayim* (the Gates of Heaven in Hebrew). The synagogue was completed in 1796 and it still being used. It is in the heart of the Muslim area.

We have never had a Holocaust in India. We are proud of that. Three times a day every Jew has a silent prayer where we say, "May all wickedness perish instantly. May all the enemies soon be cut down. O Lord, speedily uproot and crush the arrogant. Cast them down and humble them speedily in our days." Muslims and Jews believe in the same prophets Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Such acts of violence are not prescribed in any holy book.

May the Almighty give strength to all those families who have to bear the loss of their loved ones. We grieve with them. May the Almighty, who creates peace in his High Heavens, create peace for all of us.

HELP WANTED!

Dear Readers:

This spring I will have served 15 years as your **Volunteer Newsletter Editor**. At that point, I would like to let another lucky person take my place communicating with fascinating Jewish personalities around the globe! This position has enabled me to make hundreds of friends and hear amazing stories. It is always gratifying to see the concrete fruits of one's labors, and there is plenty of room for creativity.

The Kulanu Board will consider one editor, co-editors, or an editorial board of writers and editors. Writing experience is a must; editing and desk-top publishing experience are helpful. I'm available to help the transition go smoothly.

This is a rewarding mitzvah, and one crucial to Kulanu's success. Feel free to send questions to me.

L'Shalom,

Karen Primack

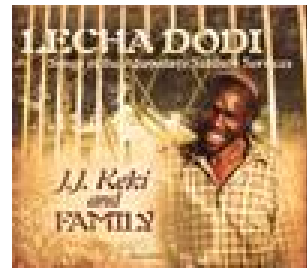
newsletterA@kulanu.org

Kulanu Boutique Adds Two New CDs

Kulanu proudly announces that our [Boutique](#) will be handling two new Jewish CDs by famous African musicians – the perfect gifts for your Passover seder hosts!

- Well-known Ethiopian Jewish musician Alula Tzadik has dedicated his newest CD to our organization, naming it "Kulanu"! Following the format his last, sold-out CD, "Make Love Not War," the new one contains a similar mix of traditional Jewish liturgy and original Ethiopia-influenced Jewish songs, all with the exciting rhythms and instrumentation of World Music. All the music and lyrics are by Alula except the traditional ones. The songs are in Hebrew, English, and Amharic. Alula plays 12 instruments and speaks 8 languages. Read about him at www.myspace.com/alulamusic.
- Abayudaya master musician, leader, and coffee farmer [JJ Keki](#) has been heard on three CDs, including the Grammy-nominated "Abayudaya: Music from the Jewish People of Uganda." His newest recording is a family project, also featuring his daughter Rachel and son Maccabbi. Titled "[Lecha Dodi](#)," it includes Hebrew, Luganda, and Lugisu songs and prayers from the Abayudaya Shabbat service.

To order, go to www.kulanuboutique.com or see the Boutique page in this newsletter.



KULANU ("ALL OF US"), a tax-exempt organization of Jews of varied backgrounds and practices, finds lost and dispersed remnants of the Jewish people and assists those who wish to (re)join world Jewry. Kulanu is undertaking a variety of activities worldwide on behalf of these dispersed groups, including research, contacts, education, and conversion information if requested. This newsletter is published quarterly by Kulanu, 165 West End Ave., 3R, New York, NY 10023.

The Donmeh: True Believers, Jewish Heretics or Untrustworthy Moslem Converts?

© 2008 By Irwin Berg

Today, if they wish to be identified at all, they call themselves "Sabbateans." They are the descendants of Jews who converted to Islam in the 17th Century to follow the example of their messiah, Sabbatai Zevi; at that time they called themselves *Ma'aminim*, True Believers. The Jews called them *Minim*, Heretics. The Turks have always called them *Donmeh*, a term for an untrustworthy convert.

In 1666 Zevi sailed from his home town of Izmir for Istanbul. He led his followers to believe that he would inaugurate the messianic era by replacing the Sultan. Instead, when Sultan Mehmet IV gave him the choice between death and conversion to Islam, Zevi chose to convert. Although outwardly he professed to be a devout Moslem, to his close followers he preached a *melange* of Jewish, Islamic and distinctively Sabbatean rites. He died in exile in Ulcini, Montenegro, in 1676.

What were the conditions that would permit pious Jews of Spanish descent living in the Ottoman Empire to honor Zevi's mission to such an extent that they would follow their messiah into Islam? Two hundred families were known to have done so in 1666 and an additional 300 in 1683 -- seven years after Zevi's death. This is a complex subject. A simplified answer is that belief can be so intense that nothing -- no matter how contrary to expectations -- can defeat or weaken it. Some historians explain Sabbateanism by emphasizing the travails of Spanish Jews with forced conversions and expulsion which brought them to the Ottoman Empire. Yet Sabbateanism also spread into Ashkenazic Eastern Europe, where a group of them, under the leadership of Jacob Frank, converted to Christianity.

For approximately 250 years Salonica, Greece, which was a part of the Ottoman Empire until 1912, was the center of Sabbateanism. After the population exchange of 1924, that center moved to Istanbul. The Sabbateans outwardly practiced and professed Islam; inwardly, they observed a Sabbatean faith which contained mixed elements of Orthodox Judaism, Kabbalistic and Sufi mysticism, and customs and beliefs of their own. Among their singular beliefs were that their messiah, Sabbatai Zevi, did not die but was in hiding and would return; that with the arrival of the messiah they were no longer subject to the laws of the Torah; and that to conquer evil they must experience it.

In time the Sabbateans divided into three sects -- the Kapandjis, the Karakashis, and the Yakubis. By the end of the 19th Century, their religious zeal began to wane, and they became increasingly secular and increasingly identified with Turkish nationalism and culture. Many thought to be Donmeh descendants became wealthy and obtained high positions in the Ottoman Empire and later in the Republic of Turkey. Today, one original characteristic remains: to the extent that they are able to do so, they hide their origins. No one knows how many Turks can trace their ancestry to the Donmeh, although estimates range from 20,000 to 50,000. There is also evidence that, although they are no longer a religious community, some still maintain contact with each other through private, social activities.

This reluctance to advertise their origins has a sound basis. There is a segment of Islamists who believe that the Donmeh are secretly Jews; and with help from professing Jews, they control the Turkish government and society. From the establishment of the secular Republic of Turkey in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, there has been a conflict between the secularists and the Islamists over the nature of the State. In the course of this 85-year struggle, many have come to believe that the Donmeh are the main obstacle to the creation of an Islamist state.

During a recent visit to Turkey, I had the good fortune to make contact with a Sabbatean descendant. I shall call him Hassan. Hassan is a Kapandji. He allowed me to interview him and to write this article so long as I did not use his real name or otherwise identify him. Hassan was quite emphatic about contradicting some of what has

been written about the Donmeh. He denied that any of the Sabbatean sects engaged in antinomian deviations including wife-swapping -- accusations that have been accepted by reputable scholars. He also asserted that Sabbateanism is not completely dead but still had adherents among "a couple of thousand of the Karakashis." Lastly, he denied that Sabbateanism was affected by Islam except to mask their inner Sabbatean faith, "especially in Sabbatai Zevi's times."

