

40 Pages

The SCRIBE

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★ A Happy New Year 5758 to all our Readers and Friends ★

REVIVING THE PEACE PROCESS

By Naim Dangoor

Why has the Middle East Peace Process ground to a halt? Because it was built on false premises and false promises. One false premise was that the Middle East conflict was between Israel and the Palestinians. Nothing can be further from the truth. When Israel was reborn in 1948 she was attacked by her six Arab neighbours to obliterate her.

The initials of those countries make up the name of ISRAEL: Iraq, Syria, Royal Jordan, Arabia, Egypt and Lebanon.

There can be no real and lasting peace in the region unless all these countries are dragged to the conference table and made to recognise to the Jewish people their rightful share of the territory and wealth of the Middle East.

Iraq has recently decreed that any Arab can obtain Iraqi citizenship within three months provided he is over 18, of an Arab father and mother, and lives in an Arab country. It purposely excludes Iraqi exiles presently living in non-Arab countries, who may soon be stripped of their citizenship and their assets.

The Arabs act as if the Middle East belongs exclusively to the Arabs, and can exclude other nationalities as they please. This cannot be so, and the Arabs have to be made to understand their limits and obligations. Israel should make a strong protest to the United Nations about this move. Is the Middle East going to be flooded with a Sudanese population which would change dramatically the ethnic and demographic balance of the region?

The Iraqi decree excludes all Palestinian Arabs from the concession in order to embarrass and put pressure on Israel. This shows the malice towards the Jews. If Iraq can absorb an unlimited number of Arabs then the first to be allowed in should be the Palestinians and thus bring into effect the exchange of populations which should have been the logical solution to the Middle East problem after the Arabs had rejected all peaceful solutions.

The Oslo accord was also built on the false promises of Arafat regarding Israel's security. While the Peres government was giving away everything to Arafat, the suicide bombers were reeking havoc among the civilian

population of Israel. There is no doubt that Arafat himself was orchestrating these suicide missions in order to extract more and more concessions from Israel, even though the Palestinians were not honouring their own obligations.

President Mubarak's and Arafat's threats that there may soon be an explosion, unless their demands are met, is clearly terrorism in another form. The responsibility for the recent suicide bombing in Mahane Yehuda in Jerusalem should be put at the doors of Arab leaders, especially Mubarak, who have been voicing their threat of violence unless Israel accedes to all Palestinian demands.

The Peace Process cannot continue on the old line.

The peaceful future of the Middle East lies in reviving Ottoman hegemony over the Fertile Crescent that will defend it against foreign invaders and local despots. ●

LORD GREVILLE JANNER

Heartiest congratulations to our friend Greville Janner on his elevation to the Peerage, after his recent retirement from the House of Commons. This is a well deserved and timely honour to him and to British Jewry, an asset to the Upper House giving him a continuing voice in Parliamentary life. He follows in the footsteps of his late father, the eminent Lord Barnet Janner. ●

STILLA MINORITY

In Iraq, the Jewish community was a minority among the Arabs. After the mass emigration in 1950-51, the majority went to Israel. But, an important community precipitated in London numbering about 8,000. We were subsequently followed by a huge Iraqi Arab Diaspora, now numbering over 100,000 in London alone.

So, we now find ourselves again a minority among Iraqi Arabs, a minority among British Jewry, and a minority among the British. ●

ARAB JERUSALEM?

From the Daily Telegraph

Sir, You are to be congratulated on your editorial on the Archbishop of Canterbury's ill-considered sermon in Jerusalem. The issue, however, goes deeper than you suggested.

The Arabs controlled East Jerusalem between 1948 and 1967 and expelled all the Jews living there. That was how it became "Arab" East Jerusalem. No access to Jewish holy places was permitted. The Jewish quarter and most of the historic synagogues were destroyed. A road and a hotel were built on the Mount of Olives cemetery and tombstones used in houses and latrine.

Christians were also harassed: according to British and Jordanian census figures which I have seen quoted, the Christian proportion of the population dropped from 48 per cent in 1946 to 18 per cent in 1961. Even Muslims suffered.

In those 19 years I do not recollect any serious pressure from the then Archbishop (or from the young George Carey, but I hope I am wrong) for religious freedom. Nor do I hear definitive promises of open access to holy places from PLO spokesmen nowadays. Israeli objections to handing over any part of Jerusalem to Arab control are not based on paranoia or intransigence: they are based on bitter experience. ●

London From Prof. Bryan Reuben

There is currently an exhibition in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem to mark the 100th anniversary of the priceless collection of manuscripts brought to Cambridge, England from Cairo in 1897. It is entitled 'The Cairo Genizah: a Mosaic of Life'.

It runs until October. ●

Cambridge

Valerie Collis

YES, ONLY ONE GOD!

From Victor Sasson, New York

I venture to intervene in what is basically a layman's discussion (Only One God? The Scribe, No: 67). I find it incredible that this Babylonian Jewish journal should voice such sacrilege as plurality of gods.

The word Elohim (a plural form of Eloah = a god) is sometimes used in its singular sense and sometimes in its plural sense. But is quite clear that when Elohim is used of God the Creator or of the God of Israel (and here one must rely on context and syntax of the Hebrew text), it is used in its singular sense - and that of one deity, one God.

El, Eloah, and Elohim are general, generic terms for a deity in the Hebrew Bible, and it is true that Elohim is also used in the sense of "gods" and "angels". El, in fact, was the name of the supreme, all-powerful deity in the Canaanite pantheon.

One scholarly explanation that has been advanced as to why Elohim - a plural form - is used of God is this: in ancient Canaan a variety of gods with a variety of names were worshipped. The word Elohim possibly came to signify the totality of divine power and this was invested in the One, true God worshipped by the Israelites.

The idea of plurality of gods voiced in the Scribe smacks of pagan pantheons. Biblical scholars recognise that the Hebrews in ancient Israel borrowed some concepts and practices from their Canaanite neighbours. However, as the centuries passed on, and as our Hebrew prophets spoke - some fundamental changes took place. Our ancestors saw more light shed on the true significance of their religious concepts and their ritual.

Do we need to add Jewish nonsense to the Christian Trinity nonsense? Don't we have enough on our hands dealing with 'Jews for Jesus'?

As is well known, Muslims have completely renounced the idea of the plurality of God. The Quran is quite emphatic about this fundamental point that God (does not beget, nor is He begotten), clearly refuting Christian claims.

The Scribe would do well to devote its precious pages to cultural issues exclusively. It has done good work in that regard. But it should shun political and theological issues.

Scribe: The rest of his letter was abusive and is being ignored.

Naim Dangoor writes:

First, you should read the main article, Scribe No: 66 page 2.

That article Only One God? was of course a layman's discussion. Just as war is too serious a business to be left to the Generals, religion is too important an issue to be left to the Ayatollahs.

When Abraham reasoned and searched for the one true God, he did not have to get permission from others.

The fact is, that while faith goes further and deeper than reason, faith must not contradict

reason. Do we still have to believe that the Universe was created in six terrestrial days? Psalms state 1,000 years in the eyes of God is like a wink. Therefore, the Creation of the Universe took six days in God's eyes which may mean billions of years. In this way, we can agree with science rather than contradict it.

Do we have to believe that the earth is flat, or are you a member of the flat earth society? In biblical times people thought the earth was flat and had four corners. As recently as 1492 when Columbus set sail Westward, many people shook their heads and said, he is going to fall off the edge of the world.

Do we have to believe that the sun circles around the earth, or that the sky is a kind of canopy within human reach, if one could go high enough. In the Quran which you bring in as a witness, Pharaoh is quoted as telling his men, "Build me a high tower I want to go to Heaven, and look for the God of Moses; I am sure he is lying." All these things were believed by the dinosaurs, and where are they now?

You and I do not believe in the Christian Trinity. You and I do not believe in Pantheism. I have no truck with the Jews For Jesus which is only a sly way of trying to convert Jews to Christianity. Moreover, the Jewish God, the only true God, was a much older tradition than the Canaanites that you refer to. Our tradition goes back beyond Abraham to Noah and to Adam himself, or at least to his grandson Enosh. "And Adam knew his wife again; and she bore him a son, and he called his name Seth.... And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enosh; THEN BEGAN MEN TO CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD" (GEN. 4: 25, 26).

It is very clear that the transition of a plurality of gods to one God happened at the time of Enosh, Adam's grandson.

This is the start of our Jewish Monotheism. It is so clear, why should some people be blind to it.

What I am saying is that God is Eternal; Judaism teaches that. I am saying that in a Universe which has been proved to be infinite, God must also be infinite. Judaism cannot have any quarrel with that. Infinity + any number = Infinity. Judaism teaches that we are born in the image of God. That does not mean just the appearance. We have a spark of wisdom, a spark of justice, a spark of love and a spark of holiness. "You are Holy because I am Holy."

What I am saying therefore, is that we have every right to aspire to be joined to Almighty God who shall always remain the one true God of the Universe.

The Scribe is a Journal of Babylonian Jewry - of and for, to and from, on and about Babylonian Jewry. For the past 26 years we have endeavoured to cover all aspects of our history, tradition, culture, experience, cookery as well as current events. Many readers have shown appreciation of our efforts. We charge no subscription and accept no commercial advertising. While the many contributions

received are greatly appreciated, these cover only a fraction of our printing costs.

The Scribe is also my personal newsletter in which I express from time to time my editorial opinions, my thoughts and ideas. It is also a forum for free and honest opinions and debate. While we accept other constructive ideas there is no room for a censor by remote control. Anyone who wishes to produce a better or a different publication is free to do so. ●

A ROYAL GARDEN PARTY

by Fred Sopher

Commander in Indian Navy (Ret'd)

My wife and I had the honour of being invited to a Royal Garden Party on 22 July 1997.

There are 3 gates leading to the grounds of Buckingham Palace.

I arrived early at Hyde Park Corner gate and found that I had to stand in a queue as the gates would only be open at 1500 hours, and there was almost 1/2 hour to go. The queue behind me started building up with service personnel and members of the police, fire, clergy and others including a host of civilians many of them dressed in morning suits with top hats and all the ladies had to wear hats. Irrespective of rank or status (except for a few) everybody else had to queue up on the pavement leading to the gate.

Promptly at 1500 hours the gates were opened and we were lead into the grounds which I only then realised their vastness. We arrived at what is called The Lawn which is a grassed area of maybe 15,000 sq ft. It gradually started filling up from 3 different directions and finally amounted to some 8,000 people.

I had all along been wondering if I would meet any ex-Naval Officers whom I would know, when, to my surprise, I was, within a couple of minutes of arriving on The Lawn, approached by a Cdr. King who recognised me after almost 50 years. He said that the only other with RIN connections who would be attending was Mrs Bond, widow of Tony Bond. As he said these words, Mrs Bond, and her daughter were just passing! We stood around talking for some time, had a delightful tea and then dispersed to various parts of The Lawn to take up advantage positions to see the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh, and other members of the Royal Family. After seeing them it was the return hike through the grounds and home.

I met the Prince at a reception in 1954. I was No 1 of the Indian Navy destroyer 'Rana' and formed part of the escort to the SS 'Gothic' between Colombo and Aden. The Queen and the Prince were on a world tour and were travelling on the 'Gothic' because the 'Britannia' had not yet been built. ●

VISITS TO JERUSALEM AND GEORGIA

by Percy Gouragey

In the middle of June I went to Jerusalem to attend meetings of the General Council or The World Zionist Organisation ("Actions Committee").

The meetings of the WZO and the Jewish Agency were concerned mainly with the restructuring of the two organisations and streamlining their respective functions based on financial factors in view of the 100th anniversary next year. In the ensuing general debate I spoke of the need to fulfil the tasks ("tafkidim") of the Zionist movement as outlined in the Jerusalem programme adopted at the first World Zionist Congress in Israel (the 23rd) in 1950 which I attended as a delegate from India where I lived and worked at the time. These tasks, replaced the Basle programme of 1897 when the First World Zionist Congress was convened by the great leader and visionary, Dr Theodor Herzl. The unity of the Jewish people eroded by internal factions and external assimilation, Jewish education and human rights and, above all, the strengthening of Israel which still has the most threatened Jewish community in the world although necessarily the strongest, the major attribute of sovereign statehood.

But by far the most interesting and exciting aspect of our conferences were the delegates' visits to the Former Soviet Union. I chose Tbilisi, Georgia, amongst other cities visited such as Moscow, Minsk, Odessa, Tashkent and Baku and Kiev. This was because my surname originates from there, once called Gourgistan because its Muslim conquerors in the Middle Ages had found its women so beautiful. In 1969, 19 Georgian Jewish families were the first in the Soviet Union to proclaim openly their wish to live in Israel in an open letter to U Thant, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, stating they had no complaint against the Soviet authorities but simply wished to join their brethren in their ancient homeland from which their ancestors were dispersed as one of the Lost Ten Tribes. This initiated the intensive campaign for Soviet Jewry, 700,000 of whom have now emigrated to Israel.

We visited Jewish Agency summer camps, ulpanim, old age homes and talked to prospective immigrants. We also visited synagogues where the Sephardi minhag is followed, including minhag Babel. Of the ninety synagogues in the former Soviet Union, fifty per cent were in Georgia. Its Jewish population has now reduced to 12,000 from 50,000. There are signs of poverty among them and the general population of 5 million although it is a beautiful country on the Black Sea. Its President was the penultimate Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr Shevardnaze. We also visited Gori, the birthplace of Stalin, where there is a museum - perhaps the only place in the world where the former Soviet dictator is venerated though he was very brutal towards them. On our return to Israel after three days, we went to the Western Wall to insert petachim or messages entrusted to us by local Jews in the wall as is the custom. It was altogether a fascinating visit. ●

THE THREE FAITHS FORUM

Jewish Christian Muslim Council, London

London. Three Faiths Forum, a Jewish Christian Muslim Council, dedicated to promoting dialogue between the world's three major religions which trace their origins to the Patriarch Abraham, has been established in Britain.

Pledging its support to all those dedicated to furthering mutual understanding and respect through dialogue, the Three Faiths Forum will be based at the Sternberg Centre in Finchley, the largest Jewish cultural centre in Europe. It will bring together existing interfaith groups and give a new impetus to dialogue between the three monotheistic religions.

Backed by Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi, the chairman of the Council of Imams and Mosques of Great Britain, the Three Faiths Forum seeks to give expression to the Archbishop of Canterbury's vision of "a world of tolerance in which love and harmony may flower."

Its creation echoes the recent statement by Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan, in his lecture at the Leo Baeck College at the Sternberg Centre, that "Only by celebrating what we have in common and understanding and tolerating our differences, can we offer hope for a better future. This is specially true with regard to the Abrahamic faiths, for Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all branches of the same family."

Announcing the establishment of the Forum, Sir Sigmund Sternberg said it would offer its full co-operation to the International Council of Christians and Jews which, after ten years of active trilateral dialogue, has recently established an Abrahamic Forum which seeks to facilitate contacts, dialogue, and co-operation on equal terms between the three faith groups.

The Three Faiths Forum has been welcomed by the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

The Forum, said Sir Sigmund, was open to all those who, while adhering to their respective religious faiths, were committed to the vital task of developing attitudes of mutual respect. It did not impinge on the work of the Council of Christians and Jews which had its own distinct and continuing agenda, he stated. It hoped, through dialogue conducive to friendship and trust, to widen the contacts between preachers, teachers and writers from all three faiths.

The Forum, which will be guided by an advisory committee consisting of lay experts and religious leaders, is to appoint a director.

THE AIMS OF THE THREE FAITHS FORUM

1. To encourage friendship, goodwill and understanding amongst people of the three monotheistic faiths in the UK and elsewhere.

2. To promote support for and public recognition of the importance of groups where people of the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths meet and share common interests and experiences.

3. To encourage respect for religious differences between the three faiths on a basis of equality, and exploring and enjoying those differences where appropriate.

4. To promote training of ministers of religion of the three faiths in their common roots; understanding of their differences, and encourage respect for each other on a basis of equality. ●

For further information, please contact:

Sir Sigmund Sternberg: 0171 485 2538

Sidney L. Shipton
Co-ordinator



Seder in Tbilisi, Georgia, 1924. All over the world, in every Jewish community, the Seder meal of Passover, which recalls the story of the Exodus from Egypt, brings extended families together.

31/12/1999

by Naim Dangoor

At midnight on 31 December 1999 most people will have stayed up to witness the transition not only to a New Year, but also a New Century and a New Millennium. As midnight approaches, New Year revellers, before popping the bottles of champagne to greet the new period, usually bid farewell to the old period by singing Auld Lang Syne:

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And never brought to mind?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And days o'lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear, For auld lang syne,

We'll take a cup o' kindness yet, For auld lang syne.

But in this case we have nothing to be nostalgic about. The passing Millennium was full of invasions, famines, the Crusades, the destruction of Jerusalem etc... Likewise the Twentieth Century, which opened on a hopeful note, was perhaps the worst in human history. The great advance in knowledge and technology were coupled by bloody revolutions, two world wars and, above all, the Holocaust - the systematic murder by Germans of 6 or 7 million Jews while all governments knew what was going on and looked the other way.

There are suggestions that a public holiday should be introduced to commemorate the Slave Trade, another to commemorate the multitude of people killed and maimed on the roads by the motor car. But most deserving to commit to the memory and conscience of mankind should be the immense crime of the Holocaust.

The Churches are attempting to make Christian capital out of the New Date. But Jesus was in fact born not in the year 1 CE but before 4 BCE. Likewise, January first does not mark the occasion of his birth, but the event of his circumcision - a more important event than birth in Jewish eyes and in the eyes of founding Fathers of Christianity, which should emphasise the Jewish origins of Christianity.

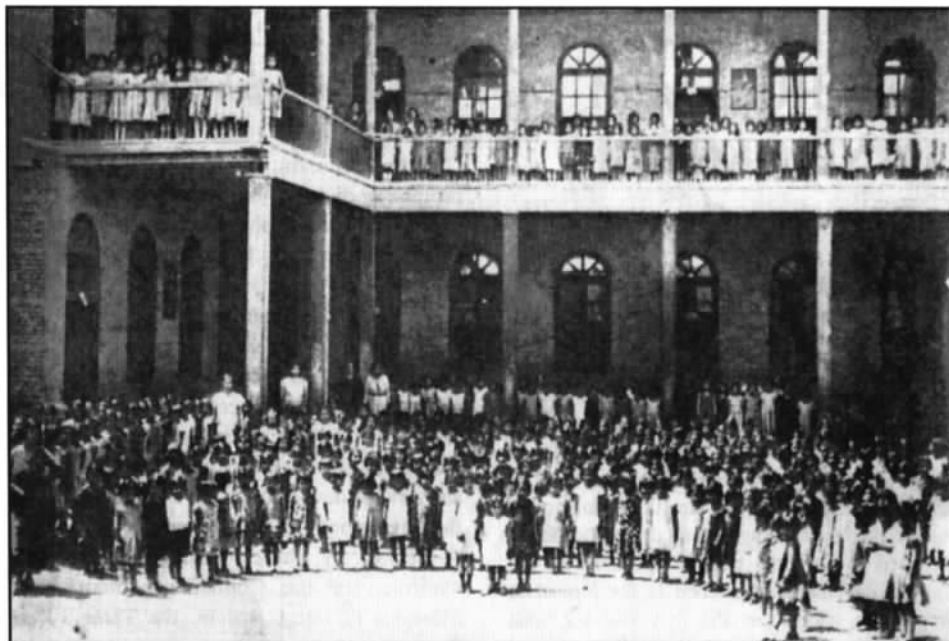
A new home, a new suit... often augur well for its people. Let us hope that the coming Millennium, century and year shall augur well for humanity.

One sour note is that New Year's Eve will happen on Friday night and will deter orthodox Jewish involvement in the celebrations. Having said all the above, we should realise that 1.1.2000 marks neither a new century nor a new millennium. This will be a year later on 1.1.2001.●

Although I have no direct connection with the Babylonian Jewry I find your "Scribe" very interesting and in particular No: 67 the April issue.

I found many articles very well worth reading and very informative.●

London John S. Montefiore-Vita
Page 4



مدرسة نوعام وطوبه (مايس ١٩٣٢) والتي تأسست من قبل الالينس عام ١٩٢٧ بتبرعات نوعام

Noam Alliance School Baghdad, 1932



The above picture shows some of the girls of Noam School in Baghdad where I became a teacher in 1945. I am standing in the centre.

I have fond memories of Noam School as I was impressed by its pupils, its teachers and especially the principal, Lulu Takoo who is still one of my best and closest friends.●

Ramat Gan

Tikva (Amal) Agassi

We were happy to see Percy Gourgey's article on his new book next to his photograph in his naval uniform.

His accomplishments give us great pride and brought back many fond memories of our association in our younger years in Abubake Mansion with him and his family.

Our main business connection in England is supplying an Antimicrobial Air Conditioning Duct Coating which eliminates bacteria and viruses in the Ducts and prevents what is commonly known as "Sick Building." It is the only product of its kind that has a six years history of protecting buildings from bacteria.●

Los Angeles Richard Moulaim

I must say that I wish all people, Jews in particular, would have the foresight that was shown in the interpretation of the saying "An Eye For An Eye".

This is how I was taught as a child, but as is plainly stated in the article, most people, unfortunately, interpret it as a Death Warrant.

I, myself, am not of Sefardi decent, but I'm married to a woman of Afghani decent.

I had a son RIP, who was married to a Yeminite girl (Background Information on myself).

I hope that many eyes see this article, and are enlightened!●

Jerusalem Gerald Zang

The late Edward A. Bashi

Mrs Naima Saleh's thoughts "In Memoriam" on her brother Edward Bashi in the March issue of the Scribe No: 65 - Page 43, brought back many memories for me.

My late father, David Ezra, was guardian of Edward and his cousins Victor and Albert while they were students in London. They used to come to our flat for lunch on weekends, and I enclose a photograph of Victor in a group taken at my Bar Mitzvah party in April 1937. Victor's father, Khedouri E. Ani, was my father's agent in Basrah.

It was Victor, and particularly Edward, whom I knew best. As a boy I had a hobby of attacking mathematical puzzles and Edward, who was studying engineering, used to help me with them.

I remember the air raid in which Victor was killed, and my father going to the house where he lived (which had become rubble), in an attempt to find out what had happened.

When I turned out my late father's papers years ago, I kept the correspondence relating to Edward. From the telegram my father had received from the Air Ministry, it is clear that the crash happened on the night of 27/28th April 1944 and not 28th November as appeared in Mrs Saleh's letter in the Scribe. My father had written to Edward informing him of his father's decease. On 27th April, Edward wrote back to say that while the news was unexpected, it nevertheless came as a hard blow. That evening he went on his fateful flight in which he was killed.

Although I was away from home and in the Army at the time and not immediately aware of the crash, I do remember it being said that Edward had no need to go on any more operational flights, but he wanted to complete another tour of duty.

I had written to Mrs Saleh with all the details, and her reply said, "I thank you for your concern and thoughtfulness, also thanks to the Scribe who brought so many memories to many people, especially the Baghdadians. What a great idea behind such a journal.

Your letter connected me to the past for a while and made me wonder about life and what it has in store for us.

London **Stanley Horesh**

Scribe: It is possible that Edward's sad frame of mind by the news of his father's death, may have been a contributory factor to the tragic end of his last flight on which he was the Senior Officer.●

I am pleased to hear that the Exilarch's Foundation has acted in the manner that may yet save Carmel College from being sold to a developer.

Regretfully, Yeshiva University has no interest in using the property, despite the fact that I remember it very well as a most attractive facility in a marvellous environment.

