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Burla



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BURLA

BURLA, family of Jerusalem rabbis from the 18th century onward; members of the Burla family are also found in Greece and Turkey.

israel jacob burla (d. 1798) is mentioned in 1770 as one of the seven leading scholars who headed the Jerusalem community. He was a member of the *bet din* of Yom Tov Algazi, and later *av bet din*. In 1774, a year after the invasion of Erez Israel by the armies of Ali Bey, ruler of Egypt, he and Yakar b. Abraham Gershon Kitover traveled to Europe as emissaries, to acquaint the communities there with the misfortunes of the Jerusalem community and to enlist their aid. His letter of appointment, printed in Portuguese in Amsterdam, 1776, contains an account of important historical events. His plan for a system of taxation, written at the request of the communal leaders of Siena, during his stay there in 1777, was published in Italian in a pamphlet entitled *Legge del Zorkhei Zibbur* (Florence, 1778). In 1782 Israel was back in Jerusalem, where he remained for the rest of his life. His responsa, *Mekor Yisrael* (1882), were published by his great-grandson, Joseph Nissim Burla, together with the responsa, *Naḥalat Ye'udah*, of his son, Judah Burla.

Israel Jacob Burla's son judah bechor ben israel jacob (d. 1803) was also a Jerusalem scholar. His signature appears on approbations beginning with 1789, and in 1795, while still a young man, he was the third member of the *bet din* of Raphael Joseph b. Rabbi. After Napoleon's invasion of Erez Israel in 1799, and the consequent suffering of the Jerusalem community, he went as an emissary to Arab countries, and in 1800 was in Baghdad. His responsa, *Naḥalat Ye'udah*, were published together with those of his father.

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samuel burla (d. 1876) was a wealthy Jew of Janina, who settled in Jerusalem and was appointed Greek consul. menahem ben jacob burla (possibly Israel Jacob's son), Hebron scholar, traveled abroad in 1835 as an emissary for the Hebron community.

joseph nissim ben Ḥayyim jacob burla (1828–1903) was a rabbinical emissary, and preacher. In 1859 he was sent to Morocco together with Baruch Pinto. Joseph Nissim was one of those who built and settled in the Mishkenot Sha'ananim quarter, the first settlement outside the walls of Jerusalem. The sermon he preached at its consecration in 1863 was published under the name *Divrei Yosef* (1863). That same year he was sent as an emissary to North Africa and [Western Europe \(/history/modern-europe/ancient-history-middle-ages-and-feudalism/western-europe\)](#) on behalf of the Battei Maḥaseh community in Jerusalem and in 1871 he was sent to Turkey. In 1878–81 he and his son Ḥayyim Jacob were emissaries to North Africa and Tripoli. In 1882 he helped [Nissim *Behar \(/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/behar-nissim\)](#) found the Torah u-Melakhah school. Joseph Nissim was the author of: (1) *Leket Yosef* (1900), a collection of laws arranged in alphabetical order; (2) *Va-Yeshev Yosef* (1905), responsa, published together with *Shuvu Banim*, sermons; (3) *Yosef Ḥai* (Jerusalem, National Library, Mss. Heb. 8° 716, 715), the first part a collection of his sermons for the years 1848 and 1852, and the second part a talmudic methodology; (4) *Olat Shabbat* (*ibid.* 4° 153), sermons; (5) *Petaḥ ha-Ohel* (*ibid.* 8° 719), a talmudic methodology; (6) a responsum on the Mishkenot Sha'ananim development, in manuscript in the Benayahu collection. He also composed prayers and *piyyutim*, some of the latter being included in *Yagel Ya'akov* by his nephew Jacob Ḥai Burla.

