



Indian Jewish Congregation of USA Newsletter

March 2009

Volume 3, Number 1

In This Issue

- President's Message
- Birchot Hachamah
- Hanukkah Celebration at Consulate General of India
- "Maharashtra in Israel"
- A Message from Leslie Jacob
- Israel Largest Defense Supplier to India
- Upcoming Israel Beauty Pageant 2009
- Hoduyada 2009
- Felicitations to Noreen Daniel
- A Jewish Wedding in Kerala After 21 Years
- Legacies
- Purim Recipe
- Children's Corner
- Upcoming Events
- Announcements
- Submissions

Useful Link

jewsofindia.org

The official website of the Indian Jewish Congregation of USA. Here you will find useful information about our organization, our heritage, future plans, and more.

Contact Us

www.jewsofindia.org
comments@jewsofindia.org
jewsofindia@yahoo.com

Clicking on the e-mail links above will open your e-mail client. If you are using web-based e-mail, please copy/paste or type the above address in the TO field.

President's Message (by Romiel Daniel)

It has been a couple of months since our last newsletter in December 2008. In the beginning of February, we celebrated Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for the Trees. In March, we will be celebrating Purim and commemorating the deliverance of the Jewish people from the evil Haman. The President's Message for this newsletter issue will address both of these wonderful holidays.

A Tree's New Year Resolution



(c) Shoshannah Brombacher

Tu B'Shevat, the 15th of Shevat on the Jewish calendar, is the day that marks the beginning of a "New Year for Trees." This is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle.

Legally, the "New Year for Trees" relates to the various tithes that must be separated from produce grown in the Holy Land. These tithes differ from year to year in the seven-year Shemittah cycle; the point at which a budding fruit is considered to belong to the next year of the cycle is the 15th of Shevat.

We mark the day of Tu B'Shevat by eating fruit, particularly from the kinds that are singled out by the Torah in its praise of the bounty of the Holy Land: grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. On this day we remember that "Man is a tree of the field" (Deuteronomy 20: 19) and reflect on the lessons we can derive from our botanical analogue.

Naturally, the New Year for the Trees would be a time for trees to engage in soul-searching—the same way people do on Rosh Hashanah. Here is a tree's New Year Checklist:

- Did I shelter the seedlings that live in my shade—so they will grow up to be a next generation like myself?
- Did I grow towards the sun as a tree should, reaching up higher and higher towards that which I can never grasp, but which nurtures me all the same the more I strive towards it?
- Did I make sure my roots remain firmly planted in the soil that nurtures them, and did I drop my leaves there in the fall to give back life to that which sustains me?
- Did I ensure that my fruits were sweet and nourished all that came to enjoy them? Did everyone walk away from me with a smile?

- Did I bend gently in the wind, accepting what G-d sends but never breaking or giving up hope?
- Did I grow in strength and wisdom with each new ring this year?

Come to think of it, not a bad checklist for us humans either! We wish all our friends of the Indian Jewish Congregation of USA a Happy Tu B'Shevat. May you all grow from strength to strength.

Purim

The Holiday of Purim this year falls on Tuesday, March 10th 2009. It is the holiday when we became Jewish. Where does the word "Jew" come from and what does it mean?

The word Jew (Yehudi in the Hebrew) is derived from Judah (Yehudah), Jacob's fourth son. As we all know, Jacob had twelve sons. Why then is the entire Israelite nation known as "Jews"?

Perhaps this question can be cleared up by analyzing the very first individual to be dubbed "Jew." The first instance of this word appears in the Biblical Book of Esther, which chronicles the story of Purim. "There was a Jewish man in Shushan the capital, whose name was Mordechai the son of Yair... a Benjamite."

That's right, the first "Jew" was actually from the tribe of Benjamin.

The entire story of Purim was a result of Mordechai's code of behavior being inappropriate for the times. His snubbing of Haman put the entire nation of Jews in danger of extinction by slighting the King's favorite minister. Mordechai, the sage and rabbi, had not been informed that the ability to conform, is the key to survival.

