



Dear Readers:

Welcome to the second *India Issue* of *Asian Jewish Life* (Issue 14). Early on in the process of working on this issue, it became clear to me that a third India Issue will need to follow shortly. There is such a tremendous wealth of information available on Jewish India and so many talented academics and researchers focused on the field of Indo-Judaic Studies.

We have included a great piece by Dr. Shalva Weil entitled *The Legacy of David Sassoon: Building a Community Bridge*. This article explores Weil's understanding of David Sassoon's role in the rapprochement of the Bene Israel and the Baghdadi communities.

Also, though much of this issue is a celebration of Jewish life in India, we have included Navras Jaat Aafreedi's rather sobering explanation for the rise of Nazism and Hitler-worship in India, entitled *The Paradox of the Popularity of Hitler in India*. This piece is an important exploration of this seemingly recent phenomena in India.

On the lighter side, we have a great fictional piece by Sophie Judah, *A Cup of Tea*. This is actually a chapter from a larger, yet unpublished work, *Tales of Grandpa Eli*, also featured in Issue 13. *A Cup of Tea* is, in a rather appropriately timed fashion, set during Passover.

Also taking on the topic of Passover, Nissim Moses details some traditions unique to the Bene Israel in *This Year in India: Celebration of Passover in the Bene Israel Tradition*.

Returning to the literary side of things, we have an inspiring interview by Books Editor Susan Blumberg-Kason. Susan sits down with memoir author Jenny Feldon to discuss her book, *Karma Gone Bad: How I Learned to Love Mangos, Bollywood and Water Buffalo*.

Susan also reviewed two middle grade multicultural novels about girls with both Jewish and Indian roots. *My Basmati Bat Mitzvah* by Paula J. Freedman and *The Whole Story of Half a Girl* by Veera Hiranandani are both recommended reads.

Also exploring themes of multiculturalism and identity is artist Siona Benjamin. I had the pleasure of speaking with Siona about her new exhibition *Faces: Weaving Indian Jewish Narratives* and talking about identity with her. I was even lucky enough to be in New York to catch her exhibition at the Flomenhaft Gallery. Siona's work, "Fereshtini", from an earlier collection, *Finding Home*, is featured on the cover of this issue.

Also looking at the beauty of Jewish culture from Cochin, we have Bala Menon who has contributed recipes from *Spice & Kosher - Exotic Cuisine of the Cochin Jews* by Essie Sassoon, Bala Menon and Kenny Salem. *Spice & Kosher* though is much more than a cookbook; it is a walk through history and a snapshot of Jewish life.

Michael Bender also walks through Cochin and talks about how Cochin, known as 'G-d's Own Country', touched him in *The Beauty of Traversing Cochin*.

Last, but most definitely not least, we have our *Best of Asian Jewish Life* feature. This feature first looks at the volunteer experience in the Jewish community of India of one young woman, Leah Robinson. Leah's personal piece is entitled *A Lesson on Strength in Small Numbers*. In this feature we detail three opportunities available through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to volunteer in India, like Leah.

Thank you again for reading!

*Chag kasher v'same'ach*. Have a kosher and happy Passover from all of us at *Asian Jewish Life*.

**Erica Lyons**  
Editor-in-Chief



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