



Joseph nannte seinen ersten Sohn Manasse; denn Gott, sprach er, hat mich vergessen lassen all mein Unglück und mein ganzes Vaterhaus. 1. Mose 41. 51

Staaten Mizoram u. Manipur im Nord-Osten-Indiens

Bnei Menasche (Söhne/Kinder Manasses)

R Ü C K K E H R aus I N D I E N

Geschichte – es gibt diverse Darstellungen, die oft auf mündlicher (z.T. auch schriftlicher) Überlieferung basieren und daher umstritten sind.

- Nordosten Indien und Burma: Volksstamm, die ihre Abstammung auf die „Verlorenen Stämme“ Israels zurückführen, die 732 v. Chr. von den Assyriern in die Region des heutigen Iran und Afghanistan ins Exil geführt wurden. Von dort reisten sie entlang der Seidenstraße nach Osten nach China, wo sie Teil der jüdischen Gemeinde in Kaifeng wurden. Von dort wanderten sie nach Süden und siedelten letztendlich in den indischen Staaten Mizoram und Manipur, die sich in einer isolierten Enklave zwischen Myanmar und Bangladesch befanden.
- Beibehaltung der biblischen Traditionen und Identität. Hielten den Schabbat und koschere Speisegesetze, feierten jüdische Feste und Opferrituale.

Timeline (Wikipedia)

- **1894:** Christian missionaries commence work among the tribal populations in the territories now known as Manipur and Mizoram. By the 1980s, almost all the population of Mizoram had accepted Christianity; In Manipur, around 30% (this being essentially the proportion of the tribal population of the state)
- **1951:** A tribal leader named Chhalianthanga had a dream in which his people returned to Israel, and shared it with his community, which led some members of the tribe to adopt Jewish traditions, combined with faith in Jesus as the Messiah.
- **1975:** Several hundred Bnei Menashe begin practicing Judaism rejecting faith in Jesus.
- **1979:** Amishav (Hebrew for "My People Return"), an Israeli organisation founded by Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail and dedicated to locating the lost tribes of Israel, heard about a group in India claiming descent from Israelites. The Rabbi traveled to India several times during the 1980s to investigate the claims. Convinced that the Bnei Menashe were indeed descendants of Israelites, he dedicated himself to converting them to Orthodox Judaism and facilitating their aliya with funds provided by benefactors such as the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, a US-Israeli organisation which raises funds from evangelical Christians for Jewish causes.
- **1998:** US-Israeli translator and New York Sun columnist Hillel Halkin travels to India with Rabbi Avichail to meet the Bnei Menashe and writes a widely-reviewed book about it entitled *Across The Sabbath River* (2002).
- **1994-2003:** with the help of Jewish organizations, 800 Bnei Menashe make Aliyah to Israel, most settle in Jewish settlements.

