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The Society for Indo-Judaic Studies

From the Editors

We are pleased to bring you the fifth issue of the *Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies*, which contains articles from the disciplines of English literature, international relations, history and religious studies. We have contended all along that, like other area fields, Indo-Judaic studies is richly interdisciplinary. We have endeavored to bring our readers a variety of disciplinary perspectives in each issue, and none has been more diverse than the current one.

We open with a study of Nissim Ezekiel, India's most acclaimed English-language poet and playwright. R Raj Rao, a professor of English at Pune University, offers an especially sensitive and insightful piece, which we hope will expand Ezekiel's following outside of India.

P. R. Kumaraswamy, a recently-appointed professor of West Asian studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, brings us a study of the beginning of diplomatic normalization between India and Israel. Much as "ping pong diplomacy" heralded the famous thaw in Sino-American relations in the 1970's, so in the 1980's did tennis assume a similar role as a tentative first step in the process of ambassadorial relations between India and Israel.

Brian Weinstein, an emeritus professor at Howard University, analyzes the energetic commercial activities of the Rahabis. They were among the Malabar's leading eighteenth century spice traders, and served as leaders of Cochin's Jewish community.

The legend of the ten lost tribes probably will always be a part of Indo-Judaic studies, and Tudor Parfitt, director of Jewish Studies at the University of London, revisits this theme in his study.

A translation by Marvin Tokayer of a Yiddish journalist's reports of his voyages in Asia in 1941 presents new and startling information about the customs of the Jews of Burma and the presence of a Jewish community in Ceylon. Although these reports must be read with a critical eye, they inform us about the place of Asian Jewish communities in the Jewish imagination.

This issue also includes a continuation of our ongoing bibliography about Indian Jewry, one book review and an index of issues one through five.

This summer, the Society for Indo-Judaic Studies will host a research conference at Oxford University, "A View from the Margin: The State of the Art of Indo-Judaic Studies," thanks to support from the Stephen and Dorothea Green Family Foundation, the Kashi Church Foundation and Florida International University. Organized by co-editor Nathan Katz and editorial board members Shalva Weil and P. R. Kumaraswamy, this conference will bring together some twenty scholars from India, Israel, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy.

We anticipate that some of the papers prepared for this conference will be included in a new book, and that others will find their way into this journal, which will include a report on the conference in its next issue. The conference is another indication of the arrival of Indo-Judaic Studies on the frontiers of scholarship.

Nathan Katz, Florida International University
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