The false allegation of sexual promiscuity among the Donmeh has two origins, according to Hassan. It came about as a result of an equality between the sexes practiced by the Sabbateans, which offended both Jews and Moslems. These allegations were also used as a club by the rabbis to prevent Jews from marrying Sabbateans. Unsure whether Jewish law contravened their status as Jews, the Jewish religious authorities used the suspicion of Sabbatean offspring being *mamzerim* (bastards) to apply Jewish law so that Jews were prohibited from marrying Sabbateans.

Hassan invited me to his home, where I met his father. Both Hassan and his father identified with the Jewish people. Hassan spoke about the forced conversions, Inquisitions, pogroms, and the Holocaust, which reduced "our" numbers and the need to bring back to the Jewish nation whatever "sparks" of Jewishness still exist and "wherever they may be found." He told of his great-grandmother who bought matzoh from a Jewish bakery before Passover. Hassan's father recited an instance when some Turkish students with whom he was friendly unfairly criticized their professor because he was Jewish. He expressed the wish that he could have defended the Jewish profes-

(Continued on page 9)

Calling All Supporters: Have you donated in the last year?

Kulanu is a very small organization with very big dreams and we rely on our community—the "all of us" referred to in our name—to fund our activities.

We at Kulanu hope you enjoy receiving this quarterly newsletter and reading all the latest news and fascinating stories about our organization's work partnering with Jewish communities and Jews around the world -- we certainly love sharing it with you!

Every three months, we mail nearly 2,000 newsletters, with copies going to our supporters, friends and the communities we work with. Many of those newsletters are going to individuals who may have supported us in the past but have not made a recent contribution. Rising postage and other costs have forced a difficult decision on us—to **limit our distribution list to current and lifetime supporters**. Our overseas partner communities will continue to receive copies of the newsletters without the need to donate.

Your mailing label on this issue of our newsletter includes the date of the last gift we received from you. We hope that if that date is more than a year ago, you will consider making a generous gift at this time.

KULANU BRIEFS

Get To Know the Board

Board members' biographies are now listed on the Kulanu website (www.kulanu.org). There are links to them both from the "contact us" page and from the bottom of the "About Kulanu" page.

Kulanu Bar Mitzvah Brochures Available

Would you like copies of Kulanu's colorful new bar/bat mitzvah brochure to share with students and families in your synagogue, school, camp, or youth group? The illustrated brochure, "Sharing Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah with Jews Around the World: Kulanu Connects You," can be found on the web at: http://www.kulanu.org/mitzvahprojects/barbatmitzvah_brochure.pdf. If you want us to send you printed copies, please write to the office or send an email to brochures@kulanu.org and give your name, organization (if any), address, phone, email, and how many copies you'd like us to send you. Donations towards postage are welcome but not required.

New Websites of Note

"Exploring Judaism" is a new website encouraging people to ask questions about Judaism, and to discuss and learn. It reaches out to "Jews in every corner of the world." See www.exploringjudaism.com.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has opened a page in Portuguese, "Enciclopédia do Holocausto." It can be accessed on the Museum's website, <http://www.ushmm.org/> (the menu on the left shows the languages available), or directly at <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/portuguese/>.

Jonah Lissner has founded the Institute for Israelite Research, with the following mission: "An online, international nonprofit organization dedicated to research in and education regarding Jews, Israelites, 'Lost Tribes of Israel', Hebrews and Gentiles interested in the scientific verification of all 'Lost' Tribes and newly discovered Jewish communities." See <http://joe3998.tripod.com/instituteforisraeliteresearch/index.html>.

The Spanish-language website and blog for CJRI (Comunidades Judias Reformistas de Latino or Reform Jewish Communities in Latin America) contains many features related to Israel and Jews, including YouTube videos. See <http://comunidadesjudias.ning.com/>.

News of the Bene Israel of India

Consul General of India Prabhu Dayal hosted a Hanukkah 2008 event on December 28 at New India House in New York City. It featured candle lighting, Indian and Israeli dancers, and an Indian Kosher dinner.

A Jewish memorial for the victims of the Mumbai massacre was held on December 15 at the Central Queens YMHA, co-sponsored by the Queens JCC and Chabad. It was intended as a unity event for all Jewish denominations.

A new CD, *Eliyahoo Hanabee: The Musical Tradition of the Bene Israel of Bombay*, is now available through Amazon.com. One of the voices belongs to the late cantor Benjamin Simon Dandekar. A booklet enclosed with the CD contains an essay on Bene Israel history and culture by Dr. Shalva Weil and one on Bene Israel music and religious songs by musicologist Dr. Sara Manesseh.

Speakers Spread the Word

Gadi Luzzatto explored the years in which Italian Jews went from being confined in ghettos to fully participating in the public life of a newly unified nation on December 16, 17 and 18 at the Centro Primo Levi in NYC. His topics included Jewish Historiography and Italian History as well as Italian Jews' relations with the Church.

Rabbi Howard Gorin spoke on the Jewish community of Nigeria at the January 15-19 Limmud conference in Ellenville, NY. Rabbi Gorin has a pulpit at Tikvat Israel in Rockville, Maryland, led a 2002 beit din to Uganda, and has visited and taught in Nigeria three times.

Benyamim Tsedaka, one of the elders of the Samaritan people, described the history and contemporary experience of this 700-member community at the Manhattan JCC on November 13.

Barbara Ribacove Gordon provided an update on the 8700 Falash Mura in limbo in Gondar Province, Ethiopia, on November 8 at Adas Israel in DC. She is director of the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry (NACOEJ).

Film-maker **Shmuel Beru** appeared with actress/singer **Meskie Shibu-Sivan** at "Changing Cultures: An Ethiopian/Israeli Experience," a reception with Ethiopian and Israeli food, and featuring Beru's film *Zrubavel*, Israel's first film with an all-Ethiopian cast and majority Ethiopian crew. The event took place on February 2 at the Washington DCJCC and was co-sponsored by the Embassy of Israel, the American Sephardi Federation, and B'nai B'rith International's Center for Jewish Culture.

Mazal Tov!

The 2009 Alberto Benveniste Prize for Literature has been awarded to **Richard Zimler** for his novel *Guardian of the Dawn*. The prize is awarded to novels either originally written in French or translated into French that have to do with the research interests of the Alberto Benveniste Centre for Jewish-Sephardic Studies. The book is a historical thriller set in Goa, based on actual case histories of the Portuguese Inquisition on the Indian subcontinent in the 16th century.

Condolences

To **JJ Keki** and family on the death of his son, **Yosef Wanzila Keki**, who drowned in January. He was a popular fifth grader at Hadasah Primary School in Mbale, Uganda.

To **Rabbi Joseph Prouser** and family on the death of his father **Melvin Prouser**. Rabbi Prouser recalls that his father "took great interest in Kulanu and in my involvement with the Abayudaya. He met Rabbi Gershon when he visited his congregation in Northampton, Massachusetts (also Laura Wetzler's congregation). The condolence messages received from our friends in Uganda have been a great comfort."

