
Tudo se ilumina para
aquele que busca a
luz.
BEM-ROSH

HALAPID

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

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Issue 4

THE FORCED CONVERSION OF THE JEWS OF PORTUGAL 1497

October 1997 was the 500th anniversary of the forced conversion of the Jews of Portugal. A ceremony in remembrance of that tragedy was held at Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel in Los Angeles. Following is an edited version of an address given there by Arthur Benveniste, the editor of Halapid

Five years ago we commemorated the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. The founders of this temple and most of its members today are descendants of those Jews. The story of the Spanish Expulsion is well known. Not so well known is what happened five years later in the neighboring country of Portugal. It is to honor the memory of the victims of that event that we gather here tonight.

Of those Jews who chose to flee Spain in 1492, large numbers went to Morocco, Italy and to the Ottoman Empire. But, the greatest number, perhaps half of the total went to Portugal.

King João II, of Portugal, allowed them to enter. He was preparing for war against the Moors and he needed the taxes collected from these Jews to finance that war. He also was aware of the great talent of the Jews in many fields including the mechanics of arms making, which he hoped he would call upon and he did not want that talent to be available to the Moors.

But his welcome was not complete. Permanent residence was granted only to 630 wealthy families who were allowed to establish themselves in several parts of the country upon payment of 100 cruzados. A number of craftsmen, skilled in arms making, were also granted permanent residence.

Others were allowed to settle for only eight months upon payment of eight cruzados for each adult. The king then bound himself to provide shipping so that they could leave. One hundred thousand refugees may have entered under these conditions. At the end of eight months, however, little shipping was available and few could leave. Those left behind were declared forfeit of their liberty and were declared slaves of the king. In 1493, many Jewish children were torn from their parents and sent to the recently discovered island of São Tomé off the west coast of Africa;

In this year of 1493, ... the king gave to Alvaro de Caminha the Captaincy of the Island of São Tome of right and inheritance; and as for the Castilian Jews who had not left his kingdom within the assigned date, he ordered that, according to the condition upon their entry, all the boys, and young men and girls of the Jews be taken into captivity. After having them all turned into Christians, he sent them to the said island with Alvaro de Caminha, so that by being secluded, they would have reasons for being better Christians, and [the king] would have in this reason for the

island to be better populated, which, as a result, culminated in great growth.¹

In 1993 the descendants of those children, still living on São Tome, held ceremonies to commemorate that tragic event.

The son of King João II, Crown Prince Affonso, was married to Princess Isabel, the daughter of the Catholic Kings of Spain. One day Affonso went fishing. Later that day his body was found, drowned. It is not known if this was an accident or foul play. Princess Isabel, now a widow and still a very young woman, returned to Madrid.

In 1494 King João died. Next in line of succession to the throne was a cousin, Manoel.

The new king recognized that the Jewish slaves were guiltless and he restored them their liberty. He even refused a gift offered to him in gratitude. Was this because he was truly an enlightened monarch or because he hoped to win them over to Christianity? The status of the Jews of Portugal appeared to be improving and they must have felt secure to be ruled by such a seemingly merciful king. But, their good fortune did not last. Soon their lives were again in peril.

There was some dispute as to the legitimacy of Manoel's claim to the monarchy. He needed a way to solidify his position. His solution: marry Princess Isabel of Spain. A union with the widow of the late crown prince would not only give him a stronger claim to the throne, but also create a possible future union with Spain in which all of Iberia would be ruled by Manoel or one of his descendants.

He made an offer to Ferdinand and Isabella. Their answer: the marriage would be approved only if the Jews were expelled from Portugal.

Manoel was in a dilemma; he did not want to lose the wealth and skills of Jews and he feared that these skills would be used to the advantage of the Moors in the coming war. But, he felt that a marriage to Princess Isabel was necessary.

Finally, Isabel herself interceded; she announced that she would not accept the marriage unless the Jews were expelled. Manoel agreed to the terms. A marriage agreement was signed on November 30, 1496. Five days later, the king issued a decree banishing the Jews from the country. They were ordered to leave Portugal by October 1497.

Continued on page 9

HONOR OUR PORTUGUESE SEPHARDI ANCESTORS

by RUFINA BERNARDETTI DA SILVA MAUSENBAUM,

My father always called me by my first name, Rufina, the name of his mother, the one who had suffered so much humiliation and shame for keeping the “antepure” (Yom Kippur). She kept it by disappearing for a whole day and night by going into the fields so that she could fast, he was extremely proud of her because of her determination to maintain the religion of our ancestors against all odds. Rufina, he told me, meant Ruth and that she came from a very “good” family, meaning Jewish.

Growing up in South Africa, Rufina sounded very “foreign and so, outside my home, I was called by my second name, Bernardetti (Blessed) taken from an Italian source. Unhappily, I only looked up the meaning of that precious name, Rufina, after my father’s death.

A “foreigner,” a Portuguese immigrant to South Africa, he arrived in 1936 when anti-Semitism became another evil in Portugal. I wonder what would have happened had those thugs known that he was also Jewish? That incident, from so long ago, remains imprinted in my mind, shared only with my gentle and loving father. This episode was just another secret to add to the many other “family secrets” buried beneath the ashes of centuries of fear and shame. Was that one of the reasons he came to South Africa, so young, with no knowledge of English, very little formal education, to start a new life free of prejudice, once more to be open and proud of his Jewish Heritage? Did the lingering prejudice against the Crypto Jews in Portugal impel him to leave; and did his “foreignness” in South Africa prevent him from reverting back to Judaism? Sadly, I will never know the answer.

At that time, growing up in Cape Town, South Africa, I had often wondered why we never discussed these secret issues and practices openly. How naive I was, thinking as the young often do, to have all the answers; ready to “take on” the Jewish community, the Portuguese Government, in fact the whole world. Yet, when I converted to orthodox Judaism, I never mentioned our “family secrets,” sticking to the ever unmentioned rule of secrecy within our closed family circle.

