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aquêlue que busca la luz.
BEN-ROSH

HALAPID

...alumia-vos e aponta-
vos o cominho
BEN-ROSH

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RETURN

My 50-year Search for My Jewish Self, Identity and Heritage

By Steve Gomes

This year marks the celebration of my first Rosh Hashanah as a Jew! When I entered the *mikveh*, or ritual bath, at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles before a *Beit Din*, or rabbinical court, it was the single defining moment of my life. It is



Steve Gomes addresses the conference

difficult to describe in words what happened on that day, Monday, March 25, 2002 (12 Nisan 5765) when Stephen Gomes, a Portuguese-American Catholic, completed his conversion to Judaism. It was a completion – a sense of coming full-circle, of finding and reclaiming my elusive long-lost Jewish soul, my *neshama*, for now and always - never to be lost again. All of the pain, challenges and uncertainties I experienced over the years in this search, pale by comparison with the magnificent emotional splendor of that defining moment. When Rabbi Steven Tucker of Temple Ramat Zion of Granada Hills, Rabbi Mark Diamond and others, including my 81 year old Catholic mother and members of my Jewish community, witnessed my return to my people, I knew I was home at last.

Sixteenth Century Ancestors

It has been a 50-year journey to recover the Jewish heritage of my ancestors. My tale could begin with the discovery in 1996 that my father's sixteenth century ancestor was buried in the Field of the Jews in the Madeira Islands off the coast of Portugal. Or it could begin with telephone conversations with relatives bearing my maternal great grandmother's name, de Quintal, who whispered in carefully shaded tones, "you know they say we are Jews."

Instead I want to tell the story of my conversion from the highly personal perspective of self discovery. Starting from about seven or eight years old, I began to realize that, in some important but seemingly unknowable way, I did not fit in with

CONFERENCE 2002—SAN DIEGO Information, Music and Inspiration in Paradise

By Max Valerio

This year the Society's 2002 conference took place in San Diego, where the light and climate are just this side of paradise! The Conference was rich with information and many voices added to the growing knowledge that we have about crypto Judaism and Sephardic culture.

Pre-Conference Talks and Activities

There were extensive pre-conference activities, coordinated by Rabbi David Kunin, all taking place at Congregation Ohr Shalom, a San Diego Synagogue. These included a Sephardic dinner and Shabbat service featuring Sephardic Shabbat melodies. A series of talks was also given featuring Seth Kunin, and Stanley Hordes, as well as an informative and lively talk by Enrique Lombrozo, "The Crypto Jews and the Conquistador."

The Conference Begins

Sunday evening the conference began officially with greetings by President, Arthur Benveniste; Conference Chair, Gloria Trujillo, Program Chair Stanley Hordes. We were also welcomed to Tijuana, San Diego's neighbor, by Rabbi Carlos Samuel Salas of Congregación Hebrea de Baja California en Tijuana, who described the *converso* background of his synagogue's members. He invited the Society to consider holding a conference there in the future, and told us we'd be most welcome.

Next we were treated to a concert featuring the young and powerful voice of Vanessa Paloma, singing a wide variety of Sephardic songs from South America, Europe, and the Middle East. She



Max Valerio, Gloria Trujillo, Mona Hernandez, Dolores Sloan and Arthur Benveniste take time out from the conference

accompanied herself on guitar, a small drum (found in New Mexico and generally seen as a toy), and an especially mysterious and exotic instrument with a bow and strings. This instrument provided a long, timeless drone behind several songs that was hypnotic. She was accompanied on percussion by Alvaro Perez for a few melodies. Vanessa Paloma has per-

the rest of the kids at the Catholic schools I was sent to. By the time I was in college, the feelings began to change, becoming more insistent and more impossible to ignore. I experienced a growing realization that something nameless, ineffably undefined was calling me. But what was it? One day, in graduate school, my best friend, Stephen Wiel, with no warning, popped a totally startling and mind altering question to me, "Why are all your friends Jewish?" Not only did I not have answers for what I thought at the time a completely crazy question; I couldn't fathom why he asked it in the first place. But ultimately, it was the first clue that put me on the track to my return. His question stayed with me, resonated, stewed, percolated, until one brisk Pittsburgh winter day, I woke up with the question, "Could I possibly be Jewish?"

For those of you who have been Jewish from birth, I am not sure you could put yourself in the mindset of the unsettling road of inquiry this question posed for me. It is an identity shattering kind of question which at that time had no basis in fact. It was relentless. I could not shake this feeling that I was, in fact, seemingly Jewish somehow – somehow. It is very hard to describe this feeling. One author who had a similar experience described it as a journey Through the Unknown Remembered Gate. My drive to unravel the mystery of this illusive Jewish identity became like a mysterious, unexplainable compulsion. At the time, the best way I could find to describe it was to compare it to how the main character was portrayed in the movie *Close Encounters of a Third Kind*.

After I received my PhD, I moved to Reno, Nevada. One cold snowy night, I found myself sitting in my hot tub with another good friend, a psychiatrist named Ed Lynn (Jewish naturally), discussing this feeling I had. I said "Ed, is there something wrong with me?" At first he laughed about it. But then he said "You know that there is something called the Jewish soul or *neshama*. You might be having an experience with that phenomenon." For some reason, that struck a chord..

The Calling was Relentless

But at the time I knew nothing about the concept of a Jewish soul nor did I have any knowledge of the *anusim*, the Hebrew term for Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity. In 1980 I moved to San Francisco. The "calling" was continuous and unrelenting. I spoke to many rabbis. They all uniformly discouraged me. Then one day I was introduced to Rabbi David Zeller. He accepted me as a student. Unfortunately, before I could make much progress toward conversion, the rabbi's wife suddenly died and left him with three very young children to raise. He moved to Israel and my study took a detour.

For the next ten years, I filled much of my spare time studying my family history. I engaged in a lot of genealogical and historical research. It began to become increasingly evident that I could actually be a direct descendant of Jewish ancestors from the Portuguese Inquisition in 1497. I studied the history of the Inquisition in Portugal which convinced me to redouble my effort to convert.

I have since learned that on my mother's side of the family, her grandfather who, it is speculated, knew that he was Jewish, changed his name when he entered the U.S. in Hawaii in 1868. He changed his name from João Baptista de Quintal to John Q. Baptist.

Right now I am trying to learn all I can about the Quintal family name and history. Recently, I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in a Portuguese Jewish Heritage Tour. While I was in Portugal, with the help of members of the Saudades-Sefarad Group, I was able to locate the medieval Portuguese village of Quintal in north central Portugal, there I was told by a passerby, "This was a Jewish village." This was the source of our family name. Some of the buildings are still in use. I was amazed to find a Hebrew inscription carved into one of the solid rock lintel stones in the interior of a doorway.