Todah Rabah!

To **Aliya Cheskis-Cotel and Orli and Sivan Cotel** for requesting that gifts in Rabbi Moshe Cotel's memory be made to Kulanu. To date, \$3538 in donations to Kulanu have been given in his name. Rabbi Cotel, a talented pianist and inspirational rabbi, served on Kulanu's board of directors from 2002 – 2007.

To **Gilbert and Lillian Zinn** and **Anne Katz-Jacobson**, valuable volunteers who raise awareness about and funds for the Abayudaya by giving frequent presentations in their own hometowns as well as other communities. Their strong dedication and gift of time go far in educating Jews in the US about Jews around the world.

To the congregations and other groups that hosted Israel Siriri on his Kulanu-Abayudaya Speaking Tour through the US and Canada this past fall: **Congregation Darchei Noam** and **Nareyver Synagogue** in Toronto, Canada; **Congregation Mickve Israel** of Savannah, GA; **Congregation Mishkan Tefila** in Newton, MA; **Dr Arthur Goshin's Healthy World Foundation** with **Congregation Beth Elohim** in Brooklyn, NY; **East End Temple** in NYC; **Guelph University** in Ontario, Canada; **Hillel Campus Life Organization of Ottawa**, Canada; **Milwaukee Area Jewish Committee (MAJC)** and **Congregation Beth Israel** in Milwaukee, WI; **Moriah Congregation** in Deerfield,

BRIEFS

The Tutsi Jews and the Pan-Kush Hebrew Diaspora

By Prof. Yochanan Bwejeri

IL; **Shir Hadash Reconstructionist Synagogue** in Northbrook, IL; **Mosaic Law Congregation** in Sacramento, CA; **Temple Adat Shalom** in San Diego, CA; **Temple Beth-El** in Ithaca, NY; **Temple B'nai Or** in Morristown, NJ; **Temple Emanu-El** of Palm Beach, FL; **Temple Emanuel** in Winston-Salem, NC; **The Community Synagogue** in Port Washington, NY; **The House** in Toronto, Canada; **the Jewish Community of Amherst, MA**; the **Joseph Slifka Center at Yale, Yale Hillel**, and **Saybrook College** of Yale University, in New Haven, CT; and **Town & Village Temple** in NYC.

To the group of donors, mainly from Chicago, who donated an additional \$1,054 for the Deaf Education Fund of the Abayudaya community since our last newsletter was published.

To these donors of \$2000 and up: **Anonymous, Harriet Bograd & Kenneth Klein, the Estelle Friedman Gervis Family Foundation, and Ruth Wolman.**

And to these donors of \$1000-\$1999: **Congregation Beth Israel, Roslyn Elson, Hope and Matthew Feldman, Dr Jules and Mrs. Josephine Harris, Laura Alter Klappman, Lois K and Isadore Levy, Angela and Carl Milner, Lionel Okun, Doris Rosenthal, Temple B'nai Or, Ronnie Williams and Suzanne Arnpolin.**

And to these donors of \$500- 999: **Gess Foundation, Arthur R Goshin, MD, Jacob S Meyers Foundation, Marcia Kaplan, Hannah and Robert Klein, National Center to Encourage Judaism.**

And to these donors of \$125-499: **Dr Stanley Azen, Anonymous, Irwin M and Elaine R Berg, Diana G Blum and Bill Scott, Louis H Blumengarten, Congregation Beth David, Congregation Hakafa, Glen R and Marci Koblenz Cornblath, Fair Lawn Jewish Center Men's Progress Club, The Krevoy Family, Eileen B. Fisher, Linda Gerstel, The Madav IX Foundation, Letitia Gomez, Michael Goodman, Anne Katz-Jacobson and Robert Jacobson, Terrence D Kalley, Rochelle P and Dr Stephen I. Kramer, Eli Kwartler, Donald Menzi and Jane Weprin Menzi, Martin and Carol R Roaman, Marcia and Steve Saft, and Laurie and Dan Ginsberg, Neil and Karen Sambursky, Charles E Scheidt, Drs Seymour and Wendy E Scheinberg, Nancy Scholem, Elizabeth and Gary Schonfeld, Christine Kraiss Schott, Amy Weinfeld Schulman and David Nachman, Ellen Schumer, Mark W and Rhonna Shatz, MD, Aleene Smith, Jeffrey M Solotoroff, Herman and Cecilia Storick, Dr Norman and Mrs Bonnie Weiss, Gail B Werbach.**

And to these members of the \$100 Club: **Am HaYam – Cape Cod Havurah, Samuel and Jill Plitteris Amster, Phil L. Atinsky, Elaine Silodor Berk, Beth Israel Congregation Religious School, Barbara Birshtein, Jeanne and Murray Bodin, Henry and Norma Botner, Artur S and Laura L Brecher, Lisa Burnstein, Rabbi William Cutter, PhD, Jonina Duker and Alan Lichtman, Mel and Margery Elfin, Charles Feigenbaum, James Feldman and Natalie Wexler, Fredman Family Charitable Trust III, Rabbi Everett and Mary Gendler, Sharon R and Rabbi Scott L Glass, Jack Goldfarb, Curtis and Joan Green, Dr Samuel and Marlene Halperin, Rabbi Shoshana Hantman, Jordan and Sarah Hymowitz, Jewish Community of Amherst, Raymond and Rebecca Kaplan, Morton and Barbara Libarkin, Walter D and Susan Post Lichtenstein, Steven Lorch and Susanna Kochan-Lorch, Rabbi P Michael and Israela Meyerstein, Lawrence D and Judy Teibloom Mishkin, Zev Nathan, Judith Neri, Ellen Kanevsky and Shalom Bachi Ophir, Lisa E Denby and Ronald Orland, Hasha Musha Perman, Rabbi David M and Sylvia S Posner, Rabbi Reiner, Michael and Rebecca Risman, Daniel and Ruth Sachs, Bruce S. Saylor, Laz and Ellen Schneider, Barbara and Julius Shair, Sherman and Rita Shapiro, S and A Shear, Gary and Maureen Shillet, Mark D Shroder and Susan Keller, Michael H Slutsky and Susan Agate, Temple Emek Shalom, Debra Gonsher Vinik, PhD, and David Vinik, Claire Weidman, Lee Weidman, Joysa Winter, Eliot and Lori Nadin, Gilbert A and Lillian Zinn.**

Ninety years ago, my ancestors, the renowned Pastoralist Watutsi/Tutsi Israelites of Kush -- in Burundi, Rwanda, Eastern Congo, Uganda, Northern Tanzania -- wore *tzitzit* and head *tefillin*. Today the survivors wear fear, humiliation, and despair. Millions of Tutsi have been killed and the ongoing Holocaust is an endless tragedy of 'Again and Again.'

