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The SCRIBE

JOURNAL OF BABYLONIAN JEWRY

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★ *A Happy New Year 5759 to all our Readers and Friends* ★



Congratulations to the people of Israel on the State's attaining the first Golden Jubilee.

The above picture shows a reproduction of the Menora which was in the Temple and which is now the Symbol of the State of Israel. ●

The Late Salim Dangoor



PART OF THE EULOGY READ BY RABBI MORTON NARROWE AT THE FUNERAL LAST APRIL IN STOCKHOLM

There is in Jewish thought a concept called *yachas* which is a blessing for some people and families and a curse for others. The word means class and station and it refers backward to those from whom one comes. The family name Dangoor is one of the most endowed among those whose home for century was Iraq and few scholars are unfamiliar with the name of the grandfather of the older generation of the present family, the saintly and scholarly Ezra Dangoor, former Chief Rabbi of Baghdad and the grandfather of Salim and his brothers and sisters - who are all here today.

A family with *yachas* can be a source of strength for those who are strong but a source of frustration for those who are not. What I mean is that *yachas* makes a claim for loyalty - loyalty to the generations behind and those yet to come.

Salim Dangoor was a family man. Nothing was more important to him than Ruth, his beloved wife, his four children, David, Sylvia, Carina, Bibbi and their families and his 11 grandchildren. Here as his heart and at his home there were always grandchildren who had come in to play. Salim had arranged for his family in Sweden to live in the same building. David in America was a phone call away and rare was the day that they did not speak twice with one another.

How his parents inculcated in each and every child a love for family and a mutuality between parents and children. Salim and his father, Eliyahu Dangoor, wrote to each other at least once weekly. I am certain that this was also true for the other family members. Together they gave the old man the strength to continue until he eventually came out in 1973, at the age of 90 when Salim and some of the other children saw him for the first time in about 25 years.

Salim left Iraq in the early 1930's and finished school in England. He studied at the American University in Lebanon and spent the war years in Bombay. He went to Teheran, just before the

end of the war and there - he met Ruth Lehr, a Jewish refugee from Austria whose life destiny was as tangled as his own. They married, came to Sweden in 1950 (where he was the only Iraqi) and here these two international people, speaking quite a few international languages, founded an international home and a way of life that made their home into a centre for diplomats and businessmen. Ruth understood and sympathised with Salim's spontaneity. He could invite numerous guests home on a moment's whim and she, though annoyed, could always manage a banquet.

Salim came to love Sweden. He had many loves after family - his summer home, the Swedish nature, bridge which he played competitively and well becoming one of the so-called 13, the truly best in Sweden. Bridge was also an activity where Ruth and Salim shared their time and through which their best friends in the later years, were bridge friends.

Salim was religious in the tolerant, Middle Eastern way. He stood and prayed in synagogue on Yom Kippur. Never a word to a neighbour nor a joke to one passing by, an important comment about a man who truly loved a joke and recorded them for future use. He spoke to God with his entire being, as he did when he led the Seder at home on Passover. And since Hebrew was one of the seven languages that he spoke and wrote, he knew what he was saying and doing in synagogue and at home. He had a deep respect for sincere believers of all faiths. What he sought was wholeness, authenticity.

Salim was a generous person who frequently assisted individuals and charities without claiming fame or credit.

He died too early and he will be missed greatly by all who knew him. ●



Stockholm 1957

Left to right: Sheikh Ahmad al-Yawer, M.P.; Said Qazzaz, Iraqi Minister of the Interior; Salim Dangoor. ●

REMINISCENCE

by Meer S. Basri

My cousin Salim Eliahou Dangoor was an affable, helpful, enterprising and a very considerate person. In 1930 he was eleven years old when our grandfather, the late Chief Rabbi Hakham Ezra Reuben Dangoor, died in Baghdad. An imposing memorial service was held for him in the Alliance School Synagogue in January 19, 1930, where the late Sasson Murad, known as the "Orator of the Community" and many other rabbis and laymen read his eulogies. Sasson Murad prepared a fitting mournful oration for the child Salim and he read it fluently in perfect Arabic, bringing tears from the moved audience.

Salim went to London in 1937 and, after returning to Baghdad, resided for a time in Beirut, Bombay and Tehran before settling in Stockholm in 1950. I visited him in the Swedish Capital in 1957 and passed with him and his family several pleasant days. In the autumn of the same year the inter-Parliamentary Conference was held in Stockholm. The Iraqi delegation was led by the late Said Qazzaz, the Minister of the Interior and Deputy for Sulaimaniyah. My friend Qazzaz visited me and told me he was going to Stockholm. I gave him Salim's telephone number and asked him to get in touch with him. When he returned to Baghdad he praised Salim's hospitality and gave me the photograph of Salim with him and Ahmed Ajil al-Yawer the deputy for Mosul and paramount Sheikh of the Shammar tribe.

Salim kept open house in Stockholm for many friends and visitors and kept cordial relations with the Ambassadors of Iraq, Iran and Israel, among others, and won the affection and esteem of all who knew him.

Regarding Dr. Albert Khabbaza's question, from the Jewish theological point of view, G-d plays a role in the management of the universe, but the relationship between man and man is managed by men themselves. For this reason, the psalmist writes that with strategy you make war. If G-d makes you victorious in war, that is a miracle, but ordinarily, G-d does not make miracles for people, only when absolutely necessary. The evil of Hitler and of the Holocaust was perpetrated despite the presence of G-d, because the men who perpetrated it did not fear G-d, but that does not mean that G-d consented to what happened. Also, I do not believe that G-d intended that the state of Israel as a justification for the killing of six million Jews. It was a miracle only that the Jews could rise from the lowliest point and create a state of independence. G-d should not be blamed for the Holocaust, but He should not be given credit for the creation of the State of Israel. Both happened as natural events and not with any specific miracle. The Talmud argues about why an evil man could even prosper while a good and righteous man could get penalised in this life. This question was raised by Moshe Rabenu, but no answer was given. It is for this reason that man should work hard to make his living and to prosper and not depend on miracles to make good in this life.

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

Scribe: *Congratulations on your becoming a Rabbi. It seems you believe you have it all worked out perfectly.* ●

FROM MESSAGES OF CONDOLENCES:

- The failure of hope is more painful than if one had no hope to begin with. ●

Dr Robert Lefever

- My father used to say "No man is truly dead as long as he is remembered." ●

Sir Robert Rietti

- With time the pain goes away and one is left only with happy memories. ●

Andrew and Sandra Graham

- Salim was such a good cousin and friend, when I knew him in Bombay, with his sense of humour, taking everything so easy. ●

Yeheskel Dangoor

- The Community lost an active and valuable member. ●

Edward Yamen

It is God's will and unfortunately this is the way of all flesh. ●

Ramat-Gan Abraham Ben Elyahou

GENES UNRAVEL JEWISH HISTORY by Roger Highfield, Science Editor

The Jewish tradition that a priestly caste - the Cohanim - are descendants of an ancestor who lived 3,000 years ago is backed by a genetic study published today.

The findings are consistent with these priests being descended from Aaron, the brother of Moses, as stated in the Old Testament. However, the study in today's Nature is silent when it comes to the identity of the common ancestor.

The scientists also believe that they have found a genetic marker for the ancient Hebrew population which can be used to unravel its relationship with contemporary communities.

The work provided a demonstration of the power of genetics to shed new light on human history, said David Goldstein of Oxford University, who reports the findings with colleagues at University College London, University of London, and the Technion in Haifa.

"I was quite staggered by the results," he said. "It supports the oral tradition that the status of these priests has been passed from father to son over some considerable time, perhaps 3,000 years."

Jewish tradition says that, after the Exodus from Egypt, male descendants of Aaron were selected to serve as priests, forming a caste called the Cohanim. The Cohanim continues to play a role in synagogues and to subject to religious restrictions - its members are forbidden from marrying divorcees or converts in Israel, for example - said Neil Bradman of Oxford University, a co-author.

A Cohen, Craig Levison, 26, the co-ordinator of Jewish Community Information, London, was unsurprised by the disclosures. "Because I am a Cohen I have known that since I was born anyway."

However, the same study of 306 Jews did not find the same degree of genetic homogeneity of the Levites, the male descendants of the tribe of Levi, of which Moses was a member.

The research on the origins of the priests began when it was speculated that, if Jewish oral tradition were accurate, the genetic makeup of present-day Levites and Cohanim should not only be distinguishable from other Jews but should also derive from a common ancestral type no more recently than the establishment by the Jews of the first temple in Jerusalem 3,000 years ago. ●

BOOKS RECEIVED:

Hooghly Tales
by Sally Solomon

Stories of growing up in Calcutta under the Raj. David Ashley Publishing, London. 164 pp. £10.00 plus postage. ●

Exilarch's Scholarship



Dr. Itzhak Mualem with his wife and daughter. ●

The Exilarch's Foundation has granted a scholarship to Dr. Itzhak Mualem to enable him to continue his studies at Bar-Ilan University.

Itzhak Mualem completed his Bachelors and Masters degrees at Bar-Ilan University in Political Science. The subject of his Ph.D. thesis was: Israeli Foreign Policy; Realpolitik or Jewishly-motivated. The subject is crucial to the understanding of Israel's foreign policy. Itzhak is highly recommended by his Head of Department.

Itzhak, who is 38 years old, is married with one child. His parents originate from Iraq. His family emigrated to Israel in 1951. He lives in Tel-Aviv and works as a teaching assistant in the Department of Political Science at Bar-Ilan, and as a teacher in the Jordan Valley College in Tzemach. ●

RECORD NUMBER OF CHILDREN:

A woman from Dyalah, north of Baghdad has achieved a world record by giving birth to a total of 54 children, 22 of them twins. They were all born in their seventh month, at home, at the hands of a licensed midwife. All the children are living and in good health. This is how Iraq has managed to increase the population from 3 million 70 years ago, to 23 million now, while Israel continues to depend on Aliyah, and fails to catch up with the Arabs. ●

GIVE US PALESTINE, OR GIVE US IRAQ

by *The Exilarch*

The forthcoming visit to Iraq by Pope John Paul is of outstanding significance to the Jewish people, and of great importance to the future of the region.

The purpose of the Pontiff's journey is to mark out the land of the Bible, to retrace the footsteps of Abraham who journeyed from Ur of the Chaldees through Syria and then to Canaan, is in fact to highlight the greater homeland of the Jewish people and the migration of the Hebrews from their origins in Arabia, through Mesopotamia, and then to the Promised Land.

The Pope's journey which may be his last major travel, is equally important to the Christians as it is the Jews. In a way it is similar to the sailing of the U.S. Battleship Missouri, which was sent by President Truman, in 1946 along the Mediterranean Coast of Europe to signal to the Soviets - keep away from these lands.

The significance of the Pope's visit is to show that the lands of the Bible, now known as the Middle East or the Fertile Crescent, is Jewish territory and lasting peace cannot be established there unless it is treated as of vital interest to the Jewish people.

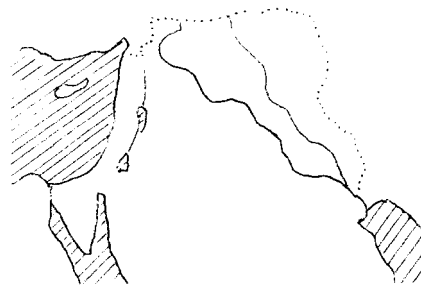
Some Arab historians dispute Jewish connections with Palestine. If so, where do the Jews come from? Surely, they didn't land from the sky. The Hebrews are part and parcel of the Middle East and have been in the Fertile Crescent many centuries before the Arabs came there.

When the Jews were exiled to Babylon in 586 BCE, they felt at home in their new territory and eventually established themselves in the land of the Rivers prospering there, where Judaism flourished and the Talmud was written down and completed in the year 500 CE. Babylonian Jewry remained supreme for over 1,000 years under the leadership of The Exilarch.

Some Rabbis debated why the Jews had to be exiled to Mesopotamia of all places. One opinion was that the language there was similar to Hebrew. Another opinion was that the Almighty decided to return the Jews to their country of origin to think again. A third opinion was that Mesopotamia was a low country, and that the Jews would be able to "go-up" to Jerusalem in due course. The fourth opinion was that the Jews who were mercifully exiled there would not have been able to withstand the harsh laws of the Romans in Judea.

All these opinions missed the point. The exile of the Jews to Babylon was a clear demonstration that the Middle East is one country and that no nation can live in peace in that region, unless the whole region is under one hegemony. If we ignore this fact, history may be tempted to repeat itself. For, like a good

עשינו עצמנו בבבל כארץ ישראל
תלמוד בבלי



The Greater Homeland of the Jewish people. ●

teacher, history will continue to repeat itself until the lesson is learned.

Saddam has now rebuilt the ruins of Babylon. He fancies himself as the new Nebuchadnezzar. He has targeted Israel with his missiles. How long do we have to wait for his full aggression? Iran has successfully tested its medium-range missile and continues to be abusive towards the State of Israel. How long do we have to wait before Iran goes on the attack? Pakistan has now become a nuclear power. Why should we wait until Pakistan decides to meddle in the Arab/Israeli conflict? How long do we have to wait before there is another Middle East war? Why should we wait while Israel is so strong?

I am not advocating that Israel should conquer the Middle East. What I am saying is that the status of the Middle East should be such that Jews would be able to establish themselves in any part of it, without harassment and in complete freedom, able to form their own autonomous life just the same as other communities of the region.

There is an obsession in the world today that democracy needs counting heads. But majority rule, as an expression of democracy, is only valid where differences are over small issues. In any country or region divided by race, nationality, colour, language or religion, all these groups should be equally protected regardless of numbers. This problem is demonstrated by what is going on in Kosovo which historically is a Serb country, but after the Albanians and the Croats managed to reduce the number of the Serbs there, it now has an Albanian Majority. Can an aggressor murder and then inherit? The answer should be no.

When I say that the Middle East is of Jewish concern, I do not seek exclusivity. Just as the future Jewish community in Iraq would not seek to form a state of its own, in the same way, the Arabs in Israel should not be allowed to have a Palestinian state. They should remain a fully autonomous communities within the State of Israel regardless of numbers.

When the Ottoman Empire was in existence, the Middle East had 400 years of relative peace and quiet. It may be necessary that Turkey

should again take the lead in bringing about a lasting settlement for that part of the world. The increasing co-operation between Turkey and Israel augurs well for the future.

The Ottoman Empire was cruelly dismembered by World War I, for oil, greed and imperialist ambitions. It was developing into autonomous regions. Should the countries carved out by Lawrence and Gertude Bell remain inviolate for ever?

In a peaceful Middle East, religion should be kept out of politics.

Therefore, give us Iraq and Palestine, as well as all the lands in-between to form a confederation united in defence, foreign policy and in managing the region's natural resources and economic policy. This is our Revolution and this is our Peace Process.

Religious fundamentalism is a dangerous concept and should be resisted in Israel as it is in Turkey. ●



Baghdad street vendor carrying a large selection of rosaries, also sometimes known as worry beads. These are sometimes made of precious and semi-precious stones. A recent buyer offered six-million Iraqi dinar for a rosary of Polish amber consisting of 33 beads each one the size of a hen's egg. These rosaries are used by Moslems and Catholics in their prayers and meditations. They are also used for relaxation. ●

Russia, The Jews and the Boer War

BOOK REVIEW

Russia, the Jews and the Boer War

by Apollon Davidson and Irina Filatova

Published by:

Human and Rousseau/Combined Book Services

287 pp. £17.99

When we were at school 70 years ago, a quarter of the World's map was coloured red to denote the territories of the British Empire on which the sun never set. Britain did not acquire this largest Empire in history by chance, or by mere luck, Britain fought its way at every turn in the face of jealous rivals such as Russia, France, Spain and Germany.

Even when transport was slow and the motorcar and aeroplane were not yet in service, Britain could despatch half a million troops to South Africa to protect the long route to India via the Cape. Jews played a major part in Britain's ascendancy in the 19th Century.

Benjamin Disraeli whose family were members of the Sephardi Bevis Marks Synagogue, acquired the shares of the Suez Canal with the help of the Rothschilds and he made Victoria Empress of India.

Educated Baghdadi Jews likewise helped to further the extent of the British advance in the Far East to China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia.

At the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899, Tsar Nicholas wrote to his sister, 'I am wholly pre-occupied with the war between England and the Transvaal. Every day I read the news in the British newspapers from the first to the last line.... I cannot conceal my joy at Boer success.'

Britain's hold on South Africa was significant for the Russians partly because the route to India lay via the Cape, and as Governors of the Cape were only too aware, Russia had its own designs on India.

In 1879 the British feared that Russia might take advantage of the Zulu War and strike in Central Asia - or even send arms to the Zulus. The young Jan Smuts, conscious of this Russian interest, advised his Boer colleagues on the eve of war to prevail on the Russians to foment an anti-British rising in India. In fact, Kruger, thinking along similar lines, had already sent the Russian Jewish émigré financier Benzion Aaron to represent the Transvaal at Nicholas's coronation in 1896.

Russian interests clashed with Britain's in central Asia, Iran, the Bosphorus, the Mediterranean and the Balkans as well as over India; and in addition to her vengeful feelings about the Crimean War, Russia felt herself blocked at every turn by Britain. Wildly excited at the thought that the Boers might at last have created the vital crack in the wall of the British

Empire, Nicholas rushed off to see the Kaiser (both grandsons of the reigning Queen Victoria). 'I intend to set the Emperor on the British - while the Russian Foreign Minister tried to interest the French in an anti-British alliance. In order to increase the pressure, Russia built up its Mediterranean and Atlantic fleets and even courted provocation with the dispatch of four cruisers to the Channel. At the same time, Russian troops were moved up to the borders of India and Afghanistan.

The Tsar was, in fact, quite carried away. 'You know, my dear,' he told his sister, but it is pleasant for me to know that I and I only possess the ultimate means of deciding the course of the war in South Africa. It is very simple - just a telegraphic order to all the troops in Turkestan to mobilise and advance towards the Indian frontier. Not even the strongest fleet in the world can keep us from striking England at this her most vulnerable point.' Such was Nicholas's 'dearest dream' but it came to nothing. The Germans and French scuttled away; Russia was in no position to take on Britain without their help.

Several hundred Russians came out to fight for the Boers and to be their nurses and doctors. It is difficult to be precise about the size of this group because many thousands of Jews, fleeing from the pogroms in Russia, had already joined the great gold rush to the Transvaal in the latter part of the 1880's. A good number of these left the Transvaal at the outbreak of war, some to join the British forces; but many fought for the Boers and probably accounted for the majority of the entire Russian contingent. The problem was that in the eyes of the often anti-Semitic Russian nationalists who flocked to the Boer cause such people were not Russians at all: the nationalists formed a separate Russian Commando unit in the Boer Army and refused to allow Russian Jews to join it. On the other hand, the British, enraged that such recent émigrés should take up arms against them, found it convenient to regard them as Russians and deported large numbers of them back to Russia to face the pogroms again, an act of callousness which has never attracted the attention - or opprobrium - it deserves. (In 1946, Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin repeated this heartless procedure by returning Jewish refugees trying to reach Palestine back to detention camps in Germany.)

Not much is known about the Russian Jews who fought on the Boer side, though several rose to significant rank; we find a Commandant Kaplan and a Commandant Isaac Herman, while two others, Josef Segal ('Jackals') and Wolf Jacobson ('Wolf'), who acted as scouts, were legendary figures in their time; Segal became a special adviser and secret agent for the Boer general, Christiaan de Wet. Benzion Aaron, by now a very wealthy man and a personal friend of Kruger, set up a Jewish Ambulance Corps and bankrolled whole depots for the Boers. The anti-Semitism of the Russian

nationalist volunteers doesn't seem to have caused any difficulties. Wounded nationalists were shown great solicitude by Aaron's ambulance corps while the members of the anti-Semitic Russian Commando, according to their own reports, were greeted as compatriots on their arrival by Russian Jews who showered them with fruit, cigars and good wishes.

Last July, the remains of Tsar Nicholas and his family were ceremoniously buried at St Petersburg, exactly 80 years after they were murdered by the Bolsheviks at Yekaterinburg, in the Urals, for fear of the advancing white Russians. The opposition of King George V in 1917 to grant his deposed cousin asylum in Britain, may have sealed the imperial family's fate.

The British Empire came to an end after W.W.II. It did so in an orderly manner as no other empire in history. Overnight, it became The Commonwealth. Even without "British" and without the crown, it goes from strength to strength.

South Africa that had left it earlier came running back under Mandela. This augurs well both for South Africa as well as for the Commonwealth.

Just like the Jews, by sheer tenacity and obduracy, the British have left their mark in the world. The one has given half of mankind its religious beliefs; the other has given half mankind the nearest thing to an international language, as well as, the tradition of Parliamentary democracy.●

BOOKS RECEIVED:

Babylonian Jewish Customs in Hebrew

by Dr. Abraham Ben-Yaacob

Edited by: The Bne Issakhar Institute
Jerusalem
in 3Volumes.

