

## #HEALTH BENEFITS

### Candy Leaf from Assam

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**Candy Leaf** (*Stevia rebaudiana* (Bertoni) Bertoni), a plant recognized for its natural non-caloric sweetening characteristics, also has therapeutic properties for diseases like endocrine, metabolic, immune, and cardiovascular diseases because of its effect on cellular signalling systems according to a new study. Assam exports Stevia worldwide. The North Eastern Council (Government of India) also highlighted stevia cultivation's potential to help the northeast Indian economy due to high demand and use. At the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST) in Guwahati, an autonomous institute of Department of Science and Technology, a team of researchers Dr. Asis Bala, Associate Professor, Prof. Ashis K. Mukherjee, Director, and Ms. Piyali Devroy, Research Scholar did pioneering research on Stevia's medicinal properties, effects on cellular signalling mechanisms to prove the Assam's Stevia's therapeutic qualities. Their multimodal strategy integrated network pharmacology with in-vitro and in-vivo techniques, showing that the plant used phosphorylation of Protein Kinase C (PKC) to inhibit a crucial cellular signalling route. PKC is connected to inflammatory, autoimmune, endocrine, and cardiovascular illnesses. Stevia suppresses PKC phosphorylation,

which alters downstream pathways that cause inflammation, a significant cause of endocrine, metabolic and cardiovascular issues. The study shows Stevia's promise in this field for the first time. The study also found that active stevia molecules strongly interact with AMPK, highlighting the need for additional research. This work published in the journal *Food Bioscience* revealed Stevia's potential and identified new targets for immunological endocrine and cardiovascular problems. It could have therapeutic effect on diabetes, type 1, type 2, autoimmune diabetes, pre-diabetes, chronic inflammation related autoimmune disease, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic kidney diseases and cardiovascular diseases like hypertension, vasculopathy and so on. The study illuminates an undiscovered facet of Stevia, underlining the necessity of creative tactics and scientific data to support traditional therapeutic practices.



## War Anniversary Month... Jews Can Defend Themselves **PART:1**

For the masses, there is indeed something annoying to people about a group that refuses to fall in line with everyone else. That's one part of it. There are different things in the Muslim world. Again, the refusal to adopt the main faith is part of it. And then, there is another theory which says that it goes back even further, which is Judaism, the religion, and offered the form of the *Ten Commandments* (which were the first sort of moral rules). People don't like rules and they don't like to behave in a certain way and Jews have been in this theory. I'm not saying that I necessarily agree with it. Jews have been like a guilty conscience to mankind.



Jonathan Freedland. Credit: Philippa Gedge



Shailaza Singh  
Published Author,  
Poet and a YouTuber

Ever since I met him at the Jaipur Literature Festival this year, it has been an ongoing conversation about a plethora of topics including the year-long raging war between Israel and Palestine and the Jewish community with the award-winning British author and journalist, Jonathan Freedland. He is also a columnist at the Guardian and the host of the Guardian's *Politics Weekly America* Podcast. He also presents *BBC Radio 4's The Long View* and is the author of the award-winning *The Escape Artist: The Man Who Broke Out of Auschwitz to Warn the World*, along with several thrillers under the pseudonym Sam Bourne. He is a past winner of an Orwell Prize for Journalism. When we met at the Jaipur Literature Festival, the very first question that I asked him was about why is there so much hatred for Jews. Hitler persecuted them. They have always been talking about the 'promised land' but their promised land has always been besieged with wars.

Jonathan said, "I don't think the explanation will lie with Jews, but instead, it will lie with the people who hate them. And so have to ask why is it that there has been this hate throughout history. There are all kinds of theories about it. The one that is probably the heart of the matter is that in the Christian world, the Jews stood out for refusing to embrace Christianity and that became very irritating for the followers of Christianity for centuries. It was an irritant to them that there was this group of people, who was refusing to fall in line and the very fact they continued to exist proved that there was another way. For example, in England, the country I am from, the only minority at all in the 12th century in England were Jews. Everybody else was Christian. Today, we're used to minorities. But for many centuries, the only minority in all of Europe, before there were Muslims, for example in Europe, would have been Jews. So, for the

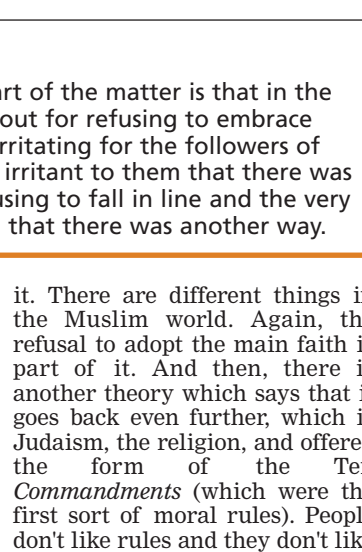
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## #ISRAEL PALESTINE WAR



Author Kai Bird with Jonathan Freedland at the Jaipur Literature Festival 2024.