Would anyone have believed me then, as even now, a most unlikely situation very few can comprehend. Would the Rabbis of the Beth Din (Jewish Judicial Council) have known about the Crypto-Jewish Phenomenon? I doubt it.

Today, so many years later, few are aware of the many Crypto Jewish and Marrano studies and Research conducted as more people are starting to question the past.

Universities around the world are researching this most unusual situation with whole departments devoted to the anusim (forced converts); Crypto-Jewish and Marrano history, culture and practices; why it should still be a part of peoples lives 150 years after the inquisition ended.

Concentrating on the Anusim of the Jewish Diaspora and hoping to understand the descendants of those persecuted ancestors with sensitivity and understanding.

Researches are helping to make sense of the lost past, full of shame and humiliation, which continues in the present;

being rejected by family and friends of the gentile community when one chooses to return to the religion of one’s ancestors; Judaism. Returnees then have to “prove” their claim to Judaism! The fear, justified or not, rests with what might happen if the “family secrets” were discovered. It continues with the secrecy being a part of the religion, transmitted through the ages along with the rituals and traditions that have caused such pain and complexity of identity, making it difficult for many of the descendants to acknowledge their Jewish past.

Upon my request to convert, it took a long time before I was accepted, which I believe is the norm. I was wanting to convert back to the religion of my ancestors by choice. At my first audience before the Beth Din in Cape Town, I was asked who my friends were, the names of people who knew me and with whom I associated among many other questions. It took another six to eight months before I was summoned back to appear before them once more. At this time I discovered that, in order to find out more about me, they had interviewed, the

people whose names I had given them
I wonder, would my anusim” heritage have been accepted and acted in my favor had they known about it? Who knew or cared of the suffering and

shame experienced by my Portuguese-Jewish ancestors, those wretched souls who had no choice were converted by force, their only choice being baptism or martyrdom.

We, the Diaspora Jews were still in shock after the Nazi holocaust, so I faced the Beth Din much like my ancestors had faced their inquisitors 500 years ago; fearful, anxious and intimidated. I remember sitting in the austere atmosphere, a young inexperienced girl, alone, facing a long table of stern looking rabbis who fired questions at me from across the divide; never knowing from which angle or which rabbi the next question would come. I was facing my personal inquisition.

I went to a predominantly Jewish day school in Cape Town. There I met and mixed with mostly Jewish children, often going to the synagogue with them. As I grew up I dated Jewish boys with my parents blessing.

It was a matter of pride in my family home where I was repeatedly told how “Jewish” I looked and behaved. and when we achieved any success, it was because my sisters and I were so “Jewish” (like my grandmother) We accepted this as it was meant, as a compliment.

A distinct memory from that period was that had we remained Catholic and in the “old country,” I, being the second daughter, would have become a nun, a protective scheme used by Crypto-Jewish families. Where I a son, I would have had to become a priest. In that way the family secret rituals would be relatively safe, as a priest I would then also have been the family confessor.

Paradoxically it was also a way to gain access to Hebrew books and studies. Going through the records of the Auto-da-Fé it explains why so many priest, monks and nuns were amongst the exposed Judaizers!

The marrying of first cousins was very common, another

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ancestors had faced their inquisitors 500
years ago; fearful, anxious and*

HONOUR OUR PORTUGUESE SEPHARDI ANCESTORS

way of keeping the secret rituals and religion safe and within the family. We were often described as coming from a “good” (Jewish) family. The “not so good” being of mixed affiliations and frowned on. I grew up on the old testament, a firm favorite in our home, and the love instilled in us for G-D, Israel and the Jewish Diaspora has a far deeper meaning now that I know more of the truth surrounding the mystery of my lost heritage. At the time my sisters and I accepted it as the norm for a “Christian” home because, although I was baptized in the Catholic Church, my parents became Protestants when I was four or five years old. Another fairly common practice amongst Crypto Jews on leaving Portugal at that time.

Today, older and wiser, I am accepted as a Jewess, having taken many years after my conversion to Orthodox

Judaism and yet often, thirty years later, I am still referred to as a “convert.” I realize that many people will never fully comprehend, not only my lost heritage and culture, but the phenomenon of the many anusim around the world. Although forced to convert, they managed at the risk of death, to

keep some vestiges of Judaism alive over the centuries. Living in the oldest country of Western Europe and, after hiding for five hundred years, they came to believe they were the only Jews left in the world. Having lived in the remotest areas, seeking refuge and anonymity in little villages throughout Portugal and the Islands (Madeira and the Azores).

For me, it is a miracle that Portuguese Judaism survived at all, and believe the time has come to honor and acknowledge our ancestors who lived under such adversity. What I do know and have experienced most of my life, is what it feels like “not to belong.” Born in South Africa, I was neither Africa, English, Afrikaans, Jewish, nor Portuguese. Having known the rejection, shame and humiliation that continue with the descendants of those brave souls that have gone before, I want to make a difference by breaking that cycle, by talking about the “secrets” and causing an awareness among the Portuguese and Jewish communities.

Our Portuguese Jewish ancestors, unlike anywhere else in the world, had no choice. Unlike Spain, where many converted or were forced to leave, the Portuguese Jews were not allowed to leave when Portugal closed the exit doors in 1497. The ones who managed to escape during those three

hundred turbulent years of the inquisition, were the wealthy who paid the bribes for permission and documents needed to leave Portugal. They left as “Conversos” or “New-Christians” and once safely settled where they were free to practice their religion, did so by reverting back to Judaism. The rest of the anusim left behind with no means of escape, continued living lives of fear, suffering the gruesome existence of deceit, shame and death.

I am extremely proud to be a descendant of a very special and tenacious people who managed against all odds to keep their religion alive. The very obvious “religious” names found among the Portuguese were used to prove their genuineness as “super” Catholics, and testimony to the stressful conditions they endured.

This chapter of Jewish history must not be forgotten, but it must be accepted as part of our tragic past, until this time the shame and humiliation will remain..... Until Portuguese gentiles accept our combined and forever intertwined history with pride, this shared history will continue to be a blot on the purity of their genealogy and shameful for many. The

Portuguese, mostly Roman Catholic, are estimated to be 80% of Jewish admixture. We, the Sephardi Jews and the Portuguese Catholics, share the same forefathers, the noble house of Israel, King David, King Solomon..... How proud our gentle family of Portugal should be of such history and lineage. Together, let us accept our heritage with pride..... for we are one.

