

KULANU

“all of us”



Helping Lost Jewish Communities
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Introducing Abayudaya Coffee!

“Delicious Peace” is the translation of *Mirembe Kawomera*, the name selected for a new kosher coffee being produced by the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda and their neighbors, in partnership with Thanksgiving Coffee of California.

The Abayudaya have joined with their Moslem and Christian neighbors near Mbale, Uganda, to create a new 400-farmer Fair Trade Certified coffee cooperative to produce Mirembe Kawomera coffee.

“We think this farmer coalition is unique in all of Africa,” announced J.J. Keki, Abayudaya farmer and co-op leader. “We will produce exceptional Mt Elgon arabica coffee for the world market,” he added, “offering Jewish, Moslem and Christian farmers a better life for our families by working together.” Keki started the coop by approaching hundreds of coffee farmers in his area door-to-door, on foot.

The project gives these family farmers their first access to the US market through Fair Trade. Organically grown, the coffee will also soon be certified by Ecocert.

The Mirembe Kawomera Coffee Project is an economic development project created by Keki with Laura Wetzler, Kulanu’s hard-working Coordinator for Uganda, and Paul Katzeff, CEO of the Thanksgiving Coffee Company of Fort Bragg, California (www.thanksgivingcoffee.com). Katzeff is a well-known pioneer in the Fair Trade specialty coffee business. His company is importing, roasting and distributing Mirembe Kawomera Coffee worldwide.

“The Mirembe Kawomera Coffee Project brings inspiring win-win partnerships of religious tolerance and economic justice to a world much in need of both,” notes Wetzler. She says the project exemplifies the Jewish concepts of *tikkun olam*, or “repair of the world” and *shalom bayit* or “peace in the home.” She adds that the 700-member Abayudaya Jewish community will also enjoy increased safety from persecution.

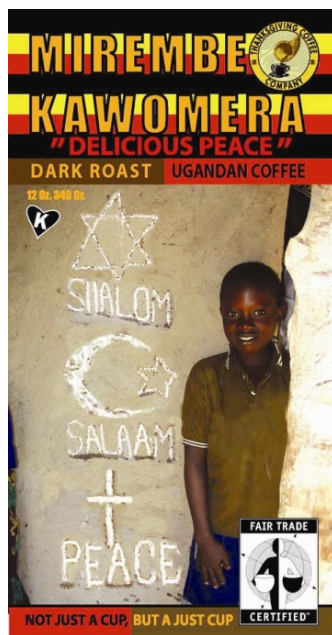
Kulanu has been at work on the ground in Uganda since 1995. The Mirembe Kawomera Coffee project is the latest in a long line of projects Kulanu has been proud to have participated in – religious and educational assistance, leadership training, linking the Abayudaya to

U.S. communities and international NGOs, supervising U.S. volunteers, facilitating sanitation, health education, water and electricity projects, selling crafts and music CDs (see www.kulanuboutique.com), initiating micro-finance banking, and leading Jewish safari mitzvah tours to Uganda. Wetzler, the initiator of the coffee project, approached 50 coffee companies with the idea.

The coffee and travel projects will dovetail next January, when Wetzler will lead the third annual mitzvah tour to Uganda (see notice on page 12). The tour will include a visit to the Mirembe Kawomera Coffee Cooperative, a tour of coffee farms, and meetings with farmers from the coop.

When asked how she could maintain her demanding schedule as Kulanu’s Coordinator for Uganda (a volunteer position) as well as her professional singing career, she replied, “Mitzvah work is the only antidote to the evening news.”

(Continued on page 6)



Rabbi Rosen and The Igbos

Journal excerpts by Remy C. Ilona

For some time Kulanu has been trying to locate a rabbi who would be willing to visit Nigeria. So when I got a notice from Kulanu and the American Jewish World Service in May that Rabbi Brant Rosen of Evanston, Illinois, was considering a full one month visit to Nigeria, I was elated.

Also I felt challenged, because I knew that to host a rabbi for one month in Nigeria would not be easy; the indigenous rabbinical Jewish community in Nigeria is still very young and weak. It is true that we have over 40 million Igbos, with all stating with seriousness that they are “Jews,” but only a tiny fraction, perhaps only a few thousand, have started *teshuvah* (return).

After much reflection, I encouraged Rabbi Rosen to make the trip, but I also told him to expect to suffer, as all pioneers do. We started preparations for the visit. Kulanu officials and Seth Appel of the AJWS joined us in this aspect of our work.

I resolved that the rabbi had to work with the Igbos who have started *teshuvah*, and with all other Igbos, if possible. The Igbo are still one people, with the same basic customs, traditions, and feelings.

We had to tackle the problem of housing for the rabbi. Few of us have suitable accommodation, and security had to be considered. The honourable Teddy Luttwak, an Italian Jewish businessman long resident in Abuja, graciously accommodated the rabbi.

(Continued on page 8)

KULANU (“ALL OF US”) is a tax-exempt organization of Jews of varied backgrounds and practices dedicated to finding lost and dispersed remnants of the Jewish people and assisting those who wish to (re)join the Jewish community. Kulanu is undertaking a variety of activities worldwide on behalf of these dispersed groups, including research, contacts, education, conversion when requested, and relocation to Israel if desired. This newsletter is published quarterly by Kulanu, 11603 Gilsan St., Silver Spring, MD 20902.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

New Organization To Fight Genocide

By Jack Zeller

Dr. Rudolph and Mary Windsor, well known in the Multicultural Jewish community as activists, writers, teachers, organizers and leaders, have formed a new organization to address the issues of human rights violations and genocide around the world, with a special focus on Central Africa.

Why another Human Rights organization? The record speaks for itself. Current organizations are very good at telling us what happened WHEN IT IS TOO LATE. Although abundant in skill, these organizations are amazingly unable to get press coverage when it is needed. One of the VIPs in the US during the Rwanda and Burundi genocide of the 1990s said very simply that there was no constituency for those who were being murdered.

I have great confidence that Rudolph and Mary, very senior and seasoned communicators, know how to get the word out. But they need help both in terms of interest (grass roots workers in different states) and some start-up money. Like Kulanu, Mary and Rudolph Windsor, are incredibly frugal and will make every dollar they receive well expended.

Mary has promised: "This organization will do its best to alert and pressure our government and other international forums to take action to prevent genocide in various parts of the world. Everybody has the right of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'—not just Americans. Global Watch Inc. will also assist survivors of acts of genocide."

