

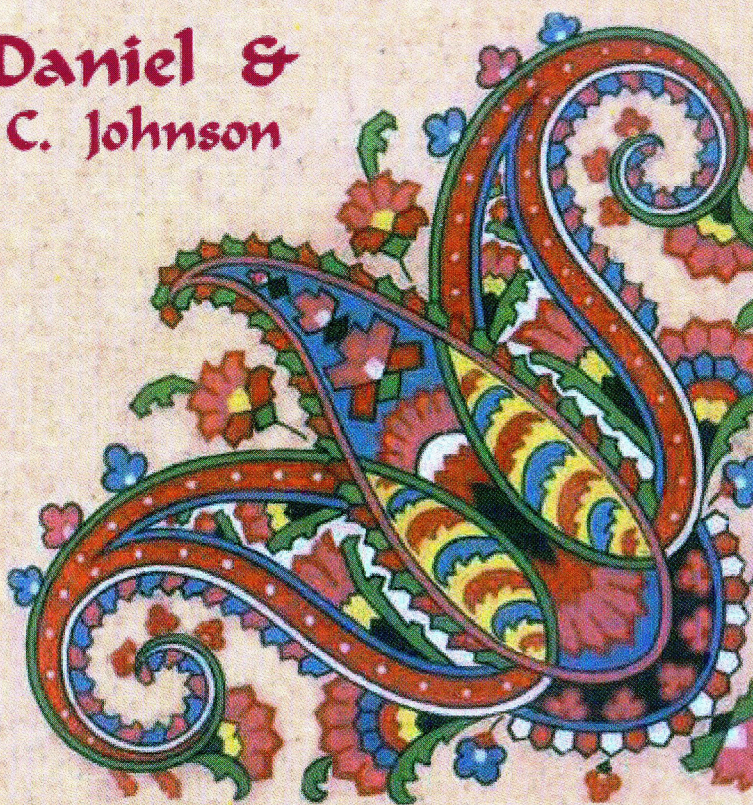


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# RUBY of COCHIN

*An Indian Jewish Woman  
Remembers*

**Ruby Daniel &  
Barbara C. Johnson**







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and  
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**Ruby Daniel**





RUBY OF COCHIN

for Joseph Palackal -

I think Ruby - Aunty  
would have enjoyed  
meeting you, I hope you  
enjoy her stories -

Barbara Johnson  
July 2009





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# RUBY of COCHIN

*An Indian Jewish Woman Remembers*

**Ruby Daniel &  
Barbara C. Johnson**

Ruby of Cochin is the first book written by a Jewish woman from the Indian community of Cochin. Filled with rich descriptions of Jewish life in an exotic culture and spanning several centuries, this ethnographic work is both the story of the Jews of Cochin, India—and the tale of one remarkable woman.

The book is written with a distinctive storyteller's voice and contains historical legends and folk tales, colorful renditions of celebrations in Cochin, and translations of women's songs from Malayalam, the language of the local Jews.

And it is also Ruby's own memoir. A woman of strong and enviable character, she did not choose the traditional path of marriage, but instead attended college and joined the Women's Royal Indian Navy. Here she chronicles her family's fight to reject the racial labels Indian society forced upon them.

Ruby Daniel was born in Cochin, India, in 1912. She was educated at a convent school and attended St. Theresa's College and then served in World War II as a member of the Women's Royal Indian Navy. She immigrated to Israel in 1951, where she lives today on a kibbutz.

Barbara Johnson, an assistant professor of anthropology at Ithaca College, has published widely on the Jews of Cochin. In 1981, Ruby Daniel became the primary informant for Johnson's dissertation research, sharing the personal recollections and insights that became the basis for the present volume.

"A gifted teller of tales, Ruby Daniel tells both her own and the story of the Malabar Jews. Without sacrificing their original flavor, Barbara Johnson, together with Ruby Daniel, created from these poignant narratives an elegant work about a vanished way of life and memory, about Israel, about the meaning of community, and much more. Never before have these unique stories been told. A scholar's delight!"

— Irene Eber, Hebrew University, Jerusalem



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