Dr **Itzhak Ben-Zvi**, the third President of Israel, was very much fascinated by the miracle of the Scattered Tribes of Israel. In 1957 he wrote a well documented book: *The Exiled and the Redeemed*, in which the Jews of Ethiopia hold a respectful place, just in the same chapter as the Jews of Upper Egypt and of those of *Himyar* (Yemen). If the book had to be re-edited today, his natural interest in the ancient and modern independent Jewish Kingdoms and states worldwide would certainly have led him to include two obviously missed sub-chapters: The **Jewish Kingdoms of the South Kush** (commonly called the African Great Lakes) and the **Jewish Kingdoms of West Africa**. The Tutsi (or *Batutsi/Watutsi*) are the traditional keepers of the **South Kush Jewish Kingdoms**. In West Africa, the **Toubous** are the traditional keepers of the **West Africa Jewish Kingdoms**.

The Tutsi and the Toubous share the same origins as their cousins, the Jews of Ethiopia, tracing their common ancestry from King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. Israeli Chief Rabbis **Avraham Ytzchak Kook** and **Ovadia Yosef**, and US **Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof**, would have included the Tutsi and the Toubous as descendants of *Dan*, following the 1500s *responsum* of a renowned Orthodox Rabbi, *Rbadaz*, Rabbi David ibn Zimrah. In fact, numerous branches of the Tutsi elite belong to the *Judah* lineage. The Tutsi Jewishness was obstructed by the Christian Inquisition that took place since the 1920s, and was never addressed until the late 20th Century. At that time, **Havila Institute** in Brussels dedicated huge efforts to enhance the re-connection of the Tutsi people to their Jewish heritage, and helped raise awareness among concerned Jewish institutions.

The Toubous face a similar but more ancient case of obstruction. They were forcibly converted to Islam centuries ago by the successive Jihads that took place in Northern Africa from the Arabian Peninsula, but they kept the remembrance of their Israelite origins.

Today, Tutsis in increasing numbers are seeking *t'shuvah*, return. Like the Western Jews, they envision *ge'ulah*, redemption. They deserve pro-active support and monitoring from concerned Jewish organizations and networks. Like the Western Jewish Diaspora, the Tutsi Jews, some parts of which have been forcibly converted to Christianity and forbidden to practice the ways of Y"Y, are People of Israel, no less than the *Falasha Mura* of Ethiopia.

(The author, president of Havila Institute, can reach reached at havila.institute@gmail.com.)

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**Chag Sameach!
Happy Passover!
Pesach begins at sundown
April 8, 2009**

A Bene Israel Fish Recipe for Passover

Submitted by Nissim Moses

2 Fish, each 650-700 grams (1.5 pounds), such as Pomfret or St Peter's Fish (Tilapia), whole with skin on, but descaled and cleaned
2-3 tablespoons of olive oil,
0.5 cup of lemon juice, more if desired
0.5 cup of white wine (optional)
2 tablespoons standard Fish Masala, (available in any Indian spice shop), (perhaps less for Americans and Europeans)
1 large onion, chopped.
1 tablespoon ginger paste
1 tablespoon garlic paste
Half a bundle of fresh coriander leaves, chopped
2 stalks of celery leaves, chopped.
2 flakes of fennel bulb.
1 teaspoon of star anis powder.
1 teaspoon cinnamon powder
Salt to taste

Put all the above ingredients except fish in a chopper or blender and make a thick paste.

Heat a frying pan and fry the paste to a nice light brown color. Having cleaned the fish, make a few latitudinal cuts on the fish on either side and apply the marinade.

Refrigerate for one hour.

Put both fish in a large glass tray and cook in Microwave oven for 8 minutes on max heat.

Then flip it over and again cook for 7 minutes at max heat.

Serve fish as required for Passover tradition. Serves 4-6.

Note: Not during Passover, I boil 6 frozen corn halves in parallel to the process of making the fish. When the fish is ready to be served I add 3 corn halves to each serving plate and put the fish sauce over the corn and serve.

Note: the fish flesh is like cotton, not hard like leather as when fried or steamed. This recipe has been served during both Rosh Hashanah and Passover at the New Delhi Synagogue, where it has been a hit.



Reflections on *Parasha Toldot* and the Abayudaya

By Myra Berkowitz

(The author, a member of Temple Beth-El in Ithaca, NY, wrote this dvar torah after Israel Siriri's visit last November.)

Toldot means "lineage" or "story," referring to the offspring of Isaac, and the story begins with the birth of Jacob and Esau. From the very beginning, before they are even born, we hear that the trend will continue for the younger brother to perpetuate the family line, receive the inheritance or birthright, and merit the blessing of learning and worship. This trend links Isaac's family to the families of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the future leaders of our people.

Throughout the *parasha*, I was struck by the frequent mention of food and drink, and how important they are in the process of making contracts and agreements. First, Esau comes starving to Jacob and begs for "red stuff" to eat, lentils, which he easily exchanges for his firstborn status. Next, the agreement about the wells between Isaac and Avimelech and the Philistines is made over a feast of food and drink. Finally, Isaac requests that a special stew be made for him, only after which he will confer his blessing on his son, Esau. This delay in order to hunt and prepare the stew, as we know, becomes the means whereby Jacob is able to intervene with his own stew—prepared by his mother this time—and steal Esau's blessing.

Notice that after Esau sells his birthright, the story of the wells interrupts the narrative of the sons' lives and precedes Jacob's theft of the blessing and flight to Padan Aram, to avoid Esau and find a bride from among his cousins. Perhaps the story occurs in the middle of the *parasha* to give it some prominence and importance.

The story that intervenes is a recapitulation by Isaac of some of the deeds of his father, Abraham. It begins with his visit to Gerar with his wife in order to avoid a famine. There, he pretends that Rivka is his sister, just as his father did with his mother, Sarah. After being sent away by Avimelech, Isaac then reopens wells that his father dug, and we are told he finds *mayim hayim*, living water. The importance of water in the Near East is easy to understand. But, the wells turn out also to be a metaphor for the deep wisdom of his father, which Isaac now accesses and which helps him flourish. It is interesting that wells, though not these wells, are also the place to find good women, who will help perpetuate the generations.

Meantime, while reading this story about negotiations with the neighbors, I could not help but think of the visit here of Israel Siriri from Uganda last week. Israel spoke movingly about his community and what the Abayudaya have been able to accomplish. In a very poignant story, he told of a 5-yr old girl who attended one of the local schools and, because she was Jewish, was accused of killing Christ. In part because of this prejudice, the Abayudaya have now built their own schools. But, in their schools, Muslim and Christian neighbors can attend as well. The Abayudaya have recently also built their own water supply and brought electricity into their community, which benefits the neighbors who aren't Jewish as well. We all know about the Delicious Peace Coffee project, another interfaith collaboration. And, Israel showed slides of future projects that involve fruit and dried fruit for export.

The cooperation between the Abayudaya and their non-Jewish neighbors in terms of basic needs like water and electricity, and extending to farming and learning, is truly inspiring. Rabbi Daniel Nevins writes in this week's commentary from JTS that the theft of the blessing by Jacob resulted in much enmity with his brother. He says, "We can't know how the story might have developed had Rebecca allowed Isaac to bless his older son. But we can work in our own capacity to interpret our sacred tradition in ways that create just and compassionate communities."

With the Abayudaya in Uganda, unlike the stories in today's *parasha*, water and wealth can spill over and be immediately shared with and perceived as beneficial by the neighboring, non-Jewish communities. May this compassionate community and its cooperative efforts continue to thrive.

