

The SCRIBE

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Naim Dangoor presenting to the Ambassador a unique bound volume of his Scribe 1971-1989.



The Ambassador, with Renée Dangoor and Valentine Barookh, sampling the Iraqi culinary delicacies especially prepared for the occasion by members of the Community.

Ambassador Biran at Iraqi Centre

The Iraqi Jewish Centre in London was resplendent and especially decorated to welcome as guest of honour the new Israel ambassador in London, Mr Yoav Biran. The function consisted of two parts, the formal proceedings and the wonderful Dinner prepared by the ladies of the Community. In the first part speeches were delivered by Mr Percy Gourgey and Mr Naim Dangoor, to which the Ambassador responded. This was followed by a presentation to Mr Biran by Mr Dangoor of a specially bound volume of *The Scribe* containing all issues since it was founded in London nearly twenty years ago. Dayan Dr Pinchas Toledano pronounced a suitable benediction. Mr Gourgey said:

"Some years ago we had the pleasure of welcoming your predecessor, Mr Yehuda Avner, to our Centre, also accompanied by colleagues from the Embassy. The Centre which was established twenty years ago seeks to focus attention on the glorious spiritual heritage and history of Babylonian-Iraqi Jewry stretching back over 2500 years. The landmarks of this history consists mainly of the return from Babylon to Jerusalem in 538 BCE following the famous Declaration of Cyrus the Great of Persia. in a way comparable to the Balfour Declaration of this century. Other landmarks in the history were the contributions of Hillel the Great, born in Babylon, the evolution of the authoritative Talmud Bavli, the setting up of the splendid Academies of Sura, Pumbeditha and Nehardea, the independent kingdom of Mahoza in the 5th century CE, the period of the Gaonates till the 11th century and that of the Hachamim in Baghdad in recent times.

In 1971 at a special reception by the then Persian Ambassador in London at the Savoy Hotel to mark the accession to the throne of Persia of Cyrus the Great 2500 years ago, which was celebrated by the Shah of Persia, our community presented to the Ambassador an illuminated scroll to mark our gratitude for the splendid treatment accorded our ancestors by Cyrus."

After Mr Dangoor's address, the Ambassador expressed his warm thanks for the Reception stating that, although he was a Sabra, he was often 'mistaken for an Iraqi Jew in Israel!' He referred briefly to the forthcoming visit of Prime Minister Itzhak Shamir to Washington to discuss with President Bush Israel's proposals for dealing with the current crisis.

Dayan Toledano then pronounced a suitable benediction for the occasion, after which the Dinner was held ●

Mr. Dangoor's Welcoming Address

Your Excellency, Ambassador Yoav Biran;
Minister Counsellor for Consular Affairs Mr. Mordechai Karni and Mrs. Karni;
Counsellor of Labour Affairs Mr. Ami Gluska;
Dayan Dr. Pinhas Toledano;
Honoured Guests;

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our community centre and to say how honoured we all are by your visit.

Berukhim Habbaim, Uberukhim Hannimtzaim!

It is often said that Israel's ambassador is also the envoy to the local Jewish community. We are glad to be able to introduce to you members of the Iraqi community in London and to assure you of our total solidarity with the government and people of Israel.

There is something special about Iraqi Jewry. Babylonia was the destination of the first exile, and when Cyrus the Great allowed Jews to return to Judea only 40,000 returned. 80,000 remained in the land of the rivers to prosper and multiply in

numbers. After the destruction of the Second Temple Babylonia became practically the Jewish fatherland. It was there that the development of Judaism took place and the Babylonian Talmud was put together over hundreds of years. As the Talmud records: "We made for ourselves in Babylonia another Eretz Yisrael - from captivity to prosperity!"

After the establishment of modern Israel there were 160,000 Jews in Iraq. But this time practically all of them emigrated to Israel, undergoing many hardships both before and after their Aliyah. Noting that when the Jews of Iraq had come to Israel thousands of years of Jewish life between the Tigris and the Euphrates had ended, President Chaim Herzog recently said that Iraqi Jews had a better record than any other Diaspora community in responding to the call to come and build up the Jewish homeland. President Herzog added, "No other exodus in Jewish history, except the exodus from Egypt, was comparable in terms of its drama and spontaneity, to the story of the Iraqi Jews."

The Jews were puzzled about the first exile, wondering why it happened, until Jeremiah gave the answer that it was because of our sins! A similar situation has arisen in our times when we have found ourselves unable to understand the reason for the Holocaust. Modern Jeremiahs explain that again it was because of our sins. This would make Hitler God's agent, which is absurd.

The Talmud gives four opinions why Babylon was the place of our first exile:

1. Rabbi Hiyya said it was to spare us the future severe decrees of Rome.
2. Rabbi Eleazar said it was so that we could later go up (make aliyah) from the lowlands of Mesopotamia to the highlands of Judea.
3. Rabbi Hanina said because the language of Babylonia, Aramaic, was akin to that of the Torah.
4. Rabbi Yohanan said that the Jews were simply sent back to their mother's home! The home of the Patriarchs.

