*From the Author of*
RAM FAN BU and HEI LE ISRAEL

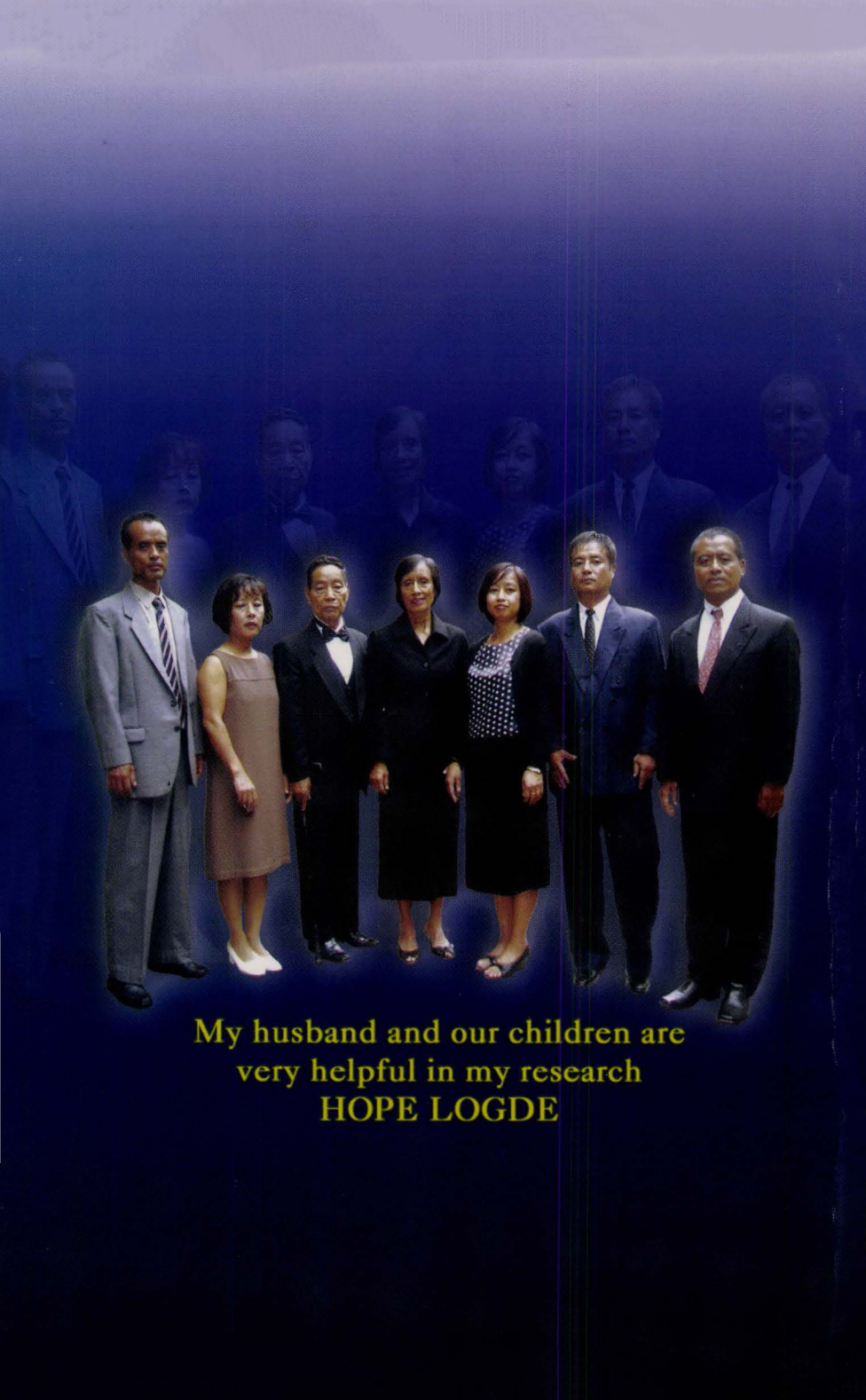
# ZAITHANCHHUNGI

# Israel-Mizo Identity



Representatives of Chief Rabbi
in Mizoram, 8th August 2004

Mizos (Chhinlung Tribes) Children of
Menashe are the descendants of Israel



My husband and our children are
very helpful in my research
HOPE LOGDE

# ISRAEL - MIZO IDENTITY

**By**

**Zaithanchhungi**
**Author of**
**Ram Fan Bu**
**and**
**Hei le Israel**

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# FORWORD

Till now, there is hardly any serious attempt made by scholars and researchers in Mizoram to make an exhaustive study on the origin of the Mizos. In the absence of written documents and records, various constraints have to be overcome in the process in order to arrive at an acceptable conclusion, which entail actual visit to our neighbouring countries in the East including China and minute study of all relevant records in these countries. Such an undertaking indeed, calls for single minded determination and enormous financial expenses. To my mind, it is, perhaps the latter that deters our researchers to venture into this neglected area of research.

It is in this backdrop that this interesting and thought provoking publication has to be appreciated. Having read this small book, Zaithanchhungi has brought us to the threshold of curiousity and unless further detailed research follows as suggested in the book, our curiosity will not be satisfied. The objective of such a research is not merely an attempt to connect our ancestry to the Jewish origin but to documentate Mizo origin to historically acceptable standard. If, as a result of careful research, our ancestry is confirmed to be of Jewish origin, I, for one believe that it will boost up our morale and pride as a race and help channelising our collective effort to turn Mizoram into a land flowing with milk and honey.

Researchers like Zaithanchhungi deserve constant encouragement and financial help not only from the Government source but from all quarters.

Dated Aizawl
The 4th August, 1990

**Rin Sanga, I.A.S.**
Home Commissioner,
Govt. of Mizoram,
Aizawl.

# PREFACE

Dr.Amnon Freidberg of Tel Aviv University said, "Zaii, why haven't your government traced your origin? Your culture and physical appearance bear undeniable evidence that you are not of Indian origin. Unless you undertake this task, no other race will do it for you. It is of great importance and value to know one's roots and origin".

Since I heard his advice, there came a great desire in my heart to trace out the 'Mizo Origin', and led me to the path of understanding the full value of having a land which we can call our homeland, "MIZORAM".

On 22nd May, 1983, I visited Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail, Chairman "AMISHAV" (an organisation that traces allegedly lost Tribes of Israel) in Jerusalem. I asked him, "Amongst our Mizo people there are some who claim that they belong to some of the lost tribes of the Jews? Viewing from your side, do you agree to this claim as concrete?".

The Rabbi replied, "You cannot say that the Mizos are not Israelites merely because of dissimilarity in facial bone structure. Thousands of years ago, your ancestors [illegible] and inter-married with the people of their surroundings. Hence, changes in colour of eyes and facial structure gradually occured". Showing me photographs of some Mizos, he said, "While some of these have distinctive Mongolian eyes, some do not; some noses

are flat and some are high". Turning towards me he pointed out, "Your nose too is high. So what's the difference between us? When you go back to Mizoram, do a 'Research' on your origin and prove that the Mizos belong to the lost Manasseh Tribe".

With my research paper, I, accompanied by Dr.Amnon Friedberg and Prof.Jehoshua Kugler, Scientists at Tel Aviv University, visited Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail on 17th, May, 1988. The Rabbi said to them, "We believed that Zaii's tribe is the lost tribe of Israel, 'The Manasseh Tribe". And to me he said, "Zaii, the most important mission in your life is to trace your 'Origin' in China".

Following the Rabbi's advice, I began to read certain books relating to the social life, customs and traditions, religious and ceremonial practices and superstitious beliefs of the Israelites and the Mizos. I was amazed to find out so many similarities in all these areas.

History reveals that the dispersed Jews settled in Central China. Historians traced the Mizos as far as Central China. On this basis, we may claim to be the lost tribe of Israel.

Mr.Nichiang, son of Dr.S.S.Kho, Chinese Dentist, who lived in Mizoram in his boyhood and later in China proper whom I met in Canada in 1979 had told me that one community in the interior of China are very similar to Mizos.

Rabbi Dr.J.Newman, Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv also read my research paper and he was impressed by

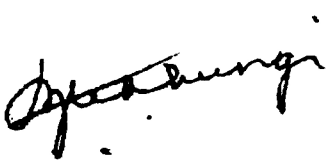
the similarities of Israel and Mizo. He also encouraged me to go deeper in the research work for more scientific proofs.

As advised by Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail, I feel that it is imperative to trace the origin of the Mizos in Burma, Thailand and China. I highly appreciate this advice and encouragement and I would like to make a success of this endeavour.

Owing to lack of funds, I cannot undertake this tremendous but valuable task.

So I need the financial help of the Government or well-wishers to carry on this work.

*Oh, surpassing love of the Lord*
*Limitless in bounty;*
*To thousands and thousands he gave*
*And now he gives to me!*



Dated Aizawl,
The 17th, July, 1991

**(ZAITHANCHHUNGI)**
'Hope Lodge'
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# INTRODUCTION

Mizoram is situated in the extreme eastern corner of India. It has international borders on its three sides - the east and the south are bounded by Burma, and the west by Bangladesh.

Mizoram is known as the Mizo Hills or Lushai Hills, and Mizos are commonly known as Lushais by non Mizos.

These hills were brought under one administrative district called Lushai Hills district within British India in 1891. As Lushai is only one tribe belonging to the group of the Mizo tribes which inhabit these hills, the name of the district was changed to Mizo District in 1954. When the north-eastern region of the country was reorganised in 1972, the Mizo District was made a Union Territory called 'MIZORAM' meaning the land of the Mizos (now Mizoram is a State). Again, recently, certain changes have been made in the spellings of names of some places. Thus 'AIJAL' capital of Mizoram is now spelled as 'AIZAWL' and Lungleh as Lunglei.

Mizoram has an area of 21,087 square kilometres and has mostly a hilly terrain; the ranges have an average height of 900 metres and run in north-south direction interspersed by deep gorges in which the rivers flow from the high hills into the Bay of Bengal in the south. There are inumerable rivers, streams, brooks and waterfalls which flow to the brim in the monsoon.

Mizoram is one of the most sparsely populated areas in India. The total population as per the 1981 census is 4,93,757. The literacy rate is very high among the Mizos, which is surpassed in India only by Chandigarh, Kerala and Delhi. In 2001 Census the literacy rate is 88.8% and stands 2nd highest in India. Its population is 8,88,573. There is an elite class among the Mizos-the highly educated, affluent and westernised section-which has been the source of alert and intelligent political and church leaders, high civil and military officers and astute businessmen and traders.

The Mizos constitute a dynamic and fast-developing society. The transformation of the tribal society into an efficient system attuned to the modern requirements is the contribution of administration of the hills, first by the British and then, by the national government. Hence the history of administration of these hills is a fascinating study not only of political and administrative significance but also of human interest. The meaning and content of the life of the tribesmen got inextricably associated with the goals and the policies of administration.

The first British Expeditionary Forces went into the Lushai Hills in December, 1844. This was in retaliation of a Lushai raid in British territory. After this raid the British Government sent punitive expedition inside the Lushai Hills. It was commanded by Lt.Col. Lister Mackenzie quoted from Lister's report and said :

*"The Lushais are a very powerful tribe under the government of six sirdars, or whom one is the acknow-ledged chief. They all have their separate cantonment with a number of dependent villages attached".*

An expedition was sent again from Cachar into the Lushai Hills under Major Stephenson for punishment of the offending Lushai chiefs.

One of the reasons why the Lushais could not be easily brought under control was the fact that they were better armed than most other north-eastern tribes. They possessed a considerable number of flint-lock muskets of English and French make. There was a regular arms trade among the Burmese tribes, and the Lushais.

The Lushais first got gunpowder from outside; but soon they learnt to make it themselves indigenously. Thus the Lushais who learnt the use of firearms only near about 1850, quickly became adapt in the use of these weapons and were also swift in building up an impressive stockpile.

It was felt by the highest British authorities that negotiations with Lushai chiefs would not bring forth peace and hence it was decided to send very strong punitive expeditionary forces inside the Lushai Hills.

On July 11, 1871 the Governor General in Council ordered an expedition into the Lushai country. The expeditionary forces were divided into two columns. One column was under the command of Brigadier General

G.Bourchier who was accompanied by Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Cachar. The other was under the command of Brigadier General C.H.Brownlow.

In the beginning the chiefs were the main opponents to the British rule and they fought the British with all the might at their command.

Before the British came, the chiefs were the sovereign authorities in the Lushai Hills, Captain T.H.Lewin, who was the first British to have intimate knowledge of the Lushais described the village system among the Lushais as a number of petty States, each under a Dictator or President. On his visit to a Lushai village in 1866 he found a drunken villager behaving very freely with the chief. Asked for an explanation of such disrespect being permitted, the chief replied : "On the war path or in the council I am a chief, and my words are obeyed; behaviour like that would be punished by death. Here in the village, that drunkard is my fellow and equal".

Captain Lewin was a great admirer of the Lushai social and administrative system under the chiefs. He described the Lushai society as the realisation of dreams of Plato, Bacon and Comte. He said, "Among these hill tribes we find an actual existing system in practical working, which might well be classed among the visions of Utopian Philosophy. Their mode of government may be described as a democracy tempered by disposition".

Captain Shakespeare described the chiefs as despotic heads of small independent States. While accompanying the British expedition in the Lushai Hills in the late nineteenth century he found each village as a separate State ruled over by its own Lal or Chief.

The Chiefs appointed some elderly men, known as Upa (Elders) who formed a council which discussed all matters of the village, and decided all disputes in the village. They received fees called 'salam' from the party who lost the case. Those fees were their own remuneration. The Chief had also some village officials to assist him.

In this matter, the position of the Chiefs in the Lushai Hills was exactly the same as that found in Africa. When the Lushai Hills were taken over by the British there were 60 Chiefs.

McDonald, Superintendent of Lushai Hills wrote :

"I must record the overwhelming fact that the loyalty and courage of the people of the Lushai Hills never gave me a moment's anxiety, that every demand for labour and supplies which I made upon the population was punctually and completely fulfilled and that I was very proud to be in charge of a district of such people at such a time".

*(Mizoram : Dynamics of Change by Dr.Animesh Ray, Ph.D., I.A.S.).*

The Lushai village lay before me, a confused mass of houses thickly scattered over the hill-side, and nearly all on different levels. The village was surrounded by a palisade

of enormous logs, as thick as the leg of an elephant and ten feet high. The entrance lay through a stockaded passage, thickly studded with downward-pointing bamboo spikes, and defended by two heavy doors of rough-hewn timber, so thick as to be practically fire and bullet proof. On passing through the passage, I found the stockade was line with men in readiness to repel any attack. Evidently these Lushais were a suspicious race, accustomed to treacherous dealing.

*(A Fly On The Wheel, page 197, Ist Edition 1912, by Lt. Col. Thomas H. Lewin)*

In Bengal the sensation most keenly felt by an Englishman is that he is an alien in a foreign land; but among the hill folk one is among fellow-creatures. Wherever I went among the people, I was hospitably entertained, fed, and feted; in return I kept open house for all who came to see me.

*(A Fly On The Wheel, page 241, by Lt. Col. Thomas H. Lewin)*

I embraced every opportunity of becoming better acquinted with the Lushais, who freely resorted to our market, and learnt all I could concerning their languages and customs. They have a curious tradition concerning their genesis. .

The chief's house is a sanctuary, where all criminals may take refuge. Even the avengers of blood, pursuing a

murderer red-handed, may not pass beyond the threshold with arms in their hands. But by thus seeking refuge under the chief's roof-tree the fugitive becomes ipso facto the chief's slave. He has other slaves also of those taken in war.

*(A Fly On The Wheel, page 241 & 243, by Lt. Col. Thomas H.Lewin)*

"Among the Lushais though, and especially among those related to the reigning families, some of whom were even handsome, we met with a much more refined type - the nose being thin and aquiline with small nostrils, the lips thin and the mouth small. In all, however, the cheek bones were high and prominent, the face broad and remarkable for an almost entire absence of beard or moustache; even a slight moustache and small tuft of hair on the chin being the exception rather than the rule.

The expression of many was bright and intelligent, and they showed a wonderful aptitude for quickly understanding anything new and wonderful which they saw during their visits to our camp. Not the least astonishing proof of this was the sharpness they displayed in understanding at a glance the intention of pencil sketch.

