

JEWISH WELFARE ASSOCIATION NEW DELHI

CENTRE FOR JEWISH & INTER-FAITH STUDIES

JUDAH HYAM SYNAGOGUE, 2 HUMAYUN ROAD, NEW DELHI—110003

(Phones, 4635500 & 4641058)

**“Behold how good and how pleasant it is
for brethren to dwell together in unity”**

Ps. 131-1.

LIST OF

SYNAGOGUES AND PRAYER HALLS

IN

INDIA, BURMA AND PAKISTAN

**“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that
I may dwell among them”**

(Exodus 25 : 8)

CENTRE FOR JEWISH AND INTER-FAITH STUDIES, NEW DELHI

List of Synagogues in India, Burma and Pakistan was compiled by Late Mr. Ezra Kolet, New Delhi and Mr. Daniel Elijah Benjamin (Gadkar) Pune and issued on 1st May, 84 as Bulletin No. 11 "OHR" Publication, by Jewish Welfare Association, New Delhi.

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Photographs of the Synagogues by courtesy of Mr. Daniel Elijah Benjamin (Gadkar) Pune
Photographs of the Synagogues at Nos. 6 & 45 by courtesy of Mrs. Carmel Berkson Bombay

Photographs of the Paradesi Synagogue at No. 21 (b) by courtesy of Mr. Than Wyenn, USA
Photograph of the Karachi Synagogue at No. 43 by courtesy of Mr. Sam Daniels, U.S.A.
Photograph of the Paradesi Synagogue at No. 47 by courtesy of Mr. Henning Schroedter Albers, New Delhi

INDIA

1

Name and address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall

Photo

When
Established

Notes

AHMEDABAD (GUJARAT)

1

Magen Abraham Synagogue
Bukhara Mohalla, Opp. si
Parsi Agiari, Ahmedabad



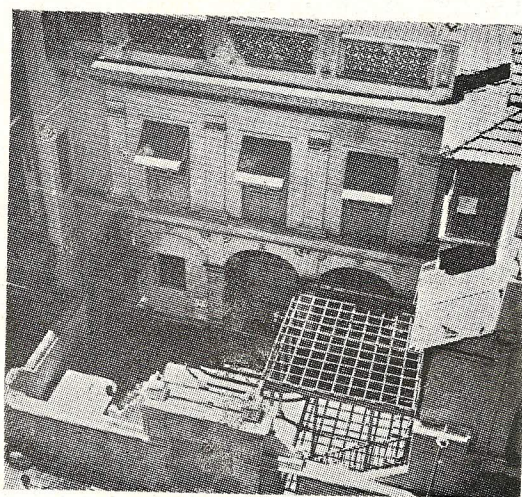
1933

A Prayer Hall was established in hired premises in the seventies of the last century. In 1906 Dr. Solomon Abraham Erulkar donated a plot of land measuring 750 sq. yards in the locality known as Bukhara near the Parsi Agiari (Fire Temple) in the heart of the city. The cornerstone of the building was laid on 19.10.1933 and the consecration ceremony took place on 2.9.1934. The name commemorates the founder of the prayer hall, Dr. Abraham Erulkar. The synagogue is in keeping with the high architectural standard of Public and State buildings in Ahmedabad.

BOMBAY (MAHARASHTRA)

2

Gate of Mercy Synagogue
(Shaar Ha Rahamim)
254, Samuel Street,
(Israel Mohalla),
Mandvi, Bombay-400003



1796

Known as Samaji Hasaji Synagogue or Juni Masjid till 1896. The establishment of the first Bene Israel Synagogue in 1796 has an interesting history. It was constructed and endowed by Samuel Ezekiel Divekar (Samaji Hasaji Divekar) after his retirement from the Bombay Army with the rank of Native Commandant (Subedar Major). He was one of five brothers, all of whom became officers in the Bombay Army and his family seems to have been one of the leading families that had moved to Bombay from the mainland. The Bene Israels believe that he was taken prisoner with a number of other Bene Israel officers and men when the whole Bombay contingent capitulated to Tipu Sultan of Mysore at Bednur in 1783,

during the Second Mysore War. The prisoners were reprieved when they said they were Bene Israels, on the intervention of Tipu Sultan's mother who pleaded for their lives because the Bene Israels are mentioned with favour in the Koran. Divekar is believed to have made a vow that he would, on release, build a synagogue in Bombay as a thanks-offering. The prisoners were released in 1784 on the termination of the war and Divekar did build a synagogue as soon as he retired from army service. In 1797 he went to Cochin to procure a Sefer Torah, but died there without being able to do so.

The street on which the synagogue stands was named Samaji Street in his honour and is at present known as Samuel Street. The railway station Masjid Bundar in Bombay named after this Synagogue celebrated its centenary in the year 1896 and on that occasion it was renamed "SHAAR-HA-RAHAMIM". The Synagogue celebrated its 198th anniversary on 6-12-1994.

Name and address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall

Photo

When
Established

Notes

3

Shaare Rason Synagogue
90, Tantanpura Street,
3rd Road, Don Tad, Israe
Mohal a, Khadak.
Bombay-400 009



1840 The Synagogue is also popularly known as "The New Synagogue". In the year 1839 Mr. Samuel Jacob Divekar and Mr. Haeem Isaac Garsulkar raised funds with the object of establishing a new synagogue in the City of Bombay.

Entrance to the Synagogue premises

4

Magen David Synagogue
Opposite Richardson and
Cruddas,
Byculla, Bombay-400 008



1861 This Synagogue was an important contribution from the House of Sassoon, having been built by David Sassoon. It is also known as "David Sassoon Synagogue."