Book Comment: *Carção, The Capital of Marranismo*

Reviewed by Manuel Azevedo

A new book in Portuguese, entitled, *Carção, The Capital of Marranismo*, was recently launched in the village of Carção, in the province of Tras-os-Montes (behind the mountains), in northeastern Portugal.

The book, 198 pages long, is based on primary research of 50 Inquisition files out of 250 cases from Carção held at the national archives at Torre de Tombo in Lisbon. Written by Maria Fernanda Guimarães and Julio Andrade, the work is based on Fernanda's research at the archives. Fernanda, a retired travel executive, works full time studying and transcribing archival records at Torre de Tombo.

The Inquisition files are quite detailed and in most cases in excellent condition. The files, totaling approximately 40,000 cases, read like modern-day court transcripts, rich in details of family genealogy, assets and business interests of the accused, Jewish rituals the accused allegedly participated in, the food they ate, the torture they underwent, particulars of sentencing, etc. The records survived the great Lisbon earthquake of 1755 because they were housed in St. Jorge's castle, high up on a hill east of downtown Lisbon (Baixa), which was destroyed by successive quakes, a tsunami and three days of fire starting November 1, 1755. The largest *Judaria* in Portugal had been located in the area destroyed.

Portugal's national educational TV channel, RTP2, filmed a 10-minute segment on the book launch and story about the Jews of Carção, with some great interviews of older local people who identify themselves as Jews to this day. The book launch, attended by over 100 people in a village of 400, included the local reeve and mayor who are sponsoring Fernanda in further research and who wish to reclaim the area's Jewish heritage to promote cultural tourism.

The interview with the book's authors relates the story of a secret rabbi who travelled to Livorno to get instruction and brought books. He was the head of a Catholic *confraria* (fraternity) which was a cover for the secret Jews of Carção to carry out their rituals, including one entitled *missa seca*, (dry mass). See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eDlkoY5S6M>.

To read more about the book, see the blog of the friends of Carção (<http://almocreve.blogs.sapo.pt/24786.html>).

Escape: New Novel about Elizabethan Crypto-Jews By Charles Meyers

Reviewed by Karen Primack

Charles Meyers is a scholar who concentrates on Portuguese *Anousim* in Elizabethan England. He has many published articles, including "Elizabethan Marranos Unmasked," which appears on the Kulanu website. He is co-editor with Dr. Norman Simms of *Troubled Souls: Conversos, Crypto-Jews, and Other Confused Jewish Intellectuals from the Fourteenth through the Eighteenth Century*.

In *Escape*, his first venture into fiction, Meyers tries to fill some gaps in the historical record he has been studying for 35 years. His historical subject is Dr. Hector Nunes, a 16th century physician from a Jewish Portuguese family who relocated in England, married "a pious Jewess," and practiced espionage as well as medicine and commerce. His novel's protagonist is Dr. Heitor Nunes, whose story parallels the historical record, but details are fleshed out from Meyers's imagination and knowledge of the period.

The book begins with Nunes's persecution by the Holy Office of the Inquisition as a medical student in Coimbra, Portugal, and continues with his terrifying escape on a cargo ship to Bristol, his unsatisfying life with his uncle's family in that city, and his departure to make a life for himself in London. Meyers is working on a sequel novel, to be titled *Alien Sojourn*.

The author's scholarly grasp of the period give the reader vivid descriptions of everything from the public streets in England (dung-filled), to the food (available edibles are itemized in great detail, as are the Portuguese delectables Nunes profoundly misses), to Elizabethan shipping procedures and cargoes, to the British treatment of foreigners (dismissive at best). Personalities of the factual and imagined characters are fleshed out (Nunes comes off as a querulous brat).

Meyers cites the theme as Nunes's drive for social acceptance and social mobility, regardless of the cost. This persistent drive comes across well.

The book is self-published, and it is to be hoped that future printings will have the many typos corrected. The book is engrossing and certainly brings the reader into the period. To order a copy, contact the author at scholar3@hargray.com.

Publications of Note

Compiled by Morton Simon

✍ "The Jews left behind in Russia -- Thousands of Subbotnik Jews being refused permission to move to Israel" by **Michael Freund**, *YNETNEWS - OPINION*, 27 November 2008. The author is the Founder and Chairman of 'Shavei Israel' -- a Jerusalem-based organization that assists "lost Jews" seeking return to the Jewish homeland. In this article, he recounts the saga of a group of Russian Jews from the time they converted to Judaism more than two centuries ago, to the present where they face towering difficulties immigrating to Israel. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-3629306.00.html>

✍ "Ugandan community boasts five synagogues" by **Sheri Shefa**, *Canadian Jewish News*, 28 November 2008. Israel Siriri, head of the executive committee of the 1000-strong Abayudaya Congregation of Uganda, hopes his North American speaking tour will raise awareness

and funds to help his developing African Jewish community. Siriri presented a multimedia program at Darchei Noam Congregation in Toronto and to the Canadian House of Parliament. His presentation described the community's sustainable development projects that were made possible thanks to funding from Kulanu.

http://www.cjnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15805&Itemid=86

✍ *Kaddish for Columbus*, a collection of poetry by **M. Miriam Herrera**, Finishing Line Press, 2008. The author explores the ambiguity of her multiple identities—childless woman, wife, poet, teacher, Chicana, Spanish Crypto-Jew, Native American—and also the disparate landscapes she inhabits: Midwest, Southwest, East Coast, Israel, California, Texas, and Mexico. Hers is a voice from the little known borderlands inhabited by conversos or the descendants of crypto-Jews

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LETTERS TO KULANU



Neve Shalom Synagogue in Paramaribo, Suriname
(Photo by Shai Fierst)

Conflicting Sources on Suriname

Please accept a few corrections as well as some relevant information regarding Shai Fierst's article, "Among Maroons: Discoveries of Color, Judaism and Slavery," from the Kulanu Fall Newsletter.

The first Jews of Suriname settled predominantly on the banks of the Suriname River within the Division of Thorarica. Mr. Fierst, like many others before him, confuses the Division of Thorarica with the important 17th century Suriname town of Thorarica. Jews did not settle in the town of Thorarica, nor did Thorarica mean "rich Torah" to Suriname's Portuguese speaking Sephardim. Also incorrect are the slave population statistics for late 17th century Jodensavanne; in 1684 Suriname's Jews owned 1,298 slaves (not 9,000).

Stichting Jodensavanne is the organization having jurisdiction since 1971 over the cemeteries and synagogue remains at Jodensavanne. Over the last decade Stichting Jodensavanne, working with the semi-governmental STINASU, nonprofit organizations including CVE (Caribbean Volunteer Expeditions) and ISJM (International Survey of Jewish Monuments), as well as individual Surinamers dedicated to the preservation of their cultural legacy, has shepherded the field work that has produced documentation of four historic Jewish cemeteries and the remains of the town of Jodensavanne. In addition, Stichting Jodensavanne made Jodensavanne accessible to visitors by building a pier and installing signage as well as contributing to the cost of publishing field documentation of Suriname's historic Jewish cemeteries.