*(The Lushai Expedition 1871-1872, page 69, Ist Edition, London 1873 by R.G. Woodthorpe, Lieut. Royal Engineers).*

With a few exceptions the Lushais impressed us very favourably. Intelligent, merry and with few wants, they

were very far removed from the utterly irreclaimable savages which, prior to the Expedition, our fancy had painted.

*(The Lushai Expedition 1871-1872, page 89, by R.G. Woodthorpe, Lt. Royal Engineers).*

The people are traditionally nomadic and mentally volatile, characteristics which militate against easy reconciliation to the static conditions of living under the Pax Britanica. At the same time they retain a cultural respect and some pride in their ancestors, social relations still being, in a measure, maintained on a well known and firm basis of agelong custom and practice.

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 29 by Major A.G. McCall).*

As a people they are actuated by instinct rather than by any objective analysis of problems. The past is a dim past, a past that has no record except that inscribed upon the hearts of the people by the accumulation of experience after experience related from father to son down through the ages.

The people lived in isolated groups of settlements of from 20 to 100 or 150 houses, perhaps even more, usually situated among the hill tops and often fifteen miles apart.

What lies behind this oriental facade, attractive and alluring as we see it? There must be some history, some system of social custom, perhaps a relationship with the

supernatural, folk-lore, and many other matters from which we may get a closer insight into the forces which we must take count if we are to understand Lushai land, land of beauty, song, and contrast.

*(Lushai Chrysalis, page 28-33 by Major A.G.McCall)*

The Lushais appear to have had a common origin with many other clans of the TIBETO-BURMAN group but today differences in culture and language are so marked as to suggest that many of these clans must have preserved their independence sufficiently long for them to be able to develop very definite patterns. Moreover, it is almost sure that the Lushais were deeply influenced by varied contacts with predominently stronger civilisations through the earlier ages for, even in such a desert of culture superficialities, indigenous society produced some of those traits of nobility, bravery, and hospitality which are common to the most cultured percetions of human relationship. In view of the tremendous enthusiasm which the Lushais later evinced for the religion of their choice it remains a matter of considerable curiousity that they never fell to the tea-chings of Buddha, Confucius, or other great preceptor, with whose disciples they must have been in intermittent contact all through the ages.

Anthropological and ethnographical research might promote the deduction of some of the major probabilities

concerning these earlier contacts but the day to day chronology of local events, which combined to create the inhabitants of Lushai as we first knew them, must remain lost for all time.

*(Lushai Chrysalis, page 34-35 by Major A.G.McCall).*

The Colonel found the LUSHAIS to be a virile race, possessed of a clear cut culture pattern and capable of giving endless trouble at any time anywhere along the British India settlements bordering on Lushai, unless subjugated once and for all. It was forty years before the Colonel's advice was heeded.

The Lushais made their mark with Colonel Lister for their skill in battle, due greatly to the efficiency which they could use a hand dao or knife to master the most obstinate of jungles.

*(Lushai Chrysalis, page 41 by Major A.G.McCall)*

But from this foregoing account of Lushai history it is fair to deduce some characteristic traits in the general make up of the Lushai mind. He is crafty, clever and determined, to the point of obstinacy. Resourceful and brave in battle he is capable of frenzied cruelty in victory. The means justify the ends at the cost of any duplicity, such ability affording greater power over others. The quest for power is rarely absent in some form or degree, from any enter-

prise, big or small. The Lushai is a master in jungle craft and is capable of the greatest physical endurance and achievement. He will engage on a venture of far reaching implications on any whim. The tendency to excess pervades every phase of Lushai life.

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 66, Ist Edition : 1949 by Major A.G.McCall).*

Much can be learned about the mind of a people by a study of their customs. They form a guide to an understanding of the fabric of the community life, obligations involved, premarital relationships, marriages divorces and separations, property and inheritance, and other matters relating to sex.

It is well to remember that these customs have ruled for years and years, observed through countless generations, and have been fashioned to meet the needs of a society forever threatened from without by ruthless enemies and from within by the ravages of nature, coupled with the failures common to most mankind. An assessment of their conception and vitality should provide some due to the genius of these people, a conception of their culture.

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 95, by Major A.G.McCall)*

A system of community obligation existed under the term TLAWMNGAIHNA, implying public service.

Crops of the sick would be tended by the strong, the Chief's land would be weeded as a mark of support, help would be given to rebuild houses accidentally burned down, worriers would volunteer when asked for, hunters would strive to be energetic in the chase, and, in general, the good citizen was he who was foremost in meeting calls that were really necessary for the good of the whole village.

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 97-98, by Major A.G.McCall).*

The customs we have just examined disclosed a very comprehensive and almost scientific code of family and social relations, a condition which would suggest an accompaniment of appropriate ceremonies and sacrifices on an extensive scale.

Ceremonies are performed at birth and at death, in illness, associations with the hunt, calamity, crops, unnatural deaths in the forests or, in the case of woman, at childbirth. Also when at war, and, in fact, in connection with every possible phase of life. It is this constant association of every situation in life with the presence of the supernatural that made these people so orderly, so religious, and so great.

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 118, by Major A.G.McCall).*

We have seen that Lushais were a migratory race. There has, therefore, never been any deep urge to accu-

mulate household possessions on any extensive scale. In the face of such unpromising conditions it is all the more surprising that the quality of Lushai handwork attained its recognised excellence.

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 182 by Major A.G.McCall)*

Much had to be learned, and the Lushai gift for humour began to assert itself to bring a more reassuring outlook.

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 289, by Major A.G.McCall)*

We find the following verses in the Old Testament :-

"The LORD will bring you, and your king whom you set over you, to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known;and there you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone. And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a byword, among all the people where the LORD will lead you away". (Deut.28:36 & 37)

"The sojourner who is among you shall mount above you higher and higher; and you shall come down lower and lower. He shall lend to you, and you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head and you shall be the tail. All these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you, till you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his command-

ments and his statutes which he commanded you. They shall be upon you as a sign and a wonder, and upon your descendants for ever".
(Deut. 28:43-46).

"And the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other; and there you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known". (Deut. 28:64).

These verses are what God prophesied through His prophets the future fate of Israel. They were terrible but came true.

The ten tribes of Israel, after 70 A.D. were oppressed by other nations and were scattered in 72 countries. Some even came to India and China. Those who went to China also settled there permanently and took part in the construction of the Great Wall of China. They did not lose their Jewish identity and continued to have synagogues. In 1948 when Israel attained independent sovereignty, about 5000 Israelites migrated to Israel from China. Cochin Jews also migrated and lived in Kibbutz.

About 20,000 Falashas were smuggled out of Ethiopia and brought to Israel by Israeli Government in 1984.

There are distinct differences amongst Israelites in the colour of the skin, the colour of eyes and the face cut. Such differences were shown in the Jewish Diaspora, Tel

Aviv, and they must have represented all the races of the world.

Although no one can take it for certain, Chhinlung is claimed by all Mizos to be the original source of their existance. There is a township called Sinlung in the Szechuan Province of Central China. It can be seen on a map at 10° 03N and 31°E. Probably the Mizo forefathers lived in this place but had to leave it because of enemies as suggested by one of their folk songs.

"Strange are the faces and no friends they are,
I had to leave Sinlung my home"

Another one says :-

"The famous Sinlung is my home,
The land of my father and mother;
To call it back if were possible,
The land of my father and mother'.

The first one suggested that they had to leave because of enemies and the second one suggested their longings for that Sinlung home.

About 820 A.D. there was a Chinese prince called Chinlung and the Mizos might have been one of his many subjects. About this time Israelites were forced to work on the Great Wall as there were many good artisans from Persia and Egypt amongst them. Unable to bear the forced labour, many of them might have run away from there.

About the same time Buddhism spread to the east-Burma, Siam, Malaysia, Thailand, China and Japan and it remained in these places as the permanent religion. Because of the spread of Buddhism the Israelites moved to safer places around Chingfu, West of Chungkin. Some of the towns are called Lushien and Loshan and it is not improbable that Luseis of the Mizos originated from these places. These people were then cave-dwellers.

Some of them left China in search of better dwellings. The forefathers of the Mizos were called Luse by the Burmese which, it is claimed, means, 'ten tribes'. This naturally leads some people to think that Mizos are one of the ten tribes of Israel. Those who left China then spread over wide areas. Some went towards Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim and others moved towards Burma and Thailand. Even today the language spoken by the Thais, Tibetans, Ladakis, Sikkimese, Bhutanese, Manipuries and Mizos are quite close and many words can be traced back to a common origin. This leads one to conclude that these people must have been using the same language about 1500 years back. It should not be an absurd idea as in those days these people must be very few in number. For example, Mizos numbered only 82,434 in the 1901 census whereas they are 4,93,757 in the 1981 census i.e. they have multiplied six times in 80 years.

Mizos are recognised as one of the Mongoloid stocks. Mongolia is between U.S.S.R. and China. There is

close similarity in the physical features of the Mongolians, the Thais, the Phillipinos, the Sikkimese and the Mizos.

During the last two and three thousand years, the ancestors of the Mizos must have lived with people of different religion and culture; however, it is strange that their culture and traditional practices are more akin to those of Israelites than those of the Mongolians, the Chinese or the Burmese. Doubtless, they are no longer pure bred because of intermarriages but the fact remains the Israelites and the Mizo ancestors had once lived together in China.

# CHAPTER - 1

## PARCHMENT

"According to the oral tradition of Mizo, the leather scrolls in which all ancestral history of the tribes and families were written, were lost due to continous slavery. The leather Scrolls in which they had written about their origin, family histories and narratives of their travels were said to have been left behind in their labour camps when they fled from China. According to another legend of the Mizo, the leather Scrolls were eaten by a dog of the keeper of these Scrolls. It may be only a metaphor. Emperor Shih Huang Ti who was ruling China at that time had burnt all the books and scrolls which were dealing with ideologies other than his own. People had been referring him as the 'Dog'. The Chinese normally refer people whom they don't like as 'Dog'. The four leftist leaders of China, including the widow of late Mao Tse Tung are referred as 'dogs' by the Chinese, these days. Chin dynasty - Middle period (B.C. 211 to 207) : Extracts from Encyclopaedia Britanica).

The Prince, who became supreme in China in B.C. 221 called himself the first Emperor 'Shih Huang Ti'. He shifted people en masse, without regard for local loyalties. The most powerful families were brought to the capital, to remain under his eyes. Brigands and never-do-wells were

transported to the marshes in the North West of ancient China to keep the nomads of Mongolia at bay. In B.C. 214, he connected such defensive walls as lay in the North, into a singly system and built watch-towers to guard the country.

He standardised the Chinese script and unified the Chinese laws, weights and measures and built many canals. He believed in 'Legalism'.

Books and philosophise, at variance with the thought of Chins, were eliminated. In B.C. 213, all books and scrolls which were against 'Legalism' were burnt on order of the Emperor. It was designed to ensure the supremacy of legalism. According to Chinese Historians, the construction of the Great Wall of China had started during the reign of 'Shih Huang Ti' some time during B.C.228. He had conquered the Inner Mongolians and had taken many captives (the majority of the Israelites and other captives earlier settled in Inner-Mongolia were also taken away by him as prisoners to China). Then, with the help of those slaves he started construction of the Great Wall *(Encyclopaedia Britanica).*

It had taken over a century for the Israelites to move out from Persia to China. All the men were employed on forced labour. With their knowledge and experience in construction of stone walls and buildings acquired in Egypt, Babylon and Persia by their ancestors, they could

continue the work of the Great Wall. A large number of Prisoners and slaves managed to escape from the Great Wall area during this period and immigrated to Shensi and other South and South Western regions, some time during B.C.200. According to Chinese Historians also, Shih Huang Ti had burnt all books in his Kingdom to assure supremacy of his religion known as 'Legalism'. The Pentateuch (from the Greek, meaning 'five scrolls or books') is the title given early in the Christian era, to the first five books of the Old Testament. It is referred to by the Jews as the Torah or Law, the term by which it is found in the New Testament. Of late, Jewish villages or what are believed to be Jewish colonies possessing the 'Pentateuch' have been found in Chingfu, not far from Lushien and Loshan (West and South West of Chunking) the supposed former seat of Karens. It is also possible that these Jewish settlers of Lushan might have been known as 'Lusei' or 'Lushai' to the outside world.

*(The Origin of Mizos, Chap. 2, by Lt.Col. C.G. Vergheese, V.S.M.).*

According to the oral tradition the Mizos claim that God gave them a written language on parchment, but a dog ate it up, so they lost the writing.

*(Wind through the Bamboo, The Story of Transformed Mizos, page 5 by Donna Strom).*

According to a popular oral tradition, the Mizos claimed that they were once given a written language by God as other races were not keeping it carefully and a dog ate it up. They were thus deprived of a written language.

*(The Life and Witness of the Church in Mizoram, page 23 by Rev.Dr.C.L.Hminga).*

We seldom heard any other nation to have parchments but the Jews had them. Do the Mizos believe they are one of the possessors of parchment?

# CHAPTER - 2

## RELIGION

Even before the advent of christianity the Mizos believed in one Almighty God, the Creator of all things, whose abode is high in heaven. This God was believed to be a protector, benefactor, kind and gentle. They called him God of Heaven or God on high. When in real trouble they would say "God will see to us from high above", "It is God's will", "There is God", to console themselves.

They believed God to be good and the devils bad. When sacrifices were offered, they prayed saying, "God of our forefathers, God of our grandmothers, respond to our offerings".

Their belief in God's omnipresent can be seen from the fact that in some occasions they prayed, saying, "God of the eight layers of the earth, protect us...". They also believed God to dwell on the earth; they would pray, "The protector of dwellings will keep us safe". Besides this, Mizos believed the existence of the supernatural being dwelling in heaven. One is 'Pu Vana' who is good but not so powerful as God, and others are called 'The Maidens of Heavens'. These maidens, though good beings, are inferior to God. They are called 'Khuavang' and 'Lasi'. They are beings and they often help human beings. They are believed to

inhabit the more beautiful and pleasant places but apart from human dwellings.

"A study of anthropology would have been helpful to me, I think, but unfortunately this was not included in the curriculum of our theological college at Aberystwyth. The Hen Gorff (The Presbyterian Church of Wales) deos not appear to be very interested in anthropology. Pity! Admittedly, our missionaries seem to have done remarkably well without it, and seem to understand the people. But perhaps they might have done even better with it."

*(The Diary of a Jungle Missionary, page 31).*

I have discovered that at the back of the Lushai mind there is a consciousness of a supreme spirit or Deity whom they call 'Pathian', the Giver and Preserver of Life. They believed Him to be by nature or disposition, 'zaidam' i.e. good natured, amiable and humble, but somewhat inactive, particularly as regards controlling the evil spirit.

*(The Diary of a Jungle Missionary, page 37 by Rev.Enoch Lewis Mendus, 1888-1982)*

A belief exists in a Supreme Being, Pathian, but his relation to the word is very distant.

*(The Story of Our Foreign Mission, page 79 (Presbyterian Church of Wales) Published in 1930 by John Hughes Morris.*

This religion however had several interesting characteristics. Lushai believed in a supreme God whom they called Pathian, but it was not believed that He had much to do with them in their daily life.

*(On Every High Hill, Chap.IV,*
*by The Rev .J.Meirion Lloyd, Missionary from England).*

In seeking them to penetrate the heart of the Lushai we must always bear in mind that at least, traditionally, he is an animist at heart and in his approach to all problems and imparts. His mind cannot easily dwell objectively on a problem concerning a person or an institution without subconsciously comtemplating the spirit association. This accounts, in some degree, for the virility of his conception of the world of the spirits which is marked by the variety of its possibilities. On the basis of this association with Supernatural, the Lushai would claim to be a highly cultured man rather than a savage. The reactions, and in fact the action, of a savage would be inconsistent; in short they would be savage in the true and less provincial sense of the word. The actions or reactions of a Lushai to any given situation or phenomena would be influenced by a basic conception of its spiritual importance. The Lushai would react consistently and not savagely or haphazardly. It was this in the Lushai that showed him cultured in the midst of a desert of superficialities,cultured because his social values depended

upon a consistence of a clear-cut behaviour and decor. Old Lushais believed naturally in the existence of one Supreme God, a god of all humanity, and goodness; but their spiritual repose was disturbed by spirites of evil know as 'Ramhuais' who had to be propitiated perpetually, so that 'Khuavang' the spirit of kindness and magnanimity, could bring comfort,

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, Chapter III, page 68 by Major A.G.McCall).*

Existence after death gave ground for much speculative thought. There was a paradise but its attainment was problematical, while arrival at the dead man's village itself was by no means secure. But steps could be taken which would assist chances in the after world, though these were very partial to Lushai men, women's future being less secure.

