



MORE INDIANS OF MANASSEH TRIBE ARRIVE IN ISRAEL

Aug 25, 07. - 78 members of India's Bnei Menashe community entered Israel by bus from Jordan on Aug 23, and 40 more arrived at Ben-Gurion Airport on 24th, on an El Al flight from Mumbai.

The Bnei Menashe claim descent from the tribe of Manasseh, one of the ten tribes exiled from the Land of Israel by the Assyrian empire over 2,700 years ago. They reside primarily in the two Indian states of Mizoram and Manipur, along the border with Burma and Bangladesh.

The existence of the Bnei Menashe, known in India as the Manmassi tribe, was publicized in the Jewish world about 30 years ago. When it was observed that the tribe's members maintained certain ancient traditions unlike any observed in the Indian subcontinent, investigation revealed that the rituals were of Jewish origin.

Chief Sephardic Rabbi Shlomo Amar sent a delegation of two rabbinic judges to India about three years ago, to conduct a thorough investigation of the community and its origins. After a review of their findings, it was decided that the Bnei Menashe are in fact descendants of Israel and should be drawn closer to the Jewish people.

As the Bnei Menashe were separated from the mainstream of Judaism for so long, they are required to study Judaism and formerly convert. But as this is difficult in India, they are allowed to enter Israel on tourist visas and undergo the study and conversion to Judaism in Israel. Then they will receive permanent status as citizens.

In recent years alone, over 800 members of the community have made Aliyah, thanks largely to the efforts of *Shavei Israel*, a Jerusalem-based group that reaches out and assists "lost Jews" seeking to return to the Jewish people.

Shavei Israel locates and identifies long-lost Jewish communities. A total of more than 1,700 Bnei Menashe have immigrated to Israel and about 5,000 are still in India, waiting to come.

Rabbi Eliyahu Birnboim of *Shavei Israel* said that the Bnei Menashe have been keeping the Jewish mitzvot, or rules and commandments, for at least the last four decades. He also stressed that the immigrants were well off materially in India and came to Israel because of Zionism.

Source: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/123481>

YHWH has said: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east, and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 43:5-6)