The Jewish Annual Cycle in Babylon

Prayer and Synagogue

Shabat and Rosh Hodesh

High Holy Days

Festivals

The Three Weeks and Fast Days

Jewish Annual Life in Babylon

Marriage and Divorce

The Jewish Family and the Jewish

Homemaker

Death, Burial and Bereavement

Miscellaneous Jewish Customs of Babylon

Clothing and Jewellery

Furniture and Dishware

Blessings, Curses and Oaths

Folksongs



The above shows left to right: Mr Moshe Levy, Managing Director of State of Israel Bonds in the UK; Ambassador Ziegerman; Naim Dangoor. ●



The award is a sculpture made by the well-known sculptor, Frank Meisner which he created to commemorate 50 years of the State of Israel containing the declaration of the State of Israel. ●

Last May the Israeli Ambassador to the Court of St James, His Excellency Dror Ziegerman visited the offices of The Exilarch's Foundation in Mayfair, London to present an award to Naim Dangoor for his support of the State of Israel and of Israeli Bonds, at a reception attended by leading members of the community. ●



David Dangoor at Jerusalem Information Centre, dedicated to the memory of his grand parents. ●



DR. AMIRA SOPHER - MBCHB

Amira Naseem Sopher who came to England from Iraq in 1992 has recently been promoted to the position of general practitioner (G.P.) at Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Welwyn Garden City.

Amira was educated in Baghdad and on leaving the secondary school entered Medical College from which she graduated as doctor in 1991.

On arrival in England she revalidated her Medical Certificate by passing the necessary exam and then practised various branches of medicine at Peterborough Hospital for 1 year then at Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Welwyn Garden City for 2 years. She has now achieved her ambition in becoming a G.P. in England.

Her hobbies are swimming and travelling.

Her mother and brother are still living in Baghdad. ●



Dr. Amira on duty. ●



William Hague with the bronze head presented by the Exilarch's Foundation, with Sculptress Frances Segelman and Naim Dangoor. ●



William Hague with Bronze head and Eileen Khalastchy. ●



Congratulations to Robert Dangoor and Joy Murad on their recent engagement. ●



The wedding of Astrid Dangoor and Gary Fox. ●



Astrid escorted by her father Sasson Dangoor. ●

THE TRUTH ABOUT JEWISH ASSETS IN IRAQ

by Professor Yehouda Shenhav
of Tel-Aviv University

“Jewish assets in Iraq were expropriated twice, once by Iraq and then by Israel”

Between 1948 and 1951, Israel faced two analogous demands. First, it was implored to compensate Palestinians who had become refugees as a result of the War of Independence, and whose property had been nationalised by the General Trusteeship of the State of Israel. Second, Iraqi Jews and their representatives in the Israeli government - Minister of Police Bachor Shitreet was the most prominent - were pressed for compensation for the assets they had left behind in Iraq.

My study aimed to show how Israel established a connection between these two demands, and then freed itself from both of them. Ultimately, Israel justified its refusal to compensate the Palestinians on the grounds that the Iraqi Jews had also suffered deprivations, and urged the Iraqi Jews to demand restitution from Iraq.

Zionist activity in Iraq began during World War II. But it was only at the war's conclusion, when the dimensions of the Holocaust became known, that the Iraqi Jewish community was considered a potential alternative source for increasing the Jewish population of Palestine.

The Jewish community within Iraq was not Zionist-oriented, as the emissaries soon discovered. As an overwhelmingly bourgeois community, the Iraqi Jews understood the danger that Zionism posed to their political, social and economic status. Those Jews who did leave the country generally settled in Europe, India, Iran and North America - as well as Palestine.

By 1947, however, Iraqi Jews found themselves in an increasingly untenable position. The aggressive activities of the Zionist movement, followed by the birth of Israel, led many Arabs to associate all Jews with Zionism. At the same time, nationalism was on the rise in Iraq, marked by a distinct anti-Zionism.

The question of the fate of Iraqi Jewry came up repeatedly in meetings of the Israeli cabinet, most often on Shitreet's initiative. In September 1949, for example, Shitreet proposed a “transfer” of Palestinian refugees and Iraqi Jews. Sharett and Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion were unwilling to discuss the idea, and dismissed Shitreet reproachfully.

In mid-October 1949, the Israeli press began reporting that Iraq was willing to agree to a transfer, and there was evidence that senior Iraqi officials supported such a move. But Ben-Gurion and Sharett chose to ignore these signals, and despite Israel's professed interest in absorbing Iraqi Jews, the two leaders adopted an intransigent position. Ben-Gurion told the cabinet that “all this talk about

exchange seems very curious to me. Clearly, if the Iraqi Jews could get out, we would never think about asking for any type of exchange, whether of persons or of property!”

Ben-Gurion and Sharett were well aware of the hefty price Iraq would demand for concluding any concrete agreement. Israel would have to either repatriate the Palestinian refugees or compensate them.

In March 1950, the Iraqi government passed a bill allowing Jews to renounce their Iraqi citizenship, and to leave the country. Known as the de-nationalisation law, it was to remain in effect for one year and carried no stipulation about property.

A month after passage of this bill, Israel made its first attempt to recover Jewish assets from Iraq. The Government was willing to examine the possibility of exchanging Arab property in Israel which has not been abandoned for the property of Jews in Iraq. The investigation, it was stressed, relates only to Iraq and not to any other Arab country, and only to property which has not been abandoned.”

The plan proposed by Ben-Gurion and Sharett called for nothing less than the deliberate transfer of Israeli Arabs. Lief, the adviser for land and border affairs at the Prime Minister's Office, had already begun to implement it. According to Uzi Benziman and Atallah Mansour, in their book, “subtenants,” Lief wrote to the prime minister, the foreign minister and the treasury minister that “as a first measure, I would instruct our representatives in Paris to establish contact with members of the Iraqi Jewish community in order to convince them to cease selling their assets at reduced prices, and to signal that there is a chance they will be able to obtain a higher price on the basis of mutuality.”

All efforts at mediation failed, however, and the assets of Iraqi Jewry were never brought to Israel. Nor did anything ever come of the transfer plan.

In 1951, Zionist activists were hard at work in Iraq. Some 35,000 Jews had already departed, and another 105,000 were registered to leave. Delays in the operation were caused not by Iraq but by Israel, and specifically by the quota system then applied by the Jewish Agency. On March 10 of that year, Iraq's prime minister proposed a bill at freezing the assets of all Jews who had renounced their citizenship. In order to prevent last-minute transactions, the Iraqi treasury ordered the banks to close in the three days before the law took effect. Jewish homes were searched, their stores were closed and their cars and property impounded.

Sharett asked his fellow cabinet members to consider Israel's response to the Iraqi actions. “The question arises as to what, exactly, we can do. Appeals can be sent to Britain and the United States, of course I assume that they

will refuse to intercede They can say ‘you took the property of the Arabs who left Israel, you gave the property to the Trusteeship. The Iraqis are doing the same thing...’”

In the same discussion, Sharett reported that some Iraqi Jews in Israel were calling on the government to impound Arab assets in Israel and distribute them to the Iraqi Jews. The majority of the cabinet agreed that the transfer of Arab assets to Iraqi Jews was not feasible.

In its place, Sharett proposed an alternative. “We declare that the entire subject of Iraqi Jewish assets will be taken into consideration in the final settlement, in determining compensation for the Palestinians,” he explained. “Since we have yet to abandon the principle of paying compensation, we will now say that the value of the Iraqi assets will be deducted from them.”

Inventive as it was, Sharett's idea did not satisfy Shitreet. He continued to press for a tangible measure to ease the Iraqis' plight. “The Iraqi Jews will come to the Foreign Ministry and ... they will not be content with empty words,” he told Sharett. “There can be no doubt that their claim to Arab assets is well-founded. Their situation is the direct result of the creation of the state of Israel, and we have to consider a way of compensating them from the Arab assets.

Kaplan retorted that by the same token, it might be said that Israel should compensate every individual who comes here. Poland takes the Jews' money as well...”

The Knesset ultimately approved the government's position on the Iraqi situation, so that linkage between Iraqi Jewish property and Palestinian compensation became Israeli policy.

“By expropriating the assets of tens of thousands of Jews who immigrated to Israel,” Sharett said in a speech before the Knesset on March 19, “the Iraqi government has incurred a debt to the state of Israel. Such a debt already exists between Israel and the Arab world, and that is the debt of compensation to those Arabs who left Israeli territory and abandoned their property... The action now taken by the Iraqi kingdom... compels us to link the two debts The value of the Iraqi Jewish assets that were expropriated will be taken into consideration when calculating the compensation we committed to pay Arabs who abandoned their property in Israel.”

This decision to link the two “debts” treats Iraqi Jewish capital as a national rather than a personal possession. In essence, that capital was expropriated twice, once by Iraq and then by Israel. In a memorandum sent to the UN Palestine Conciliation Commission, the Foreign Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to compensating the Palestinians, but added that “we cannot fulfil this commitment if, in

addition to bearing the burden of immigrant absorption, Israel must provide for the restitution of 100,000 Iraqi Jews. "In other words, had the Iraqi government not impounded Iraqi Jewish assets, Israel could have compensated the Palestinians.

During the debate that followed Sharett's speech, Knesset members took turns denouncing Baghdad's action. Many representatives likened it to steps taken by the Nazis. Meir Argov of Mapai said that "Israel had been willing to do its share for the refugees, but now, after this robbery of Iraqi Jews, Israel is released from its obligation."

Sharett's speech served to satisfy Iraqi Jews' demands for a concrete response to Baghdad, and kindled hopes for a speedy restitution. In a telegram to Israel, Zionist activists in Iraq wrote, "the Jews now believe that they have something to depend on... Jews whose assets have been frozen have approached us asking whether they will have to show proof of those assets once they arrive in Israel and, if so, how might such proof be conveyed. "Naim Sofer, chairman of the organisation "Movement of Iraqi and Eastern Jews in Israel," called on Israel to implement its decision immediately. His initiative clearly demonstrates the degree to which Iraqi Jews believed they would receive compensation from Arab assets held by the Trusteeship.

Sofer's letter served as a warning for the Foreign Ministry. While lower-level officials assured Sofer that "the fate of Iraqi Jewish assets is a constant concern for the government of Israel," the ministry's upper echelons were already acting to avert a catastrophe. "The frozen Iraqi Jewish assets may be registered," reported one Foreign Ministry memorandum to the Prime Minister's Office, "but their sole purpose will be to deduct the value of those assets from the amount of compensation to be

paid for the abandoned Arab assets." The memorandum added that the government could not compensate the Iraqi Jews "without opening the gates to a flood of private requests from tens of thousands of Arab refugees who once owned assets of one kind or another in Israel."

Though Sharett had always opposed the notion of transfer, the freezing of Iraqi Jewish assets offered him a golden opportunity to free Israel from Palestinian claims for compensation. And indeed, almost as soon as the 120,000 Iraqi Jews arrived in Israel, the government turned its back on them. The Foreign Ministry objected to the creation of a special office to oversee the registration of claims against Iraq for assets left behind. According to historian Moshe Gat, Sharett insisted that "the value of the Jewish assets impounded by Iraq would be tallied when the question of compensation comes up for discussion. That has yet to happen, and there is no telling when it will. The issue remains hypothetical."

Hypothetical though it was, the policy of linkage was twice put to the test. In 1955, a public committee was set up to register the claims of Iraqi Jewish immigrants. The committee completed its work in December 1956, and submitted its final report to the Foreign Ministry. There it remained, unattended. The reason for the ministry's inaction again was rooted in the linkage policy, as indicated by documents relating to the committee. As one internal memorandum advised, "It is recommended that we refrain, at least for the time being, from declaring that the purpose of the claims registration is to deduct the amount from that of the compensation for abandoned Arab assets."

The second test of the policy came in 1979, during peace talks between Israel and Egypt. Addressing the Knesset, Shlomo Hillel asked

Prime Minister Menachem Begin about compensation for Iraqi Jews. "The problem of Jewish property that was stolen by Arab countries - and not just one Arab country - was raised and will be raised in all our discussions, "Hillel quotes Begin as saying. "It was raised and will be raised in all our discussions with Egypt. That is why we agreed to create a committee to consider the claims of all parties. When the right day comes, we will submit our claims for assets seized illegally."

The peace treaty with Egypt was signed, but no action was ever taken on the Iraqi assets. Though it had linked the two claims, Israel never offered compensation to either the Palestinians or the Iraqi Jews. The linkage policy represents an historic milestone for Israel and its attitude towards both the Palestinian refugees and the Iraqi Jewish community. After their expropriation by the Iraqi government, Jewish assets were then nationalised by the state of Israel. Proof of that nationalisation can be found in the Israel State Archives, in the files labelled "Defence of Israeli Assets." Once it had claimed those assets as its own, Israel could put them to any use - rhetorical symbolic, or legal - it chose.

During the 1948 war, many Arab assets were either abandoned or seized. The value of these assets has never been determined, but is probably in excess of \$5 billion. Israel, however, remains opposed to paying that compensation as long as Jewish claims against Arab states remain unsettled. The linkage policy stands unchallenged.

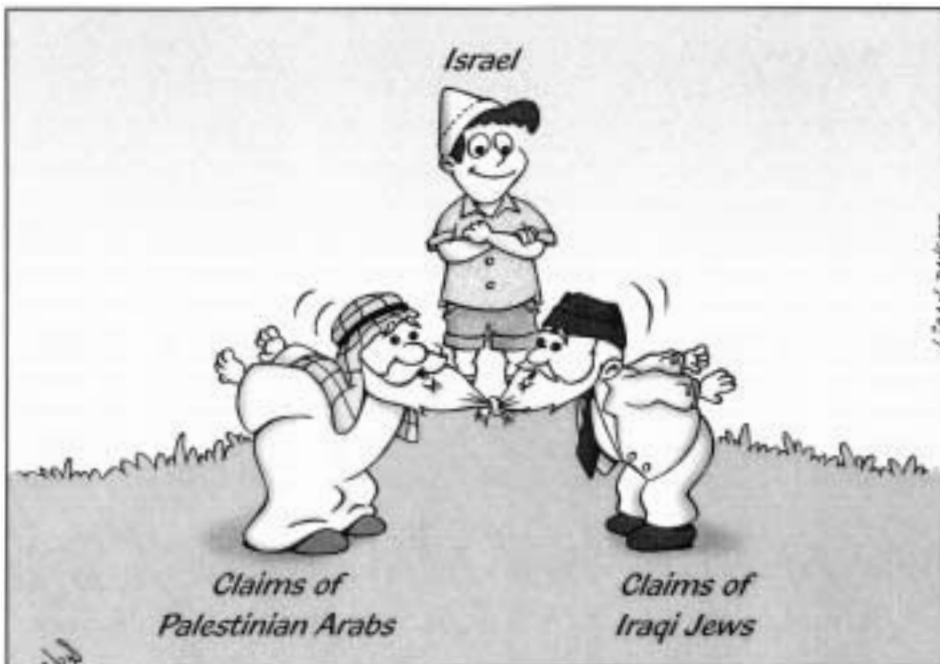
The linkage between Palestinian and Iraqi Jewish claims grew out of the cynical Israeli belief that Arab and Jewish interests are inherently irreconcilable. In looking for the roots of the antipathy between the Arabs and the Jews from Muslim countries - an immense topic that lies outside the scope of this article - one cannot ignore the way in which the Zionist movement and later the Israeli government helped spawn those tensions.

From Ha'aretz Magazine. April 10, 1998

Scribe: *The Israeli Government has explained its position concerning Jewish assets in Iraq, of not compensating Iraqi Jews out of the frozen Palestinian assets, by saying that the State of Israel spent billions in resettling Iraqi immigrants in Israel. WOJAC was just a camouflage.*

What about the assets of Iraqi Jews who did not go to Israel? ●

Now that Swiss Banks are paying 1,250 million dollars compensations to Holocaust Survivors, and other European countries are beginning to consider coughing up part of their wartime Jewish loot, there is hope that Iraq will one day agree to pay us our confiscated billions.●



سڈوا کیسے باکیسی

RELATIVITY

Your Grandfather the late Hakham, was a very learned scholar and was undoubtedly familiar with the many medieval authorities who explicitly taught us that "time" was created with matter. See Ibn Ezra introduction to his commentary to the Torah, Maimonides "Moreh Nevuchim" eg., the edition of Kappach, page 161 and more (from memory), Yehudah Halevi, and probably Ramban (Nachmanides)

It is an opportunity to congratulate you on issuing the "Scribe" - "Khazak Baruch". Being (forgive me) Ashkenazi by origin, it is a gratifying intellectual and emotional experience to receive the Scribe, - a window to the once thriving community of Babylonian Jewry. ●

From: a reader

The Indian Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath Tagore mentions in one of his poems "a worldless, timeless, lightless great emptiness" to describe the pre-creation state. Then comes the Big Bang. The poem anticipates the eventual collapse of creation on itself - The Big Crunch, and the 'system' returning to rest.

As might be expected the poem is couched heavily in Hindu imagery. ●
London **Atiene Aghegho**

Einstein and the Rabbi do not commit Tagore's mistake in attempting to describe God's domain of infinity and eternity beyond our own universe. How long is eternity? How large is infinity? Why should there not also be an infinite number of Gods all living in peace and harmony with each other? Call them one God if you will, as long as it does not amount to monopoly.

Although Moses grew in a culture which believed in afterlife, the Torah deliberately avoids such speculation. We are concerned with our own universe, where we are doomed helpless hostages.

I note that people do not bow when we pray to God who revives the dead? Where is the evidence? It is a sop to satisfy the squeamish.

"Al Tidrosh besof ubrosh"

The Talmud recommends that for our peace of mind, we should not speculate too deeply either regarding the beginning of the creation, or the eventual end of the universe. ●

Not a laughing matter.

I read your article on page 5 of the Scribe (No: 69), under the title of "who discovered Relativity first, Einstein or the Rabbi?"

I read this article many times and at the end I laughed. Why I laughed?

Because I saw how you solved a problem
Page 10

which no-one could solve in the past, nor will be able to solve in the future.

The question is: What was existing between God and his act of creation for the universe? Was it time?

You have denied the existence of time in this phase, and your solution was: eternity existed, and still is functioning till now.

In this case I can say we are as human beings together with everything else in the universe, must be part of "that eternity."

Are we then, part of the universal God who included eternity and the creation??!! It is true that God created the man. It is also true that man created the concept of the almighty God without a partner to him called time.

Finally, the best solution that I find is that you laugh at me writing to you these lines.

Thank you for laughing.

London

Latif Hoory

Naim Dangoor writes: *It appears that earlier Rabbis too came to the conclusion that time came into being when the universe was created.* ●



Latif Hoory in a jovial mood. ●

**THE ARAB IS OUR BROTHER.
WE HAVE NO OTHER.**



The photo shows:

Capt. S. A. Shemtob-Reading with Field Marshal Sir John Chapple at the last AJEX Parade and Rally. ●

AJAC Association of Jewish Servicemen and Women, performed a parade and reunion service for former combatants of Jewish faith, attended every year by men and women from England, the Commonwealth and other countries. The Chief Rabbi and a guest, usually a high personality take the salute. The parade is held on a Sunday, a week after the national procession in November. Last year the guest of honour and speaker was Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, deputy Lord Lieutenant of Greater London. He praised the Jewish old combatants and their service for England and its allies. In a jocular mood he said he has served under three Queens, Elizabeth II, Margaret Thatcher and his own wife.

Sir John Chapple born in 1931, joined the Army in 1954 and rose to be Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff 1985-87 and Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Gibraltar (1993-95). His aide-de-camp in Gibraltar was Captain Solomon Levy, brother of Rabbi Dr. Abraham Levy Solomon took part in the parade with the Field-Marshal. ●

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

by Albert Khabbaza M.D. Great Neck, NY

I would like to compliment Hakham Ezra Dangoor, the grandfather of Naim Dangoor in his statement: "When the world was created, Time itself was created". He arrived at this conclusion, which both science and religion now agree, without the need of high mathematics and physics. However, time is only one aspect of the Theory of Relativity which is much more complex than that, although Einstein himself once said: "the hardest thing in the world to understand is not my theory but the income tax." (he referred to the U.S.A. tax forms).

When the Bible says that in the beginning God created the Heaven and earth, that means that science agrees with that without mentioning the Creator. Both religion and science also agree that there was nothing, absolutely nothing, before there were planets, stars and galaxies beyond end.

But here, scientists play with the word "nothing" which they interpret as "primal void".