So far, I have learned while many Jews fled to other countries during the Portuguese Inquisition to avoid forced conversion, most were forced to remain and forced to convert, as opposed to Spain where observing Jews fled the country.

According to Flavio Mendes Carvahao, in *Raizes Judaicas no Brasil: O Arquivo Secreto da Inquisição* (Jewish Roots in Brazil: from the Secret Archives of the Inquisition), there were 177 cases of judaizing (New Christians practicing Judaism) prosecuted during the Lisbon *autos do fe* against persons with the surname Gomes and five with the surname de Quintal. The name means from

the village of Quintal. with a population at the time of 200 men, women and children.

While this history is and continues to be under-researched in Portugal, there is mounting evidence (see Netanyahu's *The Origins of the Inquisition*) that this massive crime committed against Jews by the church and royal establishment was actually motivated primarily for greed, to allow confiscation of the property and assets of those accused. The religious accusations were primarily a diversion designed to enlist the support of the uneducated illiterate masses and incite their anger. Remember, at that time the church did not allow peasants to learn to read — even to read the Bible. Only the Jews could read, write and do math and accounting because of their emphasis on reading the Torah and on education.

For me, stepping into the *mikveh* brought me full circle -- I was home at last. The feeling is still very new and very vivid for me; I am fully certain for the first time, I truly know who I really am at the core of my soul - without a trace of doubt or lingering hesitancy. This sense of certainty is a great gift, both so concrete as the presence of my limbs, yet as ineffable and ephemeral as vapors arising from San Francisco Bay on a misty winter morning. Others have also written about their feelings the moment they discovered their Jewish identity. The descriptions are almost always in the same general tone.

Both Joy and Sadness

Besides great joy, the certainty of this "knowing" also brought with it a great sadness. I felt the pain of our forefathers and ancient grandmothers, having their children, their traditions, their very heritage forcefully ripped away - seemingly forever until now. Somehow these events of 500 hundred years ago became as fresh and vivid inside of me as if it happened yesterday. And now I feel such a great responsibility to rectify this loss in some way, to make it somehow worthwhile. Even if I only could have a small role in helping a few Portuguese descendants find their way back to their heritage, their true identity, their real roots, then I will be at peace.

Until then, I cannot seem to rest. I feel such a commitment and dedication to helping my fellow Portuguese understand the overwhelming evidence and artifacts of their former connection to their Jewish roots. Once my own "discovery" sank in, never to be lost again, I could

While many Jews fled to other countries ... most were forced to remain and forced to convert,

A SUMMARY OF THE BUSINESS MEETING HELD AT SCJS CONFERENCE, AUGUST 2002

The Business Meeting was called to order by President Arthur Benveniste immediately following the last speaker of the conference. The following items were discussed.

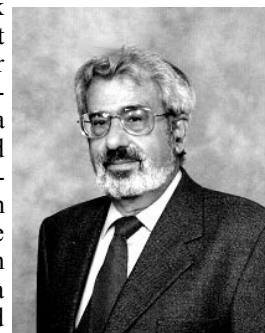
1. Rabbi Stampfer, treasurer of SCJS, was in Israel, so Art transmitted his report of a balance of approximately \$10,000.
2. The Membership Vice President, Randy Baca was absent due to illness. Art gave her report that we now have 156 paid up members. In addition, eight new members joined at the conference.
3. Dolores Sloan, Communications Vice president, called for articles for publication in *HaLapid*, the journal of SCJS.
4. Past President and Conference Chair Gloria Trujillo reported that we had 66 pre-registered attendees and 14 more who registered at the conference for a total of 80 participants. The members agreed that the 2003 conference will be held in San Antonio on August 3, 4, and 5. Programs Vice-President Stanley Hordes announced the appointment of Seth Kunin as chair of the Programs Committee. Seth then made a call for new volunteers to help set up the program for next year in order to involve more new members and keep the organization growing. The local committee for the San Antonio Conference will include Orfa Salinas, Lupe Mandujano-Garcia and Walter Cohen. It was also suggested that the 2004 conference be held in Mexico.
5. On the matter of the non-profit status of the organization, Dolly Sloan reported that we had an attorney working on this and that we would soon have it. Then donations and part of the dues paid by members would become tax deductible. In addition we could proceed with creating a committee which would approach foundations for grants.
6. A motion was made and carried for SCJS to decline an offer from a bank to advertise in *HaLapid* if we deposit our funds with it. The members agreed that we not accept any advertising in *HaLapid* but that the society may solicit corporate donations once the non-profit status is in place.
7. The conference voted to establish a genetics study committee for the purpose of conducting and reporting on DNA research and acquiring speakers for future conferences. The committee will be chaired by Flavio Montoya. Having a mini-conference in six months devoted to the single topic of DNA was also discussed.

— Flavio Montoya, Secretary

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Art Benveniste

I am writing this during the same week when the nation commemorates the first anniversary of the tragedy of September 11, 2001. On this date, religious fanatics, thinking that they were acting in a holy cause and expecting to be rewarded for it with a free pass to paradise, attacked innocents who threatened them not nor had done them any harm. The exact same statement can be made in reference to Spain and Portugal half a millennium ago. Our society is devoted to the study of those long ago events and to their effect on the victims and their descendants. Indeed many of our members are those descendants.



In August, eighty of us came together in San Diego for our 2002 conference. We were joined by many members of Temple Ohr Shalom for our evening events. It was one of our most successful gatherings. Many of us arrived two days early for events organized by our hosts at the temple and their rabbi David Kunin. We are deeply indebted to Rabbi Kunin, president David Polichar and the congregants for their hospitality. It was an important addition to our visit.

Thanks also to past president Gloria Trujillo and to Stan Hordes. Gloria and Stan have been the spark plugs which make our engine run. Devoting time, energy, skill and perseverance, they are responsible for the success of our recent conference. Also doing yeoman duty were Board Member at Large, Orfa Salinas and conference journalist, Max Valerio.

It was a great idea for Steve Gomes to call us into a semi-circle for his presentation. It added an *esprit de corps* that carried on into the business meeting. See the photo on page one.

We are making progress on getting our status as a non-profit organization. We are indebted to lawyer Martin Sosin who has donated his time and expertise in advising us and in preparing the paperwork. Soon, your donations to the SCJS will be tax deductible and we will be able to apply to foundations for grants.