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 73 by Major A.G.McCall).*

Before conversion to Christianity, the Mizos believed in a Creator Spirit, known as 'Pathian', who had made the world.

*(Wind through the Bamboos, the story of Transformed Mizos, page 21, by Donna Strom).*

"Lushai's whole life was spent in propitiating these spirits. There were also good spirits the principal of whom was 'Pathian' who was the creator of the world, but he

remained aloof after the creation. Sometimes, he was referred to as 'Chung Pathian' (God above). There were other good spirits to look after the people like 'Khuavang' which was a guardian spirit and 'Lasi', creator of animals and presiding spirit over hunting

*(Mizoram : Dynamics of Change, page 62,*
*by Dr. Animesh Ray, Ph.D., I.A.S.)*

Belief in the existence of a Supreme Spirit or being had already developed among the Mizo people before Christianity.

J.Shakespear said that practically all divisions of Lusei-Kuki family believed in a spirit called 'Pathian', who is supposed to be the creator of everything, and is a beneficient being but has, however, little concern with men.

Another good spirit, 'Khuanu' was used in pre-Christian days, sometimes as identical with Pathian and sometimes as distinct from Pathian. The term is still used as synonym with Pathian in peotry. Pu Vana, which literally means 'Grand Father Heaven' is thought by many people to be another name for Pathian. Vanchung Nula literally meaning 'Maiden in Heaven above' is mentioned in many folk tales. It should be noted here that sacrifices were offered only to Pathian. Khuavang is another term used sometimes as identical with Pathian. Lasi is the spirit which presides over hunting and offering of Lasi-khal sacrifice before hunting was believed to bring success.

*(The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram, page 33, by Rev. Dr. Hminga).*

The God of the Mizo 'Pathian' has a great similarity with Jehovah or Yehowah of the Jews. No other religions in the world have such close similarities, as seen between the Mizos and the Jews

*(Origin of the Mizos, page 62 by Lt. Col. C.G. Verghese, V.S.M.).*

Before Christianity entered Mizoram the ancestors of Mizo had already believed in only one Almighty God, Creator of everything, whose abode is high up in heaven. This belief is similarly shared by the Israelites. This may be attributed to the reason why Mizo people could not be influenced by other religions.

# CHAPTER - 3

## PARADISE (PIALRAL)

Like the Jews, the Mizos believed in Deadman's village (Seol) and also in the existence of a better place called 'Pialral' (Paradise).

There was a time when the idea of heaven and hell had some currency in Jewish theology. The Old Testament, though it has no direct reference to a concrete or physical world to come, does have some vague, poetic allusions to an afterlife. And during the period of Persian domination over Israel, some of the teachings of Zoroaster, among them the notion of a heaven or hell to come, became popular among the Jews.

But even then, heaven and hell were rarely phrased in phycical terms. A soul delighting in a life well lived was in heaven; a soul tormented by remorse for misdeeds was in hell. Occassionally, there was some speculation as to the nature of Paradise - the reward stored up for the righteous. "May he dwell in the bright garden of Eden", was the common way to speak of one who had died. But there was almost no speculation as to the nature of hell.

From time immemorial Mizos believed in the existence of a Deadman's village. The way to this village passed through the Rih Lake. All roads leading to the Deadman's

village passed through the courtyard of Mr. Pawla (Mr.Paul) and there was no bypass at all. Mr.Pawla easily detect anyone who had not seduced a girl and would shoot him with his strong bow and pellet. The effect is a three year's cyst. This difficult encounter terrified all Mizos.

Another folk tale also told about Mr.Ngama's visit to his wife, Tlingi in the Deadman's village.

Not far from Deadman's village is Pialral where the dwellers lived happily. They were not required to work, but were fed with meat and drink. To live in this abode a man had to attain 'Thangchhuah', a very difficult task. The rich Mizos all tried to attain Thangchhuah status so that he might go to Pialral after death.

Lushais also had certain beliefs about the soul. They also believed in a future life. Their views were rather unusual and some were very charming. Pialral is the Lushai heaven but only those who had certain great achievements to their credit could go there.

In Pialral everything was luxurious. In Mitthi Khua (the village of the Dead) everything was on a much poorer and smaller scale than on earth. Life was colourless and miserable there as in the Hebrew Sheol.

*(On Every High Hill, Chapter IV, by the Rev. J.Meirion Lloyd).*

The spirits of most people were believed to go to Mitthi Khua (Hell), a dull shadowy place, similar to the

Hebrew Sheol. Only a few could earn the right during their life-time to go to Pialral (Heaven), a comfortable, luxurious place with plenty of food. A person could gain Pialral by giving a series of expensive feasts or by killing certain large animals - bear, elephant, bison, stag, boar and a man to be his slave there.

*(Wind through the Bamboo/The Story of Transformed Mizos, page 22, by Donna Strom).*

The Mizos believed in life after death. The soul or ghost of a man leaves his body at death, lingers for about three months in or around the house of the dead person and then leaves the world for the spirit world. The spirit world is believed to have two compartments. One compartment is called 'Pialral' where only those who earned the 'Thangchhuah' title during their life time could go. Life in Pialral is luxurious, there is plenty to eat and no work to do. The other compartment is called 'Mitthi Khua', a compound word literally meaning 'Village of the dead'. All the dead, except those who can go to Pialral go to 'Mitthi Khua' where life is dull and colourless, a shadowy existence as in the Hebrew 'Sheol'

*(The Life and witness of the Churches in Mizoram, page 35 by Rev. Dr. C.L.Hminga).*

# CHAPTER - 4

## DEVIL/SATAN (RAMHUAI)

Mizos believed in the existence of bad supernatural beings called 'Ramhuai'. Those beings were believed to be the root of all evils including sicknesses of all kinds. They therefore sometimes tried to appease them with offerings and sometimes tried to frighten them away.

Mizos believed that the bad spirits are the cause of all sickness and sufferings and tormentor of those who failed in their promises

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 68 by Maj. A.G.McCall).*

In the Jewish tradition Satan was the mythical symbol of the evil forces in the world.

In the Book of Job, the character of Satan was very real, he was an adversary who begrudged man's contentment and well being and he was the indirect cause of Job's misery.

The Persians, under whose domination the Jews lived for some centuries, believed that there were two great forces in the world, the God of Light and the God of Darkness. Under their influence, the Jews for a time sought to equate Satan with the God of Darkness and to blame

him and other 'fallen angels' of the Old Testament for all sufferings, calamity and wickedness. But gradually these ideas were rejected as alien to the deeper Jewish tradition

*(What is a Jew/Do Jews Believe Literally in Satan?, page 21 by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer).*

We see that the beliefs of the Jews in the devils and those of the Mizos are strangely similar in principles.

# CHAPTER - 5

## SACRIFICE

There are only a few who used the blood of domestic animals for sacrificial offerings to God. Mizos like the Israelites used such blood. Their ancestors had lost their written records; hence, traditional rites and practices are taught orally through generations. This practice naturally leads to few differences in the detail of rites but the principal rites of sacrifices as well as its purpose are the same amongst all the clans of Mizos.

Lushais used mithuns (a family of bison), goats, pigs and fowls for sacrifice. But Jews never eat pork nor use pigs for sacrifice. Cattle, sheep and doves were never kept by Lushais at all. Like the Jews, they used only animals without any blemish for sacrifice. A little cut on the tip of an animal's ear would render it unfit for offerings.

Further, in one of his early letters, Mr.Edwin Rowlands stated his belief that the Lushai sacrifical system was, to some extent, a "Praeparatio evangelica", that is, the shedding of blood in the sacrifices pointed forward to the need for the "one perfect sacrifice"

*(On Every High Hill, page 88, by the Rev. J.Meirion Lloyd).*

The Jews had an altar, the description of which was given by God. It has four sides with a horn on each four corners. It had a frame of planks on the four sides and it was hollow (Exo.27:1-2).

The Lushai altar was made of bamboo, a basket shape, having four corners where strips of bamboo projected upwards long enough to be bended and coupled down each corner and it provided a sort of legs for the altar. When used, the four horns were put upwards. These are more or less like the horns of a Jewish altar.

The Israelites made the altar at a holy place which was normally on a hilltop and never in a valley or a gorge. They pitched a tent for it.

Lushais made their altar outside the village on top of a pleasant mount or hillock. Some made a thatched roof for the altar, but the majority did not make any roof.

The Israelites had a brass basin to keep water for the priests to wash their hands and feet. The basin was placed between the tent of meeting and the altar (Exo.30:17-18).

Special washing was done before sacrifice. A Lushai priest made a hole on the ground as a bowl and some used a wooden or earthen bowl. He spread young leaves of wild banana inside the bowl. He then put in the bowl water and three small fishes or small stones which were taken from the spring.

Then, the priest had to wash his hands with only this very clean water.

The sacred parts of the sacrificed animal, such as the heart, liver, ears, tails, tongues, beaks were put on the altar and the priest sprinkled the blood on them.

The sacrificial ceremonies were mostly performed for the healing of sick persons. Only men from the patient's family were allowed to go to the sacrificial place.

The conditions laid down by the priest were :-

1) Not to talk to any stranger
2) Not to go to the jungles with any weapon
3) Not to visit blacksmithy
4) Not to visit any water point
5) Not to allow strangers to enter their home.

The priest smeared the blood on the forehead and arms of the patients. Sometimes he smeared it on the elbow of arms and innerside of the knees.

They had family sacrificial ceremonies to God (Pathian) for asking different blessings. Their prayer to God was like these :-

1) 'Pathian' from above, we, the sons of Manasia, offer you the blood of animal

2) God of our forefathers
God of our grandmothers
Respond to our sacrifice.

Sometimes, the priest prayed so that the family may have many children, and wish the family to have longevity, to win in wars and to have succes in hunting and cultivating. The priest addressed the 'Pathian' who was believed to dwell in between, under the earth, on the roof of the house. He also prayed for the protection from illness and dangers.

Flour is also used by Mizos for sacrifice. The animal's head and its fat are called God's meat (Pathian Sa). The fat was then pierced through with a stick or with a bamboo twined in the fashion of a string of bead and stuck it on the ceiling along with the head of the sacrificed animal.

God ordained Aaron and his tribe to be priests. Priests could be of this tribe only.

Likewise, priests were from a particular clan amongst the Mizos. The Luseis used Hauhnar clan for priests and Sailos also used Hauhnar clan. However, all Hauhnars were not priests. And there were two kinds of priests, one was called 'Bawlpu' and all the clans used him. He used to offer sacrifice for the sick. He got a piece of meat as his fee.

The other type of priests is called 'Sadawt or Sadot'. He was concerned with religious sacrifice only. Sadawt could not be used by all different clans. Each clan had its own Sadawt.

ISHSADOT in Hebrew means His confidant, strict confidence. A person who know how to keep a secret.

Ishsadot in Hebrew and Sadawt/Sadot in Mizo may have had the same meaning!

So, sacrificial ceremonies vary widely as we will discuss few of them.

1. **Kawngpui Siam :**

This is a sacrifice for success in hunting. It is a collective sacrifice generally performed shortly before Chapchar Kut (Festival).

The sacrificial place is placed not too far away from the village. This sacrifice must be officiated by the Chief's priest called Sadawt. The number of persons attending the ceremonies must be an odd one i.e. either 7 or 5 men.

The priest leads the party and they walk in single file; the priest, beating the bush on both the roadsides, chants "Flee, flee, vipers and all the biters, flee, you are obstructing our forefather Manasia". In some places the chant is, "flee, flee those up there flee those down there, Manasia's sons are coming".

It is taboo to bring home any leftover meat. Ashes of the fire are placed over the ground on the road between two wild chestnut tree posts which is smoothly levelled and no one must go by this place.

Taking few pebbles in the bag, the party return to the village and go straight to the Chief's house where the elders gather together. The priest announces, "We have come, we have come". The Chief and the Elders ask, "Who

are you? Whence do you come? Are you good or bad guests?". The priest replies "We are good guests, we are the children of Manasia. We are Punte (a clan of Mizo) we bring increase, we bring all blessings; please open the door for us".

*In 1929 at Chapchar Kut (Festival) I also accompanied the priest to the outskirt of Buallawn village. After the sacrifice was completed we returned to the Chief's house. We asked them to open the door for us. The Chief and his men asked, "Who are you?" We replied, "We are the children of Manasia, we are good people." So, they opened the door and we all entered the house as well.*

Sd/- Brig. Ngurliana
24/4/2005
(BRIG.NGURLIANA SAILO)
Son of the Chief of
Ratu and Buallawn.

Date of Birth : Ist January, 1910

The following day is a holiday. No one must leave the village. At dawn, few young men go to see the ashes. If an animal's footprint is there, it is a sign of good luck and success but if either a human footprint or that of a tiger is there the sacrifice must be repeated.

And the whole day is kept sacred and the villagers are not allowed to go out of the village.

In the entrance of a village two posts are planted on both sides of the road making archway on the top. Bunches of leaves are hung to inform the strangers that the day is 'Hrilh' (kept sacred). Those who want to spend the night in the village have to wait outside the gate.

In the evening, when the stars appear, 'Hrilh' is over and coming out and going in to the village is permitted.

## 2. Arte Lui Lam :

This is a sacrifice performed on the seventh day of a child's birth. A rooster and a pullet are killed. The child is taken through a coil of vawmhrui (wild grape) for three times by the priest. While doing this the priest chants. The mother must not even bring water from the village spring before this.

The eighth day is a holiday and zu (Mizo beer) drinking with friends and relatives goes on the whole day. After the eight days the father is free from taboo and may work again.

The method of sacrificial offering between the ancestores of Mizo and ancient Israel were very similar.

# CHAPTER - 6

## NUMBER 7

Number 7 played an important role among the Israelites. This can be seen at many places in the Bible. Number 7 is regarded as God's number. Few of them are :-

1. Pharoah's dream :-
   7 fat cows and 7 thin cows,
   7 fatyears of grain and 7 thin years of grain
   7 years of plenty and 7 years of scarcity
   (Gen.41:1-27)
2. Sabbath on the 7th day
3. Eating of unleavened bread for 7 days in the month of Abib (Exo.34:18)
4. Sprinkling the altar 7 times (Lev.14).
5. 7 times on the 7th day (Joshua 6:4)

Likewise Mizo used number 7 in most of important functions and ceremonies. Few are given below :-

1. Like the Israel's 7 candlesticks, Mizo used 7 torches at the sacrifice or a torch having 7 knots.
2. Ralte observes 7 days for 'Hrilh'
3. 7 layers of leaves put on the altar.
4. On the 7th day of a child's birth a rooster and pullet

are killed. It is taboo for the mother to go to village water spring before this offering.

It is a strange coincidence that Israelites and Mizos give great importance to number 7.

# CHAPTER - 7

## MANASE/MANASIA

In many of the chants used in various sacrifices and in other sacred matter the name of Manasia or Manase is often cited. We know Joseph had two sons by his Egyptian wife, viz. Ephraim and Manasseh. Are the Mizo Manase and the Israel's Manasseh the same person?

1. At family offering the chant is,

"The children of Manase offer Thee
animal's blood, O, God of High".

2. Any one coming sick from the jhum is believed to struck by evil ones living in the spring near the paddy field and offering is given on the spot. The chant is :-

"If tied, untie him,
If manacled, unlock him,
We are taking Manase home".

3. At the sacrifice for healing epilepsy the priest chants :-

"Release him, we are above your power,
We are children of Manase".

4. When selecting a paddy field site, if they found anything suspected to be taboo, they shout saying, "Go away, go away, we are bringing Manasia here".

5. When a new settlement is made, clearing the jungle for that purpose, the first sapling felled is accompanied by a chant, "You are obstructing our grandfather Manasia".

6. According to one folk tale, a horn bill, presiding over a court, said, "All the beasts shall search food by night, and by day the birds and the children of Manase".

7. If a man migrates to another village, he is not allowed to take all his animals. He, later on, approaches his old chief for permission. When allowed to do so he takes them with him. If any of them would not want to go, the owner says, "Go, go quickly, Manase will curse and chide you:.