Global Watch is now accepting contributions. Please send your checks to: Global Watch Inc., P.O. Box 310393, Atlanta, GA 31131-0393. For additional information email <windsorgs@bellsouth.net>, fax: 770-969-5677, phone 770-969-2293.



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Of Special Mention (Menschen!)

Cliff Spungen, Ira Ungar, and their Men's Club at Pittsburgh's Congregation Beth El have been Kulanu activists for two years. They sell Abayudaya kippot and challah covers from Ghana (two of which cover the challahs at Beth El on Shabbat).

The Men's Club sold \$900 worth of Kulanu goods at the biennial convention of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs this summer. The kippot were apparently the "hit of the convention" and many individuals took Kulanu literature back to their home synagogues.

Kulanu treasurer Harriet Bograd says, "They've been fabulous partners, both selling goods regularly and finding and refurbishing laptop computers for the Abayudaya."

Spungen summarizes the effort: "We hope we are able to continue to raise our members' awareness of these small groups of Jews living where you'd least expect them!"



Men from all over the US sport their newly-purchased Abayudaya kippot at the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs convention this summer.

FROM KAIFENG TO JERUSALEM

By Michael Freund

(excerpted from *The Jerusalem Post*, June 1, 2005)

Slowly, and somewhat hesitantly, Shlomo and Dina Jin walked into the room, anxious to hear the rabbinical court's decision regarding their request to return to the Jewish people. It was a moment of profound significance, not only for this affable couple, who had traveled down a long and often agonizing path, but also for the community they had left behind in their native China.

Shlomo Jin hails from Kaifeng, which lies south of the Yellow River, some 1,100 kilometers from Beijing. He is a descendant of the city's once-thriving Jewish community, which first settled in the area during the reign of the Song dynasty over 1000 years ago.

In 1163, Kaifeng's Jews built a beautiful synagogue, which was subsequently renovated and rebuilt numerous times. It adjoined the city's Jewish district, at the heart of which was a street called *Jiao Jing*, or "Teaching Scripture Lane."

By the middle of the 1800s, widespread assimilation and inter-marriage had taken a heavy toll, weakening the community spiritually and numerically. The last rabbi of Kaifeng died sometime in the first half of the 19th century; a few decades later the synagogue, and the community it had served, were no more.

But the story did not end there. Against all odds, Kaifeng's Jews struggled to preserve their sense of Jewish identity and consciousness, passing down whatever little they knew to their children and grandchildren. Simultaneously they appealed for help to world Jewry, pleading a century ago for teachers and rabbis to be sent to educate their youth and replenish their Jewish knowledge and practice.

Sadly, that call went largely unheeded, and it seemed as if the curtain was finally going to come down on the 1,000-year long saga of Kaifeng Jewry. Until this month, that is.

For when Shlomo Jin went before the rabbinical conversion court in Jerusalem two weeks ago, it marked the closing of a historical circle. For the first time, a family of Kaifeng Jewish descendants was returning to the Jewish people and to the Land of Israel.

Shlomo and his wife had spent the past year studying Judaism under the tutelage of a Chinese-speaking yeshiva student, hired for the purpose by Shavei Israel. Shlomo's daughter, Shalva, had previously undergone conversion by a rabbinical court in Haifa, and now it was time for Shlomo and his wife Dina to do the same.

They answered the judges' questions on various matters of Jewish law and practice and demonstrated their commitment to living an observant Jewish lifestyle. The rabbis treated them with kindness and respect and were clearly moved by their personal and historical saga.

When told they had been accepted back into the fold of the Jewish people, Shlomo's and Dina's tears of joy flowed freely, and rightly so. The dream they had nurtured for so long was at last coming true.

But I have no doubt that at least some of those tears were inspired by their treatment at the hands of Israel's government, which has consistently shown an appalling lack of interest in the fate of Kaifeng's Jewish descendants, several hundred of whom still remain in China.

Shortly after China and Israel established diplomatic relations in 1992, Shlomo Jin went to the Israeli embassy in Beijing, bearing in his hand his Chinese residence permit listing his nationality as "Jew." He wanted to submit an application to make *aliya* so that he could fulfill his lifelong dream of going to Zion.

When the embassy clerk learned of the reason for his visit, Shlomo was told to leave. For two full days he waited outside, hoping someone from the embassy would at least come out to hear his story and perhaps try to help. But just as his ancestors' calls for assistance to world Jewry had gone unheeded, so too did Shlomo's, and he was forced to return to Kaifeng empty-handed.

When, at last, Shlomo made it to Israel five years ago, he and his

family were given the cold shoulder by the Interior Ministry, which repeatedly sought to expel them from the country. Rather than embracing Shlomo as a long-lost brother coming home, Israeli authorities treated him like an illegal alien.

Hopefully those days are now behind the Jins, and they can look forward to building a Jewish future in Jerusalem. Shalva is doing her national service at Shaare Zedek Hospital, while Shlomo and Dina are looking for work.

The odyssey of the Jin family is an inspiring lesson in the power of Jewish memory. It demonstrates convincingly that no matter how far a Jewish soul may wander – even to the farthest reaches of China – it can, and ultimately will return.

There are many more such Jewish souls out there knocking on our collective door, seeking to be allowed in. The challenge for Israel is to cut through the red tape, and pave the way for them to do so.



Chinese-Jewish Organizations At Work

Executive director Beverly Friend has announced that the China Judaic Studies Association has revamped its web page to improve clarity and ease of access to information. Check them out at <<http://www.oakton.edu/~friend/chinajews.html>> .

The official site of the Sino-Judaic Institute is at <<http://www.sino-judaic.org>> . The latest issue of their journal, *Points East*, has an article on the conversion of Shlomo and Dina Jin in Jerusalem.

Igud Yotzei Sin (the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel) has set up a new site at <<http://www.jewsofchina.org>> . According to chairman Theodore Kaufman, it aims to inform Jews who lived in China, and their descendants all over the world, and interested friends, about their past history (of the modern age) and current activities, including conferences and reunions.

In addition, <<http://rickshaw.org>> is dedicated to the World War II Shanghai Jewish community. It announces details on a reunion of former Shanghai Jews planned for April 24-30, 2006.