- **June 2003:** Interior Minister Avraham Poraz halted Bnei Menashe immigration to Israel in following charges by Ofir Pines-Paz (Minister of Science and Technology, 2006) that the Bnei Menashe are "being cynically exploited for political purposes" because they are being settled in the Gaza Strip Gush Katif settlements (evacuated two years later) and in the West Bank ("Judea and Samaria"). Rabbi Eliyahu Birnbaum, a rabbinical judge dealing with the conversion of Bnei Menashe, says that the Knesset Absorption Committee's decision is one based on "ignorance, racism, and unjustifiable hate". Rabbi Birnbaum says that the Bnei Menashe who move to Israel in fact suffer financially because their move is motivated by a desire to return to the Holy Land rather than material gain.
- Michael Freund believes that the Bnei Menashe could help with Israel's demographic problem saying: "I believe that groups like the Bnei Menashe constitute a large, untapped demographic and spiritual reservoir for Israel and the Jewish people."
- With the **March 2005** decision by Rabbi Amar, the immigration issue seems to have been rendered moot. The Bnei Menashe's Orthodox conversion would in the future be conducted in India, and they would be recognized as wholly Jewish prior to their arrival in Israel. However, this solution is short-lived because the government of India, under pressure from Mizo-Kuki churches, objects formally to the conversion of its citizens
- **2003-2004:** Controversial DNA tests
- **2003:** Israeli Interior Minister Avraham Poraz freezes their immigration indefinitely.
- **August 2004:** In response to the Israeli government decision to stop their immigration, Israeli Chief Sephardi Rabbi Shlomo Amar sends a rabbinical fact-finding committee to investigate the Jewish roots of the Bnei Menashe.
- **March 2005:** Historic decision is made by Israeli Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, announcing the state of Israel's recognition of the Bnei Menashe as part of the lost tribe of Menashe, and therefore they can immigrate to Israel under the **Law of Return**, but only after a complete Jewish conversion, because they have been separated from Judaism for millennia.
- **July 2005:** Bnei Menashe complete building a mikvah, a Jewish ritual bath, in Mizoram under the supervision of Israeli rabbis in order to begin the process of conversion to Judaism. Shortly after, a similar mikvah was built in Manipur. In mid-2005, with the help of Shavei Israel and the local council of Kiryat Arba, the Bnei Menashe opened its first community centre in the Israel.
- **August 2005:** 146 Bnei Menashe are forced to evacuate the Gaza Strip as part of Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan. When Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced his plan for the disengagement of Gush Katif and some Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (West Bank), the Bnei Menashe community were especially affected because many had decided to settle in these territories. Prior to Israel's subsequent withdrawal, the Bnei Menashe were the largest immigrant community in Gaza.
- **September 2005:** A beth din fully converts 700 Bnei Menashe to Judaism (219 from Mizoram). An estimated 9,000 people still await conversion.
- **November 2005:** Israel agrees to halt converting the Bnei Menashe after pressure from the Indian government. The entire rabbinical team is pulled out of the country.
- **November 2006:** 218 Bnei Menashe (first 100 from Mizoram) arrive in Israel and are resettled in Upper Nazareth and Karmiel. "And after what the North went through this summer during the Lebanon war, it is especially meaningful that the Bnei Menashe will help to strengthen and revitalize this part of Israel" (Freund).
- **November 2006:** In a Jerusalem Post article about an Indian historian's claims of finding a genetic link between his Northern Indian Pathan clan and the Lost Tribe of Ephraim, Hillel Halkin says that "there's no such thing as **Jewish DNA**. There is a [genetic] pattern which is very common in the Middle East, 40% of Jews worldwide have it and 60% do not have it. But many non-Jews and people in the Middle East have it also".
- **August 2007:** More than 200 Bnei Menashe make Aliyah and arrive in Israel
- **January 2009:** More than 200 Bnei Menashe make Aliyah.

- **January 2010:** The Israeli government announces that the remaining 7,200 can make Aliyah within a 1-2 year period after undergoing a conversion process in Nepal.
- **June 2012:** "The Bnei Menashe are a blessing to Israel and the Jewish people," Freund told the Jerusalem Post, "They work hard, support themselves and their families, serve in the IDF and raise beautiful Jewish children."
- **December, 2012:** According to the Associated Press (http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/A/AS_INDIA_ISRAEL_LOST_TRIBE?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT), "A group of 50 Jews said to descend from one of the 10 Lost Tribes prepared Thursday to emigrate to Israel from their village in northeastern India. The members of the Bnei Menashe community prayed in their local synagogue and then hugged their crying relatives before heading off to the airport in the Manipur state capital of Imphal, 55 kilometers (34 miles) away. ... An Israeli chief rabbi recognized them as a lost tribe in 2005 and about 1,700 moved to Israel before the Israeli government stopped giving them visas. The government recently reversed that policy. About 7,200 remain in India."