8. In the offering of some sacrifice the chant is, "Manase, Manase, come and help us".

9. Tradition handed down orally to posterity says, "Whenever you pray to God, the name of our forefather Manasia must be pronounced".

10. When offering a sacrifice for sin, the priest chants, "God of heaven and of the earth, we, sons of Manasia, who are on earth are offering you the heart, and liver of the animal for forgiveness of our sins".

11. All things considered taboo, found in the paddy field, are thrown away, all the time chanting, "You are in the way of Manasia, God of heaven forbids you to be so and we are now clearing you away".

12. At Kawngpui Siam, the priest followed by his party chants, "Those above and those below, go away, flee, we, the children of Manasia are coming". And before entering to the Chief's house, the Chief's party asks, "Who are you? Whence do you come?" The priest replies, "We are the children of Manasia".

Thus the fact that the Mizos claimed to be the children of Menashe, the chosen of God, is significantly noteworthy.

In 1929 at Chapchar Kut (Festival) I also accompanied the Priest to the outskirt of Buallawn Village. After the sacrifice was completed we returned to the Chief's house. We asked them to open the door for us. The Chief and his men asked, "Who are you?" We replied, "We are the children of Manasia, We are good people." So, they opened the door and we all entered the house as well.

Ngurliana Sailo 24/4/2005

(BRIG. NGURLIANA SAILO)
Son of the Chief of Ratu
and Buallawn.
Date of Birth : 1.1.1910

# CHAPTER 8

## PAUL (PAWLA)

Pawla, according to folk tale, is a hated one having his abode at a spot where all dead men have to pass on their way to the Dead men's village. He has a powerful bow and shoots with a pellet at anyone passing unless he is a Thangchhuah or had seduced a girl in his life time. The pellet strikes so hard that it leaves a painful tumor for three years. Few folk songs are known to mention this Pawla. The name is not a Mizo name and it is unlikely that this strange person should have a place in the Mizo folk tales and songs. These old songs are difficult to translate into English; so let's put it as it is in Mizo :-

1. "A mawi mang e, Pawla lam kaiah,
   Kiva chang thliten a her let a;
   Lengdawn a pam e".

***Meaning :*** The feathers of a bird which are attached in the outer wall of Paul moved by the wind to and fro is beautiful.

2. "Tuchhingipa, zingkhaw vanzawl i thlen chuan,
   Pawla kawtah chengrang kau ang che,
   Hnam len la, sat dai rawh".

***Meaning :*** "Tuchhingipa, soon after you reach the heavenly home,

Take out your gun and unbuckle your sword,
And let Paul yield before your".

3. "Di nei lo Pawla'n a sai an ti,
Fam mah ila min sai bik tawh hlei lawng nge,
Ka nem rang puan tial ka di zawnna".

***Meaning :*** It is been said Paul aims his bow to those me, who have no lover in their life time.

If I die, he will not shoot me because
I have a cloth which I shared with my lover.

"The spirit of the man, on reaching Mr. Pawla's house, had to cross a stone which was balanced in such a way that it always made a noise. The noise brought Pu Pawla to the door with his pellet bow in hand. At all those going to Mitthi Khua he shot his pellets to their discomfort. But he dare not raise his hand against those going to Pialral".

*(On Every High Hill, page 15, by The Rev.J.Meirion Lloyd).*

# CHAPTER - 9

## STARS

During the early days of Jewish history, there seems to have been an accepted belief that human destiny was in some way linked to the motion of the stars. The prophet Jeremiah was among the first to condemn this notion as pagan, and centuries later Moses Maimonides renewed the attack on astrology

*(What is A Jew? Do Jews Believe in 'Luck'?*
*page 40, by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer).*

Mizo believed the appearance of a comet to be a sign of a severe famine or death of a chief or a big ruler or a famous man. They believed some stars bring luck.

The moon is believed to influence lives of some lunatic. They believed they are worse on the wane of the moon improving their conditions on its wax.

Primitive colours appearing in the eastern sky are considered lucky in battle or in hunting but if on the western sky it is considered unlucky, a forecast of a violent death in the village.

Israelites used stars for time reckoning. The Sabbath ends when three stars can be seen in the sky.

Among the Mizos, the Lusei clan may not kill his pig before stars appear.

**'Hrilh' (Sacred Day)** ends with appearance of stars.

When the Kawngpui Siam sacrifice is performed, no stranger may enter the village and no one can go out of the village until stars appear in the sky.

The Jewish bridegroom waits for his bride standing under a canopy and the bride is brought to him as soon as stars appeared.

According to an old Mizo custom a bride may be taken to the bridegroom's house only after stars appeared.

These similar beliefs and practices make one wonder if such similarities are deeper than mere coincidence.

# CHAPTER - 10

## MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Mizo : They are a free society. Boys and girls mix freely, the boy's parents select a girl of their choice as the bride but also consider their son's choice. Selection for a bride is carefully done. Character, health, etc., are traced back to two or three generations.

The boy is free to marry a girl of his choice provided his parents have no objections. Sometimes a boy takes a bride of his parents' choice even though he may not have seen the girl so selected.

Marriage is settled between the two families by 'palai' (representatives) selected and sent to the girl's parents so as to give ample time for preparations, for the marriage.

The betrothal is not in itself binding and if between the date of betrothal and the marriage date either party wishes to breach off the engagment, he or she is at liberty to do so without incurring any penalty. This custom is the same whether the parties both reside in the same or in different villages.

When all has been prepared on the day fixed for the wedding the bridegroom sends two representatives whose duty is to settle finally about the price and to pay over to

the bride's parents whatever amount it has been agreed shall be paid down on the marriage day.

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 23 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

There remains the poor but honest young man who falls desperately in love with the bride of his choice, but he simply has not the money or property to make any payment, nor has any one to help him. The parents may accept a solemn undertaking, publicly made that the groom promises to make over at the very possible opportunity.

*(Lushai Chrysalis, page 105 by Major A.G.McCall).*

The bride is conducted to her husband's house by her men and women friends only after the appearance of the stars in the sky. On this occasion one of the men always calls out. "We are taking along the bride to have many sons and daughters". As soon as these words have been uttered, everybody starts throwing rice, mud and water at the bride. When the bride reaches her husband's house, the priest (puithiam) kills a pullet and sing a chant wishing the couple long life, many children and that they remain together until they are both old. This chant is addressed to the 'khuavang' who are the spirits of the air.

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 31 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

Mizos have no dowry system. The girl takes few clothes, weaving instruments and working paraphernalia so that she can be useful in her new house.

Marriage amongst Mizos is a social event. They help each other to do whatever is necessary.

If a man has two daughters and the elder daughter finds it difficult to get a husband and the younger daughter gets married first, the man who marries the younger daughter has to pay an additional 'tlai' or Rs.20/- for her, as he married the younger sister before the elder sister had got married.

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 34 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

**Israelites** : They are free society and marriage may take place either by parents' choice or by the boy's choice. It also appears that some sort of marriage price is being paid as seen in Genesis 24:53; 31:15; 34:12 and Ruth 4:10.

There are, however, certain traditional rites and symbols connected with most Jewish weddings. These include the canopy (Chupah) under which the bride and groom both sip wine at the beginning and the end of the ceremony.

In the State of Israel, chuppah is customarily arranged outdoors or under a sliding roof. After stars ap-

pear the groom is then escorted to his place under the canopy, where he is joined by the bride, and the wedding ceremony begins.

Relatives and friends often throw handful of rice, nuts or candies over them immediately after the marriage ceremonies.

In Biblical times, a childless widow was required to marry her husband's brother, in order to preserve intact the family property. This was known as "levirate marriage. The law was gradually modified, and finally, several centuries ago, the rabbis issued a ban against this type of marriage.

*(Does Jewish Religious Law Permit the Marriage of Relatives, page 65, by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer).*

This is also practised by the Mizos in ancient days.

Levirate marriage is practised by the Mizos in olden days. If the deceased brother had children the parents could not press him to marry his brother's widow. But they used to request him to marry her, saying that if he marry another girl, the children of his brother would become poor.

Uptil now there are few people who practised this old custom.

(I wish it to be understood that the majority of the remarks are equally applicable to the Lushais). According to Chin custom when a man dies the next unmarried brother

takes his widow to wife (For a similar Jewish Custom, see Genesis, Chap.XXXVII).

*(Chin-Lushai Land, page 149, Ist Edition : 1893 by Sgt.Lt.Col.A.S.Reid, M.B.)*

In Genesis 29:26, we see that the younger girl cannot marry before her elder sister does.

Since ancient times it has been a basic duty to assist a bride without dowry to obtain the necessities for setting up a home.

*(JUDAISM A - Z Illustrated Lexicon of Concepts & Terms, page 58 by Yacov Newman & GavrielSivan).*

An Israelite who no longer wants his wife can divorce her merely by writing to this effect and the woman has to leave. In olden days the husband can divorce his wife even against her will (Deut.24: 1 & 2).

When a Mizo man divorces his wife he simply says, "I divorce you", and the woman is then divorced. Similarly a woman who refuses to remain with her husband and leaves him is considered to have divorced him and this form of divorce is known as 'Sumchhuah'. A woman is at liberty to divorce her husband in this way whenever she likes but the whole of the price that her husband has paid to her relatives must be returned to him

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, Chapter III, by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

After divorce, both of them are free to marry others.

Israelites forbids marriage for a period of 33 days after passover. Mizos refrain from marrying in the month of August. It is considered unlucky.

Adultery is a heinous crime both among Israelites and Mizos. Israel considers it as an offence deserving death penalty. Mizos do not have penalty of death except for murder which is also not a judgment. Mizos consider an adultery as a despicable, heinous offence. A woman who commits adultery is turned out of her husband's house. Her marriage price and all other belongings are forfeited. She also becomes the most social outcast. Strangely enough a man cannot commit adultery. A widow still living in the house of her deceased husband commits adultery if she cohabits with any man.

If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall give the marriage present for her, and make her his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equivalent to the marriage present for virgins (Exo. 22:16-17).

If a young man is caught sleeping with a girl, he will have to pay a fine valued at about fifteen shillings or agree to marry this erring daughter of irate parents. This custom often leads to great complications

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 100 by. Major A.G.McCall).*

The Book of Leviticus contains a series of restrictions against the marriage of blood relatives, as well as of certain relatives by marriage.

*(What is a Jew? Do Jews Religious Law Permit the Marriage of Relatives? by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer).*

According to Lushai customs no fine is inflicted for incest. If incest takes place however it is believed that the village crops for the year will fail.

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 57 by N.E.Paryy, I.C.S.).*

Although there is no penalty imposed for such marriage yet it is considered most shameful to commit such offence.

The social practice of lavirate marriage and solemnisation of marriage ceremony conducted only after appearance of stars in the evening are a very peculiar practice of Mizo and Israelites.

# CHAPTER - 11

# DEATH AND BURIAL

There are similar traits in the traditional practices in deaths and burial between Israel and Mizo.

## ISRAEL

Burial should take place on the actual day of death or the next day the sole reasons for delay being the incidence of Sabbath or festivals inability of mourners to arrive early.

The following procedure and laws of burial are important :

1. The body of the deceased is washed by the group known as Chevra Kadisha. This group has a unique role. Demonstrating their friendship and loyalty both to the deceased and the mourner, their services are generally performed with honour and dignity as is attached to their task; or helping the mourner meet his obligations of burying the deceased.
2. The body is draped in a white linen and tied at the head and feet.
3. The grave is dug by members of Chevra Kadisha without expecting any remuneration.

4. The deceased should not be left alone but should be guarded by a shoner.

5. The body of an adult male is also clad in his tallith with 'fringes', a symbol of his faith.

6. According to an ancient custom (still observed in Eretz Yisrael) the corpse is placed on the bier prior to the funeral and buried without coffin.

7. Attendance at a funeral is praiseworthy, it shows respect for the deceased and provides comfort for the mourners. In a small community, where the deceased person was known to all, it is the duty of every adult to attend the funeral.

8. The eulogy is an important part of the service because it pays homage to the dead and carries a lesson to the living. The Talmud teaches that it is a mitzva to shed tears for a righteous person.

9. The draped coffin or bier is then borne on shoulders of pall bearers or wheeled on a trolley. The coffin is left above the ground covered with a green spread. When the coffin has been lowered into the grave, males cast three shovelful of earth into the grave as final act. If the casket is left above the ground or merely covered with a green spread, the obligation of burying the dead has not been fulfilled, Kaddish cannot be recited by the mourners.

10. Before leaving the cemetery, it is customary to pluck grass, saying, "He remembereth that we are dust". Upon

leaving the cemetery the members of the funeral procession would toss a twig over their shoulders, clearly a remnant of old magical thinking.

11. Upon returning from the cemetery one washes his hands with water poured from a vessel. The vessel is not handed from one person to the next, but is place on the ground. The hands are not to be dried with a towel or any other cloth.

12. Friends and neighbours of the mourner respond to his needs, both physical and spiritual, relieving him of burdens and helping him in the hour of loneliness.

13. The first meal, named, 'A meal of the comfor-ters', is prepared by friends and neighbours of the mourners. The customs of providing food is based upon the desire to express sympathy to the mourner during this tyring time. The bereaved is in no frame of mind to prepare or eat food.

14. For seven days (Shiva) beginning with the day of burial until the first hours of the seventh morning, the mourner is restricted in many of his activities. One of these is that he may not leave his home. Women are permitted to attend to necessary domestic responsibilities.

15. "Act of kindness redeems man from death", said an ancient tradition. In this spirit friends sometimes decide on a contribution to a worthwhile cause as a meaningful tribute.

During the week of Shiva, it is customary for neighbours to visit the family, offering whatever consola-

tion and practical help they can. One of the greatest good deeds a Jew can perform is to bring the first meal to his sorrowing neighbour. The Talmud suggests that the food be brought in wicker baskets, again to prevent competition among the neighbours who might be tempted to outdo others.

Judaism deals harshly with the proven suicide. A Jew who takes his own life is buried without honour or eulogy and is mourned without the traditional ceremonials.

Caves and catacombs were usually selected as family sepulchres in ancient times. During the Talmudic period, custom was to reinter bones of deceased in stone sarcophagi, and then to bury them in a permanent crypt or niche of stone wall. This practice, known as 'gathering of bones' is mentioned in Mishnah (MK 1:5).

*(For Thou Art with Me by Rabbi David Stavky), (What is a Jew? by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer) and (Judaism A-Z, Illustrated Lexicon of Concepts and Terms by Yacov Newman & Gavriel Sivan).*

## Mizo Practices in Death and Burial :-

1. As soon as a person dies, the corpse is bathed with warm water and dressed.
2. Whenever a person dies, the young men of the village immediately go to the house to run errands to relatives who are in the locality or in other villages.

3. If there is time to dig the grave, burial takes place on the same day of death.

4. The dead body is surrounded by kits and kins along with friends and neighbours weeping. Only the goodness of the dead person is spoken of. The corpse must not be left alone.

5. If it is too late to bury the body, all the neighbours and relatives gather in the deadman's house to console his family. Relatives and close neighbours use to bring something to eat for the mourners.

6. In smaller villages where everyone knows each other, death means a day of sorrow for the whole community. It is a duty for men and women to go to the deadman's house and to attend the funeral. No one ever works on such a day.

7. Members of the bereaved family are taken by neighbours to their houses to eat as it will be impossible to eat in their own house.

8. A special robe called 'Thihrin Puan' is used to cover the corpse. It is tied at head and feet. If the head of a family dies he must be covered with a special striped cloth called 'Puandum'.

9. The digging of graves is voluntarily done by young men of the village and it is a very shameful thing for a youngman not to take part in such work.

10. If a baby under a year old dies, it is known as 'Hlamzuih' and the baby is buried in a large pot. Hard boiled egg is buried with the baby.

11. When digging the grave the last man to come out of the grave sweeps the grave and his body with leaves, fanning all around. This is to drive out the spirits of the men who dig the grave. Superstition says that some spirits may try to remain inside the grave.

12. The corpse is place on a bier and carried on shoulders by son-in-laws. Relatives fill the grave.

13. After the corpse is let into the grave those attending the burial throw in some earth,

14. Those who filled the grave must wash their hands in the house of the bereaved family. Water is placed outside the house in a clay pot and hands must be washed before entering the house.