*Name and address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall*

Photo

*When
Established*

Notes

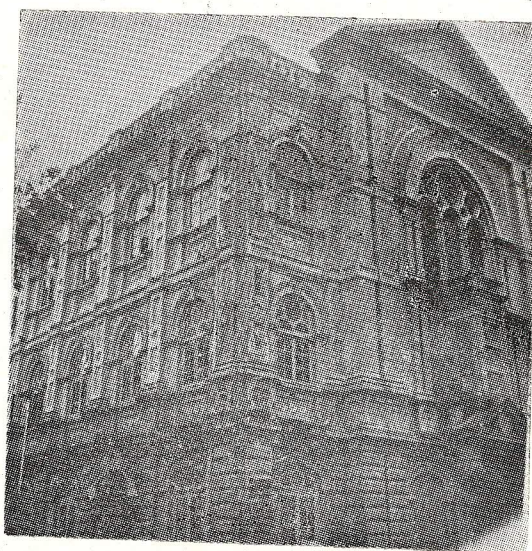
5

**Kneseth Bene-Israel
Prayer Hall**
(Malavarchi Masjid)
Tar-tanpura Street,
Opposite Shaare Rason
Synagogue, Bombay-400009

1872 Since closed.

6

**Kneseth Eliahoo
Synagogue.**
Dr. V.S. Gandhi Marg,
Forbes Street, Fort,
Bombay-400001

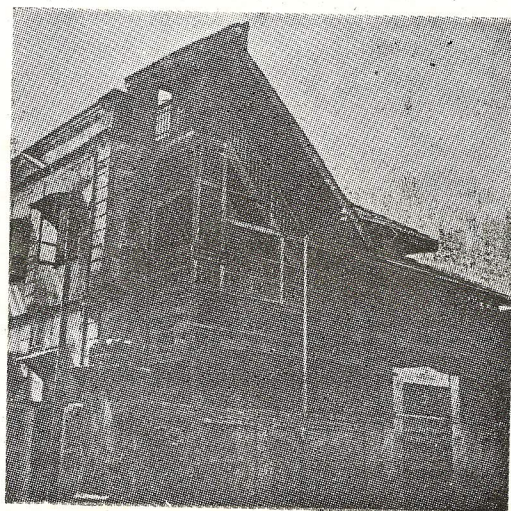


1884 This Synagogue was built and endowed by Mr. Jacob Sassoon (late Sir Jacob Sassoon) in memory of his father. It is popularly known as the Fort Jewish Synagogue.

In 1985, the Synagogue held its centenary celebrations which were inaugurated by the President of India, Giani Zail Singh. Messages of felicitations were received from the Prime Minister, Government dignitaries and Jewish celebrities all over world.

7

Tifereth Israel Synagogue,
92, K.K. Marg Jacob Circle
Bombay-40 0011



1886 A prayer Hall popularly known as "Jacob Circle Jewish Prayer Hall" was established in the year 1886 in the rented premises of a building known as Talegaoker Building. Mr. Benjamin Samson Astamkar and Mr. Solomon Benjamin Ghosalkar and their friends were mainly responsible for establishing the Prayer Hall. It was given the name of Tifereth Israel Prayer Hall in 1896. It was consecrated as a Synagogue on 23.3.1924 in a building of its own and celebrated its Golden Jubilee on 10th and 11th March. 1974.

*Name and address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall*

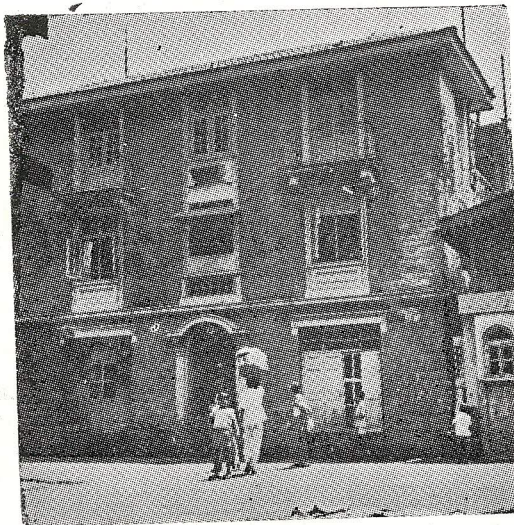
Photo

*When
Established*

Notes

8

The Etz Haeem Prayer Hall
19 Umaikhadi,
2nd Cros. Lane.
Bombay-400 009



1888

This Prayer Hall was started by the great social worker Mr. Haeem Samuel Kehimkar, in connection with the Israelite School and after his death it became a separate institution.

9

Magen Hassidim Synagogue
8, Mohamad Shahid Marg
(Old Moreland Road),
Agripada, Bombay-400 011



1904

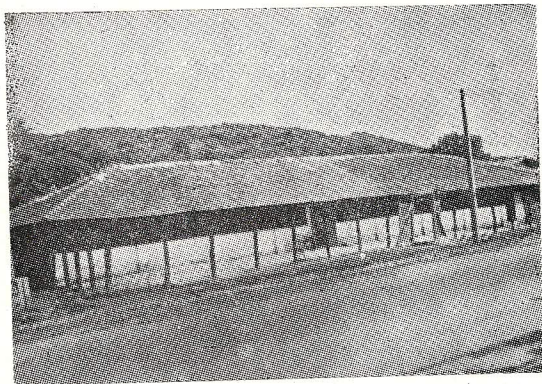

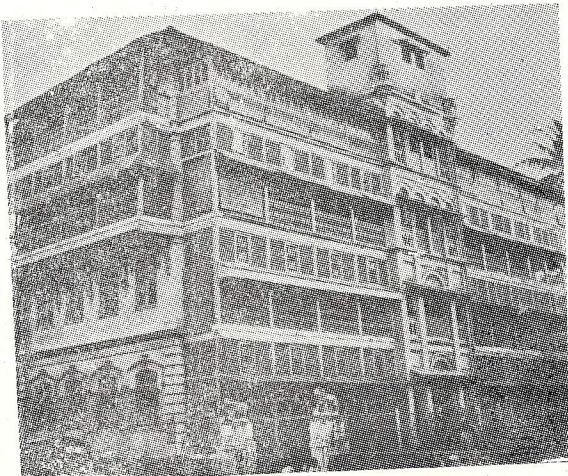
The Magen Hassidim Synagogue was formerly known as the "Jacob Circle Jewish New Prayer Hall." It was named Magen Hassidim Prayer Hall in 1914. The synagogue building was completed on 29.3.1931 and celebrated its Golden Jubilee in the year 1980.