Similarly, years earlier, Benjamin's brother Judah ignored all protocol as he approached the powerful Egyptian viceroy and threateningly demanded Benjamin's release. Unbeknownst to Judah, the Egyptian viceroy was actually his brother, Joseph. Judah is the embodiment of the exiled Israelite who must walk a thin line to defend his ideals. As Jews, only our bodies can be sent into exile—not our souls.

Mordechai the "Jew" was a proud student of his great—uncle Judah. He knew that Torah law forbids a Jew from bowing to Haman. Mordechai succeeded in implanting this sense of pride in the hearts of the masses. Not one Israelite abandoned his religion in order to be spared death. At that moment, we all became "Jews." Accordingly, the book of Esther is the first place where our nation as a whole is referred to as Jews.

In the next 2,500 years, our "Jewishness" was to be tested by countless regimes, friendly and hostile. We proved ourselves true to G-d, earning the name Jew through oceans of blood and tears.

The grand story of history concludes in similar fashion as the Purim story; we are here to tell the tale and our enemies aren't. The joy of Purim is greater than any other holiday because it tells the story of the nation that never allowed its soul to be shackled—the story of the "Jew".

Birchat Hachamah (Blessing of the Sun) 5769, April 8th, 2009

On April 8th 2009 (the morning of the day before the first night of Passover), we will watch the sun rise and bless it as part of Birchat Hachamah (Blessing of the Sun). The ceremony, which comes only once every 28 years, is surely the rarest and perhaps the oddest of all Jewish rituals. It commemorates, according to ancient tradition, the moment when G-d created the sun. On that day, according to the Talmud, the sun returns to where it was in the Heavens on the fourth day of Creation. That was when G-d assigned the sun and the moon to "serve as signs for the seasons" (Gen 1:14). On this day it is in a sense the season of the seasons, the cycle of the birth of all our cycles.

The Torah teaches that the sun was created at the beginning of the fourth day—Tuesday evening, to use our present labels. So the moment when the sun is again where it was at the beginning comes in a year when the equinox—as the rabbis defined it—comes on Tuesday evening in Nisan. But why the eighth of April? Surely it is not the equinox. The rabbis' calculation of the length of the year was a few minutes off—and in 2,000 years that has added up to a few weeks.

And why only every 28 years? By celebrating the sun only once a generation, the rabbis gave us a way to look ahead and a look back that is worthy of the sun.

We say the blessing: Baruch Atah Hashem Eloheynu Melech Ha-olam Oseh Ma-aseh B'reshit. The English translation is: Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of time and space, Doer of the deeds of Creation.

Hanukkah Celebration at Consulate General of India

Following a minute of silence in memory of those who lost their lives in the carnage in Mumbai in November, Consul General of India Ambassador Prabhu Dayal spoke of India's determination not to allow this to occur again on Indian soil.

Councilman Mark Schaer and Councilwoman Linda Greenstein, both of New Jersey, spoke of the good relations between India and the U.S.A. and the need to foster a peaceful solution to the present problems.

Romiel Daniel, President of the Indian Jewish Congregation of the U.S.A., spoke about the history of Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights. He recalled the victory of a militarily weak but spiritually strong Jewish people over the mighty forces of a ruthless enemy, the Greek Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes, that had overrun the Holy Land and threatened to engulf the land and its people in darkness. The Hanukkah Menorah, he said, has become a symbol and message of the triumph of freedom over oppression, of spirit over matter, of light over darkness.

The lighting of the Hanukkah Menorah was followed by Indian and Israeli dances by dance troupes of Sonali Skandan and Shiri Cohen. An Indian Kosher dinner followed the program.