The universe, scientists say, began infinitely small, infinitely hot and infinitely dense particle called singularity which exploded about 15 billion years ago. This mathematical concept is difficult to be understood by many people. By definition this particle (singularity) was in fact so small that it was approaching zero but never equal to zero. It was so dense that it contained all the amount of matter in the universe including, 100 billions of galaxies each containing 100 billion stars with their planets.

In the Scribe number 69 the size of this singularity was estimated to be $1/10^{30}$ of the size of a pea. This is not an accurate estimation and it might have been much smaller. Neither Albert Einstein nor Stephen Hawking tried to define the size of the singularity by an absolute number.

What Hawking did, was to prove in perfectly straight face, that 10-35 second after the Big Bang, the universe inflated to double its size (whatever that size was and continued to do so every 10-35 of a second).

Does science agree with the Bible that there will be an end to the world? The answer is yes and no - depending on what is meant by the word "world" (OLAM). If the meaning of the world is referred to Earth and life as we know it, the answer is definitely yes. The sun which is about 300,000 times bigger than the Earth burns its hydrogen as its fuel and turns it to helium with emissions of heat in the form of radiation. Once the sun consumes its hydrogen fuel, it will start burning helium, turning it to another heavier element with tremendous heat radiation. It will increase in size and appear red and hot called Red Giant until it will engulf the earth and other planets. But before that can



1947 Taj Mahal Hotel - Bombay.

Left to right: Elaine Bakhsh (nee Sherbanee); Maurice Wahba; Katie Wahba (nee Sherbanee); Maurice Sherbanee; Renée Saltoun; Efraim Sherbanee; Ishaq Saltoun.

Photograph sent by: Rachel Sherbanee - Wahba. ●

happen, the Earth will become so hot that all the oceans will be evaporated and life will be impossible. Eventually, the sun itself and with it the planets will become just a small piece of charcoal.

On the other hand, if the end of the world means the end of the universe, scientists differ in opinions and there are now three theories based on how much dark or invisible matter is there in the Universe.

1. The inflation Theory which simply states that the universe is open, started to expand from the time of the Big Bang and will continue to expand forever.
2. The universe is flat and will reach a maximum size and stay there.
3. The universe closed and will eventually stop expanding and then collapse on itself with what is called Big Crunch which is another Big Bang when again there will be nothing in the universe. But before that can happen the world will be unfamiliar to us, if we still survive, and the laws of nature and physics must change. People will never recall anything from the past but can remember the future!

Break a glass of water, collect the pieces in your hand and you will see that the pieces will form spontaneously the original unbroken glass as the Law of Disorder must be violated. Place your hand in a hot oven and your hand will freeze, as the second law of Thermodynamic will not be held any more.

But most scientists today, relying on their new observation and the pictures sent by the Humble Telescope in space, believe in the theory of inflation: that the universe will continue to expand. ●

TRAGIC PLIGHT OF THE SILENT HOSTAGES

Your editorial comment and exhaustive report of the real-estate scene in Jerusalem omit a detail (26 August). Any Muslim or Christian who sells or negotiates the sale of real estate to a Jew is liable to summary execution by the Palestinian Authority. Recent instances show this rule to be ruthlessly enforced, even against the elderly and the destitute who may have sold their only asset.

None of the many international, European and charitable funds that regularly replenish the coffers of the PA goes to alleviate the plight of Palestinians who wish to sell up and realise the market value of their property. The real hardship of the Palestinians is that they are silent hostages to the tyranny of their own corrupt authority, in whose hands they are mere pawns.

Since 1948, well-intentioned UN and European organisations and charities have succeeded in perpetuating the refugee state through three generations, a unique feat in the history of the UN. By cynically holding out unrealistic hopes and paltry refugee benefits, the crude carrot-stick methods of the Palestinian Authority are denying its people the basic freedom to move on and to improve their lot.

If Jewish charitable funds were to be applied in the way you claim, namely to compensate or even to over-compensate hard-pressed Palestinian families for their property, such funds would be fulfilling their charitable role in as worthy and wide-ranging a manner as their traditional purposes allow. ●

Kensington W8

L. Shamash

From the Evening Standard 1.9.98

THE SEPHARDIM IN ENGLAND

RABBI DR. ABRAHAM LEVY TALKS TO CLIVE ROSLIN

IN "SOUNDS JEWISH" PROGRAMME

"Rabbi Dr. Levy you are the spiritual head of Sephardim in this country and you have been here now at the Synagogue for many, many years, but it is the oldest synagogue isn't it?"

The Jews came to England in 1657 at the time of Oliver Cromwell, and the Bevis Marks Synagogue was built in 1701.

Bevis Marks still opens on Shabbat for worship, but the main Sephardi activities are centred around Lauderdale Road Synagogue, where we have a Synagogue and a Sephardi Centre. Nearby we have the Naima Jewish Preparatory School, and the residential home for the elderly in Wembley.

"Let us go back over the history, if you like, of when the first Sephardi Jews came to this country, some 400 years ago. They went first to the East End and that was Bevis Marks?"

When the first Sephardi Jews came to this country over 300 years ago, they were living in the city. They arrived earlier, not as Jews but as Spanish Catholics, who were running away from persecution in Spain. Over here, there was a war between England and Spain. They realised they were suffering because they were considered Spanish Catholics and as they were neither Spanish nor Catholic, they thought what is the point of suffering for something that they were not.

They decided to go to Oliver Cromwell and ask him to allow the Jews to come back to England. They brought over Menasseh Ben Israel, the famous Rabbi from Amsterdam. He went to Cromwell, and though no official permission was given to remain here, they were allowed to stay and they opened a place to worship in Creechurch Lane, near Bevis Marks.

Jews had lived in England previously. They originally came in 1066 with William The Conqueror, and remained here until 1290 when they were expelled by King Edward I.

As an old community we have very ancient traditions and there are some families that can still trace their ancestry back some 300 years. The Bevis Marks Synagogue seats about 600 people. If that community had continued to grow from then to today, there would have been hundreds of thousands of Sephardim in England. But, sadly many assimilated. All Jewish migration to England after the second World War, was Sephardi. Jews have come from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Algiers, Italy, Gibraltar, even India. Many of them, have joined our community, and given it a vibrancy which is quite exciting.

"This is a renaissance, in other words, that has been led by you?"



RABBI DR. ABRAHAM LEVY

We are very happy that there has been a renaissance. It is part of the general renaissance of Jewish activity in Anglo Jewry. It has been marked in Maida Vale with the arrival of young families, and more especially, I believe as a result of the opening of the Naima Jewish Preparatory School some 15 years ago.

This is the first Sephardi school opened by Sephardim in 100 years. The school has just been revamped at a cost of £1M, and exciting educational activities are occurring there.

"The school is in fact your baby. It must give you a great satisfaction in it becoming so popular?"

When the school first opened, people were doubtful as to whether a Jewish school in the West End of London would succeed. However, the school is full and there is a long waiting list. The school is my baby, and I am very proud of it, and thank God we were able to achieve it. It is popular with Sephardim and Ashkenazim. The school has given tremendous vibrancy to the Lauderdale Road Synagogue.

"The Synagogue is not all you have at Lauderdale Road. You have got an amazing centre - a centre of Jewish culture and learning."

A few years ago we were given a very handsome donation by one of the families in the congregation, and we opened the Sephardi Centre and Shasha Library. The centre opens most evenings of the week with all sorts of Shiurim, lectures and discussion groups. We have also the Montefiore Kollel. Sir Moses Montefiore opened a college in Ramsgate, in memory

of his wife. The college was transferred to London in the 1960's. But, sadly, closed in the 80's. However, the funds were still there and now we are very happy that we have a Kollel where young Rabbis teach and learn Torah.

"So your concentraion, if I am right, is trying to work particularly with young people in order to work and encourage the Sephardim to go on for many centuries?"

Everyone in the community is important, and although we have to look after everybody in the community, if we want a future, we have to devote our energies to the young. Those who want to know about Judaism today are not satisfied with the wishy-washy, anaemic type of Judaism which served their parents and grandparents. People who want to remain Jewish want to know about it, want to be much more active.

We, the Sephardi Rabbis, pride ourselves that ideological adjectives of Judaism do not appear in Sephardi history. Reform, conservative, liberal, orthodox - these ideological adjectives developed in Ashkenazi countries. The Sephardi Jews, even if they had differences among them, and they did have many differences, would always manage to remain as a cohesive group. They were Jews. Some observed more, some less, but they were Jews. This is how I like to lead my Rabbinate here in the Sephardi community. We don't ask questions, our only definition of a good Jew is somebody who wants to be a better Jew.

"As a result of your attitude, the Sephardi community is thriving. What happens in years to come? Are there going to be future Rabbis to take the reigns from you?"

I get tremendous pleasure to encourage young Rabbis around me to take on increased activities in the Anglo Jewish community. There are some marvellous Rabbis with tremendous verve and enthusiasm who are doing marvellous work.

What gives me particular pleasure is that we can proudly say that Lauderdale Road has produced at least a Minyan of young Rabbis who are now serving different communities all over the world.

Some of these Rabbis are not working in Sephardi communities, but it does not bother me so long as they are doing good work. As the Sephardi community progresses and increases its activities, we will have to bring in more of these young Rabbis to serve the community. The Kollel has 10 Rabbis studying regularly, if only part-time.

We are now looking at a very exciting project; the possibility of building a cultural centre on the site of Carmel College. There is a very big Sephardi participation as it was purchased by The Exilarch's Foundation. Many young groups are already using the campus.

We are now developing week-day activities at Bevis Marks. There are thousands, literally thousands, of young Jews who work in the City throughout the week, and the Montefiore Kollel and the Sephardi Centre have now started educational activities at Bevis Marks during the week.

We have a regular Wednesday lunch and Shiur given by Rabbi Saul Djanogly. We have other events, particularly on Monday evenings with Rabbi Rashi Simon. There is now a suggestion to open a little refectory in the complex so that people can come there during the day, pick up a book, have a drink and a short Shiur, and perhaps say a prayer in the Synagogue. The City Churches are now being used for this purpose. We believe that this facility will be of great benefit to all of Anglo Jewry.

We get thousands of non-Jewish visitors at Bevis Marks. We have a little shop there, we give them talks and they come to understand Jewish values and Jewish history. Our Shamash, Henry Vallier, under the direction of the Rev. Halfon Benarroch, helps a great deal in this area.

"Finally to sum up, you feel totally satisfied that the future looks very bright and that Anglo Jewry will be represented by Sephardim, as it has been for all these 350 odd years, that it will continue in the same way?"

I believe that a great deal of the future leadership in Anglo Jewry will come from young Sephardim. The Sephardi Jew who may not be very observant today, will rarely mock his religion. The oriental has an inherent respect for God and for religion, even if they are not very observant.

"Rabbi Levy, thank you very much."

P.S. Since the above interview, the Saatchi Synagogue has opened at the Naima JPS Building. ●

SHECHITA

The Jewish method of slaughtering animals was for a very long time the only humane method out of all other nations. However, the blessing recited before shechita does not state by what right we are allowed to kill animals at all.

In fact, in the first chapter of Genesis, God gave man dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth. The Moslem procedure refers to this authority given to man by saying before slaughter in the name of Allah.

In Baghdad, since trefa animals were sold to the Moslems, the Jewish shohet too was obliged to say in the name of Allah. ●

BOND'S AWARD

As part of Israel's golden Jubilee Celebrations last April, the government of Israel invited Naim Dangoor to receive an Award in recognition of his continued support of the State of Israel and of Israeli Bonds. But as he was unable to travel to Jerusalem to receive the Award, the new Israeli Ambassador to the Court of St James, His Excellency Dror Ziegerman graciously visited Mr Dangoor's offices to present the Award in the presence of an invited number of friends.

The following is the text of Mr Dangoor's acceptance speech:

SPEECH BY:

NAIM DANGOOR, 11TH JUNE 1998

I have great pleasure in accepting this symbolic and beautiful award from the Government of Israel and from The State of Israel Bonds. Your visit here today, Excellency, to give me this award is an additional honour which is greatly appreciated.

I take this opportunity to offer to the State of Israel and to the people of Israel my sincere congratulations on this historic milestone of the Golden 50 years in the life of the reborn Jewish State. Best wishes for a prosperous and peaceful future. I also wish to congratulate your Excellency on your 50th birthday as you, as well as my son David were born in the same year as Israel's establishment.

The Bonds are not a charity, but a wonderful investment, and wise investors should make use of it while the opportunity remains open. The Bonds cement the valuable relationship between the State of Israel and the Jewish Diaspora everywhere, giving Jews all over the world an opportunity to partake in Israeli developments.

I would like to share with you one or two thought provoking ideas.

Among all religions and economic philosophies, the Torah is unique in its denunciation of usury - lending money at interest among individuals. The ban is on the lender:

A PSALM OF DAVID:

Lord who shall Abide in thy Tabernacle?
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

He that putteth not out his money to usury,
nor taketh a bribe against the innocent.
He that doeth these things,
shall never be moved.

This ban was taken over by Christianity and Islam, which paradoxically, made the Jews usurers and money-lenders with devastating results for our people throughout the ages. The famous Babylonian, Rav Seadia Gaon, ruled that a Jew must not lend at interest to anyone. But enterprising Rabbis, especially in the Middle Ages, ruled that a Jew can lend money at interest to non-Jews.

In an era of lasting World peace, the threat to mankind is not from the atom bomb, nor from global warming, but from compound interest. To illustrate, if Moses could have deposited only one shekel at only one per cent, per annum compound, today every Jew in the world would have been a multi-millionaire!

The director of the Islamic bank of Qatar Fayeze al-Jumaili (he doesn't know his name, Fayeze means usury), speaking on Spectrum Radio quoted Adam Smith echoing Mosaic economics as saying that the ideal monetary system is one in which the rate of interest approaches zero. But neither Moses, nor Adam Smith, told us how to create interest-free money.

In this Jubilee year of Israel, VE QARATHA DROR (proclaim freedom), conditions are ripe to introduce such a system, and a re-born Israel is the best country to promote this Biblical ideal.

The creation of an interest-free monetary system, alongside conventional money, need not be a dream. As long as we treat money as a commodity, we would still be living in the barter age. Promissory money should be issued by the borrower, and not by the lender; by the debtor, and not by the creditor; by the consumer, and not by the central bank.

The Torah's ban on lending at interest is coupled by a criticism of borrowing itself, especially by the Nation. The Torah promises that the Nation which follows sound economic practices will lend to many nations, but will not borrow.

The promise of a 10 billion dollar loan guarantee was the main cause of bringing back the last Labour Government which implemented the disastrous Oslo Accord.

The Palestinians are getting bolder and bolder in their demands and Israel is well advised to bring in the rights of Jews from Arab countries in their countries of origin, who now number over 2 million world-wide, and to highlight that there was also an exchange of refugees 50 years ago.

Moreover, Israel should bear in mind that Arabs may not honour any Peace Agreement, claiming that it was only a temporary truce, as happened at the beginning of Islam.

I would like to thank you all for having come here this afternoon.

Question:

How come you denounce lending money and go on to support lending to Israel?

Answer:

Zu Halacha, Zu Melacha (one is the theory, the other is the practice).

P.S. See photograph of the event on pages 6/7. ●

ALBERT ABRAHAM LELAH



I enjoy reading the Scribe and learn all about what my father used to tell us in our younger days about Baghdad, where he was born.

Sadly, he passed away last October, and I enclose a profile written by this granddaughter. ●

Nerang-Australia **Norman Lelah J.P.**

A PROFILE OF THE LATE MR ALBERT ABRAHAM LELAH

My grandfather - the late Mr Albert Abraham Lelah - was born in Baghdad, Iraq in June 1913, to a businessman - father and a housewife - mother. At the age of six, his family migrated to Singapore, as his father planned to set-up an export business in the region. While in Singapore, he attended St Anthony's Boy's School in Victoria Street - where he learnt the English language and excelled at the sports field. His family resided in Bencoolen Street, (a predominantly Jewish area), where his uncle owned a bungalow at the site of the present-day Strand Hotel.

In 1922, my grandfather returned to Iraq as his father had difficulty in adapting to life in Singapore. He continued his education at the prestigious Alliance School in Baghdad where he learnt the English, Arabic, Hebrew and French languages; among other subjects. At the age of sixteen, he borrowed start-up capital from his father to set-up a shop selling sundry goods. In a short period of time, he managed to rake in a profit and expand his business - from one retailing lower-value products, like thread and shoe polish; to one retailing lower-value products, like thread and shoe polish; to one retailing jewellery and luxury watches.

In 1938, my grandfather decided to migrate to Singapore as the ties between the Arabs and the Jews were worsening and rumours were rife

about the fate of the Jewish people. Singapore - as he recalled, remained unchanged; there was the same mode of transportation like trams and trishaws and the same hustle-and-bustle of a vibrant city life.

My grandfather established a business which concentrated on the exporting of Japanese goods. Being the entrepreneur that he was, my grandfather realised that he could obtain Japanese goods at very low prices due to the on-going Japanese-Sino war, which led to a boycott of the wholesale and retail of Japanese goods by Chinese Singaporean businessmen. His sense of timing coupled with his insight, enabled him to establish a lucrative business exporting Japanese goods to Baghdad. His sources of supply included European companies in Cecil Street and Robinson Road namely Sime Darby and Jackson & Co: and Chinese mercantiles, in High Street and South Bridge Road. In addition, he attended various auctions where he partnered with larger businessmen to auction for damaged goods retrieved from the various ships calling at the Singapore harbour.

In December 1940, he married a local girl - Miss Leah Elias, whom he met at a Jewish function in Great World. By this time, due to his proficiency in the Malay language, he opened a showroom in Middle Road and concentrated on retailing his goods to local and Straits Malays. He would repackage the Japanese goods acquired and pass them off as European imports to obtain larger profits.

Preceding the Japanese Occupation of Singapore in February 1942, my grandfather sent my grandmother and my then three-month old father - Mr Hertzell Lelah - to Bombay where he could be assured of their safety. He only knew much later that their ship was in fact bombed, but they survived and were rescued by another shipping vessel headed to Bombay. My

grandfather, planned to leave on the next ship as he had to tie-up his business. Unfortunately, he never made it as the British announced their surrender to the Japanese two weeks later.

During the first three months of the Japanese Occupation, Singapore was virtually a ghost town as strict curfews were imposed. Shop-owners, like my grandfather were ordered to provide Japanese Army Officials any goods at no cost. In June 1942, the Japanese gave an order for all Jews to assemble at Waterloo Street for registration. My grandfather declared himself an Iraqi subject as he was aware of the mass persecution of the Jewish people in Europe and feared for his life. As such, he and my uncle were sent to Changi Prison - where they were interned for three and a half years.

My grandfather, adapted to prison life and never complained about the appalling living conditions and treatment by the Japanese soldiers. As such, prison life sailed-by smoothly. At the end of the Japanese Occupation, my grandfather decided to visit his parents in Baghdad and was accompanied by Mr Jacob Ballas (now President of the Jewish Welfare Board, Shalom Singapore), and the late Mrs Grace Ballas. After his visit, he went to Bombay and was reunited with my grandmother and father. He then left for Singapore alone, and was joined by his family later.

With the money my grandfather claimed in damages from the British government, he managed to open a business in Bencoolen Street - wholesaling and retailing watches and jewellery. In 1948, he rented a shop in Change Alley and named it Albert Store. During the early years of business, he built up a strong loyalty among customers due to his honest business practices. Among his valued customers who became good friends over time - were the late Tungku Abdul Rahman, (former Prime Minister of Malaysia); and, Mr Khoo Teck Phuat, (Chairman of Goodwood Park Hotels Ltd).

Albert Store soon became the signature store in Change Alley and was the only shop bestowed with the prestigious Certificate of Co-operation from the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board. In addition, my grandfather was Vice President of the Change Alley Merchants Association where he held office for fifteen years.

In 1984, my grandfather sadly retired as Change Alley was demolished. During his retirement years he dedicated his life to the Singapore Jewish Community where he held office in the Jewish Welfare Board, and was the Religious Advisor. His sense of humility and piety made him a well-respected and much loved member of our community. In addition, he touched many lives all over the world and donated regularly to various charities like The University Endowment Fund, The Community Chest, Rabbi Meir Baal Ha Nes; and, Bayit Layeled - an orphanage in Jerusalem. His death on 19th October, 1997 saddened many people who mourned and prayed for his soul. ●

BOOK REVIEW:

**The Children of Noah:
Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times
by the late Raphael Patai
Princeton, 208 pp, £17.95.
Reviewed by Jenny Diski**

I was taught to swim so that I could get out of the sea, should I even be so foolish and unfortunate as to find myself in it. For the sea didn't seem kosher. Jewish people I knew were tailors or shopkeepers, their children were supposed to become businessmen, doctors, lawyers, academics, no one ever mentioned the possibility of a career as a mariner. It made traditional sense to me: hadn't Moses ordered the Red Sea to part rather than have the Children of Israel get their feet wet?