At the business meeting of the San Diego Conference several important new items were introduced. One was the adoption of a logo for the SCJS. Several have been proposed, but we would like to see others before making a selection. If you have an idea for a logo, please send it to me at 333 Washington Blvd. #336, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292 or send it by email to benven@earthlink.net.

Also proposed was having a separate mini-conference devoted to a single topic. The first mini-conference would be devoted to a DNA study of crypto Jews. It could be held early next year in Tucson. Another possibility would be to add a day to our next regular conference and devote it to the DNA study. We hope to have the details by the next issue of *HaLapid*.

Our next conference will meet in San Antonio in August 2003. I'll see you there.

IN THIS ISSUE OF HALAPID

Conference 2002 by Max Valerio	page 1
My 50 Year Search by Steve Gomes	1
President's Message	3
Summary of Business Meeting	3
Scenes from the San Diego Conference	7
Jewish Genealogy Conference	7
Welcoming Back the Anusim by David Kunin	8
Websites	11

See our new website at www.cryptojews.com and
add a comment to our guest book.

formed extensively throughout the United States, Israel, Asia, and South America. She has an exquisite ability to interpret melodies, and added another layer of understanding and depth to the songs that she sang.



Andrée Brooks

Uncovering History

Andrée Brooks began Monday morning's session with an animated discussion of her new book about Doña Gracia Nasi, *The Woman Who Defied Kings* (Paragon House, June 2002). Dona Gracia was the sixteenth century *conversa* banker who saved an "extraordinary number of people" from the clutches of the Inquisition. She was ahead of her time in many respects, and even attempted to start a settlement in Tiberias as a possible site of resettlement for fleeing *conversos*. Gracia Nasi also ran a literary and cultural salon in Ferrara, and was a great patron of *converso* literary arts. An inquiring and adventurous mind, she was also connected to the spice trade from the Far East, investigating herbal cures and other "alternative" medicines.

Brooks worked with translators and specialists, researching documents in thirteen languages and ten countries. The richest findings were mined in London and Turkey, as well as Venice and Ferrara, Italy. Along the way she made rich and startling discoveries, such as the translations of Inquisition interrogations into modern French by Luciane Wolf, English Jewish scholar from the turn of the century. "The story is actually much more interesting, dramatic and full than what we have been told until now," Brooks declares. An Associate Fellow at Yale University, she has been a columnist and writer for the New York Times for eighteen years.

Hordes and Kunin to Publish

There's good news with the announcement that Stanley Hordes and Seth Kunin have books on their research forthcoming from Columbia University Press in the next eighteen months. Hordes spoke about his discoveries concerning the crypto Jews of New Mexico. He has continued to mine Inquisition documents for information. There is new evidence that waves of *conversos* fled the Inquisition tribunals in Mexico City to go north even into the 1600's, and that they were relatively ignored there by the authorities until the 1660's. Also, the general community didn't care about Jewish practices until the 1660's, when a number of "aberrant" trials were touched off by power struggles between the governor and the Franciscan friars. The settlers in New Mexico maintained ties with Portugal and the Canary Islands, and new *conversos* would also arrive from places as far away as France. Continuing documentation links the families of the Gomez Robledos, Bartolome Romero, the Herreras, and Manuel Jorge to Inquisition investigations of judaizing. Hordes described meetings in secret rooms with passwords: "*La Nacion?*" (Who is it?); "*Ismael*" (the answer). It was noted that evidence of judaizing has appeared previously in published testimony, but has often been trivialized. This is because it was often the testimony of servants in Inquisition trials, so it has never been taken very seriously. To many historians in the past, their testimony was regarded as only the "title-tattle of servants." Currently, we have a more respectful attitude, and are more likely to view their testimony as having value and integrity.

Hordes also described briefly a discovery made by Charles Carrillo, regarded as the dean of New Mexico santeros

and respected scholar, who studied an altar screen from 1692, recently discovered in the Santa Fe Church. The screen doesn't have images of the holy family, but instead has images of David, Moses and Samson -- Old Testament figures. Carrillo has always played devil's advocate to Hordes' research, but this time he called him excitedly, saying, "You're right, Stan -- I didn't realize all these years you've been right!"

Gerald Gonzalez, a native of New Mexico and scholar, went into further detail about Inquisition documents and trials of the 1660's in the Northern Spanish territory. The decade was a time of escalating and ongoing conflicts between the governors and the clergy. Gonzalez detailed the arrest of Governor Bernardo Lopez de Mendezola and his wife Doña Theresa de Aquilera y Roche in August 1662, along with Ana Robledo and Catalina Zamora. Theresa would protest that her enemies were slandering her, however 26 witnesses had seen her changing and cleaning clothes on Fridays, washing her head, and then shutting herself off in a room alone for three hours. She claimed that all of this was coincidental. Surprisingly, many of the accused did not invoke the defense of "a mortal enemy" who was attempting to defame them. Gonzalez also linked Juan Griego and the Gonzalez line to crypto Judaism, along with others.

Elena Fissman de Saad grew up in Mexico City. At about the age of twelve, she discovered that the central plaza had been the site of up to 1,000 auto-de-fes. It was La Plaza de Santa Domingo, and this discovery would prompt further investigations by the young scholar. She was to find that the Dominicans were the real heads of the Inquisition. Saad outlined a timeline from the expulsion in Spain and later, Portugal, to the discovery of the New World by a Columbus who might very well have been a *converso*.



Elena Fissman de
Saad

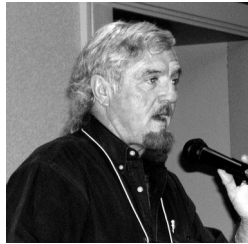
Saad is writing her thesis on the converted Jews of Tijuana. She believes that the Jews of Venta Prieto are actually descended from Sephardic Jews, as they claim, although they also have Mexican Indian ancestry. This mixing, she states, was a "survival tactic," that is "to marry an Indian woman, who could care less about the Jewish practices of her husband, and who could be claimed as Christian." Saad also spoke about Brazil, and the 12 million converted Jews there, many of whom fled to France, Cuba, or other parts of Europe when conflict raged in the region.

Exploring Genetics

Flavio Montoya, Abe Lavender, and Bennett Greenspan spoke about using genetics to uncover or confirm Jewish identity. Montoya has been working on a genetic study of Hispanos from Northern New Mexico. He's learned that a study of DNA is neither as simple nor as straightforward as he'd presumed, declaring that "genes don't have a religion." Comparisons between groups can be made, and affinities established; nonetheless, gray areas remain and DNA studies are not absolutely definitive. Lavender is the author of six books, and a sociologist in Jewish studies at Florida International University. He presented the results of a DNA study that he took part in, which showed his antecedents to have been from Northern Portugal, the Netherlands and Northern Italy.