All these views skirt the point. Our exile to Babylon demonstrated that Israel was part of a region and that to survive in the long run requires having a say in the affairs of that region. This was clearly shown in 1948 when all neighbouring countries waged war on Israel. Israel's long term strategy must be to break Arab monopoly of the region, in co-operation with other national groups such as the Kurds and Lebanese Christians. What has happened to the Kurds recently and what is happening in Beirut today is an indication of what could happen in Israel if, God forbid, the Arabs had their way. I believe that Israel should pursue a regional policy. Years ago I asked my son in which continent was Israel. He thought Israel was in Europe. Being deeply rooted in the Middle East Israel cannot remain in isolation.

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Shamir is in Washington to present yet again Israel's case and argue its right for recognised and secure borders. In all such presentations by the Israeli establishment we find a missing dimension - namely, the

rights of Jews from Arab countries who now arguably form the majority of Israel's Jewish population. In the policy guidelines of the unity government, formulated last December, there is no mention of the rights of Jews of Arab lands, and I don't mean frozen assets. When nearly a million Jews came to Israel from Arab lands they brought with them certain territorial rights in their countries of origin which have become vested in the State of Israel; and when forty years ago Arab countries waged war on the nascent Jewish state a process was set in motion - namely, the exchange of populations. This process has now to be completed by requiring all Arabs not willing to live under Israeli rule to emigrate. This process can be accelerated by imposing a land tax throughout Israel's present borders, in line with what the Arabs did when they conquered the Middle East. Such land tax would be in accordance with the commandments of the Torah.

We Babylonian Jewry strongly believe that Jewish rights in the Middle East do not stem from U.N. resolutions, the terms of the Mandate, the Balfour Declaration, or even biblical promises. The Middle East has been the Jewish habitat since time immemorial and we claim our rightful share of it. It was Babylonian Jewry that brought the Arabs to the Fertile Crescent: do we now have to beg them for a homeland? Israel must not give up any land. Palestine was already partitioned once in 1921.

Sadly, our enemies have manoeuvred world opinion into believing that the Middle East conflict is between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs, and that its solution can only be found in an accommodation between these two factions within the area west of the Jordan river. The truth is that the conflict is not with the Palestinians but with the neighbouring Arab countries that relentlessly waged war on Israel, incited the Palestinians not to come to terms with the Jews, encouraged the nazis in the Final Solution, financed terrorism, persecuted and expelled their Jewish population. There can be no peace unless these same Arab countries bear their share of the Palestinian problem.

Rabbothy, I do not agree with the view that diaspora Jews have no right to discuss Israeli politics. Until she achieves peace, security and self-sufficiency, Israel remains everybody's business. Just as we are expected to offer Israel our moral and material support, so we also can express our views on matters of policy. There is a strong case for maintaining a viable diaspora. 2000 years ago we stood alone, now the majority of mankind acknowledge the God of Israel. We should be proud of this reality and extend the hand of brotherhood to Christians and Moslems.

I would like to thank Scotland Yard and the young men and women who have assisted in providing the necessary security this evening.

I would also like to thank all members who kindly provided traditional Iraqi dishes for this function.

In anticipation of the approaching Pesach festival I wish you all Hag

Sameyyah and a Happy Passover.

Mr. Biran, in 1971 we started to publish *The Scribe*, Journal of Babylonian Jewry, and after an interval of several years its publication was resumed in 1983, with Percy Gourcy acting as editorial adviser. In this journal we try to provide a medium of communication for members of our community scattered all over the world, recalling our history and traditions and voicing our concern for Israel and our faith in her future.

Ambassador Biran, it gives me great pleasure to present to you this bound volume of 32 issues of *The Scribe* as a souvenir of the memorable visit of your goodself and your distinguished staff. Shalom! ●

Jerusalem Awaits You

Summer 1989 will mark the 10th consecutive summer experience of travel, learning and fun in Israel for young people ages 15-17 (July 2-August 8) and 18-25 (July 17-August 22) at the Sephardic Educational Centre in Jerusalem (SEC).

The SEC, located in the Old City of Jerusalem near the Kotel (Western Wall), is a beautiful complex of buildings that can accommodate as many as 250 individuals. The Centre is open the year around and offers programmes for adults and young people from all over the world. We represent the *only* international *educational* centre that Sephardim have actually founded, financed and operate.

Thousands of young people from 21 countries have learned a great deal about their Jewish and Sephardic roots in classes offered in English and Spanish. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary, nor is an extensive Jewish background. Participants also learn about themselves and others, making lifelong friends from countries around the world. They learn about Israel, touring the country by bus and exploring Israel's natural beauty through hiking and swimming. The Torah becomes alive as they follow the footsteps of ancestors at historical sites, even participating in an archeological dig. Participants also have the opportunity of living with an Israeli family at a moshav (farm) for a few memorable days. Although the programme is full of exciting and meaningful activities, there is also free time for shopping, visiting friends and relatives, etc.

The cost is \$1600, excluding air fare. Apply now... space is limited! Brochures and applications are available from: THE SEPHARDIC EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

6505 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 208
Los Angeles, California 90048
Tel: (213) 653 7365
Fax: (213) 653 9985 ●

The Literary Activities of the Arabic-speaking Jews in India

The first wave of migration of Baghdadi Jews came from the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman empire to India towards the end of the 18th century. Some settled in Surat around 1775, 165 miles north of Bombay, others moved to Bombay around 1790 and later branched out to Poona and Calcutta and later beyond the borders of India to Rangoon, Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai.

