

Explore the Rich Contributions of one of Bombay's oldest Diasporic Communities on the next session of AVID Online

For Immediate Release

*"Mumbai is not just a mosaic of India but of the world."
-Urban Historian Manjiri Kamat*

Did you know that Mumbai is home to eight Synagogues? Did you also know that the iconic Sassoon Docks, David Sassoon Library as well as Masina Hospital- were built and donated by one of the city's most prominent and influential benefactors who came from one of the most prosperous diasporic communities?

The Jewish community has had a presence in India since ancient times although they only reached the burgeoning port city of Bombay in the 18th century. Since then, this small, yet significant diasporic community - consisting largely of the Bene Israeli and Baghdadi factions – have indelibly shaped the culture, commerce and economic and architectural growth of the island city. Bombay today is home to the majority of India's rapidly dwindling Jewish population. At its peak, in the late 1940s, the Jewish population of Bombay reached nearly 30,000. Today it comprises a few thousand members. The community's contribution to Bombay, however, remains monumental.

As part of **AVID Online**, **Avid Learning** presents **Uncovering Urban Legacies: The Jewish Diaspora in Bombay**, a live session on how this small but unique community and its rich culture and legacy have historically, economically and socio-culturally shaped the trading port city of Bombay.

Please read on for more details:

Two coveted academic perspectives on this fascinating community's influence in a variety of cultural contexts will be discussed and divulged.

Author and Mumbai History Fellow at Gateway House **Sifra Lentin** and *Professor, Department of History, University of Mumbai* **Dr. Neeta Khandpekar** will present their knowledgeable perspectives on the subject and examine and celebrate the cultural legacy of Bombay's Jewish individuals, families and communities. Both these eminent speakers will then be in conversation with *Professor of History and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Mumbai* **Dr. Manjiri Kamat** to further trace the history, tradition, and culture of this community in order to understand the Jewish diaspora in their Indian setting.

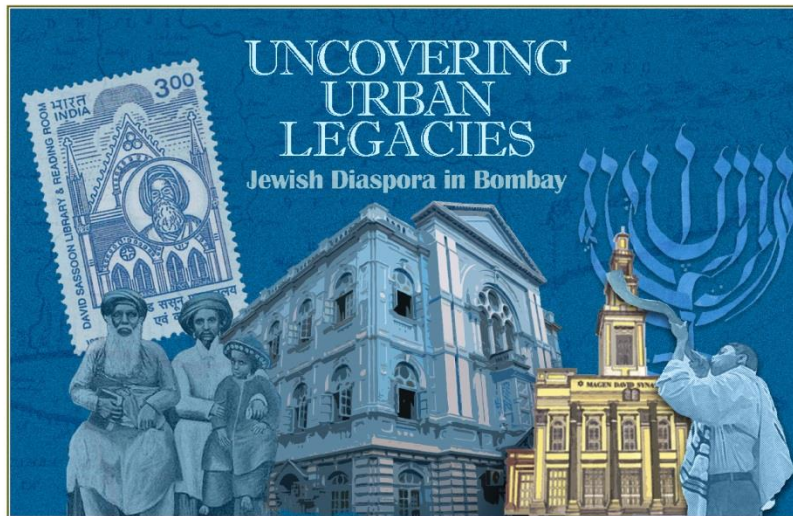
These experts will discuss the assimilative power and generous spirit of this community. They will examine the Jewish diaspora's impact on the city's maritime and trade history, economic and architectural growth, social history, built and intangible heritage and even Jewish influence on film, literature, food and rituals and customs of Bombay. These experts will also discuss Jewish contribution to India in education, government and the arts.

Join us to know more about the fascinating history and enduring legacy of this significant diasporic community in Mumbai!