15. Feast is prepared in the mourners house.

16. The mourners never do the work for one week. Women can do the household duties. During this time relatives, neighbours and friends come to console them and bring with them rice or other things. (Some bring rice and some other things.) Firewoods are collected for the family so that they can live for a week without doing any work. As long as they are in mourning they are not to bathe nor to use oil nor to comb their hair.

Sometimes bones are kept in a big earthen pot and buried. Some are preserved in a cave. Bones are still found in some caves today.

*There are different types of graves* :-

1. Stone-coffined : A coffin shaped cubicle is made on the floor of a grave, which is covered with flat stones after the corpse is placed.

2. After a grave is dug, one of the sides is dug horizontally at the floor level wide enough to admit the corpse which, after the corpse is placed, is closed with stones or tree trunks. This is known as 'khaukhurh'.

3. Tianhrang grave is exclusively known for heroes. A large hole is dug on a slope with its floor slanting at about 45°. The floor is lined with flat stones and flat stone-walls are made on two sides which when completed made a long triangular hole. The corpse is then placed, feet first.

4. The Lakhers made an horizontal hole on a slope and put the dead inside feet first. The hole is closed with a big flat stone. Rich men put some valuables with the dead body.

5. This type of grave is a hole with a length of about 8ft and 6ft wide and 6ft deep. The floor and the sides are lined with stones.This is again closed with a large flat stone after burial.

Some buried guns and other valuables for the deadman's use in the next world.

Memorial stones are common among the Mizos and figures of the deadman and of wild animals he had killed in his lifetime are engraved on it.

The Pawis and Lakhers of the South Mizoram used to erect a memorial stone roughly resembling a pyramid of Pharoah of Egypt. This is called Pura by the Pawi and Phura by the Lakhers. The Phura is about 7ft. high and a one foot square flat stone is placed on the top of the pyramid.

The body of any one died of unnatural death must not be taken inside the house. It must be buried on the west of the village before the dawn of the following day. Memorial should not be erected.

If death over a child's birth takes place the whole village must not do any work. It is believed that if the spirit of the dead enters any house, one of the womenfolks in the house will meet the same kind of death and to prevent the spirit entering a house a bunch of green leaves is hung over the doorway.

Suicide is despised and does not deserve any social help.

It is really surprising that Jews and Mizos should have detailed similarities in customs and practices regarding death and burial. And it naturally leads one to consider the probability of their being of same decendants or the possibilities that they might have lived together in the long past.

## CHAPTER - 12

# SYSTEM OF HAVING A RULER-ISRAELITES AND MIZOS

In the Old Testament we find that Samuel ruled over Israel but his sons were not fit to rule. Therefore the elders requested Samuel to select a king for them. Saul, a Benjamite was made the first king who was succeeded by David of the tribe of Judah. David was succeeded by his son, Solomon.

Men of Israel requested Gideon to be their king, saying, "Be our king! You and your sons and all your decendants shall be our rulers, for you have saved us from Median". But Gideon did not accept the offer (Judges 8:22).

Likewise the citizens of Shechem and Bethmilo proclaimed Abimelech, king of Israel (Judges 9:16).

In olden days Mizos have no royal tribe. They always were at war with those around them. It is therefore necessary to guard a village from evening's attack. Mr.Zahmuaka and his six brothers were brave fighters and no one dare attack the village whenever they were on guard. They were therefore requested to guard the village con-

stantly and the people supplied all their needs for they had no time to work in the jhum. After some years they became rulers.

In ancient days virile men seized power and held it in their time by wisdom and courage, until they became decadent, or were overpowered. These conditions have ended. Chieftainships are now hereditary, subject to good behaviour, and physical and mental normality.

*(Lushai Chrysalis, page 244 by Major A.G.McCall)*

# CHAPTER - 13

## SYNAGOGUE VIS-A-VIS ZAWLBUK

People of Israel had a synagogue for the past hundred of years. Synagogue comes from the Greek for 'bringing together. Israelites used synagogues for the following purposes :-

1. It is a house of worship.
2. Synagogue is more than a place of prayer. It is a gathering place, the focal point of all Jewish community life.
3. It serves as the home of relgious education, youth activities and social affairs.
4. For many centuries, the synagogue also contained a hostel for wayfarers.

*(What is a Jew? page 135 by Rabbi Morris N.Katzer)*

Use of Zawlbuk by Mizos :

Every Lushai village possesses a Zawlbuk or bachelor's house. It is usually built near the chief's house in the middle of the village and all the young men and boys sleep ther at night. The Zawlbuk is the centre of village at night. The Zawlbuk is the centre of village life and is a most useful institution. The younger boys are under discipline in the same way as in a boarding house in public school, the

young men use it as a club and dormitory, travellers can put up in it for the night and the chief uses it as a meeting place where he can make known his orders. As all the young men are concentrated there, they are always available for any unexpected emergency or for any urgent work. It is here that the boys learn wrestling and other games. Wrestling is compulsory for all the inmates and the smaller boys are first made to wrestle among themselves and no skrimshanking is allowed. If a leopard comes into the village and kills a pig or a wild cat comes and kills fowls all the inmates of the Zawlbuk rush out as soon as the hue and cry is raised and pursue the intruder.

The existence of a Zawlbuk facilitates matters enormously if a grave has to be dug or a sick man carried to hospital, as the chief then knows exactly where the young men are to be found.

*(A Monograph On Lushai Customs and Ceremonies published in 1928 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S., page 8-9).*

An interesting institution in every Lushai village is the Zawlbuk, or 'Bachelors' quarters'. Immediately a boy attains his twelfth year, he no longer sleeps at home, but in the Zawlbuk, with the other unmarried men of his village. The Zawlbuk is a large hall, with a huge hearth in the centre, and a sleeping platform at the far end. Meeting early in the evening, the youngmen spend hours together singing

the old war songs of their country, and reciting the brave deeds of their ancestors. The large gatherings afford excelent opportunities for the missionaries to make known to the youth of Lushai the message of the Gospel.

*(The Story of Our Foreign Mission, page 79 (Presbyterian Church of Wales) published in 1930 by John Hughes Morries)*

The Zawlbuk is the bachelors' barrack where young boys and youths learned all the discipline that has ever been possible in Lushai social life.

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 211 by Major A.G. McCall).*

Therefore there were similarities in the nature and uses of Synagogue and Zawlbuk.

# CHAPTER - 14

## SLAVES AMONG ISRAELITES AND MIZOS

**Israelites used to keep slaves :-**

1. Slaves taken in war.
2. Slaves because of debts.
3. Those who became slaves due to poverty.

God forbids that an Israelite should be a slave of foreigners. Therefore his brother or other kinsman should redeem an Israelites who had given himself up as a slave to a foreigner. A Hebrew who gave himself up as a slave due to poverty must not be treated by the owner as other slaves were. He must treat him as a servant. He must be given freedom on the seventh year and that with some properties. (Exo.21:2-6; Deut.15:12&13).

If the owner of a slave gave him a wife, the wife and the offsprings belonged to the slave's owner.

If a man wanted to marry a slave girl he might do so after mourning her parents for a month. Women who married often took their slave-girls to their new home.

"You shall set apart three cities for you in the land which the LORD your God gives you to possess. You

shall prepare the roads, and divide into three parts the area of the land which the LORD your God gives you as a possession, so that any manslayer can flee to them".

"This is the provision for the man-slayer, who by fleeing there may save his life. If any one kills his neighbour unintentionally without having been at enmity with him in time past, as when a man goes into the forest with his neighbour to cut wood, and his hand swings the axe to cut down a tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbour so that he dies, he may flee to one of these cities and save his life" (Deut. 19:2-5).

So, Moses set apart three cities, where a man who accidentally kills another man may find refuge. Such a man also finds refuge by holding the horn of the altar (I Kings 1:49-50).

## Among Mizos :

Mizos also had three classes of slaves. (Slaves were called 'bawih' in Mizo).

### 1. Chhungpui Bawi :

This term was applied to a person who was in poverty, sickness, or distress and had sought and received protection at the hands of the Chief. In return for what was, in most cases, almost paternal care, the Chhungpui Bawi was expected to work on the same lines, within his or her physical capacity, as a Lushai would have worked when

living a normal existance within the social framework. Chhungpui Bawi shared the various prequisites common to most Chief's establishments in the shape of a more lavish table, generous supplies of rice beer, and meat from the chase or from customary sacrifices.

The Chief would procure a wife for the young male Bawi (Slave) and would generally succour him as his own in times of scarcity. In no case was there any physical restriction on where a Bawi lived with the Chief's village precincts, after he had been married for three years. This period of three years would be increased to six if the Bawi married a female Bawi. On his setting up a separate house he would be known as INHRANG BAWI, 'IN' meaning house and 'HRANG' separate

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, Chapter V by Major A.G.McCall).*

The children of a Chhungpui Bawi might have born into the status of Bawi, a position which was argued, implied a sense of physical surrender without a choice.

## 2. Chemsen Bawi :

A man who kills another man (other than an enemy) is liable to be killed by the deceased relatives. Such a person would seek sanctuary with the Chief, regardless of cost, in return for protection in the face of certain retribution if his plea failed. It is easy to visualise the scene as

such an individual broke in on the easy security of the Chief's entourage throwing himself down before the Chief, his engaged pursuers chasing him, bent on immediate vengeance. Sanctuary, life, the abandonment of his freedom, perhaps that of his progeny, were all worth the gamble of the future in the face of a certain and probably deserved death. *(With the advent of the British Administration conditions productive of this type of Bawi ceased to exists).*
*(Lushai Chrysal'is, Chapter V, page 121, by Major A.G.McCall).*

The chief's house is a sanctuary where all criminals may take refuge. Even the avengers of blood, pursuing a murderer red-handed, may not pass beyond the threshold with arms in their hands. But by thus seeking refuge under the chief's roof-tree fugitive becomes *ipso facto* the chief's slave. He has other slaves also of those taken in war; by them he sends orders and messages, their authorization being the chief's own spear, which represents his sign manual
*(A Fly on The Wheel, page 243. by Lt.Col.Thomas H.Lewin).*

Formerly, a person who had committed a serious crime could enter the chief's house and escape vengeance; in so doing, however, he became the slave of his protector.

*(The Story of Our Foreign Mission, page 79,*
*published in 1930 by John Hughes Morris).*

It has long been customary for Lushai chiefs to have certain serfs (bawi) or slaves in their households. They were acquired in various ways. Under the old Lushai law the chief's house offered asylum for people guilty of certain kinds of manslaughter. On entering his house they became dependent on him and he controlled their future to a very large extent. Their children also belonged to him

*(On Every High Hill, page 64, by The Rev.J.Meirion Lloyd)*

### 3. Tukluh Bawi :

This type covered the defeated in battle who, to save their skins, surrendered themselves and, perhaps, their ultimate families to the Chief.

The Tukluh Bawi was comparatively free in that he was permitted to live in a separate house while custom provided for the redemption of his freedom by payment to the Chief of Mythan or its equivalent in value

*(Lushai Chrysalis, Chapter V, page 122, by Major A.G.McCall).*

A Mizo who accidentally kills another man finds refuge in the Chief's house but becomes a slave.

It is strange such similarities should exist between the two customs and one may wonder if it is more than a mere coincidence.

# CHAPTER - 15

## FESTIVALS

"Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to me. You shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. None shall appear before me empty-handed. You shall keep the feast of harvest, of the first fruits of your labour, of what you sow in the field. You shall keep the feast of ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labour" (Exo.23:14-16).

Israelites and Mizos both have three important festivals in a year as below :-

### 1. Passover

Passover is the outstanding home festival in Jewish life. It is the Feast of Freedom, commemorating Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Passover is celebrated for eight days (seven days by Reform Jews) during the first month of spring. On the day before the holiday begins, the house is examined from basement to attic for any sign of leavened bread or any food containing yeast, and all traces are removed. For one week, matzoth (unleavened bread) and various pancakes

and puddings made of unleavened ingredients replace all bread products on the menu.

The highlight of the Passover celebration is the Seder service-family banquet held on the first and second evenings of Passover (Reform Jews have one Seder). The table is decorated with fruits and flowers, the best china and candlesticks, and other marks of festivity. A wine cup beside each place setting is used for the four sips of wine-symbol of joy.

Essentially the ceremony consists of telling the story of the Exodus, using various symbols for illustration and dramatization.

Various items of food each have their lesson; the hard boiled egg is the symbol of life - Israel's optimistic affirmation of the sanctity of life.

Customs dictates that guests be invited to the family table. In addition to friends, a student away from home, a soldier or any traveler far from his family are welcome visitors.

The feast of Passover has become the symbol of one of mankind's most cherished ideals - freedom from enslavement. To the Jew, it is an annual reminder that the work of freedom is never ended.

*(What is a Jew?, The Meaning of passover by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer, page 165-167).*

## 1. Mizo Chapchar Kut :

This feast is usually held as soon as the jhum/field have been cut, that is the last part of March or the first part of April lasting for a week or so.

The first few days are spent by the young men hunting animals and catching fish for the feast. Then, on an appointed day, all the Lushais kill pigs, drink zu (zu is Mizo homemade beer) and have a feast. The next day, all other clans do the same.

The third day is known as the 'kut zan' and all the people gather around the village "lung dawh", a stone platform put up as a memorial to the dead, and plates of meat, rice, boiled eggs, etc., are brought out and people give titbits to their friends to eat, and all drink zu.

The fourth day is known as the 'zupui ni' which is spent in drinking zu; and, in the eyening, the chief gathers together all the young men and girls and gets them to dance and sing.

The fifth day is known as the 'zuthing chawi ni' and more zu is drunk and they continue to drink zu until the supply runs out.

The last day of the feast is known as the 'eipuar awmni' and is 'hrilh' (no work must be done on this sacred day). It is thought that any one going to the jungle on this day will be eaten by a tiger.

This is the most important feast in the Lushai year and is to celebrate the arrival of the Lushai new year

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 90, by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

## 2. Shavuoth (The Feast of Harvest)

Shavuoth is celebrated in late May or early June, exactly seven weeks after the Feast of Passover. Unlike the other major feasts, it is observed for only 2 days (only one in the Reform).

Originally Shavuoth was an agricultural festival - The Feast of First Fruits.

The Book of Exodus is read on Shavuoth, including the chapter containing the Ten Commandments. The Book of Ruth, the delightful story of the Moabite girl's devotion to the faith of her adoption, is also read in the synagogue on the Feast of Weeks.

The synagogue is decorated with various fresh fruits in remembrance of the ceremony of Temple days, when offerings of first fruits were carried by the pilgrims to Jerusalem

*(What is A Jew?, Shavuoth, page 167 by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer).*

## 3. Mizo Mimkut : (Feast of Harvest)

Mimkut is really a feast in honour of those persons who have died during the past year. It takes place in the month of September and lasts 2 days at the most.

Also the first fruits are placed in a basket and offered to God. Until then, no one is allowed to eat anything from the paddy field. The Second day is observed as 'Hrilh'

Fresh vegetables, maize, bread, necklaces and cloths are placed on the memorials of the dead. In houses in which someone has died during the year zu is drunk and on the second day everybody eats bread. At the end of this feast there is one day's 'hrilh' (no work must be done)

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 91, by M.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

## 4. The Feast of Succoth (Harvest Festival of Thanksgiving)

Succoth is the Festival of Tabernacles, which begins five days after the Day of Atonement and continues for eight days (seven for Reform Jews). It is a harvest festival of thanks-giving a reminder of the celebreation in ancient Palestine when the crops had been gathered and the rainy season was approaching.

The feast is a gay and happy event, full of rich and colourful symbols. Special services are held in the synagogue on the first two days and the last two days of Succoth (the first and last day in the Reform ritual).

*(What is A Jew? The Feast of Succoth, page 158, by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer).*

## 5. Mizo Pawlkut (Harvest of Thanksgiving)

It takes place immediately after the harvest is gathered and it is a sort of harvest thanksgiving. It may last for a week. The duration of the feast depends on the amount of zu available. At the end of the feast there is one day 'hrilh'

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 91, by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

Three important feasts, each having many similarities in their observances and their significances are, at the least, a very rare and strange coincidence.

