

64 Pages

The SCRIBE
JOURNAL OF BABYLONIAN JEWRY
PUBLISHED BY THE EXILARCH'S FOUNDATION

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No. 67

APRIL 1997

Est. 1971

A Happy Passover to all our Readers and Friends



Last February, Israel President Ezer Weizman paid a long-awaited three-day State Visit to London at the invitation of the Queen. The above picture shows President Weizman and his London born wife Reuma with Queen Elizabeth, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Queen Mother, who is still active at 97.

Britain, who had been entrusted with establishing a National Home for the Jews, was the last country to recognise the State of Israel. Likewise, it took the Queen 49 years before inviting the Head of the State of Israel for an official visit, while Arab Kings and Princes were coming and going all the time.

President Weizman's short stay was crammed with visits and activities: A State Banquet for 200 at Buckingham Palace; a visit to the Imperial War Museum, where a 14 million section on the Holocaust is being organised; the unveiling of a statue of Wallenberg, the Swedish Diplomat who had helped saving 100,000 Hungarian Jews during the war by issuing them with Swedish passports; a historic visit to the Sephardi Bevis Marks Synagogue, the oldest in Britain; a meeting with the leaders of British Jewry; a visit to the Geniza Museum at Cambridge University and finally a Dinner given by the President at Spencer House on the eve of his departure which was attended by the Queen and many more distinguished guests.

President Weizman said of his three-days stay, "it seems like 30 days." On the delay in receiving a formal invitation he said, philosophically, "better late than never."●

The Scriptures of Abraham

by: Naim Dangoor

When I was eight years old, I asked my grandfather, Hakham Ezra Dangoor (who had just been elected as Chief Rabbi of Baghdad) – I asked him whether our Patriarch Abraham (Abraham Abinu) had kept the Sabbath! It was a startling question, coming as it did from a little child, and it was entirely my own.

Jewish life in Baghdad centred around Sabbath observance. Our Community of over 100,000 lived in a Jewish Quarter. It was for convenience and not a ghetto. Our 40 synagogues were all within an easy walking distance, and we did not have to erect poles and join them with nylon wires to create an *Eruv*. All our neighbours were Jews.

As I escorted my elderly grandfather to the Great Synagogue of the Exilarch (of which he remained dean and trustee for 33 years) my thoughts were not of toys and amusements. My ambition was to look after that ancient House of God and maintain it in prime condition.

So, did Abraham observe the Sabbath?

My young mind reasoned that, if the entire Torah was given to Moses at Sinai, then Abraham, who lived 500 years earlier, could not have known of this, and, if so, why is he given such a place of honour in our liturgy? In our Daily Prayer, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are mentioned but Moses not even once. The Patriarchs were treated as Royalty, and Moses only as a loyal Prime Minister. Moreover, at a banquet he gave, Abraham did not separate *fleischik* from milkish, although this was not a Biblical but a Rabbinic injunction and, in any case, he brought the milk before the meat.

So, did Abraham keep the Sabbath?

Our Rabbis did not overlook this conundrum, and explained that Abraham, who was very close to God, was given a preview of the Torah! This presupposes that the Torah existed before Moses and Sinai. There should be no difficulty in accepting this premise; for, if the Torah is a reflection of Divine Wisdom, then it existed at the time of the Creation, and, in fact, even before the creation of the universe, for it was in wisdom that God created the cosmos.

My grandfather's answer was, likewise that Abraham was inspired to keep the Commandments.

Now that I am over 80, I can answer my childhood question by saying, without resorting to miraculous explanation, that Abraham did keep the Sabbath, for many of the traditions of Judaism were handed down from very early days.

Some 9000 years ago, a great event happened that started our present civilisation. It was the discovery of wild wheat in the Garden of Eden, and the Agricultural Revolution that followed. Whereas people were hunters and gatherers before, requiring only occasional work, now they had to work regularly and toil to work the land and irrigate it: "By the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread." Hard work needs rest, and it was Adam or his immediate successors who instituted the weekly day of rest. The Sabbath was meant to give us a taste of Gan Eden where life was easier. The murder of Abel, the old time hunter, by his brother Cain, the new time farmer, is meant to illustrate the complete triumph of the Agricultural Revolution as the start of our present civilisation.

When Abraham who was an accomplished scientist, astronomer and mathematician, went down to Egypt, he wanted to learn their method of writing. Abraham was looking for a simple method of writing, simple enough for his roving tribe to record the stories and traditions handed down of Adam and the Garden of Eden, of Noah and the Flood and of his own encounters with God. He found the system of his native Ur too clumsy so he went to Egypt to look at their system, and laughed at the stupidity of the Egyptians and their pictorial hieroglyphics. He then devised a simple alphabet of 16 phonetic consonants, which later grew to 22. Mankind developed speech long before there was any need to write down their ideas. The breakthrough came when Abraham connected writing with speech rather than with the mental picture of the object or action involved. A person maybe illiterate, in that he cannot read or write, but he may still be a good speaker. This enabled him to write down what I call the scriptures of Abraham. The Koran pointedly refers to the scriptures of Abraham and the scriptures of Moses. Both were incorporated in our Bible. Abraham's alphabet is the only alphabet invented throughout history. No other alphabet was invented before or since. All the alphabets of the world were derived from it.

The creation of the world in six days may be taken as referring to the work done in Heaven. The execution of God's plan has taken billions of years.

ABRAHAM RE-DISCOVERS GOD

From: "The Greatest Book Ever Written"
by: Fulton Oursler

"In the midst of a world of heedless people Abraham was born in Ur, and his name and deeds were never to be forgotten.

"As with most great souls, Abraham seemed to have no idea that he was important to God or his fellow man. Nor did he dream that he was one day to be put to a supreme test, reaching a height of decision without parallel before or since and thereby uncovering one of the great secrets of life and death, for those who have the discernment to grasp its meaning.

"At no time did Abraham realise that he was one of the heroes of history. It was natural for him to deal with men today so that he would not fear to meet them tomorrow. Yet from earliest youth he was despised among his neighbours, because while grey-bearded Terah, his father, and his two uncles gave themselves to other gods, Abraham believed the history of Eden, kept to old ways, rejected false worship, remembering the creator of Adam and Eve, the tales of lost felicity in the garden and the terrible experience of Noah. Terah was a direct descendant of the ark builder, and from one generation to another the family had passed on the traditions of the deluge, the drowning of many, the saving of the few, the bird with the green olive branch in its bill, the rainbow of heavenly promise in the sky. To the God of these events, the son of apostate Terah, Abraham, gave his worship.

"But the people in Ur of the Chaldees – a Babylonian city of the west bank of the Euphrates north-east of the Persian Gulf – had no use for a stern deity; they wanted an easy old duffer of a god who would let men and women do as they well pleased, so long as they brought flattery to the altar and baked sweetmeats to the priests; more they wanted a war god and a money god to bring victory to their swords and spears and gold to their caravans.

"The old true God of Abraham ruled the hearts of His people with strictness, rules, disciplines, punishments. So the people of Ur felt that anyone who would prefer the old God to the accommodating new ones must be mad.

"Even Terah had not continued to worship the Lord God. When his little son was born he called him Abram, which meant "the father on high." Somehow as the child grew, he gathered the whole story of the past and recognised its truth. It was then nine generations since Noah, and Terah told Abram how he was descended through Heber. From that name would one day derive the word "Hebrews."

"It was not easy to grow up comfortably as a pious lover of God in Ur, which was a city passionately devoted to trade and pleasure. The poor were urged to work by the whips of overseers, while the rich rode in gilded chariots; but, poor or rich, the people drank and bedded and gambled, while in palaces and in caravanserais musicians played on golden harps, crowned with bulls' heads, ornamented with lapis lazuli.

"By the time Abram reached manhood it was no longer safe for him to remain in Ur. The people hated him for his faith. There is a legend that one of those who made life miserable for Abram was Nimrod. Religious persecution is not a new cruelty; the great hunter wanted the youth to bow down to Ur's principal god, whose name was Sin.

"In Haran Abram received the Divine command: "Go forth out of your country and from your kindred and out of your father's house and come into the land which I shall show you. And I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you and magnify your name and you shall be blessed. I will bless them that bless you and curse them that curse you and in you shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed."

HEBREW ORIGINS

What are the origins of the Hebrews? Were we Egyptians, Canaanites or what? We certainly did not descend from Mars! Abraham, who is regarded as the titular head of the Hebrew Nation, and who migrated from across the Euphrates valley, is referred to in Gen. XIV: 13 as "Abraham the Hebrew," But this is not the origin of the name "Hebrews" (IBRI) in the passage is used as an appellation and not as a proper name. In fact, the septuagint renders it as "Abraham the passenger," upto the present day, the word "IBRI" is used colloquially in Iraq to mean "passenger, traveller, passer by."

The name Hebrew derives from Abraham's ancestor, Heber (EBER, hence IBRI) Gen. X: 21 calls Shem the father of all the Children of Heber (ie., the Hebrews) in a history long before Abraham travelled from across the Euphrates valley. "God's command to Abraham to depart from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house", did not only indicate the trauma of migration, but also to stress that Mesopotamia was indeed our domicile of origin, where the children of Heber lived.



Abraham Sacrifice of Isaac by Guiseppa Maria Mitelli, after Titian ©

THE AQEDA

Some Bible scholars find it difficult to accept the dramatised version of the story of the Aqeda which is a central theme in Judaism given in Genesis 22, as well as in Islam.

Could God who abhorred the pagan practices for the inhabitants of Canaan, who sacrificed children to their deities, ask Abraham to do the same?

An alternative scenario may be as follows: As Abraham comes out of the Hebron sheep market one day, he is met by some Canaanite chiefs who greet him and say, "Hey Abraham: We understand that you don't care for our deities and that you worship the God of Heaven whom no one has seen. If you are devoted to your God as we are to ours, then show us if you will sacrifice your son to Him, as we do ourselves."

Abraham staged the Aqeda to satisfy his critics and to end up by telling them that at the last moment God gave him a reprieve.

There are loopholes in the Bible story that point in that direction, Abraham's statement to his son Isaac "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering my son", Genesis: XXII:8 gives the game away!

ABRAHAM FROM: ANTIQUITIES OF THE JEWS

by: Josephus – The First Century
Jewish General and Historian

Abraham was determined to renew and change the opinion all men happened then to have concerning God; for he was the first that ventured to publish this notion.

This his opinion was derived from the irregular phenomena that were visible both at land and sea, as well as those that happen to the sun and moon, and all the heavenly bodies, thus: - "If (said he) these bodies had power of their own, they would certainly take care of their own regular motions; but since they do not preserve such regularity, they make it plain, that in so far as they co-operate to our advantage, they do it not of their own abilities, but as they are subservient to Him that commands them; to whom alone we ought justly to offer our honour and thanksgiving. For which doctrines, when the Chaldeans and other people of Mesopotamia raised a tumult against him, he thought fit to leave that country; and at the command, and by the assistance of God, he came and lived in the land of Canaan. And when he was there settled, he built an altar, and performed a sacrifice to God.

Abraham reigned at Damascus, being a foreigner, who came with an army out of the land above Babylon, called the land of the Chaldeans. But after a long time he got him up, and removed from that country also with his people, and went into the land then called the land of Canaan, but now the land of Judea, and this when his posterity were become a multitude.

Now after this, when a famine had invaded the land of Canaan and Abram had discovered that the Egyptians were in a flourishing condition, he was disposed to go down to them both to partake of the plenty they enjoyed, and to become an auditor of their Priests, and to know what they said concerning their Gods; designing either to follow them, if they had better notions than he, or to convert them into a better way, if his own notions proved the truest.

Abram was greatly admired by the Egyptians as a very wise man and one of great sagacity. When he discoursed on any subject he undertook; and this not only in understanding it, but in persuading other men also to assent to him. He communicated to them arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of learning; for the science came from the Chaldeans into Egypt, and from thence to the Greeks also.

When Abraham who was an accomplished scientist, astronomer and mathematician, went down to Egypt, he wanted to learn their method of writing. Abraham was looking for a simple method of writing, simple enough for his roving tribe to record the stories and traditions handed down of Adam and the Garden of Eden, of Noah and the Flood and of his own encounters with God. He found the system of his native Ur too clumsy so he went to Egypt to look at their system, and laughed at the stupidity of the Egyptians and their pictorial hieroglyphics. He then devised a simple alphabet of 16 phonetic consonants, which later grew to 22. Mankind developed speech long before there was any need to write down their ideas. The breakthrough came when Abraham connected writing with speech rather than with the mental picture of the object or action involved. A person maybe illiterate, in that he cannot read or write, but he may still be a good speaker. This enabled him to write down what I call the scriptures of Abraham. The Koran pointedly refers to the scriptures of Abraham and the scriptures of Moses. Both were incorporated in our Bible. Abraham's alphabet is the only alphabet invented throughout history. No other alphabet was invented before or since. All the alphabets of the world were derived from it.

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Abraham in the Koran

And Noah did certainly call upon Us, and his prayers were graciously answered. And We delivered him and his followers from the mighty scourge, And we made his offspring the survivors. And We bestowed on him (praise) among the later generations.

Peace and salutation to Noah among the nations. And most surely Abraham followed his way. When he came to his Lord with a free heart. When he said to his father and his people: What is it that you worship? False-gods – gods besides Allah do you desire? What is then your idea about the Lord of the Creation? Then he looked at the stars, looking up once. Then he said: Surely I am sick of your worshipping these.

So they went away from him, turning back. Then he turned aside to their gods secretly and said: What! do you not eat? What is the matter with you that you do not speak?

Then he turned against them secretly, smiting them with the right hand. So they (people) advanced towards him, hastening. Said he: Would you worship that which you have made with your own hands, when it was Allah who created you, and all that you have made? They said: Build for him a furnace, then cast him into the burning fire. And they desired a war against him, but We brought them low. And he said: Surely I fly to my Lord; he will guide me and grant me a son. So We gave him the good news of a boy, possessing forbearance.

And when he attained to working with him, he said: O my son! Surely I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you; consider then what you see. He said: O my father! do what you are commanded; if Allah please, you will find me faithful.

And when they had both submitted themselves to Allah's will, and Abraham had laid down his son prostrate upon his face, we called out to him, saying: O Abraham! You have indeed shown the truth of the vision; surely thus do We reward the doers of good: Most surely this a manifest trial.

And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. And We bestowed on him praise among the later generations.

Peace be on Abraham. Thus do We reward the doers of good. Surely he was one of Our believing servants ©

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

By Josiah Derby

An extract from: *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, Vol. 22,
No 1, 1994

One of the many puzzles in the text of the Bible is the disparity between the two versions of the Ten Commandments, the first in Exodus and the second in Deuteronomy. The most conspicuous and astonishing of the differences in these two texts are found in the Fourth Commandment. Here are the texts side by side:

EXODUS 20:8-11

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

DEUTERONOMY 5:12-15

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord thy God commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant nor thy maid-servant nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.

It is to be remembered that the text in Exodus is represented as the words the people heard as they stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai, and which were inscribed upon the tablets that Moses brought down with him. The text in Deuteronomy was transmitted to the people orally by Moses in one of the discourses he delivered during the last month of the fortieth year since the departure from Egypt (and the last month of his life).

Moses described to the assemblage the revelation at Mt. Sinai, in graphic detail, and then he told them what God had spoken at that time.

The question immediately arises: Why did not Moses quote the original text verbatim? Is it possible that in forty years he had forgotten those awesome words, and that he had to improvise? Could he tell the people that these were God's words when they were not exact. The two tablets had been placed in the ark never to be seen again.

Tradition absolves Moses of all responsibility by telling us that the entire Torah, Deuteronomy included, was dictated to Moses by God, so that this second version of the Decalogue was not a creation of Moses but the words of God Himself. If that is so, then the problem is even more puzzling. It is sacrilegious to say that God could not remember the exact words He had spoken at Mt. Sinai. If God did not want an exact duplication of the original, then what is the reason for the variation?

The tradition offers an answer which actually is not an answer but an interpretation. It is assumed that God had His inscrutable reason for presenting two versions. Thus the Talmud say (R.H. 27a) that God spoke both versions simultaneously at Mt. Sinai: "Remember and Observe were spoken in one utterance," something which no human being can do or hear.

The Decalogue in Exodus gives the Creation as the rationale for the day of rest, while the Deuteronomic version emphasises the Exodus. Non-orthodox scholars, Jewish and Christian, maintain that Deuteronomy is not the work of Moses at all but was composed in the eighth century B.C.E. by learned Scribes influenced by the prophetic teachings of social justice.

Naim Dangoor writes:

Far from being the only Book of the Pentateuch not written by Moses, there is strong reason to believe that *Deuteronomy* is the only Book of the Pentateuch actually written by Moses: It was his autobiography, written in the first person. Such was the learned opinion of the late Rabbi Solomon Sassoon.

The version in Exodus of the Fourth Commandment gives the text concerning Sabbath observance to commemorate God's Day of Rest after creating the universe, as handed down from very early times and as observed by Abraham himself. In the version in Deuteronomy written 40

years later, Moses puts the stamp of the Exodus from Egypt on the Sabbath institution.

For, if Deuteronomy was not written by Moses himself, who could possibly have dared to tamper with the text of the Ten Commandments?

Another explanation, which can be less controversial is that the version in Exodus was that written by God on the Tablets before they were smashed, and the version in Deuteronomy gives the modified version in the second delivery. That was therefore, the version that was put inside the Ark of the Covenant.

If and when the Ark of the Covenant is discovered, it will be found that the text of the Ten Commandments is the one appearing in Deuteronomy.

The change of emphasis from "creation" to "exodus" is apparent in the Eve-of-Sabbath Kiddush which starts by saying that the Day of Rest is a memorial to the work of creation and ends up by saying it is remembrance to the "exodus from Egypt".

I find it odd that such an ancient institution as the Sabbath, which goes back to Abraham and even earlier, is linked to the "exodus from Egypt". I often tend to omit the words: "Zekher Litzith Mizrayim".

It is remarkable that the Exodus text begins with "remember" which is clearly an indication that the ancient institution of the Day of Rest was with the Hebrews from very ancient times, and the Children of Israel were being asked not to forget their ancient tradition and heritage.

Even before the Ten Commandments were first announced, the Children of Israel were forbidden to gather Manna on the Sabbath. This shows that the institution of the Sabbath was with the Hebrews from earlier times.

Similarly, the Deuteronomic text begins with "observe", which seems to indicate a new mandate.

THE WRITING OF THE SECOND TABLETS

EXODUS XXXIV: 1, 2, 4.

And the Lord said unto Moses: 'Hew these two tables of stone like unto the first; and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which thou didst break. And be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to Me on the top of the Mount.'

EXODUS XXXIV: 27,28.

And the Lord said unto Moses: 'Write thou these words, for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.' And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

So, who wrote the second tablets, God or Moses? In Deuteronomy the second Tablets too are said to have been written by God.

A pragmatic explanation of the discrepancy in the texts of the fourth commandment can be offered thus. Aaron was the custodian of the Abrahamic scriptures, which explains his Egyptianised "brother" Moses' utter dependence on him. But, after the Golden Calf incident, he fell out of favour, which led Moses to revise the fourth commandment from "Creation" to Exodus."

The operation of the world in six days may be taken as a reference to the work done in heaven. The execution of God's plan has taken billions of years ●

ABRAHAM AND ISLAM

The Arabs did not have a tradition of their own concerning Abraham. They took all their information from Jewish sources, such as the various Jewish communities that flourished in Arabia from the time of David and Solomon.

Mohammed took the attempted sacrifice by Abraham of his son as the supreme act of obedience to God which was the foundation of the philosophy of Islam as complete obedience to the will of Allah. Moslem tradition gives Abraham precedence even over Mohammed himself.

At the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem the inscription is "There is no God but Allah, and Abraham is the friend of Allah."

It is doubtful if Abraham ever went to Mecca and established the Kaaba, as claimed by the Moslems. It is perhaps a remnant and a compromise of the ancient Arab form of worship.

MY DETENTION AT ABU-GHREB

by: Uri Ben-Asher M.D.
(Nuri Salim)
Tel Aviv

Towards the end of October, 1949, the Criminal Investigation Department or C.I.D., of the Iraqi police, mounted a midnight raid on various Jewish houses in Baghdad. The object of this exercise was to locate certain members of the Jewish Zionist underground, the Hatnua'ah.

The police had been informed of that secret organisation by a sixteen-year old boy, who, having been accused of communism, was about to be imprisoned for a long period. His name was Saeed.

Iraq was under martial law, and had been since the 15th of May, 1948. It was, of course, no accident that this date happened to coincide with the inauguration of the state of Israel; in fact, during that final week of October, scores of Jewish boys and girls had been arrested and were, so rumour had it, being brutally interrogated and imprisoned.

It was to protest at these detentions that the Jewish community of Baghdad had declared a general strike, with hundreds of protesters demonstrating in front of the public offices of the city.

One Saturday evening – the evening of the 29th October, 1949, to be exact – sporting a new suit and tie, I set out from the old quarter, en route to a rendezvous with some school friends in the well-to-do Jewish Bataween quarter; for I was, I think I should add, in the fourth form of Shamash High School at the time. And while I do not doubt that history was being made about me, I confess my energies lay elsewhere; with, in fact, my determination to pass my English Matriculation exam. Anyway, to return to that fateful evening, I had by now left the quarter and was proceeding down Al-Rashid, the main street of Baghdad, when I stopped to drink a glass of pomegranate juice at a shop in front of the Hotel Semiramis.

Hardly had I finished my drink, however, when I felt my right arm gripped by a powerful hand. This, it transpired, belonged to a dark, fat man in civilian clothes, who in turn was accompanied by another man, also in civilian clothes. Apart from this pretence, neither one of them attempted to further disguise his identity and would I be so kind as to come with them to answer a few questions.

A van arrived and I was pushed inside. Here were two other young Jews, one well-dressed the other exceedingly tall.

On our arrival at a building on the banks of the Tigris river, the officers lost no time in accusing me of being a member, the other man an instructor, and the tall one a 'pole', a leader that is, of the Hatnua'ah.

And so they asked me a few questions.

After being interrogated for three days by the Criminal Investigation Department of the Iraqi police, two facts emerged.

One, that a certain Saeed testified that, some years earlier, he had witnessed me among a crowd of students speaking in support of a Jewish state.

Two, that Saeed along with two police officers in civilian clothes, were combing the streets of Baghdad in search of suspected persons when, unable to locate the said persons in their usual hiding places, the ever-obliging Saeed had pointed to a certain young man drinking pomegranate juice in front of the Semiramis Hotel.

Hands securely handcuffed behind my back, cursed, insulted and offended, I was forced to my knees, while the Investigating Officers of the Iraqi police cross-examined me with the aid of a stick. A stick made all the heavier by the weight of my interrogator's experience.

They asked me if I was, or had ever been a



The Honorable Madeleine Albright who was born in Prague, was recently appointed U.S. Secretary of state by President Clinton and confirmed by Congress.

The above picture shows David Dangoor (son of Salim Dangoor of Stockholm) executive Vice President of Philip Morris International and Mrs Albright at a Dinner given in her honour when she was U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

The Dinner was hosted by Jack Keenan, president and CEO, Kraft General Foods International, and Mr Dangoor.

When Time Magazine disclosed Mrs Albright's Jewish identity, Naim Dangoor sent her the following fax:

member of the Hatnua'ah. I replied that I had never been a pupil at the Noa'am school. Well I thought it rather good, considering the circumstances. After all, the two names sounded almost the same. My attempt at subterfuge, however, was greeted with derision; my interrogators mockingly inquired if I thought I had been brought there to audition for the stage.