Jonathan Freedland's book, *The Escape Artist*, begins with Abraham and the Jews, and then, Christianity comes next, and then, Islam after that. And therefore, before then, with many gods, you could live differently and Judaism has, sort of, come along early and spoiled that way of living. But all said and done, the truth is that it is hard to work out why there is prejudice against black people, why there is prejudice against

people who are not white or people who are brown. It's a very hard thing to explain why prejudices live on. Why do you think Hitler hated the Jews? "Well, he was steeped in anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish racism for centuries. I don't think there's any value in trying to think of there being a rational or logical reason why people hate minorities. They always have." From Hitler's time to this time, when the wars are continuing, what has changed? "The big change in the world for Jews anyway has been the fact that Jews are no longer unable to defend themselves. For 2,000 years, Jews were always a minority who were vulnerable because they never had any means to defend themselves. It's fascinating. In 1947, there were two big partitions



## International Snow Leopard Day

Snow Leopards are captivating and powerful animals. However, they are also vulnerable to loss of prey and poaching. These animals are distributed sparsely across 12 different countries in Central Asia. These majestic creatures prowl the mountains with grace and power, their stunning coats blending seamlessly into the snowy landscape. They tend to be found in rugged, high mountain landscapes, at elevations between 3,000 and 4,500 m. The key to protecting this species is raising awareness. That's what International Snow Leopard Day is all about.



Jonathan Freedland speaking at an event.

in the world, one that created India and Pakistan and the other one that created Israel. That vote of the United Nations in 1947 said that there should be a Jewish state, and from 1949 onwards, there has been a Jewish state. And now for the first time in 2,000 years, Jews have an army and can defend themselves and that is a very big difference. In the big sweep of Jewish history, that's the big change. So, now that the Jews have a great army and are defending themselves, can it put an end to this hatred in the long run? "No. It has been there for many decades. But it is as strong now. Anti-Semitic attacks in London are high, they're up. More now than in many decades. Same in the United States. So, it has not ended the hatred. But I think it has meant that people, the attitude is different because there is now a place where Jews are defended. Now as it happens, the act of defending themselves has been part of this war between Israel and Hamas, which, of course, has brought out a whole lot more hatred for Israel, and therefore, for people who stand with Israel. So, the ability of Jews to defend themselves has not ended the hatred, it has, in a way, just created a new set of problems." Can you relate some anecdotes that have shaped your writing? "There is this stereotype about Jews that they are miserly with money, that they hold on to money. It goes back a thousand years, actually to the time when Jews were not allowed to do other jobs and the only job that they were allowed to do was to lend money. The king would allow them to collect taxes or lend money. And so, this arose this idea that Jews are somehow mean with money. So, years back, my wife and I, we were a young couple looking to buy our first home in England. We were at a flat that we liked and we asked the agent, who was showing us around, about the price cost. The agent told us the place and said that we could negotiate with the owners of the flat. He said that the owners are

the noise that a pig makes. It was a very racist thing to say that the people, who owned the flat, would somehow want more money and would behave like animals. It was just a small moment, you know, it came and it went, but it was proof to me that there are still these attitudes. This man didn't know that we were Jewish. We told him we were and he was very embarrassed. It was just a prejudice that just came out of secretiveness. But all the time, you know, even if it's not me personally, there are these stereotypes that, sort of, live on, you know, this idea that Jews operate and conspire in secret networks. And so, I remember once at work, a friend of mine had phoned and left a message with a number, and the colleague who took the number said that one of your networks called. He didn't say one of your friends, he said one of your networks. And he would never say that to somebody else, but the word came to his mind because he knew I was Jewish. And so immediately, he thought Jews have networks as if they are sort of secretive. In India, there are two worlds. In one, there's a caste system where people are treated differently on the basis of their castes, and in the other India, the caste system doesn't matter. It is more cosmopolitan. Is it the same for Jews as well? "I think that's very interesting, what you said about India. Maybe, it is something like that, where both things can exist at once, where on the one hand, you know, you can grow up and live without really encountering these prejudices. On the other, it's there. So, for example, if you go past any Jewish building in London, or Paris, or Berlin, well, I don't know about America, but certainly in Europe, you will always see a security guard outside the door of a Jewish school, a kindergarten even, for three and four-year-old children because even these buildings are prone to attack. If you go to a synagogue or a Jewish house of worship, there has to be security anywhere in the places I've mentioned. We get used to it now, we're just, that's part of life. But that's not there because people want to do it, that's there because they have to do it. There is a security threat. So, these communities are living under threat. I'm not a particularly religious Jew, so I don't wear a cap, but people who do wear a skull cap, are vulnerable in travelling around. Some choose now not to. Even if you just get on with your life, it's there. To be continued... rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com