Aktuelle Situation

- **2005:** Anerkennung der jüdischen Wurzeln der Bnei Menashe durch den sephardischen Oberrabbiner Shlomo Amar, unter der Auflage, dass sie in Israel konvertieren, um als „volle Juden“ anerkannt zu werden. Eigentlich sollte die Konversion bereits in Indien stattfinden, dass die Alijah als „vollwertige Juden“ stattfindet, aber Indien ist gegen die Konvertierung seiner Bürger.
- Die Alijah der Bnei Menashe wird durch die Organisation Shavei Israel (Michael Freund), dass Zentren in Indien unterhält, durchgeführt
- **2007:** Shavei Israel brachte 230 Bnei Menashe nach Israel. Danach wurde die Alijah unter PM Olmert und Innenminister Meir Sheetrit aus innenpolitischen Gründen eingefroren.
- **2012:** Kabinettsentscheidung unter Netanjahu, die Einwanderung der Bnei Menashe aus Indien und Burma wieder aufzunehmen.
- Michael Freund, ehem. Berater von Netanjahu, hat über Jahre für die Alijah der Bnei Menashe Lobby-Arbeit geleistet, und erhielt im **Sommer 2012** die Genehmigung, die ersten 275 Bnei Menashe seit fünf Jahren nach Israel zu bringen.
- Shavei Israel plant die Errichtung eines privaten Absorptionszentrums für die Bnei Menashe. Es wurde erwartet, dass viele Bnei Menashe sich in Akko und Kirjat Malachi (zwischen Ashdod und Ashkelon) niederlassen.
- In den vergangenen 15 Jahren hat Shavei Israel 1.700 Bnei Menashe nach Israel gebracht, die sich überwiegend in Judäa und Samaria (z.B. 60 in Shavei Shomron, 160 in Kirjat Arba) und Gaza-Streifen (146 bis zum Abzug) niederließen.
- **Ca. 7.200 Auswanderungswillige sind noch in Indien und Burma.**
- **2012-2013:** Die neuerdings erste Gruppe von 274 Bnei Menashe kommen nun über mehrere Monate hinweg mit wöchentlichen Flügen von Indien über Taschkent nach Israel. Der erst Flug fand an Hl. Abend 2012 statt, der nächste Flug ist für den März 2013 geplant.
- **Januar 2013:** ICEJ sponsort einen Flug mit **Shavei Israel** und half 54 Bnei Menashe - 13 Familien, nach Israel zu kommen.

Die „Verlorenen Zehn Stämme“

Die zehn Stämme des Nordreiches Israel, die 720 v. Chr. nach Assyrien verschleppt wurden. Von 720 - 732 v.Chr. bestand Israel noch als Königreich unter den Assyryern fort. Der Stamm Simeon wurde wohl von Juda aufgekommen

- Verschiedene biblische Definitionen der zwölf Stämme – Söhnen Jakobs und nach Landverteilung (Levi fällt raus, dafür wird Joseph geteilt in Manasse und Efraim)
- Es gibt verschiedene Theorien wieviel von den zehn Stämmen tatsächlich zerstört wurden – mittelalterliche rabbinische Lehren stärkten die Idee der verlorenen Stämme.
- Biblische Berichte erzählen vom Exil (1. Könige 11,31-35; 2. Könige 16:9,15:29, 17:34, Buch Tobit), aber auch von Personen, die zu den zehn Stämmen gehören und nach dem Exil in Israel/Juda lebten (2. Chronik 15:9; 2. Chronik 30:1-11, Lukas 2:36).
- Others believe that the Lost Tribes simply merged with the local population. For instance, the *New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia* states "In historic fact, some members of the Ten Tribes remained in Palestine, where apart from the Samaritans some of their descendants long preserved their identity among the Jewish population, others were assimilated, while others were presumably absorbed by the last Judean exiles who in 597-586 BC were deported to Assyria...Unlike the Judeans of the southern Kingdom, who survived a similar fate 135 years later, they soon assimilated..."
- Prophetie für die Söhne Josephs: Hesekiel 37:16-17
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- Diverse Theorien, wer von den verlorenen Stämmen abstammt:
 - Amerika: nord- und südamerikanische und karibische Indianerstämme
 - Äthiopien: Beta Israel
 - Afrika: Yoruba / Nigeria: Igbo Juden
 - Jemen und Südafrika: Lamba
 - Persische Juden und bucharische Juden;
 - Afghanistan und Pakistan: Pashtunen
 - Indien: Bnei Menashe, Bene Efraim, Bene Israel, Kashmiri
 - China: Kaifeng Juden

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Hilfe durch Ebenezer Deutschland



2008 bekamen wir Kontakt zu den Bnei Manasse und wurden gebeten, ihnen eine Sidur (Gebetsbuch) mit Umschrift in ihre indische Sprache zu finanzieren.



1.000 Gebetsbücher wurden in Indien gedruckt und sind seitdem in der örtlichen Gemeinde in Gebrauch.