Ground has been broken for the new building of the Center for Judaic Studies at Nanjing University, and the tentative date for completion is October 2006. The Center meets a growing demand (over 200 students annually) for Judaic studies in China by promoting the study of Jewish subjects, offering regular courses in Jewish history, examining the contributions of Jews to the western world, and covering Holocaust material. The James Friend Center for Judaic Studies will house classrooms, offices, exhibit space, and a new library; it will be part of a larger Nanjing University-Johns Hopkins University Institute for International Research. Tax-deductible donations to build the Center may be made out to The Sino-Judaic Institute and mailed to 232 Lexington Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Attn: Al Dien. Attach a separate note stating that the funds are intended for the Nanjing Center for Judaic Studies.

KULANU BRIEFS

Kulanu's Two New Faces

Lauri Donahue has accepted a newly-created position as Kulanu's Coordinator for Schools, Camps and Bnai Mitzvah. She will serve as the clearinghouse for ideas for curriculum, mitzvah projects, and fund-raisers for schools, camps, and bnei mitzvah that involve Kulanu's work.

For her Toledo congregation's younger students, Donahue has proposed such creative projects as making tzedakah boxes in the style of Abayudaya mud synagogues (coffee cans covered in brown construction paper with raffia thatch roofs, with white chalk decorations like the ones on the real synagogue walls). Another is having the children sing their favorite Jewish songs for a cassette tape, accompanied by an illustrated song book with laminated pages in a binder, to send to Abayudaya schoolchildren.

Donahue invites interested individuals and groups to contact her at <schools@kulanu.org> for advice or to share ideas and experiences.

Bluma Teram has become the new Coordinator for Ghana. A Canadian social worker whose interests include the impact of HIV/AIDS on elderly caregivers and orphans in Africa, she has lived in Israel for eight years and spent some time in Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Botswana.

Teram explains her reasons for accepting this position: "Having been to Africa three times, I wondered about Jews in Africa and began to research the topic. I was thrilled to find Kulanu's website and was very impressed with the work in which Kulanu engages. It is not only global and inclusive, but it speaks to social justice and fills a gap that exists in traditional institutional Judaism. The overall philosophy and approach of Kulanu is very consistent with my own world view and I am proud to assist in whatever manner I can."

People who want to learn about or help with the Sefwi Wiawso Jewish community in Ghana can contact her at Ghana@kulanu.org.

Kulanu's Press Database

Kulanu is working on compiling a press list of publications and journalists who may be interested in our work. We especially want to include journalists who have already written articles about Kulanu or the communities that we work with. We also are interested in finding volunteers who want to help with press outreach. If you can suggest specific journalists whom we should include on this list (such as people who have published articles in your local communities), please send this information to Harriet Bograd at harriet@kulanu.org or 165 West End Ave, 3R, New York, NY 10023. Please include the journalist's email, complete mailing address, phone numbers, publication (if any), type of journalism (staff, freelance, or other), and comments (including articles previously published about Kulanu topics).

Speakers Spread the Word

Laura Wetzler, Kulanu's Uganda Coordinator, spoke at a Kulanu meeting in Washington, DC on June 7. The award-winning singer-songwriter shared some songs and launched into a discussion of her intensive work with the Abayudaya community.

The American Sephardi Federation with Sephardic House Portuguese Culture and Education Foundation held a benefit dramatic reading in New York on June 8. It featured a staged reading of *Disobedience*, a play that recounts the heroic efforts of Consul Aristides de Sousa Medes of Portugal in saving the lives of thousands of Jews during the Nazi regime. The playwright, **Luis Francisco Rebello**, led a discussion afterwards.

Jeffrey Kaplan led a three-session course in June in Philadelphia on "Synagogues and Sugarcane: the Jews of the West Indies."

The Manhattan JCC presented **Gabriela Kohen's** one-woman

show, *Decoding the Tablecloth*, on June 15. The award-winning autobiographical show examines the experiences of an immigrant girl growing up Jewish and Latina in New York.

British dancer **Sara Manasseh** gave a series of lecture-performances in February in seven cities in India. Her performance was entitled "Remembered Rhythms: A Festival of Diaspora and the Music of India."

Abayudaya Music in New CD

Ugandan Gershon Sizomu's rendition of "*Lekhu Neranena*" is included in the new Shalsholet CD, entitled *First International Festival of New Jewish Liturgical Music*. The recording's 14 cuts also include composers ranging from an Argentinian choir director and a Czech-born veteran of the Yiddish theater, to cantors, conservatory teachers, Broadway and jazz musicians, folk artists, and opera performers. To order, send \$20 (includes S&H) to Shalsholet: The Foundation for New Jewish Liturgical Music, PO Box 15836, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. For further info, go to <Shalsholet@NewJewishMusic.com>.

Health Workshops in Uganda

Health workshops were given in Ugandan villages in the spring and summer by Abayudaya and other students who received special training at Semei Kakungulu High School, thanks to a grant from the Estelle Friedman Gervis Family Foundation and to the capable management of Molly Sonenklar, one of Kulanu's volunteers in Uganda. Workshops addressed such topics as HIV/AIDS, Hygiene, Nutrition, Child Care, and Malaria. Kudos to all involved!

Bene Israel Holiday Services in NYC

The Bene Israel Indian Jewish Community in New York will be conducting High Holiday services for the 11th consecutive year in the Bene Israel liturgy. The services will be held at The Village Temple, 33 East 12 Street, New York, NY. Rosh Hashanah services will be held October 3 at 6:15 pm and October 4 at 8 am. Yom Kippur services will be held on October 12 at 5:45 pm (*Kol Nidre*) and October 13 at 7:30 am. Anyone wishing to participate in the reading for these services should contact Romiel Daniel at (718) 897-8718 or Sam Daniel at (212) 873-4261. The services are free, but donations are welcome (expenses are incurred for the rent of the synagogue and the snacks provided on Rosh Hashanah and at the end of the Yom Kippur).

Brazilian Documentary Film

A new film co-directed by photographer Elaine Eiger and journalist Luize Valente documents the story of Brazilian Catholics who practice some Jewish traditions, often unknowingly. Titled *The Star Hidden in the Backlands*, the film includes interviews with descendants of "New Christians" escaping the Portuguese Inquisition of the 16th century, whose customs include refraining from pork, circumcising baby boys, and observing many Jewish burial customs.

A New Jewish Museum in Belmonte

The 1 million-Euro Belmonte Jewish Museum opened in Castelo Branco, Portugal, in April. It will serve as a place for documenting, investigating, exhibiting and publicizing the role played by the Belmonte Jewish community within the framework of the history and culture of Judaism. It includes a permanent exhibit space, a space for temporary shows, a store where kosher products are sold (such as certified wine and olive oil), and a 70-seat auditorium. It will also house the Adriano Vasco Rodrigues Center for Judaic Studies, named for a historian of Jewish ancestry from nearby Guarda.