10

Parel Bene Israel Prayer Hall, Parel, Bombay

1930

This Prayer Hall was closed in the year 1978.

| Name and address of the Synagogue/Prayer Hall | Photo | When Established | Notes |
|--|---|--|-------|
| <p>11</p> <p>Kurla Bene Israel Prayer Hall, Jewish Colony, 275, S.G. Barve Road. (Pipe Road) Kurla (West) Bombay-400 070</p> |  | <p>1946 This Prayer Hall was started by the Bene Israel residents of Kurla.</p> | |
| <p>12</p> <p>Bene Israel Prayer Hall, Bandra, Bombay</p> |  | <p>1930 Since Closed. Dr. E. Moses, [Khan Sahib R. Samson and others started this Prayer Hall. The prayers held during High Holidays are now organised by the Bandra Jewish Cemetery Trust, Bombay.</p> | |
| <p>13</p> <p>Rodef Shalom Synagogue (Jewish Religious Union) 26. Sussex Road, Byculla Bombay-400 027</p> |  | <p>25 This is the Synagogue of Reform Jews and was started by Dr. (Miss) J. Jhirad. The Jewish Religious Union, which is an organisation of Liberal Judaism, was established in 1925 and held services in hired premises until it acquired its own building in 1955.</p> | |

The Synagogue premises are on the third (top) floor

*Name and address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall*

Photo

*When
Established*

Notes

CALCUTTA (WEST BENGAL)

14

**Neveh Shalome Synagogue,
9, Jackson Lane,
Calcutta**

First Synagogue in Calcutta,
Rebuilt in 1911.

1825

15

**Beth-El Synagogue,
26/1, Pollack Street,
Calcutta**

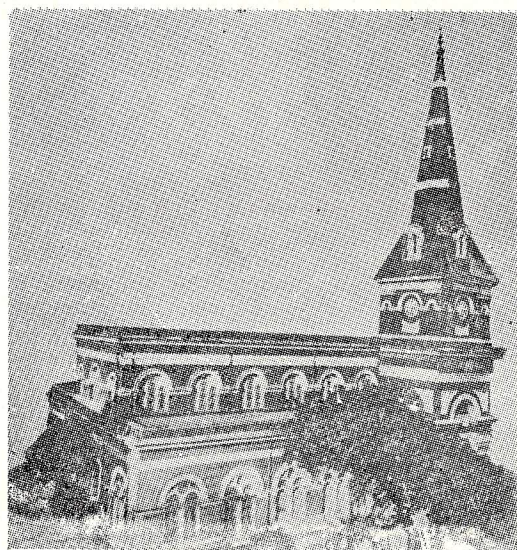


1856

This Synagogue was erected by Mr. David Joseph Ezra and Mr. Ezekiel Judah. It was later renovated and enlarged into a magnificent structure by Elias Shalome Gubbay. At one time it had over 100 Sepharims.

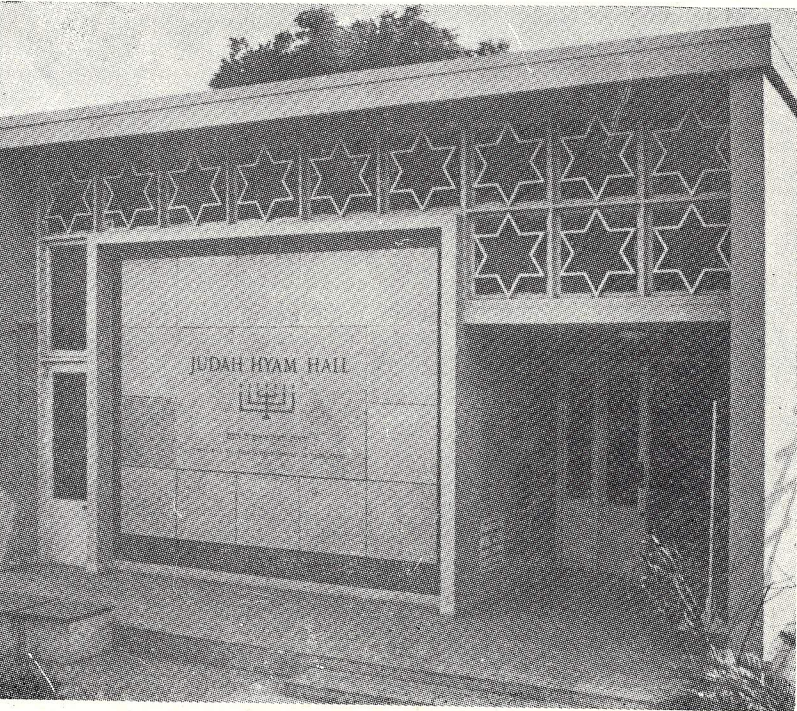
16

**Magen David Synagogue,
109-A Peplab Rash
Bihari Bose Road,
(Canning Street)
Calcutta**



1884

This Synagogue was built by Mr. Elias David Joseph Ezra to perpetuate the memory of his father, Mr. David Joseph Ezra who died in 1882. This is the largest synagogue in the East. It is a magnificent structure & its architectural design has been praised by all visitors. The outer walls are of mellow red-grey brick. The interior is Italian in design and is a unique work of art. The pillars are adorned with floral designs. There are 3 cut-glass electroliers.