Dr. Greenspan, founder of FamilyTreeDNA, spoke at length about the Y chromosome, which is passed virtually unchanged from father to son through the generations. Because of this, the Y provides an excellent avenue to check for

markers from certain population groups. The majority of Jews exhibit Mediterranean markers, which would include Semitic groups. Some Jews, both Sephardim (10-15%), and Ashkenazim (5%) are what is called "Western Atlantic" -- another European subdivision. Still others (15-20% of Jewish populations) are in a genetic group identified with populations in England, Ireland and Scotland. The movement of both Ashkenazi and Sephardic populations across Europe and the Middle East created a similar pattern in their genetic diversity, although again, most had Mediterranean group markers.



Abe Lavender

Seth Ward also contributed to this wide-ranging discussion with an excellent talk called "Genetics and Jewish Demography." First, he too introduced a cautionary note, reminding everyone that traditionally, Jewishness is passed on through the mother and not the father. In the exception, Reform Judaism, an active identification with Judaism is required for Jewish descent to be passed on through the father. Therefore studies of Y chromosomes alone would have little impact on *halakhic* ideas as to who is and is not a Jew.

High Frequency Of Rare Skin Disease

Ward then continued his talk with fascinating tidbits about Jewish genetics. Studies have found that one-third of all incidents of *pemphigus vulgaris*, a rare skin disorder known to attack Ashkenazi Jews with much more frequency than the general population, have been found in Sephardic Jews in Israel. Society members may remember that the Hispanos of Northern New Mexico also have an unusually high frequency of this rare skin disease, a fact which might link them genetically to Jewish populations. Also, there is an unusually high incidence of a gene for breast cancer in Hispanics in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, much as there is in the Ashkenazi population. Another interesting finding, not directly related to the testing of genetic markers, is the fact that the fingerprints of Ashkenazim and Sephardim have a similar congruence.

In fact, Ward states that Sephardim and Ashkenazim have had population exchanges all along their parallel yet divergent histories. The Sephardim were not as coherent a population, since they traveled to England, Morocco, Turkey, Greece, Belgium, and other areas outside of Iberia, once the expulsion was underway. Both groups exhibit what is known as a "bottleneck effect," when a small founding population practices strict endogamy, and has great fertility, producing a large population that is extremely interrelated. This happens throughout Jewish history as a small group survives various catastrophes, beginning with the foundation population of one-half million Judeans, left after the tribes of Israel were lost.

In general, Ashkenazi Jews appear to have Y chromosomes that are more similar to Middle Eastern markers than the European markers of their host Germanic population. Of course, there are exceptions to this. Ward reminded us all that we were looking for "markers" and not "who are my ancestors?" in these genetic studies, in other words, "genetics is statistics." They introduce a probability, but not a certainty. Church records are actually better indicators of one's ancestral background. In other words, Ward said "We shouldn't use genetics for religious edicts." He quoted scientist and writer Stephan Gould that "When we stop asking for more than nature can provide, we can look within."

Creative Excursions -- Past and Present

The conference changed focus with a lively talk by

Dolores (Dolly) Sloan about a nineteenth century English Sephardic woman writer well known in her time as the author of a series of romantic and gothic novels. The novelist was Grace Aguilar, and her books often had Jewish and *marrano* characters and themes. Dolly states that Aguilar was possessed of a "frail body which contained tremendous intellectual energy." What set her apart was her use of Jewish/*marrano* themes. She used her novels to explain the situation of the *marranos* to her English readers. One of her books, *Vale of Cedars*, has the heroine, a secret Jew named Marie Enriquez, fall in love with a gentile, and subsequently have to "come out" as a "Jewess" to save his life. Earlier, she makes the required sacrifice to please her father by succumbing to an arrangement to marry her cousin. Later, she is kidnapped and taken to the secret Inquisition, where Inquisitor Don Luis García, tells her he desires her and has had her husband murdered. Her torture is brutal, yet Marie doesn't give in to García or give up her Jewish faith. It is clear from her narrative and literary devices that Aguilar wanted her readers to come away from her books sympathetic to crypto Jews and their plight. She explains why they had to hide, placing the history of the Jews of Spain into her books through the interlocation of another narrative voice. Strangely, Queen Isabella is portrayed sympathetically in her works, as a "tender female."

Aguilar's books were very popular in their time, and she was read well into the twentieth century. Another work, *The Martyr*, was a bestseller dealing with Jewish themes. She died young, of tuberculosis, at only age 32. She was much celebrated and would be a good read even today.

Mario Martinez, present day writer on the theme of secret Jews, was next. His award winning screenplay, *Converso*, awaits production, and Mario is determined that the story be rendered by a company that will honor and not dilute, his vision. His literary sources of inspiration include *Iberia*, by James Michener, and *Time and Chance* by Fray Angelico Chavez, among others. Mario is from Northern New Mexico, and the fact that so many Hispanos from that region are discovering Sephardic roots inspired him. He also drew inspiration from the stories of his grandmothers. At the conference, he read from his screenplay, which is set in Pecos, New Mexico. *Converso* traces a family back in time to the expulsion from Spain and later, to the silver mines in Zacatecas, ending up eventually in a small Northern New Mexico village. There are conflicts with the French priests, and a poisoning.

Maria Espinosa is another creative writer who states that "imagination has led me back to my Jewish roots." Her new book, *Incognito: Journey of a Secret Jew* (Wings Press, 2002) has just been released. Marie began her journey after reading about the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Enthralled by a particular passage in her research, she began to connect ideas and memories in her own life. In fact, her personal story is a quixotic journey of intuition and imagination. Her research brought her to "hundreds of books" on the subject of Sephardim and the Inquisition, and spending many hours in the Bethel University library. She also fact-checked everything with a Jewish scholar, and went to synagogues. Along the way, Maria Espinosa discovered a part of her own family's history. Maria read from her book, revealing herself to have an enormous command of the language, and a visceral, sensual imagination.

