

The SCRIBE

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PURIM AND THE HOLOCAUST

EVERY YEAR WE celebrate the miracle of Purim when Haman's plan to exterminate the Jewish people was foiled by Queen Esther and her uncle Mordechai. But we had the misfortune to witness the extermination of many times more Jews by the wicked Hitler, aided and abetted by other enemies of God. Purim celebrations ring hollow when one remembers the Holocaust. **Has Haman then finally triumphed?**

The Holocaust did not mark the end of the Jewish people. Indeed, it was followed by the establishment of the State of Israel. The Holocaust, for its utter bestiality, tolled the knell of Europe and Christendom, who tolerated it, and whose culture produced it. It is said that the Nazis carried out in detail the treatment that Luther had ordained with regard to the Jews, which was also in line with Catholic tradition.

The Jews are asked to forgive the perpetrators of the Holocaust, but there can be no forgiveness without repentance and neither Europe nor the Christian Church has truly repented. Even if the Jews can forgive, history will not forget the most heinous crime of all time, which will not fade but stand out more clearly as time passes.

The traditional culture of Europe and Christendom cannot be the path to the messianic age, it has to adapt or perish ●

Besimantov

SINCE THE END of WWII with high inflation and high interest rates the rich have been getting richer and the poor have been unable to cope. In this topsy turvy world Germany and Japan, the losers of the war, have become the world's financial masters and America has joined the ranks of debtor nations with debts totalling 2,000 billion dollars.

To break the vicious circle and re-distribute wealth, one commentator suggested that what the world needs is a good old financial crash. But such a drastic remedy should not be necessary if the rich acted responsibly and used their wealth to help their fellow men.

Those who throw £100,000 wedding or barmitzvah parties could give their guests no greater pleasure than by announcing that an equal amount was being donated to worthy charities ●

Dr Murad Mikhael

WE ARE SORRY to report the death in Israel, on February 13, of the well-known poet and educator Dr Murad Mikhael at the age of 80.

Born in Baghdad in 1906, he published poetry and essays in the Iraqi press for many years. He taught in the Jewish private schools and studied law in his spare time.

After being principal of the Shamash School, he went to Tehran in 1947 at the invitation of the Iraqi Community to head its school in the Iranian capital. He subsequently went to Israel and had a distinguished career in Arab education, as inspector of Arabic studies and instructor at the University of Tel Aviv. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Jerusalem ●

South Africa

THE SUDDEN RESIGNATION of Dr. Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert from the leadership of the anti-apartheid Progressive Federal Party has put the official parliamentary opposition into disarray. The debate between opposing white South African politicians was something of a sideshow and did not contribute to solving the political issue central to the country's future, namely, a just sharing of power between whites and blacks.

But the net effect of Dr. Slabbert's continuous hammering of the government was to present a distorted picture to South Africa's friends abroad that resulted in sanctions and boycotts, and to strengthen the hands of the black militants who ask for nothing less than a complete takeover of the country.

The departure of Dr. Slabbert from political life is probably due to the withdrawal of his main supporter Mr. Harry Oppenheimer, by far the richest and most influential businessman in South Africa.

We publish inside the text of Mr. Dangoor's letter of 2 January to Mr. Oppenheimer during Mr. Dangoor's recent visit to the sub-continent ●

Jewish Marriage Council

DR. DAVIDE SALA, a trustee of the Council, has written to thank Mr. and Mrs. Naim Dangoor for their gift of a computer.

Mrs. Hanna Chody, director of the Council, adds, "Your most generous gift will assist us in many areas of our work, and enable us to provide a more efficient service to the Jewish community as well as reducing costs and administrative labour."

The Council invites interested people to visit its Marriage Bureau at 23 Ravenshurst Avenue, London NW4 4EL. Telephone: 01-203 6311.

The Bureau is a non-profit making organisation and has agreed to charge only a nominal fee to members of our community ●

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Mr. Dangoor's letter to Mr. Oppenheimer

RECENTLY I HAVE been puzzled, confused and bewildered by your attitude to South Africa's political problems. For by criticising government policy one gets the impression that you generally support the extreme demands of the black militants.

There is an obsession in the world today that democracy means one man one vote — the rule of the majority. Majority rule, as an expression of democracy only holds good in a homogeneous society where differences are over minor issues. In a society divided by race, colour, religion or language the rights of all groups should be equally safeguarded. In the multi-racial, multi-cultural South Africa of today a system of one man one vote would be more unjust and more dangerous for the country than the present system. So by denouncing apartheid let us not throw the baby with the bath water. Therefore when criticising the present system one has to identify the solution. This can only be a complex system combining universal franchise with safeguards for tribal and racial minorities.

A time will come when all South Africans will feel at home in a unitary system but this will be in 50 to 100 years time. In the meantime, a constitution can be so devised as will lead eventually to a unitary system by gradually shedding minority safeguards. Terrorism must not be allowed to win the day by the default of South Africa's friends who have no viable plan to rally around.

There are many similarities between the problems of South Africa and the Middle East. In both cases 4 million pioneering Zionists in search of the Promised Land are threatened by those who want to speak for the 20 million who surround them. In both cases a kind of confederal system in which no group will dominate the rest offers the best solution. It is the duty of liberal-minded people to work actively in order to bring about such a system.