With nothing to save my innocence, and never having been involved in any political organisation whatsoever, I pleaded devotion merely to my studies; which for me, of course, at that time, could mean one thing and one thing alone. Perhaps if I were to mention it to my captors, perhaps then they might appreciate my scholarly devotion.

I mentioned it.

They had never even heard of the English Matriculation exam.

I was flabbergasted. Of course, they pretended ignorance, I thought, everyone has heard of the English Matriculation exam. I persisted in my explanation.

"And what of it?" cried one of them impatiently. "Do you imagine provocations and demonstrations are made by primitive and turbaned persons?"

It is difficult now, with the passage of time, to express quite what those words did to my world. My faith in my studies, which, in their objectivity, I had always believed were all the proof, if proof were needed, of my neutrality in the face of life. Impartial, neither taking sides nor conferring blame; governed by nothing less than the desire for truth.

My last line of defence gone, there was nothing left for me to do but sign my confession; or should I say their confession? For no word of it was mine.

Afterwards, they suggested that I might be given my freedom if I agreed to co-operate with them. Even

You owe it to yourself, to Truth and to Justice to shed the camouflage which was forced on your parents when they fled your country of origin.

If you do not wish to return to Judaism, you can at least join the movement that gives equal recognition to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, regardless of sect – highlights their common points and not their differences.

The traditions of these monotheistic religions go back beyond Mohammed, Jesus and Moses, to Abraham, Noah and Adam who became father of our present civilisation by his invention of agriculture some 9,000 years ago.

This is the way forward to the next millennium in a world which destiny has given you the privilege of reshaping●

I understood I was being asked to become an informer. I flatly refused.

Three days later, I and a dozen other 'suspects' were taken to the detention centre of Abu-Ghreb. The room measured 3 x 4m² with a dirt floor and a low door of 1.5m in height. There were no windows. For the first six days out of those seven weeks, I was alone in the room.

During the day it was dark. And during the night I heard only the dry scraping of cockroaches as they scuttled about my cell; that and the faint songs of the Iraqi soldiers keeping watch beneath the prison walls.

I was in the infamous Abu-Ghreb. A military prison on the outskirts of Baghdad, I had often passed it on my bicycle.

On the seventh day, my isolation came to an abrupt end, as five other Jews were brought to my cell, and an oil lamp was supplied.

Six weeks later, on the 15th December, 1949, I was brought before a military tribunal, comprising of two lieutenant colonels and two civilian justices. The presiding judge was the notorious Colonel Abdulla Al-Naa'sani.

The whole proceedings were to take approximately four hours – four hours for myself and forty others. And we were only the first group. I recall that the tribunal president, having read out my forced confession, asked me if I supported the views of the Zionist propagandists. My answer to the trick question was, of course, negative.

And so, after seven weeks and three days in custody, I was acquitted through lack of sufficient evidence. Most of the men and women with me that day were sentenced to between three and four years imprisonment.

And of my schoolfellows, not one was arrested on account of my confession●

FROM THE HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION

Dear Mr Dangoor,

As a former subscriber to *Land & Liberty* you will be interested to know of the recent formation of the Henry George Foundation of Great Britain.

You will agree, I am sure, that the need for an alternative analysis of economic and social problems is ever more pressing. We have witnessed the demise of communism and the global progress of free market capitalism over the past decade, but as Henry George predicted, this progress has not led to freedom from poverty. In the UK we have unemployment, we have homelessness and its associated ills, and we shall surely get inflation again. The story is repeated in country after country.

The Henry George Foundation holds that prosperity and justice can be established in the economic system.

1948 – The International Conference on Land Value Taxation at Matlock Bath.

Abridged report on the Conference – from: *Land and Liberty*

The weekend Georgeist Conference at Matlock Bath, May 21st-23rd proved a gratifying success. Cromford Court, the ideally situated hostel of the Friendship Holiday Association, was filled to overflowing.

The Conference was given an international

character by the attendance of Mr Bue Björner of the Justice Party, member of the Danish Parliament; Mrs Caroline Björner; Miss I. M. Kristensen, deputising for her father, Mr K. J. Kristensen, chief of the Danish Valuation Department; Mr Ole Wang, of Norway, and Mr and Mrs N. E. Dangoor, of Baghdad. Mrs Björner is a past President and now Executive member of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, and Mr Wang is one of its Vice Presidents.

Mr Dangoor, member of the International Union, stated his adhesion in a striking letter about conditions in Iraq, published in *Land & Liberty*, January, 1947.

More than 80 attended from all parts of the country.

The first session was devoted to recent Legislation and Future Prospects, led by Mr A. W. Madsen.

Mr Bue Björner recited the Danish political history. At first people were opposed to the Henry George idea; then they would "look into it"; then it became "a good idea," and finally they said they were "always in favour of it."

Later, much later – it had been a great struggle – they had made themselves a force. But up to 30 years ago they had worked through the political parties and had attained the first practical results, the separate valuation of land apart from improvements. That meant a lot in the shaping of opinion. It was the turning point and had been the cause of the whole progress

for Georgeism in the last couple of decades. He saw no cause for pessimism. The discussion was continued by other members of the Conference.

Mr N. E. Dangoor expressed his delight that the Conference had coincided with his visit to this country and spoke of how he came into the Movement. Here we wish to reprint the letter he wrote from Baghdad to *Land & Liberty*, January, 1947: – (summarised by *Scrive*).

"I arrived at the justice of land value taxation and freedom of trade many years before I got to know of the writings of Henry George a few months ago. Land values, bonds, paper money, and the like, do not represent real wealth; they represent the total indebtedness of a community to some of its members. The injustice of such indebtedness can be realised when a new generation is born. Instead of previous generations, a child is born in a civilised country with a large debt on its hand increasing as the country in question is more advanced. The full application of land value taxation may prove to be a turning point in the history of mankind. In the Middle East, in particular, where the danger of Communism is most apparent, it is possible that the Land Value Taxation policy would win over the masses and thereby save the Middle East for civilisation. For this reason Land Value Taxation is an urgent job in the Middle East, and its far-reaching effects should be realised by all concerned●"



Front row: Left to right: standing at left, Vic Blundell, Lady holding young Jon Blundell; Seated: A. W. Madsen;; Mr Boothman; Mrs Maud Willott;; A. H. Peake;.....; Grace Levy;; 2nd row: 2nd from the right, Ashley Mitchell. Standing at the back is Naim and Renée Dangoor●

كَيْفَ اسْتَعْبَدْتُمْ وَقَدْ وَلَدْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَمْهَرًا

How come you have become enslaved, when your mother bore you free? Paper money should be issued by the borrower and not by the lender – President Kennedy wrongly said, “Don’t ask what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country!” – When people get together they have every right to expect some benefit over and above what each person could do for himself – Every citizen is entitled to a national dividend – Every baby in Britain is born to a debt of £20,000 – One man’s meat is another man’s flesh – Economics and the generation game – Should one generation pay tribute to preceding generations, or inherit their wealth? – Can a father sell his son into slavery to pay for work done? – Is a son liable to pay for his father’s debts? – The Bible says, “the poor shall always be with you.” This is not a commandment but a reproach.

Lady Thatcher says: “No generation has a freehold on this earth, all we have is a life tenancy with a full repairing lease.”

By: Naim Dangoor

Ever since my school days in Baghdad, and later as an engineering student at London University, I have kept thinking of the economic ills of human society the bad distribution of wealth and of income, poverty amid plenty, booms and depressions, greed and usury.

I watched the capitalist system that promises to make everybody rich and fails. Like a giant lottery, capitalism gives people an equal opportunity to rob each other and, like in a lottery, the winners are few and losers many.

I watched Communism that attempts to make everybody poor and succeeds. I realised that Communism was not the remedy but the symptom of capitalist ills. “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,” did not spell equality, but a huge slave labour camp, and that Communism had no future. I was privileged to live to see the demise of Soviet Communism.

I watched Socialism that preaches the public ownership of the means of production and distribution, and realised that if Socialism is the answer then the state must not be given a monopoly but only be allowed to compete with the private entrepreneur.

I watched the monetary system, and wondered why money can grow if I lend it to other people, but it does not grow if I keep it in my pocket!

By 1940, I identified certain economic areas that needed investigation and remedy – “community values”, such as land, “fictitious wealth”, such as national and municipal debts, paper money, and credit, and who has the right to issue them. The transmission of wealth, both positive as well as negative, from one generation to another; the right of every child to be born free of debt; storage of wealth, economic frontiers instead of political frontiers.

In July 1941, barely a month after Germany’s treacherous attack on the Soviet Union, and two months after the Farhood, I wrote my pamphlet “The New World Order” (summarised overleaf) which reflects some aspects of my economic philosophy.

Years later, I came across “Progress and Poverty” by Henry George in which he tinkers with the problem of poverty amid plenty and offered “Land Value Taxation” as a solution to the economic ills of modern society. Henry George wrote about the same time as Karl Marx. But, whereas Marxism had a rise and fall, Henry George’s economics never caught on. In the summer of 1948 my wife and I attended the International Conference on Land Value Taxation at Matlock Bath, near Manchester. (See photograph). I was asked to say a few words and what I said was that how come half a century after Henry George his solution has not taken off. Now, another half a century on, Henry George’s approach is of little relevance.

Over 3,000 years ago, Moses himself attempted to deal with the economic problems of a community. The Bible condemns usury,

the lending of money on interest, but offers no practical solution to the need for borrowing and credit. The Jubilee system, by which every 50 years accounts are closed and a fresh start is made, is an ingenious but a crude solution that should be studied and brought up-to-date.

The foundations of my economic philosophy for the next millennium are:

1. No equality but equal opportunity;
2. Economic communities instead of political frontiers;
3. Every community to ensure minimum livelihood for its members;
4. Money to be issued by the borrower and not by the lender;
5. Community values – to be identified.

RULE 1: Current public expenditure must be covered by current taxation – balancing the budget.

RULE 2: Extraordinary expenditure can be covered by borrowing.

RULE 3: The national debt at any time must not exceed the taxable assets of the nation, and should only be a fraction of it.

RULE 4: At the moment the nation has no taxable fixed assets, hence there is an outstanding national debt and as a result, every child is born to a debt of some £20,000. This must be reversed and every child must be born to a net heritage. To achieve this we must identify the taxable national assets. These can be roughly the site values and mineral wealth. Where Henry George went wrong was to allow land value taxation to cover government expenditure only. These should be more available to provide a national dividend, a share in Britain plc. A son does not inherit the debts of his father and is not liable for them. So why should one generation inherit all the debts incurred by a previous generation?

At present, citizens of a country are treated worse than foreigners. They have to pay the taxes and give their life to defend their country, which a foreigner is exempt of. Citizens are treated as hostages. Citizenship must be a valuable asset, instead of being a liability.

RULE 5: The national dividend to be paid only to first or second generation born in the country. This will put new immigrants at a disadvantage and would avoid the need to restrict them physically.

RULE 6: Income tax is immoral and should be abolished. At present, income tax is in fact a turnover tax. If I earn £200,000 a year I am left with £130,000. If I employ a secretary at £40,000, he will pay another tax on it leaving him with £25,000. If he employs an assistant at £15,000, another tax will be paid. So several taxes are paid on the same money. Personal allowances are inadequate. There should be no tax on income upto £100,000, 20% over £100,000. Likewise, corporation tax to be fixed at 20%.

RULE 7: The power of compound interest has exercised the minds of public thinkers who unanimously condemn usury (the lending of

money at interest) but offered no practical solution to the problem.

Court Jews got around the Christian ban, but later had to pay with their lives when they became too rich. Islamic banking only tinkers with the symptoms but does not deal with the root of the problem. The trouble with the monetary system is the kind of money available. The kind of money available today is treated as a commodity. As such, it is a development of the barter system. Even paper money was first issued by the clearing banks and when this gave the clearing banks too much advantage, it has been issued by a central bank.

TRUE MONEY SHOULD BE ISSUED BY THE BORROWER, AND NOT BY THE LENDER.

A central authority can decide the issuing ability and limitations of each borrower. Alternatively, this central authority can give everyone a credit allocation, interest-free, at various stages of their life: on being born, on leaving school, on entering university, on getting married, on buying a house, on having children, etc. Such allocation would depend solely on ability to repay, including repayment via the national dividend.

The main requirement of money supply would have been solved without incurring interest. The amount of interest that a nation has to pay for the convenience of money is a scandal. Of course, there will always remain a free market in money which would be marginal. This is where immigrants will have to go to get money.

Before Britain joins the EMU we should ensure the kind of money that we should have in the future.

RULE 8: Any borrowing needed to fund expenditure that will benefit future generations should be determined on the scope and length of that benefit. No borrowing should exceed 30 years.

RULE 9: No borrowing should be made to re-schedule a maturing loan.

RULE 10: To investigate what other assets can be identified to be subject to taxation the same as land site values.

RULE 11: Imprisonment can give way to depriving a guilty person of part of his national dividend.

In 1940, the money in circulation in Iraq amounted to a mere 3 million dinars (pounds) which was eminently inadequate to satisfy the monetary needs of an expanding economy. The merchant community of Baghdad filled the gap by issuing (promissory notes) to each other.

These kompialas were treated very seriously and, depending on the status of the issuer, circulated from hand to hand as actual money, and banks discounted them for cash. On the rare occasions that kompialas was not honoured at noon on the day of maturity, the issuer would be declared bankrupt. This was a prime example of money being issued by the borrower (or the debtor) and not by the lender (or creditor)●

THE NEW WORLD ORDER

by: Naim Dangoor

21.7.1941

Definitions:

- By a "generation" we mean the bread winning section of the community for the time being. This is about a quarter of the total population.
- By a "Community" we mean an economically independent group of people.
- By "National Wealth" we mean the total value of all the assets pertaining to the community.
- By "National Income" we mean the total annual income of the generating organ of the community.

Theorems:

- Every generation should by birthright be born free of all debts (inter se) but may be indebted as a whole to a previous generation for services rendered such as war, or to later generations for services about to be rendered such as large schemes, etc. Every generation should inherit completely the national wealth, and any allotment of this to members of one generation must not be transmitted to a later generation.
- Money should be made to vanish over a fixed period, (30-50 years). Likewise land must not be owned for more than (30-50 years).
- Other assets may be privately owned and transmitted indefinitely.
- Savings have no meaning if taken for a whole generation. Total savings equal total debts, and together they are equal to zero.
- The need to pay interest on money within the capitalist system is a crime within a crime.

Practice:

In the New Order the State will provide people with capital each according to his requirements. People will have an equal opportunity no matter what their connection is to a previous generation. There will not be any need for Taxation since there will be sufficient amortization of property regularly.

People who commit a crime can be deprived of their national dividend as the case may be. There will be no need for any further punishment●

Fax sent to

First Lady Hilary Clinton,

Congratulations and best wishes for the success of the first International Conference on Microcredit. It is a step in the right direction for the monetary system.

Moses condemned Usury, but did not offer any solution. Christians and Moslems followed suit, and ironically, employed Jews to do their banking. When the powers of Compound Interest was realised, the enriched Jews had to pay with their lives.

For sixty years I have been preaching that promissory money and credit have to be initiated by the borrower, and not the lender; by the debtor, not the creditor, by the consumer, not the banks. Such a system would rescue the world from the crippling interest charges which are ruining the world economy.

Today is a great day for the Capitalist System, and for Democracy, when people in need will be able to borrow on their repayment ability – without collateral and without interest.

Well done, Bangladesh!

Very Truly Yours,

Naim Dangoor

MICROCREDIT CONFERENCE

Organisers of the Microcredit Summit hope to launch a global movement to provide 100 million of the world's poorest families with access to credit and other financial services by the year 2005.

More than 2,000 government and private-sector representatives from an estimated 100 countries attended the events in Washington last February. U.S. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh, President Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Queen Sofia of Spain are among the schedule speakers.

Microcredit programs provide small loans to the very poor to help them start or expand small self-employment enterprises. The loans are usually for less than \$1,000 and sometimes for as little as \$4. According to the World Bank, microenterprises are typically informal sector businesses with five workers or fewer and with fixed assets valued at less than \$10,000.

This summit represents a coming-of-age for the development community. It is probably the largest humanitarian-inspired effort that is linked to business principles.

The document notes that despite impressive results in countries like Bangladesh and Bolivia – and extremely low default rates world-wide – existing programs reach only about eight million of an estimated 100 million families who could benefit from access to even tiny amounts of credit.

Microfinance is one way to unlock the wealth that is present in even the poorest parts of the world – the self-initiative of poor men and women.

The goal outlined in the summit declaration and plan of action is to make microenterprise lending available to the remaining 92 million needy families – 88 million from developing countries and four million from industrialised nations. It defines the "poorest" families in the developing world as the bottom 50% of those living below the poverty line. In industrialised countries, the plan of action focuses on all persons living below the poverty line.

The plan also pledges to target the world's poorest women, many of whom earn far less than their male counterparts and own no capital or land. Experts at the briefing stressed that providing credit to mothers is one of the most effective ways to alleviate poverty and its effects.

One of women's biggest expenditures is on food for their kids. The nutritional impact (of a small loan to a working mother) is often noticeable within days.

Overall, making credit available to an additional 92 million families will require an estimated \$21,600 million over the next nine years, according to the summit plan. It calculates that \$10,000 million would come from funds borrowed at commercial rates and from the savings of borrowers and others in their communities. The rest would be raised from multilateral and bilateral donors, grant-making organisations and other sources.

The World Bank, Citibank, MasterCard International, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are among 1,000 institutions that have committed to announcing contribution plans in the next 12 months, according to the Microcredit Summit Secretariat.

The summit was organised by RESULTS Educational Fund, a Washington-based non-profit organisation that promotes educational strategies designed to end world hunger●

MILLENNIUM JUBILEE

by: Naim Dangoor

Although the year 2000 CE is in fact an arbitrary date, it is the counting of the Common Era now used all over the world. It is an important chronological date and a psychological figure which puts an end to the murderous 20th century and, hopefully, starts a new century and a new millennium of Peace, Justice and Progress.

The Pope has suggested that the year 2000 be considered as a Jubilee year in accordance with the Bible (Leviticus 25: 10) which says, "Proclaim Liberty throughout the Land unto all the inhabitants thereof." In a Jubilee year slaves were freed, debts were forgiven, and land reverted to its original owner, in a sense, to the State.

The Pope is not interested in the slaves or the land but feels that, in view of the widening gap between rich and poor, the rich nations should forgo the debts of the poorer nations.

It appears that, like Jaha, the Pope is eager to give away what belongs to other people. We wish to make the following comments to the Pope:

- If you are so tender hearted, where were you during the Holocaust when millions of Jews were slaughtered in your native Poland?
- Where was your predecessor Pope Pius XII who knew full well what was going on but had an understanding with Hitler not to raise any objection or make any protest?
- The Jubilee year was meant to take place not once every 1000 years, but every 50 years.
- The economics of Moses, if fully and properly applied would also narrow the social gap in all countries.
- The Bible, and hence the Church, condemned usury but offered no solution for the need to borrow money. The International Conference on Microcredit which opened in Washington in February is a step in the right direction. Promissory money should be issued not by the lender, but by the borrower; not by the creditor, but by the debtor; not by the banker, but by the consumer.

This is the right way to rid the needy of crippling interest payments which would be more useful than a one-off act of charity to the poorer nations.

A fax in the above sense was sent to the Pope with copies to various religious leaders.

We received the following reply from Canon Fletcher, Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"The themes of your fax to the Pope have been noted. I enclose a booklet issued by all the Churches together on their position concerning the millennium which contains some reflections on the kind of questions you are raising."

Summary of the booklet:

The Government of the United Kingdom, through the Millennium Commission is investing hundreds of millions of pounds into marking the Millennium. Throughout the whole of the year 2000 a great exhibition/festival will be held at Greenwich with the hope of attracting some 15,000 visitors. This paper has been written by an ecumenical group working together.

The Millennium is a point at which to review the progress of the Kingdom of God in our lives and to pledge ourselves to its renewal. The degradation of the environment, the

THOUGHTS AND AFTERTHOUGHTS

By: Naim Dangoor

extremes of wealth and poverty, and the destruction caused by armed conflict, all cry out for a new world order based on his justice and peace. Today, the international debt crisis holds the poorest countries of the world in bondage to the richest. Both the World Council of Churches and the Vatican have appealed for the remission of debts. The lead up to the Millennium celebrations gives us a real opportunity to repent of past sins – corporate as well as personal – and to renew our moral vision for the future.

All authority ultimately derives from God, and it is to God that society should turn for its pattern for the future good of creation.

The Millennium and the theme of Jubilee: Christians have adopted from the Jewish tradition the challenge to celebrate particular moments as Jubilees. In the Old Testament the Jubilee meant lifting burdens from people, releasing them from debt and slavery, and returning the land, which was held to belong to God, to the people who originally lived on it. It was almost giving unfortunate people a chance to start again.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus recalled some of those specific Jubilee demands when he returned to his family home and first announced his mission in the synagogue in Nazareth – "He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Shenath Ratzon).

What could be more appropriate than for Christians to pray and work for the year 2000 to be "a year of the Lord's favour?"

There have been times when Christians have actively persecuted those of other faiths, and in our present multi-faith society, and celebration of Christian heritage must be accompanied by repentance.

While we should not be timid about pointing to the Christian story, there can be no place for triumphalism or denigrating the faiths of others. Indeed, in an increasing secular society there are important areas of common interest and action between members of all faiths.

OUR REPLY TO CANON FLETCHER:

I note that you too are promoting the idea of a Jubilee and, while this is a good idea, I think it should be done more frequently than once every 1,000 years.

The Church and, in fact any Church, can and should take an interest in bridging the gap between rich and poor. I for one have a number of ideas that could be used in that direction especially a way to avoid the crippling payments of interest on borrowed money. We should have an economics system that does not require occasional hand-outs to the needy, but a system that would prevent the polarisation of rich and poor in human society.

In his enthusiasm, Luke attributes the quotation to Jesus himself, whereas as you know, it is the opening of Isaiah 61. Jesus was only quoting it from the Old Testament.

Naim Dangoor adds: There is no mention of the Holocaust, the Inquisition or the Crusade in the Booklet. Christianity is still aggressive, attacking Jews from the pulpit undercover of Bible quotations.

STOP PRESS

A red heifer has just appeared in a religious Kibbutz in Israel for the first time in 2000 years. It is being taken as an Omen from God for the building of the Third Temple. The heifer cannot be used till it is three years old, which will be in the year 2000. Is there any significance in this?*

Good and Evil: There is no god of evil as the Zoroastrians claim. Our God says "I created good and I created evil." In fact, evil is the result of the imperfections of Creation. Any free will that we may have is also the result of the imperfection of creation. The reason why we can notice evil in the world is due to the fact that we were created in the image of a perfect God*

Regarding Haetzni's letter *Scribe* 66: If we don't want to consider Christianity and Islam as the daughter religions of Judaism, then we must accept them as our sister religions*

Biblical Flood: Some Scientists are now saying that a gigantic flood may have occurred 7,500 years ago in the Black Sea area. This seems compatible with the Ark having settled on Mount Ararat in Eastern Turkey.

Of course other floods may have taken place in Mesopotamia and elsewhere at a later date*

How life began: People have been wondering how life began on earth. Was it a purely chemical process, on land or in water? Scientists have now detected a dust cloud in the universe which may have sparked off the beginning of life.