I am still referred to as a “convert.” I realize that many people will never fully comprehend, not only my lost heritage and culture, but the phenomenon of the many anusim around the world.

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Plan to join us at our annual conference in El Paso, Texas, August 1998 - Details in the next Halapid

THE 401ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF LOUIS DE CARVAJAL

BY Schulamith C. Halevy

by Schulamith Chava Halevy

Dec. 8, 1997

Dear Friends, today is the 401st anniversary of the martyrdom of Luis de Carvajal el mozo, according to the Gregorian calendar (which was not used at the time in Mexico). Martyrdom comes from the Greek and means "to bear witness", and by remembering and reminding, we extend his martyrdom into our time. May his memory be blessed.

Attached are part of a lecture I once gave and a poem I wrote in his memory.

Schulamith C. Halevy

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Luis de Carvajal el Mozo, was the nephew, namesake and heir designate of the first Governor of Nuevo Reino de Leon. Possibly the largest land tract granted anyone by Spain, it stretched from eastern Mexico, through the Southwest of the US. When Luis learned that he was a Jew, the impact on him was tremendous. A man of culture, of letters and verse who knew how to play the harp and sing, knew several languages and possessed a great spirit, Luis was unable or unwilling to conceal his faith. He went about convincing anyone he could, to observe the "law of Moses"; prayers attributed to him were recited to Inquisitors a century after his death by subsequent victims. He was arrested, and in the cells of the Inquisitions converted his cell mate, a monk, to Judaism. There he also changed his name to Joseph Lumbroso: Joseph after the biblical dreamer, since Luis also had inspired dreams, and Lumbroso meaning the Enlightened. After his first arrest, torture and incarceration -- knowing full well that a second arrest meant the stake -- he did not relent. Joseph-Luis was denounced again by a would be proselyte. His second arrest was marked with religious pride and steadfastness that left its mark even on his tormentors. He attempted suicide, hoping thus to escape denouncing others under torture. He debated those sent to convert him with eloquence, knowledge and spirit. Seymour Liebman, in his seminal book *The Jews of New Spain*, translated the words of Padre Contreras who walked Luis to his fate: "He was always such a good Jew and he reconciled his understanding, which was very profound and sensitive, with his highly inspired Divine determination to defend the Law of God -- the Mosaic -- and to fight for it. I have no doubt that if he had lived before the Incarnation of our Redeemer, he would have been a heroic Hebrew and his name would have been as famous in the Bible as are the names of those who died in the defense of their law when it was necessary."

El Lumbroso

Your dues support the publication of Halapad and the work of The Society for Crypto Judaic Studies. Have you sent in

That night I was so radiant
You could barely see me for my light.

Now in the incandescent dawn
I am paraded before your helpless eye.
The stakes are high
enough for me to see my angel cry.
Padre Contreras, frail and vulnerable
Murmurs why?
Listen! the flames' voice is cracking
Hear them sigh...
My flesh imploding in the fire
Together we witness it reduce to ashes
Together watch it fly.

You and I,
How we danced ever closer to the flames
--to my flesh, to its demise
Your old soul knows I could not die,
but your mind is young,
Cannot yet read the milestones of the sky.

Cloistered in my afterglow
Shawled in me
You stood in prayer
That the light I have become
Be bestowed
Upon you.

My apparition soars
Carried in your dreams.
Four hundred years in the abyss
Cannot erase the seal our memories call
I can still embrace can enter you
Breathe my eternity into your soul.

JOIN US AT OUR 1998 CONFERENCE
AT THE HISTORIC EL CAMINO REAL HOTEL
IN EL PASO
AUGUST 2 - 4, 1998

UPCOMING EVENTS

LOS ANGELES

Thursday, February 5, 1998

IVRI/NASAWI Presents:

EXILE, PLACE AND PASSAGE: The Philosophy and Kabbalah of Jewish Identity Today

This Symposium Will Examine the Following Topics and Invite Your Participation: Diaspora vs Israel : The Jewish Question; Jew/Ivri and the Road of Passage; Sephardi/Mizrahi/Ashkenazi/Anousi, The Four Worlds of Jewish Diversity; Role Models for Today; Renewing Jewish Faith

Dr Shmuel Trigano: Chair of the Sociology Department, Université de Paris X, Nanterre; Founder and Director of *Pardès*, a journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Scholar and Philosopher

Rabbi Stephen Robbins: N'vay Shalom; Ordination, MAHL, Hebrew Union College -Jewish Institute of Religion. Scholar and Kabbalist

Dr Savina Teubal: Author of *Sarah the Priestess, The First Matriarch*; PhD in Near Eastern Studies, international College. Scholar and Feminist

Dr Moshe Lazar: Professor of Drama and Comparative Literature, University of Southern California; PhD in French Literature, The Sorbonne. Scholar of Sephardic history and culture join us for a passionate inquiry on the nature of " Jewish identity today, moderated by Jordan Elgrably, founder of the National Association of Sephardic Artists, Writers & Intellectuals (NASAWI)

Gindi Auditorium, at the University of Judaism, 15600 Mulholland Dr Los Angeles, 90077. Admission \$12, \$10 members.

DENVER

MARCH 8-10, 1998

" AVODA AND IBADA: LITURGY AND RITUAL IN ISLAMIC AND JUDAIC TRADITIONS"

Almost 40 presenters including:

Yitzhak Kerem: Aristotle University, Thessalonika. Muslim and Turkish Influences on Jewish Prayer and Ritual

Daniel J. Lasker, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Law, Morality, Cloning and the Slippery Slope

Gloria Mound,: Customs, Praying and Holy Day Ritual Amongst Marrano-Anusim Jews.

The Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies was founded in 1981 by the Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Denver to provide a scholarly forum, free from political concerns, for the academic study of interaction between Islamic and Jewish civilizations in areas such as history, religion, law, philosophy, language, literature and the arts.

Registration Fee: \$65 each

For full details contact: Seth Ward, Conference Chair, Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies, University of Denver, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208, U.S.A. E-Mail: sward@du.edu Fax: (303) 871-3037; Phone: (303) 871-3012.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Gloria Trujillo

The Society is looking forward to 1998, which already promises to be a very exciting year, and we will try to keep you informed well in advance of upcoming events. We hope that you will make plans to join us in El Paso this summer for our conference which is going to be held at the historic Camino Real Hotel. The conference begins Sunday evening, August 2, and ends Tuesday evening, August 4, 1998.

We also have an open call for papers for the conference, and there is still time to submit your proposals for papers, panels, or discussion groups. Please mail them to the newsletter address, 333 Washington Blvd. #336, Marina del Rey, CA 90292, or fax them to Dr. Stanley Hordes at 505/983-1509.

An exciting event that's been in the works is a one day Anousi Symposium which is going to be held in Simi Valley later this year. We have good news, the program has been tentatively expanded into a three day weekend event in early October. Jordan Elgrably, the President and Founder of Irvi-Nasawi, is one of the contributors to this issue, and look for more on the symposium, "Echoes of Identity" Anousi '98 Festival of Hidden Judaism" in the newsletter.

Don't forget what time it is again-it's membership renewal time! Those of us on the Board appreciate the support that we have received from everyone, and we ask everyone to renew their memberships for 1998. We have included the names of the newest members who have recently joined the society, and you will find them in the newsletter.

If it's been awhile since you have read our Statement of Purpose which is on the last page of the newsletter, please take some time to look at it again. It clearly states the purposes of the Society, as the fostering of research, and networking of information and ideas. Membership has always been open to anyone who is interested in this immensely fascinating and perplexing area.

We have been trying to obtain the masters, and/or copies of the videos that Dr. Mary Hazlett taped at the Albuquerque Conference, and we have been unsuccessful in contacting her. Our latest letter to Dr. Hazlett was returned with no forwarding address, and she also has not responded to an earlier letter, and several phone calls made to her office in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Thanks, and please remember to renew your 1998 membership!

SUNSET MAGAZINE

Last month's edition of SUNSET MAGAZINE had an article about the Crypto Jews of New Mexico. It mentions the SCJS and includes an interview with Stan Hordes.

THE MAURICE AMADO FOUNDATION IN LOS ANGELES ENDOWS IVRI-NASAWI WITH A GRANT TO UNDERWRITE THE FIRST-EVER
NATIONAL SEPHARDI

In a campaign to encourage awareness of Sephardic Jewish culture and support the production of Sephardic American literature, Ivri-Nasawi, a Los Angeles-based non-profit, devised the 1st Annual National Sephardi Literary Contest (NSLC). The Contest will award over \$5,000 in cash prizes, including \$1000 for First Place Fiction, in March 1998, and has been made possible by a generous grant from the Maurice Amado Foundation. The NSLC is cosponsored by the Sephardic Educational Center (SEC).

The NSLC entry deadline is January 31, 1998 and accepts submissions in Fiction, Poetry and Non-Fiction categories. All Jewish writers are invited to enter with original, previously unpublished work. An affinity for Sephardi, Mizrahi and/or Anousi (Crypto-Jewish) experience is desirable. The Contest is juried by several accomplished authors, including Ammiel Alcalay, Ruth Behar, Gina Barkhordar Nahai, Jordan Elgrably, Diane Matza, Victor Perera, David Shasha and Victor di Suvero.

1st, 2nd, 3rd Place and Honorable Mention prizes will be awarded in each of the categories, and in March 1998 finalists will be called to read their work aloud in Los Angeles and New York. All First Place winners will have their work published in IVRI magazine, forthcoming in 1998. All finalists will receive a complementary 1-year membership to both the National Association of Sephardic Artists, Writers & Intellectuals (NASAWI) and the SEC.

For further information and interviews contact Ivri-Nasawi at (213) 650-3157.

**STANLEY HORDES TO LEAD TOUR OF
"JEWISH SPAIN/PORTUGAL" IN JUNE**

Are you interested in meeting one-time Crypto-Jews who have come back to their Jewish ancestors' roots? How about research in some of the archives of Spain or Portugal? A guided tour to see "Jewish Spain and Portugal" will be led by Dr. Stanley Hordes of the University of New Mexico, June 21-July 1, 1998. Sponsored by the University of Judaism, this tour will visit Guarda, Tomar and Belmonte in northern Portugal, as well as Lisbon, Sevilla, Cordoba, Granada, Toledo and Madrid. Stanley will lead a 5-day optional extension to Barcelona and Gerona following the basic tour, July 1-5. For a brochure, call Freedman Habush Associates: (818) 994-0213 and/or join us for a meeting about this tour, Sunday, February 1, 4 PM, at the University of Judaism campus in Los Angeles (Mulholland Drive just east of the San Diego Freeway).

The University of Judaism is also organizing an overnigher to visit the Jews or Tijuana and San Diego, May 24-25 and a tour of Jewish Italy

**Echoes of Identity: Anousi '98, Festival
of Hidden Judaism**

by Jordan Elgrably

To the outsider-to the Gentile-the mere mention of "hidden" or "crypto" Judaism must raise an eyebrow. "Hidden" Judaism sounds like a pleonasm, because Jewish identity or Jewish-being is already cloaked in sufficient mystery: Are the Jews a people united first and foremost by religion, by ethnicity or by a common culture? How do you explain the mystical spark of Jewish identity? As the joke goes, ask three Jews the question and you'll get five answers. On the other hand, ask a Jew about hidden or Crypto-Judaism and you may get no answer at all.

For the Jew-by-birth, who is in fact a Jew-not-by-choice, those who unearth Jewish roots which are in some cases five hundred years old and claim themselves to be members of the tribe pose a spiritual and intellectual challenge-how do you become a Jew again after a long history of practicing Christianity? Aren't the connections to your Jewish ancestors distant and ephemeral? What is it exactly that causes you to shake up your entire way of being, endangering long-standing relationships with family and friends, to choose Judaism?