I wish you the best of luck in finding a reputable institution to take over this historic building.●

Yeshiva University **Dr. Norman Lamm**
New York **President**



Picture taken on the occasion of Stanley Horesh's Bar Mitzvah in 1937.

Left to Right:

Standing:;; Victor Ani; David Ezra Horesh; Stanley Horesh.

Sitting: Brother Edward; Mother Malvina; Sister Lilian Schayek.

CIRCUMCISION OF LOUIS XVI

The tardy death of Louis XV in 1774, made Louis XVI at the age of twenty master of France. But he was unable to consummate his marriage to the beautiful Marie Antoinette, because of the tightness of his foreskin which made coitus very painful. He shunned the simple circumcision operation that would have solved his problem. Then in 1777, the Queen's brother Joseph II of Austria persuaded him to submit to the knife, and soon all was well.

Montreal **Emile Fattal**

Scribe: Our Patriarch Abraham may have suffered from the same problem. According to the Lubavitch Chronology Isaac was born to Sarah one year after Abraham was circumcised. It is obvious that Sarah's pregnancy directly resulted from Abraham's circumcision. He too must have been unable to consummate his marriage to Sarah before. That is why he kept on referring to her as his sister (she was in fact his half sister).

Abraham apparently had no such difficulty with the Egyptian Hagar as he was encountering with the delicate Sarah.

Nowadays, we look on circumcision as routine but in its absence men must have encountered all kinds of tormenting problems.●

My own special Memory of Mr Abdullah Obadiah

by Rachel Khalastchi, Ramat-Gan

I was so sad to read in the "Scribe" about Mr Abdullah Obadiah's passing away on 8/1/1997. Also, I am so sorry, because I was trying to find an opportunity to tell the following story in his honour, and today I find myself telling it in his Memory!.. I should like to share with the readers of the "Scribe" my own special memory of Mr Obadiah:

Mr Obadiah supplied every student or pupil, who prepared to leave Iraq with a letter of recommendation in which he enclosed not only the pupil's marks at school, but all his other activities, hobbies and achievements and at the end Mr Obadiah's own impression and recommendation.

That letter of recommendation was typed in English on the school papers. In 1971, no one was left in the school office to type in English, so he asked me if I could do it, knowing that we had an English typewriter at home. I was very honoured and glad to receive the job as well as Mr Obadiah's trust. My mother Mrs Yassa Twaig, being a teacher at the school, helped by bringing me his drafts and school papers, and take back to school typed ones ready to be signed and stamped.

I enjoyed the job which also could supply me with the prior information of who was planning to leave. But 10 days before my leaving on April 1973, one tragic incident shocked me and I wished not to have that privilege. On that black Saturday when the Qishqush family was murdered, two typed letters of recommendation were already on the table waiting to be taken back to school by my mother! They were of Fuad Qishqush and his little sister who, it seemed, planned to leave! It was so terrible to look at the typed papers that remained after their murder and I didn't know what to do with them, whether to tear them to pieces or to return back to school, then I chose the last option...

My parents left after me on August 1973. I asked them when they came, who replaced me by that job and I was told that my father was very pleased to continue typing the letters when Mr Obadiah asked him if he could do it. The most remarkable thing to tell, is that on the summer holiday, Mr Obadiah did travel the whole distance to our house which was situated on the "other bank" of the river, sat with my family for a couple of hours waiting until my late father finished the typing on the spot! Then my parents left...

When Miss Simhah Nissim came to Israel in 1976, I asked who replaced us after our leaving and she told me that Mr Obadiah started practising typing himself, and was willing to do anything in order that everyone could receive the letter of recommendation properly! I wonder to what level his dedication reached?

I think that those letters of recommendation were our passports to open for us the gates of various universities, or to knock the doors of various offices and get honoured jobs, all over the whole world!.. All of us, the students and pupils of the Jewish community who left Iraq in the seventies owe this great man quite a lot!●

LIFE IN BASRAH AND IN ISRAEL



Ephraim Heskell Ephraim

In the years 1935-38 my late father Ephraim Heskell Ephraim, whose picture appearing above, was head of the Jewish Community of Basrah. Then I was a young girl. I didn't feel any hatred or enmity towards our Moslem Arabs with whom we lived in harmony for ages. I remember how well we used to host the Governor (Mutassarif) of Basrah, then was Tahsin Ali and other Moslem notables who used to visit us for greetings on festivals. They liked particularly the visit at 'Succoth' where they sat at our spacious 'Succah' in which we used to serve them with bitter Arab coffee in the traditional cups.

On summer we used to spend one or two months in my late father's Dates Packing House near 'Abu el-Khasib' town... an hour's drive from Basrah. All the family were not afraid to live and spend good summer months in this exclusively Moslem town.

How that situation can be compared with the events of today. The tragic massacre at 'Mahaneh Yehuda' at Jerusalem, shattered any trust of a joint life, good neighbourliness and co-operation with the Palestinian Arabs.

Two, three years ago, there were about sixty thousand Arab workers earn their living in Israel. They had all the social benefits, vacation, sick leave, etc. In what Arab brother country they find such terms? The Palestinian leadership feels the employment of her people a 'must' by Israel, whilst they wash their hands out of the late tragic event, what a sarcasm?

How much I enjoy reading and re-reading your old and recent issues of 'The Scribe'. I find them very interesting and unique in their contents. Indeed you deserve all the praise for publishing them. ●

Ramat Gan, Israel Mrs Lydia Yadid

Escape from Baghdad

I was thrilled to see a rare picture of both my father Yamen Semah and my cousin Sabih Bekhor who appear on the 1945 photograph of the staff of the Department of the Auditor General of Iraq (page 40) of your last issue. I enjoyed also reading the various articles.

I am pleased to send you a copy of my new book "Iraq as I knew it" which has just been published in Toronto. The book may be obtained from: Jack Stevens, 165 Blake Avenue, North York, Ontario M2M 1B5, Canada, at the cost of US \$13.00 or U.K. £8.00 (including mailing).

The book deals with the day-to-day life of ordinary Iraqi Jewish families during the 1930's and 1940's and the events which led eventually to the mass emigration of 1950-51.

For the benefit of the Scribe's readers, I am enclosing extracts from Chapter 20 "The Last Goodbye".

Toronto

Jack Stevens

Finally, the fateful day came. It was in mid-December, freezing cold and drizzling. We were driven in the evening to the railway station and we all boarded the train heading north. Before midnight we had reached the city of Khanaqeen. As planned, we all left the train as if that was our destination, but instead of heading towards the station, the smuggler told us to move quietly across the railway tracks to the other direction into the dark and empty fields. The drizzle now turned into rain and mud covered our shoes. We saw nothing and we heard nothing. The darkness and the silence were nerve shattering. We followed the leader blindly and soon we were joined by two Arabs wearing the customary rural garments.

After an hour or so of walking in the cold, the rain and the mud, we reached a spot with bushes and trees. There, we saw for the first time our means of transportation for the journey across the border and into Iran: five donkeys, four for the eight of us and one for our two Arab guides. The smuggler told us to follow exactly the instructions of the guides, bade us farewell and disappeared into the night.

We quietly rode our donkeys and followed our guides who had not uttered one word since we had met them. Although the darkness was complete, they seemed to know where they were heading. After a couple of hours of donkey riding in the cold and the incessant rain, without food and without rest, I felt my body aching all over, with my pelvis suffering the harshest pain. As I looked around through the darkness, I could only see hills, the same hills I had seen hours ago. I could hear the two guides murmuring for a few minutes, then they stopped moving. We gathered around them awaiting their instructions, but they told us that they seemed to have lost directions because of the persisting rain and that we could either continue, hoping that we were on the right tracks, or wait until the first sign of dawn. In both cases, they added, we could be in danger of being killed in some Kurdish ambush (used by their guerrilla fighters against government forces), or, if lucky, get caught by the Iraqi border guards and sent back to Baghdad for trial. The prospects appeared to be bleak either way,

but we all agreed that our best bet was to continue, relying mostly on the famous sense of direction of these men of the mountains.

Two or three more hours passed, the rain seemed to taper slightly but, still in darkness, our guides stopped again and, without any emotion, informed us that we had reached the border and that if we looked ahead we could see the village of Qasr Shireen on the other side, in Iran. Still in complete darkness, no one had any idea how these people could possibly have recognised the crossing point and how they could see a village a few kilometers away. That was one of their unique abilities. A short time later, dawn began to break, the rain almost stopped, and shades of huts and mud-houses began to appear far in the horizon: the small village of Qasr Shireen, Iran. That was the last time I stood on Iraqi soil, the last time I saw my country of origin, my ancestors' and my parents' home, my first home. That was the last goodbye.

As we crossed the border, we were stopped by some Iranian guards. Our guides exchanged with them a few words and told us that from then on we were in the hands of the Iranian authorities; they took their donkeys with them and turned back towards Iraq. The first thing the Iranians asked us was how much money we had. We all realised that we had to give them something for their co-operation, otherwise they could easily arrest us or, worse, throw us back to the other side of the border. I had with me about ten dinars in bills and coins which I hid in different pockets and even in my underwear. Each one of us gave them a dinar or so, assuring them that that was the total sum in our possession. Probably they believed us or just took pity on us. They agreed to escort us to one of the mudhouses where the owners were prepared to give us shelter for one or two nights. We were just happy to find a place where we could have a roof over our heads and be able to lie down. We were exhausted. We took off our soaked clothes and handed them on the trees outside. Then we covered ourselves with the few torn and dirty rags that we found in the hut and we all fell asleep.

We spent two nights in the mudhouse, and on the third day we learned that a bus was leaving for Teheran, so we paid our hosts a couple of dinars, thanked them for their hospitality and headed for the bus. The trip was very rough, mostly in rocky terrain and the roads were covered with snow and ice. That was the first time in my life that I saw snow. The driver had to make a few stops in order to clear the road from the blocks of snow and ice before we reached the city of Kirmanshah. Each time we stopped, the villagers began to pray. I could hear clearly the names of the prophet Mohammed and of the Imam Ali. During the long and strenuous trip I also heard the word "Yahoodi" (Jewish) a few times as the travellers stared at us. Although it was an uneasy feeling, we were not bothered by anyone. The trip was very long and took almost the whole day until we reached our final destination, the capital city of Teheran. ●

MEMOIRS OF A PRISONER OF ZION

(Extract) from the book
"From Babylon to Jerusalem"
by The Babylonian Heritage Centre
Translated from Hebrew
by Esther Mercado-Khabbaza

I was a secondary school pupil in Baghdad and a member of the Zionist Underground in October 1949 when they arrested me together with my brother. They took us to the police headquarters. Soon enough we realised that they had no tangible proof of our ties with the Underground. They had got our names from a Jewish girl who happened to visit our home, which was always open to members of the Movement. She had broken down during the interrogation on seeing a friend of hers, a 15-year old girl, tortured and raped. So she had told them the names of several members of the Movement, including ourselves. All she knew about us was that we had some kind of ties with the Movement. On learning this, we quickly devised a cover story whereby we were studying Hebrew from a Jew who had emigrated to Israel shortly before and whose family had published an announcement of his disappearance in a local newspaper.

Shortly after our arrest, the police officer who was interrogating us decided to separate me from my brother. In order to extract information from us, they placed a very old Jew in our cell. He had signs of a fresh beating on his body. The old man tried to make us tell him our story. He insisted, saying he knew we were members of the Movement and we had to open our hearts to him. He warned us that the police were capable of breaking every single one of us. We insisted on our innocence.

As it turned out, we managed to fool the investigators. We did "break" but without revealing any names. They tortured me for hours on end. At some time they brought me a meal, but when I started to eat one of them beat me on the throat. Then one of them tried to be "good" with me in the hope of extracting more information in this manner. I was complaining of headache, so they gave me a tranquilliser pill and a cup of tea. Seeing he was getting no results, he reverted to the cruel tactics of his colleagues and threatened to hang me by my feet.

Several days passed. Then they transferred me to the Abu Ghreb detention camp. I was placed in a cell with a Jewish Communist. They let me sleep on the concrete floor with no mattress or blanket. Cries and shouts of other inmates could be heard from every direction. One day they gave me a blanket. The food was relatively passable, but the drinking water was muddy.

We did not see the light of day in our windowless cell. After ten weeks of detention they let us wash up. Conditions were miserable. Time passed in telling our life stories to one another. Eventually we built improvised games: chess, backgammon, etc.

Our trial was conducted hastily. In fact it

was a military court owing to the emergency situation in the country. There were about 70 of us. They went swiftly through the motions. Four attorneys defended us on the grounds that not Zionism but our religion commanded us to study Hebrew and be buried in Eretz Israel. But the judges did not like that line of defence, least of all the fact that the attorneys were speaking openly in court, and they ruled that the position of the defence be submitted in writing.

We were sentenced to up to three years of imprisonment. Once out of prison, we emigrated to Israel.●



Selman Shahrabani

Scribe No 64 page 32 referred to a charitable action of the late Selman E. Shahrabani, photo enclosed, during the Farhood of 1941 in helping two bakers to restart their ruined business. According to Maimonides, this is one of the highest form of charitable deeds.

When Selman Shahrabani left Baghdad in 1953 for Israel, he arranged to take with him several cases of prayer books which he was anxious to save. At that time, Charlie Ezra Sasson Ishayik happened to be in Baghdad and he contributed all the air freight charges for that shipment. The Customs Officer at the airport, one Kamal Al-Nayib, allowed the books to go through without formalities through my uncle Kedoorie Joseph Nissim who was his classmate at the Alliance School in recognition of his debt to the Jewish School.●

Milan

Edward Yamen

YOU'RE JOKING

A Catholic, a Protestant and a Jew were enjoying a game of penny-a-point pinochle when the police burst into the room and arrested them for gambling.

When the case came up for trial each of them denied the accusation. The judge regarded them bleakly. "Were you or were you not playing pinochle for money?" he asked.

"I don't even know how to play the game," said the Catholic.

The judge turned to the next. "And you?"
"I wasn't even there," maintained the Protestant stoutly.

Now it was the Jew's turn. "And I suppose you too claim to be innocent?"

"Of course, your honour! Would I be playing pinochle for money by myself?"●

From Shalom Singapore

IVRI-NASAWI

We are a Jewish multicultural organisation founded in September 1996 in Los Angeles which promotes celebration of Sephardic and Mizrahi (Judeo-Arabic) arts and cultures. We do this by arranging events, promoting artists, writers and musicians, and by publishing an arts quarterly called NASAWI NEWS. Our first issue appeared on July 25, 1997, and included information about three Iraqi Jews Ella Shohat, Yair Dalal and Joyce Dallal.

Our next issue appears on September 25, 1997 and will contain 36 pages. We're putting out 25,000 copies to be sent nation-wide and abroad. I'm interested in seeing a copy of your most recent issue as soon as possible, because we are doing a special article about Sephardic publications.

IVRI-NASAWI consists of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews from many countries. We are creating an international network of the finest artists, writers and intellectuals in the non-Ashkenazi Jewish world.

Founder Jordan Elgrably, Co-founders: Victor Perera, Ruth Behar,

Ammiel Alcalay Creative Director: Morris Zagher, Associate Director: Meir Gal, Israeli Relations: Gilla Nissan, New York Editors: Joyce Maio, Diane Matz, Ruth Knafo Setton, David Shasha
Los Angeles Jordan Elgrably

(Later)

Congratulations on acquiring Carmel College! I only wish we had such a facility here in Los Angeles available to establish an active Sephardic cultural centre, and a place from which to run our new publishing operations.

We have seen of late enormous interest in Sephardic and Judeo-Arabic cultures in the general Jewish community, and there are more than 100,000 non-Ashkenazi Jews in southern California. This is a good place from which to launch a kind of Sephardi renaissance or renewal movement!

In any event, please fax me further information so we can put together a news brief about the acquisition. And yes, I'd like to receive good photos at your earliest convenience.●

Los Angeles

Jordan Elgrably

Thank you very much for sending me the last issues of The Scribe. Although I am not born in Baghdad (rather near Amsterdam), and I am not a Jew, I have read every number carefully and with deep interest. Your paper gives me a clear picture of a valuable community, with its own way of life and its own history, now by a cruel fate spread over the four corners of the earth. There is certainly a world of difference between those who lived in Iraq and those who inhabited the Netherlands, but we are all human beings, able to understand over all borderlines.

Best wishes for the future of your paper, and hoping that you will continue to send it to me.●

London

Prof. J. J. Janssen

The Last of the Bedu

by Michael Asher

reviewed by Charles Glass

Published by Viking (Penguin Group)

297 pp £20.00.

The romantic impulse that attracted a certain type of Englishman, and a few has produced a rich literature. Lawrence came relatively late to a tradition whose paragons were William Gifford Palgrave, Richard Burton, Alexander Kinglake, Charles Doughty, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and his wife Lady Anne. After Lawrence came Glubb Pasha, H. St John Philby, and, most notably, Wilfred Thesiger. These writers command attention to this day, both for the quality of their prose and for their love of the Bedouin. Some found in the nomadic Arabs qualities they imagined were missing in the England of the times - absolute equality, fierce loyalty, hospitality at all costs a noble code of honour. Others, Thesiger among them, believed the Bedouin shared to a higher degree the attributes of the English upper class without the indolence, pettiness and snobbery.

The English adventurers' lives among the Bedouin, their observations of Arab customs, their maps of the desert and their forays with nomad raiders were ultimately put to use by the empire and, later, by the oil companies.

Thesiger is the last of the great desert observers, although Michael Asher, has staked a formidable claim to be his successor. Thesiger's classic work is *Arabian Sands*, published in 1959, about his years with an engaging group of Bedouin traversing the Empty Quarter. His second book, *The Marsh Arabs* (1964), is the best account available of life among a people who have since been annihilated by the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Thesiger lived among those whose ways of life, in the desert and the marshes, were already dying when he encountered them. His elegies to their passing compel readers, even those with no interest in ostensibly primitive people, to care about the individuals among whom he lived and who became close friends than his contemporaries at Eton and Oxford.

From The Times Literary Supplement

Scribe: The Arab has other good qualities such as being God-fearing, with a higher moral sense than his Western counterpart. All the crimes rife in the West involving children do not happen in the East.

There is another side to the coin. The Arab is treacherous, betrayed the Ottoman Empire for promises from an "infidel" government. The role of the Bedouin Arab was to level neighbouring civilisations when they are weak, and bring them down to his desert standard.

His goat ate all the trees and vegetation in the region, thus creating the desert by removing the top soil. The Agricultural Revolution of 9,000 years ago passed the Nomads Bedou by.

The Ottoman system if properly developed is the best solution for the Middle East.

The Millet system ensured peace for 400 years.

Why should Lawrence worry about not having organised a united Arab country and

offered it to the Hashemites on a silver tray.

Faisal himself used to say "Independence is earned and not granted."

What did the Hashemites do? Virtually nothing - apart from some spectacular skirmishes at Aqaba and railway line blowing-up, actually done by Lawrence.

The way to the future is a Middle East federation. ●

LUBAVITCH "CHRISTIANS"

A faction of the Lubavitch community now believe that the late Rabbi Moshe Schneersohn was the Messiah, and that he did not die but that he is in hiding and will soon return to reign as the king Messiah.

Haven't we been through all this before?

And while Jesus of Nazareth can count his followers in billions, The Lubavitch Rebbe's followers are still only in thousands. ●

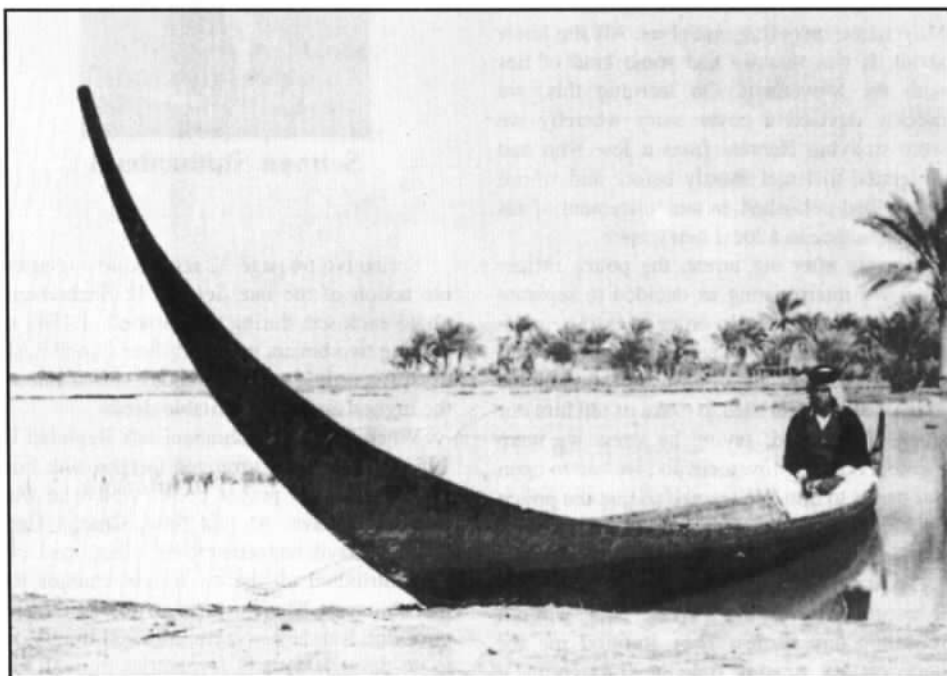
Books received:

Surrender at Dacca - Birth of a Nation by Lt. General Jack Jacob
Published by Ajay Kumar Jain for Manohar Publishers and Distributors New Delhi

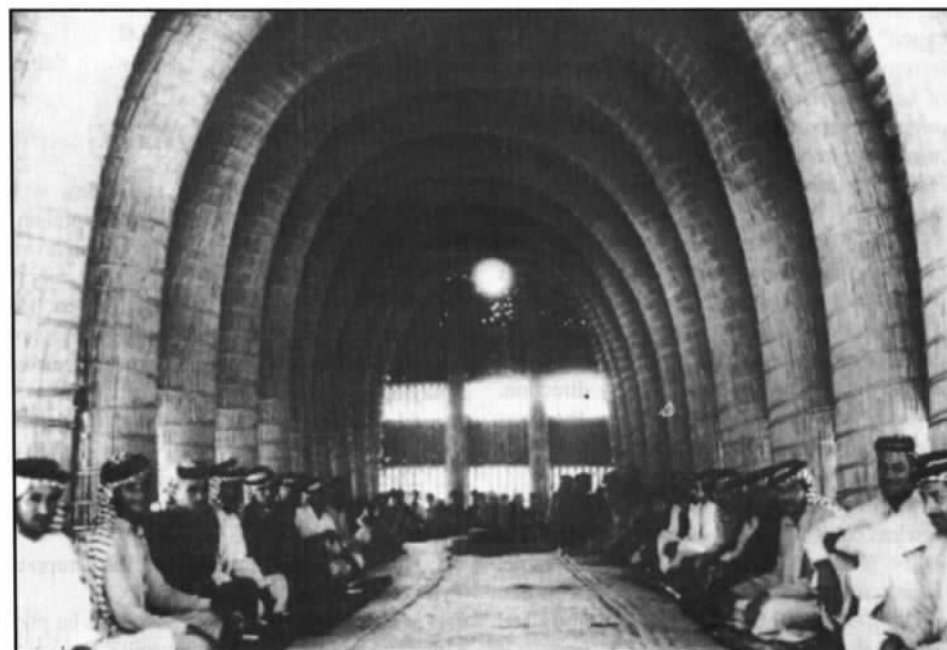
Obtainable from Jaya Books
3 Aylesbury Road Wing
Leighton Buzzard, L47 OPS
Tel: 01296 681071
263 pp £20.00. ●

Studies of Indian Jewish Identity
Edited by Nathan Katz
Published by Ajay Kumar Jain, New Delhi
199 pp 295 Rupees. ●

"The expression a woman wears on her face is far more important than the clothes she wears on her back". ●



Boat made of reeds



A Sarifa - Mudhif

The Babylonian Heritage Gala Night in Los Angeles

by Victor Ozair M.Sc. P.E.