While most scholars and writers are drawn to "*El Mozo*," Luis de Carvajal the younger, Composer Myron Fink has been inspired to write an opera about the life and struggles of the

older Carvajal, his uncle. His opera, *The Conquistador*, played to sold-out audience in San Diego in 1997. Inspired by a chance encounter with the book *The Martyr - Story of a Secret Jew*, Myron Fink began his own work on the life and Inquisition trial of the governor of Nuevo Leon. Fink is an animated speaker, who is nearly a comedian -- he had the whole room in stitches as he described the process of coming to write his opera. "There were no lights, no voice in fluent Ladino," he laughed, but -- there was an amazing story that had him mesmerized. "I couldn't believe that Texas was a place that Jews had fled through!" Finding out that up to one-quarter of Cortez's army were of Jewish descent, and that there had been an Inquisition in Mexico, was astonishing to him. "Here was a man who was successfully assimilated, a man who thinks he is part of the society he lives in, a man whose ancestry and not his faith was the problem," Fink observed. He found this dilemma to be an ominous foreshadowing of the 20th century -- where the Nazis dictated that a person need only have one-quarter Jewish ancestry to be targeted for elimination, leading to the killing of nuns and other Christians with Jewish ancestry. Fink observed the irony that "This society that the elder Carvajal felt so secure in, so much a part of, would ultimately turn on him and destroy him."

Mr. Fink was also fascinated by Carvajal as an Aristotelian character where the tragic outcome is caused by a flaw in the main character. Governor Carvajal was a man of tremendous ambition, and accordingly, his ambition and hubris are part of his downfall. In the end, he would die in prison of unknown causes.

Fink is aware that "the complexities of history don't belong on a stage" and that most audiences are not used to hearing opera in English. Music slows speech, and action must be shortened. He wrote *The Conquistador* with an eye and ear toward simplicity, and an ability to translate complex historical circumstances into dramatic music and language.

David Kunin, Rabbi of the hosting synagogue for our preconference activities, Congregation Ohr Shalom, gave the opening talk Tuesday. "Welcoming Back the Anusim; A Modern Halakhic Examination" was a lucid explanation of Jewish law and rabbinical opinions (*responsa*) concerning the return or conversion of anusim. Rabbi Kunin's talk is included in this issue, beginning on page eight.

Seth Kunin, brother of Rabbi David, specializes in social anthropology. He delineated a series of "ideal types" of crypto Jews. These sociological types don't really exist; instead these categories are created to help us understand the complexity and dynamism of crypto-Judaic identities. Kunin's various "ideal" types from "strong" to "weak" were organized according to their practices and beliefs, that is, whether they practiced endogamy, were conscious of Jewish ancestry, practices, and how they viewed the Jewish practices that they had and whether they used "oppositional" practices such as rubbing off baptism in private after a child's forced baptism.

Currently, identity is seen as fluid and dynamic, instead of static and essential. This dynamism is evident when we observe individuals emphasizing one aspect of themselves at one time, and another aspect at another. Kunin also spoke about *bricolage*, meaning literally "tinker." Culture is created by taking pieces from many different locations. There is finally a structural aspect where patterns and structures of thought

are studied. All of these categories and concepts underline the complexity of identities, and the fact that "authenticity" is a suspect notion. Identities are constantly moving, changing, and being reinterpreted. Jewish elements over time could become mediated with Christian elements. For example, the Rosary could be said sincerely and not as a cover when one is lighting candles on Friday nights. This might have occurred over time in a family, and could change again as Jewish elements of identity are uncovered or understood.

The final speaker of the conference was Steve Gomes, whose unconventional approach created a personal, informal atmosphere. We sat in a large circle and each person introduced his or herself, and stated the reason for being there. Although I generally don't like sitting in circles, possibly because I've lived in Northern California for so long and have sat in so many, I did find this instance to be an exception. When Steve began to speak, it was mesmerizing. I have to say that I found his talk to be the most moving of the entire conference. Like many there, I was fighting back tears by the end. It struck me in a very deep place, beyond words, although his words so bravely and eloquently articulated his experience. The entire text of his talk begins on page one of this issue.



Maria Espinoza

MAX VALERIO is an accomplished writer who has written for HaLapid about the 2000 conference in Albuquerque, his crypto-Jewish ancestors from the Taos area and a rebuttal to the Atlantic Monthly article which challenged the existence of crypto Jews.



Flavio Montoya



Vanessa Paloma and Alvaro Perez



Bennett Greenspan



Rabbi Salas



Gerald Gonzalez

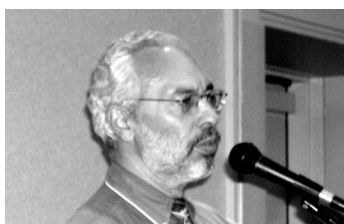
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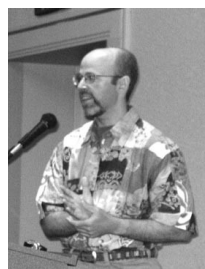
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Many contributions are memoirs or retelling of family stories and legends. They may or may not be historically accurate, although they are indeed valid, sacred memories that have been passed along through time. We do not attempt to change individual perceptions as long as they are reported as such, but we do change obvious misstatements or historical error.

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Seth Kunin



Stan Hordes

JEWISH GENEALOGY CONFERENCE, JULY 2003

The 23rd Annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy will be held in Washington, DC on July 20 - 25, 2003. The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies sponsors the conference. Over 1,200 are expected to attend.

The conference will include a panel session about crypto-Jews with three or four experts. A panel that will address the topic of genetics and genealogy is also being planned.

For information, contact Sheri Meisel, National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice, at University of Maryland College Park,

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Welcoming Back the Anusim: A Halakhic Teshuvah

Rabbi David A Kunin

My paper this morning will be divided into five sections. I will first examine existing rabbinic responsa. Second, I will turn to elements of the laws of conversion as they affect the anusim. Third, I will examine two status issues. Fourth, I will examine some extra-halakhic issues that are germane to the decision making process. Finally, I will present my views on how I hope the *halakhah* will develop in the future.

Last year in my paper presented at the Pueblo meeting, I examined the major trends found in the Ashkanazic and Sephardic responsa on the return of forced converts (to Christianity and Islam) to Judaism. That paper aimed to present a historical examination of rabbinic opinion, and how it developed over time. This year, while I will be discussing many of the same rabbinic texts, my paper serves a very different function. Rather than merely presenting and examining Jewish legal sources of the past, this paper is meant as a *halakhic teshuva*, which I hope will be a beginning of a new Jewish legal response for the present.

Within the Jewish legal tradition rabbis most often issue *halakhic* (legal) decisions as responses to questions that are sent to them by lay people or even other rabbis. The questions are referred to as *she'elot*, and the answers as *teshuvot*, the literature as a whole is called *halakhic responsa*. *Teshuvot* (answers) may be simple short answers to a question, or they may be elaborate answers, presenting both the answer to the question and the sources upon which the answer is based. *Halakhic* opinions are often comprised of precedent, building on the decisions and opinions of the past. They are, however, not limited to the majority opinions of any generation, but in the words of the Mishnah may select even a minority opinion, or an individual opinion of a past rabbi.