In his reply Mr. Oppenheimer stated that he sympathised with some of Mr. Dangoor's views particularly that relating to majority rule. He is on record as having said time and again that any form of domination, whether it be by whites over blacks or blacks over whites is not something which he could support. His sympathies lie in a constitution which would protect minority interests within a unitary state ●

Franchise and the Constitution

Taxation and Power Sharing

CONDENSED FROM A prize-winning paper by Roland Sidney Sassoon, Johannesburg.

(No taxation without representation — likewise, no representation without taxation) Ed.

The 'wind of change' is finally blowing at full force in South Africa. While government is committed to reform, it is clear that nothing short of the scrapping of *apartheid* will satisfy most people in South Africa and abroad.

It is declared governmental policy to insist on guarantees for minority race-groups. This insistence, however, does not appear to be compatible with power-sharing along non-racial lines. Government defends its policy by demonstrating the disappointing achievements of most independent African states; and it does seem inevitable that in South Africa the franchise system of 'one man one vote' in a unitary state would eventually result in further shifts from free-world values, with dire consequences for all.

A way forward could be perceived through an exclusively weighted electorate by the creation of two classes of votes, namely, 'ordinary votes' and 'tax votes'. One ordinary vote would be granted to each adult, regardless of race. An equal number of tax votes having the same powers as the ordinary votes could be created and distributed to personal income-tax payers in accordance with their latest income tax assessments.

Conceptually, this system could also be seen as a workable compromise between those demanding 'one man one vote' in a unitary state on one side and entrenched white dominance on the other. **An increase in direct contribution towards the economy will entitle people to an increased share in political power**, regardless of race.

It can be argued that the role of government is to provide certain strategic services to the community as a whole from the taxes it collects. It is therefore equitable that those who are the largest taxpayers have the greatest say in how their money is spent.

The system of 'one man one vote' creates an electorate based on the lowest common denominator, which no underdeveloped country can afford.

The partial link of votes to personal income tax will not only result in a better qualified electorate and the optimal attainment of South Africa's national economic goals but will be the basis of a permanent national constitution, free of racism, that will transform the international standing of the country ●

Aliya from South Africa

Reprinted from a letter in the *Jerusalem Post*, 12 February 1986

WHILE URGING ALIYA from South Africa, careful consideration should be given to the views of the South African Jews themselves, as they have to live with the ensuing consequences.

It is interesting to note that, nearly 50 years ago, leaders of the Jewish community in India under the British Raj were faced with a broadly similar situation. They approached Mahatma Gandhi for his advice on the community's possible role in the freedom struggle led by his Indian National Congress. He said: "Keep out of it lest your small community be crushed between the three mighty conflicting forces of British imperialism, Congress nationalism and Moslem separatism." They followed his advice as a community, though individuals who took part in the struggle for this saw the inside of colonial jails. I was one of these during the 1942 "Quit India" movement. Others sided with the Raj, the majority remained a-political. Eventually large numbers came on aliya in an entirely voluntary capacity as there never was antisemitism in India.

Jerusalem PERCY S. GOURGEY

A pessimistic view of what can lie in store for white South Africa, from Jeremiah's Lamentations:

How she sits solitary,
The city that was so popular;
She is become as a widow —
The princess among provinces,
Is become tributary.

She weepeth sore in the night,
And her tears are on her cheeks;
She has none to comfort her,
From all her woes;
All her friends have dealt treacherously
with her,
They are become her enemies.

Her adversaries are become the head,
Her young ones are going abroad.
"Oh, Is it of no concern to you,
"All those who pass me by?" ●

The Tower of Babel

THE SPACE PROGRAMME is a new Tower of Babel, a renewed attempt to reach to the skies. Unrestrained, it might also end up in some disaster for mankind ●

BOOKS

"In our Leaders' Footsteps" Vol. IV: The Ben Ish Chai,

by Rabbi Menachem Gerlitz.

Translated by Sheindel Weinbach
"Oraysoh" Publishers, Jerusalem
1984.

RABBI JOSEPH HAIM (1834-1909) was an outstanding Hakham of Baghdad whose fame extended to Jerusalem, Turkey, India and all the East. He was a popular religious leader, and his books and sermons had a remarkable effect on his generation and community. It is fortunate that an Ashkenazi Israeli rabbi took upon himself the task of writing his biography. But did he succeed in his endeavour?

In truth, the author of this book was far from familiar with the life and customs of the Iraqi Jews in the nineteenth century and he gives the impression as if he was speaking of another planet. Even some pictures appearing in the book are flagrantly inaccurate.

Rabbi Joseph Haim was an enlightened scholar; so-called miracles and supernatural antics had no place in his mind or life. We are astonished to find this book, dedicated to his memory, abounding in fairy tales related by bigoted old persons, such as the drowning of the seven year old Joseph in the well, the discomfiture of the band of thieves in the desert and their hasty flight, the Rab's presentiment of a distant fellow's death poisoned by snake venom while eating a watermelon, etc.