Rachel Frankel
New York, NY

I am not an historian and had no access to archives, however last year I wrote an article about my first visit to Suriname and cross-checked two credible sources for the figure of 9000 slaves: (1) UNESCO (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1083>) : "At the end of the 17th century approximately 600 people lived in the flourishing agricultural settlement of Joden Savanne owning more than 40 plantations with over 9,000 slaves"; and (2) Stichting Jodensavanne (<http://www.jodensavanne.sr.org/article16.html>): "The first Jews came in 1652. In 1685, came the building of the synagogue, *Beracha ve Shalom*, Blessing and Peace. At that time, already there were 10,000 people in the area: 500 Jews, 9,000 slaves."

The following sources support the statement that Jews did settle in the town of Thorarica: (1) According to the information found in the website "Jews of Suriname" (<http://www.angelfire.com/mb2/jodensavanne/>), the first group of Jews arriving in Suriname in 1639 actually lived in the old Capital Thorarica. (2) In addition is information

from an article in the following website, which is in Dutch, but as I speak and read Dutch, I have provided translation: (<http://www.cq-link.sr/personal/debye/torarica/page2.html>): "At the time of Wiloughby's... Thorarica was the Capital of Suriname... had 100 houses, a government building,.. and probably a synagogue." (3) According to the website "Jews of Suriname," in 1643 Haham Ishak Meatob and Jehudith, the daughter of Jechiel Meathob, got married in Thorarica (<http://www.angelfire.com/mb2/jodensavanne/>).

Over the past year I have been trying to find the meaning of the name Thorarica. Unfortunately, very few people could explain it to me. I don't speak Portuguese, but I was told by a Portuguese Jew that the translation of Thorarica is "rich or splendid Torah." Other people whom I have spoken with did not agree with that meaning, but could not provide a better translation. From the *Encyclopedia of the West Indies*, the name Torarica is probably of Arowakse Indian language, meaning "The place where the whites live." Since Jews most probably did live in the town, maybe even had a small synagogue and later established their plantations in the area (known as the Jodensavanne), many of which were named after biblical locations such as Goshen, there is strong reason to believe that the name Torarica is related to "rich Torah."

Jacob Steinberg
Thornhill, Ontario, Canada

In response to the number of slaves the Jewish community had by the end of the 17th century, that information was from page 44 of the *Historical Essay on the Colony of Surinam 1788*, written by several members of the Portuguese Jewish community. After further readings, such as Wim Hoogbergen's *The Boni Maroon Wars in Suriname*, I now realize that those numbers in the 1788 text were likely an exaggeration.

Thank you for the clarification on these often confused historical points. If the reader is interested in an updated version of the previous article with some more interesting findings, please check the Suriname page on Kulanu's website or go directly to <http://www.kulanu.org/suriname/amongmaroons.php>. In addition, if you would like information about the Suriname Jewish community, ongoing projects you can support, and Suriname's Chai Membership Program, please contact Jacob Steinberg at jks1111@rogers.com.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to rewrite the article. I'm grateful to Kulanu.

Shai Fierst
Washington, DC

Abuja's Jewish Library

At last my library is serving the purpose it should serve: a place where Igbos could walk in and borrow Jewish books. I was not encouraged to lend out books before, because I was afraid that the books would not be returned. However, I changed my stance when more responsible Igbos began to take interest in the books, and to approach me with requests to borrow. I have been lending out since this development. This afternoon an Igbo who is very curious about Omenana and Judaism, probably because he worked for a Jew when he lived in America, drove to my house and returned Klinghoffer's book, *Why Jews Rejected Jesus*, which he borrowed four days ago. He pronounced it great, and asked for two similar books. We discussed the one he returned for 20 minutes. And I gave him Shmuley Botetach's *Judaism For Everyone*, and a book by a Finnish Lutheran priest who converted to Judaism.

Remy C. Ilona
Abuja, Nigeria

PUBLICATIONS

Donmeh (cont.)

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who made their home in the American Southwest after the Spanish Inquisition. <http://miriamherreraoems.googlepages.com/>

✍ "An African Experience in Contrasts" by Rabbi **Jerome Epstein** and **Adam Berman**, *Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism*, Winter 2008. Epstein, the executive vice president of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, describes his visits to Uganda and Ethiopia. He reports his time in Uganda as exhilarating, and contrasts it to his visit to Ethiopia, where he felt excruciating pain. The accomplishments of the Abayudaya community in Uganda are recounted and praised. Here the visitors were present at the dedication of a *beit midrash* built in part by money donated by the United Synagogue Youth's Tikkun Olam fund. Later, in Ethiopia, Ethiopian Israeli **Avraham Negeise** brought the visitors from Addis Ababa to Gondar, where emigrants were gathering prior to their journey to Israel. Fiscal support from the American Jewish community has diminished of late and the effects are disquieting.

✍ "Heroic Welcome – Ethiopian-Israeli is Honored at City Hall," by **Maayan Jaffe**, *Baltimore Jewish Week*. **Yeshayhu Chane** helped facilitate the immigration of many thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel during the 1984 "Operation Moses" (7000) and the 1991 "Operation Solomon" (14,000). Mayor Sheila Dixon and City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake honor him in the City of Baltimore. Anecdotes of his lifetime are described, including the day he was working at the Jewish Agency office, registering newcomers when his own little sister came through. He didn't recognize her until he heard her name.

✍ "Ethiopian Israeli success stories struggle to find jobs," **Dina Kraft** reports in the *JTA (Jewish Telegraphic Agency)* December 10, 2008. Kraft describes the discrepancy between the achievement rewards of Ethiopian-born and native-born Israelis. There follows some discussion of the possible causes, then finally, the activities/programs aimed at removing some of the cultural barriers. <http://jta.org/news/article/2008/12/10/1001433/ethiopian-israeli-success-stories-struggle-to-find-jobs>

✍ "Gene Test Shows Spain's Jewish and Muslim Mix" by **Nicholas Wade** published in *The New York Times*, December 5, 2008. A commentary on the study by Mark A. Jobling and Francesc Calafell reported in the *American Journal of Human Genetics*. Wade writes: "The finding bears on two different views of Spanish history, said Jonathan S. Ray, a professor of Jewish studies at Georgetown University. One, proposed by the 20th-century historian Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, holds that Spanish civilization is Catholic and other influences are foreign; the other sees Spain as having been enriched by drawing from all three of its historical cultures, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim." In another calculation Wade postulates that Calafell had more than one million living ancestors in A.D. 1500.

✍ "Crossing the line -- Israeli Ethiopian lawyer sees role in bringing U.S. blacks, Jews together" by **Adam Kredo**, *Wash. Jewish Week*, November 07, 2008. In 1996 Itzik Dessi became Israel's first Ethiopian-born lawyer and this year completed American University's (Washington, DC) U.S.-Israel Civil Liberties Law Program. He comments upon and compares the maturity of the American, Ethiopian, and Israeli legal systems. Dessi is the founder and director of Tebeka, Israel's only Ethiopian legal advocacy group, and helped start The American Friends of Tebeka, an extension of his advocacy group. In this interview with Kredo, Dessi said he would like to launch a new leadership program that could integrate American Jews, African Americans and Israeli Ethiopians.

