



# HIIM REPORT

JANUARY 2011

## *Rediscovering the Jews of India*

For over a year now, God has given us a burden to seek out the Black Jews of India and share with them the Good News of their Messiah. In addition to Jewish expatriates and recent immigrants, there are five native Jewish communities in India. On p. 2 we will highlight the Cochin Jews and each of the others in subsequent newsletters.

### HISTORY OF THE INDIAN JEWS

Historically, Judaism was one of the first outside religions to come to India. When the Jews arrived, most assimilated into Hindu culture and adopted local traditions. Even so, it is difficult to estimate the number of Indian Jews because they settled in different communities, each one being very distinct. Even the time period of their arrival, according to historians, is varied. Some Jews arrived during the time of the Kingdom of Judah, the age of King Solomon; that's almost 3,000 years ago. Still, historians believe that some are descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes.

### WHERE THEY SETTLED AND LIVED

The Jews settled in Kodungallur (Cranganore) on the Malabar Coast, where they traded peacefully, until 1524. Of the total Jewish population in India, about half live in Manipur and Mizoram and a quarter live in Mumbai.

#### THOMAS, CALLED DIDYMUS

Thomas traveled from Kottakavu or Cranganore, now called Kodungallur (Mussiris) and landed at Palayur by boat through the backwaters. At that time, Palayur was a stronghold of the Brahmins and also of Jews. Thomas came to visit the Jewish merchants at Palayur at "Judankunnu" (meaning the hill of Jews) and to preach the Good News of Messiah.

Historians believe that seven

congregations were established by St. Thomas, one of them in Palayur, the oldest Christian Church in India. As proof that Jewish settlements existed when St. Thomas arrived in Palayur in 52 AD, ruins of a synagogue rest near a Hindu temple, close to the church.

#### PRAYFORUS

Pray for us as we prepare a missions trip to India, reconnecting with the expatriates of Ethiopia. To know that Thomas, one of the twelve disciples, may have shared the Gospel of Yeshua with their ancestors is exciting and spurs us on in this vision. We want to go, not in "word only but in power, and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (I Thes. 1:5), believing

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that it is the time to water where Thomas planted.

For those living in the crippling grip of religion, we want to bring them the fire of the Holy Spirit. For those who have assimilated into the polytheism of Indian culture, we want to bring them the knowledge of the one and only God, the Elohim of Israel. Please fill out the enclosed card and pray about how to give. Your support will bring the light of Messiah to the Jews of India.

Thank you and God bless you,

*Kokeb Gedamu*

Most information for these articles was taken from the websites [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Thomas\\_Church\\_\(Palayur\)](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Thomas_Church_(Palayur)) and [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian\\_Jews](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Jews) wasRedirected=true



### THE COCHIN JEWS

The oldest of the Indian Jewish communities is in Cochin, Kerala in the southwestern region of the country. The traditional account is that traders from Judea arrived in the city of Cochin in 562 BC, and that more Jews came as exiles from Israel, after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D.

In 379 A.D. the Hindu king Sira Primal issued, engraved on a tablet of brass, his permission to Jews to



live freely, build synagogues, and own property without conditions attached, as long as the world and moon exist.

In 1524, the Muslims attacked these wealthy Jews of Cranganore (Kodungallur) on the pretext that they had an advantage with the pepper trade.

The Jews fled to Cochin. The Hindu Raja of Cochin gave them asylum and exempted Jews from taxation but bestowed on them all privileges enjoyed by the taxpayers.

*(Pictured, Cochin Jews) In our next newsletter, we will feature the Bene Israel of India. ✧*

## A PEOPLE IN NEED OF REVIVAL

Thank you for your prayers and support in 2010. House of Israel Ministries wishes you and your families a new year in 2011 overflowing with the fulfillment of God's richest promises for your life. We pray that same prayer for the people of Ethiopia as well.

According to the 1994 national census, 83.31% of Ethiopians adhered to Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity; 15.83% of the population said they were Muslim. There is now also a sizable number of Ethiopian Jews, some of whom live in temporary camps, hoping to emigrate to Israel. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gondar>). Our June 2011 trip seeks to bring revival to these three groups of Ethiopians.

• **Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity** — Although this church in Ethiopia bears the Christian distinction, this group is steeped in tradition and customs. It is inclusive of the worship of saints and angels. Eighty-three percent of our people are held in bondage to this belief. We want to bring the fire of the Ruach Hakodesh (Holy Spirit) to them so that they will be set free from legalism and immersed in the Spirit of God.

• **Muslim** — A small number of Ethiopians are Muslim, but can you imagine if revival came to them and they are set free to receive the free gift of God, Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah?

• **Ethiopian Jews** — When most of them emigrate to Israel, they will be quickly indoctrinated into a culture devoid of their Messiah. Help us to reach them with the

Gospel as they wait to make *aliyah* (right of return) to their Promised Land.

Prayer warriors and intercessors have been spending time before God seeking His heart and timing to refresh



the people of Ethiopia with the winds of revival.

Will you join with us and support us as we facilitate what we believe will be a mighty move of God? Maybe you would like to join us in the historic cities

of Bahardar and Gondar as God breathes upon our people. If so, make plans to accompany us. We will send more information as the plans unfold. If you cannot go, please pray that the Holy Spirit would open their eyes that they will see Yeshua and know that He alone is God. In addition to praying, you can also give. Please pray about helping us fund this great event as we have been given approval by Gondar to rent its soccer stadium. Then we will need to rent the sound system and hire a musical group and pay for all the smaller items and issues that accompany such a vision. Your tax-deductible gift can assist us in making this happen. Please pray your part in this "God-event." ✧

### DROP US A LINE:

*As you are led to fill out the pledge card enclosed, use the back to drop us a prayer, a word of encouragement, or a Scripture that Adonai would give you to bless us -- even if you write that you are standing with us in prayer. Also, let us know how the ministry of HIIM or the personal ministry of Rabbi Kokeb Gedamu has blessed you. We look forward to hearing from you. Until then, Shalom. ✧*