The foundation of a permanent colony of Arabian Jews in Bombay was accelerated with the arrival of David S. Sassoon. Escaping the oppression of the Ottoman Pasha, he fled from Baghdad to Bushire on the Persian Gulf with his father Sheikh Sassoon b. Saieh (1750-1830) and moved, after the death of his father, to Bombay, where he and his family arrived in 1833. The coming of the Sassoons was a signal for an ever-increasing influx of Baghdadi Jews to Bombay, and they soon became the undisputed leaders of the Jewish community and the founders of that illustrious merchant-house which earned them the name of the "Rothschilds of the East", the merchant princes of the Orient.

These Arabic-speaking Jews from the West differed from the Marathi-speaking Bene-Israel in Bombay and from the Malayalam-speaking Jews in Cochin on the Malabar coast in many fundamental aspects, liturgically, linguistically and economically. A closely-knit group, the Baghdadi Jews were the heirs of a rich culture and tradition, deeply rooted in Jewish learning and following their own liturgy and rite. Their mother tongue was Judeo-Arabic, which they carried on from Baghdad or Aleppo and continued to use with Hebrew characters in their writings as a vehicle of expression all through the years of their stay in the new land of their adoption, India.

Favoured by their affluence and material success, the Sassoons and their associates – the Gabbai's, the Ezra's, the Muslih's and many others – channelled their wealth not only towards the establishment of hospitals, museums, libraries and innumerable charitable and educational institutions for the general and Jewish population in India but also into the building of magnificent synagogues in Bombay, Poona and Calcutta, and all their other settlements in the Oriental Diaspora. Thus there arose in Bombay in 1861, the "Magen David" synagogue in Byculla, and in 1884 the "Knesset Eliya" synagogue in Fort Bombay. In Calcutta, the first synagogue "Nevc Shalom" in 1831, was followed by the building of "Beth El" in 1856 and in 1884 by the "Magen David", a striking and imposing landmark of Calcutta, distinguished by its beautiful architecture and its steeple and clock tower, where Rabbi Eliyahu B. Moses Duwayk served as spiritual leader for over fifty years.

In Poona, the summer residence of David S. Sassoon, there arose in 1863 the magnificent "Ohel David" synagogue. It was a big red building with a ninety-foot spire, in whose courtyard the burial place and mausoleum of the founder of the synagogue, David S. Sassoon (1792-1864),

Extracts from a paper by Walter J. Fischel

was placed, embellished with a long Hebrew inscription in prose and poetry. All these synagogues still stand in their majestic beauty and grandeur, and although today mainly deserted by worshippers due to their exodus to Israel, they testify to their once glorious past.

Judeo-Arabic Printing Presses

The material success of the Baghdadi Jews in India was accompanied by an unusual degree of cultural and literary productivity which led to the creation of a new genre of Hebrew literature, namely Judeo-Arabic literature in India.

Refusing to assimilate into the new milieu, they were determined to maintain faithfully the heritage of their forefathers and to transmit their spiritual patrimony and equipment which they brought along from the "rivers of Babylon" to the younger generation. In order to safeguard their cultural, liturgical and linguistic separateness, they embarked on a vast educational scheme which led to the establishment of Hebrew printing presses, to the publication of hundreds of books and journals in their own Judeo-Arabic dialect, and to the dissemination of Jewish cultural values.

Since neither Baghdad, their spiritual homeland and reservoir, nor Jerusalem had at this juncture Hebrew printing presses, it was in Calcutta that the first Hebrew printing press was established by and for Arabic-speaking Jews in India. In 1841, the Cochin Jew of Yemenite parentage, Eliezar B. Mari Aaron Saadya Arakie ha-Cohen, who had moved with his father to Calcutta around 1817, established the first Hebrew printing press in Calcutta, which produced many dozens of Hebrew books from 1841 to 1856.

This was followed by the Hebrew printing press of Yechezkel B. Soliman Chanon (1871-1893), then by Eliyahu B. Moshe ha-Cohen (1878-1888) and by the most active of all Hebrew printers, namely Hakham Shlomo Abed Tweina of Baghdad (1889-1900).

The Bombay colony of Baghdadi Jews entered the field around 1855 and some early pamphlets and books in lithography were issued.

Liturgical Literature in Judeo-Arabic

The bulk of the Judeo-Arabic publications encompassed Judeo-Arabic commentaries (*Tafsir, Sharh*) on the Pentateuch, the *haftarot*, the Megillot, Job, the Passover Haggadah, the Book of Esther; publication of *siddurim, mahzorim, pizmonim, piyyutin, selihot*, hymns and psalms for all festive occasions, ethical treatises such as *Pirke Abot, midrashim*, cabbalistic treatises, works on the Hebrew calendar, lexicographical compilations, interpretations of dreams, and halakhic treatises on *shehitah* and many other religious works.

Also produced in Judeo-Arabic translations were belles-lettres, (*Qissat*) stories, extracts from the works of Eldad Hadani, Ben Sirah, Josephus, "Hanna and her Seven Sons", and even *Sefer ha-Tappuah* of Aristotle. The literary output by the

Arabian Jews in India exceeded three hundred and fifty publications.

Periodicals and Newspapers

The greatest literary innovation of the Baghdadi Jews was the multiplicity of their periodicals and journals. The first Judeo-Arabic journal, *Doresh Tov le-Amo*, with the English subtitle, *The Hebrew Gazette*, appeared in 1856 in lithography in Bombay. The earliest newspaper in the whole of India, it was edited by the Baghdadi Jew David Hayyim David and issued fortnightly and later weekly until 1866.

