

The Wise Son #4 - Miriam Mendes Belisario

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1) **The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History, 2001**
edited by W. Rubinstein, Michael A. Jolles

BELISARIO, ISAAC MENDES (1717–91), scholar and preacher, and **BELISARIO, MIRIAM MENDES** (1816–85), teacher and author. Isaac was rubi (*teacher*) at the *Bevis Marks congregational school; an address he gave in 1760 on the passing of George II is extant in translation from the Spanish as *A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of His Late Majesty* (1761). With her sisters Rose and Caroline, his granddaughter Miriam ran a well-patronised Jewish girls' school in Hackney founded in 1807 by their mother, **Esther Mendes Belisario** (née Lindo; 1773–1824). Miriam published *Hebrew and English Vocabulary* (1848), intended as an aid for prayer, and *Sabbath Evenings at Home* (1856), with revisions by *the Rev.* David Aaron *de Sola, which takes the form of dialogues upon the spirit and practice of Judaism. Like her cousin **Lydia Belisario** (d. 1852), she was a friend of, and influence upon, the philosemitic Christian writer Charlotte Elizabeth *Tonna. (The birth date 1820, often given for Miriam, belonged to her brother Jacob.)

Joseph Jacobs & Lucien Wolf, comps., *Bibliotheca Anglo-Judaica* (1888); Hyamson, *Sephardim*; Picciotto; Meyer Kayserling, *Bibliotheca Espanola-Portuguesa Judaica* (1890; repr. 1961); Daniel Lysons, *Environs of London*, 3 (1795); *EJ*; *UJE*; birth date from Bevis Marks archivist Miriam Rodrigues-Pereira.





Plate 7.9 Portrait of the Reverend Isaac Lopez, cantor of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' synagogue, Kingston, Jamaica. Lithograph with watercolour. Isaac Mendes Seixas, 1841.
Photo: Kate Reid private collection.

2) The Jews of Hackney Before 1840 by Malcolm Brown in JHSL Vol. 30 1987 pg 83-84

Among the more notable inhabitants of the parish, Grace Aguilar was born here in 1816, to a family which on her mother's side had links with the district going back to the 1740s. The Aguilars moved away in 1824 and returned some years later, when they fixed on 5 The Triangle as a house large enough to accommodate the family and a few boarders at the academy Grace's mother established.⁸³ In a short story entitled 'Red Rose Villa and its inhabitants' (included in the posthumous *Home Scenes and Heart Studies*) Grace described 'a first-rate finishing school for young ladies of the first families', with its own family, like hers, of two sisters and two brothers. This may have been a sly glance at another Jewish school nearby, the academy for young ladies at 5 Wickham Place, Clapton, kept by Lydia, Miriam, Rose and Caroline, the four daughters of Abraham Belisario the Jamaica merchant. Miriam Belisario herself was to achieve a measure of literary celebrity with the publication in 1856 of her *Sabbath Evenings at Home*.

3) Jewish History, Volume 8, Nos. 1-2,1994

The Frankaus of London: A Study in Radical Assimilation, 1837-1967

Todd M. Endelman

47. Louis Hyman, *The Jews of Ireland from Earliest Times to the Year 1910* (London and Jerusalem, 1972), 134-5; Eliza Aria, *My Sentimental Self* (London, 1922), 3-4, 9; 1871 census, RG 10/11/45, PRO. The school, which attracted children from the Sephardi community in particular, was kept by the four daughters of Abraham Belisario, a Jamaica merchant. One of the sisters, Miriam Mendes Belisario (c.1820-1885), compiled a Hebrew and English vocabulary for the daily prayers and wrote *Sabbath Evenings at Home*, a collection of dialogues on Judaism. Malcolm Brown, "The Jews of Hackney before 1840, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* (hereafter TJHSE) 30 (1989): 84; *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Belisario, Miriam Mendes."