But the gravest blunder in the book is the unfair treatment of Rabbi Sasson Khedhuri (1886-1971), long-time leader of Iraq's Jewry, whom the author calls "Sasson Katzuri".

Rabbi Sasson Khedhuri was Chief Rabbi of Baghdad in 1930 and had a quarrel with his fellow Hakhamim, headed by Rabbi David the grandson of Rabbi Joseph Haim. Hakhamim accused Khedhuri of desecrating the Shabbath, eating treifoth and defaming the Jews in Government circles. They wrote to the Rishon Lezion in Jerusalem and the Beth Din in London complaining of Khedhuri's behaviour.

The Iraqi Government dismissed the Chief Rabbi, who lived in retirement for a few years. However, in 1932, a new law for the Jewish Community was passed and the office of Chief Rabbi was changed to that of President of the Community. The rabbis who opposed Khedhuri retracted their accusations and were reconciled to him. He was elected to the presidency in 1933 and served in this capacity until 1949 and then from 1953 up to his death in Baghdad in 1971. The dissident Hakhamim were glad to serve with him until they left for Israel in the mass exodus of 1950-51. ● M. S. Basri

(Following is the letter of protest written by Mr. Shaul H. Sasson to the author of the book) Ed.

I AM THE eldest son of Chief Rabbi Sasson Khedhuri (named in your book Sasson Katzuri). Your writing a book on the life and works of the great Rabbi Joseph Chaim is certainly a most commendable action. But this does not give you licence to slander my late father who was in his own right a revered Hakham and leader of the Iraqi Jewish community which he served for over sixty years.

You call Rabbi Sasson Khedhuri (alias Katzuri), "wicked," "a scoundrel" and accusing him by saying he "joined evil company," "slandered the Jews in government circles," "permitted prohibitions of the Tora," "desecrated the Shabbath" and "ate Treifoth," "collaborated completely with the sinners," "fed Jews Treifoth through his orders," "desecrated the name of Heaven," "informed against Zionists by showing the Government charity boxes with blue flags," "had his men armed with clubs to beat the people mercilessly," "hired people to lie," "summoned a known thug and said 'I will pay you a huge sum for killing Chacham Rabbi David Ben Chacham Rabbi Yaacov Ben Chacham Rabbi Yossef Chaim.'"

I read with dismay, anger, and utter disbelief what you had written about my late father, basing your writings on gossips and hearsays of one prejudiced side without bothering to ascertain the facts from the other side or from authentic sources. You based your story on one sided reports of certain Hakhamim who opposed my father in 1930, but you did not bother to find out what happened since then. For your information, after two years the same Hakhamim retracted their unfounded charges and insinuations, they were reconciled to my late father and served under him when he came back to office in 1933 until they left Iraq in the mass exodus of 1950-51. Rabbi David, grandson of the great Rabbi Yosef Chaim, who was opposed to my father in 1930 was reconciled to him and he married his daughter to a son of mine, a grandson of the late Chief Rabbi Sasson Khedhuri.

Furthermore, on my father's death, the Haham of the World Sephardi Federation, Dr. Haham Solomon Gaon, sent me a telegram of condolences to Baghdad in which he called my father "Great Rabbi and teacher". Also, the then Rishon Lezion and Chief Rabbi of Israel the late Rabbi Itzhak Nissim, who was himself of Iraqi origin, and knew my father personally and was acquainted with the dispute among the Baghdad Hakhamim in 1930, sent a telegram of condolences to

LETTERS

From Haham Dr. Solomon Gaon

I WAS VERY IMPRESSED with *The Scribe*. I must also congratulate you on the publication of Haggadah which is a considerable contribution towards the preservation of the Iraqi heritage.

New York

I ENJOYED READING your *Scribe* and to learn that Babylonian/Iraqi/Baghdadi Jews also outside Israel are trying to keep their tradition alive.

Professor Zvi Werblowsky
The Faculty of Humanitis,
Hebrew University

Jerusalem

I HAVE RECEIVED with many thanks the invaluable Haggadas you have sent me. I found them beautiful, interesting and typically Baghdadi.

I take the opportunity to congratulate you for the precious efforts you are putting for the case of the Iraqi Jews and especially Israel from what I have seen and noticed as follows:

a. Organising the seminars (which I had the pleasure to attend and which took place at Oxford University).

b. Working hard to represent the Iraqi Jews on the Board of Deputies in which you have succeeded in having three Iraqi Jews elected to be members of the Board.

c. Issuing the Haggadah, etc., etc. (not to mention *The Scribe*).

As an Iraqi Jew I congratulate you and am proud of you and God bless you.

SH. HAKHAM SASSON
London

I AM IMPRESSED by the publication of the "Scribe" and I congratulate you for the initiative and your action on behalf of the Iraqi Jews.

OVADIA SOFFER
Israel Ambassador

Paris

my brother Dr. Meir H. Sasson of Tel Aviv, calling my father "Chief Rabbi may his memory be blessed." What a contrast between the expressions of the Rabbis who knew my late father well and your reference to him, you who do not even know his accurate name.