What we need here is something akin to Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* to explain the mysteries of Crypto-Jewish identity. In truth, many of us take our Jewishness for granted, yet there are hundreds, perhaps thousands of Hispanic descendants of Sephardim who cannot afford to-the ghost of the Inquisition and the terrible autos-de-fé are atavisms still able to influence behavior today. As Isabelle Medina Sandoval, an Anousi woman of the Southwest, has noted, "Over five hundred years of hiding has altered the psyche and the totality of a modern Anousi descendent."¹ Despite a history of disconnection and alienation from Jewish identity, Sandoval insists that she does not feel herself to be a complete stranger to Judaism. "I do not view my Judaic journey as a conversion," she writes; "it is a return to my faith."²

But the long arm of the Inquisition, which successfully persecuted Jews in Europe and the Americas for more than 300 years (until the 19th century in some areas), has left a troubled legacy. Hiding one's roots and traditions has created specific behavior patterns for the Anousim. Sandoval notes that, "The Anousi mind is most complex; normal thought patterns become more intricate and weave a maizeland of unspoken words."³ Whether spoken or withheld, language, indeed, is always at the heart of hidden Judaism. In *Spinoza and Other Heretics*⁴, Yirmiyahu Yovel elaborates a theory of the mascaroso, or masked Jew. "[L]anguage becomes a mask. Even when speech is true it is false, or at least misleading, since it does not express a subjective truth but more often its opposite, or its complete absence." Yovel insists that Marranos are "locked in double-speak and dissimulation."⁵

In a new anthology just out from Columbia University Press⁶, Thomas Glick likewise examines the acculturation of Jews and conversos and acknowledges in Marranos all the traits of the split personality-of the Spaniard existing between Jewish and Christian cultures. Glick uses the term "cultural commuting" to discuss how Jews and former Jews glide between worlds : Jono Batista was born a Christian in Lisbon, circumcised in Flanders, and a Jew in Salonika; once baptized in Rome he returned to Portugal, then went to Safed where he was a Jew and briefly a Muslim, and finally ended his life as a Christian in Venice. Enrique Nuñez (known as Righetto Marrano) was another Portuguese New Christian who lived as a Christian in

Florence and Jew in Venice. The novelist Antonio Enriquez Gomez was a Catholic in Madrid, identified with the Jewish community in Bordeaux and Rouen, and then returned to Seville where he lived as a Catholic under an assumed name and witnessed his own burning, in effigy. The writer Miguel de Barrios was born in Montilla, circumcised in Livorno, and lived as a Jew in Amsterdam...Captain Estevan de Ares de Fonseca...was arrested by the Inquisition to which he confessed his condition (to save his life he said), went to Bordeaux and then to Amsterdam where he was circumcised, and then continued on to the East-Livorno, Venice, and Salonika where he displayed an openly Jewish identity. He subsequently went to Rouen and became a Catholic.⁷

As Glick concludes, "it was a widespread marrano mode to be ambivalent about ethnic identity."⁸

This ambivalence, we can have no doubt, arose largely out of fear. While the Inquisition was still in effect, that fear was a bodily fear of persecution and threat of death. Today the fear among hidden Jews results from having experienced intolerance and rejection from both Jews and other Hispanics, whose own notions of self-identity are necessarily challenged by these outward Catholics now claiming Sephardic ancestry and belief systems.

Isabelle Medina Sandoval has explained that many Anousim tend to network with each other, while displaying distrust of non-Anousim. "We fear rejection and we share our previous pain of having been mistreated by some Jewish professionals," she writes⁹. When one reads these lines, one cannot help but hear the echo of Jews in mainstream societies, in Europe and the Americas, who likewise fear rejection from the Christian majority. This is all the more laden with irony when you recall the ancient Jewish commandment: "You shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were a stranger in Egypt, and you know the heart of the stranger."

Many a Jew-not-by-choice feels ill at ease with the Crypto-Jew, I surmise, because the latter in her/his "cultural commuting" is a stark reminder of the former's own tendency to assimilate into the dominant culture. In fact, the split personality of Marrano/Anousi identity-evidenced by verbal trickery and tactics of the chameleon-is very much a metaphor for Jewish behavior altogether. Aren't most of us possessed of a personality divided by multiple loyalties, and conflicting qualities? Yet, as Yovel notes of the Marrano condition, "this identity does not adhere to [the Anousi] simply or directly, for he must constantly struggle to engender and preserve it, overcoming the internal contradictions it entails. Hence he is doomed to a life of mental ferment and upheaval, to manifestations of doubt, and to a rupture with himself, his past, and his future-far more so than any member of a traditional society."¹⁰

According to my own understanding of Judaism itself, we have inherited a belief system in which, paradoxically, we are expected to manifest doubt in order to continually experience a process of growth and transformation-which in turn strengthens our faith. "Mental ferment and upheaval," therefore, is fundamentally necessary to Jewish-being.

In any event, who among us Jews-not-by-choice can claim, in this disturbed world (in the roar of tohu-bohu) to be the owners of an identity which is not

visited by doubt or fragmentation of any kind? Likewise, just as almost every Jewish person may identify with the mirrors and secrets that are the Anousi sleight of hand, so might many Gentiles empathize with today's Jewish person who experiences her/his multiplicity intensely-that is, as someone who exists between worlds and therefore in a no-man's-land. This existing between worlds that is common to more and more people wherever you go can be seen as a metaphor, too, for existing between earth and heaven, between secularism and faith, between our human societies and God. Being Jewish today, as always, is being a person in more than one world, and this is something Jews-not-by-choice share both with hidden Jews and with other cultural groups. We are, in other words, visited with a wonderful opportunity to create widespread entente. Yet the majority of Jews today, despite our unparalleled diversity (having established communities and a psychospiritual discourse in 100 countries and 70 languages) are not invariably endowed with what Emmanuel Kant like to call "enlarged mentality." We do not all seem to possess Kant's fluid ability to stand up in the mind of the Other and see life from the Other's vantage point. Too many Jews display hostility toward the Anousim, as if their conversion or return to Judaism presents a direct challenge. Are we forgetting, indeed, that we Jews "know the heart of the stranger"?