Current items on display include household utensils and ritual

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objects. The oldest exhibited piece is a *hanukiah* from the 15th century. A memorial to the victims of the Inquisition is displayed on one wall, with the names of hundreds of individuals who were persecuted and killed.

Abayudaya Film Now Available

Filmmakers Debra Gonsker Vinik and David Vinik have announced that their documentary *Moving Heaven and Earth* is now available for purchase in DVD and VHS formats. This film documents the conversion of 300 Abayudaya Jews of Uganda in February 2005 under the auspices of a *Beit Din* of one Israeli and three American rabbis, sponsored by Kulanu.

The cost for home video use is \$79.95 plus \$6.95 S&H, or for public performance rights, \$149.95 plus \$6.95 S&H. Send check to Diva Communications, 630 Ninth Ave., Suite 304, New York, NY, 10036, attn: *Moving Heaven and Earth*. It can also be ordered online at <www.divacommunications.com>.

Building Mikvehs in India for Bnei Menashe....

At the request of Sephardic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, the organization Shavei Israel has begun the construction of two mikvehs in northeastern India. These will facilitate the formal conversion of 7000 members of the Bnei Menashe who practice Judaism and desire to make aliyah. The organization hired an Israeli architect who specializes in the construction of mikvehs, and sent the architect and a rabbi to India to oversee the construction of the mikvehs, which are slated for completion within the next few months.

"The financial and logistical challenges are simply enormous," Shavei Israel director Michael Freund said, noting that each mikveh alone will cost tens of thousands of dollars and require an array of special materials for chemical sealants, plumbing and heating. For more information, or to contribute toward the construction of the mikvehs, contact <Michael@shavei.org>.

....And a Bnei Menashe Community Center in Israel

A Bnei Menashe community center has been formally inaugurated in Kiryat Arba, home town to 100 Bnei Menashe immigrant families. A joint project of the Kiryat Arba Local Council and Shavei Israel, the center will offer classes, lectures and other activities for the educational, cultural and religious enrichment of the Bnei Menashe. Daily Hebrew language and arts and crafts classes have already begun. The center is called "Beit Miriam - the Shavei Israel Community Center" in memory of Dr. Miriam Freund-Rosenthal, a lifelong Zionist who served as national president of Hadassah and was involved in bringing Moroccan Jewish youth to Israel in the 1950s. Freund-Rosenthal was the grandmother of Michael Freund, Shavei Israel's founder and director.

Mazal Tov!

Abayudaya chairman **Israel Siriri** and his wife **Tehirah** announce the birth of their second child, a daughter, **Elisheva Magoba Ruth**, in June.

Benjamin Chamovitz Nilson was born in Pittsburgh in June to **Julia Chamovitz** (an early pioneer in Kulanu's Abayudaya contacts) and **Brad Nilson**.

Sarit Adina was born in Riverdale, NY, to **Ann and James Lapin**. A proud grandfather is **Rabbi Scott Glass**, of the 2002 Uganda Beit Din.

Margie Klein, daughter of Kulanu treasurer Harriet Bograd and

Ken Klein, received a Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel Vision Award from Jews United for Justice in Washington, DC, in May. Klein was recognized for her founding of Jews for Equal Rights for Immigrant Communities (JERICO), which sponsored a national 1000-vehicle caravan to spotlight immigrant rights. She also co-founded Project Democracy, which reached out to 97,000 young voters during the last election. Klein worked for the Center for Health, Environment and Justice, and was the recipient of a GreenCorps Fellowship to work on national campaigns to safeguard water, air and forest land. She will enter rabbinic studies at Hebrew College in Boston this autumn.

Refuah Shlemah

To **Suzan Nambozo** in Uganda.

Condolences

Dr. Pedro Nuno de Sousa Mendes, who helped his father, Aristides de Sousa Mendes, rescue approximately 30,000 Jewish and other refugees in Bordeaux, France, in 1940, passed away in Portugal.

Todah Rabah!

To the **Jewish Youth Philanthropy Institute** for its \$6000 grant, to **Drs. Jack & Diane Zeller** for their \$4000 contribution for the 2005 Havila seder, and to **Hope & Matthew Feldman** for their donation of \$1430.

To these donors of \$150-\$500: **Irwin & Elaine Berg**, **Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School**, **Tenet Healthcare Foundation**, **Lincoln & Marian Hallen**, **Frank Krakowski**, **Evan Green**, and **Mak'hela, Inc.**

To the \$100 Club: **Rabbi Richard & Sharon Hammerman** (in honor of birthday of **Ralph Meyerstein**), **Faith Avner**, **Hugh Bareiss & Margaret Tsirantonakis**, **Rabbi Scott Glass**, **Frank & Beri Harris**, **N. Olyan**, **Aron & Karen Primack** (in honor of the Zeller granddaughter **Amy Genevieve**), **Mark & Carol Reifers**, **Jay Sand**, **Daniel & Heidi Schley**, **Sherman & Rita Shapiro**, **Yehuda & Catherine Sherman**, **Albert & Christine Singer**, **Todd Schubert & Nongyao Wongchaiya**.

Rosh Hashanah gift ideas from the Kulanu Boutique —

Aish Chai lapel pins

Books

CDs

Challah Covers

Kippot

Tallitot

All proceeds help Kulanu and the communities we serve

See page 11 for the order form or go to

<www.kulanuboutique.com>

An Anous Conference In Portugal

The organization Shavei Israel arranged a weekend conference for *Anousim* in Porto, Portugal, in April in memory of Artur Barros Basto.

According to Rufina Bernardetti Silva Mausenbaum, "It was a full and well attended conference with outstanding academic papers delivered. It was also a conference that attracted Anousim from far and wide, giving us an opportunity to interact with many of our Saudades members in person. This was also where I experienced one of the most joyous Shabbat services and dinners ever. What a joy to watch our *Anousim* brothers and sisters dance and sing together in celebration of Shabbat."

In addition to *Anousim* of Portugal, participants included Miguel Aguirre from Holland, Rabbi and Mrs. Carlos Dias Salas from Mexico, and a participant from England. Mausenbaum, founder of Saudade Sefarad, was there from South Africa.

Michael Freund and Rav Birnbaum of Shavei Israel announced their hope of getting the *Anousim* officially recognized. A giant step towards this future recognition took place on April 10 in the Shaare Tikva Synagogue, with the *Brit Milah* of Benjamin o filhote da Eliana of the Ohel Yacob *Anousim* community. A major political statement was made with this event, according to Rabbi Boaz Pash, since it was sanctioned by Rav Birnbaum and Shavei Israel.