Below is one of the many responses we received for the organization and coordination of this event:

Hi Romiel,

The function yesterday was fantastic. I see that a lot of planning, time and discussing has gone into it...and all compliments to you on its roaring success. I could see you were really exhausted at the end of it all. I am looking forward to the next function...probably Purim. I know all this calls for much planning and phoning, etc...and I know only you are capable of doing it.

*Shalom and kind regards,
Rizpah Corley*



From right, India's Consul General in New York, Prabhu Dayal; his wife Janakhi, both are seen lighting the Menorah; New Jersey Assembly members Gary Schaer and Linda Greenstein (both standing with hands folded) and Consul Shashi Kumar. The person behind Kumar was not identified.

Photo courtesy:
Office of Assemblyman Upendra J. Chivukla



"Maharashtra in Israel"

The Indian Jewish Congregation of USA is looking forward to the release of the book written in Marathi by Dr. Vijay Dhavle from Ottawa, Canada. The title of the book is "Israel Madhil Maharashtra" ("Maharashtra in Israel"). The inauguration of the book will be on April 20th, 2009 under the auspices of the Indian Jewish Federation, Mumbai (IJF).

In this book, Dr. Dhavle has made a deep study of the Bene Israel community that is thriving in Israel. He met many Bene Israel of earlier generations, who still like to talk in Marathi. They enjoy reading Marathi literature and look forward to cultural programs in Marathi. Most of them have not changed their food habits. They celebrate all the Jewish holidays, births, Bar Mitzvahs and weddings with Indian flavor. The Indian Jews have not forgotten India or their Indian culture, no matter where they have migrated to on the face of this earth.

At an IJF event on January 4th, 2009, many well known dignitaries were present, including Mr. Noah Massil, President of Central Organization of Indian Jews, Israel. Dr. Dhavle's speech at this event touched upon the exchange of science, technology and culture between India and Israel. He also spoke about Mr. Manohar Joshi, ex-Chief Minister of Maharashtra, who was instrumental in starting military schools in each of the districts in Maharashtra after his visit to Israel in 1996. India has sent some of their leading farmers and agriculture graduates to Israel to learn arid farming. This speech was printed in the IJF brochure.

Commenting on the recent terrorist activities and massacre of innocent victims, Dr. Dhavle said, "If a hungry snake comes to the door of a Hindu, they will give him milk to drink and leave the snake in its hole. From the Israelis, we must learn how to kill the snake before it enters our home. Then, these poisonous snakes will not come to India from the hole of Karachi, killing people in hotels." The terrorist attacks also targeted people at railway stations, hospitals, as well Chabad house in Mumbai.

According to Dr. Dhavle, he is honored to be able to write a book on the people of Israel and the Indian Jewish Community that is flourishing in Israel. The Hebrew translation of this book is being published in Israel; the English one is being done in Mumbai.

A Message from Leslie Jacob

My dear family, friends, and well-wishers,

It is already 2009, and I do not know where 2008 has gone—especially the summer. It feels as if a whole year of my life was just erased.

Let me wish all of you a very happy and prosperous 2009. I thank one and all for your many visits, phone calls, and for your prayers. All that effort pulled me through that time of trial, which I call my three months and eleven days journey

When I look back, it seems that I was ill from the start of 2008. I had guests from India, but I was unable to entertain them. I could only guide them to the City and out of town tours. My thanks go out to Romiel, Noreen, George and Lavina for entertaining my guests.

Three times, I was rushed to hospital and could not breathe. During my last visit, they found that I had a touch of pneumonia. Even though I came back strong, it still has taken me a long time to get some of the strength back. The medications keep me drugged, since I have no resistance to chemicals. My right palm and left ankle are still not 100 percent. That is why it has taken me so long to get to this letter. My apology for the delay.

During the three months, my son Marc came from St. Louis for two weeks. My daughter Judi and her husband Joe came in for a week. Molly, of course, visited every day. She had only two days off when my children were here. I do not know where she got the strength. Besides the visits, she had to make numerous phone calls and attend to the house. G-d gave her the strength, and I am overwhelmed by all her activities.