Read the Bible, which says – "And the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters" *Gen. 1:2**

Virus X: The Continent of Africa, which lies squarely astride the Equator, was the birthplace of Man. It was also the storehouse of many diseases which, in the past, travelled to the outside world, via Egypt. In the Bible, God promises Israel not to put on them "the diseases of Egypt," in return for clean living.

Like the current Aids epidemic, many dangerous viruses lie dormant in Africa and the rainforests of South America, ready to attack mankind on contact.

Smallpox wiped out the natives of the New World, after Columbus, who brought back with him to the old world the venereal diseases*

Inflation: A friend of mine told me the other day that he ordered a ten-foot mahogany dining table for £3,500.

Guess how much I had paid for my 16-foot mahogany dining table which I ordered in 1962 and for the 12 reproduction chairs that went with it? (Answers at bottom of column)*

Israel elections: New electoral law allows the Prime Minister to be elected separately and thus to lead from the front and not from the rear. This is in line with the cherished traditions of the Israel Defence Forces*

Parallel Lines: Lines meet at a point. If parallel lines meet at infinity, as is generally accepted, then it means that infinity is a point, which is absurd. Infinity must be a circle or at least circular*

British General Election: The choice in this year's General election is between Labour's "soak the rich" and the Tories "soak the poor." The Party that wins more votes will win the government*

Why is there evil in mankind? This may be due to the trauma of the last Ice Age. This is evident by the fact that civilised behaviour is coming later to the people of the North than to the people of the South*

24 year old Mark Bosnich, Australian goalkeeper of Aston Villa football Club gave the Nazi salute before the Jewish supporters of Tottenham Club during a match in London last

October. This shows that anti-Semitism is still endemic in the Western World and is rearing its ugly head among the modern youth. People like that should be dispatched on the spot.

But, surely, that would be a harsh sentence? Surely, the punishment must fit the crime?

Yes, indeed. The crime in such cases is the Holocaust itself. For anyone who follows Nazi ideology, who attempts to revive racism and anti-Semitism, or who denies the Holocaust is as if he had committed that crime himself. "And let all the people hear and fear"

Some historians question the number of Israelites involved in the Exodus from Egypt as being 650,000 men of fighting age, and suggest 50,000 or even 5,000 as a true figure. But as recent events in Africa have demonstrated, a million refugees can move across hundreds of miles without much logistic difficulties*

JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Man's rightful expectation to divinity was developed further by the Prophets to the point that Isaiah speaks of Isaiah's prophecy in Verse 9:6. The founders of Christianity gave all these attributes exclusively to Jesus, where they should be attributes of all of us. By believing that resurrection, as supposedly achieved by Jesus, will be the prize of all those who follow Christianity, are in fact barking up the wrong tree! For imperfect creatures that we are, we do not deserve eternal life.

Therefore, not resurrection but ultimate divinity as indicated by Judaism, should be our aim, when some of us will be able to join the infinite and eternal presence of ELOHIM.

It is clear that Judaism is more in tune with continuing scientific discoveries, about the origin of the universe etc., and is therefore more suitable to be the religion of the future*

JUDAISM AND ISLAM

Far from being the last word in Monotheism, Islam in fact, goes back to the primitive attitude of Abraham to submit completely to the will of God and his readiness to sacrifice his son. This submission "Islam" gave Mohammed the name of his new religion.

But Abraham's grandson Jacob, our third Patriarch, came to reject this master-slave relationship between God and man. For wrestling with ELOHIM Jacob earned the name of "Israel", for "thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Henceforth, Judaism regarded man not the unquestioning slave of God, but the junior partner of our Creator. After all, we were created in the image of God*

(Answer: table £70, 12 chairs £18)

The coming General Election in the U.K. is a race between Labour's "Soak the Rich", and the Tories', "Soak the Poor."*

WHO IS COUNTING?

Host – Have another sandwich.

Guest – No, thank you, I already had three.

Host – Actually, you had four, but who is counting?*

London

Vivi Bekhor

30 YEARS ON MEMORIES OF THE SIX-DAY WAR

by: Naim Dangoor

In the summer of 1967, I was so attuned to the developments in the Middle East, that I could almost prophesy the forthcoming events. Israel considered Nasser's closure of the Gulf of Aqaba as an act of war, but agreed to give peace a chance by waiting another week.

At a large gathering on 1 June, I noticed that friends were showing concern about their relatives in Israel. I reassured them by saying that the war will start on Sunday and will finish on Friday before Shabbath comes in, and Israel will be victorious. In the event, although the war started on Monday 5 June, it did last only one week and became known as the Six Day War, one of the most brilliant and classic wars of modern times.

One Monday 5 June, the first day of the war, as we all walked towards the Bevis Marks Synagogue in the City of London, the oldest in Britain, to offer prayers for the safety of Israel, I told my companion "that the war was already over." "What do you mean?" he asked in amazement, the war has only just started." But I was right. In those few hours of Monday morning, the war was already won. Israeli aircraft had destroyed the entire air force of Egypt and other Arab countries.

It was all organised by the CIA. American agents had told Nasser that Israel was going to strike at 5 a.m. on Monday, but advised him to be ready but wait until 5.30 before counter attacking, so that the world would not brand Egypt as the aggressor!

While Amr, the Chief of Staff, refused to accept this advice Nasser fell for it. He ordered all engines to be started and wait for 30 minutes. In that half-hour, Israeli planes dropped their heat-seeking bombs on Egyptian airfields, destroying Nasser's 300 warmed-up aeroplanes, but sparing the dummies.

Apart from one Israeli radio station giving the startling and unbelievable news at 7.00 a.m., the news of the strike was kept secret, not only from the world at large but also from Nasser and other Arab leaders. King Hussein saw on his radar a swarm of planes flying eastwards towards the Israeli coast. He telephoned Nasser to find out what was going on. Nasser assured him that these were Egyptian planes on the way to attack Israel. They were in fact the Israeli planes returning from their accomplished mission.

That Monday evening with the news blackout still on, 6,000 London Jews and friends assembled at the Royal Albert Hall demanding international support for Israel to save her from the Arab onslaught.

Despite Israel's pleading with him that they had no designs on Jordan or the West Bank and east Jerusalem, King Hussein, who has more lives than a cat, plunged himself into the fighting. He then lost the Arab areas of Palestine which Arafat is now trying to regain.

In mid-May, I had arranged for a cocktail party at home for 18 June. As the war broke out I was advised to cancel the party. I said, no: by the time of the party, we shall either be celebrating a brilliant victory or we shall be making a collection for Israel.

As I had expected, the cocktail party was on and we all celebrated with champagne, Israel's Six Day Victory ●



THE MIDDLE EAST EXPLODES:

Israel v ALL the Arabs WAR!

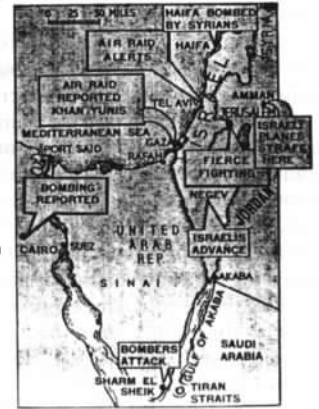
Tanks and planes in fierce battle

Britain aims for cease fire

Evening Standard Foreign News Desk

THE long-feared war between Israel and Egypt broke out at dawn today. It looked as if Israel, provoked by a threatened Egyptian air attack, was the first to strike on land but the fog of war obscured the facts.

Furious land and air battles were reported by both sides. While command forces battled in and



ROBERT CARVEL
A Foreign Office statement, expressing the British Government's policy, concerning the Middle East conflict, is reported.

The other news



Gen. Moshe Dayan, Mrs. Dayan, Renée & Naim Dangoor

SIGNS

by: Dr. Victor Sasson - New York

Bliss is his who can read God's signs well,
And, like a good motorist, track life's path,
Without a hitch. He reaches higher peaks.
Gets a glimpse of heaven while still on earth.
As faith guides his hands on the steering wheel,
He will not stray into treacherous roads,
Nor will he fear the rumblings of the clouds;
His peace of mind he reckons as his wealth.
But those who choose these signs not to heed -
Their fancy on worldly assets must feed -
Lose sense of direction and face dead-ends,
Where securities may yield no dividends.
O grant Thy road signs are ever before me,
That I may secure my right way to Thee ●

شهر الما عندك بمنو حسيه لك بعد أيامو
Shahr elma endak beenou hseeb la t'ed
eyamou.

- The month in which you have no income, do not count its days.

THE CREEPING OLD AGE, AND THE PRICE OF LIVING IN THE PAST

by Albert Moshi

The rueful past I must accept and bury,
To survive the misfortunes of time and hope.
To alleviate the burdens I am loath to carry,
I seek to learn when to resist and how to cope,
With the resurrection of images now forever gone.

I want to accept reality with its joy and pain,
Not to shirk and live with memories alone,
Confused while I am still healthy and sane ●

أبى نخبى ألف ولد وألف ولد ما نخبى أبى
Ab ghabba alf walad wa alf walad ma ghabbu ab.

- One father can support a thousand children but a thousand children cannot support one father.

The Halachot of the Ben Ish Hai

by: Hacham Yosef Hayyim z"l

English translation published in Israel in 1989

Foreword by: Hacham Yaakov Hillel

We are deeply honoured to present the English translation of the Halachic section of the Ben Ish Hai, by the universally renowned gaon and kabbalist, Hacham Yosef Hayyim z"l of Baghdad, whose halachic rulings are followed unanimously by the Sephardic communities throughout the world. From the moment it was published, the Ben Ish Hai was accepted as the standard Code of Law for Sephardim, just as the Mishnah Berurah is unswervingly followed by the Ashkenazim. It was studied diligently in synagogues and medrashim by scholars and laymen alike, particularly in the communities of Iraq and Syria, but also in North Africa and Jerusalem. Even during the author's lifetime, as well as in later generations, Torah giants regarded his decisions as absolute and binding, and the adherence to this halachic standard has continued until today in Sephardic communities around the world.

The uniqueness of the work stems from the fact that its author was not merely a giant in the wisdom of the revealed Torah, but also one of the greatest exponents of the wisdom of the

kabbalah in recent times.

Laws of hand-washing in the morning:

1. One must wash one's hands after sleeping because, during sleep, an aura of impurity settles upon the hands, and it can only be removed with water. It is explained in Yefeh Sha'ah that, in reality, a similar aura also descends upon the feet, but we are not able to remove it; this was only possible in the Beth Ha-Miqdash where, through its extreme sanctity, the Kohanim were able to achieve this when they prepared themselves each morning by washing their hands and feet. However, on erev Shabbath, we are also able to remove it through the sanctity of the approaching Shabbath.

2. In order to remove the aura of impurity from the hands, they must be washed alternately – not consecutively the correct sequence of washing one's hands in the morning is as follows. One picks up the vessel in one's right hand, places it in one's left hand, and pours water over the right hand; then one passes the vessel back to one's right hand, and pours water over the left hand. This sequence should be repeated again twice, so that in all, water is poured over each hand three times.

3. Our Teacher the Ari z"l requires that after having washed one's hands alternately three times each, one should rub them together.

4. After having rubbed the hands together, one should keep the fingers pointing upwards and lift up one's hands level with one's head....

The *b'rachah "al n' tilath yadhayim"* should be recited immediately after lifting up one's hands. This is the reason for the wording of the *b'rachah "al n' tilath yadhayim"* (on lifting up the hands), and not *"al n' hizath yadhayim"* (on washing the hands)....

Laws pertaining to the Lavatory:

One may not speak at all in the lavatory, even about secular matters, since the words themselves will become subject to the impurity of the place. It is however, permissible to grunt, since one does not articulate words thereby.

It is forbidden even to think of sacred matters whilst in filthy alleyways, or in the lavatory, bathroom or bath-house. One may not even think of anything connected with Mizwoth, for example, the requirements of charity, Shabbath, mazoth, or arba ah minim.

There is an early custom of the very pious who, before entering a lavatory, recited a short entreaty to the angels which accompanied them, asking them to wait outside until they returned.

Scribe: Since our younger days in Baghdad, we have always followed strictly these and other rules of Ben Ish Hai*

MEMORIES FROM SCHOOL DAYS IN BAGHDAD

by: Victor Ozair-Los Angeles

My description of the alumni reunion of Shamash and Alliance schools which appeared in *The Scribe* of September 1996, page 19 brought back more memories of some joyful and outstanding events which took place in those precious schooldays in Baghdad.

These events included rare moments of intense joy and laughter inside the classroom and the school yard when we took advantage of the teacher's absence and the start of a pouring rain to sing so loud some odd clumsy songs. In those stolen moments all the students were excited, thrilled with fun and shouting loud those peculiar melodious words. Then the emotions jumped up fervently with voices shrieking, hands clapping and inner selves high with ecstasy. There was an instant show of spiritual exultation. Life suddenly was inspired with lasting joy and beauty, and happiness was complete. Yes, those were the brief happy unforgettable moments we stole out from our actual daily life routine when we were young one day.

However, as soon as the teacher showed up, we came down to reality and continued with our studies.

These songs were sang with enthusiasm also by young Jews in Baghdad during other occasions, such as when they travelled together on a school trip, or while they learned to swim across the river Tigris during a swimming course arranged by the swimming school.

In the Israeli Army I was once training with a company of soldiers most of whom were from Baghdad. As if by magic, someone started singing one of those songs, and the company followed with all the zeal, the laughter and the craziness. To tell the truth, we all felt as if we were living life all over again with its innocent joy and fun.

These songs are specifically children and youth songs. They form a part of our rich Baghdadian folklore. Each one depicts a specific

meaning and has a story to tell. Some songs stress morality, others are funny, amusing and arousing humour and laughter.

I am putting down hereunder a few of these songs with translation of some of them:

طلعت اشامية على قبة عيشي
عيش بنت الياش تلعب بالتمشاة
صاح الديك بالستان الله نصر السلطان

Tal' et el shamaisa ala qebbet Aisha, Aisha bent el pasha tel' ab bel kheskhasha Sah el deek bel bestan Allah yensser el sultan.

The sun shone upon Aisha's room. Aisha, the daughter of the pasha; she plays with a rattle. The cock shouted in the garden. God saves the Sultan.

ياطرة زهبي زهبي على عناد العلووي
علووي بيديا فاسا يمشي وينقر راسا

Ya matra zekhi zekhi ala enad el alawtchi, alawtchi beeda fassa yemshi wei-nagger rassa.

Oh rain: pour, pour in spite of the grain merchant. The grain merchant has a hammer, he walks and hits his head with it.

Interpretation: Rain brings down grain prices in spite of the grain merchant with hammer in his hand walks and beat his head.

يا اولاد بلبول - بلي
ما شفتهم عصفور - بلي
ينقر بالطاصة - بلي
بيدا حياصة - بلي
قفها جلبلي - هي

*Ya wlad balboul - bali
Ma sheftem assfur - bali
Yenger bel tassa - bali
Beeda hayassa - bali
Qossen tchalabi: hé!*

لَقْلَقْ لَقْلَقْ أَمَكْ طَلَقْت
جابت ويوي أسما عليوي
بواق الصابونة من جوار الازونة
هفنه تهر ما بي نوا
لَقْلَقْ و طائر بالصوا

*Laglag laglag emmaq talgat
Jabet waiwi essma Elaiwi
Bawaq el saboona men jawa el razoona
Hafna tamer ma-bi nawa
Laglag ewtayer bel hawa*

سنبليكا مات القوا والواوي
يشرب مقوا

*Sembalaika mat el sakka wel wawi
yeshrab makka**

I am very interested in knowing about the Iraqi Jews. Please put me on your mailing list*
California Shant Markarian

Your last issue No: 66 (September 1996) was fantastic*
London Gloria Hillel

CUSTOMS AND LIFE IN BAGHDAD

by Eileen Khalastchy
Honorary Assistant Editor

SCHOOL:

After Succoth, at the re-opening of school, we used to say

Khalas el eed b'ferhetou kelman yerouh lestathetou (the holiday's pleasure is over, everyone back to school). We used to wear a uniform (tablier). In winter it used to be black with white collar and in summer white uniform with white collar. In lower classes, the teacher used to inspect our nails once a week. We had a neatly folded handkerchief in our closed hand and she used to pass by all the girls to see if our nails were cut and clean.

One of the games we played during the recreation was *hallad elou* (trying to catch each other while moving from pillar to post). Another game was *hallad mekhteboya* (hide and seek). Life was simple and the games were simple, but we had fun.

When we had daily exams, the student who finished first and handed the papers to the teacher, she would be asked to monitor the other students so that no one copies from the other.

Sometimes to punish a pupil, she would hit with a ruler on the tips of the fingers (the five fingers put together and then hit with the ruler). There were other types of punishments. If a pupil talks during the lesson or laugh and distract other pupils, the teacher would ask her to stand in the corner for the rest of the lesson. Sometimes the teacher gives a line to be copied 50 times or 100 times, it depends how harsh is the punishment. If sometimes the teacher can't tell who made the disturbance and none of the girls would say who did it, then the whole class would be punished. Sometimes but rarely, when a pupil makes lots of mischiefs in the class, then the teacher writes on a large paper that the girl is lazy and naughty and pin the paper to her back so the rest of the school would see it and shame her.

At school we learnt the basic sewing. But, in summer vacation we used to go to a teacher who taught us proper dressmaking and how to make our own patterns. We used to knit and do embroidery also.

CHILDREN:

When a baby is born and good luck comes to the family, they spoil the child and they say *q'doumou khaigh* (lucky arrival). The mother soon after giving birth was given *sharbat loz* (almond drink). The last child born was called *ghessal lebtoun* (the last of the womb). The mother *nefsa* after giving birth, she was pampered by her mother, in-laws and near relatives. She had no worry but to eat and feed the baby. Most women used to breastfeed their babies for 2 years.

When a child at the age of about six years old and his first tooth falls *sen lehteelb* (milk tooth), he used to throw it in the river saying *kheth sen el mejnoun wet'eeni sen el aqel* (take the mad tooth, and give me the wise one).

Story telling was thrilling for children and the only means of entertaining them and was very educating at the same time. Example of those stories which was known from generation to generation, the story of the "camel", a prince who used to wear a skin of a camel *kerk* etc. Another story of *abu arbataesh* who had a magic mirror etc. Maybe some of the readers still recall those stories which were thrilling for

the children.

Children used to enjoy watching *sendouq el denia* (peepshow). Someone passed the houses carrying a big box inside which he had a roll of different pictures which he turned himself and made a running comments *t'faraj weshouf ya walad* (watch and see young man etc). The children watched through a small window in the box, (probably 3-D pictures).

SYNAGOGUE:

Saturday morning, men used to go to synagogue and came back for breakfast. On Shabbath blessings were recited over *yas* (mertel) Boré Asé Bésamim and over *ghihan* (basil) Boré Asbé Bésamim.

Some women used to send their own comfortable chairs from home to synagogue for the High Holy Days.

Old religious women never combed their hair on a Saturday.

Sepharim were lined on one side in Synagogue and after the service everybody, men and women, were allowed to visit, kiss and make wishes. When the community was in difficulty or if no rain fell for a long time, the Rabbi announced a day of fasting and makes *Selikoth* (prayers) in the synagogue.

The last day of Succoth or Pesah *lailt ghas el sana*, people used to go near the river to see the water for good luck. On Pesah we used to cut rounds of the Seder Matzos and keep to throw in the river when it rises for good luck and also to calm the sea on a voyage.

The communal announcer used to make various announcements in the synagogue and used to say *aitha* (also) after each announcement and was thus called *abu-el-aitha*. During the week he used to hand out wedding invitations as there was no reliable post.

In the beginning of the 1970's, traffic lights were introduced in Baghdad for the first time. They took fines on the spot if someone did not cross at the traffic light. A peasant came from Hilla and was crossing in Rashid street when a warden stopped him and asked him for 2 dinars fine because he crossed from the wrong side. Shocked the man said "I came all the way from Hilla and paid only 1/4 dinar and now crossing the street I have to pay 2 dinars?!! Half an hour later he crossed the street wrongly again. When another warden stopped him for a fine, he told



Cluster of dates on one palm tree.

him "I have already bought a ticket." The warden said this is not a pass, you have to pay another fine.

They used to say *khethou el bent men hejeh emma* (choose the girl from the mother's lap) because a mother should be a good example to her children as they always imitate. It means the mother is the first school to her daughter. It also means it is never too early to choose a bride.

HOUSES

It was the custom when you move house, the new neighbours would prepare food and send it to the new people the first day they move in.

Women used to visit between them in the mornings. When leaving after visiting, the hostess accompany the visitor to the door and they stop and talk and sometimes it takes quite a while so they call it *waqfet el daghbouna* (the talk of the entrance hall).

If you send a gift of sweets or food to a neighbour or friend, it is not nice to return the dish empty. So you have to send back something in it.

To keep away insects from food, they used to have *kapaira* or *doulab moukhel* (a cupboard with wire mesh doors and sides) where they kept everything.

In old houses there were snakes and when a snake appears they used to say

hayet el beit la t'adaini wla adeeki (domestic serpent I won't harm you if you don't harm me), and the snake would turn and go away.

It happened to me when I was a child that a snake was about to enter the bathroom where I was washing on the ground floor, my mother was alarmed and didn't know what to do until



Copper cooking utensils as used in Iraq. Note the wide bottom and the narrow neck which resulted in even cooking.

my grandmother shouted to the snake the above formula, and the snake turned and went away.

Every spring *send we hend* (swallows) used to migrate from India to Baghdad and construct mud-nests in buildings. For many years they used to come and build their nests in one of our rooms on the riverside. The male used to make many trips to the riverside to bring mud to build the nest until a beautiful nest like a balcony was built on the wall, (we used to leave the balcony door opened during the day to give access to the bird). When the nest was ready, the female came and laid eggs. It was a pleasure watching them until time comes when the weather gets cold and they would fly back.

Some kept *belbel* (nightingale) in a cage. Their songs are very pleasant. They were given the water from boiled chickpeas which made their voice clearer and deeper.

A turkey was given *arak* before it was killed to make his meat tender.

CLOTHES:

Good dresses were kept folded in a *beqtcha* (square parcel) and they were brought out in feasts or weddings. They used to have *doulab abu jama* (cupboard with one mirror) or *abu jamtain* (with two mirrors).

It was the custom not to marry a girl before her elder sister as it was bad for the sister's reputation. Even the brothers did not get married before their sisters if they were of marriage age.



A coffee pot and special cups in which the strong Arab coffee is offered to guests.

ISRAEL and 1948:

After Israel's independence, the Jews were treated badly and some were arrested for trivial reasons. Someone was arrested because some of the bricks of his house had the shape of the star of David. With the help of an influential friend, he was freed after he proved that the matches had three stars and even the bricks in all mosques have the shape of a star.

Someone received a letter in which was nothing harmful but they told him *yousham minhou ra'eeha sahyonia* (it had a smell of Zionism). He had to pay 500 dinars to be freed.

When Jews left to Israel in 1951, they tried to take with them whatever they could. They wore many dresses one on top of the other. They took household things. Some even took *hawan* (brass mortar). One woman had gold coins which she wanted to take with her. So without telling her husband, she baked a cake and put the coins inside. At the airport, the customs officer was nice and helpful, so in gratitude the husband gave him the cake and his wife couldn't utter a word!



Palm groves near Baghdad.