A Portuguese Forest In Israel

By Inacio Steinhart

One of the initiatives of the Liga de Amizade (Israel-Portugal Friendship Association) is the planting of a forest in Yatir (northern Negev) named "Portugal Forest." An agreement was made with Keren Kayemeth, the organization responsible for forestation in Israel, by which an area of 10,000 trees would be reserved for this initiative, right next to the Aristides de Sousa Mendes Forest. The forestation of this area is paid for by individual donations towards trees in memory or in honor of people we love. The idea was initiated as a birthday gift to the former president of Centro Israelita de Portugal of Lisbon, David Halpern, on his 100th birthday.

Since then the KKL has received donations, large and small, for over 7,000 trees planted in the Portugal Forest (*Yaar Portugal*). Some were sent with very moving letters. People have planted groves of 1000 trees in memory of their parents. Others bought gardens of 100 trees. Some have presented certificates of 10, 18, 20, or 25 trees just to say "Thank You" to somebody. A few individuals from Portugal sent money towards the trees as a way of expressing their sorrow at what happened in Portugal during the 300 years of the Inquisition. One priest from a small village in Portugal sent a small donation for one tree. He wanted to have one tree with his name in the Holy Land! (The KKL does not accept donations for less than 3 trees, but they made an exception.)

The Portugal Forest needs another 3000 trees. All inquires and donations should be made directly to the Keren Kayemeth Israel, or by contacting Mr. Yaen Vered at <aenv@kkk.org.il> Each donation, large or small, receives a beautiful certificate with the name of the donor and the dedication of his choice. Please specify that the trees are to be planted in the Portugal Forest.

COFFEE (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Fair Trade is an international economic and social justice movement that attempts to address the inequities between the poor small-scale family farmers in developing countries who grow food and the people in rich countries who consume it. The Fair Trade Certified label assures consumers that farmers are guaranteed a living wage for their coffee beans, regardless of market fluctuation, plus a small premium for social program support. For more information on Fair Trade see www.thanksgivingcoffee.com.

The coffee is available in light, dark, and espresso roast. It is sold as freshly ground roast or as whole beans. It can be purchased wholesale in bulk for organizational use and fund raising, or retail for home use and gift giving. The coffee can now be ordered from Thanksgiving Coffee by web (www.thanksgivingcoffee.com) or phone (800-648 6491). Links are provided at the Kulanu website <www.kulanu.org>.

Help the Abayudaya and Help make the world a better place!

Serve Mirembe Kawomera Coffee in your home, organizations, offices, and at all your events. Use colorful Mirembe Kawomera Coffee bags as gifts and party favors.

Want to double the mitzvah? Use Mirembe Kawomera Coffee to help fund education and other life-saving projects in Uganda. Here's how: order wholesale in bulk from <www.thanksgivingcoffee.com> or call (800) 648-6491 and sell delicious Mirembe Kawomera Coffee at your synagogue, school or other organization to raise funds in support of Abayudaya mitzvah projects. Send these tax-deductible donations to: Kulanu, Inc, 165 West End Ave, 3R, NYC, NY 10023. Write "coffee" in the memo. Thank you!

Please tell others! Endorse the Mirembe Kawomera project and help publicize it. Advocate for its support with your varied members and constituencies and with other institutions and organizations through your newsletters, websites, email, listservs, etc.

Please get your favorite stores to carry it! Contact Thanksgiving Coffee Company and ask for an informational sales sheet to bring to your favorite store.

Veracruz Congregation Making Strides with Tarlow's Help

By Amichai Max Heppner

Rabbi Peter Tarlow of College Station, Texas, made good on his promise last January to take on the job of guiding the religious life of the nascent Jewish community in Veracruz, Mexico. He has since made three more trips to Veracruz. He has used these to firm up the organization of the Kehilah, to set up classes, and to initiate Bar and Bat Mitzvah studies for a group of preteens. He sends out a commentary in Spanish on each week's Torah *parsha*, and holds special lectures each time he visits the Congregation.

Tarlow also is arranging for Texas A&M Hillel students with a solid Jewish background and a knowledge of Spanish to go to Veracruz to bolster his work there. This will be particularly useful for planning holiday services and observances. The first student intern to go will be Francisco Itschen, a Master's degree student in Engineering.

We have arranged for a resource person from Mexico City to go to Veracruz to help set up a workable and efficient system of dues collection and accounting procedures and another to further bolster the organizational side of the Congregation. Currently, several of the congregation's members are writing bylaws, focusing on promoting cohesion.

We linked with a member of the Congregation who was employed this year as an official in the Governor's office of the State of Veracruz. He has taken up our efforts to secure land for building a synagogue and community center in Veracruz. His latest report is that he is close to completing the arrangement.

I believe we have succeeded in our main effort, which is to open up the Kehilah to the outside world and to help them to think beyond narrow confines. They are ready now to link with other Jewish groups and to start outreach to other isolated *Anousim* communities in Mexico, who, I trust, will follow their example.

Richard Zimler's *Guardian of the Dawn* (Constable, 2005)

Reviewed by Karen Primack

Guardian of the Dawn is Richard Zimler's third novel tied to the Portuguese Inquisition, and his best. It's a historical thriller set in Goa with plenty of local color, romance, and suspense. It is also a faithful examination--based on actual case histories--of the horrific Portuguese presence on the Indian subcontinent in the 16th century, and a fitting memorial to the thousands of Hindus and Jews who suffered there at the hands of the Catholic Church.

The narrator, a young illustrator named Tiago Zarco, stays too long in Goa, home to many Portuguese Jews who escaped forced conversions in the mother country. (As we know, the Inquisition followed Jews to the Portuguese colonies of India and Brazil, to which they had fled.) Tiago is arrested, and the reader is spared little detail as he relates the treatment of those who find themselves imprisoned for minor "offenses" against the Church, or for misunderstandings or false allegations. Squeamish readers could complain, but Zimler would undoubtedly defend the descriptions as appropriate to honor the victims' memory.

Tiago is headstrong, but also intelligent, and he uses his incarceration time to consider who might have betrayed him. The reader is drawn into his most intimate feelings about land, family, and relationships as flashbacks illuminate his life. Minute descriptions of everyday events help transport us across the world, and Zimler's trademark prose pleasantly and convincingly evokes another time and place.