Again, as David Gitlitz has noted in *Secrecy and Deceit*, fear was the most common shared emotion among Marranos, and fear remains palpable among their descendants¹¹. Gitlitz harmonizes with Yovel when he writes that if hidden Jews were to survive, they had "to become adept at donning publicly acceptable masks...Each converso perched on his own shoulder and watched himself act. Each became at once the protagonist and author of his own fictionalized autobiography."¹²

Oddly, the necessity of hiding and dissimulating in hidden Jews puts one in mind of the self-deprecation and assimilationist humor of American Jewish stand-up comics; in this regard, then, the Anousi state of being ought not to be all that strange to anyone who grew up with Lenny Bruce and his neurotic disciples!

There is in hidden Judaism, too-in the process of discovering Sephardic ancestry and belief systems-another link from the distant past to the active present, an exciting link which has been noted by Yovel in Spinoza and recently emphasized by Thomas Glick. The very act of hiding, the actions of the mascaroso/a-the flight back and forth between Judaism and Christianity, between the Old World and the New World, between the various shards of the self-brought about a heightened creativity, because, as Glick writes, "insofar as they could not accommodate traditional cultural or ethnic structures marranos were harbingers and precursors of modernity."¹³

It is this creativity in the Anousim that will be of decided interest at a forthcoming event which will mark for the first time a collaboration between Ivri-Nasawi Jewish Multicultural Association, Brandeis-Bardin Institute, and the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies. "Anousi '98, Festival of Hidden Judaism" is tentatively scheduled to take place on the Brandeis-Bardin campus, in Simi Valley, California, on a weekend in October 1998. The festival will feature noted scholars of hidden Judaism such as Stanley Hordes, David Gitlitz and Schulamith Halevy as well as authors of popular Jewish works such as Victor Perera and Trudi Alexy. The event's sponsors also hope to invite such entertainers as Judy

Frankel, Stefani Valadez and Consuelo Flores, among others, to add to the festivities, and to curate an exhibit of fine art by Anousim. Additionally, there is some discussion of storytelling workshops with Anousim of the Southwest and a spiritual workshop led by a rabbi who has worked with Crypto-Jews returning to the faith.

The participants and conditions of "Anousi '98, Festival of Hidden Judaism" remain tentative, pending further planning as well as funding commitments, yet the growing scholarship in the field coupled with increasing popular awareness of the Anousim augers well not only for the individual Anousi, plagued by self-doubt and fear of rejection, but for all Jews who have yet to satisfactorily answer the question: Who am I?

Jordan Elgrably
Founder, Ivri-Nasawi
Los Angeles, 5758

1. Isabelle Medina Sandoval, "Abraham's Children of the Southwest", in Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review, Vol. 18, N1 1-2, 1996, page 80
2. Idem, page 80
3. Isabelle Medina Sandoval, private correspondence with the author
4. Spinoza and Other Heretics, The Marrano of Reason, Yirmiyahu Yovel (Princeton University Press, 1989)
5. Idem, page 112
6. Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World, 1391-1648, Edited by Benjamin R. Gampel (Columbia University Press, Nov. 1997)
7. Idem, "On Converso and Marrano Ethnicity", Thomas F. Glick, pp 72-73
8. Idem, page 73
9. Sandoval, in JFER, page 80
10. Yirmiyahu Yovel, page 49
11. Secrecy and Deceit, The Religion of the Crypto-Jews, David Gitlitz (Jewish Publication Society, 1996)
12. Idem, page 598
13. Glick, page 76

The roots of self are in the soul, while the many facets of personality remain largely external and ever-changing, like the petals of a rose. What then are we to make of our thorns?

-JE

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Society For Crypto Judaic Studies is soliciting papers to be delivered at our annual conference, August, 2nd through 4th, 1998 at the El Camino Real Hotel in El Paso. Please contact Gloria Trujillo or Stan Hordes.

AN ANONYMOUS LETTER Forwarded to us from Stan Hordes

Dec. 8, 1997

... I received this unsigned letter the other day. No return address, postmarked Albuquerque, with a Hanukkah postage stamp.

I suggest we run it in Ha Lapid, indicating its anonymous origins, and include a response concurring with its sentiment against promoting or encouraging visits to cemeteries, acknowledging that some mean-spirited folks out there might wish to deceive us, but making a strong statement that many of the anusim, indeed, know who they are, where they come from, etc. ...

Stan

28 NOV. 1997

Attn: Stanley Hordes, et al

I recently read where a company in Southern California is booking tours at \$920.00 a clip to New Mexico...taking the "rich" to trample on our ancestors' sacred graves. I find this to be reprehensible.

But let it be known to those "so called experts" that the new Mexico people are no fools---many are telling the researchers "what they want to know", in other words making fools out of them! My cousin for instance, told some ladies at a conference in Santa Fe that his grandfather told him he was a Jew. When I chided my cousin for his flagrant lie, he just laughed and said, "Hey, these people are looking for Jews, Let's not disappoint them."

I'm getting sick and tired of these so-called New Mexico/Colorado "Jews'" superior attitudes, looking down on us that won't buy the garbage. Please refer to a newsletter(The Society of Crypto Judaic-(Studies?)) In which a Mr. Acuña was featured...putting down the Catholic religion in a vicious manner. Also, adding that his daughter's claim to Judaism is the fact that she "doesn't eat cheeseburgers", give me a break already...my Jewish friends are laughing all the way to Synagogue.

Antonio Bernal (Guajolotl@aol.com) writes; "My grandmother used to put a candle in the window on Friday night, and my mother was anti-clerical, although her name was Maria. "All this makes me suspect a marrano connection.

"Her family arrived in Sonora, Mexico probably in the 16th Century from Medina del Campo, Spain. "A prominent family name is Manuel Bernal. Any ideas?"