# CHAPTER - 16

## OTHER SIMILAR PRACTICES

1. Amongst Mizos, opposing parties in a battle select a champion of its own. These two champions meet on a single log bridge and fight. The party whose champion dies or is defeated is the loser of the day.

Another practice is that the champions bend their arms and put them together one's elbow touching the other's elbow. A glowing ember is placed on the muscles of the two arms. The champion who bears the heat longer is the winner and his party is considered the conqueror.

We see in the Bible that David, the champion of the Israelites, defeated the giant Goliath. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled (I Samuel 17:1-51).

2. The women of Israel used to welcome the victorious war-party with great joy, singing their praises.

As they were coming home, when David returned from slaying the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with timbrels, with songs of joy, and with instruments of music. And the women sang to one another as they made merry,

"Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his ten thousands" (I Samuel 18:6-7)

Mizo : On return from such raids the young women would accompany the welcoming party and meet the worriors carrying for them zu (Mizo rice beer), fruits and tobacco, and would escort them back to the village amid ecstatic jubilation.

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 38, by Major A.G.McCall).*

3. Both the Israelites and the Mizos are very superstitious and have many religious bindings.

It is only natural that a religious group with a continous tradition of scores of centuries would create a pattern of ceremonial surrounding man's greatest crisis, the end of his life. These customs have grown out of community experiences and group values. Some are vestiges of primitive superstition.

In addition to these religious rituals there are several Jewish mourning customs which are pure superstition - and which are more or less on the wane among modern Jews. It was customary for example, to cover all the mirrors in a house of mourning - a practice stemming from an ancient fear that the spirit of the dead might be confused by his own image and remain in the house. Upon leaving the cemetery the members of the funeral procession would

wash their hands and toss a twig over their shoulders - clearly a remnant of old magical thinking.

*(What is A Jew? What Is the Meaning of the Various Death Ritual in the Jewish Religion? page 94 by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer).*

**Mizo :** An ideal of the practical effect on the daily lives of the people, which these spiritual values have had, may be conceived from the following superstitions. If a moonmoth was seen, or snakes in a position of copulation, it might mean the approach of death. At times of calamity, sudden death, death in the hunt or in war, there would be a day of rest, and death would fall upon any who broke this. Retaining possessions of others which may have been found by chance, cultivating over a field containing a water spring, entering another's house in the absence of the inmates, evil dealing with the insance, and many other objectionable features in behaviour might, and probably would, all result in death.

The moral standard of society motivated by a terror of the unseen supernatural was certainly very high

*(Lushai Chrysal'is, page 74 by Major A.G.McCall).*

4. Both the Israelites and the Mizos have their towns and villages on hilltops.

A Lushai village is generally situated on or near the top of some high hill or ridge

*(The Lushai Expedition 1871-1872, page 79 by R.G. Woodthorpe, Lieut. Royal Engineers).*

5. The priests of both the Israelites and of the Mizos must marry only virgin girls (Lev.21:13-15).

6. Ancient Israel women and children were almost placed as having no religion.

Likewise Mizos put women to have no religion. Their saying quotes : "Women and crabs have no religion".

7. Israelites used a bunch of leaves-hyssop to smear blood on their posts on the eve of Exodus. A corpse placed near the grave is covered with green leaves. Those who attended a funeral used to pluck grass and toss a twig over their shoulders.

When a Mizo woman dies of child delivery, people hang a bunch of leaves above the door to scare away the spirit of the dead.

When a grave is dug, the last one to come out of it swept the floor, the sides of the graves as well as his body with the bunch of leaves so that his own spirit may also go out of the new grave. They used leaves as a sign of that they are observing a special day set apart in connection with a religious function by hanging a bunch of leaves over and outside the doorway.

8. Israelites condemned witchcraft. A witch or a wizard should be stoned to death (Lev.20:27).

In the old days, Mizos also feared and hated witch/wizard. If a man had accused another of being a wizard, he would probably have been murdered by the person he accused. If a man could clearly be shown to be a wizard, no chief would allow him into his village and he would have had nowhere to live

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 18 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S).*

9. Kindness to strangers is a constant theme in the Old Testament, with the frequent admonition to remember they were strangers in the land of Egypt. Hospitality to wayfarers is one of the ten kindly deeds which, according to the Rabbis, bear fruit on earth and procure bliss and additional reward in the afterlife.

Mizos are also strictly taught to be kind to strangers. There is a saying which taught to ask a stranger how long he would stay and not when he is likely to leave.

10. Sympathy for the misfortunes of their fellow human beings has become a part of the Jewish way of life.

Mizos are also the same in this. They have a saying which taught tc help anyone who needs help even while on journey. Another saying declares, "A coward is he who does not help anyone in distress·

*(A Monograph of Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 19-21 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S).*

11. Courtesy to the elderly was part of the fabric of Jewish living. One did not contradict an older person, even if what he said was incorrect.

Exactly in the same manner, a Mizo will keep silent even if he knows when the aged are wrong. No one eats before the oldest of them starts eating.

12. Israelites are not to lend out anything with interest to other Israelites (Exo.22:25).

Occasionally people borrow money or rice from each other, which in due course has to be returned.

According to a Lushai custom no interest is chargeable on loans

*(A Monograph of Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 71 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S).*

13. There is a Hebrew proverb saying, "One who thinks he can live without others is mistaken. One who thinks others cannot live without him is even more mistaken".

A Mizo proverb says, "A big stone cannot carry on without support from small stones".

14. Hebrew law - "Cursed is he who despises his father or mother (Deut.27:16).

Mizo saying, "One who does not respect his parents seldom gets on his feet" (metaphorically).

15. Wherever they may be, Israelites and Mizos live in a close community.

16. In olden days Israelites and Mizos used a cup made of gourd for drinking water.

17. Israelites and Mizos both like community singing.

18. The only other instrument used by the Lakhers (MIZO) is the 'Jewish harp' which they call 'chaei'. The oldest form of chaei is a small straight piece of bamboo hollowed out so as to leave a tongue in the middle.

I noticed similar zithers from the Moluccas in the Dutch exhibit at the French Colonial Exhibition in Paris in 1931

*(The Lakhers, page 185 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S).*

The 'chaei' (musical instrument of the Lakhers) has been described as 'Jews' Harp' "Harp Old Style" the Book on the Lakhers by Mr.N.E.Parry. It is amazing to note that how those Jews' harps could find their way into these primitive and isolated tribes, like Lakhers, if they were not closely related to the Israelites

*(The Origin of Mizos, page 117 by Lieut.Col.C.G. Vergheese, V.S.M.)*

19. Israelites are loyal to their particular tribes (as seen in Judges 19 & 20) about the war between Benjamites and the other tribes.

Mizos are also loyal to their particular clan. If a man of one clan kills a man of another clan the whole clan of the

offended flee the village fearing repercussion from the clan of the man killed.

## 20. Israelites

"You shall have a place outside the camp and you shall go out to it; and you shall have a stick with your weapons; and when you sit down outside, you shall dig a hole with it, and turn back and cover up your excrement. Because the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to save you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, that he may not see anything indecent among you, and turn away from you" (Deut.23:12-14).

### Mizo

In olden days the Mizos like Israelites covered their excrement. No one ever carelessly pass excrement when they go to their jhums and jungles. They dug the earth for the excreta and covered them again with earth. When they did not have digging instruments they chose shallow grounds and covered them with leaves.

### Israelites

"When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but an owner of the ox shall be cleared. But if the ox has been

accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has been warned but has not kept it in, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. If a ransom is laid on him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is laid upon him (Exo.21:28-30).

### Mizo

All cases of unnatural death caused by demostic animals must under standing orders be reported. The Lushai custom in such cases is as follows :-

If mythun or bull kills a man and it is clear that the man did not bring his fate on himself by teasing the animal, the owner of the animal must kill either the offending animal or one exactly similar as 'Thlaichhiah' for the man who has been killed and must provide 'Puandum' (special cloth) for covering the corpse. If the man killed had been teasing the animal before it killed him, the owner of the animal need only to kill a pig for the 'Thlaichhiah' and provide a 'Puandum' for the burial.

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 72 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

## 22. Israelites

"If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a

sheep. He shall make restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft (Exo. 22:1).

### Mizo

Any one who steals a chicken, a pig, a goat, a cow or a mithun and kills and eats it, is guilty of phil. Phil in Mizo is the word used to describe the stealing and killing of an animal in order to eat it.

The fines for phil vary according to the animal stolen. The offence of Phil is considered to be very disgraceful

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 59 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

## 23. Israelites

"When a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed over, or let his beast loose and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best in his own field and in his own vineyard" (Exo. 22:5).

### Mizo

The general principle in all Lushai villages is that the owner of a jhum or garden close to a village in which mythun and other animals are kept must fence it securely. If inspite of the fence, mythun, cattle, sheep, pigs and goats are always getting in and damaging the crops, the owner of the animals must strengthen the fence. If they refuse to do

so, the Chief and Upas (Elders) may order the owner of the offending animal to dispose of it.

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 72 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.)*

## 24. Israelites

"When fire breaks out and catches in thorns so that the stacked grain or the standing grains or the field is consumed, he that kindles the fire shall make full restitution (Exo. 22:6).

Mizo

If one house in a village catches fire, the whole village is very likely to burn down, even accidental fire is regarded as an offence for which the owner of the house which catches fire is to be punished. The punishment is inflicted to make people careful in view of the great loss involved for all the villagers, if the whole village is burnt down through the carelessness of the person. If a house catches fire through the carelessness of the inmates, the owner of the house is fined.

If any one deliberately sets fire to another's house, he is fined a mythun according to custom.

Anyone who, intentionally or through carelessness sets fire to the jungle no matter how little or how much is burnt, is fined a mythun.

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 74 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

25. Among Israelites, it was forbidden for a man to have relations with his wife during a time of war.

**Mizo**

To have relations with his wife on the night before his departure for the battle or hunting is considered unlucky by Mizos.

26. Suicide are buried apart from other graves by the Jews and the Mizos.

27. **Israelites**

At the time of the IInd Temple, it was the customs of Israelites to dig graves as 'khaukhurh graves' (Letter of Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail, dt. 10.1.'86).

**Mizo**

When Mizos dig the grave, after digging about five feet deep, they again make a special chamber at the floor level wide enough to put the corpse. After placing the corpse it is closed with flat stones or treetrunks. This type of grave is called 'khaukhurh'.

28. A Mizo priest swings a white fowl near a sick person during sacrifice.

The Jewish priest also swings a white fowl on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). A white fowl is sacrificed for an individual's sin.

29. Mizo children play -

"Lut teng teng, lut teng teng,
Sion (Zion)-ah lut teng teng ...

is also practised by Jewish children. *(Gideon Rei Vana).*

30. Drinking liqour is not forbidden but drunkenness is sharply condemned.

*(What is a Jew?/Are Jews Forbidden to drink hard liqour by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer, page 39).*

Drunkenness is the great curse of the people (Mizos)
*(Chin-Lushai Land, page 234 by Sgt. Lt.Col.A.S.Reid, M.B.).*

31. Chivalry, even to the extent of sacrificing one's life for others is greatly honoured by Israelites. This has also been the same among Mizos.

32. Like Israelites, Mizos considered having many children is a blessing.

33. It is known that some people have more than one wife among Israelites.

Mizo

*Polygamy* is indegenous to the country, by nowadays, it is not practised. A polygamouse wife is a concubine and is known as *hmei*

*(Lushai Chrysalis, page 105 by Major McCall).*

As chiefs usually have, in addition to their real wife several concubines, also their families run large

*(A Mongraph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 4 by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

34. A male Hebrew child is circumcised on the eighth day.

On the eighth day a male Mizo child is given a blessing by a priest. The day is observed as a holiday and they drink zu with friends and relatives. After this ceremony the father of the child is free from taboo and may do any work.

35. Cutting hair was also never done in old days by Israelites and the Mizos (Lev.19:27).

36. A Tallith is a prayer shawl worn by male Jews. Originally, the prayer shawl was a badge of distinction, worn only by the scholars and elders.

*(What is a Jew? What is Tallith/ and Why do Jews Wear a Tallith at Prayer? by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer).*

Mizos have a special cloth, which is very similar to the Tallith. Their designs are also very much the same and when they are put together it is clear that their origin looks the same. This shawl is called "Tawlhlohpuan".

Like Tallith, 'Tawlhlohpuan' was a badge of distinction, worn by the Mizo brave in the battle. Those who wear this special shawl must never draw backwards in the battle. It has fringes but not as long as the fringes of Tallith.

Mizo people have another type of white shawl called **'Naupuakpuan' (baby carrier)** with black stripes on both sides of the end and in the middle, having long fringes. The fringes have notable features in the sense that **the fringes are so much longer** than those of other shawls, approximately eight inches long; and the **style of knitting the fringes** used to be different in a special way and the fringes following the knitted portions used to be rolled throughout. The traditional pattern of the Mizo **'Naupuakpuan'** and Jewish prayer shawl **'Tallith/Tzit Tzit'** are almost identical.

Mizo ancestors used to take with them one such shawl when they were at war or when hunting for wild animals. Nowadays, Mizos weave these stripes in a simpler way and it is used for carrying babies on their back. Even then, it still resembles Tallith/Tzit Tzit.

Just before the Wedding Ceremony a Jewish bride presents her groom a new Tallith. When a male Jew dies his body is to be covered by Tallith.

A Mizo bride must take with her 'Zawlpuan" (mixed colours) on joining her husband and Zawlpuan must be used to cover her husband if he dies.

## 37. Songs

The Mizos like the Jews flower in their songs to compare its beauty with those of their beloved. These types of songs seen in canticles (The songs of Solomon) are many among the Mizo songs.

There are also Mizo songs somewhat akin to the Hebrew songs we see in Number 21:17-18.

Another type of Mizo song is similar to the peom we read in Joshua 10:12 asking the sun and the moon to halt till they can finish what they are doing. The Mizo songs asks the sun to halt in the sky so long as he is with his lover.

In olden days Mizos had a nursery rhyme in which the name of Miriam was mentioned.

'Miriami, led the group and Zermanziaki, Tukbanlerhi and Behawngi were following her...'

Another old song is about the crossing of the Red Sea or a big river, in which a column of smoke, during the day, and a fire at night were mentioned to be roaming about.

"When we are preparing for the big festival
We had to cross the Red Sea,
Our enemies were coming after us with chariots
The Sea swallowed them all
As if they are meat.
We are led by the cloud during the day,
And by fire at night.
Take those birds for the food and
Drink water coming out from the rock".

38. Tatooing is never done neither by the Jews nor by the Mizos.

39. Israelites never make God's image and Mizos also never do it.

40. The flesh of a sacrificial animal may be eaten by only a priest. There is sin offering as well as guilt offering. This is the Levitical Law of the Jews (Lev.7:6).

Among Mizos the flesh of a sacrificial animal may be eaten by the priest and only by the male members of the family for whom the offering is made.

41. Remembering the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your works; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son, your daughter, your

man-servant, or your maid-servant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates (Exo.20:8-10).

Sabbath is a time for spiritual refreshment and for a break in the monotonous routine of daily labour. For example, driving a car is taboo, buying a newspaper is forbidden and writing a letter is a violation of the law.

But the observers do not think of the Sabbath as a time when they are prevented from performing all sorts of minor labours, but rather as a twenty-four hour period when they can enjoy a world of complete serenity, beauty and peace.

*(What does the Sabbath mean to Jews?*
*by Rabbi Morris N Kertzer).*

There is a close similarity the way the Israelites spend their holy days (Sabbath) and the way Mizos do. In Mizo language, this holy day is called **'HRILH'** or **'SERH'**.

'Serh' is anything possessing a religious significance or anything that is unlucky which would be called by the Lushai **'thianglo'**.

**'Hrilh'** is applied more to the special day or days set apart for observance of the 'serh' and on which no work must be done. If anything occurs that is serh, a hrilh will always take place. A person who is 'hrilh' must do no work, except women, who can do ordinary household tasks and there are certain prohibitions which vary with the nature of the 'hrilh'.

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 88& 89, by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

42. **Mt. Mal Selaimon (Blue Mountain)**

This mountain is situated in the south-eastern corner of Mizoram. The name Mal Selaimon might have been the namesake of King Solomon or Suleiman, the King of Turks.

Near this mountain there was a place called SHEMUNA. May it be named after Kiryat Shmona of northern Israel.

