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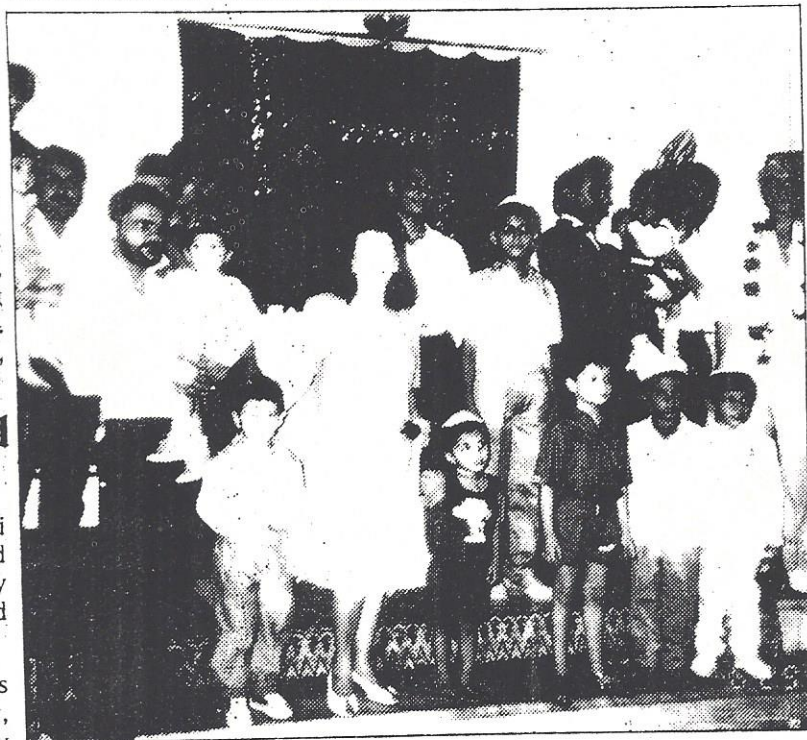
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(Top) Children assemble in Bombay's main synagogue after mass "Redemption of the First Born" ceremony for Bombay's Jewish youngsters. The ritual was performed by Jack Goldfarb of New York.

(Bottom) Jack Goldfarb and his wife Simone with some members of the Bombay's Jewish community.

Indian Jewish Community Celebrates Unique Event In Its History

By Our Correspondent

BOMBAY: India's 2,000 year-old Jewish community recently celebrated a unique event in its history- a 'Pidyun Haben' en masse of 14 first-borne male youngsters, with the ceremony performed by a visiting Kohen from New York.

Without a Kohen of its own for the past five years, the 5,000-member Jewish community in Bombay invited Jack Goldfarb, a frequent visitor to India, to help relieve an accumulated backlog of first-born males awaiting the Redemption ritual, traditionally performed by a Kohen 30 days after the birth of a first-born son.

Setting a sort of record for numbers, the 14 children, ranging in age from 7 months to 17 years, together with parents, relatives and congregants, many of whom travelled from villages in Maharashtra state over a hundred miles away, gathered in

Bombay's central Magen Hassidim Synagogue to observe the occasion.

Goldfarb, a New York-based travel journalist who often writes on Indian subjects, has now been adopted as "Honorary Kohen" by the community.

Ecumenically enough, he and his wife, Simone, often do volunteer work at Mother Teresa's shelter for children in Calcutta.