There is no evidence that any of the four great Biblical travellers on water - Noah, Moses, Jonah and Jesus - had what you could call a vocation for the sea.

Boat-building in the Bible, and indeed in the other early flood narratives, is not a skill discovered or intuited by humanity, Patai says. Both the need for boats and the ability to make them are bestowed on mankind from on high.

Noah is the only shipbuilder in the Bible, and he, too, gets divine instruction: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; with rooms shalt thou make the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is how thou shalt make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits".

Neither Noah, nor the ten generations that preceded him back to Adam's time, had any need for boats, Adam is named for the earth from which he was created. His heirs were tillers of soil, and builders of cities. Before Noah, the only time that the sea gets a mention is at the beginning of Genesis, when the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters.

These were the seas that contained Rahab, Leviathan and other sea monsters which sings the Psalmist, God defeated before he made the world: "Thou didst break the sea in pieces by Thy strength, Thou didst shatter the heads of the sea monsters in the waters, Thou did crush the heads of Leviathan, thou gavest him to be food to sharks of the sea". God, it seemed, on some accounts (Psalm 107, the Book of Job, and rabbinical commentaries on Genesis), did not just make the world, he fought with the sea to make it. And having over-mastered the waters, when he wanted to annihilate the world he regretted making, it was the waters he used to destroy it. "I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth". (The rabbis, wishing to take God's word literally, worried about the problem of fish, who clearly would not be erased from the world by a flood. It was solved when one rabbi decided that the waters that rained down were boiling, thus doing for the fish, and allowing God to keep his word to the letter).

Little wonder that the Jews had no taste for the sea. Noah is silent. Unlike later chosen ones who questioned and debated with God about

his plans, ever changing his mind, Noah never speaks. He simply "did according unto all that the Lord had commanded him". He is a survivor, not a sailor. The waters rise, the world dies and, locked up in the box God designed for him, he endures the wait. But Patai detects at least one element of seamanship in him, by carrying aboard several "shore-sighting birds". The raven and the dove give Noah a certain credibility as a sailor, although Midrashic sources suggest that he spent all his sea-going time learning what and when to feed the animals in his charge. So much so, says one, that he never closed his eyes for one minute during his 150 days afloat. As a sailor, Noah became expert in animal husbandry. Back on land, Noah showed no further interest in the sea: he took up farming and planted the world's first vineyard. Though in becoming also the world's first drunk, he may have been exhibiting an elemental trait of the old seadog. Moses, too, floated to salvation in an ark, though by now, it seems, boat-building skills had been acquired and there was no need for direct guidance from God. When the mother of Moses "could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river brink". This is more river than sea-faring, but it's an oddly watery start for a prophet whose life was dominated by mountain and desert. Neither Noah nor Moses journeys on the water for the purpose of trade or discovery. The Bible refers on both occasions to the ark as *teveh*, that is, a chest or box, and not a ship (*oniyah*).

Though Patai doesn't mention him, Jacob is another who, exhibits a reluctance when faced with water. At Jabbok, needing to ford the Jordan, he sent his wives and worldly goods across, but remained behind for the night during which he encountered the wrestling angel who would change his name to Israel. For all that scholars might suggest his motive was anxiety about facing his twin brother, Esau, whose birthright and blessing he had stolen, it seems to me possible that he was in a watery funk. Only an extremely unpleasant night sent him wading across the river the next morning. Jonah, too, becomes a seafarer through a greater fear of something else. Rather than proclaim against the city of Nineveh, as God wishes, he takes flight and buys a passage on a ship about to sail across the Mediterranean from Joppa to Tarshish. The crew of this ship are not Jewish, and when the Hebrew God foments a storm, they show both proper sea-going superstition and seamanship by crying "every man unto his god, and they cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it unto them". Jonah, strangely, sleeps through the whole thing, perhaps because he is such a landlubber that he doesn't know it's time to panic, or because he's such a landlubber that he's been rendered barely conscious by seasickness.

However, if none of these Biblical characters convinces me of a long-standing Jewish attraction to going down to the sea in ships, the fact remains that ancient Palestine had ports on its long Mediterranean coastline, and that there was certainly much toing and froing, warring

and trading in the area. Of Solomon, we are told "For the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks". It's not at all clear whether the ships were built by Solomon's men, but in Judah, King Jehoshaphat "made Tarshish ships to go to Ophir for gold", although Jewish shipbuilding skills are thrown when we find out that these ships "were broken at Ezion-Geber" either by a storm or because they were inexpertly built.

According to the Mormons, however, Jewish seafaring was an ancient tradition. America, claimed Joseph Smith, was populated by a remnant of seafaring Jews. The book of Mormon tells of a group of Jews living in the early sixth century BCE under King Zedekiah in Jerusalem, who, in an attempt to escape from an unfriendly government, sailed, via the straits of Gibraltar, across the Atlantic Ocean, to arrive somewhere on the American continent 344 days after starting out. So perhaps seafaring is a lost Jewish art, after all.

Patai offers plentiful evidence in the form of religious laws for life at sea, Midrashic commentary on the Hebrew Bible, and folklore to suggest that the Jews, reluctantly or otherwise, were indeed a sea-going lot. But this doesn't necessarily mean they like it.

The commenting rabbis were ambivalent about sailors, though they weren't enthusiastic about other professions either: "Let a man not reach his son to become a donkey driver, a camel driver, a potter, sailor, shepherd, or shopkeeper, for their trade is the trade of robbers", the Babylonian Talmud warns. Patai paraphrases the great Rashi, on the other hand, saying "that sailors live in constant danger, and therefore their hearts are inclined toward their Father in Heaven; they travel to places of much danger and are always trembling at the perils that beset them. "The distaste for the sea continues. Were it not for divine dispensation, says a Midrash on the Book of Leviticus, "every man who goes down to the sea would die at once".

Sea journeys had become an unfortunate necessity and laws were established for sea-going Jews. The Sabbath had to be kept at sea, during which time no riding or sitting in any vehicle is permitted, so the laws state that journeys had to start no later than Wednesday and that a Jewish traveller had to come to an agreement with the skipper that he would break the voyage for the Sabbath. This was highly unlikely, but it allowed the Jew to blame the Gentile for breaking his world. Not that all skippers were Gentile.

From: London Review of Books

During World War II Nazi Germany issued a special Banknote which was made legal tender in all the countries of occupied Europe. Some of these Banknotes are now being offered for sale by Westminster Collection Ltd. at the inflated price of £9.99 each.

The new single currency for Europe, the Euro, which comes into circulation next year and which will be mostly under the domination of the German Deutsche Mark, can be regarded as an extension and a continuation of that wartime banknote issued by Nazi Germany. ●

My Visit to Egypt

by: **Elias Dangoor**

The history of the Jews and that of old Egypt was intertwined for a long period of time. We know that it started when Joseph was sold by his brothers to Egyptian traders and was taken to Egypt. And that he became a man of prominence, when he explained to the Pharaoh of the day, that the dream of the seven lean and seven fat cows, was to forecast seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine. We neither know what was the name of that Pharaoh nor the date. When the seven years of famine started it also effected the land of Canaan, and the Patriarch Jacob with his family went to Egypt to buy from the grain stored during the years of abundance. A big number of Canaanites also went there for the same purpose.

The Jewish Exodus from Egypt was in the 13th century BCE. We don't know the name of the Pharaoh against whom Moses succeeded in liberating the Jewish people, who were then said to number 500,000. As explained in one Encyclopaedia, this figure incorporates all the Canaanite immigrants.

The Hebrews stayed in Egypt about 400 years. During that period the pharaohs shifted their capital from Lower Egypt, where they have built the pyramids as their tombs, to Luxor, in upper Egypt, where they dug their tombs deep in the sandstone hills of the Valley of Kings and the Valley of Queens. It is an arid area of no vegetation.

I went to Luxor, the capital of the second kingdom. It is a small city of much history. Each tomb in the Valley of the Kings consists of a long tunnel dug as a square about ten feet wide ten feet high, and several hundreds feet deep, with coloured hieroglyphic writings all along. The colours are still distinct. The writing is made of pictures of birds, animals, plants, parts of the body, etc. Because the old Egyptian language has disappeared completely, it is not easy to read those writings. At the end of the tunnel there is a large room with two large granite stones brought from a quarry seventy miles away to serve as the actual tomb.

Then there is the Karnak Temples, built over a long period of time on a twelve acres of land with a big number of massive columns about thirty feet high with ceilings made of stones fifteen feet long, six feet thick. All the stones are covered with elaborate pictures either carved or painted. Some of the colours are still vivid in spite of being exposed to the very hot sun for such a long time.

The main temple in Karnak consists of three sections joined by entrances. Starting with a large open high walled square for the people, with an altar of a white stone in the centre. This is followed by a large room with high columns and ceiling, for the Pharaoh and the priests, followed by a small covered room which is called the "holy of holies," where only the high priest could enter. Outside, there is a pond of

water for Pharaoh and the high priest to bath four times a day for purification.

I have no doubt that the Jews played a major part in the architecture, building, and decorating in Lower and Upper Egypt. It is a pity that we have no history of what happened to them during that long period in captivity.



Renée Dangoor among the massive columns of the Karnak Temple.

It was interesting to see how each Pharaoh was thinking only about himself, his good life and his future tomb. The country was his property, and the population, his slaves. A big number of people worked for years to build his tomb.

Scribe: The writer did not send any photographs, so we are publishing our own. ●



Naim Dangoor at Luxor.



The river-boat that takes tourists down the Nile from Luxor to Cairo.

Hapoel Hamizrachi Federation of Great Britain and N. Ireland

Many thanks for your interesting Pesach issue of the Scribe, which enables me and my colleagues to learn more and more of the wonderful traditions of the Iraqi Jewish Community. ●

Arieh L. Handler
President

Trina and I thank you for your good wishes on the occasion of our wedding contained in your letter to our parents.

We would like you to accept our gift to you of two trees to be planted on your behalf in Israel, and congratulate you "Be strong and of good courage" (Joshua 1,6) on your "high endeavours" in aid of the community. ●

Australia

Lionel John Boxer

THOUGHTS AND AFTERTHOUGHTS:

by Naim Dangoor

SYNAGOGUE OFFERINGS

When I was walking through the vegetable market of Yuksek Kaldirim, the old Jewish quarter of Istanbul, I noticed the shamash of the local synagogue going from stall to stall demanding payment. When I asked him what it was all about, he said he was trying to collect overdue aliyah offerings from congregants who were not in a hurry to part with their money. It appears that some people regard offering after aliyah to a sepher reading not an outright gift but a vow (neder) payable only on the granting of a request from the Almighty - payment subject to performance. This may be halachically permissible as the worshipper says in the Psalms *Nedarai l' Hashem ashalleem* (my vows to the Almighty I shall deliver). I don't know if this practice is allowed today. ●

I DIE THAT ISRAEL MIGHT LIVE

When Prime Minister David ben Gurion was told of the level of crimes, drug addiction and prostitution in Israel, his comment was, "Now we have become a nation like other nations." This cynical view, however, does not tell the whole story. A people become a nation when its members willingly, even gladly risk and sacrifice their lives for their country: "I die that Israel may live." This is martyrdom, and is a better ending to one's life, however short, than living to be a hundred. The ancient Rabbis who advised that it is all right to give up land to save lives were thinking of private property, not of material territory, at a time when the Jews had long since lost a state of their own.

The present challenge for Israelis is to defend and retain the meagre territory that is at their disposal.

The concept of "Land for Peace" is a fallacy that cannot apply to the Arab/Israel conflict. ●

WHERE WAS GOD DURING THE HOLOCAUST?

"The fool has said in his heart, There is no God!" What the fool means is that while God created the universe, He takes no interest in human affairs. But the Holocaust demonstrates not that there is no God, in that sense, it clearly demonstrates to us the limits of God's ability to influence human affairs.

To the question: Where was God during the Holocaust? We often hear the daft retort, "Where was man during the Holocaust?" The correct response should perhaps be, "Where is man after the Holocaust?" God has given man the power to carry out His will, to carry out the job that God was unable to perform. We are told that a spoonful of anthrax can kill 100 million people (the entire German race). Men should not hesitate, should be bold enough to carry out where God left off.

"And let all the people hear and fear."

NB: Our free will is the area of Man's action beyond God's limits the Tsimsum of the Kabbala. ●

I came into this world some eighty years ago in complete ignorance. Now that I am nearing the end of my very long experience, I still don't know what it is all about.

Why is God keeping us in the dark?

People should give up half their daily life activities and try and work out the mystery of life! Double or nothing!

Those who complain that they were brought into this life without their permission are completely wrong.

There was a sperm race and the winner was the one who came into being. ●

Arafat's security assurances to Israel are in fact merely terrorist threats in reverse, to be used in support of future territorial claims. ●

بصيد من العين بعيد من القلب

B'eed men el ain, b'eed men el qalb.
Out of sight, out of mind. ●

أقولك يا بنتي وأسمعك يا كنتي

Aqeek ya benti wasemme'ek ya kenneti.
I remonstrate with my daughter, but want my daughter-in-law to hear. ●

لبطانة أغلى من العج

Lebtana aghla men el wetch.
The lining costs more than the material. ●

كل ما يعجبك وليس ما يعجب الناس

Kel ma ye'ejbak welbess ma ye'ejeb el nass.
Eat what you like but wear what pleases others. ●

مد رجلك على قد بساطك

Med rejlak ala qad bsatak.
Stretch your leg to the extent of your mattress. ●



A group of young Jews at Y.M.C.A. Baghdad 1960.

From left to right:

Front row: Maurice Mashaal; Shoua Jiji; Said Bershan; Jack Shambi.

Back row:

Isaac; Heskell Japani; Dhia Anwar Shaoul; Nessim Yair; Yousef Masliah; Jacob ●

Photograph sent by Said Birshan, London



Graduates of Science College of Baghdad University 1963.

From left to right:

Amira Shohet (Chemistry); Mounir Paniri (Civil Engineering); Isaac Kut (Pharmacist); Said Birshan (BSc Economics) Amira Jiji (Languages); Nadira Ibrahim (Physics). ●

Photograph sent by Said Birshan, London



Young Judea group 1929, students of the Jewish Studies Circle in the garden of Ellis Hayim adjacent to D.E. J. Abraham brother of Flora Sassoon. The students were from both the Baghdadi and Ashkenazi communities. Shanghai, China.

Copyright Beth Hatefutsoth Photo Archive, Courtesy of Joseph Toeg, Tel-Aviv.

Aba (Abdalla) Joseph Toeg of Tel-Aviv writes: I was less than 6 years old and appear crouching in front.

On grass: Levy, Abraham, Beracha children etc..

787 אוצר המשלים והפתגמים של יהודי כבל 261 אוצר המשלים והפתגמים של יהודי כבל

4282
 סְהֵלָה עֵלָא אֶל-אֲנָסָאן אֵן יִתְחַפֵּץ מִן אֶל-עֲדוֹ, וְלֹאֲכֹן זְחִמָּה יִתְחַפֵּץ מִן אֶל-צְדִיק.
 קַל לְאָדָם לְהִשְׁמֵר מִהָאוֹיֵב, אֲבָל קָשָׁה לוֹ לְהִשְׁמֵר מִהַתְּרִיד.
 'שְׁמֵרְנִי, אֵל, מֵאוֹהֵב, מֵאוֹיֵב אֲשֶׁמֶר בְּעַצְמִי' (נוסח עֲבוּי לְמִימְרֵה הַרוּחָה בְּשִׁנּוֹת רַבּוֹת. הַשּׁוּרָה אֲלֶחְרִיז, בְּתַרְגּוּמוֹ לְמוֹסְרֵי הַפִּילוֹסוֹפִים שֶׁנֶּר א. יט).

4283
 סְהֵמִין אֶל זִיאָנָה אֶל-מְרִוּוֹה.
 שְׁנֵי שְׁלִישִׁים מִהֶרֶת הֶרְחַקְנִית.
 סְהֵמִין - שְׁנֵי שְׁלִישִׁים.

4284
 סְהֵמִין אֶל-וֹלָד עֵלָא אֶל-כִּי אֵל (אוֹ: עַל כִּי אֵל).
 שְׁנֵי שְׁלִישִׁים שֶׁל הַיֶּלֶד עַל הַדּוֹר (אָחִי הָאֵם).
 'רֹב הַבְּנִים דּוֹמִים לְאָחִי הָאֵם' (בבא בתרא ק"י ע"א; ירושלמי, קידושין פ"ד ה"ה).
 גַּם הַתִּימְנִים אוֹמְרִים: 'אֶל-בְּנֵי לְעִמְתָּהּ וְאֶל-וֹלָדָהּ קִי אֶלָּה' (הבבא בתרא פ"ד ה"ה) (הבבא בתרא פ"ד ה"ה).
 לְפִי הַרְאֵב"ע - רֹב הַבְּנִים דּוֹמִים לְאֵם וְלֹאֵם, כִּי הֵם הַשּׁוֹרְשִׁים' (סוף רות).

4285
 סְהֵמִין אֶל-קְבוּרָה מִן עֵין-הַרְעֵ.
 שְׁנֵי שְׁלִישִׁים מִהַקְּבוּרִים בְּבֵית הַקְּבוּרֹת מִעֵין-הַרְעֵ.

Treasury of Proverbs of Iraqi Jews in the Last Era
 by Dr. Abraham ben-Yaacob
 In two volumes
 Published by Yadid Hasepharim
 Jerusalem 1998

A collection of 5,600 proverbs and expressions of Iraqi Jews in Hebrew and Arabic (Hebrew characters). ●

1394
 אֶל-פְּלוֹס תְּגִיב פְּלוֹס, וְצִיבִין (אוֹ: צִיבָאן) יִגִּיב קַמְל.
 הַכֶּסֶף וְיָבִיא כֶסֶף, וְכִי צִיבֵי הַכֶּנֶם יָבִיאוּ כֶנֶם.
 עוֹשֶׂר מְבִיא עוֹשֶׂר, לְכַלּוֹד מְבִיא לְכַלּוֹד.

1395
 אֶל-פְּלוֹס תִּנְזַל סְלֵאִין.
 הַכֶּסֶף מִפְּתַח מְלָכִים.

1396
 אֶל-פְּלוֹס תְּעִיטִי עַל כָּל.
 הַכֶּסֶף מְכַסֶּה עַל הַכָּל.
 'הַכֶּסֶף יַעֲנֶה אֶת הַכָּל' (קִהְלֵת י. ט).
 'כֶּסֶף מְסַהֵר מִמְזוֹרִים' (קִידוּשִׁין עַא ע"א).
 'כָּל שֶׁהַכֶּסֶף בִּידוֹ, יָדוֹ עַל הַעֲלִינָה' (בבא מציעא ד. ב).
 שְׂאֵלוֹ לִיצָן: מִדּוֹעַ הַכָּל יִתֵּן לְעַשְׂרִים וְאֵילּוֹ לְעַנְיִים לֹא יִתֵּן מֵאוֹמְהוּ עֵנֶה הַלִּיצָן וְאָמַר: בְּגַלְל מִשָּׁה רַבִּיעוּ. כֹּאשֶׁר שִׁבְרָת לְחַזוֹת הַבְּרִית, הַעֲשִׂירִים לְקַחוּ אֶת הַשְּׂבָרִים הַגְּדוּלִים שֶׁהִיא כְּתוּב עֲלֵיהֶן: תִּגְבּוּ... תִּרְצַח... תִּנְאֵף וְכוּ'; וְאֵילּוֹ הַעֲנִיִּים זָכוּ בְּשִׂבְרֵים הַקְּטִינִים שֶׁהִיא כְּתוּב עֲלֵיהֶם: לֹא... לֹא... לֹא...'

1397
 אֶל-פְּלוֹס תִּפְתַּח אֶל-עֵין.
 הַכֶּסֶף פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת הָעֵינִים.
 כָּל דָּבָר קָשָׁה אֲפֶשֶׁר לְסַדֵּר אוֹתוֹ עֲלִידֵי תִשְׁלֹם כֶּסֶף שְׁפוֹתַח אֶת עֵינֵי הַמְּקַבֵּל וְנִשְׁמַע לָךְ. 'אֵין גְּבוּר מִמּוֹן' (שִׁירַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, מֵאֵת ר' מִשָּׁה אֲבָרְעֵזְרָא הַלְּפָר, לִיִּפְסֵיהַ תִּרְפ"ד, 28).

1398
 אֶל-פְּלוֹס תִּצְחֵן: יָא עֲזִיז!
 הַכֶּסֶף קוֹרֵא: הוּי יְקָר!
 אוֹמְרִים עַל אָדָם שְׂצוּבֵר כֶּסֶף רַב מְבַלִּי לְבוֹבוּ.