| Name and address of the Synagogue/Prayer Hall | Photo | When Established | Notes |
|---|--|------------------|--|
| 17 Shaare Rason Synagogue, Sudder Street, Calcutta | | | Closed. |
| 18 Magen Aboth Synagogue, 25, Blackburn Lane, Calcutta | | 1897 | Closed. It was started by A. Levroy for the convenience of those who, for reasons of ill health, were unable to go to north Calcutta, where all the Synagogues are situated. |
| | | 1933 | |
| DELHI | | | |
| 19 Judah Hyam Synagogue, 2, Humayun Road. (Near Taj Mahal Hotel) New Delhi-110 003 Phone 4635500&4641058 |  | 1956 | Before Word War II, the small Delhi Jewish community consisting of Afghan, French, Russian and other businessmen (exporting hides and skins) and a few Indians, used to hold prayers at the home of one of them in Baratooti, Sadar Bazar, in the old city. During the war and thereafter, more Indian Jews and those working in the Foreign Embassies came to Delhi, and prayers for the High Holidays used to be held in the home of Mr. Baruch B Benjamin, the first President of the Jewish Welfare Association, New Delhi. When he retired from the Govt. of India and left Delhi, services used to be held at the residence of Dr Miss Reuben and her sister the late Miss Luna Reuben in Connaught Place. To cater to the growing religious, social and cultural needs of the community in and around Delhi, the Jewish Welfare Association was formed in 1949 on the initiative of late Mr. Ezra Kolet Mr. Benjamin Jacob. and Mr. J. M. Benjamin. This well-knit organisation felt the necessity of a Prayer Hall-cum Community Centre of its own. In 1954-55, the late (Dr.) Rachel Judah made a substantial donation Rs. 4000/- towards the project in memory of her father Khan Bahadur (Dr.) Judah Hyam who had been a distinguished leader educationist and social-worker of the Bene Israel community of Poona before his death in 1935. |

The Hall also serves as a centre for Jewish and inter-faith studies. For this purpose, an annexe to the Hall was completed and dedicated on 26-12-79. From this centre, the Association issues bulletins regularly on various aspects of Judaism and inter-faith unity. In order to promote goodwill and understanding among all religions, it has a well stocked library of books on all religions and sacred scriptures, People of all faiths and religions are encouraged to have access to the books of this library.

The Silver Jubilee of the Judah Hyam Hall was celebrated with heart-warming solemnities on the 7th February 1982 at a crowded function, with representatives of many faiths participating.

Name and address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall

Photo

When
Est. blished

Notes

COCHIN

20

Jewish Synagogue
Cran_anore

Since closed.

1345

21

Paradesi Synagogue,
Jew Town, Mattancherry
Cochin

(a)



668

This synagogue was built by Samuel Castiel, David Belila, Ephraim Sala and Joseph Levi, the descendants of Spanish, Dutch and other European Jews. It stands on the grounds near the palace of the Maharajah of Cochin overlooking a Hindu Shrine, which demonstrates the cordial relations of the Jews with the people to Kerala.

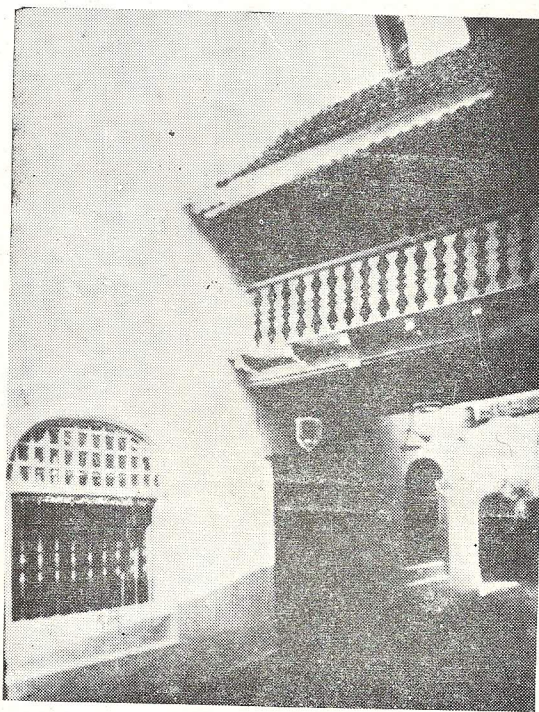
Its has a gleaming brass pulpit, exquisite willow—patterned (no two identical) Chinese tiles brought from China in 1760 and a square clock tower with dials in Hebrew, Malayalam and Roman figures and a beautifully gilded and carved ark to contain the Torah scrolls. Gleaming silver cases were made for the Torah with golden crowns to cover them.

In 1805, the Maharajah of Travancore presented one of his crowns to the synagogue.