Jonathan Freedland in his 20s.



Jonathan Freedland in his 20s.

## #PUNJABI FOOD FEST @ Monarch

So, at the *Happy ka Daba*, you have Paneer cubes and Hara bhara kebab with mild seasoning, keeping in mind the foreign travellers.



Sadhana Garg  
Journalist & Social Entrepreneur

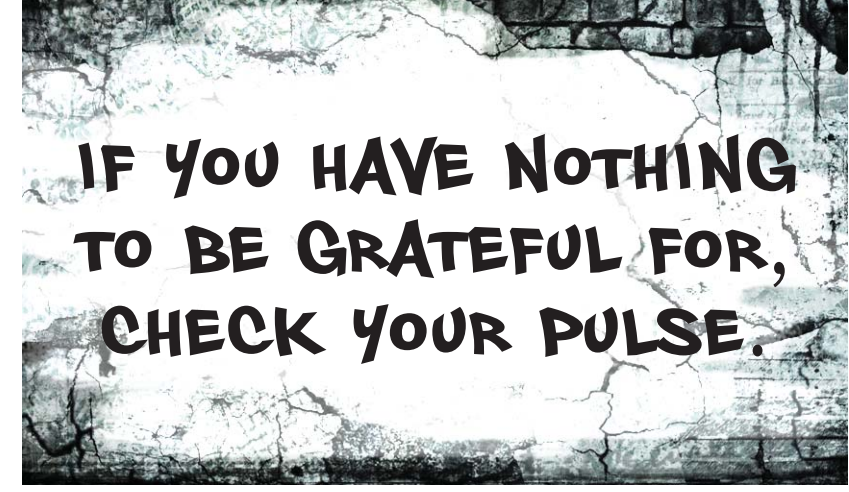
Kahao, Piyo aur Khush Raho says a poster at *Happy Singh ka Dhabba*. Wait a minute. This is no bustling roadside dhabba but a makeover at Monarch, the fine dining restaurant at Holiday Inn City Center, Bais Godam. The streams of colourful bunting complete the rustic dhabba look for the ongoing *Punjabi Food Festival*. Think Punjab and one thinks of the rich cuisine. Culinary journey for vegetarians is overloaded with dairy products as Punjab has the highest per capita usage of dairy in the country. Obviously, a later addition, *Panear*, must have come with the Afghans of the Northwest Frontier as there is no mention of it in Hindu text, despite us having been obsessed with dairy. So, at the *Happy ka Daba*, you have *Panear* cubes and *Hara bhara kebab* with mild seasoning, keeping in mind the foreign travellers. The *golgappas* with *hing*, *putina*, orange, *keri* and sweet *imilipani* were a chaatful beginning to a culinary journey that had been carefully curated for every city foodie. Also, if life is too short to eat bad food, then one should head for this *Punjabi* food festival. For the vegetarians, other than the usual, there was *palak kadhi*, *beans*, *mughlai dal*, *panear lebabdar mattar*, *dhaba style aloo mattar* and *baigan*. The food was easy on one's pallet and it was extremely comforting to see that layers of fat and red chillies was missing. The *Amrisari Kulcha*



