

Jdocu

From India to Canaan

A Photo Journey to the Jewish Community of India, Winter 2015

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The JDOCU photographers trip to India

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Nothing prepared me for my first trip to India, twenty years ago. I was attracted, body and soul, to meet this different culture. The glorious smells and tastes carried me like the wind to new places.

Twenty years later I'm back here, this time with the Jdocu Group. Along with them I focus on something that had escaped my eyes before, something unknown also to most Israelis who visit India in their search for freedom and light: The Jewish life, which has begun in India after the destruction of the First Temple, and continues to this day in cities and villages from northern India to its south.

In a country full of a dizzy abundance of colors, smells, crowds, and hundreds of millions of people on the move, a country in which the Jews were free of persecution and were integrated into their environment; in this country, the way to the Jews, with their unique customs, was the way home. Each home is unique – those of the Bnei Israel community in Mumbai, the Jews of Kochin, or the Baghdadi community in Kalkuta, with their adopted Imperial British culture.

For the Jews from India, the home is the safe haven. Those who left India continue to build and design their homes according to their traditions, thus preserving the culture they have brought with them from India.

Here and over there the camera focuses on the home, Indian Jewry's physical and spiritual living space. The photographs define those spaces, which display great pride in living in Israel but also deep longings to the country where their community has been born.

The journey to India was made possible by the JDC and its devoted representatives in India and Israel