1399
 אֶל-פְּלוֹס יְעִין בְּאֶל-צִחֵן.
 הַכֶּסֶף יִתְרֹן בְּצִלְחָת.
 'אִיסְתְּרָא בְּלִגְנָא קִישׁ קִישׁ קִירָא' (בבא מציעא פח ע"ב)



Left to right: In the picture, my aunt Katie Toeg married Lazar Levy, appears as a child on the lap of Ellis Hayim's woman secretary 4th on the bench; Jason Isaac married Mozelle Toeg, my aunt; Ezekiel Toeg married Winnie Moses; the Shamash of Ohel Rachel Synagogue, Mr Beracha standing at the back; Ezra Toeg, my uncle, 3rd standing at the back; Maisie Hayim married Ruby Abraham, DEJ's son, 5th standing at the back; Jason Isaac married Mozelle Toeg, my aunt, 1st sitting on a chair. China has been in the news lately with the visit of President Bill Clinton. Shanghai is again a bustling metropolis recalling the days when she was the Paris of the East. The Chinese government frantically restored the Ohel Rachel Synagogue in Shanghai which was visited by Hilary Clinton.

During World War II, Shanghai was the only place in the whole world that accepted Jews fleeing from Nazi terror without requiring a passport or a visa. Some 25,000 refugees were able to make the long journey to Shanghai. ●

BOOKS BY MEER S. BASRI

Three new books by Meer S. Basri have now been published (in Arabic) in London and Beirut. "Thirsty Souls," short stories followed by "Men and Gods," dramas, "Baghdad Sketches" and "Leaders of Thought in Modern Iraq" (second edition). The first edition was published in Baghdad in 1971 by the Iraqi Ministry of Information.

These and other books by Mr Basri may be obtained from London Arabic book shops, Al-Saqi, Al-Warrak and Al-Rafid, etc.

- Al Warrak Bookshop
132 Hammersmith Road
London W6 7JP
Tel: 0181 748 7500

- Al-Rafid Distributing and Publishing
348A Harrow Road
Paddington
London W9 2HR
Tel: 0171 266 4342

- Dar al-Hikma
88 Chalton Street
London NW1 1HJ
Tel: 0171 383 4037 ●

From the well-known author and poet Meer Basri, being a sequel to his previous publications over half a century:

1. Nefoos Dhamia (Thirsty souls), a collection of short stories in Arabic on human aspirations to truth, love, happiness, material wealth and spiritual fulfilment.
2. Shokhoos Baghdadia (pen portraits of various Baghdadi characters). ●

صدر مؤخراً في لندن ثلاثة كتب جديدة من تأليف
مير بصري، وهي: "نفوس ظائمة" (قصص وصور علمية)
معلق به "بشر وآلهة" (سرديات)، و"شخصيات بغدادية"،
والطبعة الثانية من كتابه "اعلام اليقظة الفكرية في
العراق الحديث"، وقد صدرت الطبعة الأولى في
بغداد سنة ١٩٧١، نشرتها وزارة الاعلام العراقية.
يمكن الحصول على هذه الكتب وسائر
مؤلفات مير بصري من المكتبات العربية في لندن.
اعلام اليهود في العراق الحديث (جزءان)
اعلام السياسة
اعلام الأدب (جزءان)
اعلام الرد
اعلام التماكن والادب التركي في العراق الحديث
رحلة العصر (مذكرات)
أخاني الحب والكلود (مصري)

ANNE FRANK

The diary of Anne Frank has become the most popular non-fiction book after the Bible. ●

If I may relate myself to the Scribe by saying our Scribe does give hope to the Iraqi people in the Diaspora and it is the only journal we relate ourselves to. ●

Nottingham U.K.

Dr. David Solomon

SEX AS SPORT

How come Religion and the Law became involved in sex? In any case, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach was brave enough to deal with the subject of sexual activities in his recent book which is reviewed here.

Kosher Sex

by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach

Duckworth

Paperback. 218 pp. £9.95

Reviewed by: Linda Dangoor - Khalastchi

Is "Kosher Sex" a clever title or food for thought? When I asked a good friend of mine (who is a learned and devout Jew), this question, his prompt answer was "a clever title! Now, whether his opinion has been slightly coloured by the controversies surrounding Shmuley Boteach, I really do not know, but he proceeded to say that the book was too superficial and that each subject that Boteach deals with deserves to be a book in its own right.

Well, perhaps. But, politics apart, Shmuley Boteach who is a director of the L'Chaim Society, an educational organisation in Oxford, Cambridge and London, has succeeded in producing a very dynamic and informative book and... a lot of publicity. Drawing on Jewish wisdom and common sense, his book which took him a year to write, breaks down sexual taboos and superstitions by the use of a good dose of psychology and humour.

Kosher Sex consists of five chapters each with very direct, if slightly sensational, subheadings (or slogans in some cases) such as: Is Oral Sex Wrong? Is there a Kosher Kama Sutra? Married People and Masturbation. Orthodox Sex, a hole in a sheet? And Does size matter? To name but a few.

A clever way to attract our attention, you might say. And why not? Unlike the shallow Tabloid Press which uses the same techniques, Boteach delivers. He deals with all the possible permutations of thoughts and feelings that one might have concerning the subject. And, although I do not necessarily agree with everything he writes, I must hand it to him for trying to answer some very tricky questions.

On Love and Lust he says "Whereas love is about wanting to draw closer to someone, lust is about wanting to possess someone.... Love is about sharing, while lust is about taking."

On the subject of the Orthodox Jewish (perhaps Ashkenazi) way of making love with a sheet separating the couple, save for a small hole in the middle, Boteach clarifies that Jewish Law does not mandate that a sheet be used, "... it even wouldn't allow it if the couple desired it out of a misguided sense of piety. The ancient Rabbis do not allow any articles of clothing to be worn during love making... it must be done without a stitch of clothing so that there is no barrier to the intimacy which the couple achieve.

5 BOOK REVIEWS

by Linda Dangoor - Khalastchi

Regretfully, Boteach does not explain how and from where this "myth" originated. Should he know the answer, the Scribe would be very happy to publish it.

And what about pornography, sex for single people, making love in the dark, marrying early in life, becoming desirable again, marriage and divorce? You have to read the book....

On the sensitive subject of divorce, he writes "In this respect, I treat divorce like the decision not to resuscitate a dying patient because their quality of life has deteriorated too far amidst incessant pain." For Boteach, this is a thorny subject, being himself, the product of a broken home which "heightened my insecurities and left me feeling that nothing in life really works. Strong words. Such open and direct descriptions of his vulnerable side is very touching and that a rabbi should be courageous enough to talk so freely about his feelings makes the book compelling. Boteach does not preach. He talks like a therapist of counsellor and uses the language of today and the techniques of the media to reach his audience.

Those who think that Kosher Sex only concerns Judaism or Jews are wrong. It is for everyone. Boteach explains:

"While I am a Rabbi and this book does contain the word 'Kosher' in its title, it is not a book that draws only on Jewish sources and wisdom. Less so is it a book meant only for Jews. Rather, the essentially Jewish grounding of the book derives from Judaism's unique qualifications to discuss both sex and relationships."

A book to read.

Scribe: *Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait. (If only the young had the knowledge, if only the old had the ability). Nowadays, knowledge is well within the reach of the young, and Viagra is giving ability to men of all ages.* ●

Aubrey Beardsley, A Biography

by Mathew Sturgis

Harper Collins

£19.99

Reviewed by: Linda Dangoor-Khalastchi

A spell of incessant and feverish creativity and inventiveness in the field of design and aesthetics characterised the best twenty years of the 19th Century, both in England and Europe.

Styles and ideas were shifting rapidly due to the industrial revolution, to commerce and to the imports of goods from the Far East, Japan in particular. Arts and crafts societies, handicraft guilds, art centres and exhibitions sprung up all over England.

It was during these excessive and turbulent

times, 1872, that Aubrey Beardsley was born. A delicate and frail child, likened by his mother to a "Little piece of Dresden China." He had a very brief life, dying in 1898 at the age of 26, "at the age of a flower" as Oscar Wilde had remarked.

For the 100th anniversary of his death, Mathew Sturgis has produced a new and very detailed biography of Beardsley's life, relating the artist's modest and somewhat shabby childhood in Brighton and London, his close relationship with his sister Mabel, his painfully boring first job in a London insurance office, his discovery by the Pre-Raphaelite painter Edward Burn-Jones, his overnight success and fame as a co-editor and illustrator of the quarterly magazine the Yellow Book, his various friendships with prominent figures such as Max Beerbohm and Oscar Wilde and his fall from grace at the wake of the Wilde scandal.

Despite his failing health, or maybe because of it (Beardsley suffered from tuberculosis) - he lived and worked intensely. Very influenced by sensual French literature and by Wagner's Operas with their themes of incest and lust, he created a body of erotic work of great individuality which was regarded as indecent by most of his Victorian contemporaries.

Stark in its simplicity, (his chosen medium was pen and ink), his style owes much to Japanese art. It is a great pity that so little of his work is included in this book as it would give clues to the mind of this wilfully perverse dandy and poseur. And although the decadence of the 19th Century's "fin de siècle" with its excesses, diseases and fast shifting ideas can find a parallel with the 20th Century's own turbulent malaise, Beardsley's work, which saw a great revival in the 1970's seems to be curiously out of place today. ●

Siegfried Sassoon

The Making of a War Poet

A Biography Volume I: 1886-1918

By Jean Moorcroft Wilson

Duckworth. £25.00

Reviewed by: Linda Dangoor - Khalastchi

Eighty years have elapsed since the end of the First World War and thirty years since the death of Siegfried Sassoon, and yet, only now has a comprehensive biography been written about this most famous English War Poet. The author, Jean Moorcroft Wilson, attributes the reason for the delay to Sassoon's complicated background and to his secretive "double" personal life. A not altogether convincing argument because his extraordinary war career has been the stuff of plays and novels and also inspiring material for his own autobiographical books and poems, the most famous being memoirs of a fox-hunting man.

So, the mystery remains unresolved. Perhaps one should look to Siegfried Sassoon himself for clues. In several of his autobiographical volumes written between 1928 and 1945, he

never seemed to go beyond 1920, as if as a person he had ceased to exist after the war, limiting the rest of his life only to the “ploughing and re-ploughing” of his past. Not much is known of his life between 1920 and 1967 and this is the subject of volume 2 of his biography where the author tries to shed light on Sassoon’s complicated post-war years.

And complicated and contradictory he certainly was. He was the quintessential Englishman who stemmed from an exotic Middle-Eastern background, he was the sporting squire and gentleman writer who became the courageous war hero decorated for his bravery, he was the Patriot and defender of the crown who denounced those who prolonged the war for their own glory, he was the homosexual who married and had a child, he was the Anglican/Jew who became a catholic.

Siegfried Sassoon’s personality was double, perhaps because he came from two very different cultures which seemed to pull him in opposite directions throughout his life and perhaps also because he was the product of a broken home (his father left the family when Sassoon was 5 years of age). Siegfried’s mother was Theresa Thornycroft of solid Yeoman stock. She came from a comfortably established family of farmers who had a deep love of the countryside around them and whose dedication to art spanned three generations.

His father, Alfred Sassoon, came from a wealthy Jewish Merchant family, often referred to as the Rothschilds of the East. Originally from Baghdad, the family moved to India and china and then to England. Their outlook, manners and dress were completely oriental until the arrival of Siegfried’s grandfather Sassoon David Sassoon, in England in 1858, when a rapid acclimatisation to the Western way of life took place within only one generation.

The book recounts in detail his English Anglican upbringing, his schooldays, his short stay at Cambridge, his initial attempts at writing and his involvement in the war. A war which came at an opportune time for Sassoon because his life, of a gentleman writer and social butterfly, was going nowhere. The war gave this shy and sensitive, if somewhat melancholy man, a sense of purpose, and he put all his energies, both creative and physical, into it, proving to himself and to all that he was an extraordinarily courageous soldier. For his war efforts he was awarded the M.C.

His generosity was legendary. He liked to help many of his poet friends and gave presents befitting his oriental background. For Robert Graves’s 23rd birthday, Siegfried Sassoon sends him 23 guineas. A very elegant gesture. However, the note which accompanied the handsome sum made reference to the “Semitic sovereigns none of which I have the least right to call my own.”

Not only was he becoming increasingly conscious of his Jewish blood, but having

adopted his countrymen’s prejudices and anti-Semitic attitudes, he became more and more uncomfortable and tormented, even apologetic, about his roots on his father’s side, wanting to be more English than the English.

It is well-known that Edward VII became friends with some of the richer Sassoons as well as other wealthy Jewish families such as the Rothschilds and this helped a little to overcome the rife anti-Semitism of much English society of the time.

But, and I quote the author “Jewishness is deemed to pass through the female line” so, technically Siegfried Sassoon was not Jewish. But a Jew will always be regarded by others as a Jew even if he renounces his faith or is brought up as a Christian or any other faith. As long as one can trace a Jewish father, aunt, grandfather, great uncle etc., in his family tree, a Jew is a Jew is a Jew. And will always be regarded as such.

And this leads me to the heart of the matter. Apart from all else, this book is also about IDENTITY and belonging which Siegfried Sassoon sought throughout his life and never found that he fitted entirely in any one camp.●

THE DIVING-BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY

by Jean-Dominique Bauby

Published by: 4th Estate

139 pp. Paperback £5.99.

Reviewed by: Linda Dangoor - Khalastchi

After suffering a massive heart-attack, Jean-Dominique Bauby should have died instantly but instead he, the editor-in-chief of French Elle magazine and the father of two young children, fell into a deep and long coma. He awoke, 7 weeks later, to find himself totally paralysed and speechless, with his mind, however, completely intact. An imprisoned soul inside an inert body, with the exception of the left eyelid which he could move. This was to become his only means of communication with the outside world. The medical body considered him a vegetable whose days were counted, but his family and friends never failed him, constantly talking to him and surrounding him with love.

His speech therapist at the hospital devised an ingenious system with the letters of the alphabet with which Bauby could communicate. It consisted of him blinking at every appropriate letter pronounced and thus, with infinite patience, a word would be constructed and then a phrase and then a sentence.

Letter by letter is how the Diving-Bell and the Butterfly was written. It is not only a staggering achievement, but a work of surpassing beauty, unsentimental and yet very moving and funny. A lesson of courage and humility to all of us.

This book took almost 16 months to write. Jean Dominique-Bauby died soon after its completion. ●

CLIMATE OF FEAR - Why we shouldn't worry about global warming.

by Thomas Gale Moore

Publisher: Cato Institute, Washington D.C.

175 pp.

Reviewed by: Linda Dangoor-Khalastchi

Does the spectre of Global Warming frighten you? Well, after reading the American economist Thomas Gale Moore’s book, you might consider your fears unfounded. Global warming is good for you, or so it transpires from the statistics and figures presented to us in Climate of Fear.

Happiness is a warm climate claims Dr. Moore, who does not seem concerned with the increase of Carbon Dioxide emission in the atmosphere. He goes on to explain that historically, mankind was more productive and creative during warm weather, during which “period trade flourished, writing was invented and the human population exploded.” Lured by better weather, people colonised new regions and apparently the Norsemen, under the effect of warmer weather, occupied Iceland and Greenland.

The two historical periods he chooses to demonstrate his theory is between 9000 BCE to 2000 BCE, and CE 900 to CE 1300.

However, Dr. Moore does continue to say that not all regions of the World would benefit from a shift to warmer weather (oh!). Some places may become too dry (Drought?) others too wet (Floods?).

How convincing all this is to a layman is difficult to say, however, it is an example of the new current of thought developing against the hysteria concerning the dangers of global warming. ●

Your April 1998 edition was a special source of pleasure for me, a fan of the pictures you publish.

Typical of my generation, I was regaled by parents, relatives, and their friends of the wonderful life they knew in Baghdad. The best of everything seemed to have had its equivalent or better in Baghdad. Pictures in the Scribe have been a great source of insight into that life. The houses on the Tigris and the grilled fish “Masguf” gave me a reality to two subjects that had been Arabian Nights images till now.

Our wish for your continued success. ●

New York

Ernest Nounou

Please let us know if you are not receiving The Scribe regularly which now appears twice a year in Spring (March-April) and in Autumn (September-October). ●

THE LATE JACOB MAHLAB



Mr Jacob Mahlab was a well-known figure among the Jews. I am certain many, many Iraqis would be pleased to remember him. "Mess'i Mahlab" as all students and parents used to call him, was among the first students to enrol at the Alliance School in Baghdad when they first opened. He became the assistant Director of the Alliance Schools in Baghdad. In this capacity, he worked as Chief Accountant of both the schools for boys and for girls in Baghdad for over 45 years. He was involved in the collection of the students fees, seeing that the well to do parents paid more than those who had less means, and excused those of no means.

Mr Mahlab, who spoke French fluently, was awarded the Legion of Honour by the French Government for his contribution in promoting the teaching of the French Language in the Alliance Schools in Baghdad until 1951.

As a teenager I was sent to study in Paris with two other students, Flora Hay and the late Naima Nahum. Soon after we arrived, war was declared and Paris was occupied by the Nazis. My colleagues and I had to flee Paris to Toulouse. Travelling by train one day, in July 1943, I was arrested by the Gestapo, interrogated and kept in their quarters for 48 hours. I thought that was the end! I was released later because of my Iraqi passport (during that period, Rashid Ali's Iraqi Government in exile and Germany were allied). Later on, I was granted a false ID prepared by the French Resistance. This enabled me to move freely, but always with fear in my heart.

At the end of the war, in 1945, after a lot of suffering my colleagues and myself were sent by the "Joint" as Jewish War Refugees, to Palestine. Thanks to an influential Iraqi member of parliament, Abraham Nahum, who happened to be in Palestine, we were able to renew our Iraqi passport and return to Baghdad, after a 7 year absence (1938 to 1945).

Miss Hay and late Miss Nahum were nominated as French teachers at the Alliance School for Girls and myself at the Alliance School for Boys. This was quite a phenomenon then. I was the first and only woman teaching young boys of 14 to 17 years of age. Later I taught at the girls school as well.

On arriving to Israel in 1951, I continued to teach French at the Alliance School in Ramat Aviv - thus accumulating over 40 years of teaching.

My father came to Israel in 1953 and passed away in 1963 in Tel-Aviv.

I enclose 3 photographs which may be of interest to your readers. ●

Tel-Aviv, Israel Rachel Mahlab-Goren



French teachers and directors at the Alliance schools, in Baghdad, taken in 1949. From left to right: 1st row: Mrs Sabagh; Mr Laredo (the director of the boys school); Mrs Laredo (the headmistress of the girls' school, Laura Kadoury); Mr Sabagh. 2nd row: Melle Totah (Mme Elkebir); Mme Barmaymon; Melle Rachel Mahlab; Mme Shohet; Mme? 3rd row: Mr Tarrab; Mr Barmaymon; Melle Flora Hay ●



Some members of the "Alliance Club" Baghdad - taken in 1949. From left to right: 1st row: ? Khebazza; Akram Nissan; Rachel Mahlab; Rose Mahlab; Flora Hay; Shlomo Sehayek. Behind: the late Ovadia Herdoun. ●



A group of students of the "Ecole Normale Israelite Orientale" in Versailles - France, holding gas masks, taken in 1940. Standing: from left to right: Flora Hay; the late Naima Nahum and the 3rd from right Rachel Mahlab. The rest of the students are not Iraqis. Some of them must have perished in Auchwitz in "La Grande Rafle." See page 16, No: 69 Swastika Over Paris. ●

THE AYATOLLAH AND ME

by Elias Dabby

Iran in the early 1950's. A young Shah rules unsteadily. His prime minister is Dr. Mossadegh, a charismatic nationalist and demagogue who makes little secret of his antagonism to the monarchy. Mossadegh's ally is the Ayatollah Aboukassem Kashani. Kashani is the undisputed leader of the Shi'ite world of Islam. One word from Kashani, and the streets of Tehran would fill with people. Kashani ruled the religious world in an imperial manner. Even though he was an elected member of Majlis (parliament) Kashani never attended a session. He would communicate with his fellow parliamentarians by letter. When Kashani's letters would be read to the Majlis, all the members would stand up to listen.

Kashani's base were the poor of Tehran. At his home in a working class district, Kashani would receive supplicants from all walks and classes of life. He would hear them out and issue letters of support when he thought there was a just cause.

One day, two men came to him saying they were struggling taxi drivers and needed tyres for their cars. They complained that the business was controlled by Jews and they couldn't get a fair deal. This, of course, was not true. But Kashani took them at their word and wrote them a letter asking for a fair price for tyres. They came straight away to our showroom. (At the time, I had been in Iran for almost a decade, having left Baghdad as the Jewish community began leaving in droves after centuries of peace).

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

I would like to refer to your review of the book: "The History of Armenian Genocide, Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus" by Vahakan N. Dadrian, in the Scribe issue No: 69 April 1998, page 33.