BEREAVEMENT:

In Baghdad, it was the custom to have prayers morning and evening at home the whole week if someone of the family died. Long ago, they used to sit on mattresses on the floor (see illustration). Men didn't shave for a whole month. Only black coffee in special cups was served (see illustration) and tea (in stikan). The seventh, the last day of prayers, blessings were made over *ke'ekat* and fruits. Visiting people used to go in and sit and depart after the prayers. No one made conversation except few consoling words to the family. A year was kept and especially for the parents. Only on Rosh Hashana, light clothes were worn. Visiting women never wore colourful dresses and wore no jewellery and no make-up as a respect to the bereaved family. On the last day, they shake hands with the family and tell them *la yeghweekem shain lash* (wish you long life).

On Shavuout, home-made *halawa* was made and put inside folded Arabic bread with few blanched almonds on top and the name of the deceased written on a piece of paper, was sent to some acquaintances in memory of the person. To commemorate the dead person, a lamp or small chandelier was hung in the synagogue with the name and date of death printed on the lamp. Women never went to the cemetery.

A pregnant woman was not allowed in a house where someone died as it was said that the child will have *waz* (a sort of persistent rash).

From a strong shock, it is said that one can get diabetes. So it is known that the person be given a glass of water with sugar immediately when shocked.

An effeminate person used to be termed *zanana*, and a manly person *merdana* ●



Mattresses used for seating in oriental diwans.

I have read recently one of your editions and being of Iraqi origin, I fell in love with it. Please add my name to your mailing list ●
Montreal Abraham Cohen

I heard about your journal on Spectrum Radio and request you to include me on your mailing list ●
London Alfred Goldschmidt

King Hussein at Board Dinner

In the dreamy and surrealistic atmosphere at the recent Dinner of the Board of Deputies of British Jews with King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister John Major, as guest of honour, I almost waited for King Hussein to be proclaimed King of Israel. Rabbi Levy even paraphrased a blessing and asked us to stand, to confer on the king part of God's glory.

But even if Hussein can never aspire to become (woe unto us) the long awaited King of the Jews, the logical conclusion of the current Arab-Israeli peace process is for a Middle East Confederation comprising Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan and Palestine in which Israel can become the high-tech lynch pin. The military treaty between Israel and Turkey can provide the sheet anchor for the security of the region against neighbouring predators.

Iraq is down on its knees and Assad is like a bull waiting to be gored. Arafat is slowly turning from a lemon into a lemonade. Israel, Palestine and Jordan have the strength, ability and numbers to bring lasting peace to the region for their benefit and for the benefit of all its many nationalities.

The two symposia sponsored by me at St. Antony's College - Oxford, one in 1975 and another in 1985 came to the conclusion, that a Middle East confederation was not viable. Now things have changed, and we should revise our thinking.

Who better can head such a union than the perennial King Hussein? However, we must tread with caution, King Faisal I of Iraq was a Zionist but begat Ghazi who was a Nazi●

N. D.

I am writing to you on the recommendation of Dayan Toledano. I am an Iraqi from Samarra, very interested in studying the three major religions. In the course of my search I discovered certain facts that were hidden from me, as indeed from every Arab-namely, that neither Christianity nor Islam has any existence on its own, but both are derived, copied and made up from the original Jewish religion which is therefore the only true path to knowledge of God.

I have left the religion of Islam to no return and I became Jewish after years of profound search and inquiries. I would be grateful to receive as much information in Arabic as possible on my adopted faith to better know its teachings●

London

S. A.

The letter of Naim Mahlab of Montreal which appeared in (issue 64, page 19) pointed out that the name Bath-Sheba had something to do with number seven. It is more likely that Sheba means "oath" as in "Beth Sheba" Genesis 21:31.

There are also other speculations regarding the possible meaning●

Milan

Edward Yamen

I want to thank you from the deepest place of my heart for sending me from time-to-time the interesting editions of *The Scribe* which take me to a very interesting world of my childhood●

Tel Aviv

Reuven Rachamim



General Jack Jacob

Lieutenant General Jack Jacob of Babylonian Jewry was the Chief of Staff of the Indian Army that liberated Bangladesh from Pakistan in December 1971.

In a recent radio programme General Jacob recalled how he demanded the unconditional surrender of the Pakistan Army, announcing through a loudhailer "you are surrounded on all sides and you have no means of escape." Thereupon, the Pakistan Commander came forward and accepted the terms of surrender handed to him by General Jacob.

On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of that historic campaign we asked General Jacob for his comments on that occasion, The following fax was received from him in reply:

My Dear Naim,

"My book *Surrender at Dacca - Birth of a Nation* has been published here, in New Delhi. It has an account of the campaign with pictures, maps etc. Copies should be available in the U.K. around mid-April from:

Jaya Books,

3 Aylesbury Road Wing,
Leighton Buzzard, L47 0PD.

Tel: 01296-681071

Look forward to meeting with you in London and the meeting in Gibraltar of the Commonwealth Jewish Council."

Your esteemed efforts to illustrate to our young people and to the world the history and the events of the Jewish Community in Iraq and Baghdad in particular, will be appreciated by future generations "continue and succeed"●

Milan

Elie Menashe Isaacs

When steaming vegetables of different textures together, place the vegetable that will take longer to cook on the bottom of the steamer where it will cook more rapidly●

1 cup of raw rice will give 3 cups of cooked rice●

I feel sure you will be interested in an article by Helena Flusfeder which recently appeared in the "Times" about the Joint Water Research Programme, for which the proceeds of our Award dinner (when His Majesty King Hussein was honoured) were contributed.

Technion is clearly at the forefront of the research being conducted by Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian experts. You have helped put it there and, hopefully, will help keep it there in the months and years ahead●

British Technion Society
London

Bill Phillips
Executive Director

Extract taken from the Times Newspaper

OLD RIVALS POOL

TALENTS

by: Helen Flusfeder

By the year 2000, water, not oil, will be the most precious resource in the Middle East, according to a group of experts co-operating on a water research project at the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology.

Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian scientists are working on the project to develop new methods for treating urban waste water so that it can be used for irrigation in this water-scarce region.

The research, which was launched a year and a half ago, approved by Jordan's King Hussein and co-ordinated by the Technion's Water Research Institute. Working groups of Israel, Jordanian and Palestinian researchers have already met twice to discuss the programme - in Amman and at the Technion.

"Water has always been a vital issue in the Middle East. Although achievements in water development and use have been among Israel's hallmarks, in the country today, along with its neighbours, faces a water crisis of serious proportions. This crisis has deepened in the past decade regardless of the amount of rainfall" said Uri Shamir a water expert at the Technion and director of its Water Research Institute. He has been playing an active role in the negotiations between Israel and its neighbours on the issue of water.

"Nearly all renewable water resources are already being used and experts estimate that within two decades, Israel will have to develop an additional amount of several hundred million cubic metres per year to meet its water needs. Other countries, especially Jordan, are facing a similar situation. Israel and the world need to look to science, technology and research to manage water - the earth's most precious resource - and develop new sources." Professor Shamir said.

Naim Dangoor writes:

Turkey holds the key to the water situation in the Middle East for the medium and long term that is where the sources of Middle East rivers are located. Israel is well placed to develop, in addition to military co-operation with Turkey, an understanding regarding the efficient use and distribution of Turkish water resources●

The Yeshiva University High Schools of New York held a concert and Gala Dinner 9 April at Lincoln Centre New York City in honour of Dr. William Basri Alumnus of the Year (son of Dr. Albert Basri) and Mrs Ruth Fried and Rabbi Label Dulitz Educators of the Year●

BOARD OF DEPUTIES DINNER

by: Percy Gourgey

At the prestigious Annual Dinner of the Board of Deputies in the middle of February held at the London Hilton, the guests of honour were King Hussein of Jordan and the British Prime Minister, Mr John Major. While King Hussein spoke extempore without notes, the Prime Minister delivered a prepared speech. Many distinguished guests were present, including the Duke of Devonshire who proposed the loyal toast, the Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks and Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy who are the ecclesiastical authorities of the Board with the latter giving the traditional blessing when seeing a ruling monarch, and ambassadors and High Commissioners.

In his speech, King Hussein said how pleased he was with Jordan's Peace Treaty with Israel made in 1994 with the late Prime Minister, Itzhak Rabin. "Before this Treaty, too much blood was spilt and too much time wasted," observed the King. He added in lighter vein that he had shaken many hands that evening. He was accompanied by his beautiful wife, Noor. He gracefully proposed a toast to Mrs Major whose birthday was on that day.

In his speech, Mr Major made two very important points, among others. "Both sides must observe their obligations respectively in the Oslo Agreements," he declared. This is only right because sections of the media tend to blame Israel alone for her apparent lapses, whereas the Palestinians themselves are not carrying out some of their responsibilities. The other point by Mr Major concerned the promotion of racial harmony in Britain's multi-racial society. He also undertook to consider carefully the Board's request for legislation outlawing denial of the Holocaust (which is a subtle form of anti-Semitism and legislation on which exists in France, Holland, Belgium and Germany)●

I was delighted with your September issue and very happy to see the faces of Sit Simha & Istadh Ishak on page 50. I was one of 25 who graduated in 1959 from Shamash School at Frank Iny Building. Sit Simha taught Arabic Grammar and I can still remember struggling with an essay about where our classmates will be in 50 years! Anyone feels like doing this composition again?

I also rejoiced at the opportunity to be able to recite the Tefilah and the Blessings over the Korayii that Eli Sawdayee included from the book of "Birkhoth Shamaim" by Hacham Ezra Dangoor. This is precious since for us who stayed behind, after the "Taskeet", there was no formal Hebrew or Religious Education. The boys were prepared for their Bar Mitzvah and the girls were left to pick up whatever rituals a kosher home observed. I feel that this book is a priceless record of our observances and I would love to purchase a copy if possible at this time. The water-colours depicting life in houses without water or electricity are right on the mark! The ritual of beating the rice and lamb mixture in the Hawan on Friday to make Kibbeh for Shabbath continued until we left (1959-1961)... nowadays, thanks to the food processor, I can soak the rice and grind it in a minute... add chopped meat or turkey to it and make Kibbeh "Ala Kefak"! (as you like it)●

New York

Samira Balass



Saleh Mukamal with Chief Rabbi Hamra of Syria and his wife●

Saleh Mukamal

It saddens me to inform you that my husband, Saleh Mukamal passed away January 7, 1997.

Saleh was a warm, sweet, caring, gentle man, and a gentleman as well. The letters and many tributes that have come to my home attest to that fact. He was always involved in worthwhile community activities and his greatest rewards were self satisfaction. At his funeral a newspaper reporter from the Canadian Jewish News, mentioned to me that she had never before seen such an outpouring of love and respect for anyone. He was a very special man and I am grateful for the forty-one years we shared.

Saleh opened the world to me. We travelled to many different countries and the experiences we had, have become beautiful memories to cherish. I, on the other hand opened his eyes to a culture other than his own - Yes, we had our differences, but what we shared in common far outweighed anything else and we were bound as one. We loved our home and we were blessed with two wonderful sons, a beautiful and equally wonderful daughter-in-law, and two precious granddaughters.

My boys spoke at the funeral, and Seth recited a passage from "The Prophet" by Khalil Gibran. Saleh would have been very proud of his family and the words of love and respect they uttered.

Our lives were richer because of him: and we are all heartsick at his passing.

I am enclosing a copy of the Obituary that was in the Canadian Jewish News. I had no idea of the depth of his involvement in the rescue mission with Syrian Jewry.

Saleh was like a diamond with many facets and prisms that cast their light into many dark places allowing people to find Peace, Hope and Freedom●

Toronto

Bernice Mukamal

OBITUARY MUKAMAL LED IRAQI COMMUNITY

by Leila Speisman
From: The Canadian Jewish News

TORONTO: Saleh Mukamal, a noted businessman who was active in communal affairs and founded the Iraqi Jewish Federation of Toronto died recently. He was 82.

Mukamal was born in Baghdad in 1914, part of a large family, many of whom were merchants. In the early 1940's, he moved to New York, where he brought most of his family.

He moved to Canada in the early 1960's and became active in the real estate business, becoming president of Chelsea Homes.

Able to bridge the Sephardi and Ashkenazi cultures, Mukamal was both on the board of directors of Holy Blossom Temple and active in his own culture. He was national chair of the Canadian Jewish Congress committee for Jews in Arab lands and lectures extensively on Sephardi culture.

Judy Feld Carr, who preceded him as committee chair, enlisted his help for her work with Syrian Jews.

Bernice, his wife of 41 years, told the CJN that her husband was an avid Zionist. One of his great prides, she said, was that he was responsible for smuggling the first date shoots into Israel, which led to the flourishing date industry the country enjoys.

He was very proud of his Iraqi heritage, she said, and wanted to perpetuate customs as they were followed in Iraq.

"He was responsible for bringing an Iraqi sefer Torah from Westminster Synagogue in London (through the efforts of Naim Dangoor - Ed.) to Holy Blossom. We took it to the Royal Ontario Museum; they restored it and now it is used for the High Holidays by Iraqis."

Besides his wife Bernice, Mukamal is survived by sons Seth and Richard and grandchildren Lauren and Danielle●

JEWISH LEADERS IN BABYLONIA

ABRIDGED FROM BABYLONIAN
JEWRY – TALMUDICAL ERA
by Rabbi Gershon Harpanas

THE EXILARCH – Rosh Hagola (Nasi)

Exilarchs, descendants of Yehonya, King of Yehuda, headed the large Jewish community of Babylon and their leadership was also recognised by the Persian Government. Babylonian Jewry looked up with pride to the royal glory which pervaded its head, and saw in the Exilarchy the realisation of Ya'akov Avinu's promise "The sceptre shall not depart from Yehuda".

The Exilarch was the recognised political leader of Babylonian Jewry and the official representative of the whole Jewish community in the court of the Persian Emperor. The taxes of a vast agricultural area (the Province of Naharouan) were channelled to the exchequer of the Exilarch and were devoted to covering the budget of his court.

In the lifetime of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi, the righteous and wise Rosh Hagola (Exilarch), Rav Huna ben Natan, died, and his son, Mar Ukva, was appointed in his place.

The Exilarch, Mar Ukva, was also counted amongst the great men of his generation, and his Beth Din was located in Kafri.

RAV AND SHMUEL

Two outstanding disciples of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi were well known among the Babylonian Sages of that time:

a. Aba bar Aivo, known as RAV;

b. Shmuel Yarhinea, the son of Aba bar Aba, who was also an expert in the calculation of leap years.

Despite their young age, RAV and Shmuel were eminent amongst the Sages of Babylon.

On the death of Rav Shilo, the Sages of Neharde'a cast their eyes on Rav to be his successor as the Head of the Sages of Neharde'a, which was situated on a hilltop on the eastern bank of the Euphrates at its closest point to the Tigris. But RAV refused to accept this great honour in the native city of his colleague Shmuel, and so departed for Sura, a city which was also situated on the eastern bank of the Euphrates and joined to the city of Mata Mehasya, the political capital of the Exilarch (opposite Kufa), about fifty miles to the south of Neharde'a. Sura, was until that time, devoid of Torah. When RAV came there he founded a Beit Hamidrash there and turned it into a second centre of Torah study in addition to Neharde'a.

THE FIRST GENERATION OF BABYLONIAN AMORA'IM

For about fifty years the Jews benefited from the faithful leadership of RAV and Shmuel. The new Yeshiva in Sura, attained a very high standard under his leadership, and at one time the number of students reached twelve hundred.

On the death of RAV in 247 CE, the leadership of the Sura Yeshiva passed into the hands of his great disciple, Rav Huna. Seven years thereafter, in 254, Shmuel died.

RAV and Shmuel, the two great teachers of the Tana'itic Mishna, were privileged to be the founders of a new epoch in Jewish history – that of the Amora'im.

The Babylonian Amora'im who expounded the teachings of the Tana'im, were the Sages of the Talmud Bavli.

SURA AND PUMBEDITA

RAV and Shmuel, bequeathed the authentic

interpretation of the Tana'itic teachings to a whole generation of disciples, who perpetuated their great work – the explanation of the Mishna and the dissemination thereof through wide sections of the people. Those authoritative Sages continued to cultivate the Yeshivot and to broaden their influence amongst the masses of the House of Israel.

THE DISASTER OF PAPA BAR NETZER

A short time after the death of Shmuel in 245, a great misfortune befell Babylonian Jewry. Neharde'a, the ancient Jewish city, and the most established in the Babylonian exile (more than seven hundred years old) was conquered and destroyed.

The great fertile valley between the Euphrates and the Tigris served as a platform for the activities of superior political powers which held sway over the middle east during lengthy epochs in ancient times. But with its conquest by Cyrus the Persian (540 B.C.E.) Babylon lost its greatness, never to regain it. Some two hundred years later, Alexander the Great defeated the Persian might (330 B.C.E.) and Babylon came under Greek rule. A further two hundred years passed, when the Parthians succeeded in imposing their power over Babylon for hundreds of years.

In the meantime, the Romans had penetrated the Middle East (Pompey, 65 B.C.E.), taking the place of the Greeks. After their conquest of all the countries on the Eastern Mediterranean seaboard, they cast their eyes on the Mesopotamian lowlands (Babylon) and the Iranian Highlands.

About fifteen years after Pompey had converted Syria into a Roman province, Crassus (a member of the first triumvirate) was appointed by the Senate as ruler of Syria. When Crassus arrived in Syria he raised an army of about thirty-five thousand men to conquer Babylon and annexe it to the Roman Empire. But this warlike expedition ended in a complete failure and a severe defeat for the Romans. The whole of the Roman army in Syria was destroyed, and even Crassus himself was captured and killed.

The great desert which separated the countries on the Mediterranean coast and Mesopotamian lowland remained the border between the Roman provinces on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean (including Eretz Yisrael) and between the East, the inhabitants of which (including Babylonian Jewry), put their lives at risk to preserve their independence and not surrender to the mighty Roman Empire.

Despite the overwhelming failure of Crassus' campaign in Babylon, the Romans did not completely withdraw from the East. They attempted to establish themselves in the East through allies and tributaries from amongst the minor rulers in the scattered oasis of the wide spaces of Syrian desert. One of these allies was Odent Nazarus – the ruler of Palmyra (the city of Tadmor which King Solomon built in the distant oasis at the eastern end of his large kingdom, near the Euphrates).

Odent, referred to by the Sages as Papa bar Netzer, crossed the river Euphrates with his army, conquered Netzivin from the Persians and annexed it to the Roman Empire, and five years thereafter (259 CE) conquered Neharde'a, plundered it and destroyed it (possibly as a revenge of Babylonian Jewry's resistance to Roman penetration).

The destruction of Neharde'a, with its ancient establishments for Torah study, was a great misfortune for Babylonian Jewry.

But the Torah centre in Babylon was already sufficiently well established, so that the

misfortune was unable to obstruct the flow of spiritual creativity which had begun to advance at an increased pace on account of the successful work of the first Amora'im under the leadership of RAV and Shmuel.

RAV HUNA AND RAV YEHUDA

The Sura Yeshiva, founded by Rav, was presided over in the second generation of the Amora'im, by Rav Huna, who was the most distinguished of the Sages of his generation. On the death of Rav Huna, he was succeeded by his colleague, Rav Hisda.

In place of Neharde'a, a new Yeshiva was founded in Pumbedita (Falluja) during the second generation of the Amora'im. This great Yeshiva was established by Rav Ychuda bar Yehezkal, one of the great disciples of RAV and Shmuel, and he served as its principal during the second generation of Amora'im in Babylon.

RAV NAHMAN BEN YA'AKOV – JUDGE OF THE EXILARCH'S COURT

Rav Nahman ben Ya'akov, born in Neharde'a, is also reckoned amongst the Sages of the second generation of Amora'im. He was the son-in-law of the Exilarch, and the most distinguished judge in Neharde'a, which was rebuilt after it had been freed from the troops of Papa bar Netzer.

On the death of Rav Huna 297, Rav Yehuda was the greatest of his generation, and all the Sages made their way to Pumbedita to take counsel with him. But Rav Yehuda did not survive Rav Huna very long, and died in 299.

The Sages said: "When 'Rabi' (Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi) died, Rav Yehuda was born; when Rav Yehuda died, Rava was born" thereby teaching that a righteous one does not depart this world until a comparable person appears to replace him.

Scribe: When Roman Emperor Julian came to power in 361, he wrote to the Jewish community in Babylon to allow him through in order to attack Persia. In return, he promised to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem at his own expense; but the Jews rejected his offer and maintained their loyalty to their Persian allies ●

HH THE EXILARCH

How come you have assumed the title of Exilarch, as you are not a direct descendant of King David?

London

St. H.

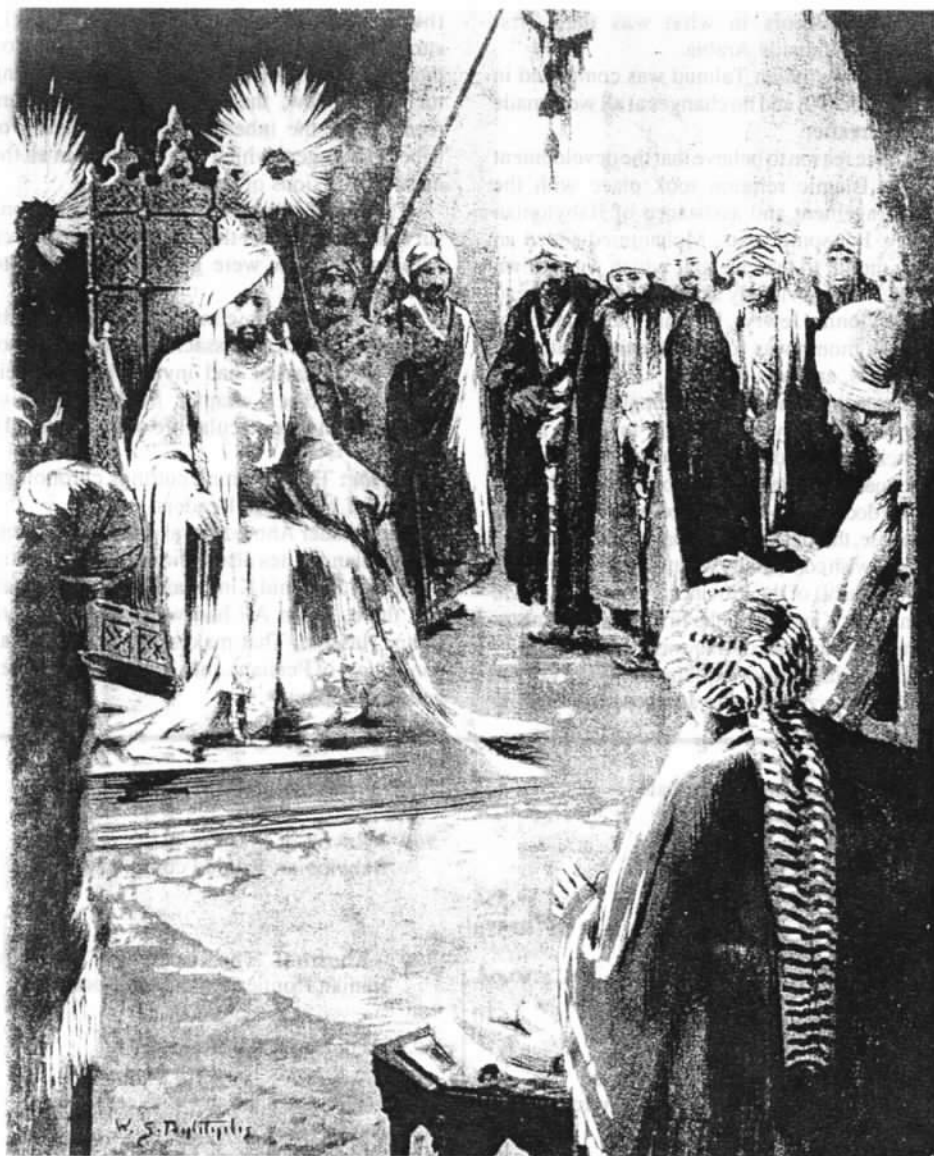
Naim Dangoor writes: If at any time in the future someone appears who is a direct descendant of King David, both I and any of my successors would gladly hand over to him the dignity which I revived in 1970, as well as the large assets of the Exilarch Foundation, which I established in 1980.