When: Saturday, 6th February 2021 | 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

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The Jewish community - although small - has made monumental contributions to Bombay's urbanscape. Two coveted academic perspectives on this fascinating community's influence in a variety of cultural contexts will be discussed and divulged. The panelists will present their knowledgeable perspectives on the subject and examine and celebrate the cultural legacy of Bombay's Jewish individuals, families and communities. Both these eminent speakers will then be in conversation with Manjiri Kamath to further trace the history, tradition, and culture of this community in order to understand the Jewish diaspora in their Indian setting. Join us to know more about the fascinating history and enduring legacy of this significant diasporic community in Mumbai!

#AVIDONLINE LIVE



Author and
Mumbai History Fellow
at Gateway House
Sifra Lentini



Academic and
Associate Professor,
University of Mumbai
Dr. Neeta Khandpekar



Professor of History,
University of Mumbai
and Author
Manjiri Kamath

MODERATOR

DATE: **SATURDAY, 6 FEBRUARY '21**
TIME: **5:00 PM - 6:30 PM**
REGISTER: www.avidlearning.in



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About the Speakers

Sifra Lentini is a Mumbai-based writer and the Bombay History Fellow at Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations, a foreign policy think tank headquartered in Mumbai. She was awarded the 2018-19 Herbert Katz Fellowship for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania for her ongoing project on "Karachi's Jewish Community". The books written by her are: the Indian Navy's Western Fleet coffee table book 'A Salute to The Sword Arm – A Photo Essay on The Western Fleet' (April 2007); Our Legacy: the Dwarkadas family of Bombay (March 2018) on the 250-year-old history of the eminent Halai Bhatia Dwarkadas Khimji family of Mumbai, and more recently Bombay's International Linkages (February 2019), a Gateway House publication. She has also been published in three books: MARG's 'Indian Jewish Heritage – Ritual, Life-Cycle & Art' (2002), One India One People's book on Communities of India (2006), and recently in Primus Publications Mumbai Socio-Cultural Perspectives: Contributions of Ethnic Groups and Communities (2018), where she has written

Chapter 10 on 'Mumbai's Jewish Community'. Sifra graduated in English Literature (Hons.) from Elphinstone College, Mumbai, and went on to complete her Bachelor's in General Law (BGL) from Government Law College, Mumbai. Her earlier career was in journalism with a focus on Bombay and South Asian Jewish history. She is currently a Trustee of the Sir Jacob Sassoon School (Byculla, Mumbai).

Dr. Neeta M.Khandpekar holds the position of Professor in the Department of History at the University of Mumbai. She has wide teaching experience of over three decades. She was awarded D.Litt degree by the University of Sambalpur, Odisha. Her interests include Modern/ Maritime History and Christian Missionary History. She has visited several countries like USA, Canada, Italy, Malaysia, Indonesia & China with support from UGC and ICHR, New Delhi. A member of more than 14 professional academic bodies and was in the Board of Studies of University of Mumbai from 2004-10. The other distinctions include certificate of merit by Government of Maharashtra (1986), Mumbai University History Department Scholarship (1989), UGC Teacher Fellowship Award (1999) and UGC Postdoctoral research Award (2004). She has authored two books namely Konkan Coast: and other on Christian Missionaries. Recently she was deputed as ICCR Chair Professor at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Dr Manjiri Kamat is Professor of History and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Mumbai. Dr Kamat holds M.Phil and Ph.D degrees in History from the University of Cambridge. She has recently co- edited the book, Bombay Before Mumbai: Essays in Honour of Jim Masselos with Prashant Kidambi and Rachel Dwyer published by Hurst Publishers, London, Oxford University Press, New York and Penguin Random House, Delhi in 2019. Dr Kamat is also editor of Mumbai Past and Present: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Challenges and editor of Mumbai Kaal ani Aaj: Aitihāsik Akalan ani Samakaleen Awhana. Dr Kamat is Member of the Mumbai Heritage Conservation Committee of the MCGM, Member of the Board of Trustees of the CSMVS Museum, External Associate at the Centre for Global Health Histories, University of York, Ambassador for the Association of Commonwealth Universities, London and a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

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