Many Armenian refugees arrived to Iraq after the Armenian Tragedy in World War I.

The Jews of Baghdad were sensitive of their condition. The Jewish notable, Mr Menahem Saleh Daniel, contributed in the year 1927 a valuable plot of land in the centre of Baghdad to build a school for the Armenian Refugees in Iraq.

That generous man allocated also a sum of ten thousand English Sterling pound to erect the building.

We the Babylonian Jews may be proud of that human deed. ●

Tel-Aviv

Dr. Shaul Sehayik

When France recently criticised Turkey for the 1915 Armenian Genocide, Turkey retorted: How dare you mention that, after what you did to the French Jews in the last war. ●

Brandishing their letter from the Ayatollah, the two Iranians demanded their tyres. They did not provide their permit numbers like other taxi drivers did. But we sold them what they wanted at a very low price. After all, who were we to go against the Ayatollah's will? Soon as they left our office, they were spotted outside on the sidewalk selling the tyres at a hefty profit. Later, we found out they had visited other companies and got away with the same deal.

We had to put a stop to this extortion. A meeting was held to decide what to do. I suggested visiting the Ayatollah to get him to withdraw the letter. The others thought that was a find idea, as long as I was the one to go. I was taken aback. "Me a Jew, and not even an Iranian at that!" They insisted and eventually I accepted reluctantly.

The next day I showed up at the Ayatollah's residence in a poor district of Tehran called Sar-cheshme. I walked into a large entrance packed with people, all seated on a floor covered with carpets. Most of them were men, the women sat off to one side. The only chair to be found was occupied by a young Mullah who served as the Ayatollah's secretary. I approached him to give my name, tell him that I was Jewish and wanted to see the Ayatollah on an urgent matter that involved his honour.

A stern looking Shi'ite holy man sitting nearby gave me an angry look and snapped at me, asking sarcastically if my business was more important than that of the others waiting. I told him I was addressing the Ayatollah's secretary and not him. He looked away with contempt and said nothing more. That holy man's face was later to become the most recognisable face in Iran and indeed, the whole world.

Fifteen minutes later, I was called into Ayatollah Kashani's office. It was a small, modest room and the Ayatollah sat cross-legged on the carpet. He extended his hand to me as I bent down. I kissed it twice and put it to my forehead as a sign of respect. He noted I was Jewish and asked me where I was from. When I told him Baghdad, he broke into fluent Arabic and our conversation continued. I told him about the two men who were going around the bazaar holding up his letter and getting merchants to sell them cheap car tyres. How they sold them at exorbitant profits. He grew angrier as our conversation continued, remembering the two men had come to him earlier. His voice grew to a shout when he found out they had claimed the tyres money was going to the Ayatollah himself. At that moment, the Mullah sitting outside his office burst in, thinking a fight had broken out. The Ayatollah put up his hand to stop him. "Leave this Jew alone. We should be glad he came to us. Call the police."

When the policemen guarding his building came running into his office, the Ayatollah told them to accompany me downtown and arrest the two men who were buying tyres in his name. He also told them he held them personally responsible for my safety. I thanked him, kissed his hand again and left with the police officers.

When we got downtown, I pointed at the two men, who began running when they saw us. The police gave chase and eventually caught them. A scuffle broke out, the two men were beaten and taken away in handcuffs. I never saw them again.

Elias Dabby is retired and lives in Montreal. His son Victor helped prepare this article. ●

انسبت ١١ تموز (يونيو) ١٩٩٨ الموافق ١٧ ربيع الأول ١٤١٩ هـ / العدد ١٢٩١٢
AL HAYAT SATURDAY 11, JULY, 1998 ISSUE NO 12912

AL HAYAT 17-
OPINION



The Turkish-Israeli military alliance as seen by an Arabic newspaper, following the adage: Two bottoms in one pant. ●

I enclose an excerpt from the book entitled: From Babylon to Jerusalem, Studies and Sources on Zionism and Aliya from Iraq, by Zvi Yehuda (p.186-187).

Translated from Hebrew into English by me.

Telegrams received from Baghdad on October 21, 1949

1. Yesterday there were more than twenty searches done, mainly in the homes of instructors and commanders. According to the latest news, three girls and one young man died of torture. The police took the prisoners off in different clothing in order to discover persons they knew from the Movement.

The person in charge and the instructors of the Movement and the Shura (the Hagana organisation in Iraq) cannot get out of their hiding places. Yesterday and today they searched also Jewish schools and they arrested teachers and pupils. In our opinion, as things are going on, our main task will be to bring the person in charge of the Movement and the Shura to Israel and thus complete our tasks, if we survive.

2. Despite the tortures applied by the government, the prisoners have disclosed no further names of the Movement members. The police use three kinds of torture:

- a) Tying elbows and wrists with iron chains, raising them up and beating the whole body with a whip.
- b) Placing the hands and feet in boiling water.
- c) Inflicting burns on the entire body with a hot iron.

Members have entered a state of hysteria from these tortures; some of them can hardly be recognised.

3. The entire Jewish population is shocked and wants a day of prayer and atonement. The head of the Jewish community together with a few other prominent members oppose this for fear of antagonising the government, but they propose to surrender the weapons and move out, which means the death of all members of the Movement and the Shura. If there are any talks by the head of the community with foreigners, his answer cannot be relied upon.

4. The members of the Movement and the Shura are on the verge of despair. They demand armed action against some members of the government and the community.

5. We are not frightened by the situation, we have survived and will survive, but guidance is needed. Answer quickly!

6. Our work compels us to be on the move all day long. We may be caught at any moment. Are we to appear as locals or Israelis? We cannot appear as locals because we have no proof that we have not been absent for some time. Answer quickly! ●

Ramat-Gan Esther Khabbaza Mercado

Recently an article was published in Ma'ariv daily newspaper, that prominent Iraqi Jews, residing in England had met with the Iraqi "Ambassador" in London.

I think it is a right approach. The Arabs, among themselves, quarrel and fight each other, and then reconcile, on the face of it, and fall on each other's neck, and then unite against Israel. So in fact, Israel is the only catalyst in the Arab world. If really the Iraqi leaders want to meet the Iraqi Jews of outside Iraq - I think it is a good move, may be to a way similar to the approach of Morocco 20 years ago, that opened the way to direct talks between Israel and Morocco.

If the Iraqi leaders meet the Iraqi Jews, openly, in Baghdad, then this would neutralise some of the Iraqi open policy against the Jews and then Israel.

If fact, I suspect that this move from the Iraqi "Ambassador" is recognising the great influence of the Iraqi Jews, and to counter the Iraqi Opposition approach to the Iraqi Jews.

But, I think, the English Iraqi Jews should not agree to separate the Israeli/Iraqi Jews from them. Also, I think, that at least the first meetings should not be about property. When I represented Naim Dangoor at the WOJAC Conference here some years ago, I agreed that Israel must not represent the non-Israeli Jews concerning their lost property.

Anyway, I am ready to lend a hand in any endeavour to approach the Iraqi authorities, provided it is not clandestine and in the open, and am even ready to be included in any delegation - as a proud Israeli.

As you know, I am very good in the Arabic language and even have a word processor in Arabic, so if I can co-operate in any way (writing, translating, typing in Arabic) I am ready. ●

Ramat-Gan Advocate Shoua Jiji

I received your journal from my cousin Ketty Levy Ozair in which I sadly saw the article about my late aunt and uncle, Semha and Philip Levy with their photograph.

I was pleasantly surprised to see so many letters from people that I knew. I read the different articles which drew me back in time and place and sat up all night just browsing through your journal and going back to the ones written by people that I knew and have not heard from in a long time. ●

New York Stella Tawfik Cooperman

I am an Iraqi who has been living in Brazil for the past thirty-five years. But, whenever I have the opportunity, either in London, where I have my two sisters and a brother, or in Tel-Aviv, where I have my mother and other brother, I read it all and enjoy it so much - as it makes me remember my home life in Baghdad and the people I knew then.

Please put me on your regular mailing list. ●
Rio de Janeiro, Albertine Joory
Brazil (nee Sawdayee)

There is a very interesting story behind this photograph of my younger brother Fred with our maternal grandmother Khatoun Reuben (Karradi). Fred enlisted in the British army at age 17, in the Royal Berkshire Regiment in India. He was seriously wounded in the Burma campaign and was sent back to England, together with his regiment. Because of his army service in Burma, Fred was promoted to sergeant at a very young age. On route to England, the plane stopped in Palestine, and Fred obtained permission from the Commanding Officer to go to Haifa, where he believed he could track down our Uncle Victor, who was associated with the Shell Oil Co.

When he arrived at the building, a young man answered the door. Upon asking to see Uncle Victor, the young man responded that there was nobody by that name in the building. Fred told him that this was the address he was given. The young man insisted that there was nobody by the name of Victor Reuben in the building, and questioned Fred at great length how he was related to Victor Reuben. At the end of five minutes of intense questioning, the young man said "Shake hands with me - I am your first cousin Eliyahu!" You see, Eliyahu was with the Haganah, and all he could see was a man in the uniform of a British sergeant. The story had a happy ending, since my brother got to see all our relatives, including our dear grandmother, who was in the photo with Fred.

Fort Lauderdale, Joseph & Sandra Sion Florida

As per letter sent to Dr. Naim Dallal, Montreal, who appears in the photograph on the opposite page. ●



Fred, younger brother of Joseph Sion with his maternal grandmother Khatoun Reuben (Karradi) taken in Haifa 54 years ago. ●



1948 Graduates of the Royal Military College.

Karrada, Baghdad

All were doctors graduated with the rank of Captain. Picture sent by Dr. Naim Dallal of Montreal.

Left to right: Back row

1.....; 2 Dr. Salim Soffer; 3 Dr. Naim Dallal; 4.....; 5 Dr. Yoseph Haya; 6.....; 7.....; 8.....; 9.....; 10 Dr. Abraham Soffer; 11 Pharmacist Sabha; 12 Dr. Sam Nathan.

2nd row from back: 1.....; 2.....; 3.....; 4.....; 5.....; 6.....; 7.....; 8 Dr. William Shahrabani; 9 Dr. Ezra Nissan; 10; 11 Jewish Pharmacist; 12; 13; 14 Dr. Sasson Yado.

3rd row from back: 1 Jewish Pharmacist; 2; 3 Dr. Maurice Saltoon.

4th row from back: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5 Dr. Mahdi Al-Saffar.●

ISRAEL'S POPULATION

700,000 Jews from Arab and Moslem countries immigrated to Israel since its establishment in 1948, among them:

127,000	from	Iraq
45,000	from	Yemen
300,000	from	Morocco
35,000	from	Libya
29,000	from	Egypt
15,000	from	Algiers
4,500	from	Afghanistan
60,000	from	Iran

In 1948 Jews numbered 650,000. In its first year Israel received 203,000 immigrants from 42 different countries including Holocaust survivors. In 1950 the Law of Return was adopted allowing any Jew the right to return to Israel, and in 1952 a new law gave all Jewish immigrants Israeli nationality.

After the six-day war in 1967, 380,000 Jews emigrated from Western countries. The main immigration of Soviet Jewry started in 1989 amounting to one million in two years. In 1985 and 1991 52,000 Jews were air-lifted from Ethiopia.

At present Israel's population numbers six-million, among them five million Jews. ●

From an Arabic Daily

THE LATE DAISY SHABI



I am writing to you with reference to the very sad passing away of my aunt Daisy Nathaniel Shaby on August 3, 1998.

Both she and her husband Jack About Shaby (who owned the Jack About Hospital in Baghdad) were very prominent figures in the Iraqi Jewish Community. She was a charismatic, charming, elegant and a beautiful woman and cared for people more than herself. Although in her last months she did not socialise very much, but she always asked after people. Her presence and love is greatly missed by her family and especially her daughter, Huda, her sister, Valentine and two nieces, Pamela and Nina.●

London

Pamela Shabi

Abu Nawas

The wine song in Classical Arabic Poetry.

Abu Nuwas and the literary tradition

304pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £48

Although condemned by the Koran, drunkardness was celebrated from the beginning in Islam's own heartland. This is because Islam incorporated in rapid succession various alien cultures.

The above book is an examination of the genre of khamriya, poetry lauding wine and drunkenness, and in particular of the work of its most celebrated practitioner. Abu Nuwas (c. 750-c.815), "the glory of the genre," a figure who, like petrarch, is seen as the archetypal representative of a whole poetic rhetoric and ethos associated with his name.

At first glance, Abu Nuwas's origins may go some way to explaining this "un-Islamic" subject matter (which also includes spirited representations of pederastic encounters); he was born of mixed Arab-Persian parentage, while at the caliphal court in Baghdad he enjoyed the patronage of the Barmaki family of civil servants (who were of Persian origin), and interestingly enough his poems often characterise the places where wine is bought, and its sellers, as "Persian."

The main riverside promenade in Baghdad is called Abu Nawas Street, after this celebrated poet.●

THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER OF BAGHDAD

Excerpts from the book: "Mine Was The Last Generation In Babylon"

by Kenneth R. Kattan M.D.

Families and relatives lived in the same neighbourhood. In some cases the adult sons and their spouses stayed with parents even after they married and had children. Each couple had one or two rooms in the big house. All shared the same kitchen. Most of these families lived in harmony, or at least tolerated each other.

In the thirties and forties many started to move to the more modern neighbourhoods in the South part of Baghdad. Some of the houses were above the shops of the market (hanging houses).

My wife's father, Ezra Rahima, used to dress in zeboon (gown), abaya (cloak) and tarboush (fez). He slept usually near the window facing the street to hear the call of the Shamash to early morning prayers, shouting Abu Rahmin "Time for Shahrit." During weekdays very few boys accompanied their fathers to the synagogue.

About one hour later, the same men came home with their purchases from Souk Hinnouni, the food market, carrying food in wicker baskets. Men bought the meat, vegetables, eggs, bread and whatever food was needed every day. By this time the wife had prepared breakfast. Women did not do the buying. It was a man's duty.

Half an hour later, after having their breakfast, Mr Rahima emerged again, this time to go to work. Children started going to school. During holidays the alleys became noisy with boys playing and shouting. Jewish boys could play

outside their houses in this area. Muslims were not around to harass them. Girls played inside the house. It would be difficult to imagine the Jewish neighbourhood without knowing Souk Hinnouni.

Souk Hinnouni (Hannoon market) was the heart of the Jewish neighbourhood. It was the main food market for more than sixty thousand people who lived in this area and it was situated inside this residential area. All the vendors and the customers were Jews. There was even a synagogue situated in its middle. It consisted of multiple intersecting alleys, each not more than 3 metres in width. They were unpaved, and they became muddy during the rainy days, autumn and winter.

In one alley there were four butcher shops next to each other. They sold mutton and other parts of the sheep, mainly liver, spleen, lungs, heart and sweetbread. The stomach, the intestines, the head and lower parts of the legs were sold in a different shop. The butcher went to the slaughterhouse after midnight, bought the number of sheep he thought he would need the next morning, had them slaughtered and took the carcasses to his shop. Each butcher bought four to ten sheep each day. Since there was no storage or refrigerator, the butcher had to sell all the merchandise by noon, which he usually did.

There were four or five shops that sold river fish from the Tigris. They were sold fresh. There was the shabboot and the binni that were sold whole. The bizz was very large fish up to 2 metres in length, so it was sold by the kilo.

In another alley of the souk there were shops selling live chickens. Nobody bought slaughtered or dressed chicken. A full chicken was bought. Customers felt the chicken for fat. A fat chicken was considered better and tastier. In the same alley there was the shohet (ritual slaughterer). After buying the chicken, it was brought to him for slaughter. He checked the animal for a defect or for a broken limb. Then he held the neck with his left hand, removed a few feathers from the neck, looked for the windpipe and the blood vessel. Then he cut with one stroke the windpipe and the blood vessels supplying the head. He had to do it in one stroke according to the Jewish law. After that he threw the chicken on a container containing ashes, in order to absorb the blood. The knife had to be very sharp so that when it cuts the animal it would not be felt. The artery had to be cut so that the brain would be denied the blood supply. The animal would lose consciousness in no time. Not everybody could be a shohet.

After passing a test, was licensed by the "Jewish authority" who would check his knife at regular intervals.

In another alley there were the vegetable and fruit vendors who sold the seasonal product. In the same alley there were the shops that sold cheeses. Feta cheese was the most consumed cheese in Iraq. The vendor sold thick yoghurt and butter, and qaimer (thick cream).

All sorts of other products and cooked food were sold in souk Hannouni. The people who crowded the souk and brought life to it are no more there. They and their children have been transplanted into the promised land: Israel. ●



Street scene in a Jewish section of Baghdad. ●



Selling cooked fava beans in the alleyways. ●

THE SAMARITANS

The Samaritans are a small tribe, totalling about 1,000 people, who live mostly in the town of Nablus (Shechem) on the steps of Mt. Gerisim, or in Holon, Israel. They trace themselves to the remnants of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh with an admixture of non-Israelite colonists transported by the Assyrians after the defeat of the Kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C.E. and deportation of the Ten Tribes of Israel.

The function of High Priest (Cohen) is carried out by a Levite descendant. The position is not hereditary but passes on to the eldest member of the Priestly family. The tribe suffered most from attacks by the Arabs who looted much of their ancient books and treasures.

The Samaritans claim that their tradition has not changed for over 3,000 years. The Samaritan religion is composed of the following beliefs:

1. The Lord is the one and only God and there is none beside him.
2. The only prophet is Moses and no other prophet was or will be beside him.
3. The only Holy Book is the "Torah" consisting of the Five Books of Moses and the Book of Joshua.
4. The belief that the only Holy place in the world is Mt. Gerizim the Blessed Mountain, not Jerusalem - the Holy place of the Jews.
5. The Day of Judgement of the Lord will be according to the laws of the Torah, then every man will be judged and punished for his sins.

The Samaritans have seven holidays:

1. The first festival is the Passover. This feast begins in the middle of the first month (the month of Nisan) which is considered the first month of the year. During this feast all the tribe mounts up to the Blessed Mountain, Mt. Gerizim and remain there all during the Passover holiday. The first evening of the holiday, the 14th of the month, all the tribe celebrates the Passover sacrifice on Mt. Gerizim while many outsiders and tourists watch as bystanders. The clothing of the Samaritans during the sacrifice should be all white, reminding them of the Israelites' clothing when they left Egypt.

The time for eating the sacrifice is after midnight. At that time the meat is ready for eating and has been well roasted and prepared previously, especially for the occasion. The Sacrifice is eaten in accordance with the Commandment of the Old Testament - "belts round thy loin, thy shoes on thy feet and thy staff in thine hand, and thou shalt eat it in haste for it is the Passover of the Lord." All the days of the Passover the tribe eats only unleavened bread, which is prepared by the tribe, cooked on ashes.

2. The feast of the unleavened bread is on the last day of the Passover. On that day, all the tribe mounts up the mountain to the highest peak. There, an altar stands, on the same place where it was said Abraham had built his own altar to give his son Itzhak up to the Lord, when the Lord wanted to try Abraham's faith. Each one of the tribe kisses the side of this altar asking the Lord for all he or she wishes.

3. The feast of Shavuoth is counted exactly 50 days after the first Sabbath of Passover, thus it always happened on a Sunday (cf. Whit Sunday). Formerly, the tribe used to bring the High Priest the first of their yield from the field, and a tenth of the wheat according to the laws of the Torah. Nowadays, the High Priest is given money which he divides among the members of the priestly family.

4. The first day of the seventh month (Tishrei) is the beginning of the ten days of repentance. On this day they feast and pray until midday. However, this day is not called the New Year (Rosh Hashana).

5. The Day of Kippurim is on the tenth day of the seventh month. On this day, all the tribe fasts, including the animals of the tribe. This fast is



A Samaritan priest with the famous Scroll said to be written over 3,000 years ago, 12 years after the children of Israel entered Canaan. ●



The above picture of the writer's great-grandfather, Abraham, who was a scribe of Tora Scrolls and who also was "bodeq" checking the writing of other scribes. The picture was painted by the author from memory. ●

accompanied by a prayer which does not stop day and night for 26 hours. On this day the Holiest Scroll, the most ancient Bible in the world is taken out and shown to the whole tribe - this is the Torah written on a skin, in the Ohel Moed by the high Priest Avishua Ben Pinchas, the great-grandson of Aharon, brother of Moses. This Scroll is found until today in the hands of the tribe.

6. The feast of the Tabernacles falls on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. This feast is a reminder of the time when the children of Israel stayed in booths on their way from Egypt to Israel. This feast lasts seven days. As from the first day, each family builds a booth in the house in one room of the house. This made by four poles up to the ceiling, then poles crosswise. On these poles a net is placed laden with seasonal fruits and covered with Eucalyptus branches. During all this time the families try to be always under the booth, eating their meals there and receiving their guests there.