*(See 1889-90 map in "The Chin Hills" by Carey and Tuck and "Chin Lushai Land" by Reid).*

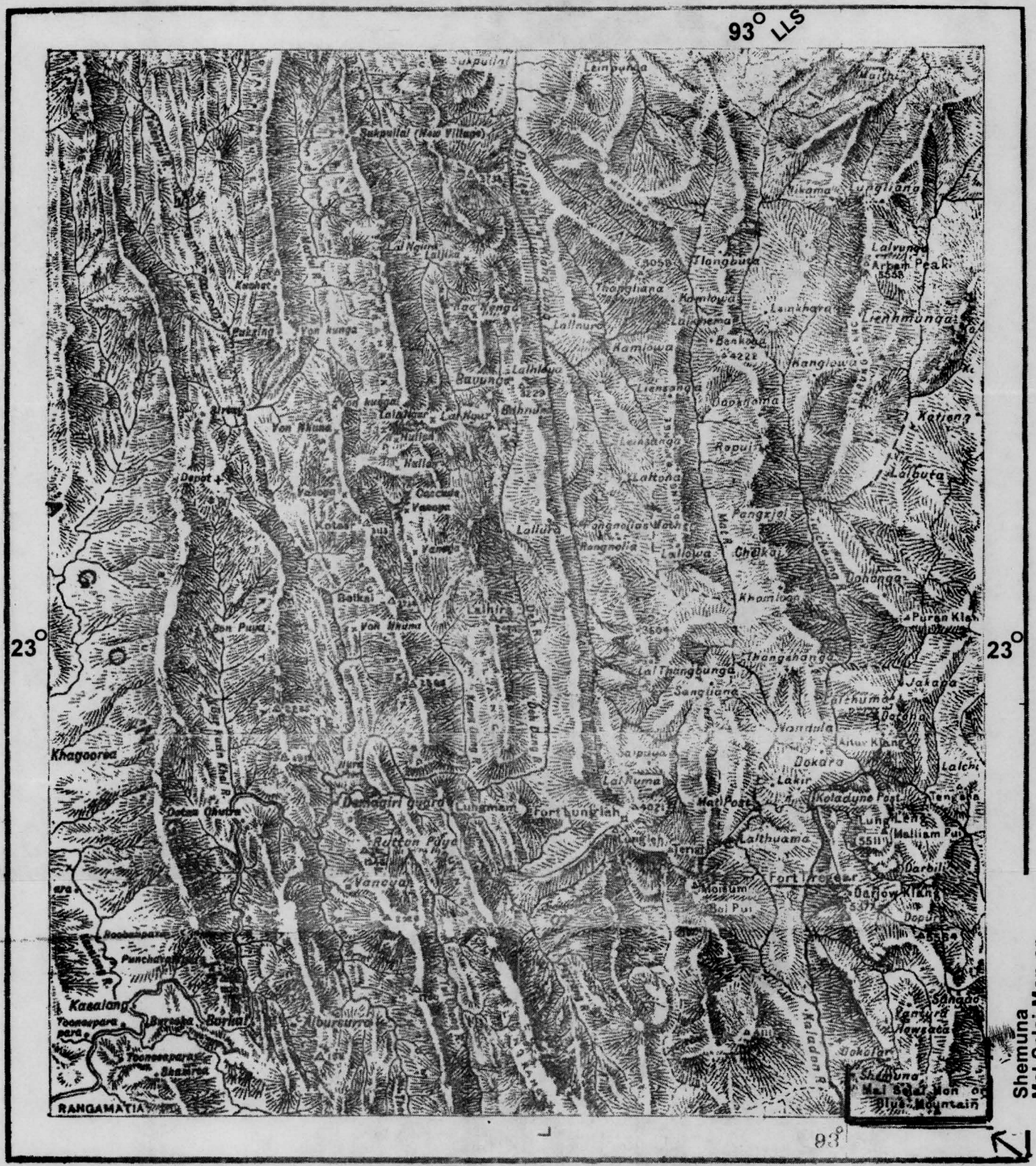
43. And these you shall have in abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination : the eagle, the vulture, the nighthawk, the seagull, the hawk, the owl, the cormorant, the stork, the heron, the hoopoe and the bat (Lev.11:13-19).

Old Mizos never eat all these birds and some wild animals which eat the flesh with blood like tigers, wolves, jackals etc.

44. "You shall not steal".

This is one of the "Ten Commandments" (Exo.20:15).

# COUNTRY TRAVERSED BY THE LUSHAI FIELD FORCE OF 1889-90




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Photo. S. I. O., Calcutta.

Among Mizos, theft is looked upon as a very serious crime. Moreover, cases are definitely rare. Paddy, umbrellas, tools are all frequently left on the main paths but a case is hardly ever heard when a passerby takes such an article for his own advantage.

*(Lushai Chrysalis, page [illegible] by Major A.G.McCall)*

45. "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favour in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house and she departs out of his house (Deut.24:1).

Mizo : When a man divorce his wife, he simply says, "I mak you", (mak means divorce), and the woman is then divorced

*(A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies, page 42, by N.E.Parry, I.C.S.).*

After divorce, she is free to marry another man.

46. Israelites forbid marriage for a period of 33 days after Passover.

Mizo refrain from marrying in the month of August.

47. In Biblical times, a childless widow was required to marry her husband's brother, in order to preserve intact

the family property. This was known as "levirate marriage". The law was gradually modified, and finally, several centuries ago, the rabbis issued a ban against this type of marriage.

*(Does Jewish Religious Law Permit the Marriage of Relatives, page 65, by Rabbi Morris N.Kertzer,).*

This is also practised by the Mizos in ancient days.

Levirate marriage is practised by the Mizos in olden days. If the deceased brother had children the parents could not press him to marry his brother's widow. But they used to request him to marry her, saying that if he marry another girl, the children of his brother would become poor.

Uptil now there are few people who practised this old custom.

(I wish it to be understood that the majority of the remarks are equally applicable to the Lushais). According to Chin custom when a man dies the next unmarried brother takes his widow to wife. *(For a similar Jewish custom, see Genesis, Chap.XXXVIII).*

*(Chin-Lushai Land, page 149, Ist Edition : 1893 by Sgt.Lt.Col.A.S.Reid, M.B.)*

48. Adultery is a heinous crime both among Israelites and Mizos.

Israel considers it as an offence deserving death penalty.

Mizos do not have penalty of death except for murder. Mizos consider an adultery as a duplicate heinous offence. A woman who commits an adultery is turned out of her husband's house. Her marriage price and all other belongings are forfeited. She almost becomes a social outcast.

49. Now there was no smith to be found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears" but everyone of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his ploughshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle (I Samuel 13:19-21).

Special mention may be made of the resemblance between the Israelites and Mizos with regard to the shapes and styles of spears and arrow used in the olden days.

Can we put away so many similarities as mere coincidence?

50. *Lt.Col.C.G.Vergheese, V.S.M. wrote about the 'ORIGIN OF THE MIZOS'.* Few of his findings are :

During the era of Khampat (Burma) the mixed tribes to Mannasseh or what we now call the "ancestors of Mizos" were using bows and arrows, akin to the bows and arrows of their ancestors on the hill, East of River Jordan (in Gilead) *(page 24).*

The ancestors of Mizos and few other tribes had believed in one benevolent God who is omnipotent, omnipresent and creator of all things and they called him "Pathian" of the Canaanites and Greeks and "Thian" of the Karens and Kachins. In no other part of the world the Christian missionaries had been so successful in converting the entire population into Christians, as they have done in Mizoram and adjacent tribal areas. I would attribute this success of the missionaries to the fact that Mizos did not have any difficulty or hesitation in accepting a God which is the same one known to the JEWS and MIDIANITES as "YEHOWAH"; PATHIAN to them or THIAN to the KARENS. Their belief about spirits and devils was akin to the ones of Jews, as described in the Bible. Though the Mizos had been called animists, they had truly believed in one "God Almighty" who is the creator of all things on the Earth *(page 60).*

Pialral to Mizos was the same as "Heaven" to the Jews and Christians *(page 64).*

The dead body of a man died an unnatural death may not be taken inside the house. The body was buried outside the village to the West and the funeral used to take place before dawn by torch light. This was also the custom amongst the Israelites in olden days *(page 80).*

Like the Jews, these tribes in Mizoram, Chin Hills, Arakans, Kachins and Karen areas liked to have their dead near them *(page 81).*

Like the Mizo customs of "SERH" and "HRILH", one could see that the Jews also had observed "sacred days". As the Mizos used to consider a house in which a sacrifice had been performed as SERH and no outsider was allowed to enter, the Jewish priests also did not allow any one to enter the Tabernacle where sacrifices were made to YEHOWAH. "Whoever entering the Tabernacle was considered to be unclean, Yehowah was supposed to kill instantaneously" *(page 88).*

Moses had given orders to Jews regarding treatment of strangers as under :-

"And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the strangers that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you and thou shalt love him as thyself, for ye were stranger in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19:33-34).

According to the Mizo custom strangers are to be treated well and their comforts are to be looked after. If a guest comes into a Mizo house, he is given free shelter and food without even asking him about his identity or antecedents. It was considered disgraceful to refuse hospitality to a stranger *(page 107).*

It is worthwhile to compare the system of slaves prevalent among these tribals with the system which was prevalent among the Israelites. You will se great similarity between the Jews and Lushais *(page 111).*

Rules regarding the treatment of prisoners of war by the Jews are given in Deuteronomy Ch.21. Persons captured as slaves by the Jews during battle were thus treated separately, exactly like the way the Lushais used consider 'SAL' *(page 111).*

Many of the Lushais had married their slave girls and treated them exactly as Moses had ordered the Israelites *(page 93).*

Israelites were not allowed to take any interest for the money loaned to a kinsman or one of his tribe. According to the Lushai customs, no interest was chargeable on loans. Lushais often borrowed things like axes, daos or cloths from each other. In such cases the actual article borrowed had to be returned. If the thing borrowed has been lost or damaged, it must be replaced with a similar article and no claims for damages were made. According to the Old Testament also, if a borrowed item was lost, it had to be replaced with a similar article (Exo.22:25-26).

When a man wants to start keeping mythun and has not enough money to buy a full grown cow mythun, it is customary to purchase a mythun calf before it is born. The would be purchaser pays down whatever the price may be and an agreement is made that he shall get the first calf that is born. When the calf is born, the purchaser has to claim if formally as his and this is known as KHEI BENG Similar customs had existed among the Israelites also *(page 113).*

The measures of weight and length used by the Lushais and Lakhers in olden days like "two fingers", "span", arms length etc., are akin to the measurements described in the Bible. On the other hand the units of weights and measures used by Mizos in olden days had greater similarity with the weights and measures which were used by the Israelites *(page 116)*.

Moses also had laid down similar laws for the Israelites regarding 'rest days' 'Holy days'. 'Clean things' and 'Unclean things' and forbidden relationships which have great similarity to those restrictions and customs of Lushais and other tribes *(page 122)*.

Naming Ceremony of children and the sacrifices performed among Lushais and the Israelites have great similarity *(page 122)*.

One has to read Leviticus Ch.18 to find out how much similarity is there between the sexual relationships prohibited for Jews by Moses and prohibited by the tribal customs of Lushais, Lakhers, Pawis and others who are believed to be descendents of Israelites *(page 123)*.

One should remember that Joseph had gone to Egypt and had married an Egyptian girl and after their return to Palestine, the descendents of Jacob also had married from local tribes like Canaanites, Moabite, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and Persians. During their stay in Inner Mongolia, China and Burma from AD 200 to AD

1200, the Israelites who had adopted the ways of other tribes had intermarried with Mongoloid people and as such, the features of the ancestors of the Mizos were bound to have more influence of the Chinese and Burmese than of the Semitic tribes. Still one could occasionally see some of the Mizos with features of Jews and Greeks *(page 131).*

I feel that the ancient laws given by Moses to their forefathers is the main reason for absence of prostitutes among the Mizos and other tribes who consider themselves as the descendants of Israelites *(page 136)*

When tribes in all other part of the world create images of Gods in stones and wood and worship them as their Gods, it is strange how the ancestors of Mizos had avoided this and made no permanent altars or images of "Pathian" the almighty God. This also proves my contention that their ancestors had obeyed the laws and customs of the Jews laid down by Moses at SINAI *(page 86).*

His conclusion is this, "Even though I have traced the origin of the Mizos and have come to the conclusion that they once belonged to the tribes of Israel, those who claim that Mizos are the descendants of Chinese, Mongolians, Burmese or Tibetans are equally correct, as their blood also flows in the veins of many of the Mizos and their tribes in the Eastern regions.

51. The following documents are written in *'Source Materials In Chinese History, page 5 & 6 by Charles Mayer,*

*B.A., Dip.Ed., B.Ed. (Melb) and Ian Allan, B.Com., M.A., Ed.D.(Calif).*

"One of the most drastic measure of quelling disaffection in the Empire was carried out on the suggestion of the powerful Grand Councillor Li Ssu. As a result almost all of the written records before the Ch'in era were destroyed.

"When they hear orders promulgated, they criticize them in the light of their own teachings. Within (the court) they mentally discredit them, and outside they criticize them upon the streets. To cast disrepute on their rulers etc., they regard as a thing worthy of fame; to accept different views they regard as high (conduct); and they lead the people to create slander. If such conditions are not prohibited, the imperial power will decline above, and partisanship will form below. It is expedient that these be prohibited".

"Your servant suggests that books in the bureau of history, save the records of Ch'in, be burned; that all persons in the empire, save those who hold a function under the control of the bureau of the scholars of wide learning, daring to store the Shih, the Shu, and the discussions of the various philosophers, should go to the administrative and military governors so that these books may be indiscriminately burned. Those who dare to discuss the Shih and the Shu among themselves should be (executed and their bodies) exposed on the market place. Those who use

the past to crticize the present, should be put to death together with their relatives. Officials who see or know (violators of these regulations) without reporting them, should be considered equally guilty.

(Those who have not burned them i.e. the books) within thirty days after the issuing of the order, are to be branded and sent to do forced labour. Books not to be destroyed will be those on medicine and pharmacy, divination by the tortoise and milfoil, and agriculture and arboriculture. As for persons who wish to study, (the laws and ordinances) let them take the officials as their teachers").

"An imperial decree granted approval".
D.BODDE
China's First Unifier (1967)

The following documents are written in the Cambridge Encyclopaedia of China

*(by General Editor Brian Hook, Senior Lecturer & Head of Deptt. of Chinese Studies, University of Leeds)*

(Shih Huang Ti (First Emperor) :

Latter accounts of the Ch'in empire lay consi-derable stress on the ruthless way in which the admi-nistration was conducted and the severity of the legal punishments imposed on criminals. It was alleged that cnsiderable popular

sufferings arose owing to the harsh system of conscription and the use of servicemen to fight foreign enemies (largely the Hsiung-nu) to build the defence lines of the north (sometimes known as the "Great Wall") and to construct roads, palaces and mausolea for imperial use. In addition, China is reputed to have suffered a severe blow in Li Ssu's measures to stamp out intellectual opposition. These included the attempt to prescribe ethical writings and scholarship in steps described as the "Burning of the Books" and the preparation of individual scholars.

The end of the Ch'in empire after a mere 15 years and two reigns has been ascribed in the first instance to be the outbreak of rebellions in the face of popular hardship *(page 169)*

## The Great Wall

During the Warring States period (403-221 B.C.) several kingdoms erected dykes or earthworks as a defence against their neighbours of potential invasion from the non-Chinese people of the north. It was one of the achievements of the first Ch'in emperor to unify a number of these walls into a single co-ordinated system, at a time when dangerous threat to Chinese security. A servicemen's life on the Wall and its attendant hardships have formed a theme of Chinese peotry and drama *(page 171)*.

## Burning of the Books

In an attempt to impose intellectual conformity, the Ch'in empire is alleged to have ordered the destruction of writings that advocated ethical ideas and thereby criticised the realistics and authoritarian measures of the Ch'in government. The success and effect of the order (213 B.C.) which was accompanied by the proscription of scholars, has been subject to some exaggeration. Li Ssu had been one of the prime froces in suggesting this measure. In doing so, he made it clear that it was only documents that were likely to be used to attack the current regime that should be banned; technical guides and manuals on, for example, divination, agriculture or medicine, are to be exempted from the order *(page 171)*.