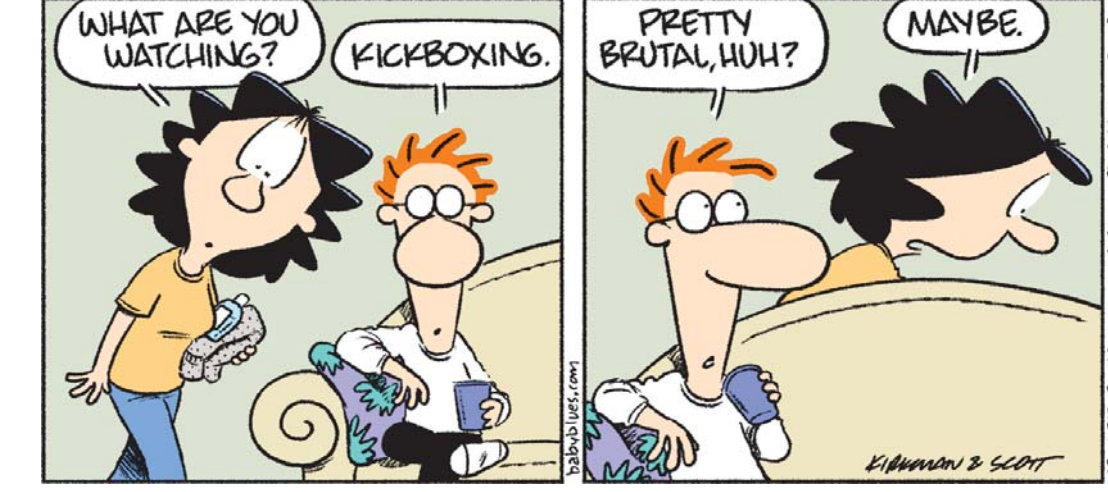
was a delight, spicy yet soft and sans reeking fat. For those, who prefer to go gluten-free, there is *Makkai roti* and *Missy roti*. I somewhat longed for the traditional *Punjabi Kadhi* with deep-fried *pakoras*, lots of onion and garlic and the *Pindi Chanaas*, or even the iconic *Chola Bhaturs* that no matter what age and time of the day, you cannot have enough. Notwithstanding that they are all calorie bombshells. Given a dynamic menu that changes everyday, it was my turn to go without the above *Punjabi* dishes but the one on the menu of the day were delectable and as good as any to create memories and give calorie counting a miss. And if you think you deserve dessert first, then there was a lavish spread. The *Kulfi*, *Badam Halwa* and *Pinnis*, made to look like small *laddoos*, took serving happiness to another level. The *baked boondi*, not essentially a *Punjabi* dessert, was accompanied by many other bakery products and cakes for the contin-

tal travellers. Says Jai Kapoor, a *Punjabi* foodie, "I had the pleasure of dining at the Holiday Inn for a *Punjabi* Food Festival, and it was an incredible experience. From the juicy and tender *Amrisari Ghost Ke Kabab* to the creamy and perfectly balanced *Butter Chicken Masala*, each dish was crafted with care. The *Tandoori Wings* were smoky, spicy, and cooked to perfection, while the *Mutton Keema Masala* was rich and flavourful. I thoroughly enjoyed the *Chicken Kaleji*, with its distinct blend of spices, and the *Golgappas* added a refreshing, tangy burst of flavour. The soft, fluffy *Amrisari Kulche* were the perfect accompaniment, and the *Mutton Biryani*, with its aromatic rice and tender pieces of mutton, was a true highlight. Overall, every dish was a delightful blend of authentic flavours, making it a memorable and highly satisfying meal." So, go check out the *Punjabi* Da Zaika on Monarch.

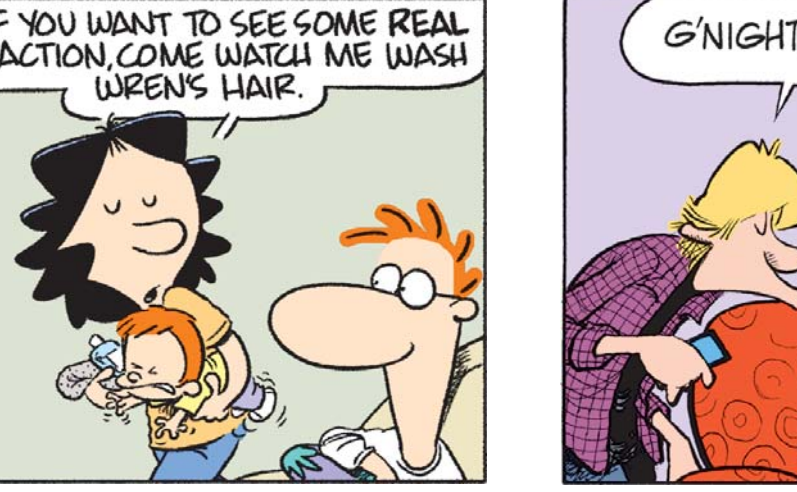
## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



## BY RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT



## BY JERRY SCOTT & JIM BORGMAN