Having said that, I must add that this paper represents my personal opinion as an individual rabbi on the questions addressed, and is in no way binding on my congregation or the Conservative Movement.

Now we must turn to the question addressed in this *halakhic* responsa; what are the Jewish legal requirements for the return of the anusim, crypto Jews, to the mainstream religious Jewish community? While this question may not seem relevant, just or even reasonable to many anusim, it is an essential question within the Jewish legal framework. In essence, it is related to the basic status question: Who is a Jew, and what are the essential elements of Jewish identity? The answers given to this question will affect every aspect of participation in mainstream Jewish religious life, from synagogue participation to marriage to another Jew.

Before I present my own answer, we will examine two modern *teshuvot*, rabbinic responsa, which, to a limited extent, also address the question of requirements for the return of the anusim. The first of these was written by Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu (1994), former Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, and the second by Rabbi Aaron Soloveichik (1994), Rosh Yeshiva of the Brisk Rabbinical College in Chicago. Both of these are prominent Orthodox rabbis. Both were written as responses to questions submitted by Dr. Shulamith Halevey, and are published on her website. *



Rabbi Kunin

Rabbi Eliahu's *teshuvah* is fairly simple and straight forward, he states that the following steps are required for the return of an anus to the Jewish people: "After completion of all the steps of learning Torah, acceptance of the yoke of Torah and its commandments, circumcision...and immersion...he should be given a certificate with the title, 'Certificate for he/she who returned to his/her ancestors' ways.'" In other words, aside from the certificate, Eliahu imposes all of the requirements of conversion on the returning anus. Eliahu explains that these requirements are necessitated because of the length of time since the forced conversions, and because of the concern about intermarriages in succeeding generations.

Perhaps the most striking aspect, however, of Eliahu's *Teshuvah* is his acceptance of the Jewish connection of the Anusim, despite the length of time and his doubts concerning the matrilineal line of descent. He uses terms of return, rather than conversion, when he speaks of the rituals that are required, and as noted above, the certificate he believes should be issued is not a "Certificate of Conversion." but rather is a "Certificate of Return."

Soloveichik's responsa, on the other hand, may also be short, but is anything but simple. Initially he states, "they (anusim) must be treated like full Jews in every way (counted for a *minyan*, given *aliyyot*, etc.)." The rituals chosen are important, because both of these *mitzvot* (religious observances) require the participant to be equally obligated for Jewish law as the other participants in the service. Allowing returning anusim to perform them, without any conversion or ritual of return as part of a congregation, is an explicit and public recognition that they are fully Jewish.

Subsequently, however, he denies their membership in the community in any way, shape or form, as he requires full conversion if the anus wishes to marry into the Jewish community. Unlike Eliahu, Soloveichik explicitly uses the term conversion rather than return, "He or she must undergo full conversion." This ritual requirement, using the term "conversion" contradicts his previous contention of the Jewish identity of the anusim since the explicit requirement of "conversion" implies that they are in no way Jewish and therefore should not be allowed to count in a *minyan*, or ascend for an *aliyah* to the Torah.

This responsa is extremely puzzling. There is no precedent within the Jewish legal tradition for a person on one hand to be treated as fully Jewish, and explicitly able to fulfill Jewish legal requirements on the behalf of other Jews, while on the other hand being treated as a non-Jew and required to "undergo full conversion," when desiring to marry a Jew.

Eliahu's *teshuva* fits in well with the stringent Ashkanazic *halakhic* tradition concerning the return of the anusim. Ashkanazic legal figures from Rashi to the Rama, while recognizing the Jewishness of the Anusim, require that they undergo rituals identical to those required of a convert to Judaism. Eliahu does quote from the Sephardic responsa of Solomon ben Simon Duran (1400 - 1467). He accepts Duran's responsa, however, only in so far as to state that the anus is "to be welcomed with kindness," and as the basis of the concept that the ceremony should be one of return rather than as a conversion. He rejects Duran's basic opinion, and indeed that of all the other medieval Sephardic authorities, who do not require the conversion rituals.

These two responsa represent the sum total of modern rabbinic thought that I could find, examining the return of the

*<http://www-csgso.cs.uiuc.edu/%67Enachum/sch/>. They are also being posted on the website of the SCJS, www.cryptojews.com

anusim to the Jewish community. They do not, however, represent all possible and legitimate *halakhic* answers to the requirements for the return of the anusim. We will now examine another approach, my personal suggestion, on an appropriate *halakhic* answer to this question.

As noted above, both existing rabbinic responsa follow Ashkenazi requirements placed on returning anusim. Yet, the returning community are not Ashkenazim but Sephardim. It is well known that the historical experiences of the two communities were not identical, and it should not be surprising therefore that the *halakhic* responses to the differing situations were also not identical. This is due to the fact that *halakhah* is by nature situational and dynamic, rather than universal and static. (These differing approaches, and the reasons for them were examined in the paper I presented last year). I believe that it is appropriate therefore to turn primarily to the *halakhic* responsa of Sephardic rather than Ashkenazic rabbis, since they were writing for, and based on the realities of the community that we are addressing.

Essentially the question that we will address could be rephrased as, "are returning anusim required to undergo the rituals of conversion before they are permitted to participate fully as part of the mainstream Jewish community?" We will therefore primarily examine the requirement of the anusim vis-a-vis the laws of conversion.

Conversion to Judaism traditionally (for Conservative and Orthodox Jews) is comprised of three (for a man) or two (for a woman) essential steps as outlined in the *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 268, written by Joseph Karo. A male convert is required to undergo *milah*, *tevilah* and *kabalat mitzvah*, that is to say, to be circumcised, to be immersed in a mikvah, and to accept the yoke of the commandments in the presence of a *Bet Din* (a court of at least three rabbis - technically a *Bet Din* is required to witness all aspects of the conversion, but Karo states that in practice if the *Bet Din* is present only at the Acceptance of Mitzvot then the conversion is still valid). A woman is required to undergo *tevilah* (immersion) and *Kabbalat Mitzvah* (acceptance of the Mitzvot). All of these steps are necessary or the conversion is not considered valid, the only caveat being that if a man was previously circumcised then a drop of blood is drawn instead in a ritual called *hatafat dam brit*. It is also traditional to push the potential convert away three times, and today most rabbis require an extensive period of study, over a year or more, before the conversion rituals can be performed. Each step of the ritual, as they are presented in the *Shulchan Aruch*, will be examined in relation to the return of anusim.