7. "Rejoicing of the Torah" is the eighth day of the Tabernacle Feast. The prayer at this time is one of the longest of the whole year (10 hour continuous prayer which goes on until 12 o'clock mid-day). When night falls, all the families tear down their booths, and make great bonfires out of the wood that has in the meantime grown dry in their homes.

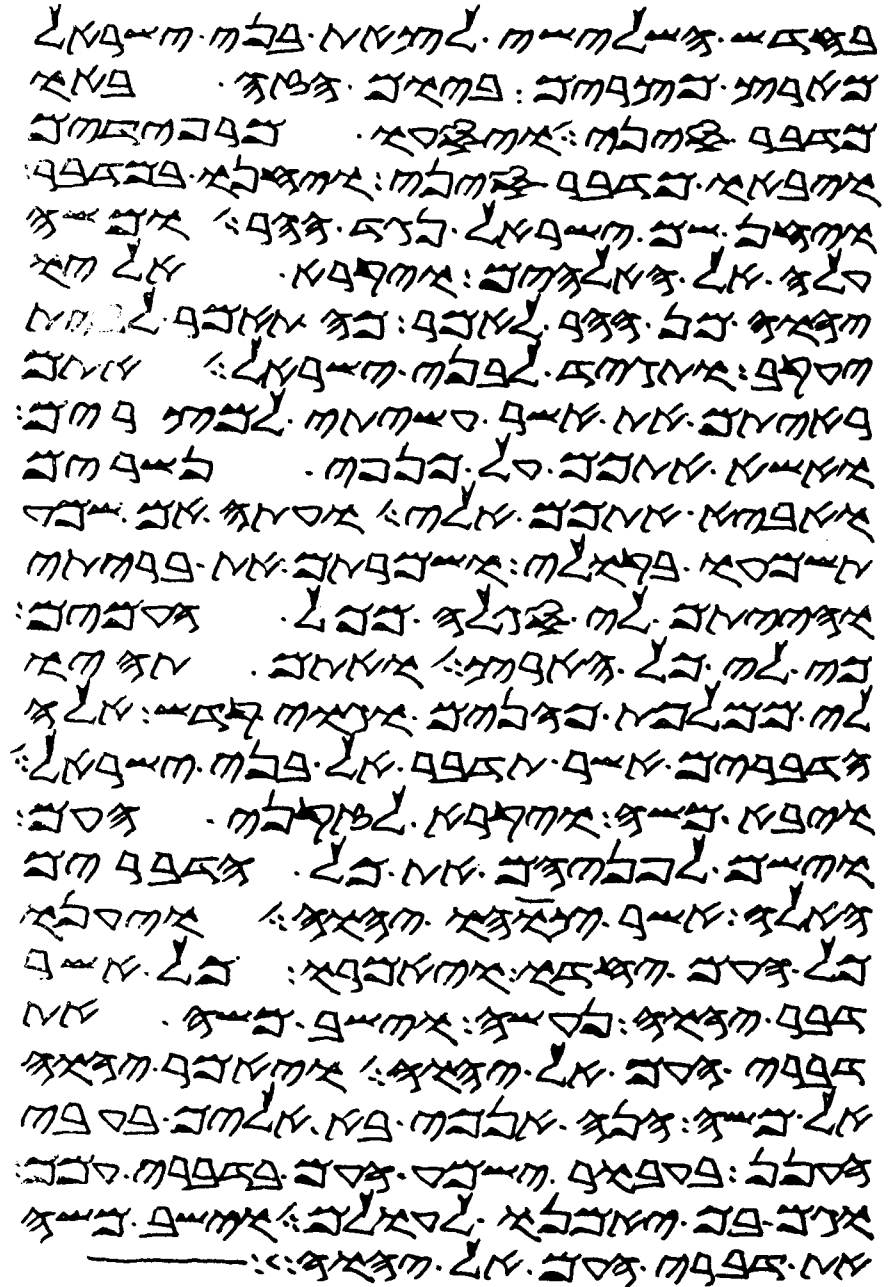
The older Priests wear a red turban and a long gown (see picture). This way of clothing started 700 years before the Exodus. However, on Saturdays, holidays and during prayers, the Priests wear white turbans.

The new born baby is circumcised only on the eighth day - not before or after. That is why the circumcision is always planned for the early morning hours, so that it may not be postponed for any reason even until the second day. The circumcision is even carried out on Saturday or "Kippurim" should the eighth day fall on same.

According to the tradition, the "Torah" was given to the children of Israel, by Moses Ben-Amran, in the year 2194 after the world existed (1566 B.C.E.) 40 years after the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt, from slavery.

During the day, two prayers are held, one at dawn lasting a few minutes and one at nightfall also a few minutes but can be lengthened by adding all sorts of passages to it. While praying, one stands, bows and kneels. All the prayers in the tribe should be held in the maximum of cleanliness. Each prayer starts only after each hath washed his face, hands, feet, ears, nose and mouth in water three times each. The person who prays is not allowed to wear shoes, and stands on a special carpet.

The Samaritan Holy Scroll was written in the original Hebrew alphabet which was used by our ancestors until the days of Ezra the Scribe when the writing was changed to the modern square Hebrew alphabet. Some say that he did



Part of the Ten Commandments in the ancient Hebrew alphabet as would have been on the two Tablets brought down by Moses. Samaritan text. ●

so to confuse the Samaritans. At the end of the Samaritans ancient Scroll is written the following:

"I, Avishua, son of Pinhas, son of Eliezer, son of Aharon the Cohen, Peace be with you, I have written this Testament on the porch of the Holy Tent, on Mt. Gerizim, in the thirteenth year after the children of Israel have entered the country of Canaan. I thank the Lord.

In the State of Israel they are recognised as an independent religious community.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN:

When Jesus spoke of the good Samaritan he did not mean to praise that group of people. On the contrary, what he meant was, that even a Samaritan who believes correctly and comes to the rescue of someone in need of help, is to be commended.●

The late Salim Saffair

تعرفنا بالمرحوم وقدينته مرسل منذ
أكثر من أربعين سنة عندما جاء إلى
البحرين ليشتغل وظيفته مساعد مدير
البنك الشرقي المحدود. ولم تضي مدة
طويلة حتى برزت خصائل المرحوم
الطيبة التي حازت تقدير كل من اتصل
به بصورة شخصية أو تجارية. لم ي
مرة شئت إذ أننا بعزفه على العود
وبصوته الرفيع. ويجرد بالذكر بأن
أهلوا فيه كن يبتعن مع زوجته الكريمة
أحياناً لتناول الحديث في مختلف العود
اجتماعية وغيرها.
وحيثما تقدم لعائلة الفقيد أغلى
تعارفنا ●

يعقوب حقيق وأقربائه
(Jack H. Zeloof) New-Jersey

From: Chief Rabbi Dr. Alberto Mosheh Somekh, Turin, Italy

I was happy to find the genealogical tree of my family on your issue number 69 of last April. I am enclosing a little up to date addition of my branch, based on my knowledge about my branch of the family, at your disposal for publication.

I also enclose a Debar Torah connected to my family name and to Yom Kippur as well, for the High Holidays issue.

THE TWO SOMEKHM ON YOM KIPPUR

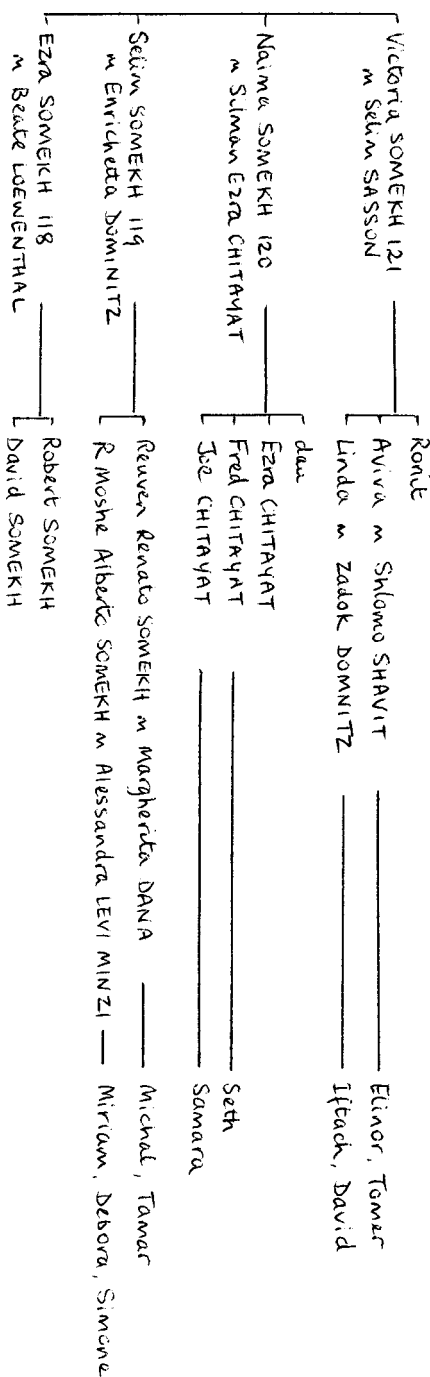
It seems that the origin of Somekh as a family name goes back to Rabbi Yechezqel who used to sign his writings as Yechezqel ha-Somekh, because he had been honoured with the title of Somekh (Assistant) in the Synagogue of Baghdad. The Somekh used to be the Assistant Minister, specially during the long Yom Kippur Service: according to the Babylonian and Sephardic tradition, two Somekhim stand on the Tebah at both sides of the Hazzan, reciting the Piyutim (special liturgical poems) together with him (Shulman 'Arukh, O.H. 619,4). Apparently, the name Somekh with this "technical" meaning is used for the first time only in Mahzor Bet Din, printed by Rabbi Eliahu Benamozegh in Leghorn, 5613-1853, but of course its origins have to be traced back to the famous verse in Ps. 145, 14, where it is referred to G-d as "upholding all that fall."

Following Midrash Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli'ezer, the source of Shulhan 'arukh has to be found in the biblical account of the battle against 'Amaleq (Ex. 17). Israel prevailed because Mosheh infused courage and trust into his people by holding up his hands throughout the fight "until sunset." But being himself an old man, he could only be helped by his brother Aharon and his brother-in-law Hur who stood on both his sides and sustained him.

But according to another interpretation it was not only a matter of age. Mosheh needed some help because he was fasting: otherwise, we can't understand how he could hold up his hands unbrokenly until sunset. "Israel is in trouble - he thought -: I will accompany them in troubles, too" (Rashi). Even if his age couldn't allow him to join his brethren in war, he never took himself apart: "blessed be a man who takes part in the troubles of his Community!" Hence the rule that on a day of fast and, notably on Yom Kippur, the Hazzan, who is praying on behalf of his congregation exactly as Mosheh did, has to be supported by two assistants in his appeal against our implacable enemy, our "spiritual 'Amaleq," the Yetzer ha-Ra' (Evil Instinct)!

There are several other reasons behind the institution of the two Somekhim on Yom Kippur:

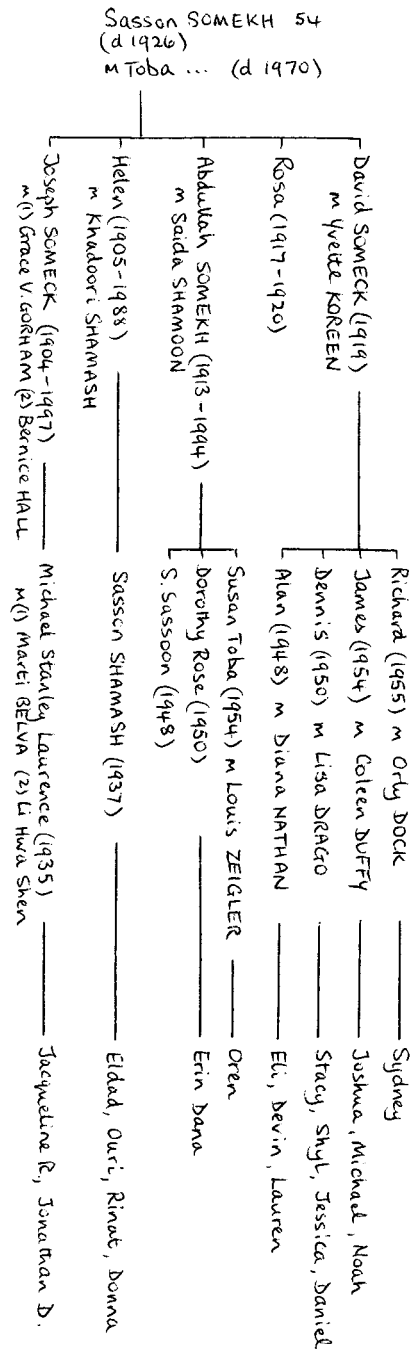
1. They assist the Hazzan even physically,



taking turns in reciting aloud parts of the service, as already mentioned.

2. They recite those Piyutim (special liturgical poems) which can't be said by the Hazzan himself, in order to prevent a break in the service.
3. It reminds us of the Beth ha-Miqdash in Yerushalaim, where the Kohen Gadol was always accompanied by the Segan on his right and the Av Beth Din on his left throughout the Holy Service of Yom Kippur. According to 2Chron. 7, 8-9 the inauguration of the First Temple took place on that Holy Day.
4. According to Gematriya, the Somekhim remind us of the Shekhinah's Presence. The numerical value of echad... Echad in Ex. 17,10 is 13 + 13 = 26, ultimately the same of the Tetragrammaton.
5. On Yom Kippur Jews are as pure as

Addition of No 13 of the Somekh Tree supplied by Michael S. Somekh of Fairfar-USA.



Angels, and according to our sources Angels used to move in groups of three, as we find with Abraham Abinu at the announcement of Itzhaq's birth (Gen. 18,1; Yoma 37a).

6. Finally, the two Somekhim remind us of the two goats presented to G-d on Yom Kippur in atonement of our sins. Once more according to Gematriya, the numerical value of the word Somekh (126) when doubled (252) corresponds to the expression goral echad related to the lots of the two goats in Lev. 16,8!

I wish to extend my best regards and blessings for the upcoming year 5759 (Ta-shna-t) to all Babylonian Jewry: Tehe' Shanah Tobah for everybody. ●

Garden Party at Carmel College



Residents of the Old People's Home. ●



Rabbi Levy welcoming the guests, with Naim and David Dangoor. ●



The Oxford Brass Band, 2nd in the UK. ●



Salman Rejwan and Ruth Khalastchi. ●

On 28 June 1998 the new owners of Carmel College site, The Exilarch's Foundation together with the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation organised an all-day garden party attended by over 700 members of the community. Among the activities were, tennis tournaments, cricket match, football, volley-ball, swimming and a Thames-side walk, bridge, scrabble, backgammon, an exhibition and sale of arts and crafts.

An excellent barbecue lunch and afternoon tea were provided by Rochelle Catering.

The 25-piece Oxford Brass Band, second in the U.K. played lively melodies. A raffle was held for the benefit of Edinburgh House, old people's home, who are celebrating their 250th anniversary whose residents (average age 91 years) were all there. ●

I am writing to express our appreciation for the splendid garden party held at Carmel College last Sunday. The setting, food, activities and the band were all superb - and even the weather obliged.

It was such a pleasure to see so many of the Congregation together and clearly enjoying themselves.

With very many thanks for the event. ●

Lucien Gubbay
President of the Board of Elders



The Art Exhibition in the Music Building. ●

We enjoyed a wonderful day at Carmel College on Sunday 28 June through your generous spirit.

The catering arrangements were superb and the sun shone on us all. ●

Frances Kutock



Renée and Naim basking in the sun shine. ●



General View. ●



The Barbecue of Rochelle Catering. ●



The Synagogue. ●



The Bouncy Castle. ●



Richard Moshi and Maurice Khalastchi at the backgammon table. ●

Seeing the Campus alive again last Sunday was extremely gratifying and made all the preparation thoroughly worthwhile.

I am also very lucky to have a dedicated group of staff who take equal pride in looking after the site. ●

Wallingford

**Peter Morrison,
Site Manager**

R Abdullah 1
 R Moshe 2
 R Haim 3
 R Moshe Haim 4 (d1837)

Rachel 5 (died young 1824)
 m Hezeke YEHUDA MATUA
 (he m (2) Khatoun dau of
 Aaron Saleh GUBBAY by
 whom he had other issue)

R. Eliahu 6 (1807-1859)
 m (1) dau of Jacob SEMAH (died)
 (2) sister of David b Meir

Reuben 7

Abdullah 8
 (to Palestine 1841)

H. Joseph HAIM 9
 (1833-1909)
 m (1853) Rachel dau of
 Yehouda Isaac SOMEKH

R. Moshe 10
 (1838-1902)
 m Aziza GOURGI

R. Nissim 11
 (1840-1930)
 m Simha dau of David
 Abraham SOMEKH

Sassoon Hezekel YEHUDA S. 2
 m Esterella (Bass) dau of
 Elia LEVI
 (Calcutta)

Shlomo Hezekel YEHUDA S. 3 (1819-1871)
 m (1834) Rima (d. 1880) dau of
 Faraj HAIM
 (to Jerusalem 1856)

Simha 18 (d. 1945)
 m Ezra son of Joseph - Ezra GOURGI

Benjamin 20 (1875-1945)
 m Gougelek dau of Isaac Hezekel MASHAL

Elie 22 }
 m Simha 21 }

Abraham 23 m Farha dau of Hengi SITI

Isaac 24 m Sa'ida KHATINA

Sarah 29 m (1) Abouti 37 son of Sasson HAIM (1st cousin) no issue
 (2) Yehuda 36 (brother of Abouti) for issue see husband
 Hannah 28 m Sion KARAKOUKLI
 Ezra - Sion 27
 Yair 26 m Naima dau of Moshe HESKEL - HAIM
 Shlomo 25

Reuben Hezekel YEHUDA MATUA S. 1
 m (1) Sakhau dau of Jacob b
 Semah b Nissim
 (2) Sakhau dau of David
 (Baghdad)

H. Jacob 17 (1854-1920) m Rachel ...

R. David 42 (1840) m Louise dau of Moshe HESKEL - HAIM
 Yehouda 41
 Aziza 40 m Abraham - Ezra 30 son of Hezekel HAIM
 (brother once removed) - for issue see husband
 Rebecca 39 (d. 1953) m Menahem GAHTAN

Khatoun 18.2 (d. 1958) m Smead LEVY
 Hezekel Meir 18.1 (d. 1913)

Naim SHULD 19.5 m Marcelle dau of Rasha SOMEKH
 Farha 19.4
 Salomon 19.3
 Naima 19.2 un m
 Menashe 19.1

Habiba 19 m Abraham Eliahu YEHUDA (MATUA)
 Naim SHULD 19.5 m Marcelle dau of Rasha SOMEKH — Laila, Tamara
 Farha 19.4 — Lila
 Salomon 19.3 — Louise
 Naima 19.2 un m — Victor ABOUDI
 Menashe 19.1 — Joseph ABOUDI m Bertha MASHAL