In the most gripping moments of the novel, Tiago carries out much of his revenge from prison, and the suspense is skillfully developed.

As in his other books, Zimler provides a dazzling multicultural setting, as Jews interact with, for better and worse, people of other races and religions.

Zimler's first three novels are independent, but related. *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon* is a murder mystery set in that city in 1506, the time of violent anti-Jewish riots; the protagonist is Berekiah Zarco, a manuscript illuminator and Tiago's great-grandfather. The second novel, *Hunting Midnight*, is an epic set in 19th century Portugal, England, and America, and features John Zarco Stewart, he too a descendant of Berekiah. These were both best-sellers. Zimler refers to the three as his "Sephardic Cycle," and an excellent sequence it is.

Wanted: a Roof and a Rabbi



Sadok Yacobi with wife Miriam and colleague Yeshuva in front of synagogue.

Forty families, comprising 250 souls, practice Judaism in Kotharedypalem, India. Their spiritual leader is Sadok Yacobi, who serves as president of the Bene Yacob Telugu Jewish Community Development Society in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Yacobi has kept in touch with Kulanu over the years, often requesting a rabbi to come and teach modern Jewish law and observance.

Storms have severely damaged the roof of their Bene Yacob synagogue, and they are appealing for funds for its repair – in addition to a visiting rabbi.

The community observes Shabbat and holidays and eats only kosher foods. They recite transliterated Hebrew prayers. On Saturday morning, the whole community gathers in the synagogue to read Torah and sing. It reassembles at noon and in the evening to close the Sabbath. Yacobi describes the services as "original and nice."

Donations for roof repair can be sent to Kulanu, earmarked for the Telugu Jews. We would like to hear from rabbis interested in teaching in this isolated area. Please contact Karen Primack at info@kulanu.org or 301-565-3094.

LETTERS TO KULANU

A Volunteer's Bittersweet Departure

I am so lucky. I am so lucky, I told myself, over and over again as I flew over the desert from one paradise to another. I have gone from the pearl of Africa, where chickens cross the dirt roads more than human beings do (I've asked myself 'why' on countless occasions), to the land flowing with milk and honey, where beauty is trumped only by holiness. I have cried painful tears over my departure from Africa and an equal number were shed upon arrival in the developed, holy,



"I will never be able to explain the children." Photo by Sarah Gold.

land of Israel.

My last few weeks in Uganda were bittersweet, to say the least. A beach vacation to the relaxing Ssese Islands, and then back to the village for the wind-down. Did some work, had some goodbye parties, recorded my debut album—"Molly and Sarah's Most Excellent Prayer Adventure"—packed my bags, cried my eyes out, and left.

I will never be able to explain what living in Uganda was actually like for me. I will not be able to put the stars into words or let you hear the bleating cries of the goats. You cannot feel the sun burning my skin through my clothing and you cannot see the sun's rays as they inexplicably tear the clouds apart. Hardest of all, I will never be able to explain the children...

Sarah Gold

Richmond, Virginia

Nigerians React to Cukierkorn Book

Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn generously sent 50 copies of his book *Accessible Judaism* to our Jewish communities in Nigeria. I would like to relay what a few Nigerian readers said about it:

Eugene Anekwe, an Igbo who attends church as a Christian, but who believes in the belief systems of Judaism as the best for himself and the Igbo people, said that the writer is a genius.

Chukwudi Okafor, his cousin, in the same position as himself (i.e. both suffer from identity crisis), asks, "How do they train these rabbis, that they are able to achieve such very high levels of scholarship?"

Dasil Onye Igbo Eckanker, admirer of Judaism: "The book opens up the Jewish world."

My own opinion is that the book is deceptive. It is slim, it appears small, but it is an encyclopaedia. As used to books as I am, yet I found myself satiated with knowledge after reading it.

Remy Ilona

Abuja, Nigeria

Rabbi Rosen and the Igbos (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

On June 22, I was joined by two other Igbos, Azuka "Pinchas" Ogbuka and "Ariel" Godwin, at the airport to receive him. We proceeded to the Luttwak home, where he was welcomed very warmly and we left so that the rabbi could get a few hours' sleep.

When I returned with a few Judaists, we retired to a nearby park. After we exchanged pleasantries, the rabbi spoke about Jewish customs. The Igbos couldn't help but compare them to Igbo customs and marvel at the similarities. Rabbi Rosen immediately started a diary of Igbo traditions.

Lecture Series

June 23 was the official day for the commencement of lectures, and the set time was from 4 pm, but the lectures normally started from the early morning because some -- including Igbo Christians -- couldn't wait till the evening to hear the rabbi. Some merely wanted to see a Jew for the first time. They see and know thousands of Israeli residents, but somehow they felt that there is a distinction between those secular Israelis and a rabbi. I think that they think that a secular Jew is just like the other Europeans in Nigeria. They found Rosen attractive because to them he stood as a gateway to the Torah, and some are interested in knowing how it is related to Igbo traditions.

A fairly big crowd of Igbo Judaists turned up at the first official lecture. Most came from distances of up to 30 miles. Also present were a few Igbo Sabbatharians. We hired a public park/garden to accommodate the crowd. I introduced the rabbi, and he made a speech, explaining why he is on the visit, and the roles Kulanu, AJWS and Luttwak have played that enabled the visit to be a reality. Then the lecture started in earnest, after prayers. He started from the very beginning -- Genesis. The rabbi's teaching of the Torah really made me aware of the fact that the Bible is a living instrument, that is relevant today as it was when it was first compiled. Words that are normally glossed over became meaningful from his explanations.

Also, I realized the importance of studying the Bible in Hebrew. Interestingly, the Igbo language seems to be nearer to Hebrew in capturing the real meanings than English. An Igbo Christian Sabbatharian who attended asked the rabbi the proper way to approach the Levitical requirement that anybody who has visited a place where a corpse was laid out should be considered unclean/impure for some days. The rabbi went to the Hebrew text and explained why such a separation is necessary: the "profound nature of death." He also explained that the Hebrew word used does not necessarily mean dirty or impure. This helped me to resolve a problem that I faced when I was writing *The Igbos: Jews In Africa?* In comparing the Igbo custom of *omugwo*, separating a newly delivered Igbo woman from normal activities for 40 days, and separating menstruating women, with the Levitical Code. I was impelled to use "unclean" as I found in the translations that I used. A scholar who helped edit the book suggested that I take another look at the word. I took a look at it in Igbo language, and the phrase is *o no na nso*, which can mean that she sacrosanctly or sacredly needs to be separated from. No translation of it neared *iru unyi*, dirty or impure. I made up my mind to study Biblical Hebrew.