I always thought I took care of myself, but it was not enough. I ate properly and exercised regularly, but still water got into my lungs and weakened my heart. Well, it is over and I hope I will never have to go through it again. I have refused any more procedures. It is enough for me.

Once again I thank you for everything. You are my family in this strange land.

Fellow Bene Israel,

Leslie (David) Simon Ghosalker

Israel Largest Defense Supplier to India

Jerusalem: Israel has emerged as India's largest defense supplier, overtaking Russia. It has signed defense deals worth \$9 billion with New Delhi in the last decade, a media report here said on Sunday.

"There is close cooperation and the Indians respect the Israeli systems and our experience in fighting terror," a defense official was quoted as saying by The Jerusalem Post.

Russia had averaged sale of \$875 million annually to India for the past 40 years. In the wake of the Mumbai terror attacks, India purchased from Israel the aerostat radar system to defend the country's coastline for \$600 million, the daily said.

The radars will be deployed at strategic points to provide warning against incoming enemy aircraft and missiles.

Israel and India have also agreed upon the joint development of medium-range surface-to-air missiles for the Air Force, the report said. New Delhi is expected to receive the first of three new Phalcon Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS), part of a \$1.1 billion deal to be signed between the two countries by March.

Both sides are said to be in talks for the possible purchase of another three AWACS.

Source: The Hindu

Upcoming Israel Beauty Pageant 2009



Sivan Z'vulun of Modi'in is one of the finalists in the upcoming Israel Beauty Pageant 2009. She is 20 years old.

She studied Theater in High School and served in the Air Force branch of the IDF. She is saving money for her big trip to Australia by working as a waitress.

"My mother is from an Indian heritage and my father is a second generation in the county, a son of a family who immigrated from the former Soviet Union. When I visit my Indian grandmother, I eat curry chicken, and when with my father's family, I eat gefilte fish (stuffed fish) and kneidelach (dumplings). The truth is that I prefer Indian food. I was never there, but I'm curious to familiarize myself with my mother's heritage."

"In the IDF, I served in a closed base and I didn't get to leave for home everyday. In the beginning, I had a crisis, but very quickly I understood that this was my chance to mold myself as an adult with an independent existence."

The final contest will be held on March 18, 2009

Photo and Article Source: <http://www.ynet.co.il/home/0,7340,L-7152,00.html>
Translated from Hebrew by Aylon Samson

Hoduyada 2009

In January 2009, the Indian community in Israel celebrated its annual gathering in Eilat.

Shalom Astvikar mentions in the interview (link below) that this is the ninth year that these celebrations are held. He says that this year's turnout was a bit lower due to the war in Gaza, but in spite of it, many people did show up. He is hopeful that more will attend next year's celebrations.

All the performers from India enjoyed their stay in Israel and would love to come back next year. Moshe Binyamin concluded the festivities by thanking all the guests for taking the journey to the celebrations from all over Israel in spite of the situation. Lastly, he thanked the IDF and gave his well wishes to everyone involved making the celebration happen.

To watch the video interview visit:

http://www.bilplus.co.il/main_video.asp?id=115

Interviews in Hebrew, English, Hindi and Marathi



The Indian community in Israel is very active. Many events take place throughout the year for both adults and youth. On February 28, the Bollywood singer/actor Shaan performed in Israel. In addition, there's an upcoming Purim party for the community's young adults which will be held at the dance club TLV on March 12.

Photos courtesy of PhotoArmon

Felicitations to Noreen Daniel



Noreen Daniel was given the "Woman of Achievement Award" for 2008, at a program held at the Rego Park Jewish Center on December 14th, 2008. The award ceremony was held at a special program organized by the Rego Park Jewish Center Sisterhood on behalf of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism. They support the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies and the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem. This award was given to Noreen for outstanding community work, both religious and secular.