In the meantime, I and my designated successors occupy this position, as it were, in an acting capacity as a unifying factor of our now dispersed community, and as a link with our traditional past.

The fact is that at various times in Jewish history after attempted revolts and endeavours to reform our Nation all known descendants of King David were rounded up and massacred, both by the Persians as well as by the Romans.

However, as Time Magazine pointed out recently, after ten generations every ancestor would have some 1000 descendants. Thus after 100 generations every Jew must carry some of King David's genes. This would even be more pronounced among Babylonian Jewry.

In the meantime, any person who finds himself better qualified for the title is invited to come forward ●



The Caliph of Baghdad receiving the Exilarch (seated in front) accompanied by leaders of the community.

It has been always a pleasure to read *The Scribe* that took me back to my roots.

I have enjoyed in your last edition the article "The editing of Babylonian Talmud" which is interesting and informative about the religious activities during the long Diaspora of the Babylonian Jews in Babylon.

If you know of any other publications on other cultural activities of the Babylonian Jews for the same period, I am very interested to acquire.

South Africa Albert Shabat
Scribe:

1. A History of the Jews in Babylonia.
by: Dr. Jacob Neusner (6 volumes).
2. Encyclopaedia Judaica.

The above publications may be of interest ●

Reference is made to your article on page 10 of your last issue entitled: "MUFTI'S LINKS WITH THE NAZIS". – The ill-famed photograph of the Mufti, much to my disgust, aroused in me anger and distaste towards the Mufti and all the religious persons. This photograph never disappeared from my memory since I saw it first in the Trial and Error by Chaim Weizmann and for the 2nd time in the book of Netanyahu and now in your esteemed review.

I should say to those who do not know the origin of the Mufti that he is not an Arab: he is of Bosnian origin ●

Milano

Edward Yamen

WHY ONLY PORTUGAL?

500 years ago, in 1496, under the Portuguese Inquisition, at times more cruel than its Spanish counterpart, tens of thousands of Jews were tortured and burned, the next would be allowed to stay if they converted to Christianity or had to flee.

Today Portugal offered atonement. Justice Minister José Eduardo Vera Jardim called the expulsion of Portugal's Jews "a black piece of our history" the state, he said, owes Jews "moral reparation" for centuries of "brutal persecution".

Why did it take 500 years for Portugal to admit and apologise for the crimes it did to the Jews? Why other countries, including Russia and Arab countries, do not admit black pieces of their own history as Jardim did?

It is my belief that real peace between Jews and Arabs will come only when the Arab countries recognise and apologise for mistreatment of Jews and forcing them to leave their homes and their belongings behind ●

G. Neck, NY

Albert Khabbaza, MD

I wish to thank you very much for publishing my story "Our Journey from Baghdad". I trust that all of our readers enjoyed and related to it, as much as I did in reading many of the other articles. I was also very pleased to see my picture among the others in the first birthday "Nadi" club in New York ●

Florida

Clementine Cominsky

In *The Scribe* No: 65 of March 1996, there were two pages about the Zilkha family and a short history of the late Khedourie A. Zilkha.

I would like to add a few words to what was written. My grandfather, the late Moshe Jiji started working with uncle Khedourie from the first day the Bank opened for business in 1899. Uncle Khedourie liked his hard work and dedication and finally a marriage was arranged for him with Muzli, the sister of Khedourie.

Both my grandparents used to tell us stories about uncle Khedourie. My grandmother used to say that he was a man with a vision and a mission which he wanted to fulfil in life. He heard about the Rothschilds dynasty and wanted to follow their example.

My grandfather used to say that uncle Khedourie won the confidence of many people, Jews and non-Jews alike. He was a good listener. He listened to people carefully and respectfully, picked up the facts, analysed them and charted the future. He reacted to events before anybody else and was always at the right place and at the right time.

When Russia started exporting oil to the Ottoman Empire from Bako on the Black Sea, trade flourished and oil in tin containers was exported as camel caravans carried them to many places including Baghdad. It was at that time that people started using kerosene for cooking instead of wood. As a result of this trade, it was a good opportunity for bankers to speculate with Russian currency. When uncle Khedourie heard about the problems of the old regime in Russia, he decided not to hoard any Russian currency, for fear of unexpected political changes. Other bankers who hoarded Russian currency suffered great losses after the Russian revolution. He used to say that a businessman should keep part of his assets as liquid as possible, so that in case he has to run away he can salvage something, because he cannot carry with him his real estate to other countries.

In a book entitled: "The Economic History of Iraq, by Saeed Hamada" of the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, there was a chapter about the SARAFs (Bankers) of Baghdad, and it was mentioned that Zilkha was instrumental in introducing modern banking systems to the Middle East ●

Ottawa

Sami Sourani

My mother left Baghdad in 1943 when she was 17 in the company of her mother and settled in Bombay where she married; and when I was 4 we moved to Japan.

Most people have anglicised their names and I miss hearing such names as: Eliahou, Saleem, Sassoon, Gubbay, Mizrahi, Ben-David, Bakhsh, Aboody, Moshe, Mâtouk, Nessim, Bashi, Pinto, Elias, Shashoua.

So I wasn't surprised when an Ashkenazi acquaintance of my father asked me: "What's Wahba? Why don't you have a name like Smith?" Wahba is an authentic Egyptian name, held by Jews, Moslems and Christians. And so, "It is Smith in Egypt!" I answered.

For me our traditional names are so familiar, musical, and heart-warming, but are to other ears strange and disquieting.

So *The Scribe* comes into my house and feeds me with these wonderful faces and names ●

San Francisco

Rachel Wahba

Last part of the article "The Editing of Babylonian Talmud" abridged from Babylonian Jewry by Rabbi Gershon Harpanas, (*The Scribe* No: 66), in reference to the end of Byzantine Rule in the Middle East, says "The Moslem Arabs stormed through the Lands of near East, smote the large Byzantine host..." and then adds "Two years later, Jerusalem was handed over to Caliph Omar (638)." Three years later, the Arabs succeeded in destroying the Kingdom of the Sassanids in the east, and conquered the Euphrates Tigris valley and the Iranian highland eastward (*all with Jewish financial and military help*).

As I have been reading books on the history of Iran and the Middle East, this claim is news to me. I would appreciate very much if you can lead me to the source and documents to corroborate this claim. To clarify whether this help, *financial and military*, was furnished from the Jewish community in Jerusalem which was already under the rule of the Islamic conquerors, or from the Jewish community in Babylon that in the last part of the Sassanids rule were persecuted by the Zoroastrian fanatic moebeds.

Also, I would be interested to know whether any changes had occurred in the Babylonian Talmud during (four hundred years) Geonim Period, when all the Jewish religion centres were under the Caliphs and Islamic rule.

Florida, USA **Ahmad Tavakoli**

Naim Dangoor writes:

The Jewish community in Palestine helped the Moslem conquerors by giving them vital military intelligence, that was the first Islamic conquest outside Arabia. Regarding Mesopotamia and Persia, it was Babylonian Jewry that invited the Moslem Arabs to invade, and gave them financial and military assistance. At that time Babylonian Jewry numbered over 1 million, and had virtual autonomy of Central Mesopotamia. When the fourth Caliph Ali visited Iraq 90,000 Jews went out to welcome him. This was mentioned in a letter that Sherira Gaon had written to an inquirer from Spain, and this letter is known in history as the Iggereth of Sherira Gaon.

To highlight the close relationship between the Moslem Arab conquerors of Iraq and Persia, and the Babylonian Jewish community, is the fact that the second Caliph Omar married one daughter of the defeated king of Persia, and the head of the Babylonian Jewish community, Exilarch Bostenai, married her sister.

The persecution of the Jews by the Zoroastrian fanatics happened a century before this period. Thereafter, Persian-Jewish relations improved to the extent that in 614 a joint Persian-Jewish force captured Jerusalem from the Romans. But three years later the Persian King Khosro II married one of the Christian captives and turned against the Jews which prompted the latter to turn to the Arabs.

In 1969 I bought, on behalf of our Community in London, a house in Kensington which was the centre of the Parsee Association of Europe. As you know, the Parsees were the remnants of the Zoroastrian Persians who fled Iran in the face of the Moslem Arab invasion, and settled in parts of India. The president of the Association asked me what the house was going to be used for. When I told him it was intended as a centre for Iraqi Jews in London, he said, "You were responsible for bringing the Moslem Arabs to Mesopotamia and Iran. I was surprised that the Parsees had kept this tradition for so many centuries". It must have been true.

In his book "The Arabs" Philip Hitti refers to the help the Jews of Palestine gave to the

Arab conquerors in what was their first acquisition outside Arabia.

The Babylonian Talmud was completed in December 499, and no changes at all were made to it thereafter.

I have reason to believe that the development of the Islamic religion took place with the encouragement and assistance of Babylonian Jewry. For some years, Mohammed added an extra month to the calendar which was known as the Nasi (obviously as reference to the head of Babylonian Jewry). But this interpolation of an extra month was found too complicated for the Arabs, and was dropped.

Throughout the Abbassid Empire, the head of Babylonian Jewry was directly involved in the financial affairs of the Treasury. This tradition continued even after the Mongol invasion when the Jewish doctor Saad-al-Dawla became Grand Vezir. Likewise, throughout the Ottoman period the head of the Jewish community was usually the Treasurer (Saraf Bashi) of the Province. As is well known, even under King Feisal, the first Finance Minister in the new kingdom of Iraq was a Jew.

(Historians do not explain the mystery of the single Qurayza Jew who accepted Islam while

the rest of his co-religionist willingly surrendered to martyrdom, rather than abandon their Judaism. The explanation is that: according to Moslem law, the one who accepts Islam receives all the inheritance of his family or tribe, a stratagem which was followed in all the mass conversions of Islam.

Thus, the Jews of Qurayza selected one survivor to look after their women and children whom they knew were going to be sold into slavery.

Many historians consider this episode in which Mohammed massacred the people who, seven years earlier had invited him to their town, as a black chapter in the otherwise admirable and spectacular life of Mohammed).

Scribe: The adjoining cuttings chronology may be of interest to Readers.

Our Reader Ahmed Tavakoli further writes: The Iranian Shiites also believe that a daughter of the last Sassanid King was taken to Medinah and there, Imam Ali had wed her to his son, Imam Hussein. That makes Imam Hussein as son-in-law of Persians, thus bonding the Shiites and the Prophet.●

Palestinian Jewish Patriarchate – abolished by Romans.	425	Jewish leadership in Babylon.
		500 – Revolt of Mar Zutra. Babylonian Talmud completed.
Samaritan – Jewish uprisings.	556 578	
Beginning of Mohammed's call.	610	590 – Khosro II "The Triumphant" extended Iranian frontier to its widest point
Jerusalem taken by Persian & Jewish forces – Christians slaughtered, churches destroyed.	614	602 – Fourth Roman-Iranian war. – 37,000 Christian captives from Jerusalem.
Mohammed's reputed night journey to Jerusalem and thence to seventh heaven	620	617 – Persians become hostile to Jews and punish them for slaughter of Christians in 614 because Khosro II favoured Christianity and married a Christian, perhaps from captives.
Qurayza Jews invite Mohammed to Yathrub (Medina).	620	
Hijra – beginning of Moslem era	622	
Battle of Badr – Quraish defeated.	624	
Nathir Jews expelled.	626	
Qurayza Jews raided, 800 men beheaded women and children sold as slaves, one Jewish man was spared because he accepted Islam.	627	627 – Khosro defeated by Heraclius at Ninaveh.
Heraclius re-takes Jerusalem with Jewish help.	627	
Heraclius turns again against Jews	628	628 – Kavad II
Khayber Jews reduced – put to the sword.	629	
Mohammed's letters to rulers inviting them to accept Islam.	629	629 – Ardashir III Boran
Mecca taken – Kaaba becomes focus.	630	630 – Hormizd V, Khosro III
Islam accepted by Arabs.	631	
Mohammed dies in Medina.	632	632 – Yazdagird III Grandson of Khosro III
Abu Bakr first Caliph – 632-634.	634	
Arabs conquer Jerusalem offer Jews to re-build Temple.	635	
Heraclius dies.	641	640 – Bostanai exilarch 641 – Ali makes Kufa his capital.
Omar 2nd Caliph – 634-644.	644	641 – Fall of Ctesiphon to Moslems
Koran recorded by Othman	650	651 – Yezdagird killed by his soldiers
Othman 3rd Caliph – 644-656.	656	
Ali 4th Caliph – 656-661.	661	658 – Ali visits Peruz Shapur welcomed by Mar Ishag and 90,000 Babylonian Jews.
Muawiya proclaimed Caliph in Jerusalem, but reigns in Damascus.	661	688 – Death of Mar Ishag●

Chronicles

NEWS OF THE PAST

1 SIVAN, 4395
(635 C.E.)

Vol. II, No. 15

Byzantine Resistance Finally Broken

JERUSALEM IS LIBERATED BY PERSIAN AND JEWISH TROOPS

Report 90,000 Enemy Casualties

(Chronicles News Service)

After three days and nights of street-fighting, the allied armies of Persia and Israel yesterday completed the conquest of Jerusalem.

The Byzantine forces, their ranks bolstered by thousands of Christian civilians, lost 90,000 men, killed and wounded.

During the 20 days of the siege, the Allies captured and destroyed all the fortifications and monasteries around the city. In Jerusalem itself, a number of churches have been set afire, including the Church of the Grave.

With the end of the fighting yesterday, a Jewish government was set up in Jerusalem, headed by our victorious commander, Nehemiah ben Chushiel, who at once took the necessary steps to restore the sacrificial service on the Temple Mount.

ROMAN EMPEROR HERACLIUS SEEKS KHAZAR ALLIANCE

From reliable sources comes the news that because of the critical position of the Roman Empire after the smashing military triumphs of Persia and her allies, Emperor Heraclius has decided to try to enlist the aid of the Khazar Kingdom against his enemies.

Should the Emperor's efforts be successful, the Khazar army may be expected to invade the Persian section of Armenia from where it would threaten the very heart of the Persian Empire.

In addition, Emperor Heraclius hopes to obtain from the Khazars reinforcements for his own armies.

Persia's plan is based on the fact that the Jews wield considerable influence both in the land of the Khazars and in the Kingdom of Churzam (Chiva), with which the Khazars maintain the friendliest of relations. The plan calls for a Jewish delegation to be despatched to the King of the Khazars, the task of this delegation being to dissuade the King from forming any sort of alliance with the Romans.

20,000 JEWS UNDER ARMS

By Our Correspondent in Tiberias

"Our military forces today number 20,000 men," announced the prominent Jewish leader and father of the Jewish army, Benjamin of Tiberias, at a special rally convened here yesterday for the purpose of bolstering our military might.

Benjamin likewise made known that several thousands of Jews from Damascus have enrolled in the Jewish army, as have a number of trained units from Cyprus, who have succeeded in infiltrating by way of the sea — despite Byzantine watchfulness — and arriving safely at Caesarea.

Asked whether preparations were being made to move against Tyre, Benjamin replied that for security reasons he did not wish to discuss that particular subject.

Uphill Struggle All the Way

Thousands of Jews right now are streaming toward Jerusalem which yesterday was liberated by the armies of Israel and Persia.

As the Allied armies neared the city, the Christians put up a determined resistance, which steadily stiffened as our forces cut down the distance between themselves and the Holy City. Even the occupants of the nearby churches and monasteries joined in the hostilities.

In the initial phase of the fighting, our forces set upon the Church of Aeliona, on the Mount of Olives, and the Church of Gethsemane, in the Valley of Kidron.

15 KISLEV, 4401
(610 C.E.)

NEWS OF THE PAST

Vol. II, No. 15

Exilarch Joins Caliph's Family!

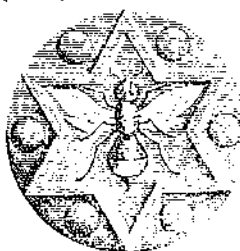
WILL MARRY SISTER OF OMAR'S WIFE

By a Special Correspondent

Bostanal, the Jewish Exilarch, is about to become a brother-in-law to Caliph Omar.

Both of Chosroes' daughters were recently taken prisoner by the Moslem forces of Caliph Omar. The Caliph married one of the princesses and offered the other to the Jewish Exilarch.

Before sending his reply to the Caliph, Bostanal requested a legal opinion from the Gaon of Sura, Mar Bar Rav Huna. The Gaon permitted the marriage but advised Bostanal to release the princess formally from her prisoner status, since otherwise his children would not be able to become his heirs.



BOSTANAL'S EMBLEM

(See THIS 'N' THAT, p. 2)

Marriage Will Strengthen Jewish-Moslem Ties

By Our Political Analyst

Caliph Omar's action in offering to make Exilarch Bostanal his brother-in-law fairly bristles with political significance.

For one thing, it means a strengthening of the personal ties between the head of the Moslems and the head of Babylonian Jewry. For another, it indicates that Caliph Omar is anxious to extend Bostanal's authority — which is understandable, after the great success of the Arabs' military campaign in Persia, made possible largely through Jewish intervention on the side of the Arabs.

An important factor in this

Jewish-Moslem cooperation has been the magnetic personality of the Exilarch, which quickly made friends for him among the Arab leaders — although there are those among the Moslems who eye Bostanal's rapid political rise with equal measures of suspicion and ill grace.

At the moment the Caliph is interested in strengthening the bond with the Jews of Babylonia for yet another reason: The stiff resistance being put up by the Persians makes it mandatory for the Arabs to secure their rear, wherefore it is vital that the Jews of Persia remain on their side.

Temple-Mount Mosque

'Temporary'

The Moslems gave assurances that the mosque under construction on the Temple Mount is temporary structure.

Permission granted the Jews to build a synagogue next to the Foundation Stone —

New Synagogue Dedicated at Cave of Machpelah

(Chronicles of the Past, P.O.B. 7113, Jerusalem)



Dayan Toledano with Chief Rabbi Sacks and Dayan Ehrentreu at the launch of the second volume of his book 'Fountain of Blessings' on 11 November.

I am writing to beg a favour of you.....

But first of all, my heartiest thanks for the latest issue of "*The Scribe*". Indeed, you say things which only a man of candour and of courage would say – and that pleases me immensely.

Now, my request: A friend of mine (not unlike blind Khadouri – he suffers from Multiple Sclerosis, very advanced stage), to whom I read 'House of Israel – Go Home' over the phone last night, would like your permission to include it in a quarterly newsletter he sends out. Your brief article hits the nail on the head and says what some have been thinking and witnessing for a very long time. Nicholas Ridley saw it – and paid the price. Could we have your permission to reprint the article, please? It appears on page 7 of the current issue of the '*Scribe*'.

I appreciated Thomas Gray's version on the conquest of Wales by Edward I. Thank you. It is indeed remarkable that so small a nation has survived and kept its identity, like yours, under the shadow of the British Empire. But I would not wish to see the break up of the U.K. Wales would become vulnerable, politically. Catholic influence is on the increase here, and Ireland is too close for comfort. They have designs on us.

Any reference to the STRUMA awakens a mixture of sorrow and anger within me. It's tale is one of the biggest indictments against Britain. 'End of Empire' page 8 latest issue, refers to it. Willie Perl's book 'Operation Action' deals with it in some depth. Did you know they were held for a year on the Danube before a Russian submarine took a pot at her? Martin Gilbert's 'Holocaust' verifies this. Such pain, suffering, injustice and horror cannot possibly go unheard, which is why 'for their sake He rebuked kings'.

AM YISROEL CHAI!●

Swansea Gruffydd Thomas
Wales

I wish to express my gratitude for the rich vein of information that runs this way over the years from "*The Scribe*".

I have just returned from Israel where they did me well: so well. It warmed the cockles of my heart to see the Army on full alert, a stage between Red alert and total war. G-d bless Netanyahu, say I.

*There is a young Statesman called 'Bibi'
Whose vision is open and fair;
He won an election
By clear conviction
And Israel was saved from despair.*

The above limerick was my response to a recent invitation in the J.C. for response to a limerick from their thoughts about Israel's Prime Minister. The J. C. printed the translation that appeared in the Times of an Arabic poem, about Netanyahu.

Will they publish, I wonder?

Swansea Gruffydd Thomas
Wales

Scribe: Not likely. The J. C. appears to be under strong leftist influences●

FOUNTAIN OF BLESSINGS

Code of Jewish Law – Volume two

By Dayan Dr. P. Toledano
Published by British Sephardi
Federation Press. Price £17.00

The Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, was among over 250 people who filled the Montefiore Hall of the Lauderdale Road Synagogue on 11 November 1996. They came to celebrate the launch and publication of Dayan Dr. Pinchas Toledano's second volume of his Code of Jewish Law "Fountain of Blessings" which is devoted to the laws concerning Shabbat, Festivals and High Holydays.

Chief Rabbi Sacks praised Dayan Toledano's ability to write scholarly works whilst still fulfilling his wide-ranging Congregational responsibilities.

Dayan C Ehrentreu, Rosh Beth Din of the United Synagogue, congratulated Dayan Toledano on being able to fulfil his scholarly potential to the benefit of the wider Jewish community.

The book launch was also attended by Mr Elkan Levy, President of the United Synagogue, Rabbi Dr. Levy, Communal Rabbi of our Congregation, Rabbi Abraham David and Rabbi A. Gubbay.

Copies of the book can be obtained from the Synagogue office on 0171 289 2573●

Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai

Further to my letter which appeared on page 45 of your last issue, little did I realise that Defence Minister General Yitzhak Mordechai would not only deliver the martial goods but also prove to be an outstanding success in his diplomatic dealings with his Arab counterparts.

A rising Iraqi star in Israeli politics, General Mordechai was in rapid succession in charge of the southern, central and northern commands. A gentleman and an unflappable, down-to-earth yet no-nonsense commander, he was both loved and respected by his troops, down to the lowliest private.

In his new capacity as minister of defence, Yitzhak Mordechai has risen to all the tangled situations that wanton deeds and pronouncements by his cabinet colleagues and premier have often created with the Arab world●
Yehud, Israel Ezra S. Soffer

ARAB ORIGIN OF SEMITES

It is possible that Arabia was the home of all the Semitic races and the starting point of Semitic culture, in which case the Sumerians, the Phoenicians, the Assyrians, the Carthaginians, and even the Jewish people could all be classed technically as "Arabs."

It seems certain that the earlier Jewish authorities in Old Testament writings recognised their kinship to the inhabitants of Arabia.

It has followed as a consequence of the Arabs' colonising talent that some people are spoken of as Arabs who have no ethnological right to the name but who, having adopted the Arabic language and Arabian manners and customs, are taken for Arabs●

The Arab's Place in the Sun, by Richard Coke

Indisputably, *The Scribe* reveals itself to be highly readable and qualitative with its wide range of interesting topics which garner considerable praise and admiration.

