

COMMUNICATIONS

THE DALAI LAMA IN HEBREW

by Bezalel Naor, OROT

Your readers may be interested to learn that the earliest reference to the Dalai Lama in Hebrew literature occurs in a fanciful biography of the pseudo-Messiah Shabbetai Zevi, *Sippur Halomot, Kez ha-Pela'ot* (Story of Dreams, Wondrous End), alternatively titled *Me'ora'ot ha-Zevi* (Events of Zevi), Lemberg, 1804. [Though according to Scholem, the title page gives a false date and the actual printing was about 1830. Ch. B. Friedberg, *Bet Éked Sefarim*, gives 1824 as the year of the Lemberg (Lvov) edition. Scholem informs us the true editioprinceps was brought out by Israel Jaffe, the famous hasidic printer, in Kopyst 1814. G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi* (Princeton, 1973), pp. 757, n.190; 124, n.52.]

You may ask what the Dalai Lama has to do with the "Messiah of Izmir?" In a gloss to page 15 (the first, real page 15—due to mispagination there are two pages 15), the anonymous author advises his reader not to be amazed that a wondrous light emanated from Zevi's face, for such could be seen over the head of the "Lama," where it was produced by the adjuration of evil spirits!

The lengthy reference to the "Lama," "high priest over all the priests," "in the land of Tibet near East India, in its great city whose name is Barantola," is full of misinformation. It seems much of this misinformation was drawn from Bernard Picart's *The Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the Known World* (London, 1741). See Donald S. Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago, 1998), pp. 21-2. According to Lopez, Picart's source, in turn, was the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher (1667). Lopez, pp. 27, 222.

In the imagination of this writer of "creative history," the Dalai Lama became a *golem*, the Tibetan priests created from clay, "just like the *golem* our 'masters of names' (*ba 'alei shemot*) produce from clay." Somehow, the author of *Me'ora'ot ha-Zevi* mixed-up two Tibetan concepts, *tulpa* and *tulku*. A *tulpa* is a phantom being voluntarily produced by powerful concentration of thought and the repetition of prescribed rites.

A *tulpa*, unlike a *tulku*, which is the successive incarnation of a particular personality (such as the Dalai Lama), is a temporary phenomenon that is willfully created. It may take any form whatever but is most often in human shape. These *tulpas* coexist with their creator and can be seen

simultaneously with him. The *tulku*, on the contrary, does not coexist with his ancestor. Usually, the *tulpa* is sent to perform a definite mission. However, once the thought form is given sufficient life to pass as a real being, it may free itself from its originator's control. Folklore in Tibet and elsewhere tells tales of the created being turning on its magician-father and killing him, and we are reminded of the fictional Dr. Frankenstein and his monster (Barbara Foster and Michael Foster, *The Secret Lives of Alexandra David-Neel: A Biography of the Explorer of Tibet and Its Forbidden Practices* [Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1998], p. 154).

Sound familiar? By the way, in 1936, Alexandra David-Neel, spurred on by the legend of the *golem*, paid a pilgrimage to the synagogue of the sixteenth century mystic Rabbi Loew in Prague (Foster and Foster, p. 306).

Our teacher Rav Kook, of blessed memory, devoted much thought to the phenomenon of Buddhism, developing some original ideas in this regard. But that is another subject altogether, best left for a future communication.

Holocaust Refugees and the Maharaja of Jamnagar

by Shatrushalyasinji, H. H. the Jamsaheb of Nawanagar

Editor's Introduction

*The story of Jewish refugees to India during the Holocaust is only beginning to be told. Whether from the recent edited academic work (Anil Bhatti and Johannes H. Voigt, eds., *Jewish Exile in India 1933-1945*, 1999), or from the fiction on Anita Desai (*Baumgartner's Bombay*, 1989), interest has been piqued about India's ambivalent response to Jewish suffering in Germany.*

One little known refuge was provided by His Highness the Maharaja of Jamnagar, a port city in Gujarat in western India. Mr. J. M. Benjamin, a leading member of New Delhi's tiny Jewish community, wrote to the current Maharaja of Jamnagar, son of the savior of more than 1,000 Jewish children, seeking information and clarification. Mr. Benjamin passed the Maharaja's response on to Mr. Samuel Daniel of Congregation BINA in New York City, who in turn submitted it to our journal. This, then, is the first time that any information about this righteous act of heroism has appeared in print.