Noreen earned a Masters degree in Embryology and Cancer Research from Bombay University. While in India, she taught English to physically challenged girls and organized traditional cultural programs for the youth and women at the Magen Abraham Synagogue in Ahmedabad, India. In the U.S., she strives to create awareness among the different ethnic Jewish communities about traditions that are unique to the Bene Israel community. She has given lectures about Indian Jewish women through the times to various Jewish groups.

She was one of the contributors, along with Dr. Joan Roland, to a paper titled "Religious Observances of the Bene Israel—Persistence and Refashioning Tradition," published in the Journal of Indo-Judaic series. She also wrote about how Indian Jews celebrate Purim in India in the book "Esther's Legacy," promoted by Hadassah International Research Institute at Brandeis University. Information about Noreen has been written in "The Encyclopedia of Famous Jewish Women of the World."

At the Rego Park Jewish Center, Noreen is very involved with the Sisterhood and chairs the "Women in Judaism" lecture series, which focuses on empowering women and keeping the Jewish practices. Her goal is to integrate the Indian Jewish Community with the larger American Jewish Community, while at the same time retaining Indian Jewish culture practices and identity.

Noreen's profession is case management advocacy, counseling and interpretation for HIV+ clients from the Asian and Pacific Communities.

Noreen says that "Kol Hachoved" Gemilut Hasadim—giving of loving kindness without expecting anything in return—is a great Mitzvah. Anyone can do it at any time. This is Noreen's message to one and all.



A Jewish Wedding in Kerala After 21 Years

KOCHI: The parents of Shelomo and Susan want the marriage of their children to be a quiet affair. But the first wedding for India's oldest Jewish community in more than two decades promises to be far from that. And with the Mumbai terror strike making the country's handful of Jews a target for the first time, there is also going to be a lot of cops around.

After 21 long years, the 48-member Jewish community in Kochi will witness a wedding at the 400-year-old synagogue in the popular Jew Town in Mattancherry. The bridegroom is Shelomo (28) and the bride Susan (25), who will exchange rings on December 28.

"We wanted a quiet ceremony," says Elias Josephia, a close relative of the bridegroom. "But the news of the marriage leaked out and now it is a different story."

According to Josephia, after it became public, Shelomo's parents feared the ceremony would become a target for terrorists and sought police protection. "They're now giving out passes to guests to ensure no one else enters the synagogue. Vehicle passes are also being issued," says Josephia.

A social networking site brought Shelomo—an MBA who works in Chennai—and Susan—who is settled in Mumbai—together. Later, they told their parents who agreed to their marriage. "There's no dowry. We go by Tamuldic rituals. The bridegroom will offer a silver coin to the bride. On the day of the marriage, both the bridegroom and bride will fast till evening. Later, they will take out rings immersed in a glass of wine and exchange them. After this, they'll also drink the wine and break the fast," Josephia says.

The bridegroom's family is a member of the Thekkumbhagam congregation of the Cochin Jewish community. Susan's is from the Bene Israel (Sons of Israel) community in Mumbai. Since most members of the Jewish community here have migrated to Israel, the city is left with only a small population of 48 Jews. "Of them, 60% are above 75 years old. So, this marriage calls for special celebration," says Josephia, who remembers the last wedding in the synagogue in 1987.

The synagogue is an architectural marvel. Its 18th century hand-painted willow patterned floor tiles are from Canton in China. There are Hebrew inscriptions on its stone slabs. The scrolls of the Old Testament and ancient scripts on copper plates are the oldest in the Commonwealth and attracts tourists from across the world. Interestingly, it suffered structural damages when it was shelled during Portuguese rule in 1662. It was re-built two years later.

Source: The Times of India

Legacies (by Noreen Daniel)

Many memories of bygone years pass through my mind when Tu B'Shevat comes around. As usual, I have gone back to my life in India. My father's family, Vakrulkar Kutumb, has been deeply connected with the villages in the Konkan.