The Iraqi Jewish community in Los Angeles celebrated the second Babylonian Heritage gala on June 1, 1997. About 270 guests filled the charming, richly decorated ballroom and the veranda of the hotel to honour our affinity to our common heritage and to confirm our continuous support to our Babylonian Heritage Centre in Israel.

It was a unique evening filled with nostalgic music and songs played by an Israeli band and later, with Arabic music by CHALGHI of famous Iraqi singers and their choice ensemble. There was abundance of food varieties with hors d'oeuvre, dinner and dessert table making up the best of Israeli and Persian delicacies with ample supply of wine donated by Carmel & Co.

Prof. Lev Hakak who acted as Master of Ceremony organised a silent art auction of paintings from eminent Iraqi Jewish artists, who contributed their work for this festive event. One hundred copies of Mr Ben Porat's book "To Baghdad and Back" were given to the guests autographed by Mr Ben Porat, Chairman of the Babylonian Heritage Centre, who had come from Israel for this occasion.

The gala was filled with excitement and joy, with lots of music and dancing. The guests, overwhelmed with emotions, surrendered to the melodious rhythms played by the band of Shlomi Amber, an Iraqi Jew from Israel. Several ladies and men jumped upon the chairs and the tables to dance, wavering their bodies to the rhythm of the music, while most of the audience had pleasure to follow the singer with his songs.

The Israeli consulate was represented by two consuls in Los Angeles Mr Aharon Ben Nathan and Miss Roni Shem-On, both consuls have their roots from Iraq.

Thanks to Efrem and Uri Harkahm who offered the space in their Bel Air Summit Hotel for this festive occasion.

Thanks to Prof. Lev Hakak, Mrs Yvette Dabby, Dr. Abe Kattan and Mr Victor Ozair, active members of this community, who worked so hard to attain this delightful excellent gala, a gala to remember for a long time. ●

I got the Scribe from a friend and I read it from cover to cover. God bless you for the wonderful work you are doing!

Regarding Family Trees, why is priority given to some families and not to others who may not know about this project?

Tel Aviv *Violette Shakarchy*

Scribe: Lydia Collins has taken an interest in preparing family trees of the Iraqi Jewish Community as and when she has the necessary information in hand. We shall endeavour to include any family tree of general interest.

No readers' letters are excluded for lack of space. ●



From left to right: Dr. Abe Kattan, Prof. Lev Hakak, Mr Mordechai Ben Porat, Mr Victor Ozair. ●

RON LEVY named 'MAN OF THE YEAR'

From *Lexington Minuteman*

The breakfast at Temple Emunah recently was part acclamation, part roast as about 100 people gathered to honour Ron Levy as Man of the Year. The annual award was given by the Temple Brotherhood, for Levy's outstanding contribution to its fund raising and social and educational activities. Levy also held several key volunteer positions in town government before moving to Winchester about five years ago.

Levy's wife, Sandra, Brotherhood President Steve Dangel, and award committee chair Lester Macklin praised Levy for his dedication to family, temple and town.

In presenting the award, Levy's colleague Richard Mazow delivered on his promise to introduce the audience to "the real Ron Levy," who spent his childhood in Iraq, India, and England, moved to Canada for college and to the Wharton School for a master's in business administration, to Lexington in 1973 and finally to Winchester five years ago. ●

"We have been once a team of pupils in Shamash School Baghdad and deeply mourn the death of our dear chemistry teacher then, Dr. Nissim Ezra Nissim.

He was a prominent personality known to the whole community, genius and highly educated, decent and modest, helpful and good-hearted.

He has left a wonderful wife, Suzette (Biochemist) and a son Uzi, physician.

Our sincere condolences to the family.

Dr. Nissim Ezra Nissim will be greatly missed by the whole community here and in the Diaspora." ●

Israel on behalf of the team:
D. Salman

Your erudite and beautifully documented publication will make an excellent addition to our library in the "Magen Abraham Synagogue" here in Ahmedabad-City. We will be delighted to receive it. It will be read by our community members living in Ahmedabad-City, Baroda-City, Surat-City, and in the other cities of Saurashtra also by turns.

In spite of the fact that majority of the Bene-Israels have migrated to the State of Israel, there is yet a sizeable number of Bene-Israel families left over in these cities of Gujarat State and quite a lot in Bombay-City and suburbs thereof. In our state of Gujarat there are at least 64 families left most of whom are service class people well posted. There are five English medium Schools and higher secondary schools in Ahmedabad-City, popularly conducted and owned by our Jewish, (Bene-Israel) brethren. Communities like Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsies etc., consider it most prestigious to get their children admitted to these Jewish Schools.

There are quite a number of Bene-Israels here who are most orthodox in matter of leading a staunch Jewish life and all the Jewish festivals are observed with great devotions and glamour to keep the faith ever at its desired altitude and Glory of God at its highest peak. The Synagogue, perhaps the largest one, most beautifully constructed last sixty years back and more, is yet full on festivals like "Rosh Hashanna",

"Yom Kippur" and other High Holidays. All the members of our Jewish Community being well educated are always keen to know what is happening and what is being done of the Jewish communities all over the world. Your Edition, "The Scribe" will add to their knowledge and invoke more enthusiasm.

Keep up the good work you are doing, and we send our choicest Blessings to you all. ●

Baroda India Isaac Ellis Erulkar



April 1997, Daniel, son of Judy and David Dangoor, celebrated his Barmitzvah. He is seen above between his parents with brother Simon and sisters Anna and Sarah.●



July 1997 was the wedding in Israel of Yuval, son of Israel London Ambassador Moshe Raviv and Hanna Raviv, to Yolanda daughter of Toni and Shoshana Jacobs, originally from Baghdad.●



A group of children at Daniel's Barmitzvah at Grosvenor House Hotel - London.●

CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY STUDIES and MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP

Beyond the Middle East Conflict - A Future for Federalism?

by *Naim Dangoor*

The foregoing papers have taken a generally sceptical view of the prospects for Middle East Federalism. There are however one or two key observations in support of Federalism in this area which should be made:

Throughout history, the Middle East has suffered more than its share of warfare and strife and has enjoyed relative calm only under Ottoman rule, with all its faults and defects. The Allies of the Great War promised self-determination to the peoples of the region only to betray the minorities when they handed over the whole region to the Arabs. Subsequently, the Arabs have pursued their policies throughout the area and it is worth noting that whilst they accuse Israel of expansionism, they openly proclaimed their dream of a pan-Arab empire from the Atlantic to the Gulf - and even beyond as evident from Iraq's invasion of Iran.

Arab brethren have on occasion attempted to suppress the rights of minority peoples by various formations. Egypt and Sudan, Egypt and Libya, Egypt and Syria, Syria and Iraq, etc. Now Muslim Fundamentalists call for a union of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine as well as Cyprus.

It seems that although the Arabs claim that Zionism is the root of all the troubles in the region, Arab imperialism is a much more pervasive factor. It is as a Jewish refugee from an Arab country, Iraq, that I came to the conclusion when I left Iraq 21 years ago that federalism is the only solution for the region and all the peoples in it.

First let me define the region:

It is that corner of South West Asia bounded by Turkey to the north and Iran to the east. Egypt, though not included in such an area, would greatly benefit from the stability and prosperity which a regional federalism would generate.

My reasons for suggesting a federal regime are as follows:

a. This is a precise historical area being the home of the Semitic people and the fountain of the three monotheistic religions. It is still the home of many national and religious and ethnic groups and the crossroads of three continents.

b. It is a precise area of physical geography being mostly plain country bordered by mountainous neighbours.

c. The nation-states of the area are too small to resist foreign invasion. Only by uniting can the region hope to compete in size and population with its neighbours.

d. The endemic problems of the region cannot be solved piecemeal but have to have an overall solution, which ensures that the region cannot be dominated by any single group.

The outbreak of the Iraq-Iran War has

shown what can happen in this region when it is not subject to some regional discipline. Hundreds of thousands of people have died in this futile war; much wealth has been squandered and the whole region is now under threat from Iran and Islamic Fundamentalism which equally alarms Muslim Egypt and Jewish Israel.

Mr Joffe referred, in his paper, to "the real issue of Palestinian nations." I am on the other side of this coin. After the establishment of the State of Israel 850,000 Palestinian Arabs left Israel for Arab countries and 850,000 Jews left various Arab countries to return to Israel with the full co-operation of the Arab governments involved. It was recognised at the time that this was in fact an exchange of refugees, similar to other exchanges which were taking place after the War between, for instance, Germany and Poland and India and Pakistan.

While Israel absorbed its refugees the Arabs kept theirs in camps largely for political and propaganda reasons. The claim that Israel alone has to solve the Palestinian problem is simply fatuous. The Arabs have the land, the resources and the money to do so. The Palestinian Arab population is a regional one and has to be solved in a regional context.

The peoples of the Middle East who have often suffered together under foreign domination but have never been united in freedom can, if they want, organise themselves into a confederation that would seek neither to Arabise, Islamicise or Sovietise the Middle East; a confederation which would ensure autonomy, freedom and prosperity to all the people of the region. Each minority people would be free to live and work in any part of the federation - a formula which may satisfy Palestinian Arabs. A regional development board would ensure that the vast wealth of the region is utilised for the benefit of all.

Sceptics might say that it will take a very long time before this arrangement becomes acceptable to the conflicting peoples of the region. But once the solution is identified the time element becomes immaterial. There is a saying in the Middle East that "he who follows the right path will eventually reach his destination."[Ⓢ]

JEW OF EGYPT

The International Conference of Jews in Modern Egypt will be held in the Middle East Institute of Columbia University, New York on December 3-4 1997.

The scholars participating in the Conference will include Jacob Landau, Mosce Ma'oz, Zvi Zohar, Hebrew University; Ada Aharoni, Technion; Ya'acov Meron, Israel Justice Ministry; Yo'ram Meital, Ben Gurion University; Sasson Somekh, Israel Research Center, Cairo; Jacque Hassoun, Paris; Joel Beinon, Stanford University; Norman Stillman, University of Oklahoma; Walter Zemer, SUNY, Albany; Nadav Safran, Harvard University; Albert de Vidas, Fairfield University; George Gruen, Columbia University, etc., etc.[Ⓢ]

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2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11229.

Tel/Fax: 718 339-0337,

e-mail sanua @ rdz.st.Johns.edu.

The Scribe has brought together the various Babylonian Communities spread all over the world. We are able to learn of our traditions and history which otherwise would have faded away into oblivion.

A once great centre of Jewish Heritage and culture brought back to life by you and your journal, especially so to the many who call themselves Babylonians, Baghdadi and Iraqi. We so much appreciate what you are doing.

I was born in British India, Calcutta. It all began in 1798 when my great-great-great-grandfather, Shalom Aaron Cohen came from Aleppo, Syria to Calcutta. He was regarded as one of the founders of the Jewish Community of Calcutta. He requested some of the Jews of Baghdad to come and settle in Calcutta, (which was at that time the capital of British India).

My grandfather Khader Joseph Khader Abden (Koder) was a white Jew from Cochin. My father was Sasson Judah Ashkenazie of Bombay - the only Ashkenazie family in Bombay, Cochin and Calcutta.

My great-great-grandfather, Samuel Koder (Khedhair?) came from Kurdistan Northern Iraq to Cochin in 1820. His son Joseph married Rachel, descendant of Joseph Rabban, the Prince 1300 CE. Joseph had 3 sons, Elias Joseph, who settled in Rangoon, Burma; Samuel Joseph whose son Satto Koder of Cochin is well known; and my grandfather, Koder Joseph Abden Koder who settled in Calcutta.

My mother Rachel who taught at the University of Calcutta, was the first practising lady lawyer. She had 2 children - my sister Violet Williams (nee Ashkenazie) and myself, Kenneth Ashkenazie.

Most of the Jews of India, Bombay and Calcutta were related to one another. Many of the families of the Baghdadi Jews in Calcutta were related. The older generation wore Baghdadi clothes, spoke Arabic and kept customs and traditions of Baghdad as well as their food, some of which was blended with Indian. They were a proud people with a fine tradition and customs thousands of years old.

Though the total Jewish population in India numbered about 24,000, the majority lived in Bombay. About 2500 in Cochin and another 2500-3000 in Calcutta.

The close ties and strong bonds and love we had for our brothers and sisters in Baghdad and motherland was very deep.

Today, there are 4000-6000 Jews left in all of India. A rich and beautiful culture almost ended of a very beautiful people. Many of us scattered in many different lands. Turn over the pages of our History. The Jews of India, Cochin, Bombay and Calcutta.

How beautiful were those days. The days of our grandparents.[Ⓢ]

Montreal

Kenneth Ashkenazie

Hareth Ghanima requested that the epilogue of the book was written in such a way as not to highlight atrocities committed against the Jews in order that this publication can be well received in Iraq.[Ⓢ]



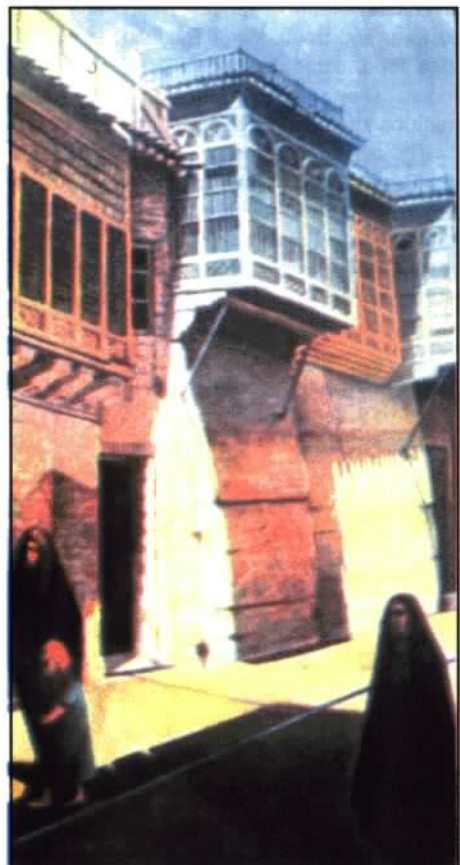
The Benjamin Shamash Synagogue Tel-Aviv showing our Baghdadi style Sefers in hard cases covered with silver or silver gilt while the others made of high solid wood painted custom handmade art. Standing: Youseph Tweg - Manager ●
New York David Shimoney

In my letter that appeared in the last issue, my indignation is in fact limited to the Mufti and at all those religious persons like him, religious in face but inhuman and un-religious in their deeds, but does not extend to all religious persons as may have appeared in the shortened version of my letter. ●

Milan Edward Yamen

The below picture represents a feature of Iraqi architecture with rooms overhanging the road way called Shanashil which gave a better view of the road and improved ventilation. ●

London Jihad



Interior of Meir Tweg Synagogue, Baghdad. ●

What a wonderful piece of work is the Sadka Family Tree (Scribe 67, centre pages). Where did Lydia Collins get all the information?

London Albert Bekhor

Naim Dangoor writes:
Some thirty years ago I started noting down any genealogical information I came across involving members of our community. In this way I collected hundreds of pages of ancestral information on many families, which Lydia is now plotting with care and devotion, adding her own researches. ●

"A great man shows his greatness by the way he treats little men". ●

"A good man is better than gold". ●

In your last issue, you listed a number of Iraqi recipes within a book on Sephardi Cookery.

It is my understanding that Sephardies are from Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, and people from Iraq are known as Mizrah (Oriental) or Middle East. Please clarify.

New York Violet Darwish

Scribe: In Israel the Jews of Iraq and other members of Eastern congregations are often referred to as Mizrahi (Oriental). But, because liturgy is identical to that of our Sephardim, we are grouped together in many respects.

In England, Jews from Iraq have in fact joined the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation which is headed by Rabbi Dr. Abraham Levy. Iraqi Jews now form more than half of that congregation. As for the recipes, we purposely selected those recipes that were offered by persons well known to our readers, and of dishes that were traditional recipes of Iraq. ●

I can't find the exact right words to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading the last edition of the Scribe for its unique and special insight you are giving your community around the world.

Eileen, you are great, the article on Customs and Life in Baghdad gave me a very close feeling to my origin of which I am very proud, but did not live it, since I grew up in Beyrouth. Of course we spoke Iraqi and Lebanese, we ate Iraqi food thanks to my dear Mom, she kept most of the customs at home, we had tebitt in the same large pot you have in the picture which came originally from Baghdad.

Your article took most of my friends to a youth and happy time. ●

Montreal Simha Peress

Maurice Raeburn (Sadka)

by David Schayek, London

In the Family Tree of our ancestor Rabbi Sadka Hussein (Scribe 67) there appears the name of Menashe Sadka known as (Maurice Raeburn) son of Rabbi Moshe Sadka and brother of Sadka 1874-1961. You will find him on the extreme right of the chart.

I remember Maurice Raeburn as a very kind gentleman. In my childhood between 1923 and 1929, my parents often took me to see him in the French Riviera.

He would have been born in the mid 1870's in Baghdad and went to the Far East. During World War I he made a fortune in Japan. Everything was fine until late in that war the Japanese realised that Mr Raeburn was a Turk, and Japan and Turkey were at war, so that further business would have been trading with the enemy.

In about 1920 Mr Raeburn contracted polio, and ended up much worse than President Roosevelt. He spent most of his time in a wheelchair, could only walk with two sticks and his speech was very impaired. He rented villas in Mentore and Nice, employing a lady housekeeper, a male secretary, a cook, a maid, a chauffeur and a gardener. His cooks were French or Spanish and he taught them to make Kubba, Mhasha, Tibit, Shefta etc., they made them just as well as any Baghdadian lady would have made them.

He entertained lavishly at the Nice villa which was called Villa Les Mouttes. This name did not put off the numerous guests of Baghdadian origin, although my parents were not pleased when I referred to the Villa as Kada Mouttes. Mr Raeburn's guests were either born in Baghdad or were descendants of such persons born in India or the Far East. To amuse me and other children, Mr Raeburn imported from Harrods a cricket set and we played in the tennis court with a tennis ball. Middle aged men participated in the cricket.

He once rented a villa on Lake Geneva and he got his nephew Robert Zilka to organise fishing from the garden for the youngsters.

As mentioned above, Mr Raeburn's speech was badly impaired. When I was four he asked me if I had enjoyed the Kubba, but the word came out as Kipper. I was very puzzled as I had not had Kippers for a long time.

He gave lavish presents to his friends and their children. However, Mr Raeburn could get very upset with people and would write them very angry letters.

On one occasion someone mentioned that Mr Raeburn had been engaged to a young lady who had broken it off. He said that it was him who broke off the engagement some 30 years before. He called the secretary and dictated an announcement to the London Times that the engagement 30 years before had been terminated at his behest.

Needless to say the Times refused to print it.

In World War II Mr Raeburn left Europe and went to live in California. In the mid 1940's he wrote me a very kind letter when I was recovering from a war wound.

He had coped with terrible disabilities with courage and equanimity, a great man and a witty descendant of Rabbi Sadka Hussein.●



Baghdad 1978 - Barmitzvah ceremony of 14 boys at Meir Tweg Synagogue.●

Photo sent by Naji Arab

I thank you for sending to me the Editions of the Scribe which I read with interest to know about the Jewish community of Iraq. The Scribe also contains other interesting topics.

The Scribe Edition No: 67 contains the Sadka Family tree prepared by Lydia and Morris Collins but it has no mention of the family of my paternal grandfather Menashe the son of Rabbi Moshe. I am guessing that this omission is due to the fact that we were living in Basra to which city we moved in 1917 as my father had to flee from Baghdad in order not to join the Turkish army.

I enclose a list of my grandfather Menashe's family which I hope will appear in your journal.

Tel Aviv

Moshe Sadka

Scribe: Your list will hopefully appear in the next issue.●

We acknowledge with thanks receipt of voluntary and generous contributions from:

Mr Elliot Shakarchi	- Brooklyn NY, USA
J. S. Nathaniel	- Montreal, Canada
Mr Joseph Mosseri	- California, USA
Mr B. Levy	- California, USA
Mr Jack Stephens	- Ontario, Canada
Mr Saleh R. Masri	- New Rochelle, NY, USA
Mr & Mrs A. Aslan	- New Jersey, USA
Mr Edward E. Bekhor	- Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Mr S. Shekarchi	- New York, USA
Mrs Lydia Yadid	- Ramat Gan, Israel
Mr Abdallah H. Simon	- New York, USA
Dr. Nejla Burton	- Arcadia, Australia
Mrs Rosa Sassoon	- New York, NY, USA
Mr Denny O. Azrieli	- Northridge, California, USA●

The Scribe has grown immensely since I last saw it in London. Naim Dangoor is a man of truly indefatigable energy as well as being most erudite. I always enjoy reading his articles.●

Dublin

David Sowby

A chance remark the other day brought home to me just how much the Scribe is now taken for granted by its many readers all over the world. It appears regularly and it is always interesting to read with its high-quality articles on religion, politics, history, social life and many other topics. It has become all too easy to accept the Scribe as a natural phenomenon, without thought for the immense effort that must go into every issue, never mind the expense. Sincere thanks for this contribution to our cultural awareness.

Fifty years ago the Baghdad community of this country was curiously reticent about its origins. Though intensely loyal within the group, they were often reluctant to admit to outsiders that they had come from Baghdad.

A well-known architect, in my presence, refused repeatedly to acknowledge his origins when asked by a high government official - "the Middle East" he first said vaguely; and when really pressed, he reluctantly admitted to coming from Israel.

When lecturing to otherwise well-educated Jewish audiences, I am often greeted with surprise when I tell them that Babylon/Baghdad - the home of the Talmud - dominated the entire Jewish world for seven centuries; and that was where Judaism, as we now know it, was largely developed.

The point of all this is to praise the Scribe for doing so much to erase that old negative image of Baghdad from the consciousness of its emigrés. Because of the Scribe, and I suspect only because of the Scribe, former Iraqis in this country now hold their heads high, aware that an origin in Baghdad can be a source of pride. That I assure you, is no mean achievement.●

London

Lucien Gubbay

MOUALLEM FAMILY REUNION

The Mouallem family reunion (Scribe 67 page 26) was organised by Saleh Ezra Mouallem of Great Neck.●

حور الاسبوع

— استعراض الكشافة السنوي —
في مبيحة نهار الجمعة الماضية احتفلت
كشافة العاصمة باستعراضها الرابع للعام تحت
رعاية صاحب الجلالة وقد حضر ذلك الاحتفال
الذي اجري في قاعة للجمعية عدد كبير من
وجهاء البلدة واعيانها ووزراء الدوائر الرسمية
وموظفيها وغيرهم من افراد الشعب على اختلاف
الطبقات.

والحق يقال ان الاحتفال كان في متبى
الاجبة والجلال برزت فيه مفاخرة الكشاف العراقي
وامتداده الشام لتقدم في مصلو هذا السنت
الليل . ولا ننسى ان اذا قلنا ان وفي هذه القبة
المباركة مما كانت عليه في العام الماضي لم
محسوس في كل سكتة من سكتات الكشافة
وكل حركة من حركاتهم وما افضل في ذلك
الا انى قائم المام السيد جيل اندي الزوى
الذي استحق بصفته هذه كل شكر وثناء .