Mr. Benjamin wrote to Mr. Samuel M. Daniel of New York on April 21, 1999: "I am enclosing a copy of a letter received from the Maharaja of Jamnagar in reply to my request."

"Some one thousand two hundred children and women were saved by his father. The[ir] ship was not given permission to land at any British port nor at Bombay. This great humanitarian service of the late Maharaja has somehow remained shrouded in mystery: rather strange that it has not found a place in any archives of India nor Israel. You may remember one ship carrying men, women and children going to the Holy Land was sunk by British forces off the coast of Haifa!"

"You may request your friend [presumably the editor of this journal] who is doing research on this subject to give as much publicity as possible in the American media."

The Palace,
Jamnagar,
Gujarat,
India.

April 5, 1999.

To:

Mr. J. M. Benjamin,
A-7, Nirman Vihar,
NEW DELHI -110 092

Dear Mr. Benjamin,

The information you seek should be available at the Polish Embassy in New Delhi in view of the fact that the Vice President of Poland personally came to Jamnagar to express the Polish people's gratitude for the safe sanctuary afforded to some Polish women and children during World War II. However a brief history of that episode is as follows:

Some one thousand and two hundred children and approximately forty women had managed to escape from the advancing Nazi Armed Forces aboard a small ship, unfortunately they were unable to get permission to enter any British Port due to the very difficult situation prevailing there at that time. Their predicament became quite serious as a result of failure to find any refuge at all inspite of having sailed all the way around the African continent and they

were then finally anchored at Bombay Harbor where they were also confronted with refusal of landing permission, and now with the Captain of the ship refusing to sail on as there did not seem to be anywhere left to go.

It was at this juncture that during an Imperial War Council meeting in London during which my father, who was attending as one of its two Indian members, was approached by the then Prime Minister 'in exile' of Poland who was attending as a Special Invitee, with a request to persuade the Governor of Bombay to grant refuge to these hapless twelve hundred Polish children and forty women. This my father tried to do upon his return to India which journey he undertook flying through West and Central Africa.

It was when my father found himself confronted by an unmoveable Authority, in the Governor of Bombay, who pleaded his inability to concede to the Polish request unless he got clearance from The Home Office, London, that the invitation to the Polish children and women was extended to come to Jamnagar.

Jamnagar was the very first time that these unfortunate Polish children and women set foot on *Terra Firma* since they set sail from their homeland in the middle of a Nightmarish night. At Jamnagar, after badly needed medical treatment, they were first accommodated in a temporary camp 'under canvas,' and later relocated at Balachadi which is seventem miles East of Jamnagar on the coast of the Gulf of India where a 'Polish Camp' had been quickly constructed as a sanctuary for these Polish visitors. This 'Polish Camp' which consisted of a Barrack-type accommodation and incorporated a School, dispensary and playgrounds is where my beloved Polish brothers and sisters spent the remaining period of World War II until they returned home in 1946.

An important aspect of this episode was that the expenses of maintaining these Polish children and women had essentially to be borne by my father personally and not by the Nawanagar State Exchequer. This was because, in our status in relation to the British Crown, if these Polish children and women became guests of the State of Nawanagar then giving them sanctuary on Indian Soil would have necessitated first obtaining clearance from the Home Office, London. Whereas if they were my father's personal guests then the Home Office at London or the Viceregal Administration at New Delhi had no jurisdiction or control over their arrival and presence in Jamnagar. In conclusion these lovely Polish children and their escorting women were never war-time refugees; they were ROYAL GUESTS OF THE THEN JAMSAHEB OF NAWANAGAR and were treated as such and not as refugees.

Yours truly,
SHATRUSHALYASINJI
Jamsaheb of Nawanagar