One summer vacation, we decided to visit my father's (Dr. Samuel Solomon's) ancestral home in Sakar. The new owners welcomed us into the house and the garden. Father was very happy to see the coconut and mango trees planted by his grandfather and father still bearing fruits. When he was a young lad, the saplings were irrigated by water drawn from the well which had a Persian wheel turned by a bullock walking around. Now, there was a motor driven pump installed to draw water.

Our garden in Mandwa has many mango and chickoo (Sapodilla) trees. We were told stories about the Alphonso mango grafts planted by our great-grandfather. We have seen the way our grandfather proudly distributed the Alphonso mangoes and Solomon Chicksos among our relatives and friends. With the kind of nurturing he did, it was the best-flavored fruit anyone had tasted! He had planted some coconuts near the water tanks. All of us used to long for the sweet coconut water in the afternoons. There are a few jackfruit trees too, planted by our grandfather, still bearing fruits every summer. We associated jackfruit to our grandfather's personality. Rough skin outside but full of many sweet, fleshy golden fruits inside. We had a big love for the apple tree near our first well. We remember the taste of that white juicy heart shaped fruit even today. We had to shake the branches and there would be a shower of fruits for our afternoon snack.

My father had a Doctorate in Plant Genetics. He had been associated with many of the Agricultural Research Stations in Maharashtra. He often introduced us to some new varieties of mangoes and other uncommon fruits. He had planted few trees of the Kawasji Patel mangoes, with each fruit weighing more than two pounds. These can be used to make mango preserves like Murumba and Chutney. He has also planted a few Rumali mango trees. These are round, with a skin as thin as a handkerchief, and are sugar sweet. Father also planted some Madras Hapooos trees. These mangoes are crimson red and attract passers by. The pulp is sweet but has fiber.

Father has also planted some grafts of Etimoya in our garden. This plant is a hybrid between Sitaphal (custard apple) and Marutiphal. It bears roundish fruits with few seeds and more flesh than Sitaphal. Daddy planted a couple of saplings of Ramphal too. This is a big tree and takes long to bear fruits. I remember commenting "Daddy, will you get to taste the fruit of this tree?" He said, "It is for you to taste. This is my gift to you."

Our Daddy left us seven years ago to be in the Garden of Eden. He must be happily wandering among all those beautiful heavenly trees. Just before Tu B'Shevat, I asked my brother David which new fruit he was going to bring for Shehechyanu Bracha. He said that he would be in Mandwa on that day, so he would see what he could get there. When I called him after his return to Mumbai, the first thing he told me "Noreen, I got two Ramphals on the tree Daddy had planted. I said the Shehechyanu Bracha on it!" This brought tears to my eyes. I could only say, "Wonderful, this fruit has come with Daddy's blessings."

Now, it is our turn to plant fruit trees in our garden. My brother Jonathan plants a few mango grafts every monsoon. This will be his legacy for our children and grandchildren. I make it a point to plant a few perennial flowers and fruit trees each time I go there. Our domestic helpers devotedly water them. When I call them sometimes they tell me, "Tai, your magnolia tree is giving fragrant flowers now. When will you come to put them in your hair"? I answer, "G-d willing very soon. Till then, look after my plants".

Note: It is a beautiful act of honor and remembrance to ask friends and relatives who are special to us to plant flower and fruit trees when they visit our garden. Dr. Joan Roland and Dr. Alan Roland have planted two varieties of magnolia plants in 2003 when they visited our home in Mandwa, and these plants have started bearing flowers.

Purim Recipe (by Noreen Daniel)

Stuffed Tomatoes or Capsicums with Kheema

5 large tomatoes with thick skin or 5 lightweight green capsicums	1 teaspoon turmeric powder
500 grams ground chicken or lamb or beef	1 teaspoon allspice powder
2 large onions	1 cup green peas or tender corn kernels
2 garlic cloves	1 teaspoon salt
1 ½ inch piece ginger	2 tablespoons cooking oil
3 long green or red chillies	1 cup chopped coriander
1 teaspoon cumin powder	2 eggs

Wash ground chicken/lamb/beef in a big sieve under cold tap water. Leave aside till water is drained. Finely mince the onions. Grind ginger, garlic and chillies to a paste. Add oil to a nonstick pot over medium heat. Once oil is warm, add onions and fry until golden brown.