Certain persons had difficult questions on Genesis. With respect to the words "Let us make man in our own likeness," the Igbo Christians had learned that the "us" means that there were other persons with God as He created the world. Apart from explaining that the plural there stands for plurality of majesty, and not that of numbers, Rabbi Rosen explained that such plural terms are also used for objects like water (*mayim*), because of its nature. In the case of God being infinite and everywhere, such a plural term can be aptly ascribed to Him. Rosen patiently went over the whole creation, and by the time he was through, nobody was mystified anymore.

(Continued on page 10)

PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE

✍ "Mitzvot in Mexico," by **Carlo Remondini**, appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* on July 14. The article reports on Carlos Salas Diaz, an illiterate Mexican shepherd who immigrated to the US and became a millionaire as well as a Jew and the founder of Congregacion Hebrea de Baja California, a 114-member synagogue in Tijuana, Mexico.

✍ **Tamar Rotem's** "Between Yangtze and Yarkon" appeared on *Haaretz.com* on July 1. It is a report of the journey of the Jin family, descendants of Kaifeng Jews, who settled in Jerusalem five years ago and have converted formally to Judaism but have been refused identity cards by the Israeli government.

✍ "Remains of the Day," by **Orly Halpern**, appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* on June 28. It tells of the ancient Jewish community of Herat, Afghanistan, where archeological evidence of the Jewish presence dates from the 8th century CE. Although most Herati Jews left for Israel by 1935, one couple remained there until 24 years ago. Afghan Jews in Israel and abroad hope the sites are preserved and diplomatic relations with Israel are established so they can visit the land of their roots.

✍ **Nina Gilbert's** June 21 *Jerusalem Post* article, "Panel: Bring in 10,000 Subbotniks," reports on a recommendation of the Israeli Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee. The Subbotniks, who have been practicing Judaism for 500 years, originally broke off from the Russian Orthodox Church. Most live in Voronezh, Russia, where they are experiencing anti-Semitism.

✍ JTA carried **Larry Luxner's** article, "In Curacao, Dwindling Community Maintains Oldest Synagogue in West," on June 8. It discusses Mikve Israel Synagogue on the Dutch Caribbean island of Curacao, famous for its age (in continuous use since 1732) and sand floor.

✍ A June 7 JTA article, "UJC Moves To Raise \$160 Million for Falash Mura and Jews in FSU," is by **Rachel Pomerance**. It details a campaign by Jewish federations to raise \$23 expedite the aliyah of 20,000 Falash mora, \$40 million for their absorption in Israel, and \$37 million to integrate Ethiopians already in Israel through improved education. Some \$60 million has been targeted for youth and the elderly in the former Soviet Union.

✍ Another June 7 JTA article, "Jewish Groups Launch Campaign for Rights of Refugees from Arab World," by **Brett Kline**, addresses the rights of Jews who were expelled during Israel's 1948 War of Independence. Two organizations, Justice for Jews from Arab Countries and the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries, will launch a campaign next March to document the mass violations of Jews' human and property rights in the Arab world. The documentation will be kept by the Israeli Justice Ministry.

✍ "Tunisian Jews Persevere," by **Andrew Borowiec**, appeared in the *Washington Times* on June 8. It describes the ingathering in Djerba, Tunisia, of thousands of expatriate Tunisian Jews and their descendants to celebrate the annual festival of El Ghriba, a 2600-year-old synagogue site. Djerba is still home to 1000 Jews (down from 120,000 in 1948), but the Tunisian government encourages visits from expatriate Tunisian Jews, and 15,000 come each year. The government airline even serves kosher meals (with advance notice).

✍ "Search for 'Lost' Jews Leads to Spain, Brazil and India," by **Eli Stutz**, appeared in the *Canadian Jewish News* on June 9. It discusses the work of Shavei Israel on three continents.

✍ "Direct Line to Portugal" by **Irit Rosenblum** appeared in *Haaretz* on June 2. It discusses the Jewish community in Belmonte, Portugal, which practiced secretly for 500 years.

✍ "For Linguistics Scholar in Taiwan, Yiddish is More than Just Shtick," by **Dan Bloom**, was published by JTA on May 26. The article is about S. H. Chan, a young Yiddish specialist in Taiwan who heads the department of German at Aiwan College.

✍ A JTA article of May 10, **Uriel Heilman's** "Indian Rabbi Follows His Dream, and It Leads Him Right Back Home," discusses Rabbi Joshua Kolet, a Bombay native who studied in Jerusalem and received his rabbinic ordination in 2001. He was touring the US to raise funds for a \$1 million holistic Jewish center in Thane, a suburb of Bombay, that will teach Jewish traditions of meditation and spirituality to the thousands of Israeli seekers who visit India.

✍ **Loolwa Khazzoom's** JTA article of April 21 was "Ethiopian Jews in New York Share Their Ancient Tradition." It discusses Chassida-Shmella, a nine-month-old organization of Ethiopian Jews in NYC that gives cultural programs to educate Americans. Programs have included an Operation Moses anniversary celebration, an Ethiopian Shabbat dinner, and a speaking tour by three young Ethiopian-Israeli lawyers.

✍ "After Years of Improvisation, Jews in Costa Rica Are Now Turning Kosher," by **Brian Harris**, appeared in the JTA email edition on April 21. It details the increased interest in and availability of kosher food in Costa Rica, which has about 200 Jewish households.

✍ "In Search of Jewish Chromosomes in India" by **Yair Sheleg** was published by *Haaretz* on April 1. It discusses genetic research on members of the Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribe, the Bnei Menashe of northeastern India. Studies have shown no Jewish connection on the male side of the genetic chain, but on the female side of the profile (mitochondrial DNA) a certain resemblance to the genetic profile of Middle Eastern peoples and to that of the Jews of Uzbekistan (who also have a tradition of belonging to the 10 tribes).

✍ *The Perpetual Table* is a "multimedia cookbook" of Iraqi Jewish food written and presented by **Nita Jawary** of Melbourne, Australia. The CD will run on any windows based machine that can accommodate Acrobat Reader 6 or higher (which is a free download from Adobe). You can easily print out a recipe after watching the video clip on how the dish is made. For further information go to <http://www.nita.com.au/perp.html>.