All you have written about my late father is false accusations, defamatory and libelous, and several others contained in your book are mere gossip, unworthy of repetition by a religious man, claiming to be such an authority.

By this letter, I ask you to apologise to me, to my brothers and sisters and to the Iraqi Jewish community, and to retract publicly through several prime Israeli newspapers what you have accused my late father of in your book ●

The Late Habib Elghanian

AT THE RECENT JIA dinner tribute was paid to the memory of Habib Elghanian honorary president and prominent personality of the Iranian Jewish community who was judicially murdered by the Iranian authorities in 1979. We give here the absurd indictment of Elghanian:

"In the Name of God The Compassionate, the Revolutionary Islamic Tribunal of Iran, Tehran,

In this file, Habib Elghanian, son of ... (Jew), Identity Card No. 6108, living in Tehran, Jew, Iranian citizen, educated, spy and Zionist, capitalist, is accused of:

1. being friend of God's enemies and enemy of God's friends;
2. having spied for the Zionist Government of Israel;
3. having collected money and support for Israel and its conquering Army which bombs day and night our Moslem Palestinian brethren;
4. having invested funds originating from the exploitation of Iran with the intent of developing Israel which permanently fights, robs and affronts Islam and God;
5. corruption on earth by destroying the economic resources and, consequently, destroying an active generation in society;
6. waging war against God and his messenger, the present Imam;
7. blocking God's ways and the ways of happiness and of all weak nations, this being contrary to Islamic and human principles;
8. corruption on earth;
9. helping in the daily and cruel massacre of our brothers the Palestinian fighters.

Proof of Guilt

1. Clear confessions and proofs asserted in the file;
2. sufficient proofs and documents in the file, including money payments to Israel with a view to supporting the defence apparatus of that country;
3. encounters arranged with the cruellest foes of God and the Palestinian nation, e.g., with Abba Eban and other leaders of the Zionist robber State;
4. purchase of lands and buildings of great value which, together with the preceding, and with reference to the Koranic saying "God and his messenger prohibit ..." (sic)

For all these reasons I request the penalty of death for the culprit and the confiscation of his property and that of all his family.

The Procurator of the Islamic Revolutionary Tribunal of Tehran,
Ayatollah Azari Qomi."

Why Babylon?

by N.E.D.

DURING OUR 2500-year sojourn in Babylon our rabbis and thinkers kept speculating why did the Holy One, blessed be He, exile the Jewish people to Babylon of all places?

The Babylonian Talmud records four opinions: Rabbi Hiyya thought it was because they would not have been able to survive the severe decrees of Rome. Rabbi Elazar ben Pedath compared low-lying Babylonia to the nether world, from where the Jews would soon be redeemed. Rabbi Hanina bar Hama said it was because the language of Babylonia was similar to that of the Torah. Rabbi Yohanan bar Nappaha said, God sent the children of Israel back to their fathers' house.

However, they all miss the point. To me **the message is loud and clear:** We were first exiled to Babylon to demonstrate to us that Israel is part of a region and that it is too small a part of that region to be able to stand up to the forces around it, in isolation, that is, as our mission and destiny obliged us to be. It is said that the golden age of David and Solomon coincided with the decline of the super powers of the Middle East and when Nebuchadnezzar's Chaldeia flexed its muscles again, danger loomed in the horizon. In the last resort, Judah tried to rely on a treaty with Egypt, "that broken reed", but to no avail.

It is said that History repeats itself. Like a good teacher, History only repeats itself when the lesson is not learned. Although the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans, it was with the help of local enemies, and what is more there is evidence that the Jewish people were dabbling in super-power politics between Rome and Persia, just as today Israel is caught in the US-Russian rivalry.

Modern Zionism was based on co-operation with the Arabs who, under

The punishment that Iran is getting in the Gulf War is in part a retribution for its treatment of Elghanian. Just as the audacity that had spurred Saddam to hang 19 innocent Jews to the cheers of his mobs, led him also to start a war for which Iraq is paying dearly in men and material. The two bloodthirsty regimes of Iraq and Iran are getting a dose of their own medicines. The wise men of Arabia used to tell their people "don't touch the Jews, leave them alone," warning them of the *Hoba* of the Jews. We have been chastised by God as no other nation was, but God does not want to make an end of us. No mortal can take advantage of this situation with impunity ●

the influence of international anti-Semites decided not to co-operate. After 40 years of hostility and frustration the Arabs will now continue indefinitely to look on Israel as a foreign body, a cancer, that has to be removed. The fact that Israel is a small part of a larger, wealthy and hostile region is again demonstrated by the crippling arms expenditure that Israel has to bear. As Prime Minister Peres succinctly stated in London recently, Israel's defence burden is not related to her size and resources but to the large size and immense resources of her neighbours. **Will reliance on far away America ensure Israel's survival for ever?**

When Cyrus allowed the *aliyah* to rebuild the Temple only 40,000 returned; 80,000 decided to stay put in Babylon: once bitten, twice shy and even at the time of the 2nd Temple Babylonian Jewry went from strength to strength and after the Roman Wars Babylon became virtually the Jewish homeland. At one time the community numbered over 2 million and it was there that the Babylonian Talmud was written and Judaism blossomed.