This is reflected by the variety of letters, articles and discussions emerging in every issue.

I recently noticed that an Iraqi government letter ordering the freezing of Jewish property was paradoxically headed by the legend: In the Name of God, The Compassionate, The Merciful." I thought, "Oh God how many crimes are committed in Thy Name."

In 1932, Iraq was admitted as a member to the League of Nations after it submitted a solemn declaration binding herself to protect all the inhabitants of Iraq without distinction of nationality, language, race or religion. This promise was kept only during the reign of King Faisal I who died prematurely a year later at the age of 49●

Milan

Edward Yamen

THE VATICAN'S HOLOCAUST

by: Avro Manhattan
Published in the *United States*
sent in by Gruffydd Thomas

The book is an account of a most horrifying religious massacre of the 20th Century. Revelations of forced conversions, mass murders of non-Catholics, Catholic extermination camps, disclosures of Catholic clergy as commanders of concentration camps; documented with names, dates, places, pictures, and eyewitness testimony.

The author is an authority on Roman Catholicism in politics. A resident of London, during World War II he operated a radio station called "Radio Freedom", broadcasting to occupied Europe. He also wrote political commentaries for the British Broadcasting Corporation●

SOLOMON'S JUDGEMENT IN BAGHDAD

by: Edward S. Dangoor

It was a novel experience for me aged 9, when my father took me one day in 1931, to the Court, known as the Court of the 1st instance, in order to witness some of the cases administered by his friend, Judge Abdul Aziz al-A'raj.

The Judge was known for his incorruptible existence and commanding great respect in legal circles.

For the third case of the day, the plaintiff was a poor Jew, showing signs of nervousness wondering what his fate will be. The Moslem defendant was confident.

The plaintiff brought his poor wife and children in order, no doubt, to gain some sympathy.

The Judge invited the plaintiff to put his case and the poor man stood gravely as he began to tell his story.

"Three days ago, I went to see this man," he said pointing to the defendant, "in order to negotiate the price of a cow which I intended buying to support my family. After agreeing on a price of 250 rupees, I paid him 100 rupees deposit. When I came the next day to pay the balance and take delivery of the cow, he denied receiving the 100 rupees.

The defendant said under oath in an arrogant manner, that the Jew agreed to buy his cow, promising to come with the full amount the next day. To his dismay he only brought 150 rupees claiming that he paid 100 before.

The defendant swore again that he was telling the truth.

The Judge was thoughtful for a while, then declared that the plaintiff did not prove his case, as he had no receipt or witnesses.

At that moment one could see the note of satisfaction which figured on the defendant's face considering the case ended.

However, the Judge went on having realised his plight and poverty of the plaintiff, "I would like to make a small collection for his poor family."

The Judge then produced a ten rupee note from his pocket and put it on the table. Then he whispered to his clerk who immediately produced a five rupee note and did likewise. Then he asked the defendant if he would contribute to the poor family. The man was very happy to oblige and he produced from his pocket a wad of notes, out of which he drew five rupees and put them on top of the others.

The Judge glanced at the banknote and all of a sudden he shouted so loudly that everyone present was startled:

"Usher, arrest that man", pointing at the defendant. "This money is counterfeit. Where on earth did you get it?"

"He gave it to me", he said trembling as he subconsciously started emptying his pockets of the banknotes like an angry cat.

The spectators in court, and I was one of them, were puzzled not knowing what had transpired. This was soon turned into amazement on realising the sudden transformation of the whole episode. Of course, the banknote was never counterfeit.

As we left the court, my father shook Abdul Aziz by the hand and remarked "King Solomon himself would have been proud of the way you rendered justice."

This article was corrected and put down in beautiful English by my brother Abdallah Dangoor●



Linda Dangoor and Frank Khalastchi have announced their engagement. Best Wishes for their future happiness●

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

1997 is a Royal Golden Wedding Anniversary year. In this connection we give below the names of various wedding anniversaries:

FIRST	- PAPER
SECOND	- CALICO
THIRD	- LINEN
FOURTH	- SILK
FIFTH	- WOOD
SIXTH	- IRON
SEVENTH	- FLORAL
EIGHTH	- LEATHER
NINTH	- STRAW
TENTH	- TIN
FIFTEENTH	- CRYSTAL
TWENTIETH	- CHINA
TWENTY FIFTH	- SILVER
THIRTIETH	- PEARL
FORTIETH	- RUBY
FORTY FIFTH	- SAPPHIRE
FIFTIETH	- GOLDEN
FIFTY FIFTH	- EMERALD
SIXTIETH	- DIAMOND
SEVENTIETH	- PLATINUM
SEVENTY FIFTH	- DIAMOND & GOLD●

I learnt of "The Scribe" at the beyt-Knesset which I attend here in Sydney - "Bet-Yosef: The Caro Synagogue"; I enjoy all the articles in your journal but most especially those detailing the traditional Iraqi customs and practices in connection with Shabbat and festivals. It is most important to preserve the knowledge of the Bavli customs and to pass them on to succeeding generations.

Keep up the superb work●

Australia

Jeff Hand

WOJAC

Dear Mr Dangoor,

Thank you for your continuous interest in WOJAC (World Organisation of Jews from Arab Countries).

Since the passing away of WOJAC's Chairman of the World Executive, Att. Shlomo Toussia-Cohen as well as the Chairman of the Presidium, Leon Tamman, their successors have not yet been elected. Currently in charge of the Organisation is one of the leaders of WOJAC and its Treasurer since its foundation, Mr Oved Benozair, previously Deputy Chairman and now Acting Chairman of WOJAC's World Executive.

Our present policy and activities are based on the principles and aims that have guided us since WOJAC's establishment, with the main goal of representing and promoting the legitimate rights and claims of Jews from Arab countries. While waiting for the developments in the on-going political process to reach the phase of the negotiations on the permanent settlement in the Middle East, we keep in close and continuous contact with the senior officials of the Foreign Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office and the Jewish agency; we constantly raise the issue of Jews from Arab countries and insist that their legitimate rights and claims be part and parcel of any future agreement with the Palestinians and the Arab countries, and that WOJAC's representatives be included in the negotiations on the final resolution of the refugee problem. In addition, we continue to present the important fact of the 'de facto' exchange of population that took place in the Middle East between the Jews who left Arab countries as refugees and settled in Israel and other countries, and the Palestinian Arab refugees who left Israel - a fact which provides a major political argument against the Palestinian claim to the "right of return". Several days ago we met with Foreign Minister David Levy and with the Director-General of the Foreign Office, who showed thorough acquaintance with WOJAC's aims and argumentation and acknowledged their importance. Our meeting with the Foreign Minister has been encouraging and we expect positive developments in the activity of the Organisation.

Tel Aviv

Fax: 03 522 5089

Shimon Avizemer

General Secretary

Scribe: While the Palestinians are shouting their claims from the rooftops, no-one can hear your voice. We shall certainly lose our rights by default.

Moreover, until last year, the official view of the Israeli government was that Jews who came from Arab countries were not refugees but olim. That view knocks on the head any argument of exchange of population.

As regards compensation, the Palestinians are now going to claim through the Israeli courts and will not wait for the peace conference to decide their rights. Peace will leave us completely high and dry. We shall be told to direct our claims to the courts of Saddam, Gaddafi, Asad and Mubarak●

A friend of mine recently showed me *The Scribe*. I was fascinated by the articles written on various topics.

I was extremely impressed by the high standard of information, some new and some old of which makes one interesting to read●

Ramat Gan

Violet Kamar

HERBERT SAMUEL AND THE PARTITION OF PALESTINE

From a lecture by
Professor Bernard Wasserstein
at the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies.

The first practising Jews to hold Cabinet office in Britain in 1909, Herbert Samuel was also the first British politician to raise the subject of British support of Zionism to the level of serious Cabinet discussion soon after the outbreak of the First World War.

When Chaim Weizman first met him in December 1914 he was amazed to find in Samuel a fellow – Zionist. Samuel's support for the Zionist cause played a crucial part over the following three years in the tortuous negotiations that led to the Balfour Declaration of November 1917.

Samuel's performance as High Commissioner in Palestine between 1920 and 1925 has been seen by many Zionists as a descent from high Zionist principles at the outset to appeasement of Arab nationalist violence, most notably following the riots in Jaffa and elsewhere in May 1921. In the eyes of many Zionists, one of the major blots on Samuel's record in Palestine was his alleged 'partition' of Palestine in 1921-2 when Transjordan (so the argument runs) was cut away from the rest of Palestine.

Until June 1920 Palestine was ruled by a provisional British military government many of whose officers were hostile to Zionism. In discussions with the Foreign Office, Samuel insisted that Transjordan must be included in Palestine.

When Samuel himself took office as High Commissioner in Palestine on 30 June 1920, the northern and eastern borders of Palestine had not yet been fixed. At the San Remo Conference in April 1920 the French had reluctantly acquiesced in a British mandate over Palestine.

In the north, Samuel was immediately presented with a delicate diplomatic problem when the French army, in late July 1920, ruthlessly deposed the Emir Faisal whose enthusiastic but ineffectual supporters had declared him "King of Syria" the previous March. On 1 August the dethroned monarch sought refuge in Palestine together with his brother Zaid, an entourage of notables, a bodyguard of 17 with rifles, 72 followers with 25 women, five motorcars, one carriage and 25 horses. A harried governor of Haifa complained that the retainers were 'round the place and in and out like a swarm of bees, and one never knows how many meals are required for lunch or dinner... They cannot stay here indefinitely. Samuel received Faisal personally with full honours and, on instructions from London, conveyed a message that the British hoped to be able to reward him in the future. But he did not encourage the uninvited guest to stay for an extended visit. Shortly afterwards Faisal left for Europe.

Faisal's deposition and the assumption of power in Damascus by the French left a power vacuum in Transjordan, previously under the vague authority of Faisal. Under the Anglo-French wartime agreements, Transjordan had been assigned to the British sphere of influence, and Samuel was anxious lest the French step into the void created there by the collapse of Faisal's authority. On 7 August he therefore sent a personal and private telegram, marked 'very urgent', to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon:

"We shall be making grave error of policy if we do not now include Transjordan in Palestine. It will certainly result in anarchy or French control across the border. Will government authorise occupation if there is spontaneous formal and public demand from heads of all tribe and districts concerned?"

With France's assurance that she will not contravene the Sykes-Picot agreement, Curzon decided no immediate inclusion of Transjordan in Palestine.

Contrary to his instructions from the Foreign Office, Samuel went into Transjordan with 50 soldiers and 12 policemen and thus quadrupled the area of territory under his administration.

Although his action was disapproved by London, Samuel remained convinced that the River Jordan was, a very bad frontier strategically, economically and politically.

The opportunity for which Samuel was waiting arose a few months later. In the autumn of 1920 Faisal's brother Abdullah began moving north from the Hejaz with armed men, apparently with the intention of attacking the French in the hope of regaining Syria for the Arabs. Abdullah's activities further soured Anglo-French relations in the Levant, and appeared to Samuel to indicate the need for a definitive settlement concerning Transjordan. In early 1921 control of Palestine policy was shifted from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office, headed by Churchill who shared not only Samuel's enthusiasm for Zionism but also his imperial zeal. In March 1921, Churchill presided over the Cairo Conference of British officials in the Middle East, at which an attempt was made to reach broad decisions on a number of pressing issues. It was agreed that Faisal would be installed as King of Iraq and Abdullah as ruler of Transjordan.

The Transjordan settlement, however, had certain strings attached. Transjordan was to be included formally within the area of the League of Nations mandate for Palestine, but with a separate administration subject to the overall supervision of the High Commissioner. The clauses of the mandate that gave effect to the establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine were to apply, as hitherto, only to the area west of the Jordan. Abdullah proved amenable to friendly approaches and cash gifts from the Zionists. Samuel's expansionist aim was thus achieved – but at the price of the exclusion of Transjordan from the Jewish National Home. This price, regarded as too high by many Zionists, gave rise to the myth that Palestine was 'partitioned' in 1921. In fact, what occurred was a huge addition to the territory of Palestine, not any subtraction. Zionist disappointment at the loss of what they had never been promised and never possessed led to the idea that they had been somehow cheated out of part of their birthright. The legend persists.

If anything, Samuel saw the attachment of Transjordan to Palestine under the same mandate and under British overlordship as offering, in the long run, a vast area for potential Arab and even Jewish settlement that could help relieve pressure in Palestine west of the Jordan River.

Although Samuel did not, in truth, preside over what may properly be called a territorial partition of Palestine in the early 1920's, he was

responsible for initiating a profound and significant development which does merit the word 'partition' not a territorial but an institutional partition between Jewish and Arab political communities in Palestine.

Naim Dangoor writes: Wasserstein is mistaken. Transjordan (or most of it) was an integral part of Biblical Palestine. The Balfour Declaration can be interpreted to include areas east of the River.

Partition or no partition, Transjordan should have been developed as the logical national home for those Palestinian Arabs who aspired to have a state of their own. By excluding Jewish settlement east of the River Jordan, the thought must have crossed some minds in Whitehall.

But imperialism has no interest either in logic or in peaceful solutions●



Faisal (right), deposed by the French from his throne in Damascus, walking in Cairo with his chief aide, Nuri Said, 1921.



Gertrude Bell and T.E. Lawrence in Cairo, 1921.

Gertrude Bell

Naim Dangoor writes:

When the British Government required the loyalty of Arab leaders during the First World War, Gertrude Bell who came to be known as Desert Queen, provided the intelligence for T.E. Lawrence to carry out his military activities in conjunction with the Arab revolt against the Turks. After the war, she played a crucial role in creating the modern Middle East, and her influence remains apparent to the present day.

The net result has been that the Middle East which consists of a score of different nationalities and in which the ruling Arabs form merely an overall minority, was handed over wholesale to form a number of Arab dictatorships. There can be no lasting peace in the region unless the Jews, the Kurds, the Christians, the Turkomen, the Druz, the Assyrians, the Armenians, the Shiites are allowed their rightful share of the territory and immense wealth of the Middle East.

The Middle East Peace Process cannot be confined to a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians but there has to be an overall Middle East settlement.

DESERT QUEEN

(a biography of Gertrude Bell)

by: Janet Wallach

Published by:

Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London 1996

Reviewed by Meer S. Basri

Since the death of Gertrude Margaret Lowthian Bell (1868-1925) seventy years ago, her letters were published and several biographies depicted her rich life as a traveller, explorer and politician. In the Arab world during the first world war of 1914-18, especially in Mesopotamia which was soon to become the Kingdom of Iraq, she played in politics an illustrious role which can be compared to that of T.E. Lawrence in the war of Arabia.

Do we really need a new biography of this outstanding woman, especially now that the British Empire has been eclipsed and no new English man or woman can play a similar part in the world of today? To this challenge, Janet Wallach, brought us an answer in her book: "Desert Queen", purported to tell "the extraordinary life of Gertrude Bell: adventurer, advisor to Kings, ally of Lawrence of Arabia."

Miss Bell came to love the Arabs and serve them and to help the Iraqis to achieve self-rule. She was initially against Zionism and the Balfour Declaration, but far from being anti-Semitic, she was a good friend of Iraqi Jews. She advised the Emir Faisal, when he came to Baghdad in 1921 to gain the throne, to speak at the reception held for him by the Jewish community, and to soothe the minds of his Jewish hosts by telling them that the new Arab kingdom will embrace the Jewish community, and hold them as true citizens without any bias or discrimination. One of Miss Bell's great heroes in Iraq was Sasson Heskell, whom she wooed and exerted every effort to overcome his reluctance to accept the Finance portfolio in the new Iraqi Council of State in 1920.

Gertrude Bell's connection with the Near East began in 1892, when she was barely twenty-four years old; she visited Persia (Iran) where her uncle, Sir Frank Lascelles, was British Minister in Tehran. She was fascinated by her visit and translated the poems of the famous Persian poet, Hafiz (Hafidh) of Shiraz. Eight years later she travelled in Syria and Palestine

and went to Jerusalem. She visited Turkey and the Arab Near East subsequently several times, went to Hail an unknown part at that time of Najd, and wrote her enchanting books: Amurath to Amurath, The Desert and The Sown, etc. She was interested in excavations and antiquities, and, in her last years in Baghdad, she laid the foundation of the Iraqi Museum.

Her chequered life fascinated many biographers in England as well as in the Arab world. My friend, the eminent Iraqi diplomat and historian Najdat Fathi Safwat wrote, in Arabic, a very interesting biography of Miss Bell, which I read in manuscript. He enhanced her achievements from the local point of view and dwelt especially on her role in Iraq during the formative years of 1917-23.

Her last years in Baghdad were indeed sad. She was fifty-eight, lonely, depressed and disillusioned. Miss Wallach spoke of her last moments in the following words:-

"Too tired to finish a letter to her parents, or even to leave a note, she asked only that Marie (her maid) awaken her at six the next morning. But she had other plans. Wiping away the dreary future, she took an overdose of the sleeping pills on her night-stand, turned out the light and went to sleep, a deep sleep from which she never awoke."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Janet Wallach, a Jewish writer of fine English prose, lives in New York City. She has been interested in Arab politics and history, with her husband John Wallach. She wrote two books about the Middle East: "Still Small Voices"; "The Real Heroes of the Arab-Israeli Conflict" ●

Extract from the book

The large Jewish community also had to be won over to the Sharifian side. Reluctant to accept an Arab ruler (they had once petitioned that they be granted British citizenship if an Arab government was installed). Gertrude worked to convince them that Faisal had British support. Her spirits rose when they agreed to host a large reception for him. On Monday morning, July 18, Jewish, Christian and Arab notables gathered in the courtyard of the Grand Rabbi's official house, where an awning covered the open square, and flags and streamers in Arab colours – green, red and black – hung

from the second-story gallery. Children crammed the balcony and women peered out from the upper windows to watch the scene in the courtyard. Row upon row of chairs were filled with turbaned Jewish rabbis, prominent Christians, all the Arab Government Ministers, the leading Muslims and Shiite holy men.

The official party came in, took their seats and the crowd burst into applause. Gertrude was given the honoured place to the right of Faisal. "You know the absurd fuss they make about me, bless them," she wrote. The program began, and for two hours, in the sweltering heat, cool drinks and refreshments were passed while the audience listened to speeches and songs. The Rabbi, she thought, looked "straight out of a picture by Gentile Bellini"; the well-prepared oratory was "interesting" because of the underlying tensions – "the anxiety of the Jews lest an Arab government should mean chaos, and their gradual reassurance, by reason of Faisal's obviously enlightened attitude."

The heavy Torah, encased in gold cylinders, was removed from the Ark and carried first to the Grand Rabbi, who kissed it, and then to Faisal, who repeated the gesture. Next, the future Emir was presented with a gold copy of the Ten Commandments and a beautifully bound copy of the Talmud. Gertrude leaned over to Faisal and whispered that she hoped he would make a speech. He hadn't meant to say much, he whispered back, but thought he must. "You know I don't speak like they do," he added. "I just say what is in my thoughts."

At the end of the ceremonies Faisal stood up. "There is no meaning in the words Jews, Muslims and Christians in the terminology of patriotism," he told the crowd; "there is simply a country called Iraq, and all are Iraqis. I ask my countrymen the Iraqis to be only Iraqis because we all belong to one stock, the stock of our ancestor Shem [Semites]; we all belong to that noble race, and there is no distinction between Muslim, Christian and Jew."

He spoke really beautifully; it was straight and good and eloquent," Gertrude noted approvingly. "He made an immense impression. The Jews were delighted at his insistence on their being of one race with the Arabs, and all our friends were equally delighted with his allusion to British support ●



A 1923 garden party in Baghdad with sofas and rugs laid out on the lawn. Foreground: Gertrude and King Faisal.



The above photograph was taken in August 1986, at the Reunion Party of "The Moyallem Family" (Hakham Saleh) which took place at Leonard's of Great Neck, New York. It took me three years to organise this gathering which was attended by 75 family members who came from Israel, England, Canada and different parts of the United States of America.

Left to right are:

1st row: Robert Mouallem, Michael Mowlem, Jonathan Mooallem, Roger Mouallem, Susan Mooallem, Claudia Mowlem, Jeffrey (Fred) Mooallem, Rebecca Mooallem, Jennifer Mooallem, Ruth Anderson, Eric Anderson.

2nd row: Jow M. Saleh, Angelika Saleh, Naima Saleh, Aviva Eliahou, Albert Eliahou, Teffeh Saleh, Saleh E. Mouallem, Sylvia Mowlem, Vicky Mouallem, Renee Mooallem, Violette Levy, Violette Salm, Flora Masry, Victoria Tawfik, Yahooda Soffer.

3rd row: Shafik Benjamin, Toba Benjamin, Harry Tawfik, Rose Tawfik, Jamil Mooallem, Gladys Mooallem, Huguette Gabbay, Harry Gourdji, Clemence Gourdji, Joyce Shashoua, Leonie Salih, Ida Saleh, Gladys Bahary, Joe E. Salih, Chris Meir, Ronnie Soffer.

4th row: Albert Mowlem, Albert Mowlem, Albert Tawfik, Janet Dickson, Edward Royal, John Linder, Vivian Linder, Fred Mooallem, Manny Alani, Fred Shashoua, Edward Shashoua, Emma Dickson, Maurice Saleh.

5th row: Michael Shashoua, Johanna Dickson, Victor Shashoua, Angela Shashoua, Dorothy Mooallem, Nancy Alani, Jeffrey (Jamil) Mooallem, Ronit Mooallem, Saul Mooallem, Ketty Saleh, Alda Mooallem, Naomi Masri, Edmond Masri.

Attended, but not photographed:

Linda Meer, Steven Meer, Philip Meer, Joe S. Mooallim, Sandra Tawfik, Beverly Tawfik, David Tawfik●

Thank you for sending me the "Scribe" issue No: 66. I am sure it will help us establish a similar publication or guide us along that path, for the Jews of Iran who are currently experiencing displacement, exile and humiliation, just like the Iraqi Jews did one generation before●

Beverly Hills
California

Frank Nikbakht

JEWES AND ARABS 1,000 YEARS AGO

by: Dr. Stefan C. Reif

A hundred years ago, in the spring of 1897, numerous sacks of old papers were delivered to Cambridge University Library. They had been sent by the University's reader in Talmudic Literature, Dr Solomon Schechter, from the *Genizah* (store room) of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in the medieval part of Cairo in Egypt, as a gift from the Jewish community there to the University of Cambridge. Schechter's trip had been encouraged and paid for by the Master of St John's College, Cambridge, Dr Charles Taylor.

It turned out that these sacks contained 140,000 priceless fragments of all kinds of written items that had been stored in that Synagogue for about a thousand years by Jews anxious not to destroy anything that might be sacred or might contain a reference to anything of a religious nature.

Some research was done in the first few years after their arrival and remarkable discoveries were made about the religious ideas, literature and history of the Jews of the Mediterranean area, and their relations with non-Jews, at the time when England was being conquered by the Normans.

Only recently, however, has there been a comprehensive programme at Cambridge University Library to preserve all these documents by means of the latest techniques, to catalogue them and to make copies available to scholars and universities around the world.

As a result of these recent developments, many new areas of research have emerged, including the study of the everyday language used by the Jews in oriental countries, conversational Arabic, written in Hebrew characters, now called Judaeo-Arabic by scholars. This language holds the key not only to the literary documents of the *Genizah* but also to mundane matters such as private letters, bills, legal agreements, lists of clothes and jewellery, commercial correspondence and communal controversies.