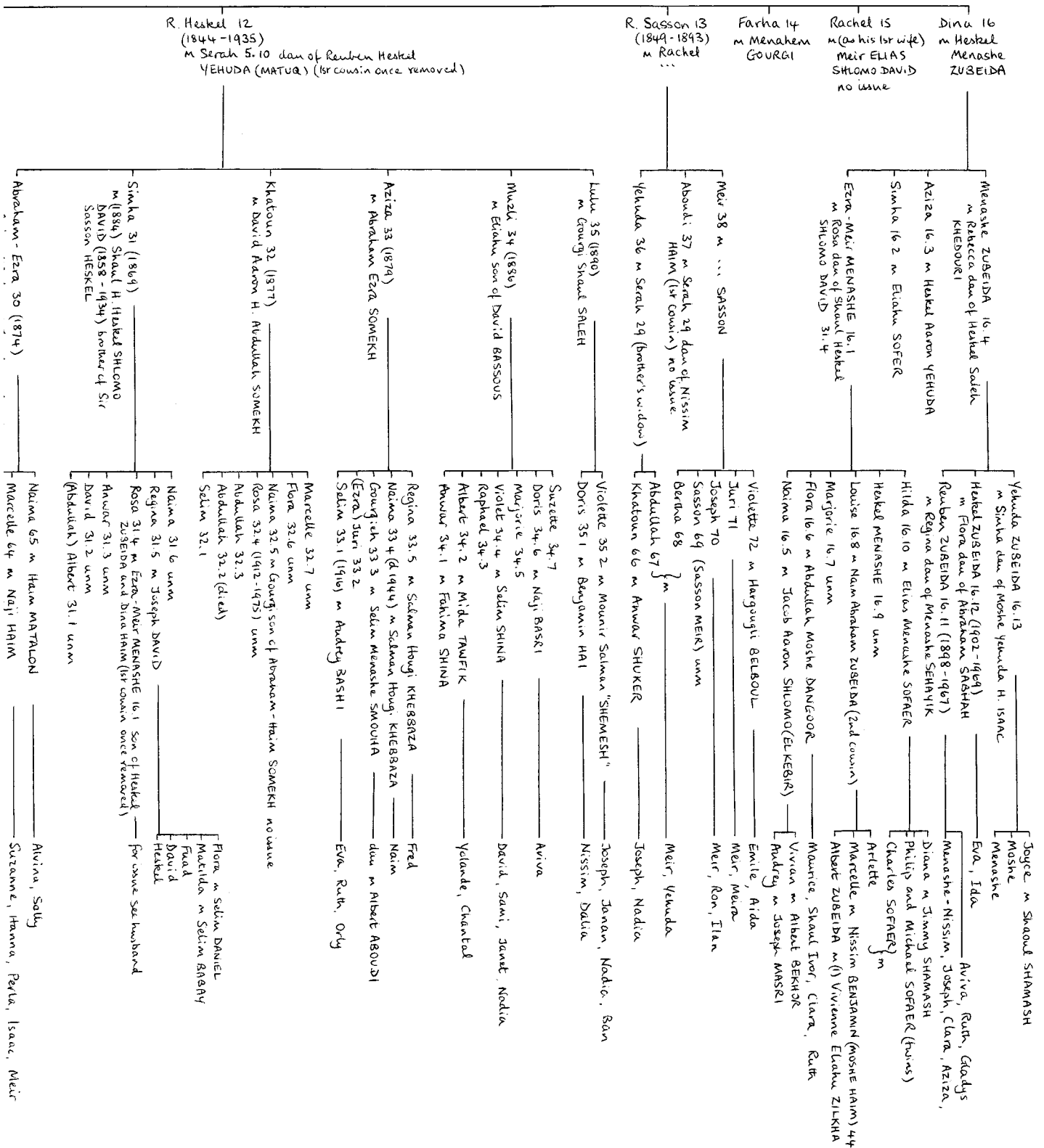
Joseph 45 m Conchita
 Nissim 44 m Marcelle dau of Naim Abraham ZUBEIDA and Louise MENASHE 16.8 — Ingrid
 Moshe 43 m Esperance dau of Abraham Reuben — Carmen, Jane, Benjamin
 ZUBEIDA (aunt of Marcelle)
 Naima 47 un m
 Mu'zi 46 m Shaul FIRHA
 Victoria 54 m Sasson SEMAH
 Najiba 53 m Ezra SION
 Habiba 52 m Ayush SHOHET
 Mazli 51 m Sion DANGOOR
 Joseph 50 un m
 Reubin 49 un m
 Aaron 48 m ... ZERUBABEL
 Eliahu 55 m Dorothy FATRAL
 Victoria 54 m Sasson SEMAH — Isaac, Dani
 Najiba 53 m Ezra SION — Hanna, Ilana
 Habiba 52 m Ayush SHOHET — Eliahu, Hezekel, Reuben, Nissim, Maurice, Albert, Victor
 Mazli 51 m Sion DANGOOR — Naima m Naji ENATCHI
 Joseph 50 un m — Hezekel DANGOOR un m
 Aaron 48 m ... ZERUBABEL — Joseph Naim DANGOOR m Victoria dau of Sion SHOHET

Hananek Khatoun 5.21 m Matchek MANI
 Marelkov 5.20 m Yehuda Sion HALEVI (1856-1897)
 Serah 5.19 (1842-1901) m Yehuda YELIN
 Rebecca 5.18
 Hezekel 5.17
 Shimon 5.16 (1853)
 Moshe 5.15
 Faraj - Haim 5.14 (1848-1895) (poet)
 Benjamin 5.13 (1843-1912) m Rebecca BERGMAN
 Shaul 5.12 (1840-1864)
 other issue
 Hezekel 5.11 (1801-1935)
 Rebecca
 Esther
 Jacob - Zvi YEHUDA (1873-1942)
 Sulzane
 Joseph Abraham - Shalom YEHUDA (1877-1951)
 Jacob YEHUDA (1863-1941)

Joseph GAHTAN m Suzette SALEH
 Selim un m
 Abdoulak un m
 Satek un m
 Joseph ABOUDI m Bertha MASHAL — Louise
 Victor ABOUDI
 Juri LEVY m Yvette YEHOUA
 Naim LEVY m Olga ...
 Selim LEVY m Eva ADES
 Mu'zi m Naim KARAKOUKLI
 Joyce m Zaker NADSI
 Joseph m Sahan dau of Rakhumim
 Jacob DAVID m Lisette dau of Selim Isaac Rasha ZUBEIDA
 Rachel m David HINDI

Hakham Moshe Haim Family Tree

'Beit al-Hakham'



Based on information supplied by Marcelle Haim and Jack David with additions

Chart prepared by Lydia Collins

SHOULD THE HOLOCAUST BE FORGOTTEN?

by Naim Dangoor

A Reform Rabbi has suggested that the time has come for the Holocaust not to be commemorated separately, but to be relegated to the bin of the Ninth of Av, the date reserved every year for major Jewish tragedies of the past.

Our friends also, seeing how painful the memory of the Holocaust remains in the Jewish conscience, counsels us to forgive and forget. Should the Holocaust, therefore be forgot and never brought to mind? Certainly not! This unique experience in human history still has to be dealt with.

First and foremost, the Holocaust was a sin against God and against humanity. One of the first commandments of the Bible is - Whoever sheds human blood, by man his blood must be shed. No room for forgiveness there. No pleas for manslaughter can be offered. It was deliberate and premeditated genocide.

The Holocaust was also a crime against its victims and these victims are in no position to forgive, nor is there anyone in a position capable to forgive on their behalf. Whenever people raise the question "Where was God during the Holocaust?" It is cleverly dogged by the reply "Where was Man during the Holocaust?" Which is not an adequate answer.

- Abraham: *How come you always answer my question by another question?*

- Moshe: *Why not?!*

Are we to understand that God took no notice or interest in the fate of the Jewish people. If that is the case, then we may have to reconsider our attitude towards religion.

Where was God during the Holocaust? Answer me! I shudder to think that while we prayed and fasted and opened our hearts to God, the Jewish people were led to the slaughter - gassed and burned in the extermination camps, day after day, month after month, year after year!

But above all, the Holocaust was a challenge to the entire Jewish people. Our enemies declared war on us, intent to erase the House of Israel from the face of the globe. They failed. We have survived. God has delivered Germany and its allies into our hands. The proper question to ask now is: Where is man after the Holocaust? The difference between the Holocaust and other Jewish disasters is that our enemies are still around us. But who are our enemies, seeing that the perpetrators of the Holocaust are almost all dead? Our enemies are all those who say Hitler was right to kill the Jews, all current anti-Semites, and racists, all the neo-Nazis raising their ugly heads in Germany, France, Poland and elsewhere. All those who say Death to Israel and all those who deny that the Holocaust ever took place.

The Jewish people are at a defensive war against our enemies. Modern science has developed weapons a thousand times more potent than Zyklon B. The Holocaust book cannot be closed until the enemies of God and of Man are laid low, until the memory of the Neanderthal beast of Europe is obliterated from under the sky - don't forget!

Recent research has revealed that the Allies

were seriously considering assassinating Hitler either by a bomb or by anthrax, but in the end, they decided against it because they thought that Hitler was making many mistakes in the war, and should be allowed to continue making these mistakes. What a daft and bizarre attitude! Hitler's death would have been his ultimate mistake and the war would have come to an early end. What the Allies did in effect, was to give Hitler ample time to finish off European Jewry. You can say that again! ... And again. ●

HOLOCAUST DENIAL

France, Belgium and Germany among other countries have laws that make denial of the Holocaust a criminal offence. Denying the existence of God may be worthy of punishment, but are we so attached to the Holocaust that we want to give it the same treatment?

The reason why we feel the need to remind the world of the Holocaust is the same as the reason why it has become easy to deny it - its perpetrators have got away with it! Hardly any punishment was meted out to the German animals who carried out the extermination of European Jewry. Their stale defence has been - obeying superior orders, otherwise their life would have been in danger. Judaism has a valid reply to these enemies: In those instances a man must prefer to die than to commit any of the following acts: **1. To worship idols; 2. To commit incest, but above all murder a**

fellowman.

To legislate against Holocaust denial in the face of freedom of speech is an uphill task and would hardly be adequate in any event apart from a fine or a light custody.

Another objective in keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive is to prevent it happening again! What a joke this is. As one diplomat put it recently: "I can guarantee that the Holocaust will not happen again. Not enough Jews are left in Europe anyway!"

The correct attitude to the Holocaust should be that it is not too late to deal out proper punishment to our enemies who are in fact the enemies of God. But who are our enemies? All those who deny that the Holocaust took place, all those who say Hitler was right to kill the Jews. Denying the Holocaust is denying an historical truth like saying the sun does not give us heat and light.

Anyone in the above categories must be regarded as if he had taken part in the Holocaust himself. He walks about with a death sentence on his head.

If our enemies can be made to experience the loss of 6 million people themselves they would no longer claim that the Holocaust did not take place.

Seeking to punish the deniers through the courts; besides being lengthy and costing millions, would give them a platform to propagate their criminal ideas. Isn't this terrorism? Not at all. We are not picking on anyone. Only those who identify themselves as enemies of God will receive their punishment. We are not threatening anyone. ●



The above photo was taken around the year 1943. Some of the children, myself included, who appear in the picture were born and raised in Eliahu Reouben's house. (Sheikh Sasson) who was my grandmother's father, "except the children of Nazima Levy (nee Sawdayee) who spent most of their time with us."

As a result of the pogrom and persecution of the Iraqi Jews in the forties and fifties, all the persons in the picture are now dispersed all over the world. This fate is typical of the Iraqi Jewish families. From left to right:

Fortunee Gabbay (nee Sawdayee), Long Island NY; Violet Tchenguiz (nee Sawdayee), London; Dan Levy, Montreal Canada; Esperance Al-Ani (nee Sawdayee), Long Island NY; Max Sawdayee, London; Dr. Maurice Sawdayee, Long Island NY; Jacqueline Horesh (nee Sawdayee), Long Island NY; Eli Sawdayee, Kiron Israel.

Sitting from left to right:

Gracy Tizabi (nee Levy), L.A. California; Nina Ambar (nee Levy), Ramat Gan Israel; Bertine Joury (nee Sawdayee), Sao Paulo Brazil; Yvonne Moualem (nee Sawdayee), London; Eli Levy, Jerusalem Israel; Hilda Balass (nee Sawdayee), Ramat Aviv Israel. ●

Israel

Eli Sawdayee

HOLOCAUST MONEY IN SWISS BANKS

The offer of the three Swiss Banks - Union Bank of Switzerland, Swiss Bank Corporation and Credit Suisse to pay \$600 million to Holocaust victims is insulting. 90 percent of the money represent interest over a period of over 50 years that the Banks refused to acknowledge that there was any money to return.

In 1934, a year after Hitler's rise to power sent tremors of fear across Europe, the Swiss legislature passed a law guaranteeing anonymity to anyone who transferred his savings to a Swiss bank. Soon deposits were coming in from all over Europe, particularly from Jews who feared the Germans would plunder their savings.

It appears there was a conspiracy between Nazi Germany and Switzerland to lure Jews under cover of confidentiality, to send their money to Swiss banks, who in due course sent the details to Germany. Who thus forced the Jews to part with their savings under torture in the concentration camps and death camps.

Those Jews, who somehow managed to reach the Swiss frontier in order to re-join their assets, were refused entry by the Swiss authorities and were turned over to the German police. We asked Switzerland the Biblical question: Do you murder and also inherit?

What remained in some Swiss banks is just a fraction of the original total.

When after the war, survivors or heirs of depositors came to claim their assets, the bankers invoked the same law of confidentiality to block any payment. They even required death certificates for those who perished in the death camps.

Available records now only cover 10 percent of the deposit account. The bankers claim that the rest of the records were destroyed in the normal course of business.

Moreover, Switzerland received the looted assets of concentration camp victims, and in return gave Germany hard currency to buy war material from Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Argentina and Turkey.

These dealings enabled the Germans to prolong the war for two years.

Once the war was over with the defeat of Germany, it was wrong for the greedy bankers to hold onto deposits made during the Holocaust and the profits earned by dealing with the Germans. Morally and legally, all that money belongs to Germany's victims.

A fair settlement must include the return of all Holocaust deposits, not merely those few for which records have survived.

No settlement can possibly be defended if it allows the Holocaust to stand as a profit making enterprise for the Swiss banks.

NAY, SWITZERLAND MUST PAY DOUBLE FOR ATTEMPTING TO ROB THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN THE HONESTY OF THE SWISS BANKING SYSTEM.●

I am appalled by the insensitivity of the editorial comments at page 30 of the last issue. For the first time in the history of Christianity, a pope tells his people "We thank the Jewish people for giving Jesus to the world." Yet, all your editor sees fit to say is "Don't mention it, Mr Pope. Just stop murdering us by the sword, by the pen and from the pulpit." How utterly ungracious.

Even more offensive is the next comment: 'CHRISTIANITY son of God? yes you can fool some of the people.... etc...' In my sixty-three years in this country I have never come across a disparaging comment on Jewish beliefs in any responsible journal here. Yet an immigrant who, like you and me and the rest of the Iraqi community, has been welcomed here, thinks it good fun to mock the fundamental beliefs of his hosts.

He is lucky to live in a tolerant society - would he have dared to mock Islam when he lived in Iraq?

What a pity it all is. A pity, because the owner/editor is doing invaluable work bringing one community together. We all owe him a debt for this labour of love. I for one enjoy reading the Scribe, even including the occasional crack-pot opinions - that on Einstein's theory of relativity is a gem in the art of obfuscation!

Oxfordshire

Edward Raby

Scribe: *Although you have been receiving our journal for many years, we never heard from you before, either in support of what was written, or at least to contribute your own views. Your letter suddenly comes out of the woodwork because you thought you didn't like some views. We do not find your criticism to be constructive, but rather short-sighted and narrow minded.*

The Jewish people do not expect any credit for "giving Jesus to the world" (meaning of course the Christian world). What we wish to be recognised for, is giving God to mankind including Christians and Moslems. The Pope's conciliatory remarks are prompted by the Vatican's desire to square the books before the new Millennium. The Pope's words do not match his deeds. He recently planted a 10 foot cross in the middle of Auschwitz and asked his followers to add more crosses. Considering the strong anti-Semitism in Poland, it will not be surprising if one day Christian Pilgrims will be taken to the cross planted by Pope John Paul and told, "this is the spot where the murderers of God received their just punishment." Before feeling any gratitude for the words of the Pope, consider what the Church did for the Jews for the past 2,000 years.

As regards of son of God syndrome, I quote Chaim Bermant in one of his inimitable essays, where he tells a Christian clergyman that he

would like to return in the next life as a Parson. "Why wait Mr Bermant," retorted the clergyman, "you can do it right now in this life." "I am afraid," said Mr Bermant, "but I do not believe the doctrine that Jesus was the son of God." "Don't let that worry you, who does." Such doctrine is blasphemy and is utterly rejected by Jews and Moslems alike. Many Christian Churches are giving it up. So don't shed any tears for it.

We thank God for being able to have come to a free and tolerant society, but Britain's doors were not specifically opened for the Jews. In the fifties the Home Office refused to extend my visa, and I, my wife and children had to sell our flat and return to Baghdad. Since the war, Britain received millions of Commonwealth people and more recently, 200,000 Arabs came to Britain from the Middle East, many of them receiving generous allowances and accommodation. Moslems are now claiming for autonomy, whereas Jews have been loyal and law-abiding relatively free of crime, contributing to their adopted home in all fields of endeavour.

The fact that we came from an intolerant and repressive country, does it really mean that we have to continue living here as slaves or as second class citizens? Britain and other countries in the West believe in and encourage freedom of speech and freedom of opinion. Do you really believe that these freedoms are not opened to us Iraqi Jews? ●



LETTER FROM A READER

The young lady I mentioned to you (shown above) lives in Israel. She would be very interested to meet with a gentleman with a view to marriage. She is Jewish, Israeli, single, 34 years old and looks much younger. She is good looking, intelligent, outgoing. She says she is "spiritual yet rational." She is curious about human kind and likes people. I am impressed with her optimism and sense of humour. She says "I am a 'Sabra', born and raised in Israel (my parents came from Iran in a young age), I lived in Chicago, USA for three years (1989-91) and see myself as a cosmopolitan person. At the moment I live in Tel-Aviv and work in a company which deals in international trade as an administrative manager. I am seeking a Jewish man, a relevant age (in relation to my age), intelligent and a sense of humour would be a plus." My address is 13/3 Chen Blvd. Tel-Aviv. ●

A VISIT TO JORDAN

by Abraham Yadid

In August 1995, a year after the accomplishment of the peace-treaty between Israel and Jordan, I, my wife and my son, along with a group, mostly ex-Iraqis, hired a minibus for a 5-day visit to Jordan. The trip was a safe and interesting one. In the mini-bus a polite and friendly Bedouin policeman and Guide accompanied us throughout our journey. Indeed we enjoyed the trip. We visited very interesting old and historical sites, like Petra, Djerash and Mount Nebo where (so they say) Aharon Hacohen was buried there.

As it is usual, visitors to a new country, want mainly to do shopping particularly, when everything sold out in the magazines, shops, stores and supermarkets of Amman are cheaper than Israel. To my amazement however, women amongst our group, who were the majority, insisted on the driver to take them to a certain shop in the suburbs of Amman, selling antique jewellery, curiosities and silverware of all kinds.

Like birds of prey falling on their booty the women fell on the articles shown in the shop. They bought out old diamond and gold necklaces, bracelets, pins, etc., all in US dollars and at relatively cheap prices. I and a friend stood to look out on the Silverware corner of the shop wherein, antique silver trays, plates, cups, spoons, etc., were found in that corner. My friend who was standing at my side, traced a sweet dish *كردان* with a nicely inscribed handle, which was engraved on its bottom two Arabic words: *ح. ع. ع. ي. ن. ي.* ie., Haron Einy. My friend immediately he has seen this plate, slapped his face, exclaiming "this belongs to my uncle Haron Einy, how it happened that this is found here?"

He added, definitely this is "ex-Farhud as well as all the contents of this shop. He remembered that all valuables in his uncle's house were looted in the "Farhud." The late Haron Einy was a senior official at the Ottoman Bank in Basrah and Baghdad. The "Farhud" is the great looting of Jewish houses and shops which took place in May 1941 after the collapse of Rashid Ali's regime in Iraq.

Following this scene, I turned out to a tall person - an Iraqi Shia's Moslem, apparently a partner in that shop, who spoke well the Arabic dialect of the Jews of Iraq, addressing him, you see how the Arabic Proverb *معايشة تقدم عند تقدم ذراير* "calamities of a people are benefits to other people" fits this case. He smiled and nodded his head what to do?

Ramat-Gan

Abraham Yadid

Scribe:

On a visit to Vienna some years ago we found many shops exhibiting silver Judaica articles, which must have been looted from Jewish households during the Holocaust. Criminals all. ●

Groups camping at Carmel College



Since its acquisition by the Exilarch's Foundation Carmel College buildings and facilities have been used by various Jewish youth groups for educational and recreational camping, namely:

1. Jewish Free School;
2. Beth Jacob Grammar School for Girls;
3. Bnei Akiva;
4. Hanoar Hatzioni;
5. The Adam Science Foundation;
6. The Federation of Zionist Youths;
7. The Jewish Agency Education Department;
8. The Yetev Lev Youth Club.

Forthcoming users include:

1. The Maccabi Union;
2. Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade;
3. The Jewish Learning Exchange;
4. Union of Jewish Students.

I have been reading your journal for several years and enjoying it. It is really a fascinating read and a reminder of our Jewish Babylonian heritage.

Please continue to send me the Scribe to my new address. ●

Florida

Yehuda Hanuka

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

Mr Sassoon Sopher - Geneva, Switzerland
Mrs Rosa Sassoon - New York, USA
Mr J. S. Nathaniel - Montreal, Quebec
Dr. David Solomon - Wollaton, Nottingham
Mr Ernest Nounou - New York, USA
Mr Meyer J. Jonah - Los Angeles, USA
Mr Joseph Masri - West Kensington, London
Mr V. Smith - Bushey, Hertfordshire
Mrs Violet Masri - Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Mrs Frank Shasha - Buenos Aires, Argentina
Mr George Elias - Manchester moved to Israel. ●

The information on the appearance of your published journal "The Scribe" was brought to my attention by my second cousin Eli Sawdayee, and I have the honour to follow it up and read it. I am happy to emphasise that I enjoy reading it and it fills me with excitement. Your enthusiasm, efforts and investment are very much appreciated. ●

Israel

Aharon Meir Shaashoua