The first Judeo-Arabic periodical printed in Calcutta was *Mevasser, The Jewish Gazette*. It was edited by Solomon Hayyim and appeared weekly from 1873 until the end of 1877. This was followed by *Perah*, edited at first by Eliyahu B. Moses Duwayk ha-Cohen and appearing over a period of eleven years from 1878 until 1889. The third and perhaps most important Judeo-Arabic weekly issued in Calcutta, *Maggid Mesharim*, was published from 1889 until October 1900. It was continued under the title *Shoshana* for another two years under the editorship of Hakham Shlomo Abed Tweina (d. 1913), the most prolific scholar, author and editor, credited with almost one hundred Judeo-Arabic publications.

Historical Records in Manuscripts

There exists also an abundance of annalistic and historical materials in manuscript form – memoirs, registers of marriage, birth and death, lists of families, communal records, and autobiographical diaries for which the Persian name *Nauruz* was used.

The first preserved example of such a Judeo-Arabic diary is that written by Shalom ben Obadiyah ha-Cohen (d. 1836), the famous Aleppo merchant and jeweller who, after many years in Surat, moved in August 1798 to Calcutta as one of its earliest settlers. He was allied through the marriage of his daughter with the actual founder of the Arabian Jewish community, Rabbi Moses ben Simon Duwayk ha-Cohen (1825-1861), who together with his sons, were the mainstay of Jewish life all through the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. He, too, wrote his *Nauruz*, a veritable storehouse of information on the Jewish community in Calcutta.

The Decline of Judeo-Arabic

As a consequence of the intensive English education, the Judeo-Arabic dialect lost its appeal and gradually came to be forgotten by the younger generation in India. Very few Judeo-Arabic books appeared in the 20th century and the periodicals of the 19th century were replaced by journals in English published in Bombay or Calcutta. The English periodicals in Bombay, such as *Zion's Messenger* (1921), *The Jewish Advocate* (1931-1940), *The Jewish Tribune* (1933-1951), and *India and Israel* (1948-1953), and in Calcutta *The Eastern Hebrew and Annual* (1941-1945), the *Shema* (1946-1960), the *Davar be-Itto* (1917-1919), and later *Redivivus* and others, became the literary nutriment of the Baghdadi Jews in the 20th century ☉



Rabbi Ovadia Yosef was in London recently to launch "Adi Zahav" by Hakham Ezra Dangoor and to launch the appeal for Shulchan Aruch.

EFRAT

Jewish Association for birth encouragement in Israel

EFRAT is an officially recognised non-profit organisation without political, ideological or religious affiliation based in Israel under the Chairmanship of Prof. Benjamin Engleman, of the Atomic Research Centre. Its primary goals are to encourage an increase in the Jewish birthrate, to prevent unnecessary abortions and to support and strengthen the Jewish family unit.

From the statistics it is evident that more than one third of the pregnancies of Israeli women are being terminated voluntarily. Over 100 Jewish children die every day in Israel through voluntary abortions. That deprived us of a million children who were potential heads of families forty years ago. Generations are being exterminated by our own hands. Based on current census figures, a further population decrease of 2,000,000 Jews is predicted by the year 2000. Only 70,000 live births occur each year in Israel, while, tragically, almost 40,000 abortions are performed, almost all of which are medically unnecessary.

EFRAT reaches the public through education, publicity, individual counselling and direct social aid. Amongst its many activities **EFRAT gives financial aid to needy pregnant women** and holds meetings to inform the public, encourage normal births and stop unnecessary abortions.

WE APPEAL TO YOU to become a **PATRON OF THE UK COMMITTEE** by lending your name to our list of supporters and by exploring every available avenue in order to increase the much needed financial reservoir of EFRAT.

EFRAT ADDRESSES: 41 Ezrath Torah Street, Jerusalem
22 Rotherwick Road, London NW11 7DA●

There is a movement here in the northern part of New Jersey to bring the Sephardic Jews in this area back to our "roots". I have shared my copy of *The Scribe* with numerous Ashkenazis with remarkable results. Thank you for the publication.

Incidentally, I was always aware of the

remarkable culinary talents of my mother, "chef" Alice Shashou of the Cookery Corner. I am truly gratified that you have given her the forum to share these talents with the "world"●

New Jersey

Linda Meer

Shulchan Aruch

5748 – 1988 was the 500th anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest scholars our people have ever known, Rabbi Yosef Karo. He was the author of the "Shulchan Aruch", which has since been accepted as the authoritative work on Jewish law.

A committee has been set up under government auspices, with the purpose of finding ways to mark this important milestone in the history of our people.

It was decided, among other things, to publish a new edition of Rabbi Yosef Karo's writings and to reissue the Shulchan Aruch and the "Tur" in some two dozen volumes.

This tremendous undertaking was given to Machon Yerushalayim, the world's largest Torah research Institute. It is to be a joint effort of all seven Israeli branches of the Institute, including the newest branch, which was recently opened in Safed, in the very building, in the same House of Learning, in which it is believed that Rabbi Yosef Karo originally composed his historical works.

The Jerusalem Institute plans to initiate a project for the collection of the vast amount of diverse material, including manuscripts, primary sources and additional commentaries which have never been published to date.