THE FORCED CONVERSION OF THE JEWS OF PORTUGAL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Soon Manoel began to question his decision. He knew of the value of the Jews and may genuinely have felt he could convert them. He wanted to find some way to keep them in Portugal as Catholics. On the advice of the Apostate Levi ben Shem-tob he found a way to achieve this goal.

Friday March 19, 1497 (the first day of Passover) Jewish parents were ordered to take their children between the ages of four and fourteen to Lisbon. On arrival in the capital, they were told that their children would be taken from them and given to Catholic families to be raised as good Catholics.

At the appointed time, those children who were not presented voluntarily were seized by the officials and forced to the font. Scenes of indescribable horror were witnessed as they were torn away by the royal bailiffs. ... In many cases, parents smothered their offspring in their farewell embrace. In others, they threw them into wells in order to save them from the disgrace of apostasy, and then killed themselves. Sometimes, even old men were dragged to the churches and forcibly baptized by over-zealous fanatics, who were under the impression that a general conversion of all the Jews had been ordered. The desired effect of forcing the parents to accompany their children into baptism rather than lose them for good was achieved only on exceptionally rare occasions. In all other cases, the unwilling neophytes, some mere babies, were distributed throughout the country, as far as possible from home, to be brought up in Christian surroundings.

More than thirty years later, the terrible scenes still lived in the mind of the old Bishop Coutinho. "I saw many persons dragged by the hair to the font," he wrote. "Sometimes, I saw a father, his head covered in sign of grief and pain, lead his son to the font, protesting and calling God to witness that they wished to die together in the law of Moses. Yet more terrible things that were done with them did I witness, with my own eyes." The children of the Moslems, who were included in the edict of expulsion, were untouched. The authorities cynically confessed the reason. It was that there were lands in which the Crescent was supreme, and in which reprisals might be carried out!²

Meanwhile the final date for departure was arriving. At first the king gave the Jews three ports from which to leave. But soon he changed his mind and ordered them all to leave from Lisbon. In October 1497 some twenty thousand Jews from all parts of Portugal gathered in Lisbon where they were herded onto the courtyard of *Os Estãos*, a palace normally used for diplomatic receptions. Here they were harangued by priests and apostate Jews in an attempt to bring them to the baptismal font. Some succumbed. The rest were kept under guard until the time for their departure had elapsed. They were then informed that by their failure to leave they were now declared forfeit of their liberty and again were the king's slaves. More succumbed, others were dragged to the font by force. And the remainder? Holy water was sprinkled on them and they were declared to be Christians.

King Manoel then informed the Catholic Kings of Spain. 9

"There are no more Jews in Portugal"

1. Source: Pina, Rui de. *Chronica D'El Rei Dom João 11. Collecção de Livros Inéditos de História Portuguesa* (first published in Lisbon, 1792). As quoted in : Raphael, David *The Expulsion 1492 Chronicles*, Carmi House Press, North Hollywood, CA 1992

2. Roth Cecil: *A History of the Marranos*, Fifth Edition, Sepher-Hermon Press, Inc New York, 1992

...the unwilling neophytes, some mere babies, were distributed throughout the country, as far as possible from home, to be brought up in Christian surroundings.

FROM THE INTERNET

M. De Marco announces a new mailing list has been started for descendants of Anusim. The list will cover many topics of interest to people of Anusim ancestry or those investigating potential Jewish roots, such as genealogy, history, customs, personal stories, religion, conversion, and so on. There is also a Portuguese-language version of the list.

To subscribe, send email with your name and address to: anusim-owner@wesleyan.edu. October 7, 1997

THE FORWARD AT <http://www.forward.com/>, had an article entitled: "Crypto-Jews' Seek Lost Heritage as Academic Debate Rages" by Sarah Wildman

Read **HALAPID** online at: www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/8341/halapid.htm

OTHER WEB SITES

Sephard/Sefard www.orthohelp.com/geneal/seph_who.htm

IVRI/NASAWI www.ivri-nasawi.org

Sephardic Genealogy Sites: www.orthohelp.com/geneal/Sefardim.htm#TOC

Feb. 15 to 22 is **Jewish Web/Net Week** - www.jwww.org/

Home page of **Schulamith Halevy**

www.cs.huji.ac.il/~schalevy/

Kulanu <http://www.ubalt.edu/www/kulanu/>

Society Of Hispanic Historical and Ancestral Research
www.webcom.com/shharnet/welcome.html

In memory of the Judaizers of Yecla, victims of the Inquisition

Yecla is an average city in the northern part of the region of Murcia (Spain), famous for its wines and furniture. Its history begins in Roman times, but the subject we will deal with here is the history of its Judaizers (Crypto-Jews: Conversos who continued to observe the laws of the Jewish religion.)

The first case of a Crypto-Jew appears in 1595, when the Inquisition detains Melchor Fernández and his wife, who are condemned to three years in prison for "practicing the Law of Moses"; but it is only in 1618 that a small community of Crypto-Jews is revealed, when Antonia Blandoa is denounced by her servant, who tells the Inquisition that, "she washes on Fridays and lights candles and does not eat meat prohibited by Moses."

She is tortured and confesses that it was her mother that made her return to Judaism. Also denounced by an informant are Diego Alfonso and his wife, Blanca Rodríguez, who are detained and imprisoned. She manages to escape and flee, but is arrested later in Valencia, and is sent to Murcia. There she declares that she is 21 years old and "is Jewish," but that she did not know "it was a 'sin to be Jewish.'" Another denounced Crypto-Jew is Manuel Perez, who says he has been a Judaizer for seven years, and that Tomás de Blandoa has been Judaizing as well. The only denounced individual who managed to successfully escape was Anton Rodríguez "Zioche," who was never found again.