ويؤننا ان تذكر هنا على سبيل - عسى ان
تنتع الذكرى - اننا لم نشاهد بين افراد الكشافة
لذين اشتركوا في مراسم الاستعراض ويبلغ
عددهم (١١١٢) اية فرقة من المدارس
الاسرائيلية في العاصمة اللهم الا فرقة المدراس
التي لاتتجاوز الحنة والار بين كشافة والتي لم
تقم بعمل ما سوى المرور من امام المدعوين ثم
الانزواء لتفريج على ما يجري هناك .

وهل تعلم ايها القاري الكريم ناشدتك الله
كم هو عدد تلامذة المدارس الاسرائيلية في
بغداد ان عددهم يتجاوز الحنة آلاف ا
نكتفى بما ذكرنا الان واليبب نكتفى
الاشارة .

My admiration for "The Scribe" has grown with each issue. The previous issue at Pessah time was magnificent in colour and absorbing to read. ●

Bat Yam Judith Dattner

Not the Centre of Babylonian Heritage, not the Iraqi writers in Israel and not in their own Iraqi background returned me back to the background that I knew, like what the Scribe has done. I keep it in my bag, in every place they see it with me. It attracts most my American daughter-in-law and my half-American grandchildren that always saw me with Arabic books and articles and very little Hebrew, to see their granny reading English and so consciously.

My name in Israel is Tikva (Amal) Agassi, but in Baghdad I was Amal Saleh Shimon Muallem Nessim. I am the granddaughter of the brothers Shimon Muallem Nessim the most known educator and Abraham Hayim Muallem Nessim the member of the Iraqi Parliament for about 16 years.

I enclose some more Arabic songs. ●
Ramat Gan Tikva (Amal) Agassi

لذين اشتركوا في مراسم الاستعراض ويبلغ
عددهم (١١١٢) اية فرقة من المدارس
الاسرائيلية في العاصمة اللهم الا فرقة المدراس
التي لاتتجاوز الحنة والار بين كشافة والتي لم
تقم بعمل ما سوى المرور من امام المدعوين ثم
الانزواء لتفريج على ما يجري هناك .

وهل تعلم ايها القاري الكريم ناشدتك الله
كم هو عدد تلامذة المدارس الاسرائيلية في
بغداد ان عددهم يتجاوز الحنة آلاف ا
نكتفى بما ذكرنا الان واليبب نكتفى
الاشارة .

Naim Dangoor writes: The above report which appeared in the Jewish Arabic Weekly "Al Misbah" of 24th May 1924, describes the fourth Boy Scout Jamboree held in Baghdad which was attended by King Faisal I and many dignitaries.

I remember attending this impressive event of 73 years ago with my grandfather who was Chief Rabbi.

The report gives the number of Scouts taking part to be 1112 of whom 45 were from the Jewish Midrash. At that time Jewish students in Baghdad numbered over 5,000.

The Boy Scout movement was soon taken up by other Jewish Schools such as Rahel Shahmoon School. ●

Regarding the Fourth Commandment on page 4 - issue 67, by Josiah Derby, I would have liked to see the writer had more insight for perception and sharper distinction in his views.

I admire Naim Dangoor for his clear response in asserting the full role of Moses in the Deuteronomy.

John Bright, professor of Old Testament in Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia said that to deny that role to Moses would force us to posit another person of the same name. In other words, no chance to speculate on this matter.

When Moses in his farewell address linked the Sabbath to a historical event of great importance, dear to him and to his people, the Exodus, he never diminished the value of the Creator of the Universe but he added a circumstantial value which should not be forgotten forever.

The Sabbath blessing marks the Sabbath as a memorial of the end-point of the Creation and also the first of the holy convocations as well as the Exodus from Egypt. The world was created as a base of freedom and not slavery, so the Creation and the Exodus are in harmony and can go hand in hand very comfortably.

The Sabbath commemorating the Creation, as well as commemorating the Exodus from Egypt into freedom, its meaning now belong to all mankind, whether the Sabbath is Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

Milan Edward Yamen

Naim Dangoor writes:

Neither Sunday nor Friday was meant to be a substitute for the Sabbath.

Early Christians observed Sunday for the Resurrection, but also kept the Jewish Sabbath.

The nomad Arabs could not afford to keep a weekly day of rest. Their Friday prayers were in imitation of the Jewish eve of Sabbath observance. Thus, the Jewish Sabbath remains unique and should one day become the universal day of rest.

Norman Bentwich, Attorney-General in Palestine 1920-31 once remarked to me that Jews made too much fuss about the sanctity of the Sabbath since, he thought, that its sequence must have changed over the years. I assured him of my conviction that the sequence never changed and that it was kept religiously since its inception at the dawn of our civilisation, as the seventh day of the week. ●

In a tongue twisting competition, the winner is the one who can repeat the sentence several times without a mistake.

هَذَا صَوْمْتِي حَبِيْبَةٌ وَهَجَلَةٌ وَبَيْدَةٌ
وَجَيْبِي عَلَيَّ الْمَوْجَلُ مَوْجَلٌ مَوْجَلٌ بِأَجْدِجَلِ
يَا صَبَّةَ يَا فَسْحَاةَ يَصْرِيْبِي بِأَتْمَارَةِ
وَجَلِيْبِيَا وَرَاهَا
وَرَاهَا قَيْبِي الرِّمَانِ وَتَقْسِيْمُهُ عَاجِبِيَانِ
إِنِّي سِي حَبِيْبَةٌ حَبِيْبَةٌ وَجَيْبِيَانِي يَا كَلِيْبَةٌ ●

سَجَّانِي سَجَّانِي
أَقْدَمُ بِالْبَلِيَّةِ حَبِيْبٌ حَبِيْبٌ لَيْلَةٌ
جَا الْعَانِي دَقَّ الْبَابُ مَا عُدَيْتُهُ لِدَّ حَبَابُ
سَلَّةٌ بِصَلِّ سَلَّةٌ نَوْمٌ وَأَنْفَعُ الْجَنَّةُ فِي حَبِيْبَتِي ●

حَمِيْبٌ وَحَمِيْبٌ عَبْرُوا عَلَيَّ سَمِيْبٌ
رِيْحَةٌ مَوْجَلِيْبَةٌ
حَمِيْبٌ كَمِيْبٌ حَمِيْبٌ حَمِيْبٌ وَحَمِيْبٌ كَمِيْبٌ
حَمِيْبٌ حَمِيْبَةٌ ●

Dear Mr. Dangoor,

I have received a copy of the April issue of The Scribe and have read it with great interest. I was surprised to find an extract from my pamphlet on Herbert Samuel on page 24 - surprised since the pamphlet is copyright and the extract appeared without my permission or even knowledge.

I should be grateful if in future my permission is sought before any copyright material of mine is published - as is required by law.

Normally a fee would be payable but I shall waive it in this instance.

It would be a great pleasure to see you here in Oxford. I enclose an invitation to our garden party in honour of HRH Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan. That would be a particularly appropriate occasion for us to continue this debate.

Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies **B. Wasserstein**
President

Naim Dangoor replied:

I wish to explain that it is the practice among Jewish publications to borrow from each other as long as proper acknowledgement is made; this I have done very correctly.

In fact, there was nothing new in your Lecture, the only reason why I made extracts of it was to lead to the final paragraph and to make my comments on it, when you say: "Zionist disappointment at the loss of what they had never been promised and never possessed led to the idea that they had been somehow cheated out of part of their birthright. The legend persists". It was in fact a review of your Lecture.

A recent court decision allowed book reviews upto 400 words quotation from the work.

The Jewish people have a right to at least 10% of the vast area and wealth of the Middle East. Israel is only a token of our right in the region.

Our destiny is not to become a tolerated minority among the Moslems, but to achieve a major role in the destiny of the Middle East. Otherwise, history will continue to repeat itself and, one day, God forbid, a new Nebuchadnezzar will again lead the Israelis into exile to Mesopotamia, which incidentally was our country of origin.

The way to achieve this is through a Middle East Confederation which will be better placed to defend itself against foreign aggressors and local despots.

I held two symposia at Oxford. One in 1975 and one in 1985 to further this idea.

The recent Military Treaty between Israel and Turkey is a step in the right direction towards achieving a balance of power between minority nationalities on the one hand, and the Arabs on the other.

While thanking you for your invitation to the Garden Party which you are giving in honour of Prince Hassan, I am sorry I shall be unable to attend. I do not think that this would be a proper occasion for us to continue this discussion unless you can draw the Prince himself into the debate.●

Keren Hayesod are building an information centre on Ammunition Hill, just outside Jerusalem, comprising archives, reference library and work rooms, with a central archive on the battle for Jerusalem.

This museum will be named in memory of the late Khatoun and Eliahoo Hakham Ezra Dangoor donated by their children.●

ANCES-TREE

I am fascinated by the family trees which Lydia Collins is preparing for The Scribe. She is doing a wonderful job for our community in helping our community to trace their roots and take an interest in them. It will also help others to collect similar information regarding their own families.

I wonder if Lydia Collins has attempted to reverse the process, ie., instead of starting with one ancestor at the top and spreading out at the bottom, a contemporary person starts at the bottom and tries to trace all his own ancestors. It is a great challenge and becomes more personal, and can be very interesting.

Combining the two methods can produce a composite chart covering many families of Babylonian Jewry.●

London

Michael Dangoor

On a visit to our cousin Velda Adam in Boston, we enjoyed reading the last issue of the Scribe which is very interesting to read especially about Baghdad-Iraq which we left few decades ago.

Many congratulations for the excellent magazine you are producing. Please kindly add our name to your mailing list.●

London

Mr & Mrs David Shaul

I hereby enclose a copy of an article published in the bulletin of the Israeli defence ministry, describing my 47 years of service in the ministry. I joined the ministry after serving for 22 years in the Iraqi administration at a senior post, being appointed by a royal decree.

BULLETIN OF THE ISRAELI DEFENCE MINISTRY APRIL 1997

I met Ezra Lev at the office of the ministry of defence's pensioners' organisation. Lev, a tall well-dressed man, is still an active person, despite being born more than 90 years ago.

Lev, who emigrated to Israel in 1950, served in a sensitive position at the Iraqi administration and received various commendations for his efforts. In 1942 he was granted an OBE honouring his services for the British Empire. Lev served the Iraqi government for 32 years, after which he fled with his wife Mazal and their four children to Cyprus and from there to Israel.

Lev was hired by the defence ministry, serving at various positions in the military administration, the office of the legal councillor, the office of the deputy general director, the office of the co-ordinator of operations in the territories and in the defence ministry ombudsman's office. In all these positions, he fulfilled his duties outstandingly receiving the complements of all his superiors, while working with people who had considerable influence over the country's political affairs. After his retirement, Lev continued to work as a volunteer and has been doing so for many years now. In the summer of 1996, he received an award from the ministry for his long years contribution to the defence of the state of Israel.●

Israel

Ezra Lev (Balbool)



1925 - Picture taken in Hamadan-Iran.

Left to Right: Standing: Yacob Aboudi; Shaoql Khedouri; Agha Heskell; Haron Horesh; Eliahou Meir Khedouri; Daoud Khedouri.

Sitting: Mouzli Aboudi; Khatoun Horesh; Sara Haim.

On the floor: Rachel Aboudi; David Meir; Renée Meir (Nounou).●

From the album of Isaac Horesh, Atlanta - Georgia



Shamash School graduates - Baghdad 1934.●

NUZHAT AL-MUSHTAQ HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF IRAQ

Yusuf Rizqullah Ghanimah (1885 - 1950), an eminent Iraqi erudite and politician, wrote this history of the Jews of Iraq (in Arabic) published in 1924. The author was a member of a distinguished Chaldean Catholic family of Baghdad. He studied at the Alliance school in gratitude for which he wrote this book.

Yusuf Ghanimah rose to be Minister of Finance in the Iraqi government. "Nuzhat al-Mushtaq" relates the history of the Jews in the Land of the Twin Rivers since the Biblical times upto the early twenties of this century.

The author's sources and references are diverse in Arabic, Turkish, English and French.

A second edition of "Nuzhat al-Mushtaq" was published in London in 1997 by Al-Warrak Publishing Ltd, 132 Hammersmith Road, London W6 7JP (Tel: 0181 748 7500), with a foreword by Advocate Harith Ghanimah, son of the author. To the new edition was added a special section on the history of the Jews of Iraq in the 20th century up to 1997 by Meer Basri, President of the Jewish Community until 1974. Mr Basri added also a short synopsis on the Jewish religion, the sacred books, divine worship, and mysticism (Kabbalah). The new edition is profusely illustrated.●

مؤلفات مير بصري الاخرى :
 اعلام اليهود في العراق الحديث (جزأ ١)
 السياسة ، اعلام الكرد ، اعلام الادب (جزأ ١)
 أغاني الحب والخلود (شعر) ، رحلة العمر : من
 صنفان يهبط الى وادي التيس (مذكرات) ،
 اعلام التركمان ، التي
 تطلت هذه الكتب في لندن من المكتبات العربية
 ومكتبة العراق ١٣٢٢ شارع هارمستيت ، لندن ،
 تكفون ٧٥٠٠ ٧٤٨ (٥١٨١) ●

نزحة المشتاق في تاريخ بغداد العراق

The Arabic book you gave me created a sensation here. I have a long waiting list from our friends who want to read the book.

If some Iraqi Jews had some doubt of our proud past - this book written by a Christian removed any doubts.

There are still others who suggested that the Iraqi Jews should make the effort to translate it to Hebrew.●

Ramat Gan

Shoua Jiji

I read the book Nuzhat Al Mushtaq 2 times and enjoyed it thoroughly for covering the wonderful history of the Jews of Iraq since the time of Abraham.

It is a pity our children and grandchildren cannot read it in the Arabic original; efforts should be made to have it translated into English and other languages.●

Milan

Violette Shamash

What a stunning issue Scribe 67!●

London

Graham Morris



The above picture is of my classmates at Shamash School in the years 1949-1951 in which there are some well-known figures:

Right to Left: 2nd row: 3rd, Latif Hoory. 3rd row: 3rd, Professor Sasson Somekh. Standing behind back row, Moshe Shahal (Maurice Fattal).●

Tel Aviv

Uri ben-Asher M.D. (Nuri Salim)

I am indebted to the Scribe for it was instrumental in relation to a meeting I had in Jerusalem on 18th August 1997 with Shlomo Dayan, ex-ambassador of Israel in Nepal.

He was my classmate and friend for ten consecutive years in the Alliance School in Baghdad. Upon turning the pages of the Scribe some months ago, he found my name and where in the world I was living. Pursuing his intention that we should meet he took charge of looking for me. I promised to meet him in Jerusalem where he lives. I truly enjoyed the experience and had an especially fine time.

When we met I felt the time not only ceased to move forward but recycled and moved 50 years back, intended to "unstructure" all those years which separated us.

I had the pleasure to meet his splendid wife and be at their home. I was offered a nice tour all over the places in Jerusalem, this Eternal City, which seemed to be "the whole world put in a nutshell".●

Milan

Edward Yamen

—Candles last longer if you put them in the freezer first.●

—To help the cut flowers last, soak the foam in water with plenty of plant food.●

"Praise when you can, and blame only when you must". ●

It was very interesting to read the review by Mr Naim Dangoor on page 61 - issue 67 of the Scribe, of the book by the son of the Duke of Hamilton 'The Truth about Rudolph Hess'.

As a matter of fact, the Hess strange story remained an intriguing question and one of those unexplained mysteries of WWII.

The big question to be asked here is whether Hess had sympathisers among those in high circles in Britain, either inside the British government or close to it, who would have liked to help bring about a negotiated end to the war with Germany.

If this is indeed so, the facts will not be released, as I believe until the year 2041, for certain government files on the Hess affair remain closed until then, under a very convenient 100 year rule.

Churchill himself attached no importance to Hess's escapade.●

Milan

Edward Yamen

I refer to the 'Aqeda' on page 3 issue 67 and want if possible to expand the theme in saying that while the sacrifice is spared and a sacrificial ram is substituted for Isaac, the Jews learned that human sacrifices are not wanted, not even as an act of faith just as fifteen centuries later we were to learn through our prophets that God does not even want animal sacrifices, but He can be approached through prayer, humility and good deeds.●

Milan

Edward Yamen

Iran Pistachio Ban

The European Union has banned the import of pistachio nuts from Iran because they were found to contain a poisonous substance.

The ban starts immediately and effects 5,000 tons of pistachios on their way to Europe, with an estimated value of £25 million. Pistachio nuts are the third largest commodity that Iran exports, after oil and carpets. The ban represents a heavy blow to the Iranian exporters. Iran is also the world's largest exporter of pistachio nuts, followed by the United States. The Iranian government is complaining that the European ban was made under the influence of the United States government in order to promote American pistachios.

According to the press release from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in London, Iranian nuts were found to contain a high level of Aflatoxins. These are toxins formed by certain moulds which may grow on a wide range of crops, and are formed under hot humid conditions.●

"A soft answer often turneth away wrath".●

"If justly angry, remember that you yourself have sometimes been in the wrong".●

"People only throw stones at trees that are laden with fruit".©

**Dahiya,
Jewish Queen of the Berbers
The Berbers**

by Michael Brett and Elizabeth Fentress
350 pp. Oxford Blackwell £40

Like the Kurds, the Berbers are an important mountain people who have never had a state of their own. Like the Kurds, too, their language has rarely been written until modern times, so there is no Berber literature or scientific culture. Similarly, they are divided into different tribes, speaking different dialects and living in different environments under the more or less effective authority of different governments.

And their role in history is usually tangential: they bounce off urban imperial peoples, Romans or Arabs; and we know of their history chiefly through the reports of their enemies and masters. They may have had an eastern origin, and some Muslim sources describe them as the descendants of the giant Goliath, but in the historical record they appear first as the indigenous people of North Africa, from the oases of the western desert in Egypt to the Atlantic coasts of Morocco. In the classical period, they produced warrior kings like Jugurtha, who was accorded royal status; but after the Roman occupation was completed, they effectively disappear from the written historical records. They are conspicuous again in the written sources of the Arab conquest, and their leaders, like Kasila or the prophetess-queen Kahina Dahiya, have acquired noble status in the Arabic narratives.

In the Middle Ages, the Berbers re-emerged as independent peoples. At first they were regarded as a source of plunder and slaves, and Berber girls were prized highly in the harems of both Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphs. At the same time, the Muslim conquest presented the Berbers with new opportunities, for under Arab leadership the sons and grandsons of the conquered Berbers of north Africa became the conquerors of Spain and Portugal. With the fragmentation of the Abbasid Caliphate in the ninth century began the golden age of Berber political and military influence, though even at this time they did not act as a united people in tribal confederations. It was Kutama Berber tribesmen who formed the backbone of the Fatimid armies which took Cairo in 969 and bore the banners of the Fatimid Caliphs to the gates of Aleppo and the banks of the Euphrates in the following decades. It was the Sanhaja Berbers who saved Muslim Spain by defeating Alfonso VI of Castile at Zallaqa in 1086, going on to attack Toledo and establish their outposts on the foothills of the Pyrenees. With the Almohads (1147-c1260), a Berber dynasty proclaimed themselves, and were accepted by many in North Africa and Spain, as the true successors of the Prophet and Caliphs in their own right. They made no secret of their Berber origins and took the same pride in their tribes and lineages as the Arabs had always done.

After the collapse of the Almohads in the mid-thirteenth century, the imperial age of Berber Merinids, had more limited ambitions,



Queen Kahina Dahiya

though it was largely Berber troops who protected the Muslim Kingdom of Granada against its Castilian enemies in the late Middle Ages. After the establishment of Ottoman governorates in Tunis and Algiers in the sixteenth century, the Berbers were again driven back "aux marges". Only in Morocco under the Sharifian dynasty which still rules today, did Berbers enjoy a major political role.

The writing of a book about the Berbers requires many different skills and approaches. Michael Brett is an Islamic historian specialising in North Africa, Elizabeth Fentress an archaeologist of the same area. Each has written chapters on their own specialisms.

The Berbers is an excellent introduction for English readers to these mysterious but important people. ●

Let me say how pleased I was to hear of your personal involvement and substantial commitment to the Carmel College site. It is visionaries like you who maintain the fabric of the community and who ensure not only its survival, but also its growth and success.

I understand that the Carmel College story is not yet ripe for a radio programme. I would be very grateful if you could grant us in due course an interview so that the community can hear the story from the source.

I would also like to discuss the possibility of sponsoring a monthly programme for Sefaradim and about Sefaradim, featuring Sefaradi celebrities, music, events etc. Each programme could be based around another centre of the Sefaradi world - Baghdad, Bombay, Rangoon, Teheran etc. I believe that our listeners would appreciate the enormous contribution of Sefaradim to Jewish religion, culture and heritage. ●

**Spectrum Radio,
Jewish Programme**

**Aba Dunner,
Chairman**

Thank you very much for sending us a copy of the newly re-issued history of the Jews of Iraq. I have passed this on to our Librarian who is delighted to receive it and asks me to tell you that it is a very welcome addition to our holdings. ●

St Antony's College, Oxford Clare Brown

**JEWISH BERBER QUEEN
STOPS ARABS**

(From: *Chronicles of the Past Vol II,
No: 18*)
3 Nisan, 4455
(694 C.E.)

Somewhere in Tunisia. Heavy fighting has again broken out all along the Tunisian front, as the Moslem army renews its attempt to crack the solid front being put up by the Berber tribes, under the brilliant leadership of their Jewish Priestess-Queen Kahina Dahiya.

Queen Dahiya issued the following Order of the Day:

"Soldiers! Lions of Mauretania and Judah! Show these Arabs that there still lives within you that mighty spirit which enabled you five years ago to drive them back in the great battle on the River Nini - and which will enable you to repeat that feat today.

"But if by any chance, you should be compelled to retreat - burn the fields, the granaries, and the settlements you leave behind you - and leave the enemy nothing but scorched earth! Let him find not one roof or shady palm-tree, to rest or refresh himself thereunder!

"My heroes! Remember that this war will decide whether we shall remain free or become enslaved to Islam. Let our slogan in the approaching battle be: FREEDOM OR DEATH!"

The battle of five years ago referred to in the Queen's Order of the Day was by far her greatest single achievement. As an aftermath of the momentous victory, the Moslem invaders of North Africa were driven all the way back to Tripoli.

The Omayyad Caliph Abdel-Malik has sworn to seek revenge for this humiliating defeat, and toward this end he has despatched reinforcements which are expected to arrive at the African front within the next few days.

In these Berber tribes, a number of which have gone over to Judaism, the Arabs are encountering an obstacle of unprecedented proportions. After conquering Egypt and all of eastern North Africa with what may be termed "the greatest of ease", the Caliph's troops are finding that the western part of Africa (or "Ifrikia", as the Arabs call it) presents an altogether different problem.

In Arabic, the word Dahiya has come to mean brilliant, ingenious. ●

**INTERNET SITE OF THE
BABYLONIAN JEWRY
HERITAGE CENTRE**

We would like to invite you to visit our expanded site on the internet. The site includes information about the Babylonian Jewry Research Institute, library, museum, events at the centre, Iraqi Jews in the Diaspora and a list of our publications.