We would be delighted if you would adopt this momentous project and have your name associated with it for all time●

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef Yitzhak Navon
Rishon Lezion Deputy Prime Minister
and Minister of Education & Culture

LETTERS

I was proud to be part of the successful solidarity meeting of world Jewry leaders with Prime Minister Shamir. The key to our success in the present and in the future is indeed our solidarity and unity.

In the course of my personal meeting with Mr. Shamir he agreed with me that if the "Law of Return" will be changed, a significant part of the Jewish people can drift apart from the State of Israel, and this is why he thought "the whole idea must be shelved."

I have written to Mr. Shamir that that statement was very encouraging for me and the millions who did not adopt the Jewish-Orthodox way but are nevertheless committed and devoted Jews who do their utmost to ensure the future existence of the Jewish people and the Jewish State.

I know our beloved State faces crucial decisions in the near future and this clarification will strengthen my Jewish Zionist belief.

London SW7

Menahem Baroukh

Your thoughtful and clear historical analysis of "The Cairo Conference of 1921" is most welcome, because it can only help to clear up the myths and distortions of recent history. We, as the Jordan Is Palestine Committee, who constantly research and inform the public on these issues, are particularly grateful for your extensive research and for your helping to spread this message. We agree and even go further in accusing the Foreign office of their responsibility not only for shaping the foreign policy, but worse still, of distorting it, and by so doing, misinforming both the Government and the public at large. I do wish your message will be perpetuated throughout the world and some positive action will emerge. Ignorance is not bliss and good judgment means survival for the Jews and Israel. Well done *The Scribe* ●
Jordan Is Palestine Committee Mia Silver
London National Director

I was given a copy of your excellent publication. I don't know where. At some meeting of interest to the Jewish community? and I found the contents not only extremely interesting but also very varied.

What with Operation Babylon, The (Saatchi) Brothers, Jordan's Name, the feature on Free Will, the letters re Saudi Jews and on the Mujahidun, and last but not least, the piece on the Shroud of Turin. It so happens I wrote a similar piece under the title IS THIS THE CLOAK OF CHRIST? long before it was proved that the shroud was actually a hoax, or rather, a fake.

Golders Green

Yosef ben Selig

The letter of Mr. Joe Shrem (*The Scribe* No. 31), reminds me of when, 56 years ago, King Feisal I died. Hakham Yosef Shrem (Joe's grandfather), who happened to be in Baghdad, was requested by the heads of the Jewish Community to mourn the king. The Hakham was raised on a platform in Maidan Square, in the centre of Baghdad, to deliver his oration.

It is very interesting to remember the crowd of 1000 people surrounding the platform, hearing the mournful voice of the Hakham chanting *Anshe Emunah Abadoo* (The men of trust have perished) ●
Ramat-Gan E. Zilkha

At the time of declaration of war by the Anglo-French-Israeli Forces against Egypt in 1956, the Iraqi authorities, in co-ordination with the Egyptian government, proclaimed martial law in the country and appointed a General of the Army as Military Governor in the capital, Baghdad. He was invested with full emergency powers to investigate all unlawful acts relating to spying and other forms of offences brought forward to him and committed either by Iraqi citizens or by foreign residents in the country.

At that time, I was working as a local agent in Iraq of an Egyptian cinematographic company, and upon the request of a cinema house in Baghdad, I had despatched a cable to my principals in Cairo requesting them to send me by air freight a copy of their latest films entitled "AROUSSAT AL-BAHR" (The Bride of the Sea), which describes, among other things, an Entertainment and Show Boat story. The telegram was sent in the morning and in the afternoon I was astonished to receive a letter signed by the military governor asking me to appear before him as soon as possible. I knew that the matter related to my telegram.

Next morning, I proceeded to the general's office taking with me all the relative documents in my possession, comprising illustrated pamphlets, photographs, prospectuses, etc. of the film in question. In the yard adjoining the governor's office I found tens of persons waiting to be received by him. But, upon presenting the letter sent to me, I was surprised to be called immediately to appear before the general. First of all, he invited me politely to sit down in front of him and he then began to read the accusation note written against me.

The note specified that I was a Zionist agent, that the vessel in question was a ship of war sent to carry out arms from Italy to Israel, as well as other invented and imaginary acts attributed to me.

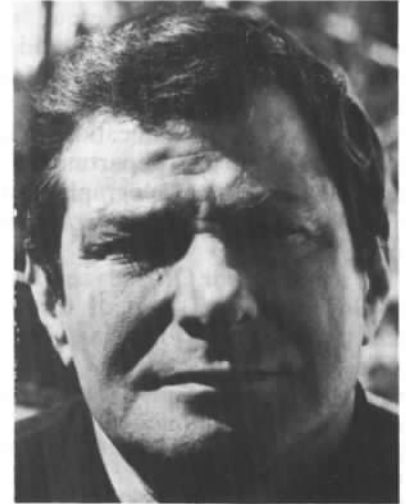
As soon as he finished the reading of that foolish memo, the general asked me quietly and gently to give my explanation of the matter in defence of myself. So I hastened to show him the documents brought with me and I also explained to him the story of the film in question. Then I added that the telegram was sent to an Arab country, that the vessel was no other than a Show Boat and not a ship of war, etc. He then asked to bring before him the officer in charge of my case, who wrote the foolish note, and ordered his staff to despatch quickly my cable to its destination. He even offered his excuses for its delay and for the trouble caused to me.