This small community had relations with the Jews of the neighboring city of Jumilla, many of whom were also arrested after the discovery of the Crypto-Jews of Yecla. The first to be denounced was Damien Rodríguez, who "fasted, lit candles, and did not want to travel about on Shabbat." Also detained was his wife Josefina Rodríguez, who declared it was her mother who "taught me the Jewish religion." The next victim was Leonor Enriquez, friend of the others and widow of the doctor Anton Morón, who declared, "I am a Jew and have practiced since I was 20 years old." Also denounced was Clara Méndez, who said, "I am 39 years old and my parents taught me the Law of Moses when I was 11 years old."

Apart from these individuals, 18 other Jews were denounced and tried, but the records of their proceedings no longer exist. In an auto-de-fé which took place in 1620 in Murcia, all were condemned to different punishments, such as confiscation of goods, scourging, life imprisonment, etc.

Translated by Michele Greene

(The transcripts of the quoted proceedings can be found in the Municipal Historical Archive of Yecla and are:

AHN.Inquis.leg. 2804, 2810, 2022, 35,37,88,89,102,351.)

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SANTANGEL 1998

I would like to invite you and your members to participate in our symposium, which now has its official title: SANTANGEL '98.

As I read the proceedings of your Conference in Denver, I can see that you and the members of the SCJS would make an important contribution to our international gathering; I would like to give you a voice in our proceedings. I would also like to have a fuller U.S. participation in SANTANGEL 1998. For example, I think that a panel of SCJS members discussing their Crypto-Judaic/Sephardic heritage in Southwestern United States would be a fascinating topic to explore.

The focus of SANTANGEL 1998 is the positive side of Sephardic culture and history. We are planning a celebration. I hope that your schedule, and that of members of the SCJS, allow us the pleasure and privilege of your company next August. Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours

Kathleen E. LeMieux
Coordinator
SANTANGEL 1998

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you in Order to inform you about the interridtional Congress on Luis de Santangel and his age that we are preparing.

Both the *Dominican University* and the Instituto Cervantes Chicago are interested in making Santangel better known in U.S. universities as well as among the general public.

We believe that this subject could be of interest to you and, therefore, it is our pleasure to invite you to participate in this important project.

The Dominican University and the Instituto Cervantes Chicago will jointly coordinate the organization of this Congress which will be held from August 23rd to 26th, 1998. The Congress' official title will be: Luis de Santangel: su vida, su epoca, su aportacion, su herencia (Luis de Santangel: his life, his era, his contribution, his legacy).

We hope that you will join us in participating in this important encounter for specialists.

If you need any additional information, do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,
Miguel Angel Martin

For information, contact;

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Waiting for the Arrived

In the nearly five years that I have been a member of the Society of Crypto-Judaic Studies, I have had the privilege of hearing many *anousim* tell their remarkable stories I have found these experiences to be both moving and inspiring. But at the same time, I have been troubled by the decision of many to postpone their return to Judaism openly. Often the stories conclude with an expression of intent by these *anousim* to await the confirmation of authenticity of their Jewish ancestry by the Jewish community. But for every year we wait to be recognized, we lose a year of Jewish life.

Many of these same *anousim* have already risked rejection when they endured the ethno-generated obstacles to "making it" in the predominantly Anglo society. Perhaps "making it" as a Jew in a predominantly Hispano-Christian society is perceived as even more perilous. For others the lingering guilt that our ancestors chose conversion and Crypto-Judaism over expulsion can be an equally heavy burden. So we wait in anticipation of a more auspicious time. But for every year we wait to be recognized, we lose a year of Jewish life.

It is my hope that these returning *anousim*, whose ancestors were snatched from our midst so long ago, will take the vital step back into their faith and reinvigorate our dwindling Sefardi community. Hundreds of thousands of liberated, formerly Soviet, Jews, have done as much for the Ashkenazi community by returning to Judaism; so too can the Iberian *anousim* enrich the Sefardim. But we will not get there by waiting for our Jewishness to be acknowledged with an invitation to Join the Jewish community.

First, we must recognize that our Jewish heritage is a possession stolen from us. The remembered vestiges of our faith that have been passed on to us from one generation to the next by heroic ancestors authenticate our right to be Jews. We need not await the validation of anyone. That there are preliminary processes, required by Jewish law, that we may be obligated to undergo as part of our return, is a given. At the same time, our right to reclaim our Jewish heritage must be beyond doubt.

We must learn and grow as Sefardi Jews by establishing our own minyanim (quorums for prayer) and eventually our own congregations, and by retaining Sefardi teachers to instruct us. This is precisely what our ancestors did when they returned to Judaism in Amsterdam and elsewhere--and it worked! Today our brother- and sister-*anousim* are doing the same thing in Portugal and Brazil in their hundreds, if not thousands.

When our ancestors lit their concealed Sabbath candles, continuing the practice of their faith despite fear of torture and death, they bequeathed to us the ultimate responsibility of maintaining that faith. If we do not take back the Sefardi heritage that was theirs, then ultimately, what did they do it all for?

There is no guarantee of what each of us will find at the other end of the road back to Judaism. Given time, I believe that most of us who have returned have found it to be a net-plus. Does the fear of the pain of our rejection by the Jewish community mask an even greater fear of venturing into the freedom of the unknown"

Five hundred years ago Judaism was torn away from our ancestors and thrown into the gutter of forgotten history where it has lain ever since. Now we stand on a roadside looking down at our past, like a fallen wallet, opened to our driver's It cense with our photo ID plainly visible. Are we going to pick it up, clean it off, and take back what is ours? Or are we going to wait until someone comes along, looks at the wallet, then at us and asks "Isn't that yours?"

Marginal Threads

On the fringe I wander
boundary of periphery
wondering just where I belong

Trailing Tarshish tzitzit translate
Oye Israel El Eterno en Nuestro
Dios El Eterno uno es

On the border I ponder
bound by jaded Jews judging my
Judaism juggling their own justice

Rachel's reaching rebozo renders
Hear O Israel Hashem is our God
Hashem the One and Only

Inside the tallith I have rights
Outside the rebozo
I have a right to return

On the outside looking in
on the inside looking out
to other Jews my soul is
in constant state of doubt

Insidious inside
let me in
Outrageous outside
let me out

One the edge I stand
now knowing why
I do not understand

Isabelle Medina Sandoval