"We made ourselves at home in Babylon, from dire captivity to great prosperity." Against the troubled and intermittent stay in Palestine we had a long and fairly easy life in Babylon. **Is there no message in this?** The Babylonian Exile has another message: we belong not just to Palestine but to the whole region. While Israel is our national home, the whole Middle East is our home. To survive, Israel must think and work in regional terms and break Arab monopoly of the Middle East by creating a confederation not dominated by any one group, in which Israel can have a say in the destiny of the region and share in its wealth. The Lebanon campaign could have been a step in that direction but it was bungled.

Some will say that Zionism has failed, the *yeridah* is proof; others that it had to fail; others still even work to defeat the Jewish State.

Our Rabbis, twice bitten, had ordained to await the Messiah before rebuilding Zion. He will come if we proceed on the right lines. In the meantime, **the diaspora has no desire to liquidate itself.**

When we were overwhelmed by Roman might we stood alone. But our sacrifices have not been in vain. Look around us: the majority of the human race, in Christianity and Islam, have received our message and acknowledge God's Kingdom.

Now we can proclaim to the whole world, "Come, let us build Jerusalem together and inaugurate an era of peace, justice and equality for all mankind" ●

Cookery Corner

The following recipe is taken from Daisy Iny's book, "The Best of Baghdad Cooking," which has just been reprinted.

MAHASHA or DOLMAH (Combination Stuffed Vegetables)

1 cup uncooked long-grain rice
3 small green peppers (preferably Italian)
3 small cucumbers or gherkins
2 thick carrots
leaves of 6 sprigs of fresh mint, chopped, or 1 teaspoon dried mint (optional)
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1 cup lemon juice or tamarind syrup
1 pound lean lamb or beef, coarsely chopped (to give a chewy texture to the stuffing)
salt
1/2 cup finely chopped parsley (optional) plus parsley sprigs to garnish
3 tablespoons brown sugar, or 4 tablespoons date syrup

Wash and soak the rice two hours or overnight.

Prepare the vegetables to be stuffed: Peel and scoop out the beets, leaving a shell 1/4 inch thick. Cut a thin slice off the stem end of the peppers and remove the cores and seeds. Reserve the slice. Cut a thin slice off the stem end of the tomatoes, scoop out the pulp, and save for the stuffing. Reserve the slice. Cut off the stem end of the cucumber and, with an apple corer, scoop out the inner part and save. Peel the onion and make a slit at one side from the stem end to the root end. In 2 cups of water in a small pot, boil the onion for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the onion layers are loosened. Remove from the pot and put in cold water; separate the layers. Peel the carrots and scoop out the inside with a vegetable peeler.

Prepare the stuffing: Chop the scooped-out part of the cucumbers and tomatoes, and mix with the drained rice. Add the mint, pepper, turmeric, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, meat, salt to taste, and parsley (if desired).

Stuff and bake: Stuff the scooped-out vegetables loosely with the meat-and-rice mixture. Cover the peppers and tomatoes with their own lids, and arrange closely in baking dish. Carefully take each layer of onion, place some stuffing in the centre, wrap the sides over it, and arrange next to the tomatoes in the dish. Pour remaining lemon juice and 1 cup hot water over the vegetables; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover and bake in a preheated 400° oven for 45 minutes, or until the liquid is completely absorbed. Sprinkle the sugar on top, add 1/2 cup hot water (if necessary), cover again, and bake for 30 minutes more, or until all liquid is absorbed again. But not too dry. Garnish with a few sprigs of parsley before serving.

Makes 3 servings.

Note: The stuffing can be expanded and made more economical by doubling the amount of rice, lemon juice, and sugar and adding more vegetables to be stuffed. The result will be tasty, but not as rich.

Tamarind syrup and date syrup are available at Middle Eastern grocery stores.

STUFFED TOMATOES

This dish is a variation of stuffed vegetables. Omit the mint from the filling and add parsley and a few basil leaves chopped. Wash tomatoes and cut a thin slice from the stem leaving 1/2 inch uncut to make a permanent lid. Discard the seeds, scoop out the pulp (and reserve for another use, as in a salad). Stuff the tomatoes and continue as for stuffed vegetables.

ZENGOULA or ZELABIA

(This recipe was sent by the late Abraham Khezzoom in 1973 to his son in America.)

A 1 cup flour, 1 dessertspoon starch, Yeast

B Syrup made of 1 cup water and 2 cups sugar boiled together

Mix the ingredients (A) in tepid water to a creamy consistency and leave overnight covered with a heavy blanket.

Next day fry oil one inch deep in a frying pan and pour the mixture through a nozzle on the hot oil making various circular shapes. Remove the hard shapes and dip in the cold syrup.

(The veins of the Zengoula have to be saturated with syrup. Date syrup can also be used.)

Ed●

Spot an Ancestor

A FURTHER SELECTION from the Register of military taxpayers of the Baghdad Community of 1892.