As to the author of the shameless note, who accused me of spying, as he could not explain and justify his silly action, the commander reprimanded him in my presence and promised to impose on him a strong penalty and even to down grade his

rank in case of repetition of such mistakes.

In conclusion, I must point out here that the commander was found to be a sincere and good-hearted man, otherwise a serious penalty would have been imposed upon me ●
Tel Aviv

Saleh S. Basri



Arie Elias, who was born in Baghdad, is a very popular stage, television and film actor in Israel. He is a graduate of the Academy of Arts in Baghdad, and studied in Paris with Jean-Luis Bareaux and Jean Villar.

As actor and director Arie Elias dedicates himself to the rehabilitation of distressed youth. He received the President's award in 1986 for his voluntary work with handicapped children ●

Respona

Questions & Answers

"Why is chametz treated with greater strictness than other forbidden food?"

– This is a simple question requiring a simple answer.

The explanation is that since the leaven culture can reproduce itself very rapidly, even the minutest presence of leaven is enough to contaminate the product. Hence, the principle of neutralisation by the ratio of one to sixty cannot apply.

There are two explanations to the prohibition of chametz and to the commandment to eat matza on Pesach: it is possible that the tenth plague – the killing of the first-born – was achieved through the germ of botulism in leaven. The Israelites were not affected because on the morning of the Exodus they had no time to wait for the dough to rise. We eat matza in commemoration.

The other explanation is that leavened bread was an Egyptian invention, and Jewish bread was unleavened. On Pesach, the season of our liberation, it is fitting to keep to our traditional bread – namely matza ● N.E.D.

Jewish Senior Officials

in the Royal Government of Iraq

In November 1920 a national government was constituted in Iraq by the British High Commissioner Sir Percy Cox headed by Sayid Abdual Rahman al-Naqib. Sasson Effendi Hesqail held the portfolio of Finance. Thousands of Jewish officials served in the Iraqi Government, mostly in the Ministries of Finance, Communications and Works, and in the departments of Accounts, Posts and Telegraphs, Railways, Port of Basrah, Customs and Excise, etc.

The list of Senior Officials serving in the Government of Iraq of October 1923 includes the following Jewish public servants:—

Abdul Nabi effendi, born 1874, assistant secretary, Ministry of Interior.

Gourgi Sasson effendi, born 1900, superintendent of Personnel.

Sir Sasson Hesqail, b. 1860, Minister of Finance.

Saleh effendi Kahtan, b. 1893, legal assistant, Finance.

Yusuf effendi Elkabir, b. 1898, registrar, Government Counsellor's Office, Ministry of Justice.

Ibrahim effendi Elkabir, b. 1885, assistant Accountant-General.

Rubain Daud effendi, b. 1892, Treasury Officer.

Joseph Saul effendi, superintendent of Posts.

Dr. Daud Nissim, b. 1884, medical officer, Health Service.

Dr. Samuel Adatto, b. 1891, medical officer, Royal Hospital.

Daud effendi Samra, b. 1878, Judge, Court of Appeal.

G. Joseph effendi, Postmaster, Baghdad.

Dr. Yahya beg (Sumaikah), b. 1875, Sanitary superintendent, Mosul Liwa.

Hesqail effendi Saleh, b. 1898, Ma'mur Tapu Department, Kifri.

Naim effendi Zilkha, b. 1878, President, Civil Courts, Diyala Liwa.

Rubain effendi Battat, b. 1888, vice-president, Civil Courts, Basrah Liwa.

Shamun effendi Halima, b. 1896, accountant, Diwanayah Liwa●

LETTERS

I was interested to read in the recent issues of *The Scribe* Naim Dangoor's and Meir Basri's comments on the "Satanic Verses". I was commissioned to review the book for a local Weekly and I thought it might interest your ever-growing circle of readers to have the review published in *The Scribe*. I enclose a copy.

You may know that I worked in London as the Administration Director of the World Sephardi Federation for close to five years●

Melbourne

Gad Ben-Meir

Recently, while on a trip to England, I attended a seminar at which I met some representatives of a branch of Jewry I'd all but forgotten existed. Now, however, I'm fascinated. I was also given a copy of *The Scribe*, which I found very informative.

Although I am of Ashkenazi background, I am one of those Jews who wishes she could be a little bit of everything simply for the richness and beauty of it all.

If it is possible, would you place my name on your mailing list?●

St. Paul, Minnesota

Marianne Luban

Thanks to *The Scribe* I read articles which give me hope that rational analysis and thinking about international Jewish affairs have not perished●

Bellevue, WA

Albert Adatto

I would like to offer my congratulations for the article of Mr. Moshe Kahtan, "Any more advice for Israel", published in your issue No. 32 of March 1989.

It is indeed a tragedy and a mistake when doctors are concentrating on admonishing the patient instead of eliminating the disease●

Bruxelles

Henri Sasson

The Scribe is the most informative Sephardic magazine I have read through the years. I have greatly enjoyed reading your articles, and I concur with most of your opinions.

Congratulations for the quality of your publication●

Sephardic Educational Center Dr. José A. Nessim
Los Angeles President

BRIDGE

The 2 Club Opener

by Charlotte Joory

A lot of people think that they cannot open 2 clubs unless they have 23 points and over; when in fact there are at least 3 types of hands that qualify for the opening of 2 clubs which we all know is a strong bid that forces partner to keep on bidding until game is reached.