Please visit us at:

<http://www.BabylonJewry.org.il>

e-mail: babylon@babylonjewry.org.il ●

Or-Yehuda

Dr. Zvi Yehuda

TWO STAGES - AND A SCENE OF LIFE IN ONE COMMUNITY

Back in May 1957, a scene took place at the Frank Iny School in Baghdad. A little six year old girl entered the Staff Room to talk to her mother, Yassa Twaig, the teacher of Arabic for elementary classes. The girl said hello to her mother's colleagues and a Lebanese teacher, Amin Mar'ee asked her if she was clever. "Of course" she answered which prompted him to test her with a little arithmetical exercise. She solved it easily and waited confidently for a mark to be given. After carefully studying the answer, Mar'ee exclaimed in Arabic "Sab'aa!". As soon as she heard that, the little girl protested "No Sir, I have to get 10 because I got the answer right!" The teachers smiled and explained that the word "Sab'aa" meant "a clever girl", not the mark "seven"!

The little girl had no idea what effect that scene had. One of the teachers present in the room was Khaz'aal, teacher of Arts, who was also Director of the yearly play. At the beginning of the following year, Khaz'aal told Mrs Twaig that he would like her daughter to play the role of the little girl in Moliere's "The Imaginary Sickman." As the girl could not yet read, he asked if she could learn her lines by heart. Mrs Twaig did her job well because by the time of the first rehearsal, the little girl knew not only her lines, but the whole of the dialogue between her and her father.

During the afternoon of the first rehearsal, the little girl realised that a place called the "Mice House" had a door in its roof which opened onto the stage. The Mice House was a legend used by teachers to frighten pupils by telling them that if they were naughty, they would be punished in the Mice House. All the children knew was that the Mice House was a basement with an iron door which, when open, emitted a pungent smell of the Acid-Finic spread on the floor. During that afternoon of the first rehearsal, the little girl realised that the prompt sat on a chair in the Mice House so he could whisper forgotten lines to the actors. The eyes of the prompt looking up from the Mice House and his whisper confused the little girl but she had the courage to say to the director "Sir, if you want the play to be a success, please ask this fellow to stop whispering while I'm on stage, because I know my part very well and I can even whisper to my father if he forgets his words!"

The play was a most exciting experience for the little girl and she looked forward to the first night, which took place on the 12th April 1958. The audience filled the hall while the actors got into costume. The whole company waited for the curtain to be raised and then put on a great performance. As the audience applauded, the success felt so sweet after all the hard work, but even sweeter was the admiration given to them by their community.

In 1958, our little girl met another audience while standing on another stage in her own school at "The Nakkar Prizes Ceremony". The children dressed in white and wore silver medals on their chests as they paraded along a carpet spread the whole length of Frank-Iny's big garden.



"Nakkar celebration" 22.5.1960

Left to Right: First row: Emil.....; Nidhal Shkury; Tefeh.....; Vilma; Akram Da'abool; Alfred Shina; Elias Horesh?; Daood Ihsan Samra; Salman Ihsan Samra. 2nd row: Rita Hermosh (1/2 face); Ezra Atraktchy; Suad Abu el-Thalj; Rachel Twaig (Khalastchi); Maurice Bakhsh; Daood Samra; Efaf Murad; Gladys Ezra Daood; Rachel Victor; Kamal Shkury. 3rd row: Salah Lawi; Moshe Dallal; Chitayat; Emile Somekh?; the one with 5 medals; Balgit Talwar; among others: Yvette Kashi; Sami Shina.●

At this time, the community, whose hope was to encourage and push forward its children was experiencing some calm years. The children started to understand that the community was their own big family, concerned with giving them a brilliant future. They could not disappoint them.

Yet, some better years were in store for this community; Kassem's revolution on 14.7.58 opened the "Golden Era" of full freedom and opportunity. 1959 was a lucky year. Our little girl pleaded for a role in the annual play and was given a speech at the opening of the performance, in front of the same audience as before! The Nakkar Ceremony was also thrilling that year, because representatives of the Ministry of Education were present. Everyone was so enthusiastic and hoped the day would go well. As if both the celebrations were not enough, Frank-Iny's hall opened its big door in the Summer vacation, in order to prepare for participation in the big Citizen's Parade on the 15th July. Hand-made flowers decorated the open lorry on which little girls dressed in white danced. Before the lorry, a group of dancing children represented the Jewish Community celebrating their joy and happiness at the young Democratic Republic. Everything was just perfect.

But these better days did not last long.

The following years brought with them bad and worse days. A heavy curtain had been drawn over the life of the Community.

1966 brought some calm days, although things were not the same as before. At the beginning of 1967, William Jindi, the English

teacher decided to revive the annual play. Our little girl was now 16 years old and was the first to praise the idea as she could reveal the secrets of the stage to the new cast! This time however, the players had to fix their own make-up and costumes. And there was no prompt.

(I should stop now for a moment to remember my dear friend Samir Qishqush. May his soul rest in peace. He was the pupil that performances depended on. He was William's right hand man and carried out virtually all the work needed to make the dream come true. Sadly his own dream was destroyed when he and four other members of his family were murdered in cold blood at their own house in April 1973. May their memory be blessed).

Back to our 1967 performance... The Community was experiencing some quiet days before the hard storm.

After the 6 Day War in June 1967, the beginning of the end took place. For the Iraqi Jewish community, the days got worse and worse. Persecution was its bitter fate but the Community slowly began to lick its wounds and start a new life. Somehow and somewhere. The school tried its best to keep morale high and didn't change any of the study programmes, even when the classes started to disintegrate. Only 5 or 6 pupils attended class until the end of the year. The future of the Community lay in other countries.●

Ramat Gan

**Rachel Khalastchi
(that little girl)**



20 November 1947: The wedding photograph of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip with members of the Royal Family at the Throne Room, Buckingham Palace. ●

ROYAL GOLDEN WEDDING GARDEN PARTY

by Naim Dangoor

Renée and I were among the 4,000 couples (out of 45,000 applicants married in 1947), who were invited to the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace to mark the Royal Golden Wedding Anniversary year.

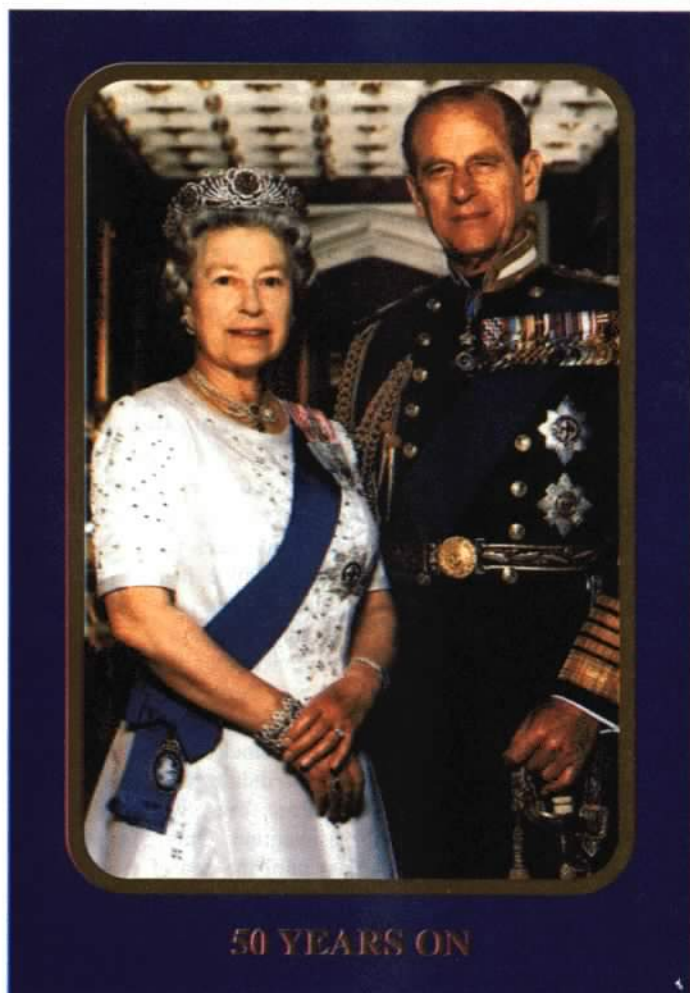
We went there by car, and arrived just before 3 pm. The street leading to the Palace was jammed by guests waiting to get in and, pavements on both sides of the street and along the Mall were filled with parked cars. We had space reserved for us near the Palace gate.

At 3 o'clock precisely the Royal Standard was raised and the Palace gates were opened and the whole multitude entered the grounds in an orderly fashion.

At 3.15 a sumptuous tea began to be served, which discreetly had no meat items included. When I asked for a serviette, I was told that the Queen did not allow serviettes as paper would litter the grounds.

Military bands played suitable music tunes throughout the afternoon.

The stewards who were dressed in bowler hats and carrying umbrellas for the rain that never came, asked the guests to form a long gangway for the Queen and the Duke to pass. They arrived at 4 o'clock and



50 YEARS ON



November 1947 - The wedding of Renée and Naim Dangoor was one of the last functions of the Iraqi Jewish Community. ●

it took them one and a half hours to get to the Royal Pavilion, at the other end of the garden, where they had tea with the diplomatic Corps and 16 couples who were married on 20 November, same day as the Royal couple. We did not attempt to get near the Queen, because we had spoken to her at length on previous occasions.

At the end of a memorable afternoon, we left the Palace thinking of the strict order and discipline for visitors to the Queen and the ease with which an intruder, some years ago, gained access to the grounds, went straight to the Queen's bedroom, sat near her bed, and asked her for a cigarette. He was reprimanded and told to come in future by the front door.

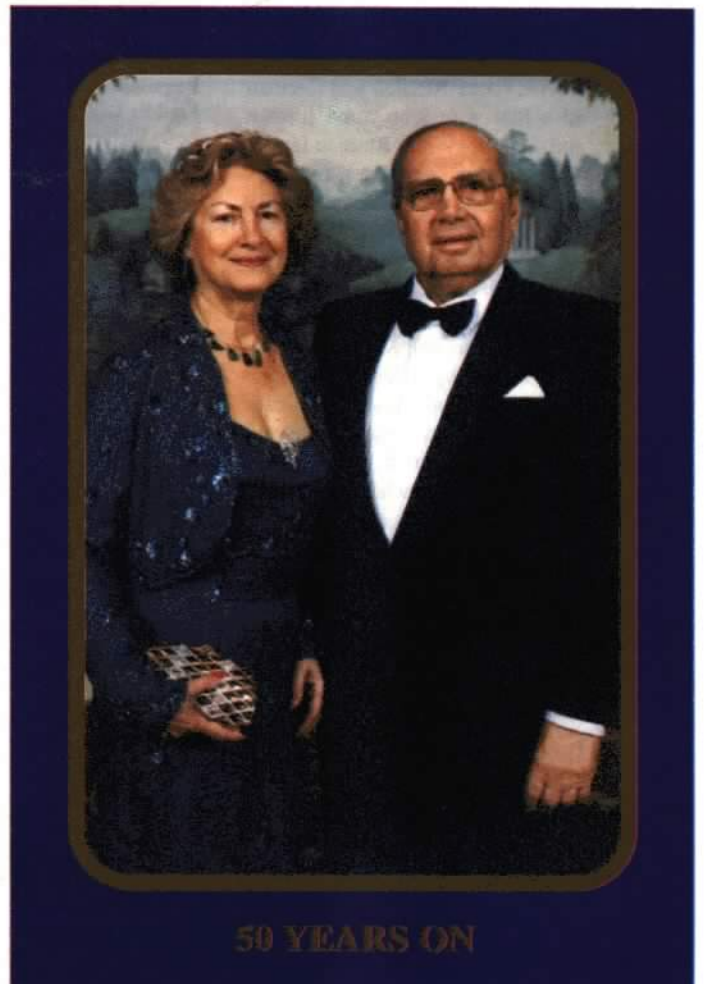
It is rumoured that during Nasr-ed Din Shah's second State visit to England in 1889, while staying at Buckingham Palace, he had his masseur strangled for incompetence and the body was quietly buried in the Palace grounds. No questions could be raised because of his diplomatic immunity as head of state. ●



*The Lord Chamberlain is
commanded by Her Majesty to invite*

Mr. and Mrs. Naim Dangoor

*to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace
on Tuesday 15th July 1997 from 4 to 6 pm
as part of the celebrations for the Golden Wedding Anniversary of
The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh*



IN SEARCH OF SUGIHARA

by Hillel Levine

The way Hillel Levine tells it, he came to write the story of Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese diplomat who supplied visas for some 10,000 Jews trapped in Lithuania between the Nazi and Soviet armies, because of an experience of almost mystical intensity.

Rabbi Levine, a professor of Jewish history at Boston University, had heard of Sugihara in 1989 when he went to Japan to teach. In 1993, however, he was invited to the Lithuanian capital to give the inaugural lecture at the University of Vilna's Centre for Judaic Studies, a task he found depressing because the city had been so thoroughly emptied of its Jews. On a side trip to Kovno - the site of Sugihara's generosity - he impulsively asked his hosts to take him to the building where the Japanese rescuer had maintained his consulate. It was, he remembers, a nondescript house in an even more dreary section of town.

Nevertheless, recalled Rabbi Levine, "I was transfixed. I couldn't move for several hours. It seemed to me that something very important had happened in this place, something important in the history of morality and conscience.

From that moment, Rabbi Levine told the Forward from his home in Brooklyn, Mass., "I had to find out what made Sugihara tick," a quest that culminated in his new book, "In Search of Sugihara," published by the Free Press, in America. Sugihara, he said, was an "ordinary" man, "who did not grow up with Jews, did not know anything about them and did not identify with them."

Nothing in his education - he trained as a Russian specialist, spoke Russian and German well and had a first wife who came from a prominent, anti-Semitic, White Russian family - augured the future rescuer. Yet this cosmopolitan diplomat and devoted family man stretched the rules of his government, giving out visas to the hungry, exhausted refugees who lined up outside his door, simply "because of his love of life."

In some cases, those helped by Sugihara and their own scrambling efforts defied the wishes of Jewish religious leaders. Eliezer Portnoy, a dissident yeshiva student, managed to secure visas for more than 300 students from Mir Yeshiva against the wishes of several eminent rabbis, who had issued religious opinions saying that they should stay put and trust in God.

Rabbi Levine also sought to uncover whether Sugihara had high-level approval for his actions, and concluded that he did. He makes the case that Sugihara, who he writes was a top spy sent to Lithuania to report on Soviet and German movements in anticipation of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, may have had the protection of a faction in the Japanese military that saw a certain diplomatic utility in giving Jews safe passage.

Even so, Rabbi Levine argues, Sugihara was a hero whose actions risked the wrath of his own government, the Soviets and the Nazis. He claims to have checked out stories,

many of which have appeared in the Japanese press, casting aspersions on Sugihara's motives. "Not one of the refugees I interviewed indicated that he asked for or accepted any favour," said Rabbi Levine.

Rabbi Levine is more guarded when he speaks of Sugihara's legacy for Japan. Japan, he noted, is a country with a "shocking degree of anti-Semitic literature," although he does not detect a popular anti-Semitism there.●

From: Points East

A Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute.
Vol 12, No: 1.

Book Review:

UNDER THE SHADOW OF DISCRIMINATION

A book written in Hebrew by: Mrs Esther Khabbaza-Mercado, 1997.

Mrs Esther Khabbaza-Mercado has just completed a book describing the bitter experiences of young Jews of Iraqi origin, including her own, trying to find employment and livelihood in Israel of the 1950's, which was dominated by the Ashkenazi establishment in business and government.●

POB 8429

M. Sasson, PhD

Ramat-Gan 52183



Baghdad 1934 wedding of Heskel Abed and Hanna Masri. Bridesmaid - Yvonne Masri; page boy - Freddie Lawee.

Left: Victoria Iny; Rosa Iny; Mrs Yehouda Nounou; Marcelle Lawee, Henini Masri.

Right: Aliza Hakkak; Victoria Abed; Mouzli Lawee; Naima Lawee; Teffaha Levy.●



Zawra Club - Purim 1938. From right to left: Sitting: Muzli Murad; Violette Shamash; Ezra Khazma. Standing: Daisy Saatchi; Ezra Khdhoury; Farid Samra; George Meir; Naim Hanania; Jacob Peress; Salim Mahlab; Yacob Rahamim.●

Both historic pictures sent by Violette Shamash, Milan.

Books Received:

Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism

Edited and with an introduction by Silvia Berti
Translated by Maura Masella-Gayley
Published by The University of Chicago Press
242 pp Chicago and London.●

The Jewish Contribution to the 20th Century

Compiled and written by Alan Symons
Polo Publishing London £20.00.

The book contains brief biographies of 1,000 Jews who have made a significant contribution to the 20th century. They come from some 150 different disciplines and many countries. Inevitably, the shadow of the Holocaust hangs over any book which looks at Jewish achievements this century.

For each person listed here, 1,500 Jewish children were murdered by the Germans. Who knows what they might have achieved?

The author acknowledges his debt to Freddie Knoller "without his encouragement this book would never have come about."

Mr Knoller himself has a unique collection of postage stamps issued by many countries honouring Jewish achievements in modern times.●

Janner's Complete Letter Writer

by Greville Janner
Published by Business Books, London
249 pp.●

The War of Gods

Religion and Politics in Latin America
by Michael Löwy
Published by Verso, London
163 pp £12.00 (paperback),
£40.00 (hardback).●

In the Beginning

A new reading of the Book of Genesis
by Karen Armstrong, formally a catholic Nun,
now lecturer at Leo Baek College for the study
of Judaism and the training of Rabbis.
Harper Collins Publishers 181 pp £14.99.●

Moral Politics

What Conservatives Know that Liberals Don't
by George Lakoff
The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and
London 413 pp US\$ 24.95 £19.95.●

The Greco - Persian Wars

by Peter Green
University of California Press
344 pp.●

A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain

Studies in Modern History
General Editor: J.C.D. Clark
by W.D. Rubinstein
Macmillan Press
539 pp.●

The Marsh Arabs

by Wilfred Thesiger
Published by the Penguin Group
233 pp £7.99.●

Islamic World

(from the 8th to the 18th century)
Illustrated History
Edited by Francis Robinson
Published by Cambridge University Press
328 pp £24.95.●

Monotheism

by Lenn Evan Goodman
Allanheld, Osmun Publishers U.S.A.
119 pp.●

Eminent Turkmans and Turkish

Literature in Modern IRAQ (in Arabic)
by Meer Basri
Published by Al-Warrak publishing Ltd
192 pp.●

Fortification and the Synagogue:

The Fortress of Babylon
and the Ben Ezra Synagogue, Cairo
Edited by Phyllis Lambert
Published by Weidenfeld & Nicholson,
London
277 pp.●

Fascinating Life and Sensational Death

The Conditions of Iraq Before and After the
Six Day War
by Gourji C. Bekhor
Printed in Israel by Peli Printing Works Ltd
298 pp.●

Christian - Jewish Dialogue

Compiled and edited by Helen P. Fry
with a foreword by Dr. Jonathan Sacks,
the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew
Congregation of the Commonwealth
Published by University of Exeter Press
324 pp £12.95 (paperback),
£35.00 (hardback).●

Book Review:

The Idea of Property

Lectures edited by His Honour Colin Kolbert
Published by The Ian Mactaggart Trust
in association with Churchill Press
167 pp £13.00.

According to Lady Thatcher, "no generation has a freehold on this earth, all we have is a life tenancy, with a full repairing lease."

This is the correct ultimate attitude to the ownership of property, which is fully in accord with the Bible system of a 50 year Jubilee.

However, in reality, leasehold is dying out in domestic housing in Britain, after a series of parliamentary Statutes designed to transform

the leaseholder into a freeholder. This trend appears to be followed in most other countries, in line with the privatisation movement which is being followed even by communist countries.●

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF ZIONIST MOVEMENT

by Percy Gourgey

On 31 August 1997, I attended the celebrations in Basle, Switzerland, when exactly 100 years before the First World Zionist Congress was held in exactly the same venue - the Stadt-Kazino. It was convened by Dr. Theodor Herzl, following the publication of his book "The Jewish State" in 1896. Herzl said the best solution to the problem of anti-Semitism was the establishment of a Jewish State and the restoration of Jewish sovereignty in the ancient Jewish homeland.

Herzl also announced the formation of the World Zionist Organisation, and wrote, prophetically, in his diary, "Today, I founded the Jewish State in Basle - in 50 years it will be a reality". In 1948 the State of Israel was proclaimed. Avrum Burg the Chairman of the World Zionist Organisation spoke of the need to achieve mass immigration from Western countries to Israel. He stated that in December 1997 the 33rd World Zionist Congress would be held in Jerusalem to conclude the Centenary year and start to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Israeli statehood in 1998.

An outstanding address was given by Dr. Judith Stamon, the Speaker of the Swiss Parliament, in which she welcomed all delegates and courageously admitted Swiss guilt in the Second World War in accepting deposits of gold from the Nazis, stolen from Jews. She called for Switzerland to make adequate reparations.