Menashe Ezra Gahtan
Yamen Reuben Gahtan
Shlomo Ezra Gahtan
Abraham Yacoub Gahtan
David Yacoub Gahtan
Meir Ezra Gahtan
Eliahu Heskell Gahtan
Yosef-Ezra Abraham Gabbay (Gurji)
Abraham Heskell Gurji
Meir Hayim Gurji
Moshi Yosef Gurji
Eliahu Moshi Gurji
Ezra Hayim Yosef Gurji
Barukh Heskell Hayim (Gurji)
Nessim Heskell Hayim Gurji
Ezra Nessim Heskell Hayim Gurji
Sion Yacoub Gurji
Menahem Yacoub Gurji
Menashe Abraham Heskell Gurji
Eliahu Meir Gurji
Sasson Heskell Gurji (Gourgey)
Yishaq Yosef Gurji
Shaul Meir Gurji
Yacoub Meir Gurji
Reuben Heskell Gurji
Hayim Nessim Hayim Gurji
Ezra Nessim Hayim Gurji
Menashe Meir Gurji
Yosef Hayim Yosef Hayim Gurji
Abraham Daniel Gurji
Aboodi Elia Gurji
Reuben Heskell Hayim Abed Gurji
Ezra Dawid Heskell Hayim
Heskell Hayim Dawid Heskell Hayim
Ezra Barukh Heskell Hayim
Moshi Heskell Hayim
Aboodi Heskell Hayim
Heskell Barukh Heskell Hayim
Reuben Habib Beqqal
Ezra Pinhas Beqqal
Yacoub Habib Beqqal
Shalom Yishaq Beqqal
Reuben Nessim Bettat
Eliahu Nessim Bettat
Reuben Saleh Shalom Bettat
Menashe Reuben Abdulla Bettat
Nessim Reuben Abdulla Bettat
Heskell Reuben Bettat Qalabchi
Yehuda Abraham Shalom Bettat
Yishaq Nessim Bettat
Nessim Eliahu Bettat
Heskell Yosef Bettat
Aboodi Eliahu Chwela
Heskell Eliahu Chwela
Dawid Selman Ghali
Moshi Eliahu Jeddai
Meir Reuben Jeddai
Aharon Heskell Yacoub Jeddai
Gabriel Shimeon Gabriel
Menashe Shimeon Gabriel
Mordechai Shimeon Gabriel
Ezra Heskell Shua Jangana
Selman Heskell Jangana
Shua Shalom Shua Gigi
Mordechai Heskell Gigi
Saleh Moshi Gigi
Mrad Selman Gigi
Yosef Heskell Gigi
Abdulla Meir Gigi
Yacoub Moshi Gigi
Shaul Moshi Gigi
Heskell Moshi Gigi
Shaul Meir Gigi●

Purim Customs in Iraq

FOR CENTURIES THE occupation of Babylonian Jewry was mainly in agriculture and in the quiet months of winter and early spring the community had time to busy itself with celebrating various festivals of which Purim was an important one. In the home it is customary in Purim to make mainly various sweets for the family to enjoy and to send as home-made products from household to household. The following are the special Purim goodies:

1) Masafan: Star-shaped cakes made of ground almonds, sugar, cardimom and rose water, brushed with egg-white and when dry put in the oven for a short time.

2) Hajji Bada (aji badem): as above but round shaped.

3) Baklava: layers of thin (fila) pastry separated by a mixture of ground almonds, sugar and cardimom, in a baking dish, cut in diamond shapes and melted butter or margarine poured over it. It is left in the oven until the top is brown, then sugar syrup is poured over it.

4) Red Luzina made of quinces, peeled, cleaned and boiled overnight until it becomes red. It is next mashed and sugar added, and cooked until it becomes a thick paste. It is spread one inch thick over a layer of coarsely ground almonds and cardimom and similarly covered. When cold it is cut in diamond shapes.

5) White Luzina: made of sugar, ground almonds and rose water.

6) Pistiryag: a dough is made of sugar, rosewater and gum tragacanth (white ribbon) soaked overnight. 1½ inch portions are then filled with a mixture of ground almonds and sugar and manipulated into various animals and other shapes.

7) Zengoula or Zelabia — see Cookery Corner.

8) Malfouf: thin (fila) pastry covered with a mixture of ground almonds, sugar and ground cardimom, then rolled over a thin stick into a cylinder of 1' diameter, then slightly compressed lengthwise, removed from the stick and baked in oven.

9) Sambusak Bettawa (fried samusas): a dough is made with or without yeast. On flat round discs a mixture of onions

NOTES ON THE JEWISH EXODUS FROM IRAQ

by M. S. Basri

THE PEEL COMMISSION on Palestine, headed by Lord Peel, in its report submitted to the British Government in 1937, was the first to suggest the creation of two states, Arab and Jewish, in the Holy Land. However, it stated explicitly that should a Hebrew state be instituted, it will probably entail the end of the prosperous Jewish communities in Iraq, Egypt and other Arab countries.

The British in the 1930's considered Jewish merchants in Baghdad as rivals to their trade. Whereas Moslem and other importers and exporters in Iraq mostly co-operated with the several British firms established locally to further their imports and exports, Jewish merchants had direct connections with foreign markets and opened new competitive supply outlets, e.g. Japan, U.S.A., etc.