1 – The balanced hand; which you must have at least 23 points and on which you intend to rebid No Trump. This can prove difficult if partner has no points.

S – AKxx xxxx
H – AKx xxx
D – Akx xxx
C – QJx xxx

2 – A hand that has 9 tricks and over regardless of the number of points.

3 – Most important is the distributional hand on which you can call 2 clubs with as little as 14 to 18 high-card points and which can make game or even slam opposite a balanced Yarborough, for example:

S – AKxxxx xxxx
H – – xxx
D – AKxxxx xxxx
C – A xx

4S is easy on this hand; all you lose is 1S, 1 or 2D.

S – AKxxxxx xxxx
H – – xx
D – AKxxxx xxxx
C – – xx

and on this 6 or 7 spades or diamonds is possible too.

If you open 1 spade partner will pass and even if you open 2S partner will keep it open for one round only and you will have to decide blindly on a suit contract, instead of doing it gradually to find the best contract knowing that partner is to keep the bidding open as long as you wish.

To evaluate such a distributional hand add 3 points for every card over four in the trump suit, by which you will reach the magic figure of 23, or count 9 tricks and over●



July 1921: The Amir Feisal receiving the allegiance of the Dulaim Tribe at Ramadi: "We swear allegiance to you because you are acceptable to the British Government."

COOKERY CORNER

Cannelloni

by Alice Shashou

It is a very good party dish especially served with kichri or non-meat dishes. Butter a rectangular pyrex dish approximately 13" x 9".

Ingredients:

1 packet and half cannelloni
4 packets mozzarella cheese, 8 oz. each
2 big onions
1 tin medium size whole tomatoes in tins
1 tin Neopolitan sauce (Buitoni)
1 bay leaf Salt, pepper, pizza spices to taste and a pinch of oregano
A little grated parmesan cheese for the top

Cut the cheese in thick long slices, the length of the cannelloni.

Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil. Add a little mazola oil and the cannelloni. Stir and boil for about 8-10 minutes or until slightly under-cooked. Drain well in a sieve. Sprinkle with cold water and stir very gently to prevent it from sticking together. Taste for salt.

Immediately fill the cannelloni with the cheese while still warm.

To make sauce:

Heat oil in a pan and fry the chopped onions till golden. Add the tomatoes and bay leaf and let it cook for a few minutes until the tomatoes are mashed. Add the Neopolitan sauce and about 1 cup of water and boil a little on a small fire. This liquid should not be too thick or thin. Take away

from the fire and add a pinch of oregano, pepper, salt to taste and a pinch of pizza spices.

Taste and adjust seasonings.

Arrange the cannelloni in the buttered pyrex dish. Cover each layer with the tomato sauce. You can make 2 layers with this quantity of ingredients. (You can make more layers with more ingredients).

Put remainder of sauce over the top. Then sprinkle with a little grated parmesan cheese.

You can freeze.

Defrost before baking.

Bake uncovered in a moderate oven for about one hour or until golden.

If it becomes too dark, cover with silver foil.

Serve immediately●

Rice Arouk

by Gershon

The Shell:

1¼ lb. minced lean meat (beef)
3 cups Basmati rice
1 tablespoon salt

Wash the rice and soak for half an hour with a little salt added to the water so the grains won't break. Knead the meat and work it while wetting your hand slightly, until it gets smooth. Drain the water completely from the rice; add one tablespoon salt to the rice and mix.

Take a little of the meat at a time and mix with the rice – as much rice as it takes – keep on doing that until all meat is mixed with the rice. Sprinkle a little water when mixing. Then leave in the fridge to rest for one hour.

The filling:

¾ lb. minced lamb or beef
4 medium onions finely cut

Salt and pepper

2 tablespoons ground dried lime

Cut the onions finely and sprinkle with a little salt, leave for a few minutes, then squeeze the water out. Mix the onions with the meat, add salt, pepper and the dried lime.

Divide the meat and rice mixture into balls the size of a peach on a working board.

Wet your hands and flatten each ball of the mixture on the palm of your hand to ½ inch thick and put the filling in the centre the size of a walnut. Close the shell well and flatten it slightly always wetting lightly your hands while working.

To cook:

Half fill a pan with water and a little salt and bring to the boil. Put a few of the "Arouks" at a time in the boiling water, cover the pan and leave to boil for 20 to 30 minutes. Take out of the water carefully with a spatula and put on working board.

When cold, fry the Arouk with very little oil that has been heated very well otherwise they will stick to the pan. Cover the pan when frying because the rice splashes.

If you don't want the Arouk fried, you can make sauce: Sauté in a little oil one onion then add tomatoes and green pepper cut finely, salt, pepper and water and let it boil until the sauce thickens. Arrange the Arouk in an ovenproof dish and pour the sauce over and bake in hot oven for 20 minutes.

The Arouks can be frozen nicely.

(This quantity makes about 45 Arouks. It depends on the size you make)●

Tips

by Alice Shashou

Never keep mushrooms in a plastic bag in the fridge. Store in a brown paper bag.

Do not keep biscuits and cakes in the same tin. Your biscuits will become soggy.