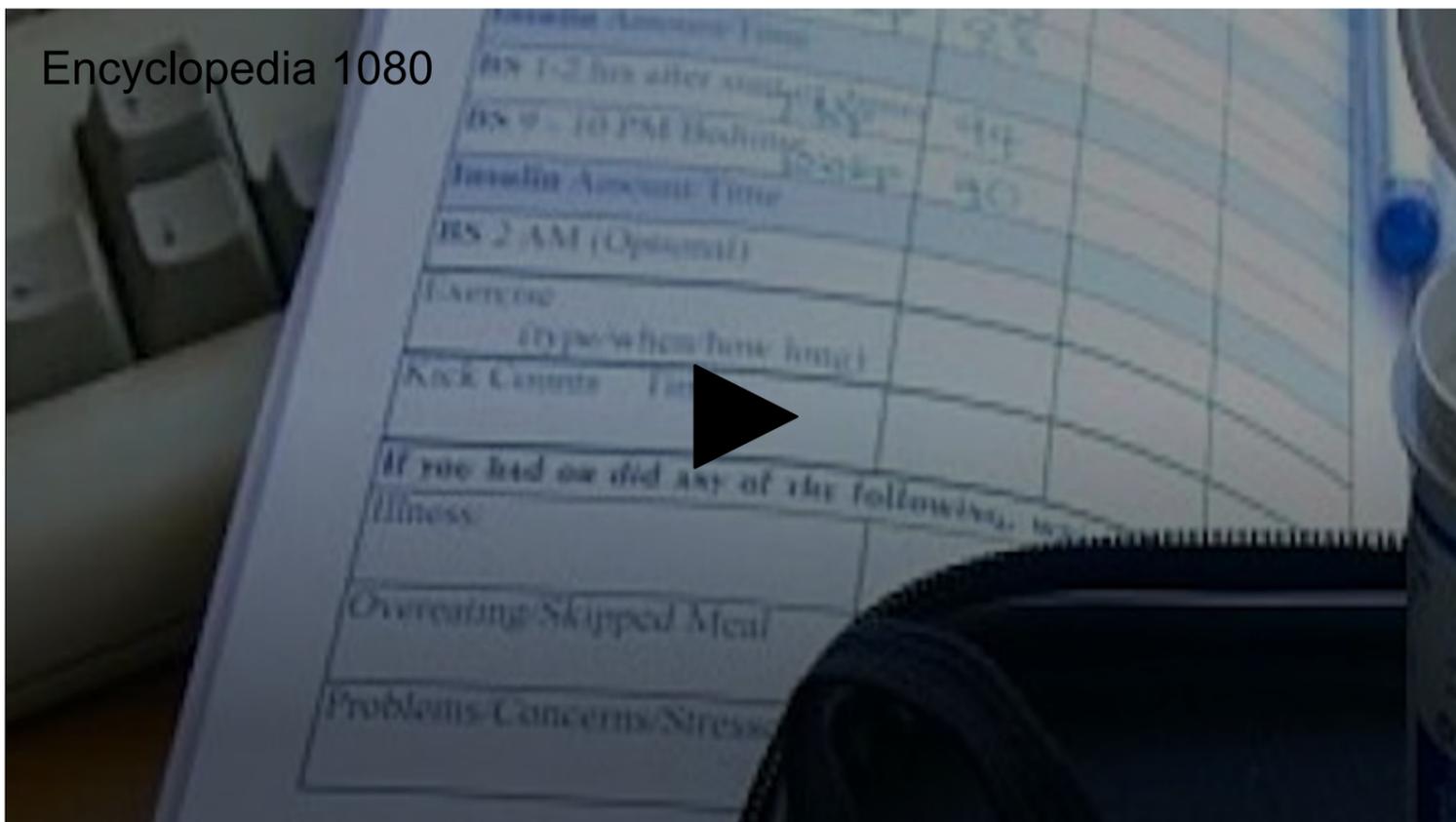
His son, Ḥayyim jacob (1847–1929), accompanied his father as an emissary to Turkey and Morocco. Twelve volumes of his sermons, along with a register of promissory notes, accounts, etc., are in the National Library of Jerusalem (443, 8⁰).

jacob hai ben judah burla (d. 1892) was a Jerusalem cantor. He founded the Ḥemed Baḥurim society for evening and Sabbath study, and published a number of *tikkunim* ("orders of study for special occasions"): *Marpe la-Nefesh* (1873), studies for the Sabbath in accordance with *Ḥemdat Yamim*; *Tikkun ha-Berit* (1881); and *Oraḥ Ḥayyim* (1890), a *tikkun karet* ("an order of expiation"). He also published *Yismah Yisrael* (1875), a small collection of poems, a Ladino edition of *Shivḥei ha-Ari* (1876), and *Yagel Ya'akov* (1885), poems by himself and other authors.

joshua ben bechor judah burla (1852–1939), bookbinder by trade, was in charge of the graves of Rachel in Bethlehem and Simeon ha-Zaddik in Jerusalem. He was the father of the writer, [Yehuda *Burla \(/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/burla-bourla-yehuda\)](#).