One may describe the Zionist Movement as the most successful national liberation movement in this 20th century when considering all the difficulties involved in achieving the Return to Zion.●

"We can't command the love of others; we must earn it".●

"A good name is better than gold".●

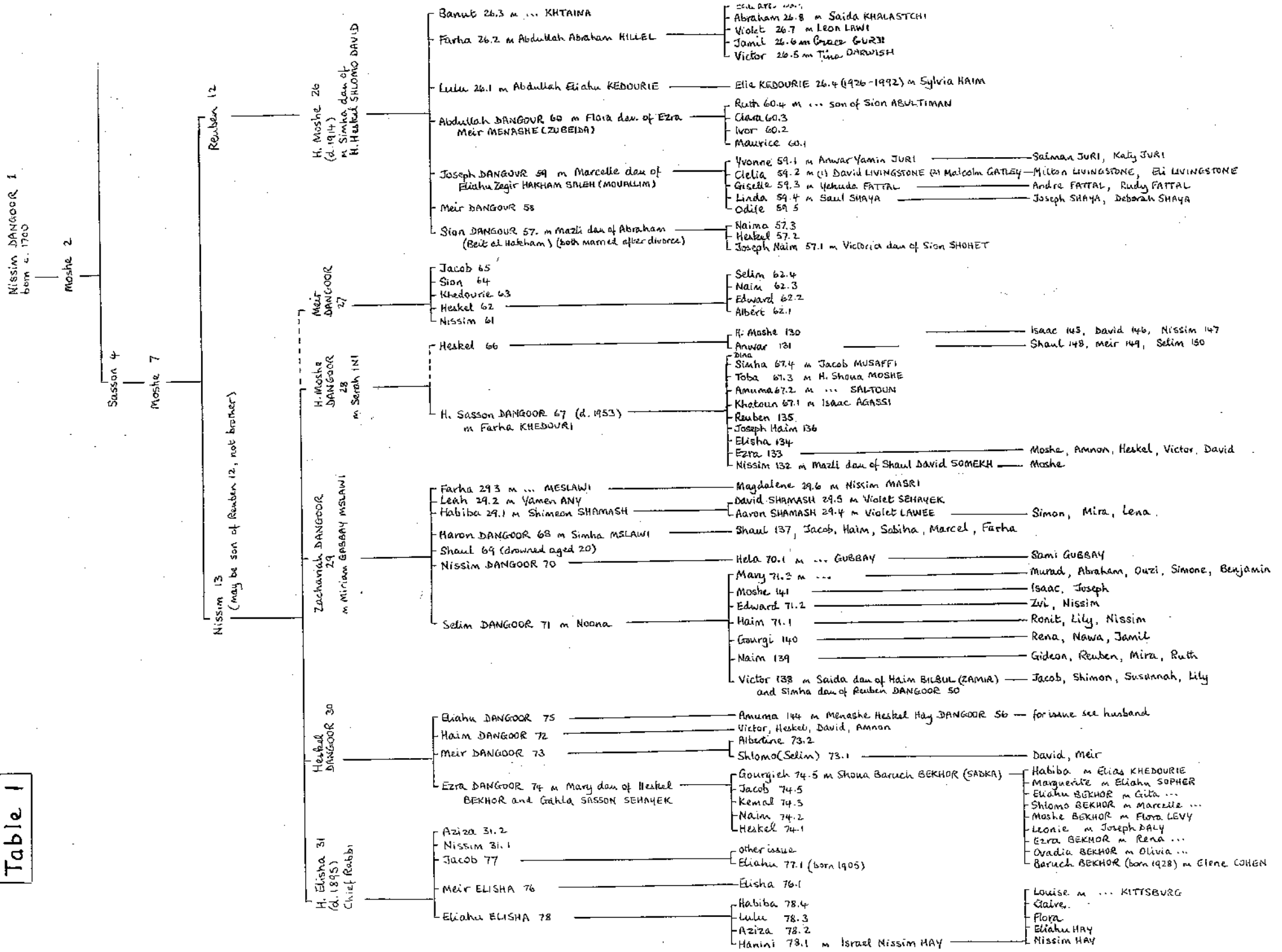
"A good wife makes a good husband".●

"A good word for a bad one is worth much, and costs little".●

"A quiet conscience sleeps in thunder".●

"A quiet tongue shows a wise head".●

Table 1



DANGOOR FAMILY TREE

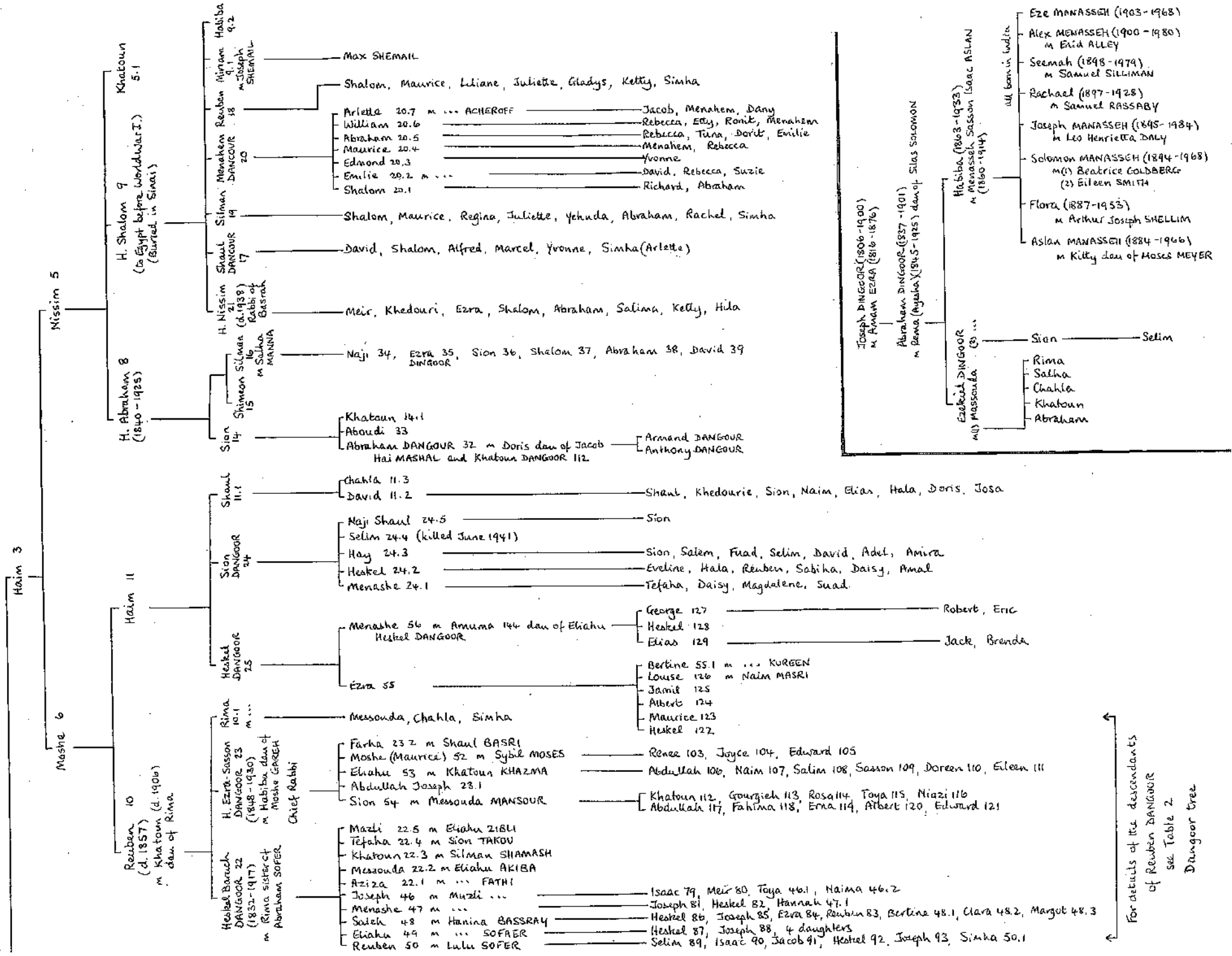
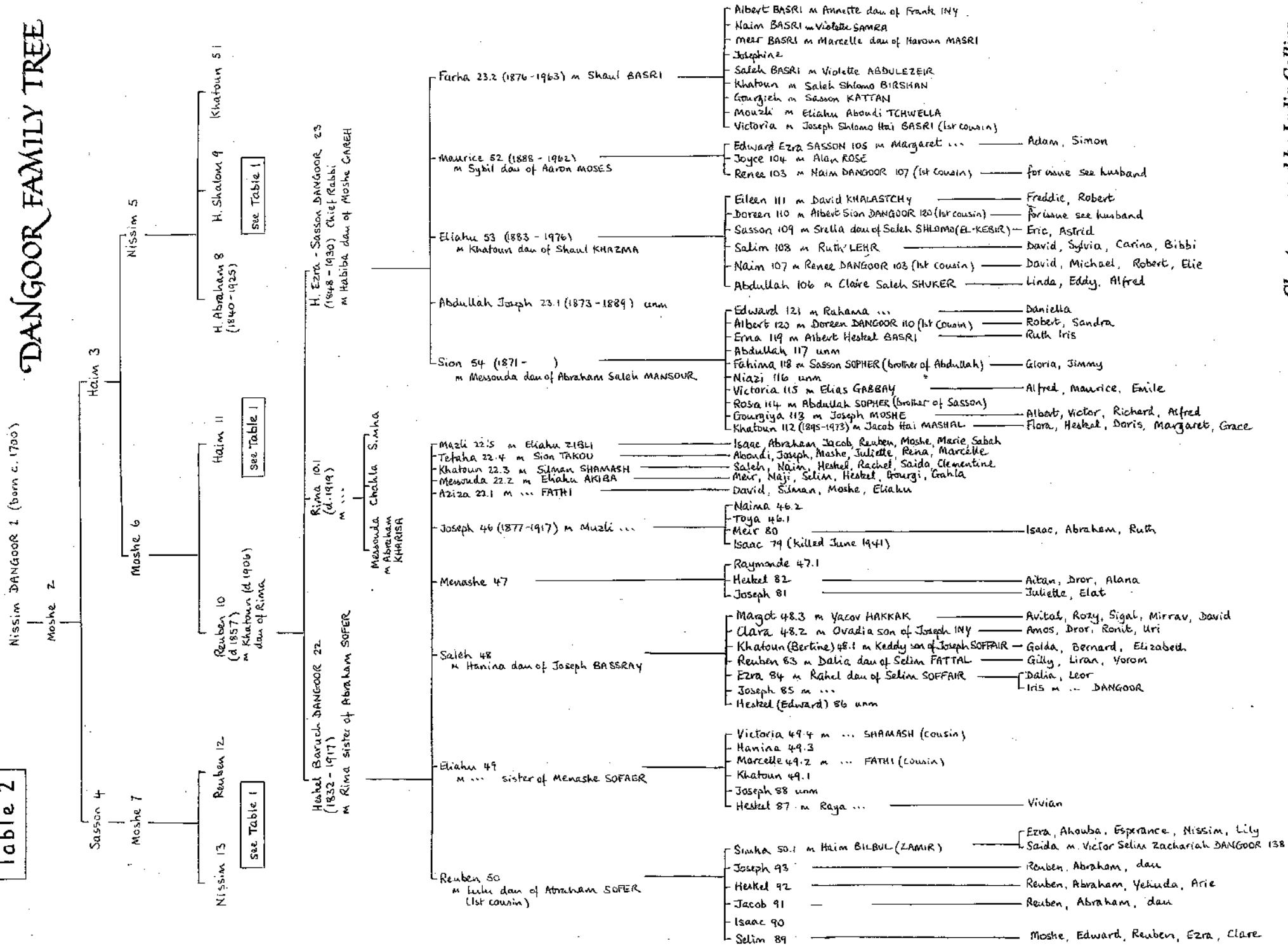


Table 2

DANGOOR FAMILY TREE



Charts prepared by Lydia Collins

YALKUT MINHAGIM

(Customs of Jewish Communities)

Edited by Asher Vasertil

Published by

The Israel Ministry of Education 1996

555 pp

Reviewed by Ariel Levene

This book (in Hebrew) is the third edition of a compilation which aims to provide an extensive survey of the customs of the various Jewish communities.

The Customs are regarded as a complimentary interpretation of the Halacha. In many cases the custom points out the clear way of implementing the Halacha and translates the meaning of it to the language of everyday life. The custom thus distinguishes a certain community and its tradition and enables it to fill with a unique blend what would have been otherwise a standard set of rules and orders.

Following is a section from the chapter on Babylonian Jews customs by Abraham ben Jacob:

Purim:

The preparations for Purim are intense and are manifested mainly in the making of sweets intended for Purim gifts (Mishloah Manot). These are the sweets made especially for Purim:

1. Masafan - star shaped cookies made of crushed almonds, sugar and ground cardamom.

2. Hajibada - same as masafan but in a perfectly round shape.

3. Baklava - cakes made from layers of thin pastry that between them sugar, crushed almonds and cardamom are spread. The pastry is cut in the shape of a diamond, oiled and then baked. After baking, syrup is made of water and sugar is spread over the cakes.

4. Red Luzina - peeled and cored quinces are cut and then cooked in water all night. The quinces are mashed and then cooked again with sugar. Then they are spread on a tray and covered with crushed almonds and cardamom and the luzina is cut in cross diagonals.

5. White Luzina - a large amount of sugar is boiled in water. Crushed almonds are added and mixed until the sugar congeals. After adding rose water, the mixture is poured into a flat bowl with a spread of crushed almond and cardamom and cut in cross diagonals.

6. Pistiriak - sugar, rose water and gum tragacanth (Ktheera) are kneaded to a paste and rolled. The rolls are stuffed with a mixture of sugar and crushed almonds and then shaped in different forms like birds and flowers.

7. Zingula (Zalabia) - made of a very thin paste with added yeast. The paste is left to rise and then deep fried in sesame oil by pouring the paste to the pan through a funnel in circular shape. It is then taken out and dipped in sugar syrup or date syrup.

8. Milfuf - a cake made of a very thin pastry. Crushed almonds, sugar and cardamom are spread on the pastry and then rolled and baked in the oven. Some people knead the paste in rose water and mixed eggs.

9. Simbusak Bitawa - a cake made of pastry with or without yeast. The pastry is cut into

circles and stuffed with fried chopped onion and cooked chick peas spiced with salt and pepper. It is closed to form a semicircle pastry and then fried in sesame oil. (Some people stuff the paste with cooked minced breast of chicken or meat). This cake is made in the memory of the seeds that Daniel and his companions were able to obtain in a miraculous way.

- On the eve of Purim, an announcement was made. The donations were collected in the synagogues. At times when a Shalyah (a messenger coming from Eretz Israel for the purpose of raising funds) was present, he would collect the donations after making a short public address.

- During the reading of the book of Esther, the audience would read in a loud voice and with a special tune the four verses of redemption.

- During the reading of the blessing before and after the book of Esther, the audience stands. The reader would ask for the public's permission to start reading the first blessing.

- The Purim dinner was held in a festive manner accompanied by the drinking of alcoholic drinks.

- Card games, not allowed by many during the rest of the year, were allowed in Purim. Cards are considered to be a Purim game and the king is called in Babylonian Arabic Haman.

- Children receive for Purim Handsome sums of money from their parents. Money is also given to those who deliver the Purim gifts.

- Music bands would circulate between the houses and play tunes (Nigunim). The bands were rewarded by the head of the family.

- A custom amongst youth was to make dolls in the shape of Haman. These were hung on the house roofs for four or five days and burned in Purim.●

It was a great pleasure to receive three issues of The Scribe since I wrote to you last year. The enclosed picture shows 2 Bedouin girls husking rice in wooden pounds in Basrah some 100 years ago.●

London

T.J. Al-Abdi



Thousands of pages of history I read in my life but the best surprise that made me happy and satisfied was to read an Islamic history in a Jewish paper issued in London -

The Scribe, an article so nicely and clearly written about the Ismailis and the connection between them and the Agha Khans of today.

When the Scribe mentioned the French Begum of Agha Khan the third with her palace on Aswan Lake, I remembered that before many years I read an article about such a thing, but this remained just imagination for me all those years until you gave me, Mr Dangoor, one of the most lovely surprises, to see in the year 1997 in reality what I only read about in the year 1964, in a picture taken by a Jew published in a Jewish paper that shows the exact description I read about. You have done it for me Mr Dangoor.

I was less than seven when we moved to live in the western side of the river Tigris at Baghdad exactly in one of the corners where the Statue of King Feisal the first had been. I wrote much in my book about our house and about the many interesting events that happened there. I only needed the picture of the Statue and I am so happy that I found it at last in The Scribe No 66.●

Ramat Gan

Tikva (Amal) Aghassi

EXCHANGE OF REFUGEES

Why did the Jews leave Iraq? It should be stated that in 1949 there was a secret resolution by the Arab League held in Bloudan, Lebanon, to have all Jews expelled from the Arab countries and confiscate their assets. Knowing full well that Israel would accept them, this was a sinister conspiracy to draw Israel with almost 1 million penniless refugees. That, coupled with the resolution to boycott Israel economically, and after a bloody war of independence where over ten thousand casualties were suffered by the Israelis, it would have meant the demise of the newly born State of Israel. The Jews prevailed and the Jewish refugees from Arab lands, especially from Iraq, were accepted as citizens of the State of Israel, and, even though slowly, were rehabilitated into Israel's mainstream life and economy.

The fact still remains that the Arab League imposed on Israel a population exchange whether declared or not. Now, the Arabs should stand by that resolution and accept the Palestinian Arab refugees. As a matter of fact if the Arab League rescinds its "third" sinister resolution prohibiting Arab governments from granting citizenship to the Palestinian Arab refugees, there will be no Palestinian Arab refugee problem, because all of the Palestinian Arabs residing in the various Arab countries automatically will become citizens of those countries - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Syria, etc. Basically that should be the stand of Israel in any negotiations pertaining to the refugees.●

New York (Prof) Heskell M. Haddad M.D.

THOUGHTS AND AFTERTHOUGHTS

by Naim Dangoor

Thou Shalt Not Murder!

The 6th Commandment is often translated - "Thou Shalt Not Kill," but the proper translation is "Thou Shalt Not Murder." We are allowed to kill animals for food, and the State is duty bound to kill the worst criminals for punishment.

The stock defence of war criminals for carrying out mass murders, murder of innocent people and crimes against humanity has been: "We had to obey superior orders. If we had refused, we would have been killed ourselves."

Such a plea may sound reasonable and has often been accepted by the courts, but is faulty for the following reasons:

First, Hitler had no shortage of "willing executioners"; there was no need to use threats against those who refused to carry out acts of genocide. Second, there must be limits to the excuse of trying to save one's life. Most people, for example, would rather die than agree to murder their children or their parents. Judaism has clear rules in this matter. A person may do any illegal acts to save one's life with three distinct exceptions:

1) To worship idols; 2) To commit adultery or incest; 3) To kill innocent people.

In any of these situations, a Jew must prefer to die rather than become guilty of these acts. ●

Who shall inherit the earth? When I am gone it will make no difference to me who shall inherit the earth - the meek or the monkeys! Ultimately, God Himself will inherit everything. But to God, Fifth Avenue, Oxford Street and the Champs Elysées and all they contain, Rome and its monuments, the palaces and their treasures, the museums and their antiques, the galleries and their art are all but a speck of dust. ●

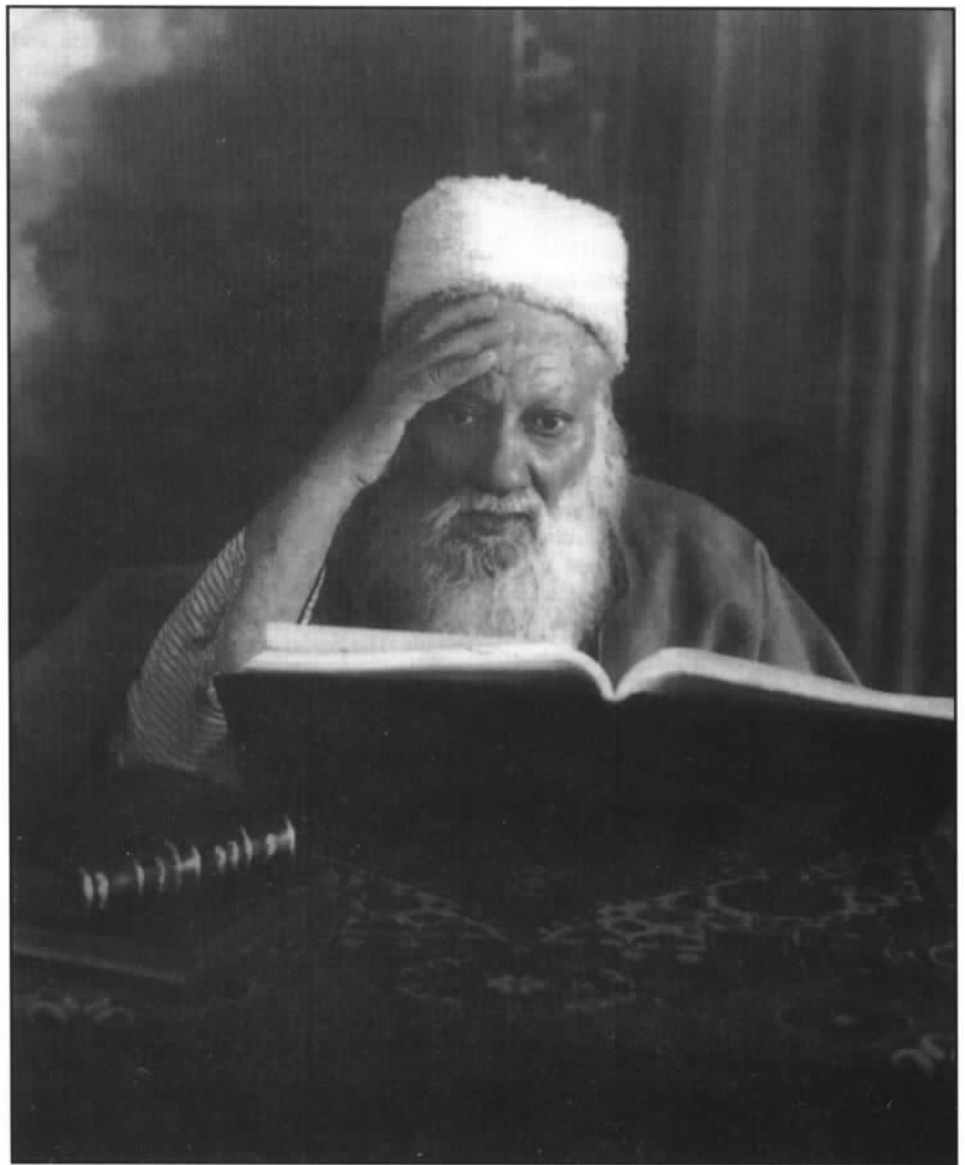
ISRAEL AND THE COMMONWEALTH

On a recent visit to London by Yasser Arafat, the Arabs and anti-Semites of the British Foreign Office fed him the idea of joining the British Commonwealth. The idea appealed to him, as it would put him one up on Israel as well as on other Arab countries. But to admit a newly emerged Palestinian entity alone would be a snub, even a hostile act towards Israel. Hence, the Commonwealth Secretary General approached Israel's Ambassador to see if his country would be interested to join too.

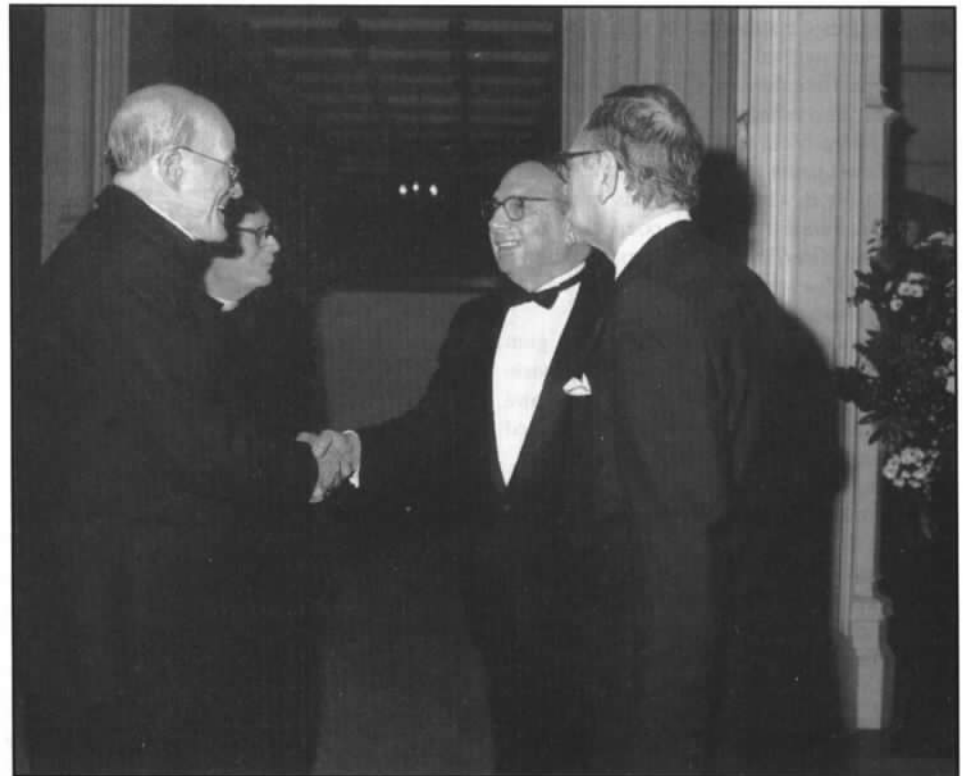
However, this would not put matters on an even keel. Israel would be seen to join on the coat-tails of Arafat. Moreover, Arafat would use the generic name of Palestine. Israel would appear as the odd man out. Having exited Palestine 50 years ago by the front-door to leave the country in chaos and civil war, Britain now wants to re-enter by the backdoor to pursue her earlier intrigues.

Israel's future does not lie with the British commonwealth, but within a regional confederation in which Turkey plays a vital stabilising part.