Scribe: The importance of the Geniza fragments can be appreciated by the fact that President Ezer Weizman, in his short state visit, found time to visit the Geniza Library at Cambridge●

JUDAS WAS NOT A TRAITOR

Judas Betrayed or Friend of Jesus?

by: William Klassen

Published by: SCM Press

207 pp. Price: £12.95

Reviewed by: Naim Dangoor

In this book, the author comes to the conclusion that Judas was not a traitor. But this negative verdict is not good enough.

A thorough and impartial reading of the Gospels stories themselves clearly indicate that not only was Judas not a traitor, but, in fact, he was the most sincere and the most loyal as well as the closest of the Disciples to Jesus.

Jesus became convinced that to demonstrate his messiahship he had to go to Jerusalem, be rejected and killed and be raised again the third day.

Judas Iscariot was the only Judean among the twelve disciples. While the other eleven were provincials from Galilee. Judas was more sophisticated and most committed to Jesus's ambitions. For this reason he was the trusted treasurer and secretary of the movement.

Jesus decided to perform all the scriptural prophecies concerning the expected messiah – riding on an ass into Jerusalem, being betrayed to the authorities and being rejected, and undergoing suffering for the sins of the people. Jesus secretly made beforehand all the necessary arrangements for his drama: a ready donkey at the entrance of Jerusalem, a house to hold the Passover Seder. Unbeknown to the other disciples, he arranged with Judas to "betray" him to the High Priest.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said to the amazement of the company that one of those present would betray him to the authorities. This was not a prophecy but a pre-arranged plan with Judas. One by one the disciples asked, "Is it me, Master?" But Jesus told Judas, "Go and do what you are supposed to do." Judas dutifully went to the police court of the High Priest, told them Jesus was in town claiming to be the Messiah King and to make this "betrayal" look genuine he agreed to take 40 pieces of silver as a bribe to tell them where Jesus was hiding. In the meantime Jesus and his disciples were waiting at the garden of Gethsemane where Judas arrived with a mainly Gentile police contingent. By a pre-arranged signal Judas kissed Jesus to identify him and Jesus was promptly led away. When it suddenly dawned on the faithful Judas the disastrous possibilities of what Jesus had put himself into, he could not face development of events, returned the 40 pieces of silver and hanged himself.

Even if it is taking 2000 years to understand and appreciate Judas, it is not too late for the Church to revise its attitude to him and canonize him and ranking him ahead of all the Disciples of Jesus. The demotion and demonisation of Judas was only one manifestation of Christian anti-Semitism for 2000 years. If the Holocaust has now satisfied Christian lust for Jewish blood, then it is time to rehabilitate Judas.

Germany should not be allowed to stage the Passion Play anymore, and should be approached to make a complete ban on this anti-Semitic exercise.

(See my article "Who Killed Jesus", *Scribe* No: 62. September 1994, Pg. 34)●

The Jewish Preparatory School of the London Sephardi Community

A £750,000 re-development programme will increase the number of classrooms of this successful Preparatory school called Naima J. P. S. after the late mother of David and Sami Shamoon.

The plan will provide above the classrooms a large Synagogue to be used by the students which will also provide an overflow Iraqi service for members of the Congregation during the High Holy Days. The Synagogue will be named after Nathan and Daisy Saatchi who are contributing £250,000 towards the cost.

It was originally intended to keep the synagogue on the ground floor and build the classrooms on top. But one visit to the site convinced Naim Dangoor that the plan should be reversed by having the classrooms on the ground floor with the Synagogue on top. This was found to be the correct and the more economical procedure and was adopted.

I refer to *The Scribe* No: 66, page 45 where Rabbi Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbrook cited a philosophical argument by Maimonides which considers ascribing positive attributes to God a form of "idolatry". Naim Dangoor in his comment on this point has strongly refused to accept the concept. I surely shared his real intention by judging the statement and not the man. Now, contemplating deeply at the core of the argument, I should admit that I arrived to a different conclusion inasmuch as the concept is purely philosophical and Maimonides or (Harembam as we called him in Iraq) never promoted the idea which preferred to have it known to a certain class of philosophers and intellectuals.

According to my research I found that Maimonides did not mention the word "idolatry" in the matter but he went as far as considering ascription positive attributes to God could border on "multiplicity and inadequacy".

Milan

Edward Yamen



The above picture which was taken on a visit to the school a few years ago, shows: Left to Right: Murielle Salem; Freddie Salem; Lord Sainsbury; the late Lady Janner; Communal Rabbi Dr. Abraham Levy; Naim Dangoor

ROYAL GOLDEN WEDDING

Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh who were married in November, 1947, have designated 1997 as the Royal Golden Wedding year. They are holding a Special Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 15 July for couples who were married in 1947.

Some 457,000 couples were married in the UK that year, 45,000 applied for the Royal Party and 4,500 were chosen by ballot.

Renée and Naim Dangoor who were married in Baghdad within a week of the Royal couple, were among those who were thus selected.

The rest will depend on the weather! ●

Thanking you for translating to me the letter in Amrani, the language spoken only by Iraqi Jews, which my father had sent to me in 1953. For the last 44 years I was unable to find anyone who could decipher the writing or understand the words.

As a teenager, I had been living with my father in Bombay who tried to teach me Amrani (special alphabet used in writing it) at that time. Then planes came to take children on Aliya to Israel and I was one of them, therefore I forgot this language.

You may remember that I am the taxi driver who took you to your home few years ago. I am ever so grateful to you for letting me know, at last, what my father was trying to tell me ●

London

Moses David



The Laura Kadoorie Alliance School, Baghdad.

I happened to attend an interview with Mrs Esther Mercado, author of the book: "Iraq - My testimony" which took place in Ramat Gan theatre recently. The most exciting part of the interview was when Mrs Mercado was asked: Thanks to whom the book has been written? her answer was:

To the nameless heroes and the Zionist emissaries; to the organisers of our immigration; to my people the Iraqi Jews here and in the Diaspora, who made history: they are the inspiration and the encouragement the drama and the story; the test and the success; the witness and the reality; the tragedy and the message; the memories and the hope!

Mrs Mercado told the interviewer of Ma'ariv and the audience that her wish and dream is to witness equality among all the people in Israel prevailing: to witness the peace treaty signed with the Iraqi authorities, and to pay a visit to that country, to her home and schools where she grew up, and finally to write a more optimistic book full of hope and promising future.

Ramat Gan

Rina Dallal

Israel

Scribe:
No need to dream of seeing your old school which is now a heap of rubble. Keep thinking of the school as you knew it, as shown at left ●



The above picture goes back to 1928 portraying Iraqi officers, including my father, on the occasion of the termination of their trainings and exams of the so called "17th Adjutants 'Session" which took place in Baghdad (Karradah). The graduates at the session were then authorised to assist and substitute the commanders of battalions' subdivisions which are called in Arabic "Sariyyah" and what is called in English "company".

Sitting in the centre of the first row is my father: Lieutenant Yamen Youssuf. Another Jewish officer can be seen in the same row sitting at the extreme right, viz, Lieutenant Heskell Shaool Joory.

In the centre of the second row is British Officer Captain Teak, supervisor of the Royal Military school and the Training College in Baghdad. On his right, the commander of the school Tawfik Wahbi. His great "hereafter" was minister of Education and minister of Social Affairs. On his right is Kamel Shebeeb, one of the teachers, who was later one of the four officers known as "the Golden Square" who supported Rashid Ali in his unsuccessful "Pro German Conspiracy."

After the termination of his training my father was sent to Zakho, in Mosul Province, near the Turkish frontier. Half the population of Zakho were Jewish. In the early twenties, thousands and thousands of Jews from Zakho have already left the place to live in Jerusalem where they established their own nucleus●

Milan Edward Yamen

THE IRAQI EUPHRATES REVOLT OF 1920

Summary of operation carried out by:
The Mesopotamian Wing, Royal Air Force
July – December 1920

Total hours flown: 4008 hours.
Total weight of bombs dropped: 97.5 tons.
Total rounds of S.A.A. fired: 183,861 rds.
Number of casualties:
Officers Killed in Action: 6
Other ranks killed in Action: 3
Officers wounded in Action: 5
Other ranks wounded in Action: 2
Machines lost in hostile country: 11
Machines put out of action temporarily by hostile rifle fire: 57●

The Israel Air-Force Association held last November an International auction held in New York City and linked live by Satellite hundreds of people in New York, London, Tel Aviv, Los Angeles, Ohio, and Las Vegas. The auction was extremely successful, raising over \$750,000 to support the activities of the Association.

Among the important items were:

- Letter from David Ben-Gurion warning of attack in 1956: \$13,000;
- Oslo accords: \$28,000;
- Israel-Jordan Peace Accord Mementoes: \$7,000;
- The gloves that captured Adolph Eichmann: \$55,000;
- Isaac Stern's autographed Gas Mask; \$21,000;
- Final original flight planning map of the Entebbe rescue: \$90,000;
- Joystick from the F-16 that first hit the Iraqi Nuclear Reactor and the jacket of Col. Zeev Raz, leader of this mission: \$38,000;
- IAF Launch Orders from the six-day war: \$60,000;
- Shafirir Missile: \$30,000●



Jews of Zakho, 1942, Freya Stark.

ONLY ONE GOD?

Your article in "The Scribe" of September 1996 was excellent. But the interpretation of Elohim as "Gods" in the plural form is not correct. Elohim is a singular noun, meaning "God". "In the beginning Elohim created the heaven and earth" (Gen 1:1). The Hebrew word for "created" is "Bara" which is past singular verb and therefore Elohim is also singular. The structure of the name Elohim might have been confused with other Hebrew names like "Mayim" "Shamayim" and "Hayim" which are plural but have no singular.

Furthermore, Elohim is also not the plural of EL (god) from the plural of EL is Elim, not Elohim.

The importance of the singularity of Elohim cannot be ignored. Some Arab writers started to attack the Jewish religion as having many gods thus casting doubt at the monotheistic character of our faith.

Gt. Neck N.Y. Albert Khabbaza, MD

Naim Dangoor writes:

Mayim and Shamayim have no singular because they are "collective nouns." If you wish to treat Elohim in the same way, i.e., as a collective noun, then this confirms rather than contradicts what I am saying, namely that Elohim represents, was meant to represent, can be taken to represent, an infinite number of Gods all living in peace and harmony – an infinite mass of Gods rather than a single God.

However, Elohim *does* have a singular, namely, not El but Eloah, as we say: Ki En Eloah Mibiladé Hashem.

When we wake up in the morning we say Elohai (in the plural) and not Elohi (in the singular).

When the Children of Israel made the Golden Calf, they did not say Zé Elohekha Yisrael but Ellé (in the plural) Elohekha Yisrael.

Likewise, Elohim occurs many times in the Bible and is translated as "Angels" also in the plural.

Elohim: The clearest evidence of the plurality of Elohim in early Genesis is the expression "behold the man is become as one of us" (Gen. 3:22).

In addition, the second Commandment refers to Elohim Aherim (in the plural) which is translated as other gods●

1997 WORLD SCHOOLS DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIPS

by Michael Birshan, 16

Last February, I represented England at the Ninth World Schools Debating Championships – held for ten days in Bermuda. Debating is essentially competitive arguing: one team of three argues that something is right or true – for example, that boxing should be banned – and the other team argues the opposite. Whichever team is more successful at persuading the adjudicators wins the debate.

Selection for the England team began in October 1996. All eligible applicants were invited to London for a day of trial debates and interviews. I was one of five who were chosen to be the 1997 England Debating Team. It would seem that some of my grandfather Harone Kattan's renowned oratorical genes have rubbed off on me.

The England team along with our coach and an assortment of English adjudicators flew to Bermuda. Bermuda has got to be one of the world's loveliest places. The scenery is beautiful, the climate is warm and sunny all year round, and the hospitality reaches Sephardi standards.

It was an experience to meet so many young people from so many different parts of the world and bringing with them so many different cultures. Also, since World Championship debates are always in English, it was a shock to meet so many debaters from Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Peru, etc., who spoke as good, if not better English than the teams from English-speaking countries. But, for me, one of the most endearing memories of the Championships was the relationship between the Pakistani and Israeli teams. Officially, Pakistan does not recognise the State of Israel and the Pakistani team is threatened, by their government, with the firing squad if they debate Israel. Nevertheless, it is a testament to the Pakistani team that, albeit secretly, they did debate Israel and it is a testament to both teams that, outside the debate chamber, they were genuinely best of friends.

On the debating side, England did extremely well. We reached the Grand Final – which was televised live on Bermudian television – and won the silver medal, with the gold going to Australia.

Next year, the World Debating Championships will be held in Israel – as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the State's foundation. Israel will be the first non-English speaking country to host the World Championships. I will still be eligible for selection, and so, hopefully, the Hebrew saying *l'shana haba' ab' Yerushalayim* will come true.

The debate was on the notion that, "Terrorism is Justified in some circumstances." Our Team was assigned to argue for the motion; Australia against the motion, and were the winners.

Naim Dangoor writes: White or black kind of debate, the choice between two extremes is the worst form of discussion. Most often, the truth lies in the grey area in between.

One recalls the ill-fated debate at the Oxford Students Union in February 1933 at which the motion "That this House will in no circumstances fight for its King and Country", was carried overwhelmingly by 275 to 153, which Hitler took as expressing the feeling of the British public, and which may have precipitated WWII.

Oppressed minorities often have to resort to

armed struggle to obtain their rights, since it is only by the use or the threat of force that the majority imposes its will on the minorities. An international charter for minority rights is the only way to distinguish between the freedom fighter and the terrorist.

The Prime Minister of Bermuda wrote:

Dear Mr Birshan,

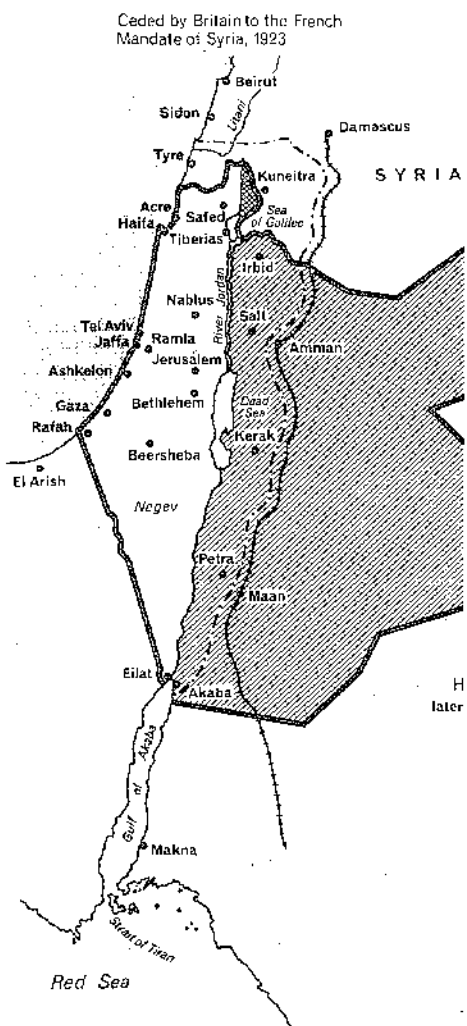
You and your colleagues on the England team have every reason to be proud of yourselves for the way in which you acquitted yourselves in the recently concluded Ninth World Schools' Debating Championships in Bermuda.

I was impressed by your presentation in the Finals which combined, as it did, passion, good argument and solid information. You seemed to be enjoying the debate and that, of course, is most important. Continued good luck to you.

As a souvenir of your visit to Bermuda, I now send you a copy of "Picturesque", a book of local photographs.

Yours sincerely

The Hon. David J. Saul



Shaded territory was ceded by Britain in 1923 to the French Mandate of Syria without proper authority. (See adjoining article.)

The effects of drinking alcohol are much stronger when you are flying.

Drink a lot of fluids when you are flying.

Eat less salt. Don't put salt on the table at mealtimes.

GOLAN HEIGHTS HAS BEEN JEWISH PROPERTY SINCE 1892

by: Dr. M. R. Lehmann

The world, including the Jewish world, has overlooked a fact of historic importance: In 1892, Baron Edmonde de Rothschild – also known as the "Famous Benefactor" – bought 80,000 dunam of the Golan Heights from Arabs for the purpose of settling them with Jews. This fact was revealed only recently in an Israeli publication, but since the revelation occurred during the leftist Peres government, the facts were suppressed. Here are the facts around this sensational revelation:

Golan Heights, called "Bashan" in the Bible, was awarded by Moses to the tribe of Menashe (Deuteronomy 3:13) as part of biblical Eretz Yisrael. During the last century it was a totally barren area, populated only by small pockets of Arab tribes who moved in and out from various countries. In 1892, Baron Edmonde de Rothschild bought the area between Damascus, Mt. Hermon and the Golan Heights, with the central town being Daraah. The Arab seller was Ahmed Shasha Pasha. This purchase was confirmed many times, including by the Turkish authorities who controlled the country in 1892. It was also confirmed by the French High Commissioner under whose sovereignty the land fell after World War I.

In 1929, the Rothschild family registered the land in the name of their private business company, PICA. In 1942, some faint attempts by Arabs to claim the land failed totally. In 1957, Baron James de Rothschild transferred the deeds to the land to the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet) and from there to the irrevocable power of attorney. The Rothschilds made the transfer to the State of Israel with the explicit proviso that the land should be used for Jewish settlers. Baron de Rothschild, in his lifetime, tried to encourage colonisation of the Golan Heights by Jews but failed at that time.

When negotiations with Syria commenced some years ago, members of the Labour party approached the late prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin with the demand that the recognition of the Golan Heights as Jewish territory should be raised with the Syrians. However, Rabin shrank from pressing the claim. He missed an outstanding opportunity to press this claim on perfectly legal, contractual grounds. That was a terrible mistake, because by reminding the world that the Golan Heights have been Jewish land for over 100 years, there would be no point in negotiating "the return" of the Golan to Syria, since it is not Syrian anyway. This discovery would place the status of the Golan Heights in an entirely new light.

While the leftist government of Rabin and Peres evidently did not have the nerve to claim Jewish rights to the Golan, we can be sure that the staunchly nationalistic Netanyahu government will not shrink from asserting Jewish rights over the land, based on perfectly legal, internationally recognised contracts and documents. And it was acquired by Jewish money for the benefit of the Jewish people.

Scribe: In 1923, Britain ceded a large territory in the region of the Golan Heights from the Palestine Mandate to the French Mandate of Syria, without proper authority as is shown in the adjoining map adapted from The Arab-Israeli conflict – its History in Maps by Sir Martin Gilbert.



Diamond Wedding

Daisy and Nathan Saatchi, who were married in Baghdad on 15 December 1936, recently celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary at a Dinner at the Dorchester Hotel, attended by over 200 family and friends.

The above photograph shows the happy couple at the party.

A Kiddush after the Shabbath service was also offered last month to members of the congregation at the Lauderdale Synagogue, London.

The Queen sent a message of congratulations, as is usual on such occasions●

On the Rivers of Babylon: Treasury of Proverbs of the Iraqi Jews

by Yehoshua Meiri

Published by Reuven, Mass, Jerusalem 1996 518 pp. 84 NIS

1001 Baghdad Proverbs

by Moshe Hakham

Published by Yaron Golan, Tel Aviv 1993 318 pp.

The proverb is generally considered as a brief witty saying in common use. It conveys conventional wisdom in a concise and clever form, making it memorable and easy to pass from one generation to another. The proverb states cultural truisms in its cultural validity is indisputable. It may advise a course of action by drawing attention to the moral or ethical benefits gained from taking the suggestion it makes.

The main function of the proverb is rhetorical and it is an authoritative tool of education to moral values. Authority is achieved by the ascription to sources like elders or ancestors. Proverb use is usually governed by social norms and a good speaker does not only know its logical application and meaning but also its appropriate social use. (Source: The Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics, Volume 6, (Oxford 1994).

A few months ago, a new comprehensive anthology of Babylonian Jews' proverbs appeared in Jerusalem. The author, Yehoshua Meiri is a graduate of the Shamash School in Baghdad. An accountant in his profession, Mr Meiri devoted many years of his life to the collection of proverbs that bore fruit in the form of this 500 page book. In reviewing the book reference was made to another anthology compiled three years ago by Moshe Hakham.

In the collection process, both authors have drawn upon human sources, mainly older family members and friends. Mr Meiri shows a clear attempt to pursue a more scientific approach by mentioning the specific source for each proverb. Both Mr Meiri and Mr Hakham paralleled the proverbs with other Middle Eastern and general anthologies and have done a thorough work manifested in the elaborated references attached to every proverb. Mr Meiri has again a small edge here as he seems to have consulted with a more comprehensive list of sources.

Mr Meiri's book contains several introductory passages concerning the history of the Babylonian Jewry in Iraq and then the *Alia* to Israel. Unlike the anthology itself, the introduction is implicitly trying to be unscientific aiming at a more general public who would like to attain some concise relevant information. A very useful introductory passage deals with the meaning of the words *spigam* in Hebrew and *matal* in the Jewish Arabic colloquium. Mr Meiri shows there an impressive ability to

The Chosen People

by: Naim Dangoor

Let us face it: We made a terrible mistake in accepting the role of Chosen People. "We listen and we obey" did we say? Even without knowing what it was all about? We keep kidding ourselves that we were chosen above all nations, and were selected from all languages. But the facts appear to be different. It transpires that the Torah and the accompanying role of Chosen People were first offered to all the nations of the world who, one by one, had rejected the "honour" after reading the small print, and realising there was a catch in it. No thanks they said and walked away. We were too gullible to appreciate the risk involved. As born gamblers, we dived into the unknown without thinking of the consequences.

What was our reward for 3,000 years of being the selected people of God? Throughout the centuries we have been harassed and ridiculed, persecuted and tormented, decimated and dispersed, ending in the terrible tragedy of the Holocaust, with no end in sight.

Our leaders tell us that our sufferings are due to our sins. In fact, we are punished not only for our own sins but, having accepted our special role, we suffer for God the wickedness and savagery of mankind.

We keep saying we have survived thousands of years, the only people to do so. But then who are all these people around us everywhere, haven't they also managed to survive?

Fifty years after the war, Israel has become the whipping boy of the world. Many enemies and very few friends. Can this be our reward, is this our recompense? Is this what we bargained for? Since Israel was established, a hundred new states came into being, most of them living in peace and quiet.

According to Newton's second law of motion, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The immensity of the Holocaust is a measure in reverse of the impact which the Jewish people have had on mankind. Because we are few in numbers, the impact has been so crushing on us.

Look around us, most of humanity acknowledges the God of Israel and follow His moral code.

Is this then our role? Were we destined to become the vanguards of God's purpose, the spearhead of a moral crusade?

If so, should we be agreeable to continue in this capacity, or is there a way out of it? Those who can't stand the heat need not stay in the kitchen. Nothing is for nothing. But for those with staying power the final reward may be incalculable.

As chosen people, we have two options: either to conquer for God or to suffer for God. Out of the goodness of our hearts we refused to conquer. We preferred to be the victims rather than the aggressors. The inner feelings of those who were led to the gas chambers must have been: "I would rather be a docile Jewish lamb than a raving German dog pursuing a false doctrine of racial superiority."

At the dawn of Islam one Jew wrote to his friend, "someone has risen in Arabia who says he is the Awaited One. But surely, the Messiah doesn't come with sword and chariot".