4) BELISARIO, MIRIAM MENDES:

JewishEncyclopedia.com: The unedited full-text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia

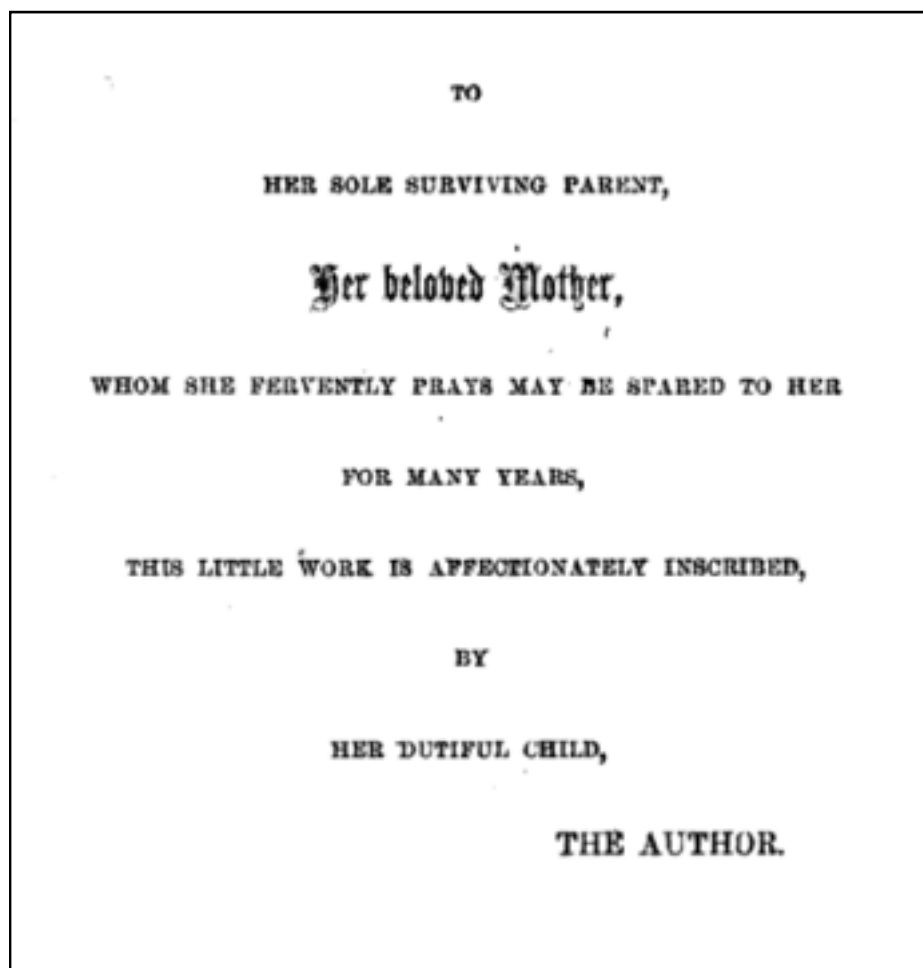
By: Joseph Jacobs

English authoress and teacher; born in London about 1820; died there 1885. She was a granddaughter of Isaac Mendes Belisario (see Lyson, "Environs of London," iii. 429), and with her sisters for many years kept a girls' school in which numerous members of the Sephardic community were educated under her direction. She compiled a "Hebrew and English Vocabulary" for a selection of the daily prayers (1848), and wrote "Sabbath Evenings at Home" (London, 1856); the latter being in the form of dialogues upon the spirit and ordinances of the Jewish religion.

Bibliography:

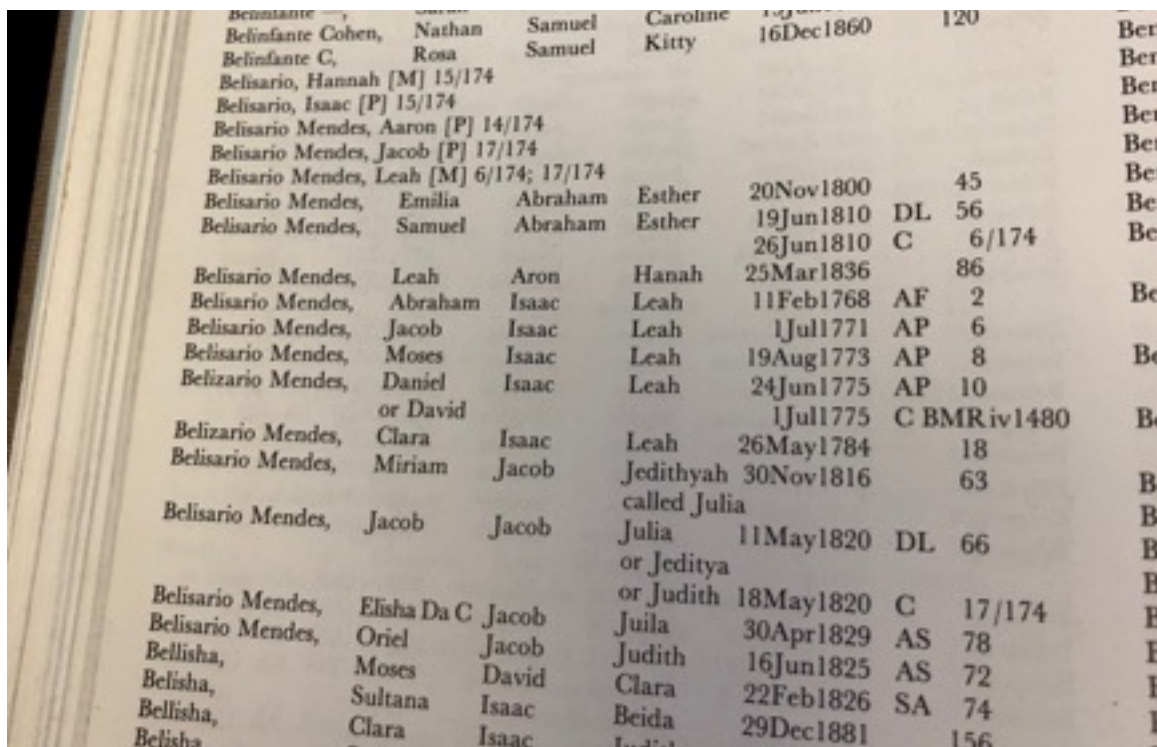
Jacobs and Wolf, *Bibliotheca Anglo-Judaica*, Nos. 2093, 2105.

5) Sabbath Evenings at Home by Miriam Mendes Belisario



6) Bevis Marks Records: Part V

The Birth Register (1767-1881)



Parent(s)	Child	Date	Other
Belinfante Cohen, Nathan	Samuel	16Dec1860	120
Belinfante C, Rosa	Samuel		
Belisario, Hannah [M]		15/174	
Belisario, Isaac [P]		15/174	
Belisario Mendes, Aaron [P]		14/174	
Belisario Mendes, Jacob [P]		17/174	
Belisario Mendes, Leah [M]		6/174; 17/174	
Belisario Mendes, Emilia	Abraham	20Nov1800	45
Belisario Mendes, Samuel	Abraham	19Jun1810	DL 56
		26Jun1810	C 6/174
Belisario Mendes, Leah	Aron	25Mar1836	86
Belisario Mendes, Abraham	Isaac	11Feb1768	AF 2
Belisario Mendes, Jacob	Isaac	1Jul1771	AP 6
Belisario Mendes, Moses	Isaac	19Aug1773	AP 8
Belisario Mendes, Daniel	Isaac	24Jun1775	AP 10
	or David	1Jul1775	C BMRiv1480
Belisario Mendes, Clara	Isaac	Leah 26May1784	18
Belisario Mendes, Miriam	Jacob	Jedithyah 30Nov1816	63
		called Julia	
Belisario Mendes, Jacob	Jacob	Julia 11May1820	DL 66
		or Jeditya	
		or Judith	
Belisario Mendes, Elisha Da C	Jacob	Julia 18May1820	C 17/174
Belisario Mendes, Oriel	Jacob	30Apr1829	AS 78
Bellisha, Moses	David	16Jun1825	AS 72
Bellisha, Sultana	Isaac	22Feb1826	SA 74
Bellisha, Clara	Isaac	29Dec1881	156

7) BELISARIO: A HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY OF A JAMAICAN JEWISH ARTIS

by Jackie Ranston

<http://lphfoundation.org/the-lindo-slave-holding-family/>

Then there's Jacob Mendes Belisario. Who was Jacob? He was Isaac's uncle, a London art dealer and stockbroker. Today, we hear a lot in the news about worldwide recession, the troubled world of investment and fraudulent escapades. But in 1822, Jacob Mendes Belisario became involved in the most audacious fraud in history when he became the agent for Gregor MacGregor, a Scottish adventurer, who managed to raise some 200,000 pounds sterling on the London market, at 6 % interest, as he beguiled London society and the man-in-the-street alike to invest in Poyais, a new republic on the Caribbean coast of Central America. The only problem was Poyais didn't exist! The bond issues, land sales, and trumped-up currency of the imaginary territory of Poyais, were all part of a brilliant scam.