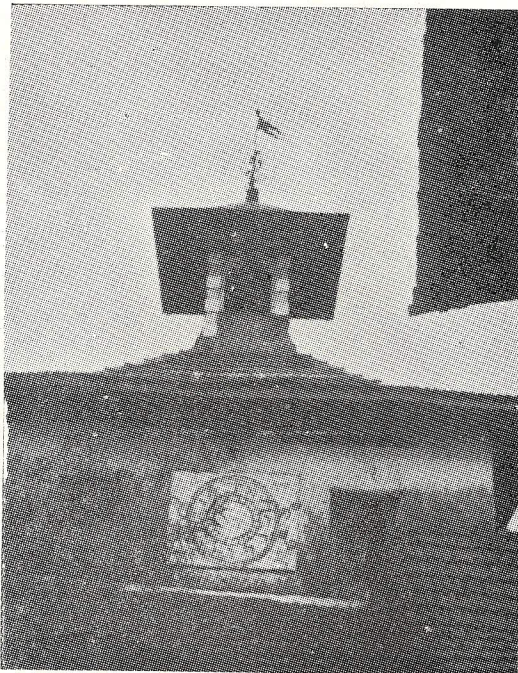
This is the first synagogue that came into existence in the Commonwealth and one of the oldest in the world. The synagogue has been declared a historical monument and a "Tourist Centre" by the Govt. of India.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India attended the Quater-Centenary celebrations in 1968, when a special commemorative postage stamp was issued by the Government of India.

(b)

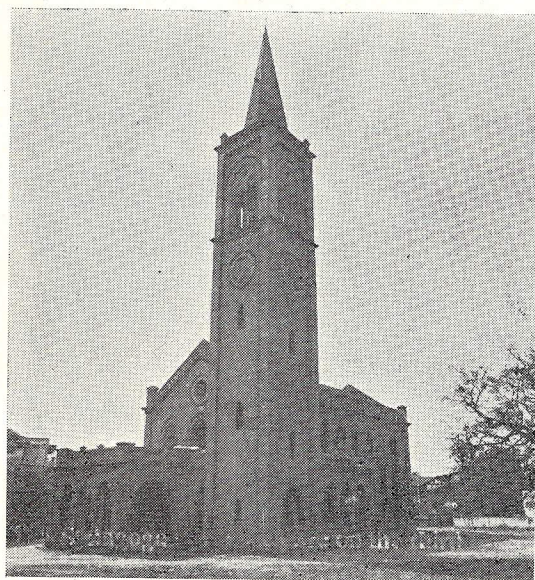


Front view of Synagogue

| Name and address of the Synagogue/Prayer Hall | Photo | When Established | Notes |
|--|--|--|------------------|
| 22 Chennamangalam Synagogue, Jew Street, Chennamangalam, Cochin |  | 16'4 | Rebuilt in 1916. |
| 23 Parur Synagogue, Jew Street, North Parur, Cochin | | 1781 | Closed. |
| 24 Thekumbakkam Synagogue, Jew Street, Ernakulam, Cochin | | 1939 | Closed. |
| 25 Kadavumbagham Synagogue, Jew Street, Ernakulam, Cochin | | 22(c) Clock Atop the Paradesi Synagogue (Note Hebrew lettering on dial) | |
| | | | Closed |

PUNE DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA)

26
Ohel David Synagogue,
Synagogue Street,
Poona Camp
Pune-411 001



1867 The Synagogue popularly known as "Lal Deval" was built by David Sassoon. The late Dr. Zakhir Hussain, President of India, visited the same on 10.12.68. The tomb of David Sassoon is situated in the grounds of the Synagogue. The centenary of the Synagogue was celebrated on 30.7.1967. The Synagogue is a handsome red-brick building. A tower 90 feet high to the north of the entrance porch carries a chiming clock and is surmounted by a spire.

An adjoining Street is called Synagogue Street,

*Name and address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall*

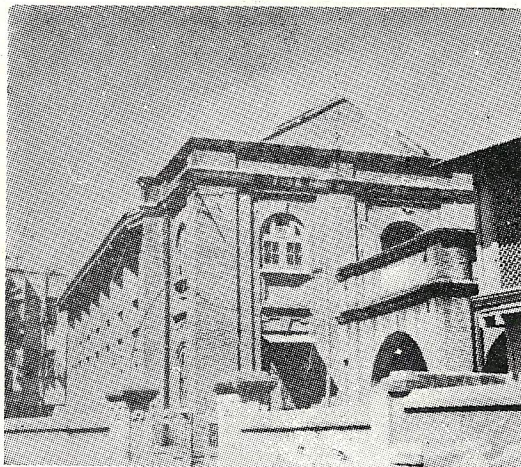
Photo

*When
Established*

Notes

27

**Succath Shelomo
Synagogue 93, Rasta Peth,
Poona-411 001**



1921 For some years before 1921 there were two separate congregations of the Bene Israels in Pune which were in 1916 or so amalgamated under the name Hebrath Beth Yaacob. This prayer hall was located in rented premises in Rasta Peth and was replaced by the present Synagogue.

The foundation stone was laid on 28.12.1919 and the building was completed on 21.5.1921. The Synagogue celebrated its Diamond Jubilee on 23.5.1981. and will celebrate its Platinum Jubilee in 1996.

RAIGAD (FORMERLY KOLABA) DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA)

28

**Beth-el Synagogue,
Rewdanda,
Alibag Tehsil**

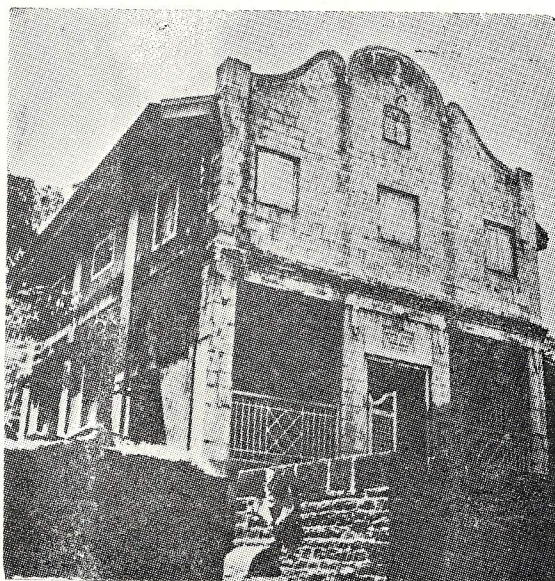


1848 This is the first synagogue built in Raigad District. It was constructed by means of voluntary contributions in 1842 and was rebuilt in 1848. Its Centenary was celebrated on Sunday, the 28th December 1948.