Arafat's Palestine must remain Israel's appendix and not the other way round. ●



The renowned Kabbalist Rabbi Yehuda Moshe Ftayya, born Baghdad Shabat 5619, died in Jerusalem 5702 (1859-1942) ●



Naim Dangoor arriving at Lambeth Palace, residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, for a (Kosher) dinner. ●

My son Aaron Lewis is currently the Eric Samson Professor of Applied Science at The Hebrew University where he moved in 1986 from the position of Professor of Applied Physics at Cornell University. At Hebrew University he continued his work on nanophotonics and also established the Hadassah Hospital Laser Center which is aimed at developing new tools in ultramicrosurgery. Professor Lewis is the author of over 200 publications and 25 patents covering a broad spectrum of subjects such as near-field and other lensless optical methodologies which span the electromagnetic spectrum from the infrared to the deep ultraviolet and even to the x-ray regime, fundamental studies in light energy transduction in biophysical systems, applications of non-linear optical probes of physiological functions in cells, efforts in understanding and developing artificial neural network implementations and new approaches to ultramicrosurgery. Among the fellowships that he has received are an Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Fulbright Fellowship. He has received several honours including, most recently The 1997 Rank Prize in Optoelectronics at the Royal Society of Medicine in London for pioneering work in the development of the field of near-field optics.

Professor Aaron Lewis my son, and his family with me emigrated to Israel in 1986 from the USA where we lived for approximately 30 years. We are of Baghdadian origin. My parents and grandparents are from Baghdad although both my son and I were born in Calcutta, India.

I have been getting the Scribe regularly for the past approximately 3 years, and enjoy it immensely. It brings back many childhood memories of Baghdad related by my parents and grandparents and is of much interest to my whole family.

My brother and a sister live in London in the Hendon and Golders Green area. Ellis Meyer, Barrister-at-Law, Bertie Meyer and Benjamin Meyer and my sister Seemah Lanyado.●

Jerusalem

Dr. Sally Lewis

Princess Diana



The tragic death of Princess Diana in a car accident in Paris on 31 August, touched the hearts of millions of people all around the world. The veneration of the multitudes who streamed to the Royal Palaces never happened before and may not happen again. It made Diana a Saint by popular acclaim.

The spontaneous emotions expressed inside Westminster Abbey and by the crowds outside who lined the streets all the way to her final resting place 80 miles away, can only be described as a popular revolution.

Her rumoured proposed marriage to Imad al-Fayed would have created national as well as international problems with very far reaching and long lasting serious consequences.

One radio listener suggested that the death of Mother Theresa who died of a heart attack

on the eve of Diana's funeral, meant that the Nun was going to Heaven to look after the Princess! This may appear fanciful, but it seems very likely that news of Diana's tragic fatal accident may have hastened Theresa's demise.

There may even have been an element of jealousy in the Nun's mind, thinking, "If so much adulation is shown to Diana's five years of charitable work, surely I will deserve no less for my fifty years of public service". The honours accorded to her at her funeral would not have disappointed her.

And whereas Diana has become a saint by popular acclaim, Theresa will soon get the real thing. The Vatican will canonise her in record time.

But what did Mother Theresa achieve? She looked after the poorest of the poor in Calcutta, but did not attempt to discover or remedy the causes of poverty. She cared for the dying, but took no interest in the living.

Among the one million floral tributes covering most of the grounds of Kensington Gardens, around the trees and on the railings, we found the following messages:



Photo by Eileen Khalastchy

ON BEHALF OF ALL THE IRAQI PEOPLE WHO ARE STILL STRUGGLING UNDER THE OPPRESSION AND BRUTALITY OF SADDAM'S REGIME.

WE WILL MISS YOU BADLY DIANA.

The Iraqi Opposition

From Diana's Funeral Service

Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for those who grieve, too short for those who rejoice, but for those who love, time is eternity.●

Diana's genuine goodness was threatening to those of the opposite end of the moral spectrum, that is why they attempted to bring her down.●



Aaron Lewis. Eric Samson Professor of Applied Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was one of 11 scientists from Britain, the US, Switzerland and Israel who were awarded Rank prizes recently at a ceremony held at the Royal Society of Medicine, London. The Rank Prizes, established in 1972, are awarded in recognition of significant achievements in the fields of nutrition and opto-electronics. Lewis, who is the first Israeli recipient of the prize, was closely involved in the development of a near-field scanning optical microscope that enables the examination of minute objects previously unobservable with conventional microscopes.●

From The Jerusalem Post

The Exilarch's Foundation

Dear Mr Dangoor

I want to congratulate you.

I read in the Jewish Chronicle that you have acquired the site of the Carmel College. I felt very happy that this site came back to our hands. "Our" here means yours.

I am certainly interested in the spiritual side of the deal.

I have two children who grew up at Carmel. Whenever I visited them on a Sunday, I always felt very proud of our community which had secured such a nice refuge to the Jewish tradition, which enabled many people who lived in different circumstances to secure for their children a school where they can exercise the Jewish way of life.

I was present at the last official day of term on the 29.6.97 when the management invited all the parents and students to a ceremony giving prizes and titles to the students.

The general atmosphere was very tense due to the fact that all the students and teachers knew that it was their last meeting from having been together for so many years.

The excitement was much higher when you see the end of such an organisation vanishing like this by a one day decision made without the least appreciation to its past and to its contribution to the Jewish culture.

It was sorrowful on that Sunday afternoon to see the boys and girls embracing one another with tears in their eyes when saying goodbye. This was the last day together after many years. Everyone was asking: "Why this is the end of Carmel?" One could see all the teachers' wives with saturated eyes of tears ready to break out.

I myself in this situation felt pleased to be alone, aside from the crowd thinking about the situation. I looked around the place in such a mood when I asked myself if I would ever be there again in my life?, who knows?: No.

I said farewell to the pleasure in which I felt when I used sometimes the school library when I read some of the historic articles found on the shelves of that place.●

London

Latif Hoory

My wife, Masooda and I, Ezra (anglicised Edward) missed receiving the latest copy of the Scribe. The pair of us keep saying to each other, "balkat halyom, balkat ghada" (maybe today, maybe tomorrow); but alas! not yet, why? Are we being punished? We enjoy the Scribe and hope we shall continue to receive it regularly to which we look forward.●

Ramat-Eliahu

Edward and Myrtle

حُلُومُ اللَّائِي كَبُول

Bad dreams are null and void.●

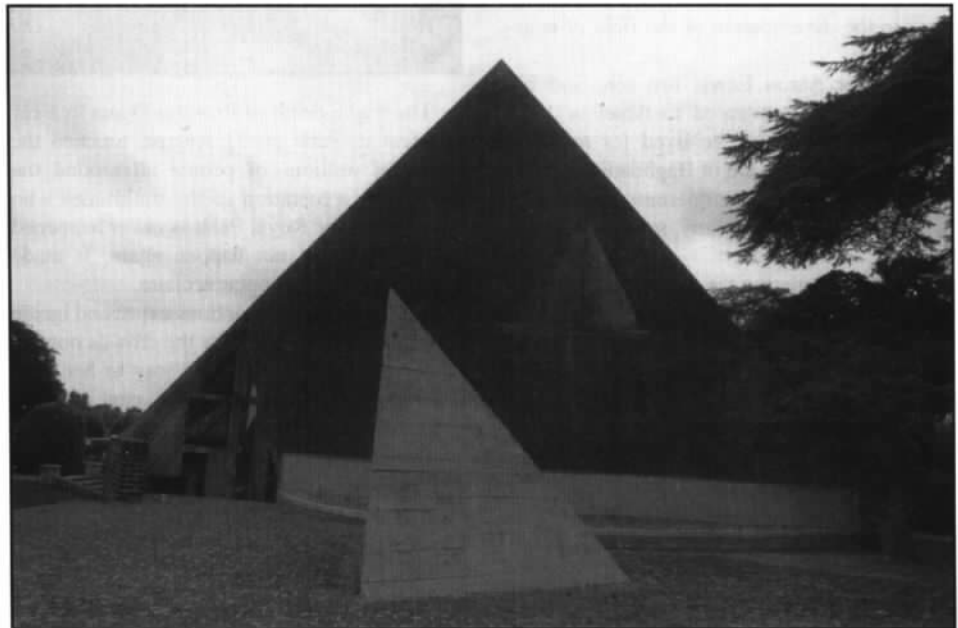
لَا تَكْفِي بِالرَّحْمَانِ تَرَا الْحَائِطِ
نُؤُ أَدَان

Be careful what you say, the wall has ears.●

Page 30



The Amphitheatre.●



The Julius Gottlieb Art Gallery. Designed by Sir Basil Spence. ●



Dining Hall.●

acquires Carmel College

Last April, Carmel College was sold to a property developer because of the heavy burden of its mounting debts and the falling demand of boarding students. Few parents could afford £16,000 per annum. The closure of the College came as a surprise and a shock to the remaining students and to the Jewish Community. At the last minute the Exilarch's Foundation stepped in to save Carmel from the developer's bulldozer and bought the property at £4.4 million to explore ways to continue using this important establishment for Jewish education. Negotiations are proceeding to this end.



Aerial view of the Carmel College site at Wallingford near Oxford.●



The Synagogue.●



11 July 1997, last day at Carmel - old Carmeli, David Dangoor with headmaster Philip Skelker, followed by Naim Dangoor, Founder-Trustee of the Exilarch's Foundation.●

MID-EAST CONFEDERATION NEEDED

From: an article published in
The Daily Telegraph

Sir - The only effective way to avoid breaking up Iraq into three parts once Saddam Hussein has been neutralised or defeated is to create a Middle East confederation which would include that country with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait and Israel, headed by King Hussein. This should be the ultimate aim.

Such a confederation could use the region's immense oil wealth for its advancement. It would also be powerful enough to save its individual countries from large expenditure on arms while leaving it strong enough to repulse threats from all directions.

Since ancient times, the region has been cursed by having a collection of aggressive but largely equal peoples who could be united only by outside conquerors.

The roots of Iraq's modern dilemma go back to the Cairo Conference of 1921 when Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, decided to give the country over to Arab rule without regard to its substantial minorities. After the death of King Feisal in 1933 the Arabisation of Iraq started in earnest: the massacre of the Assyrians, denying the Kurds any measure of autonomy and systematic persecution of the Jews, an educated, industrious and enterprising minority which had lived in Iraq 1,000 years before the Arab conquest of the country.

The virtual expulsion in 1950-51 of the Jews of Iraq, a third of Baghdad's country because they had been an important moderating influence.

The rulers of Iraq then embarked on aggressive adventures that led to the eight-year war with Iran, the occupation of Kuwait and the subsequent intensified persecution of the Kurds and the Shias.

When will Saddam's perplexed opponents wake to this important possibility, which has long been ignored?●

N. D.



The above picture shows my late husband Saleh Chitayat paying his respect to Shah Mohammed Pahlevi which he did twice a year, on the occasions of the Shah's birthday and the Persian New Year (Now Ruz). He did this as his position as head of the Iraqi Jewish Community in Iran.●

London

Louise Chitayat

I enclose some verses of the poem by the poet Abraham Ovadia and its free translation by me.

Ramat Gan Esther Mercado-Khabbaza

WITH THE PAST

Like my shadow;
So are my memories and my sorrow;
As always - me - they follow.
Heavy is my head;
With its dreams that never end!
And where could I;
From my past run away?
It's both my first and my last;
My night and my day!

My time and its hours;
I am counting;
And the years of my life;
So fast are running!
My world is nothing but darkness;
What a pity, it's always sadness!

And how could I sing happily;
Since my pain tears my songs
and its melody!●

Page 32

مقطع من: مع الماضي
للشاعر الكبير ابراهيم عوباديا

كظلي تلاحقني الذكريات
ورأسي يدور باحلاميه
وأين أمر من الذكريات
وماضي خلفي وقدامي!
أعد الليالي وساعاتها
وعمرى يصدو بأحلاميه
وهل في حياتي غير الضياع
فوا حسرتاه لأياميه
وكيف سأنتد شعر المراج
وهزني يمزق انفاسيه
وما تخنياتي صدى للبراع
وهزني يمزق انفاسيه

GERMANS-MURDERERS, HYPOCRITES

Last month, a German court sentenced Egon Krent, East German leader to six and a half years imprisonment for manslaughter of a number of people who were shot while trying to escape over the Berlin wall, at the time of the cold war.

As someone pointed out on the Spectrum Jewish Radio programme, those same Germans had shot over 4,000 Jews during the war while trying to escape from the hell of the Warsaw Ghetto.

It shows how hypocrites the Germans are. That high court German judge should spend the rest of his life in a concentration camp.●



Jacob Zilkha

Architect, teacher, pioneer, humanitarian.
Born in Baghdad, Iraq in 1919, died April 1,
1997 in Tel Aviv, aged 78.

There is an expression in Hebrew, "calm water penetrating deep". This is the essence of the portrait of Mr Jacob Zilkha. His humbleness, kindness, love for his fellow man, strong sense for justice, and his very special nature and joy for life touched many people who highly respected him and searched for his friendship.

Mr Zilkha was born as one of the many grandchildren of the great Rabbi Ezra Cohen. The second to youngest of six children, he grew up acquiring from his family, among other things, the value of education and the will to attain a goal when set.

As a young man in the Iraq of 1937-42 he was a teacher in the Alliance School in Baghdad and imparted to his students his special importance placed on education, and he did this in his unique way of teacher-friend. He became admired by his students and even led them to the most excellent achievement in the government exams where they came first in the country. Those years were fun youthful years of close friendships at school and field trips which left wonderful memories that stayed long afterwards. Many of his students remained his social friends later in Israel, often talking about those memorable years.

In 1942 he visited Palestine. His thirst for higher education made him to decide to stay there and study architecture at the Technion in Haifa. It was a very difficult time to conquer because of the language and mentality, but his determination to overcome any obstacle gave him his diploma in architecture four years later. He then served in the Israeli army in the engineering force and was able to witness the birth of the new state of Israel.

In 1952 he met and married his lifetime companion Tikva (Esperance) Mani. As their family grew so did their successful architectural office in Bat Yam. Bat Yam was but hills of sands near the sea shore when they started and they became a big part of its growth into its place as a big bustling Israeli city where their office still runs today. Many streets in this city have a number of buildings that were planned by Mr Zilkha. It is fascinating to see the progression of change in architectural style in Israel by looking at this work of the past 50

years. His knowledge and abilities were valued by his colleagues and other workers in the field who were always coming to him for advice.

Especially to his devoted wife and three daughters, Jacob Zilkha's life was like a necklace beaded with stories of helping people in need, doing deeds of charity, refusing to get anything back in return, but rather himself thanking the people he helped for the opportunity they gave him to do a Mitzvah. This is Mr Jacob Zilkha - a loving and devoted husband, a supportive father who was always there, a caring friend - sun that touches with her soft warm rays many and each of us that were fortunate to have known him.

Mr Zilkha is survived by his wife, 3 daughters, 2 brothers and a sister, and 6 grandchildren in Israel and Canada.

Dr. Ed Shahin is a son-in-law of Jacob Zilkha.●

Montreal, Canada

Ed Shahin, M.D.

THE UGLY SILENCE

The West knew about the genocide of the Jews by the Nazis at the time of the Holocaust.

Professor Breitman, a historian at the American University in Washington was among a group of American scholars who studied 1.3 million wartime documents from the National Security Agency. He disclosed that 282 pages of radio intercepts from the SS were among the documents which established that the British knew that the Jews were being targeted for atrocities as early as September 1941.

(New York Times, 19 November 1996).

The British intelligence marked those documents "to be kept under lock and key, never to be removed from the office."

The disclosure not only raises the troubling question of why the British kept silent but why the transcripts were not released earlier to assist in the persecution of war criminals?

On the other hand, the International Committee of the Red Cross on December 18, 1996 released copies of its WWII files, some of which provided verification that it knew of the persecution of Jews in Nazi Concentration Camps but felt powerless to speak out. These files, 25,000 microfilmed pages, were turned over to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for further study, to show that the Red Cross shared responsibility for the silence of the world community.

Even the Pope of the Catholic Church at the time knew exactly how the Jews were treated by the Nazis but didn't utter a word. The whole world found it more convenient to remain silent. Many lives could have been saved if the Allies, Red Cross, nations, religions and ordinary people had spoken out. Silence is sometimes a crime against humanity and a sin towards God.

Great Neck,
New York

Albert Khabbaza,
M. D.

Scribe: Why are we still discussing the Holocaust at length. For fifty years, world Jewry has been in shock. As the numbness recedes we start feeling the pain.●



Joe A. Cohen

Born Rangoon, Burma, 17th September 1914.
Died London, 23rd March 1997, aged 82.
by David Elias BEM. MWS. FIWO

Joe Cohen was one of the leading lights of the Ohel David Eastern Community, being one of the founding members of the synagogue in Golders Green and on the board of trustees since his arrival in London in 1956.

Joe's family moved from Rangoon to Calcutta, India, when he was in his early teens. There he completed his education and then worked for many years in the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

In 1956 he arrived in London with his wife and two young children, and immediately upon his arrival he was asked to be a guarantor for the good name of Calcutta Jews in order for them to acquire premises for their own Synagogue in Golders Green. This was granted to them by the Lincoln family.

He immediately became interested in the welfare of the Indian Jewish community in London and he worked untiringly for them in his capacity as Vice President. His door was always open to anyone who needed help or advice, especially newcomers who had arrived in London to make their homes here. He was instrumental in engaging Rabbi Silas as the first Rabbi of Golders Green and then Dyan Toledano who was the Rabbi for many years and became an extremely close friend. He encouraged the establishment of a Ladies Guild and was always ready to lend a helping hand.

With the death of Joe Cohen the O.D.E. Community has lost one of its outstanding leaders; he was a man of great character, human kindness and compassion, always ready to sacrifice his own needs to help others; his place will be immensely difficult to fill.

He was very proud of his heritage and maintained an interest in all matters affecting the Eastern Jewish community.

Joe was married for 51 years to his dear wife Ruby and is survived by her, his two children and his three grandchildren.●

MY RECOLLECTIONS IN IRAQ

by Shawky Dallal



Herewith is a picture taken about February 1923 of the students of what was then called 5e B or 5th Primary class of College Albert D. Sassoon Baghdad managed by Alliance Israelite Universelle. The picture of every class was then taken one after the other with the teacher that happened to be at that class then.

The school teacher with the turban in the picture is Sayed Mahmoud al Witri, teacher of Arabic language. He later became a Nazi and the Iraqi papers published in 1938 a picture of him shaking hands with Dr. Goebbels.

Front row sitting on their knees from left are:

Menashi Cohen, Saleh Yentob, Kamal Bekhor, Salim Elias, Elie Khedhour, Jamil Bekhor, Anwar Elia Shaoull and Saleh Herdoun.

Second row: Salim Gareh, Naim Levy, Naim Aboudi, Nahom Batchat, Joseph Masri, Gourji Herdoun, Sayid Mahmoud, Salim Shahrabani, Eboudi Soffer,.....,

Naim Sawdayee, Ishaq Shina, Gourdji Sawdayee.

Third row: No 3: Heskel Smouha, No 5: Naim Paniri, No 10: Naji Aboudi, No 11: Victor Aslan.

Fourth row: No 5: Shawky Dallal, Naim Somekh.

There was an age gap between the boys in the class of up to 4 years. I was among the youngest.

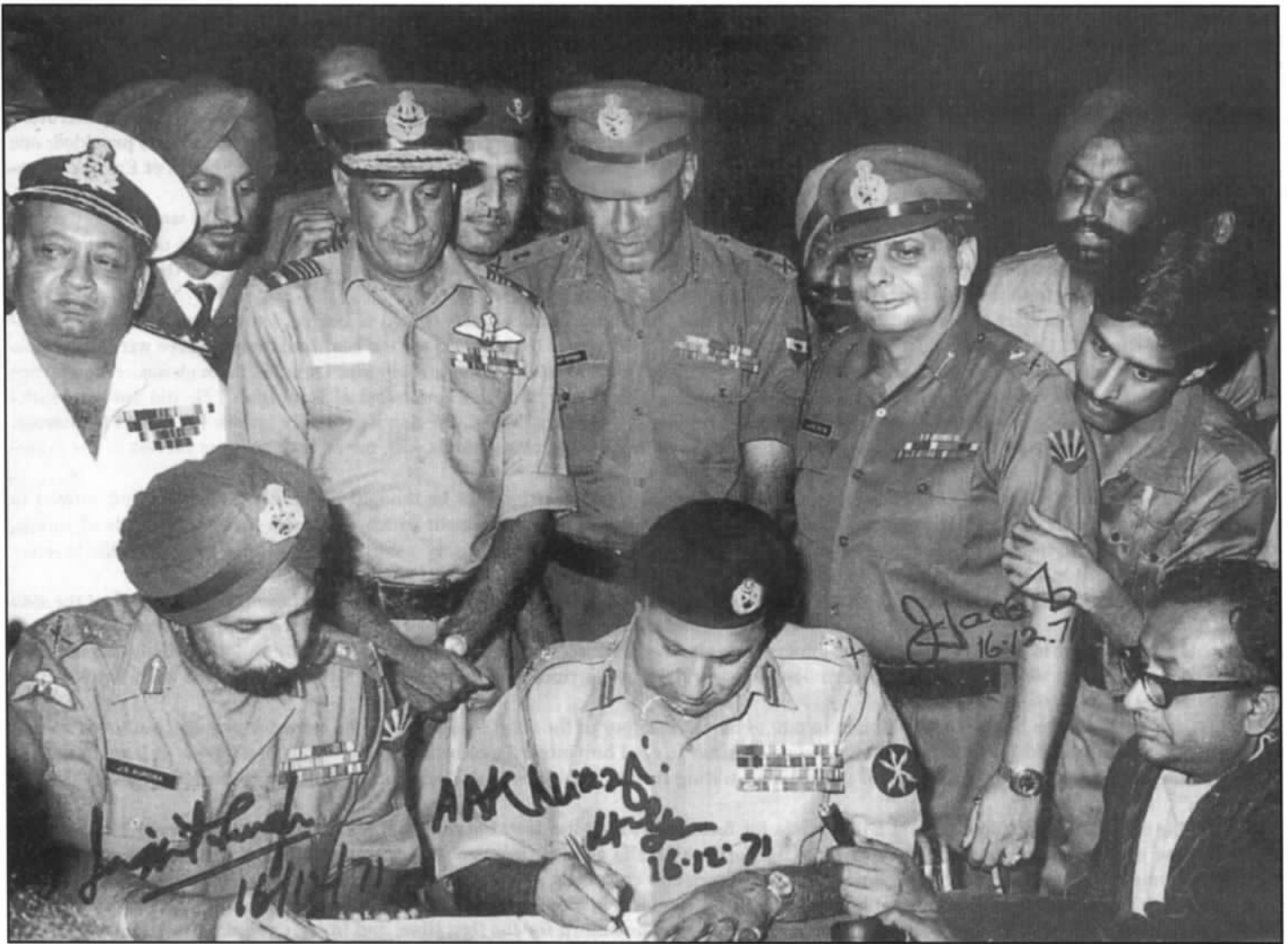
The College Albert D. Sassoon was for boys. Albert Sassoon was the son of the famous David Sassoon who fled Iraq to establish a great firm in Bombay. He was the son of Sheikh Sassoon, President of the Jewish community and Sarraf Bashi to Wali-governor - of Baghdad. Laura Kadourie, built by Sir Eliezer Kadourie was for girls, both were managed by Alliance Israelites Universelle of Paris.

The teachers of both schools included Jews from North Africa trained at Ecole Normale in Paris by Alliance Israelite Universelle. The husbands were for the boys school and the wives were for the girls school. The director was Monsieur Sasson, his assistant Monsieur Sabbagh, and there were Messieurs Zilberstein, Malki and Menda. There were also Monsieur Bonfils who taught us modern Hebrew and Mr Rosenthal from England who taught us English.