The first step of the conversion is the requirement to push the potential convert away. The *Shulchan Aruch* records that one is to say to a convert "Don't you know that the Israelites are an oppressed and despised people." If they still wish to convert then they are accepted and the process is begun. This step of the conversion process is absent from both Ashkenazic and Sephardic sources. There is no requirement to push a returning anus away since both the Ashkenazic and Sephardic medieval responsa recognize the historic connection of the anusim to the Jewish community.

After resisting the push, the proselyte is to be educated in Jewish law as preparation for *kabbalat mitzvah*, the acceptance of the yoke of the law. *Kabbalat Mitzvah* is to be done in the presence of a *Bat Din*. Interestingly, Karo does not

require that the proselyte undergo a detailed education in the law, rather he or she is to be educated merely in the basics of Jewish observance and belief.

The sources on anusim present an interesting variety of approaches concerning the requirement of education and *kabbalat mitzvah*. The Ashkenazic sources are silent as to the requirement for education, but universally require *kabbalat mitzvah*. But the Sephardic sources explicitly state that neither education or *kabbalat mitzvah* is necessary. In the words of Solomon ben Simon Duran:

"Since it is clear that these (anusim) are not to be considered proselytes, we do not need therefore to enumerate to them all the commandments and their punishments (as must be done to a gentile who wished to become a proselyte). This is obvious, since, if you were to say to him that (as you might with a gentile candidate for conversion), should he (the anusim) not wish to accept the commandments, we would dismiss him and he would be free to them as if he were a gentile - God forbid that this should even come to mind. Because he is already in duty bound to fulfill them just as we are."

Duran explains that education and acceptance of the *miztvot* are unnecessary because the anus is, in his words, already part of the household of Israel.

Following the teaching of the *mitzvot*, the next step in the process listed by Karo is *tevilah*, immersion in the *mikvah*. Traditionally the proselyte immerses himself or herself once, then recites the appropriate *berachot* (blessings) and then immerses him or herself once or twice more. Ashkenazic sources

all require a that a returning anus undergo *tevilah*. Sephardic sources from the Rambam on hold that immersion is unnecessary. Duran states, "Since he (the returning Anus) is an Israelite, he does not need the ritual bath."

The final stage of conversion mentioned by the *Shulchan Aruch* as part of conversion is *milah*, circumcision. The circumcision of a proselyte is to be accompanied by the *beracha* - *Baruch atah Adonai Elohainu*

melech ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu lamul et gerim. (Blessed are You, Lord our God, king of the universe, who has made us holy with mitzvot, and commanded us concerning the circumcision of proselytes.) Karo adds that if the candidate is already circumcised then the *hatafat dam brit* must be performed.

Brit Milah literally is translated as sign of the covenant, and is a *mizvah* which is incumbent on all male Jews. Therefore all of the sources require that returning anusim be circumcised, or undergo *hatafat dam brit*. Most of the sources are silent on the wording of the *beracha*, but Duran states that the same *berachot* used for male Jewish children at their *brit milah* on the eighth day should be used for returning anusim. These are *Baruch atah Adonai Elohainu melech ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu al hamilah*. (Blessed are You, Lord our God, king of the universe, who has made us holy with mitzvot, and commanded us concerning the circumcision), preceding the circumcision, and *Baruch atah Adonai Elohainu melech ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu lahaknisu b'vrito shel Avraham Avinu* (Blessed are You, Lord our God, king of the universe, who has made us holy with mitzvot, and commanded us to bring him (the anus) into the covenant of Abraham our father). While circumcision is required both for the proselyte and for the anus, and indeed for

The question that we address is "are returning anusim required to undergo the rituals of conversion before they are permitted to participate fully as part of the mainstream Jewish community?"

any male Jew who has not been circumcised, the wording of the *beracha* is again an indication of the anus' full status as a member of the Jewish people.

Two Final Questions: Sincerity and Descent

There are two final questions which must be addressed. Should we be concerned with the sincerity of the initial conversion to Catholicism by the ancestor of the anus in Fourteenth or Fifteenth Century Spain, and should we accept only those anusim who can demonstrate matrilineal descent going back to ... I guess to *Moshe Rabeynu*.

Early Sephardic authorities, such as the Rivash, Rabbi Isaac ben Shesht, required that careful checks should be made of returning anusim (Resp. 11). They believed that only those who were converted forcibly, and who never embraced Christianity with any degree of sincerity should be accepted back into the Jewish fold. Shashet states that there are two types of anusim, "those who have chosen conversion, and have given up the yoke of Torah, and cut off the chains of the Torah from themselves, and of their own will they are following the ways of idolaters and transgressing all the *mitzvot* of the Torah." and "those who would have left Spain, but were unable to do so...and are careful not to defile themselves with the impurity of sins, except in times and places of danger." The first group was in effect no longer part of the Jewish people and its members were ineligible as witnesses, while the second group remained Jews and were kosher as witnesses.

The Rivash's responsa only dealt with those people who made the initial choices concerning conversion. It did not deal with their children. Later Sephardic rabbinic authorities addressed the descendants of these anusim, and did not make any distinction between the Rivash's two groups, since even the children of those anusim that fell in the first group bore no responsibility for the decisions of their parents. Sadaya Ibn Danan and other Sephardic authorities equate the children as Jewish children raised by gentiles, therefore having no culpability for their practice of Christianity.

The answer to the second of these two questions is more complex. For more than two millennia Jews have traced religious/national identity through the matrilineal line. Yet, to require this of anusim, is essential a sign post saying no entry-at least without a full conversion in every sense of the word. The Sephardic responsa do provide, however, a means of creating a bypass. While Duran, in what otherwise is one of the most liberal of the Sephardic responsa, states that Anusim who can trace a maternal line should be accepted "to the end of all generations," Ibn Danan is much more liberal on this point. Danan states that "no special care should be taken in investigating the genealogy of the anusim, as to whether his or her mother was Jewish."

It should also be noted that nearly all the Sephardic responsa make it almost an obligation to welcome back the anusim. Duran states, "we must not terrify him or confuse him, but draw him to us with kindness, for he stands as we do under the oath taken at Sinai." Danan indeed captures modern feelings of anusim when he states, "If the marranos, his word, are to be considered gentiles and those who wish to return as proselytes, their desire to return to the fold will weaken...the marranos must be received not as strangers but as brethren. They should have the feeling that they are returning home...indeed when it comes to lineage all the people Israel are brethren. We are all sons of one father. The yoke of the law is still on their shoulders and can never be removed from them." Joseph Karo, in the *Bet Yosef* states that anusim "must not be discouraged in any way from returning to Judaism."