| <i>Name and address of the Synagogue/Prayer Hall</i> | <i>Photo</i> | <i>When Established</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|---|--------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 29 Talekar Synagogue, Post Chordee, Talekar, Talla, Murud Tehsil | | 1893 | This synagogue was built by Haeem Samuel Penkar. Now closed. |

30

Kneseth Israel Synagogue,
Talley Ghosaley
Mangaon Tehsil



1849 This synagogue was burnt in 1852 and rebuilt in 1876. Now closed. Donated to Gram Panchayat for Library.

31

Bene Israel Synagogue,
Talley Ghosaley,
Borley

1852 Closed.

*Name and address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall*

Photo

*When
Established*

Notes

32

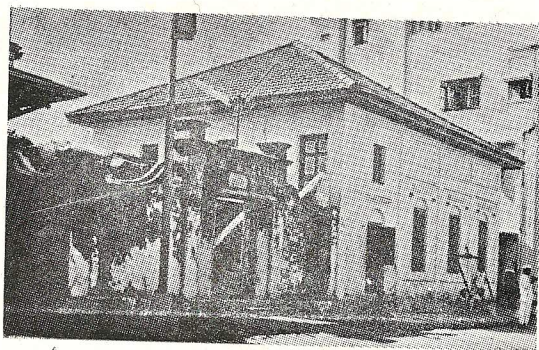
Magen Aboth Synagogue,
Alibag



1848 The Synagogue was built in the year 1848 by means of voluntary contributions and rebuilt in 1910.

33

Beth-El (House of God)
Synagogue,
Mirchi Gali,
Mahatma Gandhi Road
Panvel-410 206



1849 Beth—El means "House of the Almighty". This synagogue is one of the oldest in Raigad District. It was erected by subscriptions from Bene Israels in India and was dedicated on 17.5.1849 on the Feast of Shavuot. This synagogue has a special significance of its own. It is believed by many that whatever vows are taken, e.g. prayers for a child, etc. are fulfilled, and the parties concerned perform an Eliahoo Hannabi ceremony after the fulfilment of their vows. It celebrated its 120th anniversary on Sunday, the 15th February 1970. The synagogue is a modest structure close to the main square of the town,

Name and address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall

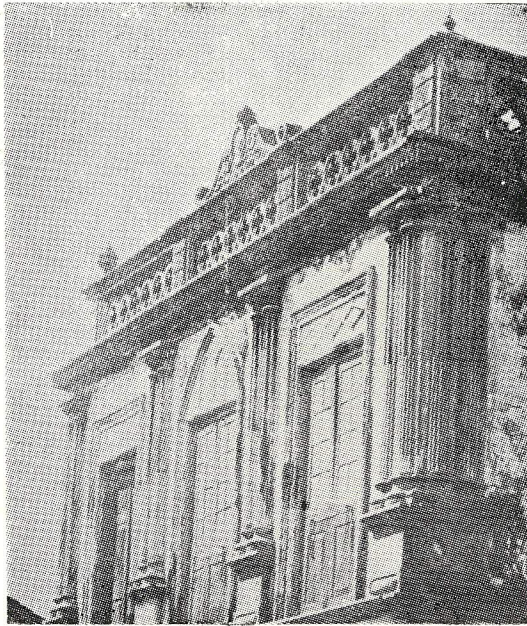
Photo

When
Established

Notes

34

Beth-Ha-Elohim Synagogue,
Pen

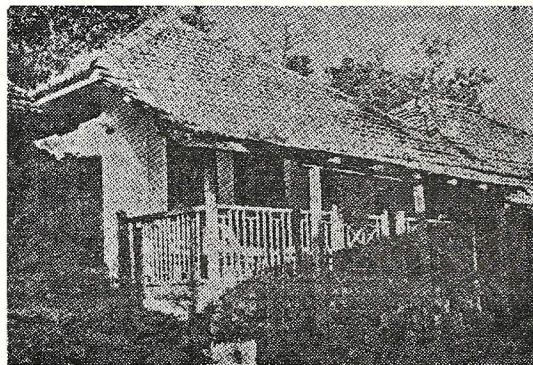


1863

Prior to the building of the synagogue a prayer hall was opened in private residences (one of which was the residence of the celebrated ballad singer Eloji Shohar). A piece of land was given by Sutkiel Benjamin Kandlekar for the erection of a synagogue which was built out of donations given by Hannabai, widow of Haeem David Divekar. The Synagogue was dedicated to the service of God on the 1st of Elul 5623 (1863). It was rebuilt by the people themselves and rededicated to the service of God on 9.3.1893.