8) My Sentimental Self Diary by Eliza Aria (b1866), 1922

Our daily school, where boys and girls were received, was conducted by a Miss Belisario, and under her guidance many Jews, Jessels, Mocattas, Sebags and Montefiores, all present-time magnates, took with us their first lessons.

Miss Belisario was a Jewess of the most rigid kind, a severe disciplinarian regarding the traditions of our faith as sacrosanct, and incidentally allotting to me a prize for reciting the ten commandments in Hebrew. I wish now that I could remember them to faithful observance even in English.

"Young ladies, don't laugh but say the blessing," she would urge with uplifted hand when she entered the classroom, her brown wig well awry, to hear us tittering during a thunderstorm. She was a stern and stupendous figure, and reported to have written to upbraid Charles Dickens for allotting the thief Fagin to the Jewish race.

9) Sabbath Evenings at Home by Miriam Mendes Belisario

Available Online

[https://books.google.co.uk/books?](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=EckCAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

[id=EckCAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=EckCAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

SABBATH EVENINGS AT HOME;

OR,

FAMILIAR CONVERSATIONS ON THE JEWISH RELIGION,
ITS SPIRIT AND OBSERVANCES.

BY

MIRIAM MENDES BELISARIO,

AUTHOR OF

מאיר עין בני הנעורים

"A HEBREW AND ENGLISH VOCABULARY FROM A SELECTION OF THE
DAILY PRAYERS."

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

REVISED BY THE REV. D. A. DE SOLA.



חנוך לנער על פי דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not
depart from it."—Prov. xxii. 6.

Third Conversation

Jacob. Well, then, to commence; the arguments we have collected as evidence of the Bible being the Word of God, rest on the following grounds:—

1st. The continued existence of the Jewish nation.

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2nd. The past and present history of the Israelites bearing out literally the prophecy of Moses, in Deuteronomy.

3rd. The present deserted and degraded state of Palestine.

4th. The peculiar nature of some of the laws of the Pentateuch, precluding the possibility of human agency and direction.

5th. The duration and immutability of the laws of the Pentateuch, in contradistinction to human legislation.

6th. The originality of the Law, and the appeal of all religions to its dictates.

And with this, we must, I suppose, conclude our conversation this evening.*

* Some of these evidences are derived from a Sermon of the Rev. D. A. De Sola.

Ruth. Why, Aunt, this exactly applies to what you were telling me the other day, of the value and influence of a virtuous woman. How I pray that I may grow up to answer this description in its general meaning!

Aunt. If you will resolve earnestly and sincerely to conquer your chief fault — vanity, I have every hope, my love, that you will be assisted in your efforts, and that in time we shall have the pleasure of seeing you all we can desire; but in order to accomplish this, you must make up your mind steadily to face the truth — to recognise that the possession of mere beauty reflects no merit upon you. It is undoubtedly true that you have a pleasing exterior, with pretty, regular features, and may become in the lapse of years what the world terms handsome; but I see not how you can arrogate any praise to yourself on that score. Beauty is not a virtue or a talent, that you have taken pains to cultivate, it is a gift from the Almighty, which may at any moment be withdrawn — witness the direful effects of the small-pox; and at the best, it is but a transitory possession, to which Time is a ruthless foe; therefore, my dear child, let us pray to be strengthened to resist the temptation of setting store by such a fleeting frivolous advantage; let us rather seek to lay up treasures of virtue and piety, which, if carefully guarded, will remain with us till the last hour of our existence, retaining the same imperishable lustre. Now, my boy, repeat the eighth commandment.