✍ *Kol India* magazine, published by the American Joint Distribution Committee in Bombay, gives news and happenings in the Jewish community in India. The subscription is \$10 per year (includes the postage). To subscribe, send a \$10 check to the American Joint Distribution Committee and send to Saul Aptekar, Editor, Kol India, American Joint Distribution Committee, D.G. Ruparel College Compound, 1st Floor, Administrative Building Above Bank of Maharashtra, Bal Govinda Marg, Off Tulsi Pipe Road, Matunga, Mumbai 400 016, India.

✍ The virtual book shop of NY's Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum has an interesting selection, including books and videos on Greek Jewish history, Greek Jewish cooking, and Greek Jews in the Holocaust. See <www.kkjsm.org>.

הבוא הנש

Happy New Year!!

Rabbi Rosen and the Igbos (cont.)

(Continued from page 8)

These lectures occurred daily for two weeks. As the news circulated in Nigeria that a Jewish rabbi was in Abuja, Igbos started trickling in from other parts of the country. One fellow was particularly striking. He had long beard and side curls, and he is Igbo, practices Judaism, and belongs to a congregation in Igbo land that I hadn't heard about. Some non-Igbo Judaists, from the Uhrobo ethnic group, also sent their leaders. My house was a guest house for over one week.

Shabbat Services

On the first Shabbat, Rabbi Rosen and I did a round of the synagogues in Abuja and the rabbi led the services in the first one, Beth Knesseth Siyahh Israel. He explained the meaning and implications of Korach's rebellion against Moses. The rabbi also discussed Korach's actions at the synagogues at Kubwa and at Karimu.

On the following Shabbat we participated in the service at Gihon, which was followed with singing. With representatives from Beth Knesseth Siyahh and Karimu participating, the rabbi joined Gihon in singing for over one hour. It was truly thrilling. Afterwards, he made a speech thanking everybody present for allowing him to participate in the service, and for being gracious hosts.

Some months ago I wrote about my friend Sule Gise, a Fulani Moslem who loves Jews, Israel, and Judaism. I brought Rabbi Rosen to see him, and the rabbi came away quite impressed with Gise, who believes that if the Moslem world is educated, they will see Israel as a friend, and not a foe. Sule has dubbed himself a "Jewish Moslem." Rabbi Rosen said that while he may be familiar with Messianic Jews, Sule is the first Jewish Muslim he has come across.

Road Trip to Igbo Land

To save money, and to see the country, we took an 8-hour ride to Igbo land. In the early evening we arrived at Onitsha, an important market city. Awaiting us were Innocent "Moshel Ben Moshe" Onwuesi and Okechukwu Okoye, who drove us to the Nkisi Palace Hotel, our home during most of our stay in Igbo land. Important Igbo dignitaries, such as Josiah Okeke, started coming to welcome us. We held meetings far into the night.

Our visits were to start with Ozubulu, my own clan, stopping at Umunnealam sub-clan of Nnewi on the way. There are congregations/synagogues everywhere in Igbo land, but they are mainly people's homes, and thus are not ideal for large gatherings.

Accompanying us were Moshel Ben Moshe and Stanley Nwata. When we reached Nnewi we were joined by Josiah Okeke, who led us to the residence of the head of Umunnealam. The leader and his men were waiting in their obi. (I suggest very strongly that obis were the most ancient synagogues. An Igbo clan has its own obi, as do sub-clans, sub-sub-clans, extended families, and individuals. They gather regularly in them for meetings. They pray first, discuss their affairs, and end with prayers.)

The coordinators in various localities had already passed the word around that Rabbi Brant Rosen (referring to him as a "son of Israel") was visiting Umunnealam, and quite a number were seated in their obi when we came. The main connections for Igbos to the traditions of Judaism are Igbo traditions; thus it was my plan for the rabbi to see as

much as possible of these traditions, and for him to contribute to the sessions by lecturing on Judaism. And that was how it went.

Igbos will not start any occasion without sharing kola nuts. It's only recently that I understood why scholars have written that Igbos share this custom with Israel. Abraham and his descendants were known to be good hosts. Igbos see it as unethical if a visitor is not welcomed. And this tradition ossified in giving kola nuts. At the place in question, kola nut was brought out, prayed over, and shared up to Rosen who, along with his entourage, was given a position of honour. He was given one to take back to America. Then the leader of the community rose and welcomed the guest officially.

Rabbi Rosen stood up and bid the group Shalom. With Moshel Ben Moshe interpreting, he opened by explaining his connection to Israel as a Jew, a citizen of the United States, and rabbi of a congregation. He explained the Diaspora, which ensured that Israel is to be found in all parts of the world, and said that it is a holy task in Judaism for one to seek one's long lost brethren. He said it was only recently

that he learnt about the Igbos' connection to Israel, and that meeting the Igbos was like meeting his own extended family. Spontaneous cheering and clapping of hands punctuated his speech regularly. Lastly he talked about Israel's mission, *tikun olam*. He explained that a vital part of this mission is to gather the dispersed of Israel, which is a prelude to gathering the whole world/humanity, since we are all one as children of the Almighty God. As he dropped the gavel, everybody present rose in cheers of joy and appreciation. Every body wanted to take photographs with him and to shake his hand.

When some quiet was restored, the Okpala Nnewi spoke. He said that what Rabbi Rosen had done was unprecedented.

That for him to deem it worthy to visit his brethren is a sign that Chukwu's mercy will descend on the long-suffering Igbo people and all Israel. He then changed gears and started praying for Rosen, imploring Chineke to make his mission among the Igbos a success. The prayer was a traditional Igbo prayer, and was well delivered too. When it was all over, they brought out their gift for Rabbi Rosen, a fine wood carving of a hand extended in friendship. They had one request: that the bridge that Rosen had built would last forever. Rosen thanked them and pledged that he would not forget them. They bid us farewell and we left.

As we drove into Ozubulu from Nnewi, I noticed that many people were trekking towards the chief's palace, which also houses the obi of Ozubulu. We arrived at around 2 pm, and the square was already filled with people. Seats were arranged inside and outside the obi. Igbo dignitaries in red caps were everywhere. Men in *kippahs* (Judaists) were also evident. Traditional Igbo music by Morocco Maduka was blaring from loudspeakers. I lost my cool and said, "Rabbi, my people have put on a real show — they have pulled out all the stops for you." We were escorted to seats of honour. The rabbi was given a seat next to the king's chair.

(To be continued: Read about the king's reception in the next Newsletter!)



Rabbi Brant Rosen flanked by Sule Gise (left) and the author

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