After finishing Albert Sassoon college in 1926, I went to the "*Thanawiyah al Markaziah*" situated near the "serai" - government offices. It was then composed of four classes being two intermediate and two secondary only. It was then the only secondary school in Iraq having students from all parts of the country. Illiteracy was then rampant among non-Jews. Each day when we left school we were confronted by men and women holding letters in their hands asking us "Please read us this letter." There were then "*arthahalchiyas*" who sat near the door of government offices, writing petitions for people as well as letters for those who do not write.

There were then no anti-Jewish feelings. The general belief then was "*al deen lillah wel watan lel jamii*". Religion is for God and the country is for everyone. In fact, King Faisal I visited both Albert Sassoon and Laura Kadourie schools in 1925, and took pictures with prominent members of the Jewish Community.

At that time, the government used to send the top students who graduated from the secondary school to Britain to study B.A. or B.Sc. The government then had to send these students first to Safad in the then Palestine where there was a school conducted by British missionaries to teach Matriculation the equivalent of the present GCSE to gain entrance at any British University. I wanted to study B.Sc. electrical engineering, but my father could not afford the expenses, so I thought of getting it through the government.



In our last issue we referred to the book written by General Jack Jacob of Babylonian Jewry on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the military campaign against Pakistan led by General Jacob which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh.

Above: Lt. Gen. AAK Niazi of Pakistan signs the surrender document as Aurora (to his right) and Gen. Jack Jacob, Chief of Staff, Eastern Command of the Indian Army. (standing left).

That swift decisive offensive which was organised by Gen. Jacob, launched by the Indian Army on 4 December 1971, culminating in the surrender of the Pakistan Eastern Command within a mere thirteen days is surely the greatest military feat in Indian history.●

RECYCLING HUMAN WASTE

The increase in the Indian population is going on at a fast rate, and the move to the urban centres in search of work, is going on at an even faster rate. The results are more food shortages, and increased pollution.

The Government of India has decided to solve this dual problem simultaneously by recycling human and animal waste, to produce fertilisers, fuel blocks, which can be used to generate electricity and even food additives.

Our Indian friends who form the largest democracy in the world, by their religious toleration, can be regarded as the most civilised people on earth. In fact, the Indian tribes who originated in Europe, must have decided to leave at the dawn of History, their savage neighbours and migrate to the sub-continent of Asia.

For a long time now, all the drinking water that we use would have been recycled. Even bottled water, rainwater and river water, cannot be regarded as pure; they are all contaminated and polluted. If this is going to apply to solid wastes as well, then where can we turn to enjoy healthy food and drink?●

JOHN PEEL

A song from School days.

Do ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay,
Do ye ken John Peel at the break o' the day, Do
ye ken John Peel when he's far, far away, with
his hounds and his horn in the morning

For the sound of his horn brought me from
my bed, And the cry of his hounds which he oft
times led,

Peel's "View haloo" would awaken the
dead, Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

Yes I ken John Peel, and Ruby Too, Ranter
and Ringwood, Bellman and True; From a find
to a check, from a check to a view, From a
view to a death in the morning.

Then here's to John Peel, from my heart
and soul, Let's drink to his health, let's finish
the bowl; We'll follow John Peel, through fair
and thro' foul, If we want a good hunt in the
morning.

Do ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay?
He liv'd at Trout-beck once on a day; Now he
has gone far, far away, We shall ne'er hear his
voice in the morning.●

AU CLAIR DE LA LUNE

Au clair de la lune Mon ami Pierrot,
Prête moi ta plume
Pour écrire un mot.
Ma chandelle est morte,
Jen'al plus de feu:
Ouvre moi ta porte
Pour l' amour de Dieu;
Au clair de la lune Pierrot répondit:
Je n'ai pas de plume
Je suis dans mon lit
Va chez la voisine
Je crois qu' elle y est
Car dans sa cuisine
On bat le briquet.
Au clair de la lune L' aimable Lubin
Frappe chez la brune
Ell' répond soudain:
Qui frapp' de la sorte?
Il dit à son tour:
Ouvrez votre porte
Pour le Dieu d' amour.
Au clair de la lune On n'y voit qu' un peu
On chercha la plume
On chercha du feu
En cherchant d'la sorte
Je n'sais c'qu'on trouva
Mais j'sais que la porte
Sur eux se ferma.●

ABOUT PHILOSOPHERS

by Salim Khabbaza
Great Neck, NY

When a person follows a strange logic or an unusual way of argument, we say "yitfalsaf" (he philosophises). This is true of some famous philosophers, as shown in the following examples.

The Greek philosopher Diogenes was not interested in wealth or fame. All his possessions consisted of a barrel in which he slept, a sack with which he covered himself, a stick and a bag.

Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, heard about the philosopher and wished to meet him. He went to Diogenes and found him lying comfortably on his back in the sun. The king approached him slowly, but the philosopher did not get up or move. The king told him angrily:

- I am Alexander the Great.
- I am Diogenes.
- Why don't you treat the king with respect?
- Although you are a king, you are only flesh and blood. Why are you demanding respect of me?
- Aren't you afraid of the king?
- Are you a bad person of whom I should be afraid?
- Do you have any request from me?
- Yes, please move aside a little; I feel cold, and you are obstructing the rays of the sun from me.

The king moved to one side, and said with a smile:

- I am sorry I blocked the sun. Is this all that you are asking of me?
- Can a rich person ask for something from a poor person?
- Do you mean that I am the poor person and you are the rich?
- Yes. I am rich because I do not need anything. You are poor because you want to conquer more countries which belong to other nations.

RIGHT IS WRONG!

A French tourist, with his wife, came to London, rented a car, and started to drive on the right side of the street, as is usual in France and continental Europe. He was immediately stopped by a police officer who asked him:

- Why are you driving on the right side of the street?
- Do you want me to drive on the wrong side?
- You are driving on the right side, and that is wrong.
- If I drive on the left side, would that be right?
- Yes.

The tourist turned to his wife and said: "Now I understand; in England, right is wrong, and left is right." ●

اصطغفوا الى صفتهم تاكلموا عنيب

Wait for the sour grapes to enjoy them when they ripen. ●

نشيد العراق

الناظم :

فخرى البارودي

أنت عنوان الفخامة
كل من يأتيك يوماً
عالمعاً يلقي حمامة
* * *
أنت العراق بلادي
لن تكوئي لسوانا
في جبين الأرض شامة
ولامعدك الندامة
* * *
نحن في الحرب أسود
نطلب الموت لنحيا
ولدى السلم حمامة
هل على هذا ملامة
* * *
كم شرب دمعاً
حين نتس ذلك
لن نبي مرة
انده نبي مرة



نشيد حطموا

تلحين

منا بطرس

نظم

اسماعيل فرج الموصلي

حطموا يا نساء عنكم
فزمان النخس ولي
واكسروا هذي التيجون
وأآى عصر السجون
* * *
وأتركوا تقليد قومر
كل من تلقاه منهم
حبذوا فينا الجون
هه فينا يسود
* * *
نام باسم الحق يدعو
ان حق الله رشد
بأذلا أقصى الجهود
ليتة داعر رشيد

نشيد الجندي

الملحن

أحمد الوسماني

الناظم

عبد الرحمن البناء

الدور | أنا جندي أبي
يبلادي أتباهي
بدعي أحمي حماما
الدور:
أنا حصن لبلادي
عأذا نادى النشادي
الدور:
أنا في الحرب أمانع
إذ دوت فيها المدافع
الدور:
أنا للهيجاه عاشق
نأسألوا غني البنادق
الدور:
عن بلادي لا أجد
سوف عنها سأذود
الدور:
ولسني عربي
ليتني صرت فداها
من جميع التوب
لم تزله الأعادي
قلت لبيك أبي
عن بلادي وأدافع
تدفع الأعداء بي
لا أبالي بالقيالق
كيف أرمي الأجنبي
وإذا أصطف الجنود
بشفتار القضب
الدور:

نشيد هذي البلاد

هذي البلاد لنا وطن
وهي القريدة في الزمن
وهي الخي وهي السكن
وجميع ما فيها حسن
* * *
لعمالها النور المجيد
ولانها الواقي السميد
كل الايادي والنن
* * *
قيا مضى رجعت على
شملت معارفها الملا
في كل قطر أو زمن
* * *
نحن الشبية كنا
لا بد من نيل لنا
قندي البلاد بروحنا
أو نشرب كأس المن

نشيد النهوض

الملحن

نورى ثابت

الناظم

محمد صادق المرزوقة

هكنا دائماً نمشي للأمام
نشأتنا نمشي الدهر بالنظام
إننا لم نزل سادة كرام
بالمالي والعوالي نملك الزمام
إذ نجد ونجد ونجونا إستقام
نحن من شيدوا على الصروح
والهدى أيدوا فافتدى يروح
حيث قد أوجدوا النهوض مدوح
لم نرم ماربا ما خلا للملا
جدنا يعرب أسس الأبناء



The Coo of the Dove:
Coo Coo Khtee
Wanee ekhtee? Bil Hilla
Ash takel? Bajella
Wash teshrab? Mye Allah.

كوكو ختي

ويني أختي؟ بالهلا
أشي تاكلي؟ بالهلا
وأشي تشراب؟ ماي الله ●

GROWING UP IN CALCUTTA UNDER THE RAJ

by Sally Luddy Solomon, London

I was born in 1921 in Calcutta. My grandparents were descended from Jewish immigrants who, like many others, came to India in the late 18th century from Iraq, Yemen and Syria, by way of Surat. I grew up in Calcutta when the Raj was at its peak and the Jewish community in which I lived enjoyed many privileges. It is the most vivid memories of those days.

My earliest memory of my childhood was in the house where I was born. Looking down on Bentinck Street where Jewish families had lived for generations, ever since my great-great-grandfather, Shalom Aaron Cohen, the first Jewish settler, put down roots in the year 1798. Our household consisted of Daddy and Mummy, my brother, two sisters, and paternal grandmother, Rahma Mitana Duek Cohen. I can still remember this indomitable matriarch, dozing on the veranda on hot afternoons, the hookah pipe dangling in her hand, while I watched the press of traffic in the street below. Tram-cars rumbled down their lines, horns blared, bells rang, and shouts of Chalo! Hutaol sent throngs of people scurrying out of the way, while over the rooftops of the city came the distant sounds of barges and steamboats honking down the River Hooghly.

We occupied a large three-bedroomed flat, and like most Jewish middle-class families, we had servants - ayah, bearer, borchi (cook), mehta (sweeper) who, time and again are remembered, together with the anecdotes inseparable with their names. Good or bad, clever or cunning, servants made an indelible mark on our lives and helped to support an enviable lifestyle.

Sometimes wedding and engagement parties were catered for at home. I remember one occasion when food for hundreds of people was cooked on open fires in the courtyard of my maternal grandmother's home. Shouts of Kilililee, the shrill cry of joy used by Jews of Middle Eastern origins, rode high over the music, bells and singing. It was a magical scene, as was the sight of the bridegroom and his retinue approaching the house, carrying torches and bearing gifts for the future bride.

I waved goodbye to Bentinck Street when my father lost his money and we moved to Tottee Lane in Central Calcutta near the New Market. In spite of a more modest way of life there were many advantages in the move, not the least being that the Wesleyan Preparatory School, which my sisters and I attended, was within walking distance of home. The fact that it was missionary-run was overlooked in favour of the excellent education it offered. But when it came to secondary school, we went to The Jewish Girls' School, the headmistress of which was my cousin, Miss Rahma Luddy. It must have been one of the best in the city, combining a British-style curriculum with Hebrew studies.

But it was getting to school that I remember most. We made the near two mile journey by gharry. This horse-carriage would arrive at our home every week-day morning at 8.00 am, its owner-driver, the gharry-man, perched high on his front seat, holding the reins and chewing betel-nut with toothless gums. Six, sometimes eight, of us piled into the gharry, and on one occasion, in a burst of enthusiasm, the driver took us on a wild gallop all the way to the school. Suddenly, a cracking noise rent the air as our carriage split right down the middle! We must have presented a bizarre picture as we emerged unharmed from the wreckage dressed like proper British children in our prim serge tunics and white blouses.

My first introduction to religion was walking with the family to the gate of Neveh Shalome synagogue, the abode of peace. While Mummy and we three sisters go upstairs, Daddy and my brother enter a downstairs hall which echoed with strange chants. The time was probably unparalleled in their history. In Calcutta, three main synagogues - Maghen David, one of the grandest in the world; Neveh Shalome, 'The Little One', lying in the shadow of the former; and Beth-El, The House of God - served the congregation.

I remember the regular observance of the High Holy Days and Passover right up to the time when I left my father's house as a young bride. New Year meant new frocks sewn by the derzi on the hand-machine in the veranda and visitors dropping up during the week to take coffee and nibble walnuts and raisins served in beautiful glass dishes. Yom Kippur, with all its solemnity, was anticipated as a time to prove our adulthood by enduring twenty-five hours of fasting. The long blast of the Shofar, the

ram's horn, announcing the end of the fast, had a centuries old ring which returned to haunt every Jew on this sacred day.

The first sign that Passover was around the corner was the making of massa, unleavened bread, in the Beth-El synagogue, opposite our school. Our house was scrubbed from top to bottom to remove leaven, the Seder table, laid with special care, was colourful and inviting. Against this background unfolded a musical drama in which I, as the youngest in the family, played an important role. After the opening chant: Ha Lahma...aniah, (Behold the Bread of Affliction), the time came for Daddy to ask the three questions. I stepped forward, the napkin with massa (unleavened bread) strapped around my shoulder. Daddy asked, and I answered, in Hebrew:

'From where have you come?

'From Egypt.'

'Where are you going?

'To Jerusalem.'

'Do you have provision for the way?'

I don't answer but point to my laden shoulder, and sing:

Mahnish Tana.... How different is this night from all other nights!

After hours of such powerful emotion, my burden feels more heavy and I want the journey to end with the wish of every Jew:

May next year find us celebrating the Passover in Israel.

The observance of the Sabbath remains one of my fondest memories of India, and it is inextricably linked with the food we ate. Aloo Muckulla, fried potatoes, cooked in the special Middle Eastern way and served with spiced chicken portions, was the grand finale of a day of preparation and anticipation. Every Friday evening Mummy lit the Qiraye (Sabbath lights) in the dining room before it was hauled up above the table. The memory of Daddy's melodious voice making Kuddoos (Kiddush), the washing of the hands and the blessing on the two Sabbath loaves covered with an exquisitely embroidered satin cloth; the breaking and distribution of the bread after the



Seder, (Calcutta 1945), with servicemen.●



Jewish Girls' School - 'Reds' Hockey Champions 1933.
Standing (rear) L to R: Hannie Joshua, Rahma Luddy, May Medicott, Sally Luddy, Flora Silas.
Seated L to R: Helen Jacob, Helen Benjamin, Miss Rahma Luddy, Headmistress, J. G. S., Rachel Luddy, Sarah Ezra.
Goalkeeper: Esther Cohen.●



JGS Holiday Camp, 1936.
Journey on ghat road from plains to Darjeeling.●

blessing; and, finally the eating of aloo muckulla, still brings back a longing for those browning potatoes and the bitter-sweet memories contained in their crispy skins.

Calcutta did not enjoy the healthiest of climates, but two seasons in particular brought welcome relief - the cold, crisp winters and the monsoons (summer rain from June to September). I became acquainted with the latter at a very early age, when Mrs Hopkins, the Headmistress of our preparatory school, made my sister and me run towards each other from opposite directions of the classroom and collide, in order to demonstrate how the impact of swollen cloud with Indian mountainside, triggered off the monsoon. But for others, this seasonal rain had dire overtones.

Epidemics of typhoid and cholera, and bowel complaints, were regular occurrences, while reported cases of small-pox filled the inhabitants with terror. Mummy's chronic stomach ailment depressed our household, and two of us got typhoid and went into the General Hospital as in-patients.

Today, when I see storm clouds scudding across the sky, accompanied by flashes of lightning and thunder, I hear Daddy's voice ordering the gharri and then calling to us, 'We will eat smoked hilsa today, the catch will be good.' I can see us all piling into the gharri and driving down the Strand to buy this tasty river fish which Zuhor, the cook, would later cut into chunks and grill over hot coals. The earthy smell of the monsoon shower and the fishy smell of our purchases wrapped in newspaper, were the best aperitif for the menu that evening.

The school holiday camp in Gopalpur in 1931 gave many of us our first trip out of the city, also our first glimpse of the ocean. It did not matter that we travelled in third-class bogie carriages and slept on hard benches; that the trip to the camp site - a large derelict godown with a bare concrete floor - had to be made by bullock-cart. The sight of an endless expanse of blue water with white-trimmed breakers rolling unceasingly towards the sandy shore, was unforgettable. As our train pulled into Howrah Station, we crowded around the windows and sang the camp song:

Down in Gopalpur close by the sea,
 Camped the Jewish girls jolly, gay and free.
 With kit-bags all ready we were prepared
 for a happy fortnight in jolly Gopalpur.

Jewish Girls' School Sports Day was an annual event which brought out performances inspired by the school motto, Not Failure But Low Aim Is Crime. The chalk-marked field on the maidan and the megaphone announcing the start of events, attracted even members of the general public. After the Relay Race and Tug O' War, a ring formed around the table of glittering prizes ready for the presentation. Lady Ezra, wife of Sir David Ezra, Head of our community, handed out the trophies. I will always remember her tall and dignified figure in a wide-brimmed hat, giving cups, medals and words of encouragement, to the successful competitors.

Schooldays gave way to college and, as young women, my sisters and I had our own private preferences for boys, in, or out of, the community. Since there was no question but that we would 'marry Jewish', opportunities to meet non-Jewish boys were rare, and unproductive. While my parents beamed approval when eligible Jewish boys were entertained at home, it was clearly understood the unchaperoned meetings with the opposite sex had to end shortly after sundown, while outings during daylight hours were more likely to be sanctioned. We were fortunate to live close to the Judean Club, the community's venue for social and cultural activities, and our home at No. 7 Tottee became a popular meeting place for a group of us called the Gang. Every Saturday the Gang made a block booking of seats at the Globe Theatre, a cinema house on Lindsay Street, next door to the club. On these occasions, if we did not sit near the current boy/girl friend, we felt that our precious pocket-money was wasted.

The prospect of the Gang's holiday camp to Madhupur in December 1938, when a dozen members, accompanied by one or two grown-ups, would live under the same roof, sent many tongues wagging. 'But Seemah, this is madness!' my mother was told by one of her friends. 'It is disgraceful!' Notwithstanding the pressure brought to bear, the camp went ahead.

A journey of one hundred and eighty miles north-west of Calcutta, took us to the small town of Madhupur in the Bihar countryside, a popular winter resort for community families, some of whom owned or rented houses there. In Shamrock, a three-bedroom bungalow with basic furniture, and fitted by our advance party with linen, victuals and portable lighting, we enjoyed living simply and contemplating the future, sitting under the shade of the tress beside the well. Our silent farewells around the campfire on the last night seemed like the end of a chapter in a very good book.

The outbreak of World War II in the year 1939 shook the foundations of Jewish Community life and the Calcutta in which it grew and flourished. When we were young, we hardly questioned the Jewish presence in India, but gradually the desire to know more about our past grew within us. 'Where do we come from?'... 'Are we English?' 'Are we Indian?' I, personally, did not feel either of these; just thought of myself as Jewish - not so much in a religious sense as belonging to a group identified by its religion. I also feel that India was my home, and I still feel this today.

I was attending the Scottish Church College in the University of Calcutta, when my mother began to notice my frequent presence at home during weekdays. 'Sally, why are you not at college today?...' she'd ask with concern, and I'd tell her that the Indian students urged us to go on strike to protest against the arrest and imprisonment of Indian leaders. The struggle for independence had begun. While the triangle of British, Congress and Muslim league were locked in political argument, Calcutta citizens began to fear the repercussions of internal strife as much as the danger from the Japanese enemy.

It was in Darjeeling, a hill station nestling 7,000 feet up in the foothills of the Himalayas, that I heard of the Japanese bomb attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941. As a pupil-teacher of music in the American Missionary School of Mount Hermon, I had completed a year of independent living with time to contemplate my future, away from home. An overnight's journey from Calcutta, followed by a scenic ride on the narrow-gauge toy-train,

brought the more affluent members of the community to this salubrious summer resort, so I did not feel completely cut-off from the community - but I did, from the rest of the world. Even though I could have returned to Mount Hermon as a teacher the following year, I decided to go home to Calcutta and find a job.

The change in the city was startling. Calcutta was filling up with servicemen for whom large areas were requisitioned, and khaki-clad men and women seemed to be everywhere. The uniformed men started dating the local girls, many of whom broke off existing alliances to make new ones with soldiers, sailors and airmen who showered them with gifts and promises. Daddy was in his element, pointing out to us that while the British serviceman usually had one girl on his arm, the American invariably had two! Even though he joked, deep down was the gnawing fear of his daughters being lured away to foreign lands, perhaps by non-Jews, and with little hope of returning. But from our point of view, the war had magically opened doors which we thought were forever closed.

Calcutta's Jewish population reached its peak of almost 4000 in the year 1942. Added to the figures of servicemen, and European Jewry fleeing from Nazi persecution, was the additional count of refugees from Burma trekking over the mountains or by sea into India as the Japanese steam-rolled over southern Burma.

So far, the war had seemed far away, being fought by others, not ourselves. It was only when, in the very heart of the city, fighter planes of the British, American and Indian Air Forces took off from the emergency airstrip on Red Road to meet the Japanese threat; and when our own community suffered the loss of two young men of our age group, that the war became a reality.

In the midst of this unsettling environment I married Gerald Ezekiel Solomon in 1944. The ceremony took place in the Maghen David Synagogue, where Gerry's family worshipped. To me, the big synagogue was reminiscent of the days when I first saw him in its courtyard, as I looked over the wall of the Neveh Shalom. When we left for our honeymoon in Kashmir, the war, everything, seemed far away, but most of all, the girl I once was; she had been taken off into the clouds like those Spitfires on Red Road.

The news of victory over Japan in 1945 momentarily blotted out the bitter fact that this peace came in the aftermath of the atom bomb. The British were now preparing to leave India and, in 1946, Sir Stafford Cripps, emissary of the new Labour Government, brought with him proposals for acceptance by the Congress and Muslim League which would culminate in the transfer of power in August 1947.

Meanwhile, the internecine feud continued between Muslim and Hindu, while British protection in the form of curfews and patrolling tanks in the streets of Calcutta did much to save lives during the Great Calcutta Killing of 1946 which contributed to the birth of two new nations, India and Pakistan.

Shortly after the birth of our first child in 1947, we moved to South India, where my husband took charge of the Gresham Life Assurance Society, while studying for his actuarial examinations. Three more of our children were born in Madras, which became our home for the next twenty-five years.●



Front row: Right to left: Rachel Yehuda; Rosa Hillel; Marie Qanawati (headmistress, sitting); Erna Dangoor; Semha Shina.

Back row: Khatoun Battat; Aliza Darwish; Naima Ezair; Toya Karkoukli; Rachel Murad.●



From left to right: Sitting: Madame Brown; Josephine Khouri; Marie Qanawati (headmistress); Marie Shama'a; Fahima Malki.

Standing: Naima Mredekh; Linda Karam; Rena Daoud; Naima Nissan; Dola Chitayat; Victoria Karkoukli; Rachel Yehuda.●



A classroom.●

Above pictures sent by Mrs. Shoshana Jacobs.