## Religion and philosophy

Chinese religions continued to exist under the Mongols, who did not try to impose their native religion upon their subjects. There were also Muslims and Jews who had migrated to China but as yet no Chinese seem to have been converted to these creeds *(page 213)*.

## Judaism

**Origin** : The earliest evidence for the existance of Judaism in China comes from the T'ang dynasty, when in

A.D.878 in Khanfu (Canton) Jews were said to have been slaughtered. Jews and Muslims were forbidden by Mongols to circumsize, slaughter ritually, or marry paternal cousins. Marco Polo, Ilen Battutta, etc., mention Jews in Hangchow, Peking and Ch'uan-Chou. But it was only in Kai-feng that Jews left any records *(Jews women in K'aifeng, 1919).*

## K'ai-feng

Founded in the Sung dynasty, with a synagogue (Ch'ing-chen-sou) in 1163, by immigrants probably from Iran (although whether by sea or by land is not determined). Jews were on good terms with the authorities, both in the Ming and early Ch'ing, becoming officials, physicians and army officers. Chao Yin-Ch'ing, (1619-57) who helped rebuild the synagogue destroyed in the 1642 flood, was a Chin-shih of 1646, Vice Commissioner and special Imperial envoy.

The Community took in non-Jewish women, assimilated Confucianism but survived remarkably.

From 1840 Jews from Baghdad and elsewhere settled in Shanghai and Hongkong coming mainly as traders. From 1949, there had been a steady exodus to Israel, U.S.A., and elsewhere. By 1959 only 300 were left and in 1970 no community life as such existed with few

individuals remaining (apart from the synagogue and community of Hongkong).

## YEAR OF JUBILEE

"And you shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall be to you forty-nine years. Then you shall send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property, and each of you shall return to his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be to you; in it you shall neither sow, nor reap what grows of itself, nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat what it yield out of the field (Lev.25:8-12).

Every fifty years or so, the bamboos in the areas (Mizoram) start flowering. The bamboo fruit is much relished by the rats. The fruit acts as a fertility pill to the female rats. The rats thus eat away all the crops. The rat menace increase to such an extent that it requires an army to destroy them. These famines have been occuring from time to time adding to the misery of the Mizos.

*(The LandWhere The Bamboo Flowers, page 63 by J.D.Baveja).*

The Israelites had believed that every fiftieth year they should neither reap nor sow. They were not allowed to reap that grows of itself in their fields nor gather Grapes from the undressed as holy. In the year of Jubilee, they were supposed to release all salves and return every man to his own possession. (See Lev.25:8-12). The myth of the 'Mautam' after every 49 years among the Mizos has something to do with the Yobel year which was observed in ancient days by their ancestors in Palestine, in addition to the famine caused by the flowering of the bamboos and rapid increase in the rhodent population.

*(Origin of Mizos, page 137 by Lt.Col.C.G.Vergheese, VSM).*

# CONCLUSION

The strange thing about the Mizos is that they did not change their religion at all except for Christianity.

They entered Mizoram from China through Burma, whose main religion is Buddhism. Surprisingly enough, there was not even a small trace of Buddhist influence which signifies their deep commitment to their original religion, customs and traditions. Even now, Mizoram is surrounded by different religions like Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism, but no Mizo embraces these religions.

The Christian Missionaries from England arrived at Aijal (now Aizawl), the capital of Mizoram on 11th, January, 1894. After 5 years of hard labour only 2 Mizos were converted to Christians.

The Missionaries, while visiting the sacrificial places, noted with surprise the striking resemblance btween the Mizos and the Jews in their way of offering the blood and sacred parts of animals to God. To win over the Mizo priests, the Missionaries informed them that the Jewish people, from whom they copied the practice of offerings, have already stopped such rituals. Hence, it is no longer necessary for them to continue it. Then, they preached about Christianity and gradually won their hearts. So, after 50 years most of the Mizos became Christians.

On the religious front, the Mizos were found to be very conscious in obeying the Ten Commandments of God to Moses.

The social life, customs and traditions of ancient people of Israel and Mizos are very much alike.

It is notable to learn that no other religion in the world have close similarities as seen between the practices and rituals of the ancient Mizos and of the Jews.

Can all these parallel practices be coincidence? After careful research, the Israelites and the people of Mizo must have the same ancestors or mere neighbours close enough to copy each other's customs, traditions and social life.

Similarities in laws, customs and religious practices, some even almost identical are so numerous that anyone who does not accept them as mere coincedence cannot be accused of having a fertile imagination. Can all these similarites be coincidence!?

In fact, a careful research shows that the **MIZOS** are the **'MANASSEH TRIBE'**, one of the **Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.**

# RABBINATE RECOGNIZES BNEI MENASHE AS DESCENDANTS OF ISRAEL ON 30TH MARCH, 2005.

March 31, 2005
Aruzt 7 Israel National News

In a historic decision yesterday, Sephardic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar decided to formally recognize the Bnei Menashe of north-eastern India as "descendants of Israel".

The Chief Rabbinate has also agreed to send a beit din (rabbinical court) from the Chief Rabbinate to the region to convert them.

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 year ago. They reside primarily in the two Indian states of Mizoram and Manipur, along the border with Burma and Bangladesh. In recent years, over 800 members of the community have made aliyah, a Jerusalem - based group www.shavei.org thanks largely to the efforts of Shavei Israel that reaches out and assists "lost Jews" seeking to return to the Jewish people.

Shavei Israel Chairman Michael Freund, who took part in yesterday's meeting with the Chief Rabbi, praised the decision. "This is the momentous day, and we are very grateful to the Chief Rabbinate fro the openness and sensitivity that they have demonstrated in addressing the issue of the Bnei Menashe. This is the break-

through that we have all been waiting for, and thank G-d, the remaining 6,000 members of the community still in India will at last be able to come home to Zion."

In June 2003, then - Interior Minister Avraham Poraz of the Shinui Party decided to halt the Bnei Menashe aliyah, reportedly because he objected to the fact that they were all religiously - observant and many chose to live in Jewish communities in Judea, Samaira and Gaza. After Poraz' decision was announced, Freund turned to the Chief Rabbinate, and began lobbying to receive official rabbinical recognition of the Bnei Menashe as a means of circumventing the Interior Minister's decision. Yesterday's meeting with the Chief Rabbi marked the culmination of those efforts.
Rabbi Eliyahu Birnbaum, a dayan (rabbinical court judge) and spokesman for Rabbi Amar, said that the decision had come after careful consideration and study of the issue. "The Chief Rabbi sent a delegation of two dayanim to India last year to conduct a thorough investigation of the community and its origins. After a thorough 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."

Rabbi Birnbaum added that once various conditions laid down by the Chief Rabbi are fulfilled, such as the construction of mikvaot (ritual baths) in India, and the dispatch of additional teachers, then the Chief Rabbinate would send a beit din of its own to the area to convert members of the community to Judaism, thereby allowing them to make aliyah to Israel.

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## SOURCE : AMISHAV, JERUSALEM, MARCH, 2005

Zaithanchhungi, although a Presbyterian herself has been one of the strongest supporter of the Jewish movement in Mizoram, In 1979, she visited Israel for the first time in part to explore the theory that the Mizos were a lost Israelite tribe and although her initial conclusions were negative. In 1983, with the encouragement of Rabbi Avichail, she began to research the issue. She spoke to old Mizos about their pre-Christian customs and conducted research in libraries and archives. In 1988, she attended the first conversions of Mizos to Judaism in India. In connection with her research she visited Rabbi Dr.J.Newman of Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv, who helped her in many ways. And she collected important documents for her research from their Library. In 1990, with her family she visited Dr.Myer Sam, Anthropologist in Hebrew University, Jerusalem, who afterwards visited Mizoram for three times. In 1991, she attended a lost tribe exhibition at a leading Israeli museum. In the same year, she published the result of her investigations in a book entitled Mizo-Israel Identity. In it, she demonstrated the similarity between many ancient Israelite customs and those of the pre-Christian Mizos and strongly put forth the argument that the Mizos were a lost tribe of Israel.

Zaithanchhungi has not only helped propagate the notion of the Israelite descent of the Mizos but also has been active in supporting the Amishav organization program for conversion and resettlement of Mizos in Israel. On her living wall, one can find large photos of Rabbis of the Amishav organization as well as numerous books about Israel. She herself wrote a book about her experience in Israel entitled, "This is Israel". Formerly a successful insurance agent and the wife of a state legislator, she has paid for Mizos to travel to Israel. She has helped Rabbi Avichail, and other Rabbis from the organization to procure the Restricted Area Permit which is required by the Indian government of foreigners to enter Mizoram. It is with her help that the Rabbis of Amishav were able to stay in Mizoram for a period of time and

educate the Mizos about the basics of Judaism. She has also acted as an unofficial guide and host for visiting International Jews, from filmmakers to researchers who were interested in the possibility that the Mizos were a lost tribe of Israel. Her own nephew is studying in the Amishav School in Aizawl.

"I have found through exhaustive research that the Shinlung tribe, found along the Indo-Myanmar border, were descendants of the Mannaseh tribe, one of the 10 lost tribes of Israel," said Zaithanchhungi (Eds: one name), a researcher and author of "Israel-Mizo Identity".

The local Mizos, the dominant tribe in Christian-majority Mizoram, are believed to be a branch of the Shinlung and "have very many things in common with the Jews in Israel," Zaithanchhungi added.

No one over there knows where their folk songs or the design for the shawl have come from. All they know is they have this tradition this way, even many generations before them. To strong a link, says Zaithanchhungi, the local anthropologist, to be a coincidence.

There are also historical pointers to this claim. Zaithanchhungi, a scholar who has been studying the Mizo claim to Israeli ancestry for over 20 years, is convinced that all Mizos are descendants of the Menashe. "The Menashe were enslaved by the Assyrians and taken there (Assyria) when Jerusalem fell," she says. "From there they migrated to the Afghanistan region. During Alexander's invasion they were driven further on to China through the Kashmir region and Tibet plateau, and they settled in the Chhinlung region of China. They entered Mizoram about 300 years ago from Thailand and Burma." (The new Jerusalem via India Archeology)

All the evidence is at best circumstantial. Though for one, Zaithanchhungi, 60, a headmistress turned historian (and practicing Presbyterian) in Aizawl, has collected a book's worth of it in her "Israel-Mizo Identity," a bestseller in Mizoram. "From birth to burial, we had numerous customs matching those of Israelites in the Bible,' is the conclusion she drew after interviewing village elders (on Avichail's request).

**MEMORIAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE**

15 East 26th Street
New York, NY 10010
(212) 679-4074

**REFERENCE FOR FELLOWSHIP - 1995-96**

*NOTE : Please return this form to the Memorial Foundation before Dec.1,1994*

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NAME OF APPLICANT (please type in English) : Mrs Zaithanchhungi

PROJECT TITLE : Research on Israel-Mizo Identity in China

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PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW TO GIVE YOUR EVALUATION OF THE APPLICANT , INCLUDING HIS/HER BACKGROUND AND ABILITIES, PLEASE TYPE. (Use additional sheets if necessary).

I have known Mrs Zaithanchhungi, or Zaii (as she is known) for almost 15 years. During this time we met for long periods in India, Israel and the U.S.A. Zaii is a most unusual person. For the last 20 years she has been working very successfully as a life-insurance agent, an extremely demanding occupation, especially in a country such as India. Apart from the necessity for continous travel, both within her home state (Mizoram) and across India, Zaii has used extraordinary skills to persuade people to cooperate with her. Because of her talents, not the least of which is to communicate well with people, whoever and wherever they are, she has been extremely successful. At the same time she has developed a strong urge to see the world. However, her trips to Israel resulted mainly from her curiosity to discover the roots of her people in Mizoram, which are assumed to be in the "lost tribes".

During her first trip to Israel, we travelled extensively together the length and breadth of the country. I was impressed

both by her curiosity and broad interests and the attention she gave even to the tiniest detail. She documented her experiences and impressions in a scientific manner, filling her notebook with endless data and photographing every tourist attraction. What sometimes appeared to me to be trivia often turned out later to be important. Back home, she would painstakingly gather all these data, re-write them, edit the product and almost without assistance, produce a book that summarized the trip. This was done after each of her first 3 trips, and her books have become best-sellers.

I am not an expert on the subject of Zaii's proposal. However, as an Israeli Jew, I feel it is important to trace any missing segment of the "lost tribes" and their route in exile. I think that little effort has as yet been directed eastwards. Zaii's readiness to do this should be regarded as a most fortunate opportunity and should be encouraged. If anyone has a chance to succeed in such an adventurous undertaking, it is she. Her oriental features and knowledge of eastern cultures (and customs) will give her an advantage over westerners in visiting places such as central China or nearby countries. Knowing Zaii and her abilities, I am confident that her research, if funded, may shed light on the above questions.

Name of Referee : Dr Amnon Friedberg
(PLEASE PRINT)
Signature :
Position : Curator, National Collection of Insects
Date : 16 October, 1994
Institutional Affilliation : Tel Aviv University,
Department of Zoology

# CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

In 1983 Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail, Chairman, Amishav, Jerusalem advised Mrs. Zaithanchhungi of Mizoram to do research on the origin of Mizos. In doing so, she was interviewed and her research scrutinized by several Rabbis, Rabbinical Court Judge, BBC and Star TV Representatives, Film Makers, Historians, Writers, Anthropologists and Journalists from Israel, U.S.A., England, Canada, France, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Japan, Hongkong, Nepal, and India as well as Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail and Mr. Michael Freund, Director, Shavei Israel, Jerusalem.

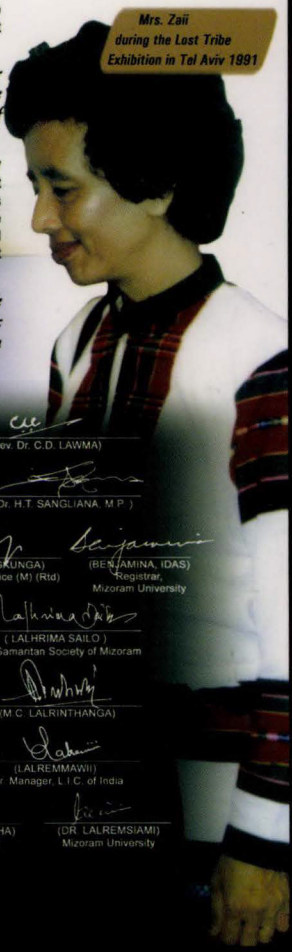
In 1991, on behalf of the Israel-Menashe, she participated in the Lost Tribe Exhibition in Tel Aviv where she hosted the Menashe room for two weeks.

The Rabbinical Delegates and their six colleagues who came to Aizawl on the 6th. of August, 2004 were extremely keen about Mrs. Zaithanchhungi's research findings.

*The historic decision made by Shephardic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar on the 30th. March, 2005 to formally recognize the Bnei Menashe (Chhinlung Tribe) of Mizoram and Manipur as descendants of Israel was broadcast all over the world.*

The recognition of the Bnei-Menashe as decendants of Israel may be greatly attributed to this research and it may be claimed that Mrs. Zaithanchhungi has uplifted the ethnic status of the Mizos as a nation by unearthing its glorious heritage. The recognition of the Mizos as descendants of Israel, the Chosen Nation of God, will boost up our ethnic morale and pride and this rare achievement ought to be highly valued.

*As a token of our profound appreciation of this remarkable achievement, we, on behalf of the Friends of Israel-Mizo Ethnic Identity on this day, the 13th October, 2008, have given Mrs. Zaithanchhungi this certificate of appreciation and honour.*



*Mrs. Zaii during the Lost Tribe Exhibition in Tel Aviv 1991*

(REV. DR. H.S.LUAIA)

(Brig. NGURLIANA SAILO)

(Rev. Dr. C.D. LAWMA)

(H. HRANGDAWLA, Ex.MLA)

(B.SANGHNUNA, I.A.S. (Rtd))

(Dr. H.T. SANGLIANA, M.P.)

(C. KHENGLAWT)
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(Upa LALPIANGLIANA PUDAITE)
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( Dr. SANGKIMA )
Secretary, Mizo History Association

( LALHRIMA SAILO )
Director, Samantan Society of Mizoram

(Rev. L. REMA)

(THUAMKUNG SAILO, )
Govt. Republic H.S.S.

(M.C. LALRINTHANGA)

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