<http://washingtonjewishweek.com/main.asp?SectionID=4&SubSectionID=4&ArticleID=9599&TM=70992>

✍ "Bangalore's Jewish son came from California" published in *The Times of India*, 7 December 2008. Rubin Moses, a Jew who emigrated

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 3)

sor but feared that doing so might have led to the discovery that he was a Donmeh.

Secrecy intruded even into my conversation with Hassan's father. We were talking about prominent Turks who were rumored to be Donmeh. He was about to mention a name when, upon a signal from Hassan, his father abruptly changed the topic of the conversation.

The most illuminating part of the day that I spent with Hassan was our visit to the Bulbulderesi Cemetery in Uskudar, which lies in the Asian side of Istanbul. It is a cemetery where the Kapandjis and the Karakashis are buried. The name of the cemetery means "Stream of Nightingales." This name refers to a Sabbatean legend that the Messiah would reappear when he heard the singing of the nightingales. Hassan told us that the Kapandjis are buried nearer to the entrance and along the lower slopes of the cemetery and the Karakashis further up the hill. The Yakubis are buried in the Macka Cemetery on the European side of Istanbul. (I would not have given the names of the Donmeh cemeteries had they not been common knowledge).

Without Hassan, I could not have entered the Bulbulderesi Cemetery. There is a guard at the entrance, and the place is constantly patrolled. Although we were not challenged at the gate, two men inside making rounds questioned Hassan. After he identified himself as a Kapandji with relatives buried within the cemetery's bounds, they left us and continued their rounds. This security is not misplaced. Moslems knowing that the cemetery contains the remains of Donmeh, occasionally enter and deface the stones. They particularly object to pictures of the deceased on the stones since it is not a Moslem custom to place pictures on tombstones.

Except for the occasional photographs, the inscriptions are typical of Moslem tombstone inscriptions. Although in Turkish, those erected after 1928 are in Latin script and those before 1928 are in Arabic script. (As part of his effort to modernize and secularize Turkey, Ataturk, who ruled Turkey from 1919 to 1938, changed the manner in which Turkish is written). The names are also typical Turkish names. The bottom line on most stones reads *Ruhuna Fatiha*. Hassan was unable to explain the phrase to me. I later learned that it was a reference to a chapter of the Koran dealing with death and customarily appears on Moslem tombstones.

Although time would not allow a visual inspection of the hundreds of tombstones in the Bulbulderesi Cemetery, two that I saw were remarkable. One read "I hid it; I didn't disclose it; my worries I kept secret until I was laid to rest." Could the secret kept unto death be one's Donmeh identity, Sabbatean faith?

Even more remarkable was the stone of Semsî Efendi. It read that he was the teacher of Ataturk. Semsî Efendi (1852-1917) was a Kapandji who established two progressive schools in Salonica. One of the students in his schools was Ataturk, the hero of the battle of Gallipoli and the founder of the Turkish Republic. Whether Ataturk attended a Donmeh school because it was progressive or because he was a Donmeh has been a matter of considerable speculation among those who oppose a secular state.

In writing this article I am beholden to Reuven Alpert's *Caught in the Crack: Encounters with the Jewish Muslims of Turkey*. Alpert has deep roots in Lubavich Hasidism. He describes the "shockwaves" among the Lubavichers by the death in 1994 of their rabbi, Menachim Mendel Schneerson. Before his death, most of his followers were convinced that he was the messiah. Some of his followers could not accept that their messiah died before his mission was fulfilled. These followers deny his death and await his second coming, just as the Christians await the second coming of Jesus and the Sabbateans once awaited -- and a small portion of the Karakashis may still await -- the second coming of Sabbatai Zevi.

The Genetic "Pintele Yid" in Iberia

By Michael Freund

(This column appeared in The Jerusalem Post on 10 December 2008. The author is chairman of Shavei Israel, www.shavei.org.)

More than five centuries after the expulsion and forced conversion of Spanish and Portuguese Jewry, the results of a new genetic study might just spur a return of historic proportions to Israel and the Jewish people.

In a paper published in the latest issue of the *American Journal of Human Genetics*, a team of biologists dropped a DNA bombshell, declaring that 20% of the population of Iberia has Sephardic Jewish ancestry. Since the combined populations of Spain and Portugal exceed 50 million, that means more than 10 million Spaniards and Portuguese are descendants of Jews.

These are not the wild-eyed speculations of a newspaper columnist, but rather cold, hard results straight out of a petri dish in a laboratory.

The study, led by Mark Jobling of the University of Leicester in England and Francesc Calafell of the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, analyzed the Y chromosomes of Sephardim in communities where Jews had migrated after the expulsion from Spain in 1492. Their chromosomal signatures were then compared with the Y chromosomes of more than 1,000 men living throughout Spain and Portugal.

Since the Y chromosome is passed from father to son, the geneticists were able to measure the two groups up against each other, leading to the remarkable finding that one-fifth of Iberians are of Jewish descent.

This result underlines the extent to which our ancestors suffered so long ago in Spain and Portugal. From the historical record, we know that as early as 1391, a century before the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, widespread anti-Semitic pogroms swept across the country, leaving thousands dead and many communities devastated.

In the decades that followed, there were waves of forced conversions as part of an increasingly hostile and dangerous environment for Jews. This reached a climax in 1492, when King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella gave Spain's remaining Jews a dire choice: convert or leave forever. Large numbers chose exile. American historian Howard Morley Sachar has estimated the number of Spain's Jewish exiles at around 100,000, while Hebrew University's Haim Beinart has put the total at 200,000. Others have spoken of even more.

But untold numbers of forcibly converted Jews, as well as those who voluntarily underwent baptism, remained.

These include, of course, the *Anousim* (Hebrew for "those who were coerced"), many of whom bravely continued to cling to Jewish practice, covertly passing down their heritage from generation to generation. In recent years, a growing number of *Anousim* from across Europe, South America and parts of the US have begun to return to Israel and the Jewish people.

But what makes the findings of the genetic study so important is that they attest to the Spanish monarchs' terrible success in subjugating their Jewish subjects and compelling the bulk of those forced to convert to eventually assimilate into the Catholic majority.

For centuries thereafter, the ruthless arm of the Inquisition hunted down and killed suspected "Judaizers" or "secret Jews," ultimately forcing many to abandon the faith to which they had remained so heroically, and secretly, loyal. According to the late historian Cecil Roth, the Inquisition's henchmen murdered more than 30,000 "secret Jews." Some were burned alive in front of cheering crowds, while countless others were condemned for preserving Jewish practices. It is no wonder, then, that many of them eventually succumbed to despair and seemingly disappeared as Jews.

Until now, that is.

The finding that 20% of the population of Iberia is descended from Jews will likely take Spain and Portugal by storm.

The results, as *The New York Times* put it last Friday, "provide new

and explicit evidence of the mass conversions of Sephardic Jews" which took place over 500 years ago on Spanish and Portuguese soil.