Some modern rabbis have required *kitubahs* or other documents as instruments of proof of the anusim's Jewish identity. It cannot be held in due conscience that those who maintain their identity orally and by acts should be punished where the written material was in the hands of the oppressor (e.g. the Spanish royal government or the Holy Office of the Inquisition). The irony in this case was that the oppressor was in charge of the records now required by some rabbis. Further, as Hordes points out, the very existence of these records is precarious, often vanished or destroyed over time.

The following extra *halakhic* factors must also be taken into account. The history of persecution and secrecy of the anusim over 600 years is becoming well known. The following therefore can clearly be demonstrated, 1) the anusim have been an identifiable though hidden segment of the Jewish community for more than half a millennium. 2) the anusim consider themselves part of the Jewish people despite the danger, and despite being cut off from the Jewish world. The anusim have also maintained a remarkable dedication to the teachings and rituals of the Jewish tradition as best they could despite the danger and isolation. And the often harsh response of the Jewish community is poor reward for such heroic survival in the face of persecution and fear and the test of time.

Based on the above discussion the following in my opinion should pertain.

Due to the special history of the anusim who have maintained their Jewish identity, beliefs and practices secretly and often to their peril, and since in the words of R. Solomon Duran, the anusim for all time are part of the Jewish people, no conversion ceremony is necessary, nor is it necessary to investigate the genealogy of the returning anusim to demonstrate a clear matrilineal line of descent. It is advisable however to provide and encourage ongoing adult education as we do for all Jews, so that the returning anusim can play a full and fulfilling role in synagogue life. It may also be useful to develop a ritual of return within the congregation as a form of celebration and formalization of the return.

Like all male Jews, those anusim who wish to return must be circumcised, or undergo *hatafat dam brit*, using the same blessings as are used for the *brit milah* on the eighth day following the birth of a Jewish male child.

It is an obligation on all Jews to reach out to our brothers and sisters from the anusim community to facilitate the return to the Jewish community of any who wish to return.

DAVID KUNIN is Rabbi of Temple Ohr Shalom in San Diego, a congregation with many crypto Jewish members. He was the local chair of our 2002 conference.

look at my fellow Portuguese with wonder and amazement. Now I can't be in Portugal or with Portuguese and not see the evidence of their Jewish heritage everywhere — in their mannerisms, superstitions, body language, words, family practices, their way of being in the world, personal philosophies, customs, and their stubborn propensity to debate. All of these practices and cultural effects have roots in their common Jewish ancestry.

For me, Judaism is a proud common history that influenced a culture, and, through adversity, forged a unique people who made tremendous contributions to the world and to *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. The Portuguese, my people, are as yet almost totally unaware of just how deeply linked they are to their Portuguese-Jewish roots and how their culture derives so directly from their Jewish heritage. Their continuing inability to embrace their inheritance is such a shame. But there are signs of hope that seem to be gaining momentum, including our ground breaking Jewish Heritage Conference Tour to Portugal in June (see Summer 2002 issue of *HaLapid*, page four). Since participating in the tour, I have spoken many times at synagogues about my discovery of my Portuguese-Jewish roots and what it has meant to me.

Vestiges of Jewish Family Practices

I speak about how, even in my own immediate family, these vestiges of Jewish family practices persist. They are small clues into the past but for most of us that is all we have. Just last week I discovered that my great-grandfather on my mother's side, João Baptista de Quintal, actually had two sons named Jacob and two sons named Benjamin (of twelve sons and one daughter, Ludvina - very Dutch). I asked my mother why that was, since I only knew about one great-great uncle Benjamin and one great-great uncle Jacob? She said it was because for generations her family had a "peculiar" tradition. As long as she could remember, they named their children after relatives who had died. So when their first son Jacob died in his first year of life, they named another son after him and the same with Benjamin. Even my middle name, Laurence, is named after my mother's brother, a pilot in WWII who died trying to making sure that a German tank did not overtake an American position.

Another touching remnant of our tradition is the fact that my grandmother on my father's side always baked braided Portuguese sweet bread on Friday mornings. It looked and tasted exactly like *challah* — the first time I saw *challah* I thought it was Portuguese sweet bread. As a kid, I could hardly wait for Fridays because we would stop at my grandmother's house after school and have toasted fresh Portuguese sweet bread with butter and dip it in hot chocolate. My brothers and I thought it was such a great treat. When I asked her

why she did that she said she did not know, but it made her feel good because that is what her mother and her mother's mother and all the women in her family did as far back as she could remember from the time she was a small girl.

An additional vestige is the tremendous focus in my family on the value of education. My brothers are all either very highly educated or own their own businesses. I am a college professor, former CEO, businessman and consultant and am blessed (or cursed, depending on one's perspective) with an intense curiosity about everything. The Jews in Portugal were instrumental in establishing one of the earliest known universities in Europe. They stressed education even at the smallest village levels. On our tour, we could see the symbol of a candle flame on the doorpost at the entry to their one room schools, indicating that education and the study of Torah brought light into the world.

It saddens me to see that most modern Portuguese don't see this link to their Jewish heritage, much less honor and cherish it for what it gave them, much of their cultural soul, the very essence of what it means to be Portuguese. My hope is that in some small way by participating in and supporting activities such as the Saudades website/listserv (www.saudade-sefarad.com), I can play a small role in helping modern Portuguese at least catch a glimpse of the magnificent tradition and heritage that was taken from them and how it has so influenced who they are to this very day. Since I have discovered my Jewish Portuguese roots, I feel so proud to be Jewish and to know that once, before the Inquisition, we were major contributors to the art, culture, business expansion, trading life, and the very heart of Portuguese society. *¡Va com Hashem!*

STEPHEN L. GOMES, PhD, addressed the 2002 SCJS Conference on this subject. He has also spoken about his return to Judaism before synagogue and cultural groups.

WEB SITES

SCJS Website: www.cryptojews.com

SCJS Home Page at Sephardic Connect:

<http://sephardicconnect.com/halapid/halapid.htm>

La Historia de Judeos en Mexico: <http://www.ort.org.mx/tribuna/meses/efemex1.html>

Inacio Steinhardt's Page: <http://www.geocities.com/Beithakfar/>

Benveniste's Page: <http://home.earthlink.net/~benven/>

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Saudades: <http://www.saudades.org/>