Honey, if it goes sugary, stand the jar in hot water and it will liquify again●



The simple enthronement of Feisal at the Sarai at 6 a.m. on Tuesday 23 August 1921. The day was chosen by Feisal because it coincided with the Shia feast of Al-Ghadir (when Mohammed nominated Ali as master of the people). In the picture: Sir Percy Cox, High Commissioner; Sir Aylmer Haldanè, Commander-in-Chief; Sayid Mahmud, eldest son of the Naqib, who read a blessing.

The Naqib himself, Sayid Abdul Rahman Al-Gailani, President of the Council of State, was conspicuous by his absence. He was opposed to Feisal, and had previously told Miss Bell: "I would rather a thousand times have the detested Turks back in Iraq than see Sherif Hussein or his sons installed here." The Naqib's followers, the notorious people of Bab-al-Sheikh quarter, who were responsible for the anti-Jewish pogrom of 1941, also played a leading part in the bloody revolution of 1958 which put an end to Feisal's dynasty.



Sayyid Talib Pasha rivalled Amir Feisal for the throne of Iraq and was exiled.



The Ambassador perusing the volume of *The Scribe* with l. to r. Dayan Dr. Pinhas Toledano, Naim Dangoor and Percy Gourgey.

Baghdadi Wisdom

From Mr. Shaul Hakham Sasson

I enclose 159 proverbs of our Community in Arabic which I received lately from my cousin – Professor Frederick D. Ezekiel of Massachusetts, U.S.A.

These proverbs were collected by his late mother, my aunt, Mrs. Naima D. Ezekiel – née Naima Shaool Tweg. They represent certain cultural values, wisdom and beliefs of our forefathers and may be of interest to your readers●

London N20

S. H. Sassoon

Here is a selection:

Imshi shahegh wala titfigh nahegh
(Walk a month and don't jump over a ditch)
Id ilma tiqdar teidha boosa
(Kiss the hand that you can't bite)
El tama'a dharr ma nafa'a
(Greed is harmful and of no benefit)
Itghis babak wa ammen jarek
(Shut your door and trust your neighbour)
Alf sadiq wala adu wahid
(He who has a thousand friends hasn't got one to spare; but he who has one enemy will see him everywhere)
El shategh bil nashaf yizlaq
(The clever one slips on a dry floor)
Ash tekhalli bil jidir yitlaa bil kifkigh
(What you put in the pot comes out in the ladle)
Idha takel wayya a'ami kel binsaf
(If you eat with a blind person be fair)
Janna bala nas ma tendas
(A paradise without people is not pleasant)
Ya gharib koon adib
(Stranger – be polite)
Liyhibbu Allah khellanu bemkanu
(Whom God favours He keeps in one place)
Mithqal summ wala hebbayi humm
(An ounce of poison rather than a grain of worry)●

The sentiments of a Welsh Baptist Minister

Reading your April issue has warmed the cockles of my heart. I enclose copies of a letter I wrote to the Prime Minister, and one to *The Baptist Times*, following a malicious report in it. YERUSHALAYIM shall prove to be a poison cup to those immediate nations who meddle with her. Do remember that in 1947, when Britain did the dirty on the Jewish people, "the Jewel in the Crown" was lost forever, namely, India●

Swansea

Gruffydd Thomas

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher Prime Minister

It is a matter of deep concern to fair-minded people in Britain today that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights takes Israel to task for whatever allegations the Palestinian-Arabs choose to bring against her, but does nothing about the evils committed by Moslem-against-Moslem in Iraq. Some 5000 civilian Kurds were killed by nerve gas and 10,000 injured by mustard gas.

The employment of double standards – one for Israel and another for Israel's enemies – is farcical. But your Administration is strong enough to resist this current trend; and I, for one, should be grateful to see visible measures taken to speak out in favour of honest dealings in these affairs.

I have no doubt but that such courage would secure for the Tories another term of office, further enhanced, following the next General Election●

Gruffydd Thomas
Baptist Minister

The Editor, Baptist Times

Had I not personally been to Judea, Samaria and Gaza under military escort, when the riots were launched by Islamic

Fundamentalists and Communists in 1987, I should have been misled by Mr. Richard Kayes' report to your newspaper (30 March). I can assure him that the pain of the Jewish Conscience over Israel's present troubles is more acute than is the conscience of his British counterpart over Ulster. The use of mischievous hyperbole is commonplace in the Middle East: but when it is affirmed by Western tourists that Palestinians are "held behind the wire fences of the Jabalia Camp in Gaza" one wonders how they manage to get out each morning to earn a better living in Israel than their fathers ever knew under The Turk, The Egyptian and The Jordanian. The squalor and misery of the Palestinian Refugee Camps could be swept away in less than a year by a week's revenue from the oil-rich Arab States.

Would to God that it were true that Lord Balfour had indeed "declared the State of Israel in 1917". Five million defenceless Jewish people and more than a million of their little ones would then have lived to see the shoreline of their ancient homeland . . . and Jordan would not have been known. It was a grave injustice against the Jewish people when Britain "gave" 79% of Old Mandated Palestine to Abdullah and called it "Jordan". Regardless of the heart-rending plea, the Jewish people had to content themselves with what remained of "The Jewish National Home" – a mere 10,000 square miles against 4½ million square miles of oil-rich Arab territory now arraigned against them. But now the Arabs want a second Palestinian State – within Israel itself!

The ever-increasing appearance of inflammatory propaganda against Israel indicates that the sow that bore the Nazi litter is farrowing again●

Gruffydd Thomas