Add the ginger, garlic and chili paste and fry for about 2 minutes. Add ground chicken/lamb/beef and fry over medium-high heat until it gets brown, stirring often. Add the powdered spices and salt. Stir until the mixture is well mixed and releases a strong aroma.

Add green peas or corn and tomato pulp scooped from the tomato halves and mix well. Add little water if needed. Cover the pot and let the kheema cook on medium heat.

Lastly, add the coriander when the kheema is dry and remove from heat. Leave the mixture to cool with the lid open. Our stuffing is now ready to use as required.

For tomatoes:

Wash the tomatoes and cut them into halves breadth wise. Scoop out the pulp and leave upside down for 10-15 minutes. Use these tomato cups to fill with kheema stuffing.

For green capsicums:

Wash the capsicums and cut into halves breadth wise. Remove the seeds and discard them. Cook the halves in the microwave for 30 seconds or steam until the skin softens.

Fill the tomato or capsicum halves with kheema and top with bread crumbs. When all the tomato or capsicum halves are ready, beat the eggs. Spread a little egg with a tablespoon on top of each tomato/capsicum.

In a non stick skillet, add a little cooking oil. Fry each tomato or capsicum half lightly. Egg will seal the stuffing and keep it from falling.

Arrange the tomato or capsicum halves in a Pyrex dish or an aluminum tray. I like to alternate red and green capsicums or a circle of tomatoes surrounded by green capsicums. Place in a preheated oven at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 minutes. Remove and serve in an open dish.

This is a good starter for any special occasion. I prefer to prepare the stuffing the day before. This dish goes well with any kind of beverage. This was one of my mother's favorite dishes to welcome her special guests.

Children's Corner

We feel that there's a necessity of reserving space in our Newsletter for Jewish children. We would like them to feel connected to the Jewish congregations the world over through their articles, stories and poems. As an introduction, we have included two poems written by Noreen's granddaughters on the occasion of her felicitation.

"Ima"

My grandma is the best
Not only for me, but for the rest.
Kind-hearted, always there
Teaching here, learning there.
Over and over again I go
To see her face, to see it glow.
All of the above, as you can see
Is from our heart,
Raina and me.

By Yafa Daniel (10 years old)

"Ima"

Our grandma is nice and sweet,
She makes nice things for us to eat.
She's helpful and kind and helps us unwind,
She gives us advice and always is nice more than twice.
She's always strong and always tough
Sewing, knitting, cooking too,
She's always there for me and you.

By Raina Daniel (9 years old)

Upcoming Events

Purim Celebration

Purim is just around the corner. Let us enjoy the festival in the spirit it warrants. Enjoy Bollywood, Israeli and the latest American music with one of the best DJ's. There will be music for grandchildren, children, adults and grandparents. Dress code is suitable for Purim—your choice whether you want to be Mordechai or Esther or Ahasuerus or any other character of Purim. Or, come as yourself!

Enjoy delicious Indian Kosher Food and snacks, as well as American snacks, while we enjoy the season of joy.

The party will be held on Saturday, March 7th 2009 from 7 p.m. onwards, at the Rego Park Jewish Center, Crystal Ballroom. The address is 97-30 Queens Boulevard, Rego Park, NY 11374

The charge is only \$25.00 per adult and \$10.00 for children below the age of 12 years. Free admission for children under 5 years old.

RSVP with a check to "Indian Jewish Congregation of USA" by March 5th 2009.