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The Shoah, Pfizer, And The Vaccine That Protects And Saves Millions In Israel

By **Yosef Bitton** - January 7, 2021



THE BOURLA FAMILY

“Bourla” (also spelled “Burla”) is the surname of a famous Sephardic family from Spain. After the expulsion in 1492 we find this family in Salonika (Thessaloniki), Greece, and in Smyrna, Turkey. Over time, part of the Bourla family migrated to Erets Israel, where they lived for centuries. Some examples: Rabbi Israel Burla (d. 1798) was one of Jerusalem’s leading scholars at that time. He is famous for his mission in Europe to enlist the help of European Jews for the benefit of Jerusalem by creating a special voluntary tax. Among his books are “Mekor Yisrael.” His son was Rabbi Yehuda Burla, author of Nachalat Yehuda. The son of Yehuda was the celebrated Rabbi Yosef Nissim Burla (1828-1903) who participated in the construction and settled in Mishkenot Shaanim, the first Jewish neighborhood outside the walls of Jerusalem. He was the author of Leqet Yosef, a collection of Halachot arranged alphabetically; Va-Yeshev Yosef, Rabbinical Responsible; Od Yosef Chai, Olat Shabat and others. Yehoshua ben Bekhor Burla (1852–1939), was a bookbinder by trade, and was in charge of Qeber Rachel in Bet Lechem and the grave of Shimon ha-Tsadiq in Jerusalem. He was the father of one of the most famous Israeli writers, Yehuda Burla (1886 – 1969), who wrote on Sephardic history and culture and especially on Yehuda Halevi. Yehuda Burla was awarded the PRAS ISRAELI (Israel Prize), the most prestigious award given by the State of Israel.

SALONIKA and AUSCHWITZ

Yesterday I mentioned that Thessaloniki was probably the largest Sephardic community in the early 20th century (see here). After the 1917 fire, the Jewish population decreased. Many Jews left the city, and fortunately many of them emigrated to Israel. At the beginning

of World War II there were approximately 60,000 Jews in Thessaloniki. When the Nazis arrived in Thessaloniki, many tragic events occurred: a possible act of betrayal by a prominent member of the community (it is not easy to judge what actually happened in those times from our post-Holocaust perspective, so we better leave it there...). The Jews of Thessaloniki, practically the entire community, were deported to concentration camps in March 1943. The Bourla family and all their sons and daughters also boarded the terrible cattle cars that led to Auschwitz. Ninety-five percent of the Jews in Thessaloniki, 54,000 Jews, were murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau, or died during the terrible "Death March" from January to May 1945 (see more here). A member of the Bourla family survived the inferno. He married another Holocaust survivor, and in 1961 they had a son, his only child, Israel Abraham Bourla, also known as Albert Bourla.

ALBERT BOURLA

Albert grew up and was educated in Thessaloniki. He received his doctorate in reproductive biotechnology from the Veterinary School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. At 34 he left Greece and in 1993 he joined Pfizer in the US. He held many important positions and in January 2016 he served as president of the company's Innovative Health Group. At the beginning of 2020 Bourla was the CEO of Pfizer International. In 2020, in light of the global COVID19 outbreak, Bourla ordered his team at Pfizer to act aggressively to develop a coronavirus vaccine. In November 2020, Pfizer announced that the vaccine they developed was effective in 95% of cases.

COVID19 and LA SHOAH

Simon Griver writes in «Globes» (January 4, 2021): *"There is no mystery as to how Israel has already managed to vaccinate more than 1.25 million people. In just over two weeks, 13.5% of the population, including 52% of people over 60 will be vaccinated. Israeli health maintenance organizations are effective, highly digitalized and have been mobilized with enormous efficiency. What is not clear is how Israel received so many doses of the Pfizer vaccine so quickly... Israel had ordered millions of doses of the Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccine, but did not order any doses of the Pfizer vaccine. When Pfizer announced that its vaccine was 95% effective against Covid-19 Israel's top health officials were embarrassed that the country had bet on the wrong horse. So Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu immediately spoke to Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla. It was the first of several calls. And ultimately Israel received four to five million doses of the world's best vaccine in existence before the end of 2020, enough to vaccinate and save the lives of at least two million people. "*

It is very sad to think how many millions of future and potential "Albert Bourla"s were lost in the Shoah. But on the other hand, it is quite a miracle how Holocaust survivors rose from the dust and ashes, and by themselves or through their descendants, save the lives of their brothers and sisters in Medinat Israel.

Yosef Bitton