I was at the time secretary, and later, director of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce. In my meetings with J. P. (later Sir John) Summerscale, the commercial secretary of the British Embassy, and his staff they frequently made the point that Jewish merchants did not favour British trade and were serious competitors of British commercial interests. My answer was always that Jewish merchants had good knowledge of world markets and exerted their efforts to find competitive goods in quality and price from whatever source of supply.

Finally in 1937 the British urged the Iraqi Government to enact a law establishing quotas for imports from Japan and other countries whose

and ground chickpeas seasoned with salt, pepper and curry powder is added and folded on itself. They are fried in oil. The filling can also contain minced meat or chicken breast. The second day the sambusaks can be reheated or dipped in beaten egg and fried again.

Parents give their children cash presents, usually in new coins. Bands used to go from house to house to play traditional Purim tunes ●



In Purim Jews play card games of chance such as *Dosa* and *Naqsh Yehud*, in line with the Purim of Persian tradition when people were meant to try their luck.

balance of trade with Iraq was deficient, thus making their goods more expensive. This was at a time when free trade was an established rule.

Thus the British viewed the Jewish merchants' endeavours in Iraq as detrimental to their trade and would gladly have gotten rid of their competition.

In the period 1948-51 a sharp crisis shook the Iraqi economy, especially during the mass Jewish exodus of 1950-51 when the markets almost came to a standstill and the Iraqi Government was sometimes compelled to borrow large sums of money from the Eastern Bank to pay its employees and meet current expenses. It was not till after the Jews left the country that the British-owned Iraq Petroleum Company made a new agreement with the Iraqi Government increasing the oil royalties twofold or even threefold and thus eased the economic straits and enabled Iraq to institute a Development Board and embark on a high pitch development programme.

Iraq had, in 1951, made a 15 year loan of \$15 million from the World Bank, but it was able after two or three years to repay the money which it no longer needed.

The law authorising Iraqi Jews to leave for Israel and renounce their nationality was drafted and sent to the Legal Codification Department at the Ministry of Justice in 1950 prior to its sending to the two Houses of Parliament for promulgation. My friend Ahmed Hamed as-Sarraf, member of the Department, told me at the time that the bill was written in poor Arabic and seemed to be a translation from English. However, the Codification Department was urged to pass it urgently without amendment ●

by Anonymous

I USED TO know a group of influential Kurds whom I used to visit once or twice a week to discuss politics and to hear their views, especially on matters concerning Palestine.

At one of the meetings at the beginning of 1947 when Iraqi Jews were very active in land purchase and property development one of the Kurds expressed the view that all these investments will soon be lost. He explained that an American newspaper had published a secret report from the British Ambassador in Baghdad stating that trade between Britain and Iraq would not be revived as long as the Jews remained in Iraq and controlled its commerce. He added, "I am sure the British will drive you out one of these days. When, and

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Three Conferences in Israel

by Percy S. Gourgey

"ISRAEL WILL MAKE every effort to secure a peace with Jordan," declared Prime Minister Shimon Peres in the Knesset hall adorned by fine Chagall paintings of biblical periods. He was speaking at the concluding session of the World Jewish Congress 8th Plenary Assembly in Jerusalem chaired by Mr. Phil Klutznik a former US Secretary for Commerce and ex-Congress President. Mr. Peres was preceded by former US Vice-President Walter Mondale who reaffirmed America's abiding support for Israel from many points of view.

At the session dealing with East-West relations, there was a separate session dealing with Soviet Jewry, we heard an address by Professor Lown, an eminent American Jewish scientist who won the 1985 Nobel Peace prize with a Soviet scientist for their joint chairmanship of an organisation of scientists against nuclear weapons. In the ensuing discussion in which I participated with many other delegates, I observed that if, as Mr. Lown stated, the Soviet Union had announced a moratorium on nuclear testing and called on the United States to do likewise it was because they had completed their current series of tests and in any case they had superiority over

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how? I don't know, but they will exploit events to put their plan into action."

One of the Jews present asked him, "Do you think the British had a hand in the 1941 riots so as to get rid of the Jews?" He replied, "The riots had other reasons for the British to encourage them."

At the beginning of March 1950 when Tawfiq al-Suwaidi was prime minister an envelope was handed to him from the British Embassy with a draft law that the Jews be allowed to leave provided they give up their citizenship. On 3rd March he invited a delegation headed by Heskell Shemtob and asked them how many Jews would leave if such a law were passed? The replies ranged from 5,000 to 20,000. The prime minister commented, "I think there will be a chain reaction. I see that all the Jews will leave." (I heard of this conversation from Israel Nessim Hai who was a member of the delegation.) With a heavy heart the prime minister agreed to the law which was passed by both houses of parliament and signed by the Regent in one day and was valid for one year up to 9.3.51 ●

the United States and the West in conventional weaponry. He replied in effect that arms control still had to be negotiated. If I had the right to comment as an ordinary delegate, I would have observed that it was the Soviet Union who had walked out of arms control talks in the winter of 1983 when Cruise and Pershing missiles were deployed by NATO in Europe and only returned to the negotiating table in early 1985 when they realised that President Reagan was serious in proceeding with his Strategic Defence Initiative. So the balance of advantage aspect had to be considered from all points of view. I also recalled that the late Soviet President Andropov had said in November 1982 that the "Soviet Union was not that naive to disarm unilaterally and did not expect others to do so." In regard to Soviet Jewry I said that we should relate their sorry plight with that of Syrian Jewry because of the close alliance between the Soviet Union and Syria especially in regard to their joint hostility to Israel. There was a special session on Jews of Arab lands in which Mr. Leon Tamman, head of the World Organisation of Jews of Arab Countries (WOJAC), his colleague Mr. Ben-Porat and also Mr. Steve Shalom of New York participated.