Jews in the Cradle of India

Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust presents:

Sunday, March 15, 2 p.m.
Jews in the Cradle of India

Panel discussion with
Romiel Daniel, the Indian Jewish Congregation of USA
Nathan Katz, *Who Are the Jews of India?*
Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, Chabad-Lubavitch Movement
Rahel Musleah, journalist and author

India, a country that values religious and ethnic diversity, has long been home to three Jewish communities and has remained largely free of anti-Semitism. Journey to Jewish Kolkata, Mumbai, and Kochi, and find out how the recent attacks in Mumbai are affecting that small but thriving community.

Panel discussion co-sponsored by the Indian Jewish Congregation of USA

Preceded by a free screening at 1 p.m. of *In Search of the Bene Israel* (Directed by Sadia Shepard, U.S.A., 2008, DVD, 38 minutes)

TICKETS:

\$10, \$7 students/seniors, \$5 members

Advance reservations recommended.

TO PURCHASE TICKETS:

<http://www.ticketweb.com/t3/sale/SaleEventDetail?dispatch=loadSelectionData&pl=jewishheritage&eventId=938704>

or call 646.437.4202

The Museum of Jewish Heritage is located at 36 Battery Place, New York, NY 10280.

Reflections on the Tragedy of Mumbai with the Indian Jewish Community

The JCC in Manhattan presents a program in memory of the recent tragedy in Mumbai.

Monday, June 29th 2009, 7 p.m.

\$20 for members / \$25 for non-members

Join Romiel Daniel, president of the Indian Jewish Congregation of USA and other members of the community as they share their reactions and reflections on this horrible tragedy and discuss the history of Jewish life in India and, particularly, in Mumbai. Indian cuisine will be served. Co-sponsored with the Indian Jewish Congregation of USA.

The JCC in Manhattan is located at 334 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10023.

Announcements

Atara Zivah Manglani

Mazal tov to parents Rajiv Aaron and Miriam Manglani of Cambridge, MA, and grandparents Arjun and Florence Manglani of Brooklyn, NY, on the birth of Atara Zivah Manglani. Atara was born on December 27th, 2008.



Leeon Samuel



Mazal tov to grandparents Joshua and Sophie Samuel Rohekar, and parents Abraham and Irene Samuel Rohekar of Ahmedabad, and maternal grandparents Samson and Anita Vakrulkar of Alibag, on the Bar Mitzvah of Leeon Samuel. Leeon's Bar Mitzvah took place on January 10th, 2009 at Ahmedabad's Magen Abraham Synagogue.

Leeon is 13 years old and in eight grade of Zydus School for Excellence, Ahmedabad. His favorite subject is History. He is interested in soccer and plays on his school team. He has also won many medals in athletics especially in shot-put. Leeon is a computer gaming aficionado. Leeon's motto in life is very simple: "Don't worry, be happy."

At his Bar Mitzvah, Leeon read his first portions from the Torah and made everyone proud of him. In his welcome speech, Leeon said that he was very proud of his family and the values that were taught to him by his parents and grand parents. He also thanked everybody that graced the occasion. The

ceremony was followed by a sumptuous lunch for the Ahmedabad Jewish community at the Synagogue premises. The Indian Jewish Congregation of USA has awarded a gift of \$50 to Leeon. May he grow in his knowledge of Torah and be an asset to the Ahmedabad Congregation.

Nissim Moses

Nissim Moses has undergone a valve replacement surgery on Monday Feb 27th. At present he is in a rehab center. He will be back at his residence possibly in the first week of March. He will undergo extensive physical rehabilitation over the next few months.

We wish him Refua Shelema and a speedy recovery to active Jewish life.

Submissions to the Newsletter

We would like all our members to send us articles of interest, birthdates or birth months, wedding anniversaries and any other information of interest to the community. Submissions are subject to editing for clarity and style. Please send newsletter submissions to tapluna@jewsofindia.org or aylon@jewsofindia.org.

To be included in our electronic mailing list, please send your request to: comments@jewsofindia.org