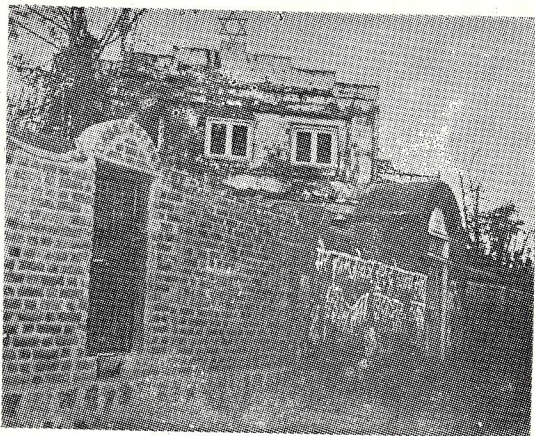



35

Hesed-El Synagogue,
Poynad, Alibag Tehsil



1866

This synagogue was built in May, 1866 and later rebuilt by local subscriptions. It was named "Hesed-El" in 1933. Now closed.

| Name and address of the Synagogue/Prayer Hall | Photo | When Established | Notes |
|--|--|------------------|---|
| <p>36</p> <p>Shaare Shalom Synagogue, Borlai Hubshi, Janjira, Murud Tehsil</p> |  | <p>1869</p> | <p>Shaare Shalom means the Gates of Peace.</p> <p>The synagogue was built at the expense of Shalom Isaac Sagaonkar and dedicated in May 1869. Now closed,</p> |
| <p>37</p> <p>Ambepur Synagogue, Ambepur (Cheul) Alibag Tehsil</p> |  | <p>1874</p> | <p>The Synagogue was built partly at the expense of Joseph Solomon Sankar and partly by means of voluntary contributions. It was re-built in January, 1884. Now closed.</p> |
| <p>38</p> <p>Beth-El Synagogue, Ash'ami, Roha Tehsil</p> |  | <p>1882</p> | <p>Closed.</p> |
| <p>39</p> <p>Shahar Hatephills Synagogue, Mhasla</p> |  | <p>1886</p> | <p>The Synagogue was re-built by voluntary contributions and was dedicated on Monday, the 26th February, 1921. Now closed.</p> |

*Name and address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall*

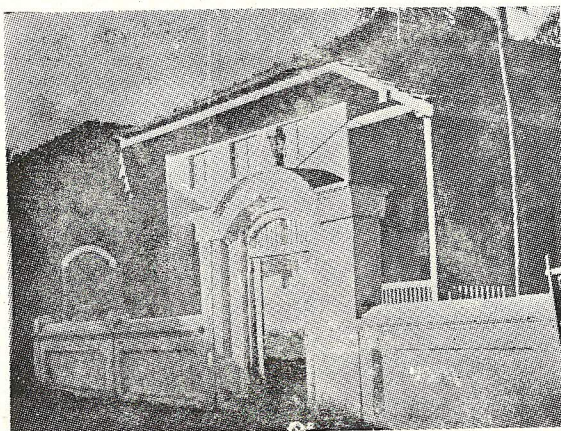
Photo

*When
Established*

Notes

40

**Orle-Israel Synagogue,
Nandgaon Murud Tehsil**



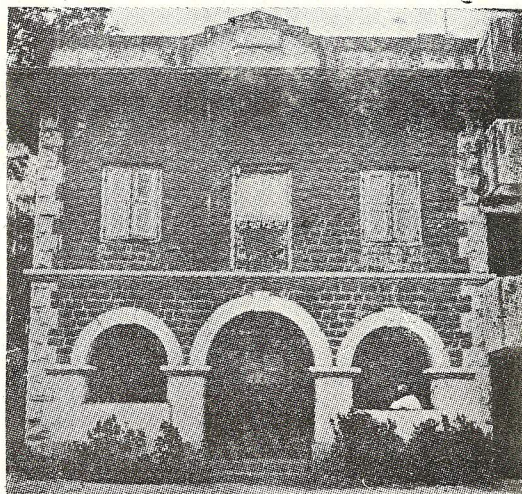
1896

Pensioner Havaldar Moses Malyankar presented a plot of land to the Bene Israel community of Nandgaon for use as a synagogue, in the year 1896. It was re-built in the year 1945. Now closed.

THANE DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA)

41

**Shaar Hashamayim
(Gate of Heaven)
Synagogue, Tembi Naka,
Opposite Civil Hospital
Tanie-400 601**



1879

The foundation stone of the synagogue was laid on 26.3.1878 and it was completed in November, 1879. The centenary of the synagogue was celebrated on 6th January 1980.