In another conference, i.e. of the Israel Labour party and its sister organisations from abroad, following an address by the Israel Minister of Energy, I suggested that Israel should seek to export her solar energy units to less-developed nations in the third world to offset their dependence on Arab oil and although oil prices were falling these nations had an inexhaustible source of energy, namely, sunshine most of the year round.

The Conference of the Zionist General Council which I attended as an

observer was addressed by the Foreign Minister Mr. Itzhak Shamir. During the following question period in which there were many participants, I asked about the matter of compensation for property confiscated by the Egyptian Government from the Egyptian Jewish community. Mr. Shamir replied that this would be raised at a suitable opportunity as there were many problems to be discussed with the Egyptian government including the Taba issue and converting the Cold Peace with Egypt into more cordial relations as envisaged in the Camp David Accords and the Peace Treaty.

All these conferences proved most interesting but they suffered from the usual organisational difficulty most ordinary delegates complained about — too many platform speeches entailing sheer persistence to participate from the floor! ●

Egg Mixture Could Help Addicts

AS REPORTED IN The Times, an egg based compound, AL 721, could become an important weapon against drug and alcohol addiction. It might also help to control some problems of old age and make it easier with children suffering from cystic fibrosis to breathe.

We understand from Mrs Violet Shamash that the discovery was the work of a young Iraqi Jew, David Haron, her nephew, who works at the Weizmann Institute under Professor David Samuel.

Recently a small number of elderly patients in an Israeli hospital who were given AL 721 showed marked improvement in health. It is expected that trials will soon begin in the United States ●



The World Sephardi Federation honoured Percy Gourgey, former founder-Chairman of the ZF Jews in Arab Lands Committee.



Prime Minister Peres and friends on his recent visit to London.

A Stab in the Back

THE IRAQI JEWISH community numbers over 5000 in the United Kingdom (and more in other parts of the Commonwealth). Although many of us are members of various synagogues we are not properly or fully represented through these synagogues on the Board of Deputies. We also look on ourselves as a unified congregation with our own tradition which we try to uphold by conducting, for instance, communal Seders every year and also in celebrating Chanukah and Purim. In addition, three Iraqi donors have acquired the new Preparatory School, which is run by Rabbi Dr. Abraham Levy, to which is attached a large modern synagogue. It is hoped that High Holydays services on the Iraqi minhag will be conducted there.

After negotiations that started 3 years ago the Board of Deputies of British Jews wisely and kindly gave us a token three seats on the Board to enable us to keep in direct touch with the rest of Anglo-Jewry. Deputies generally approved the step taken by the Board.

Mrs. Vera Goodman, a Sephardi deputy and a member of the Executive of the Board of Deputies, apparently on her own initiative, attacked this

move both privately and publicly on the grounds that we are not a "congregation of Jews," as Rabbi Levy had certified. She is on record as saying on December 15 before 500 deputies that, regardless of financial advantages, the Board "should never waive its honesty, integrity and rules by admitting organisations for deputies who did not qualify."

After the Board examined her formal objection and upheld its original decision as being in order, Mrs. Goodman wrote to Mr. Dangoor to explain that the objection to the Iraqi deputies was not her idea. She confessed that she was manipulated by two Sephardi life-elders, "one of whom is a prominent Iraqi who has gone so far as to suggest that I 'challenge the Certificate in the Courts.'" ●



UNFORTUNATELY, IN OUR community if one rises in his field and we cannot reach him we try to pull him down, so that we all become equal.

S. SHAMOON

Why did it happen?

IN A RECENT article on the Holocaust to explain why the righteous and the saintly perished with the rest, the Talmud is quoted that, "Once permission has been given to the Angel of Death to destroy, he does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked." If this is so, we must find out why, as this view seems to run counter to the interpretation of the dialogue between God and Abraham when God vowed that he would not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah if ten righteous people were found there. The popular interpretation that ten righteous men can save a wicked city (on which is based the number of a minyan) misses the point.

What God was telling Abraham is that **in a sinful city no one is innocent.** It is no use saying, my hands have not shed any blood, I do not hate my neighbour, I do not exploit the poor, I do not put out my money to usury; if we live in a society that tolerates or indulges in these things, then we are all guilty.

God commanded Abraham, "Lech Lecha" — get thee out; if you can't put up a fight, don't stay. Those who left Hitler's Europe saved themselves; those who would not or could not get out took a risk and paid the price in the end ●