It is the biological equivalent of the *pintele Yid*, the eternal and unbreakable Jewish spark that can never be extinguished.

Indeed, it is as if a large mirror were suddenly being held up in front of every Spanish and Portuguese person, forcing them to look at themselves and see the reality of their national, and individual, history.

But even more compelling than what it says about the past is what it might just say about the future. If Israel and the Jewish people undertake a concerted outreach effort toward our genetic brethren in Iberia, it could have a profound impact in a variety of fields, ranging from anti-Semitism in Europe to the future of Jewish demography. Imagine if just 5% or even 10% of Spanish and Portuguese descendants of Jews were to return to Judaism. It would mean an additional 500,000 to 1 million Jews in the world.

And even if many or most choose not to return, it still behooves us to reach out to them. The very fact that such large numbers of Spaniards and Portuguese have Jewish ancestry could have a significant impact on their attitudes toward Jews and Israel, possibly dampening their anti-Semitism and anti-Israel slant.

For when someone discovers they are of Jewish descent, it is likely to create a greater sense of kinship for Jewish causes. Hence, we should seek to promote and cultivate their affinity for Israel and the Jewish people.

Moreover, I believe we have a historical responsibility to reach out to the descendants of the victims of the forced conversions and the Inquisition, and to facilitate their return.

Through no fault of their own, their ancestors were cruelly taken from us. Centuries ago, the Catholic Church devoted enormous resources to tearing them away from the Jewish people, and it nearly succeeded. Our task now should be to show the same level of determination to welcome them back into our midst.

FOR ITALIAN JEWS AND FRIENDS

Notes from Rabbi Barbara Aiello

- An Italian Jewish Roots Conference will be held in New York City on March 22. Sponsored by the Italian Jewish Cultural Center of Calabria, the director, Rabbi Barbara Aiello, will be joined by fellow speakers Dr. Bennett Greenspan, director of Family Tree DNA; Kathleen Kirkpatrick, CEO of Gentracer; Rabbi Frank Tamburello, a former Catholic priest who discovered his Sicilian Jewish roots; and archeologist Enrico Tromba, who excavated 3rd century synagogue ruins in Calabria. Pre-registration is required. For information, email rabbi@rabbibarbara.com or tel. 941-306-3255.
- An 8-night Jewish Heritage Tour in Southern Italy, exploring 2000 years of history, will be held June 1-9, 2009, and repeated October 12-20, 2009. Sponsored by Amalfi Life, the tour will be guided by Rabbi Barbara Aiello in Sicily and Calabria and by Dr. Laura Supino in Rome. For information see www.AmalfiLife.com or www.RabbiBarbara.com.
- Rabbi Barbara Aiello has a new program on Talk Radio WGUL 850 in Tampa, Florida, entitled "Radio Rabbi." The Sunday morning show can be heard live or downloaded during the week. A recent program opened with the "Sh'ma Yisrael" sung by Abayudaya Jews of Uganda on their CD "Shalom Everybody Everywhere!" The rabbi also explained *Anousim* and presented commentary and recorded music on the weekly *parasha*. Find the link at www.rabbibarbara.com.

The Kulanu Boutique

Proceeds from these items benefit Kulanu and the communities that they represent.
Order by mail or online at www.kulanuboutique.com

BOOKS/MUSIC

Always an Olivia Charming children's book retelling the family saga of one Jew of African descent

A Short Story from African Israel Story told by Remy Ilona, an Igbo researcher in Nigeria

New! Kulanu CD Well-known Ethiopian Jewish musician Alula Tzadik has dedicated his newest CD to Kulanu!

New! Lecha Dodi CD A new collection of songs from the Abayudaya of Uganda for Shabbat

Shalom Everybody, Everywhere! CD Recording of the unique sounds of the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda

The Igbos: Jews in Africa? Remy Ilona's fascinating research into the Jewish ancestry of the Igbos of Nigeria

Under One Canopy: Readings in Jewish Diversity Reflections, essays, and poems by Jews worldwide

JUDAICA/JEWELRY

Abayudaya Kippot Hand crocheted small or pillbox-style skullcap (assorted colors; let us choose one for you)

Aish Chai Jewelry Lapel pin and tallit clips fashioned of sterling silver with gold plate, depicting in Hebrew letters *Chai* (life) coming out of *Aish* (fire), suggesting the return of *Anousim*

Challah Covers Colorful, embroidered challah covers from Ghana. **LIMITED INVENTORY!**

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Publications (cont.)

(Continued from page 9)

from California shortly after the 1906 earthquake, prospered in Bangalore, India. The renowned Rubin Shoe Shop of Commercial Street was said to be the largest in Asia. His wife, Rahma, from Calcutta, established a prayer hall at the Rubin House on Main Guard Road where shoes were manufactured. It was visited by Jews from India, US, England and Palestine. Among them was Ezer Weizmann, who later became Israel's President.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Bangalore/Bangalores_Jewish_son_came_from_California/articleshow/3805734.cms

✍ "Unlikely Ugandans" by **Jeff Kaiser** a freshman in Yale's Saybrook College in *The Yale Globalist*, 22 January 2009. Kaiser identifies the uniqueness of the Abayudaya from their beginnings with Semai Kakungulu's inspiration, then the scattering forced upon them by Idi Amin Dada, followed by a spiritual and community resurgence and revitalization (the "kibbutz movement"), and now their economic enterprise (J.J. Keki's Mirembe Kawomera, "Delicious Peace") coffee.

<http://tyglobalist.org/index.php/20090121182/Features/Unlikely-Ugandans.html>

✍ "Hidden Roots in the Jungle" by **Robin Cembalest**, a review of **Lorry Salcedo Mitrani's** new documentary film, *The Fire Within*, appears at the *NEXTBOOK.ORG* website, January 7, 2009. Cembalest

describes the film as: "the latest addition to a genre of what might be dubbed Lost-and-Found Jewry: films, books, long-form articles, and other reports on the intriguing communities with potential Jewish roots that have been 'discovered' in recent decades around the globe." In this film, Victor Edery Jr recounts how his grandfather, Abraham Edery Fimat, a Sephardic sailor from Morocco, arrived in the remote Peruvian city of Iquitos about a hundred years ago. Surprisingly, he found that other Jews preceded him – children and grandchildren of now absent Jewish rubber trade entrepreneurs. Cembalest takes this opportunity to open issues common to many lost-and-found groups seeking to connect to mainstream Judaism.

<http://www.nextbook.org/cultural/feature.html?id=2445>

✍ **Andree Aelion Brooks's** article "Spark in the Bottom of the Boot," in *Hadassah Magazine*, December 2008, discusses a renewal of Southern Italians' interest in their Jewish roots. Although Jewish artisans and merchants thrived from Roman times and for 1000 years thereafter, they were expelled during the Spanish Inquisition (the area was under Spanish rule) and seemingly disappeared. Credit for the renewal is attributed to Progressive Rabbi Barbara Aiello in Calabria and Orthodox Rabbi Pier Paulo Puntarello in Naples. <http://www.hadassah.org/pageframe.asp?section=news&page=per.html&header=per&size>

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Deadline for next issue: April 1, 2009

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