Name of address of the
Synagogue/Prayer Hall

Photo

When
Established

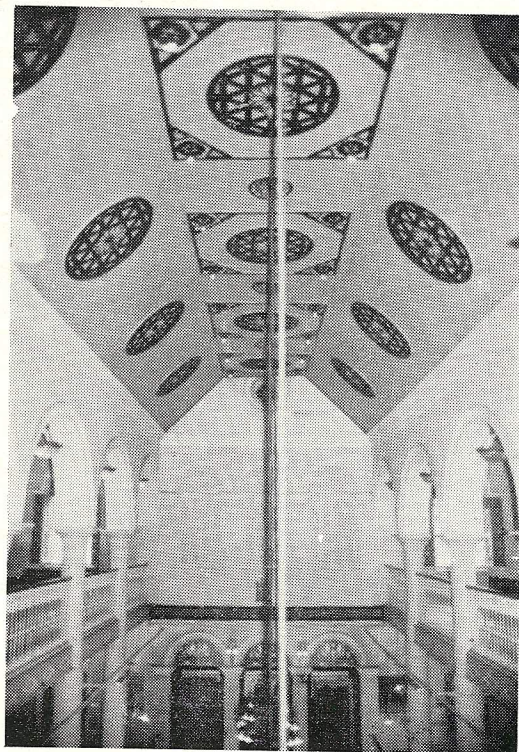
Notes

BURMA

42

1857

Musmeah Yeshua
Synagogue, 58-26th Street,
P O. Box 45,
Rangoon

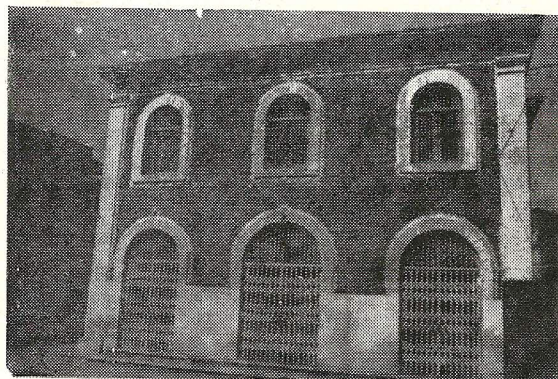


A Section of the Interior View

PAKISTAN

43

Magen Shalom Synagogue,
Jamila Street and
Nishtar Road,
Karachi-3



1893

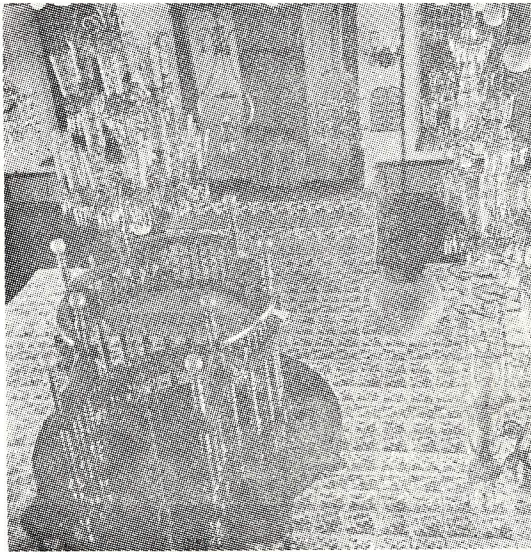
This Synagogue was built by Mr. Solomon David Umerdekar. At that time, Karachi was in Indian territory. This is the only synagogue in Karachi. The synagogue building was extended in 1912 at the expense of Mr. Gershon Solomon Umerdekar, and his brother Rahamin Solomon Umerdekar, sons of the founder.

A community hall was built by Abraham Reuben Kamerlekar in memory of Shegulabi Solomon Umerdekar and was named "Shegulabai Hall" after her.

The Karachi Jewish Community also provided a Hebrew School in 1916, Nathan Abraham Hall was built in 1918. The Karachi Jewish Syndicate was formed in 1918 with the aim of providing houses to Jews at reasonable rents.

INTERIOR VIEW OF SOME OF THE SYNAGOGUES

44



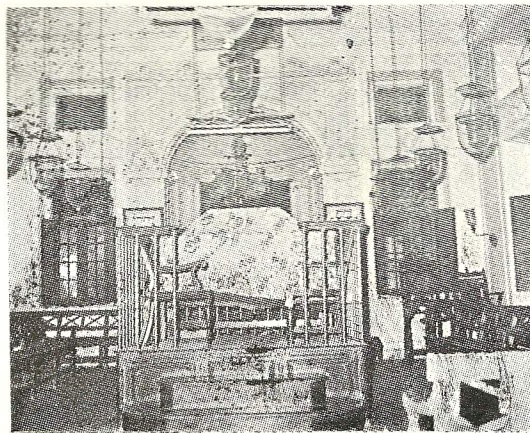
Paradesi Synagogue Cochin

45

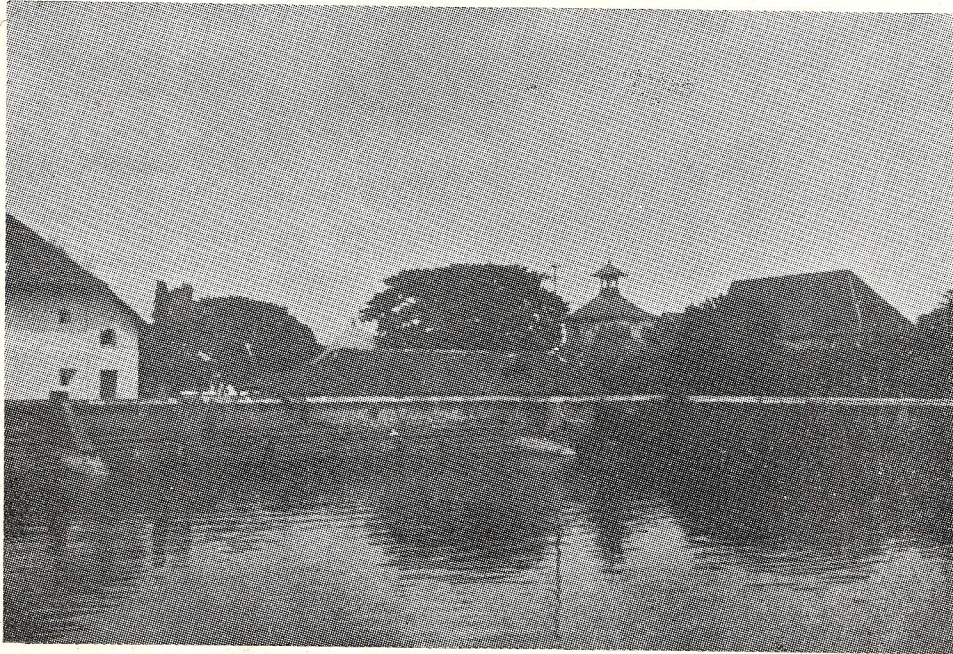


**Interior view of a Bene Israel Synagogue
showing Simhath Torah celebration**

46



**Interior view of Beth Ha-Elohim
Synagogue Pen Raigad Distt.**



Another view of Paradesi Synagogue Cochin showing also a section of the Maharaja's palace at extreme left and a Hindu Temple
There is also a Muslim Mosque in the vicinity

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.

* * *

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in
the house of the Lord for ever.

From Psalm 23

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require
of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?

Micah 6, 8