We are peace loving people, a peace-loving people searching for peace and following it. But peace now means trouble later; peace now means suffering later; peace now means Holocaust later.

Having renounced conquest for God, Christianity and Islam came to conquer in our stead. They have also appropriated to themselves our title. We have been marginalised. This being our philosophy we have to keep suffering until our true Messiah appears. By that time we may no longer be here●

combine scientific material with foot-notes alongside popular culture as in the example where he quotes a famous saying often used by his mother, "the makers of proverbs are never wrong."

On the other side, Mr Meiri partially fails to emphasise the special importance of proverbs in the popular language and literature in the Middle East and its special weight in the discourse of everyday life, in a culture based prominently on oral tradition.

Mr Meiri's anthology is divided by subject which seems to be a more sensible way than the alphabetical order used by Mr Hakham.

Although Mr Meiri's book contains a substantially larger amount of proverbs (1303 compared to 1001), the two books manage to cite proverbs that are exclusive to them, making both of them indispensable●

SECOND EXODUS

We received No: 2 of volume 2 of the above journal published by the Historical Society of Jews from Egypt P.O. Box 230445 Brooklyn, N.Y. 11223, Fax: 718 998 2497.

We reproduce below an interesting letter which appeared in the Journal from Andrew Strum of Melbourne.

My mother née Bentata, and her family migrated from Egypt to Australia in 1961. I was born here in Melbourne in 1967. I am a barrister by profession. My wife née Ninio, was similarly born in Australia of Egyptian parents.

My maternal grandmother, née Israel, was born in Cairo in 1908. She is the great-granddaughter of Rabbi Yomtov Israel Chief Rabbi of Cairo between 1867 and 1891. Rabbi Yomtov Israel was the author of "Minhagei Mitzrayim" (Jerusalem, 1873/1990), on the religious customs of the Jews of Cairo.

He in turn, was the son of Rabbi Eliahou Israel, Chief Rabbi of Cairo between 1847 and 1866. Rabbi Eliahou Israel's other children were: Rabbi Isaac Israel the sofer of the Cairo Beth Din; Bida Israel who married Jacob Cattaul Pasha; and David Israel, who married Ida Rossi, daughter of Dr. Elia Rossi Bey of Ferrara who was the physician to the Khedive Ismail of Egypt.

On her mother's side, my maternal grandmother is the granddaughter of Ibrahim Hanan, who founded the Etz Hayim Synagogue (Kenisset Hanan) in the Cairo suburb of Daher in 1901. She is also the great granddaughter of Shalom Levi, who founded the Neveh Shalom Synagogue (Kenisse El Kebira) in the Cairo suburb of Abassieh in 1890. Her uncle was Victor Hanan, who founded the Societe Egyptienne de Tuyaux et Produits en Ciment Armé ("Siegwart") a director of which was his close friend Maurice N. Mosseri.

My maternal grandfather, Moise Bentata, was born in 1904 and died in Melbourne in 1972. His family, the Bentata and Maratchi families, had migrated from Spanish Morocco to Tantah in the second half of last century and were closely related by marriage (several times over) to the Benzakein family. His grandfather, Isaac Maratchi was a founder of "La Bourse du Cotton" and a street in the Cairo suburb of Hamzaoui where his business had been located, and continued to bear the name "Wekalet Maratchi until the 1950's. On my wife's side, her mother is a great-niece of both Haim Dorra, a president of the Jewish Community of Alexandria, and Joseph de Picciotto Bey, an Egyptian Senator and Jewish communal leader.

I have been involved in tracing the genealogy and history of these families for a number of years, I collect whatever information I can on Egyptian Jewry: books, articles, documents, artifacts, religious objects etc.

You may be aware that a number of Jews migrated from Egypt to Australia between the late 1940's and the late 1960's. They are mainly concentrated in the cities of Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide ●

We have determined that the Danker families in Jerusalem originated from the same area of Latvia as Annette's father's family. The first Danker to arrive in Jerusalem came in 1840. The given names in the family are somewhat similar, and many individuals in their family strongly resemble ones in ours. We feel certain that there was some relationship.

This may be possible with the Dangoors as well. We'll leave it to a later genealogist to determine! ●

New York Annette and George Steiner

THE INDIAN NAVAL REVOLT OF 1946

by: Percy Gourgey

Published by: Sangam Books Ltd UK

57 London Fruit Exchange,

Brushfield Street, London E1 6EP, £2.95

(Published in India by Orient Longman Ltd

Here is an authentic account of a brief, momentous event that preceded India's independence fifty years ago. Nehru, the first Prime Minister, described the period as "a political earthquake of devastating intensity."

Dissatisfied with their treatment and conditions of service, Indian ratings of the Royal Indian Navy seized control of ships and shore establishments in February 1946. This unparalleled event was sparked off by a British Commanding Officer's remark: "You are the sons of coolies and bitches!"

This is a personal account by Mr Gourgey, a junior naval officer at the time, caught by chance at the centre of the disturbances in Bombay, and it indicates their far-reaching implications – the historic trials in New Delhi, when Nehru was one of the defence lawyers of the Indian National Army, the reference to it in the House of Commons, London, Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and the significance of India becoming the first Republic in the Commonwealth.

In his foreword, Lord Sorensen, a former Government Minister, refers to "such agitation (which) fused, as in the French and Russian revolutions, in the resultant flames.... I commend Mr Gourgey's record both for its historical and human value (as) it contains much that illustrates the consummation of a massive political struggle (to) appreciate the tragedy within the struggle and the majesty of the achievement."

Mr Gourgey is a writer and broadcaster, active in public affairs who claims the unique privilege of having personally witnessed the course of the three greatest freedom movements this century – as an officer in the Second World War, as a journalist in India's freedom struggle, and as a Zionist before Israel's statehood in 1948. The book was launched in Bombay in January 1997 by Admiral L. Ramdas, former Chief of India's Naval Staff ●

MOSES MONTEFIORE IN ALEXANDRIA IN 1840

by Andrew Strum (Australia)

Taken from Second Exodus,

Published by Historical Society of Jews from Egypt, Vol 2.

In 1840, at the height of the "Damascus Affair," the blood libel against the Jews of Damascus, Moses Montefiore travelled to the Middle East. Whilst in Alexandria, he convened a meeting of the Jews of that City with a view to the drafting of written statutes for that community. He also commissioned a census of Alexandrian Jewry. I am currently working on a translation of that document from the Hebrew original. The census lists the names of the heads of each household or of widows and orphans; their place of birth; their age; the period of their residence in Alexandria; their financial status; their occupation; their marital status; their dependent children below and above the age of thirteen years; and any relevant observations. There are 169 surnames that appear in the census ●



Lieutenant Percy S. Gourgey, Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve, 1943-46 ●

OUT OF EGYPT

by: André Aciman

Published by:

Harvill Press, London 1996

Price: £15.99

Reviewed by: Lydia Collins

This is an immensely enjoyable account of the life of the author's family in the last years of cosmopolitan Alexandria; the eccentric collection of relatives, friends and servants who peopled his youth, portrayed with lively humour and affection.

The family had settled in Egypt from Constantinople in the early years of this century. They spoke many languages but the older generation felt most at home in Ladino (which they called Spanish) and, as French and Italian nationals, they were that unique phenomenon, the Levantine European.

Their history is typical of many such families. They had gone to Egypt in its heyday, but they remained long enough to experience the final momentous events for both Europeans and Jews. On three occasions the family gathered together at the home of the author's great-grandmother for mutual protection and support in time of crisis – in 1942 as the Germans advanced across the Western Desert, in 1956 at the time of the Suez invasion, and later in the 1960's. After the debacle of Suez things would never be the same again, and the author vividly conveys the feeling of ever-present danger, waiting for the knock on the door or the anonymous telephone call, wondering whose assets will be seized next, who will be told to leave. Eventually the family dispersed to Europe, Britain and America and we meet them again in exile responding to their various changes of fortune and reflecting on their life in Egypt, the sunlit days of Alexandria and a world gone forever ●

R. Saadia

R. Saadia Hussein

born Aleppo 1699, died Baghdad 1773

R. Saadia Bekhor
d. in Plagne 1772

Muzafar
m. Ezra Abraham
Missaiah SEHAYIK

David

Yeshua BEKHOR (d. 1851)
m. Rachel (d. 1883)
dan of Benjamin
SEHAYIK

R. Shlomo BEKHOR (1843-1892)
m. ... dan of Nassim Isaac SHUKER
m. Chakla dan of Joseph Moshe

Habiba m Moshe HAI
Sarah m Ephraim Eliahu BEKHOR (1st cousin)
for usne see husband
Meir BEKHOR
Yehuda BEKHOR m Georgina DANIEL
Joshua BEKHOR

David BEKHOR (1935) m Helena HOOTMAN
Menahem BEKHOR (1930) m (1) Mayana ... (2) Christa ...
Rachel m ... RAY
Sima m Bernard Fox
Solomon BEKHOR (1925)
Bertina m Judah JUDAH
Victor BEKHOR m Hadige SAMRA
Gourgi BEKHOR m Tefaha REHEMA (EZRA)
Salim BEKHOR

Joseph BEKHOR
m (1) ... dan of Moshe Nissim SASSON
m (2) Chakla dan of Shlomo Ezra Benjamin
SEHAYIK

Aziza m Joseph ABOUDI
Khatoun m ... SABHA
Jacob BEKHOR
Hestel Ezra BEKHOR

Rachel m Showker LOYA
Edward ABOUDI
Madeleine m Joseph SABHA (1st cousin)
Nazim ABOUDI m Violet INY (niece)
Naima m Khedoua INY
Joseph SABHA m Madeleine ABOUDI (1st cousin)
Habiba m Elias KHEBOURIE
Marguerite m Eliahu SOPHER
Eliahu BEKHOR (1934) m Gita ...
Shlomo BEKHOR (1933) m Marcelle ...
Moshe BEKHOR (1932) m Flora LEVY
Leonie m Joseph DALY
Ezra BEKHOR (1930) m Rena ...
Ovadia BEKHOR (1929) m Olivia
Baruch BEKHOR (1928) m Elene COHEN

Baruch BEKHOR m ... dan of Benjamin
ABDELNABI

Shoua BEKHOR (1892) m Gourgiye dan of
Ezra Hestel DANCOOR
David BEKHOR
Naima
Rachel

Jamil BEKHOR (1910) m Flora ...
Charles Anwar BEKHOR (1906) m Esther ELIAKIM
Khedourie BEKHOR (1903) m Adele BOUCAI
Naima (1901) m Sassoon REUBEN — Helen m Ken Sion BEKHOR
(cousin)
Louise (1898) m Eliahu MORLLEM
Rachel (1896) m Meir Joseph SHEMTDB
Irene (1894) m Abraham SHAMASH
Sulman BEKHOR (1892)
Habiba (1890) m Hestel TOEG

Aboudi BEKHOR m (1) Habiba (d. 1873) dan of
Joseph BASHI (banker)
m (2) Sarah (1st wife's sister)

Shoua BEKHOR m Messouda dan of Moshe
Shoua BEKHOR (1st cousin)
Messouda m Yehouda Isaac SEHAYIK

Florine m Yamin SEMAH
Gourgiy SEHAYIK m Muzli dan of Menashe Muzid H. DAVID
Gourgiya m Eliahu SEHAYIK
Pauline m Meir SOMERH
Eliahu SEHAYIK m Muzli dan of Abdullah INY

Moshe BEKHOR m Salha dan of Baruch
Reuben ABOUDI (dan of 1st cousin)

Sassoon BEKHOR (1893)
Ezra BEKHOR (1883) m Khatoun dan of Ezra
David HESKEL-HAIM
Messouda (1876) m Shoua Aboudi BEKHOR (1st cousin)
for usne see husband
Rachel m Baruch KHASMA
Hanina m R. Shoua OABADIAH (Zegir)
Menashe BEKHOR m Jeanette ...
Aziza m Joseph S. BENJAMIN (SASSOON)
Shoua BEKHOR

Albert BEKHOR m Vivienne Jacob SHLOMO
Marcelle m Naim SHAMASH
Maurice BEKHOR m Bertha Meir HESKEL HAIM
Yakov KHASMA (1915) m Lilit NAGAR
Marcelle
Daisy
George KHASMA
Marcelle
Naima m Abraham NATHAN
Rosa m Kaitouri SARAF
Gourgiyeh
David (Naim)
Moshe (Naji) m Victoria BERSHAN
Sassoon BENJAMIN
Frederick (Elishe) BENJAMIN
Naim OABADIAH
Selim OABADIAH
Elias OABADIAH
Violet
Vicky
Renet
Muzli

David BEKHOR (d. 1901) m ... dan of Isaac
Joseph SOMERH

Messouda m ... MASHAL
Hestel BEKHOR (d. 1940)
R. Ezra BEKHOR m Rimah dan of Moses Ezra BATTAT
Shoua BEKHOR

Salim MASHAL
Jouri MASHAL m Doreen SCHOUVELLA
Kissim BEKHOR m Suzanne ...
Jacob BEKHOR m Victoria ...
David BEKHOR m Simka ...
Muzli m Meir SADKA
Messouda m Salim SEHIRAH (maternal cousin)

Aaron ABOUDI

Jacob ABOUDI
Eliahu ABOUDI
Menashe ABOUDI
Jacob ABOUDI m Mazli dan of Abraham Haim SOMERH
Reuben ABOUDI

Abraham ABOUDI

Farha m Hestel Ezra Elisha "3 E" SASSOON
Aziza (1899-1951) m Saleh ELKESIR (2nd cousin)
Reuben ABOUDI
Sion ABOUDI

Jacob SASSOON
Abraham ELKESIR

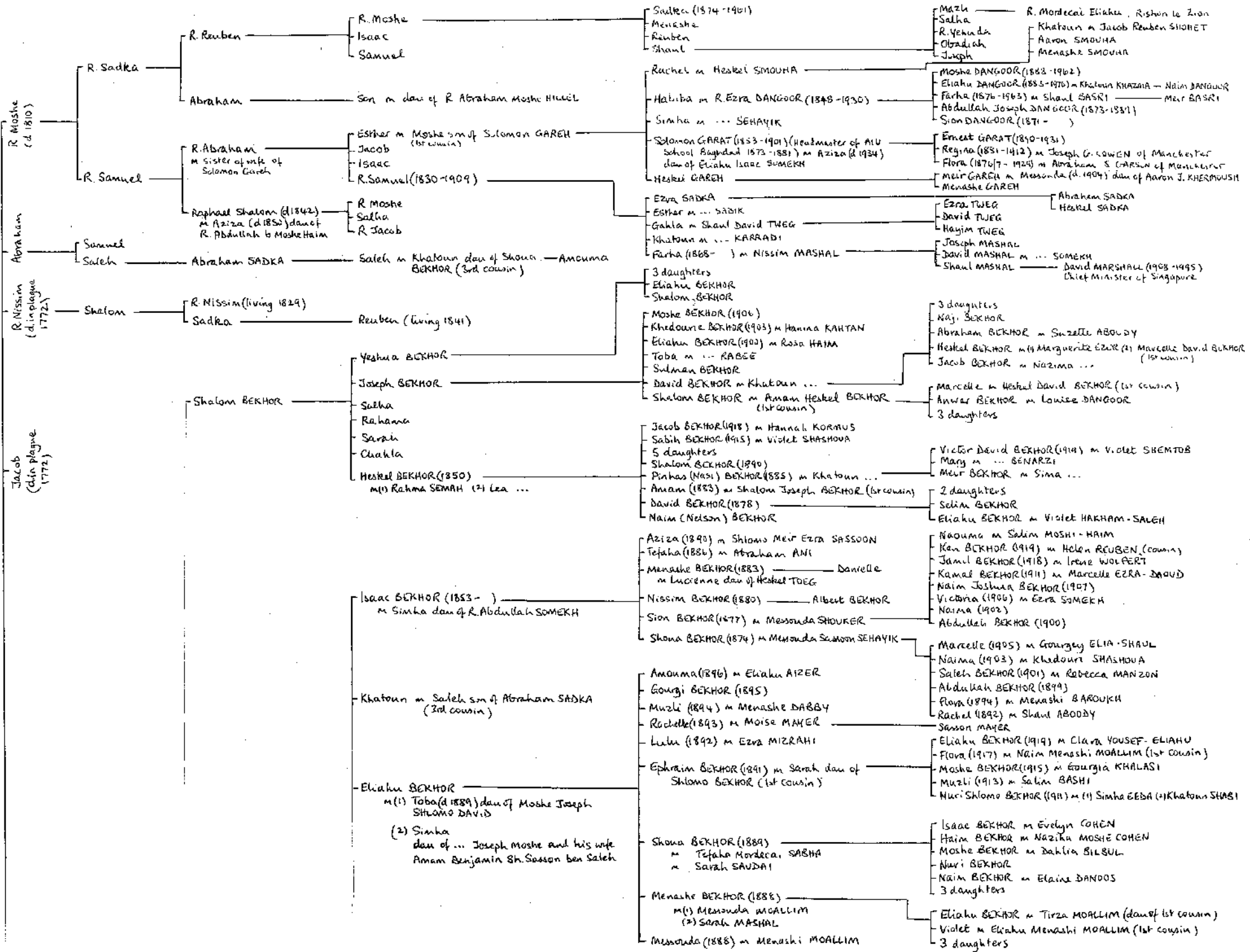
Shlomo ABOUDI m Rima (1826-1886) dan of
Shoua Hestel ELKESIR and Toba sister
of R. Abdullah SOMERH

Salha (1837-1942) m Moshe Shoua BEKHOR (father's 1st cousin) for usne see husband
Reuben ABOUDI
Joseph ABOUDI m Rachel dan of R. Abdullah SOMERH
Muzid ABOUDI

Baruch ABOUDI

Sadka Family Tree

prepared by Lydia and Morris Collins



NEXT YEAR – JERUSALEM

by: Naim Dangoor

No sooner had the Hebron accord been signed than the PLO, the BBC and other enemies of Israel started to clamour for the bigger prizes of Jerusalem and the return of the 1948 refugees to Israel proper.

Although the implementation of the Oslo accord has been extended to the summer of 1998, it does not cover Jerusalem and the refugees; but it will leave the road clear for these demands to be made on Israel.

Next Passover, Arafat may well be tempted to have a *Seder* of his own and proclaim with gusto – NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM. The world will find nothing wrong with Arafat's threats of renewed terrorism unless his demands are met. So, unless Mr Netanyahu prepares and carries out a concrete plan of his own covering these two thorny issues, he will, when the time comes, find himself in a very weak and defensive position.

Since it was captured by King David 3,000 years ago, this year, Jerusalem had not been anything but a Jewish capital. It had never been an Arab capital. Access to the Holy Places, such as they are, of all Faiths has never been more free and secure than it is today.

On what grounds can the Palestinians have their claim to the Holy City?

Can the West, whose post-cold war showpiece has been the reunification of Berlin, now preside over the partitioning of Jerusalem?

Arafat cites Rome as an example of a capital city shared by Italy and the Vatican. But the Vatican has no territory outside its small enclave and has no ambitions or claims on Italy. Allowing the Palestine authority to run its business from the Jewish capital would only ask for trouble.

Labour would have been quite ready to accommodate Arafat on the question of Jerusalem. Not actually partitioning but *sharing* the city. Even such a level-headed statesman as our own Shlomo Hillel was ready to go along with such an arrangement. For the sake of economy, how about Israel using the Knesset during regular hours, and allowing the PLO to use it after hours?!

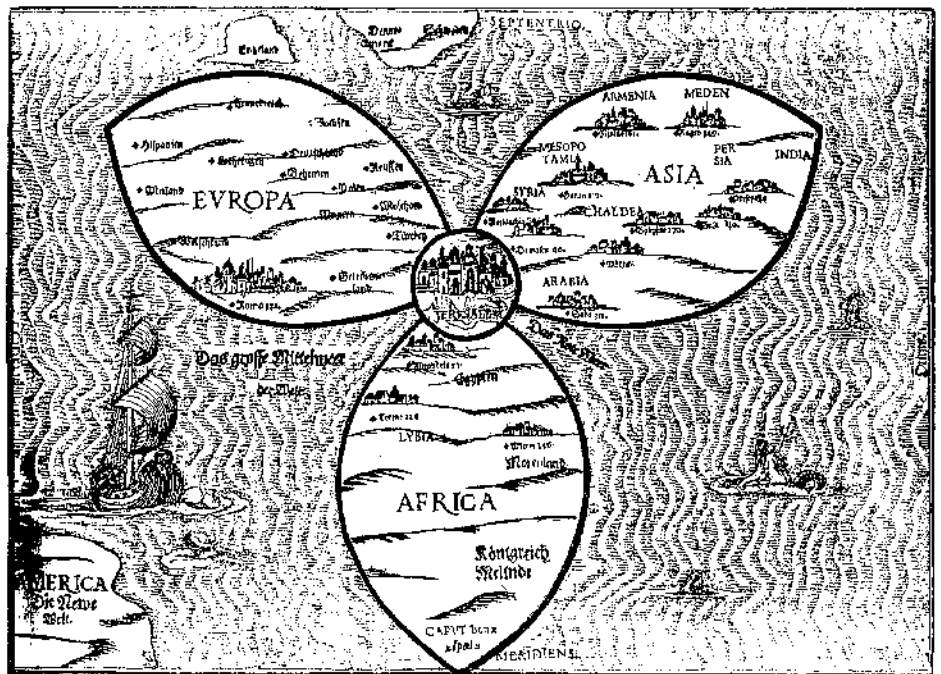
The last person to leave Israel – please don't forget to switch off the lights!

In spite of the damage done by the Peres administration, the election of Benjamin Netanyahu under the new rule was nothing short of a miracle. Bibi should take the initiative in solving the Jerusalem problem; it is not enough to declare that Jerusalem is not negotiable. I recommend my simple plan as follows:

Offer Israeli citizenship to all Arabs now living within the enlarged boundaries of Jerusalem. All Arabs not accepting this offer will be slated for repatriation to the Palestinian territories in any future negotiations beyond the Oslo accord. Arafat is now trying a new trick for establishing his capital. He wants a piece of land close to Jerusalem which shall be called "Al-Quds". Shimon Peres and his Labour administration fell for it and were prepared to oblige Arafat and his preposterous demand. This must never be contemplated. I hope Netanyahu will reject it out of hand.

By what right do we of the Diaspora keep meddling in Israeli politics, which is a source of irritation to most Israelis? The affairs of Jerusalem are different. Jerusalem belongs to the entire Jewish people and we all have the right to voice our views and opinions to safeguard our Eternal Capital.

To prove my point, I hereby volunteer in the defence of Jerusalem, should the need arise●



The above map shows the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe with Jerusalem in the centre.

The Holy City still remains today the focus of world attention, which in addition to its rightful Jewish owners it is being claimed by Moslems and Christians. Henricus Bünting (1545-1606), map of the world as a cloverleaf, with Jerusalem at its centre, from his book "Itinerarium Sacrae Scripture." This map was in an album collection, kindly offered by: Israel Ambassador to Dublin, Mr Zvi Gabbay●

From HE, Zvi Gabay,
Israel Ambassador in Dublin

I enclose a copy of a letter from some Christian friends that appeared in the Irish Times last October.

ANTI-ISRAEL BIAS

We recently had the privilege of representing Ireland in Jerusalem as an interdenominational delegation of Christians from North and South of Ireland. Part of our purpose was to attend the ICEF-sponsored Christian Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, along with some 6,000 Christians, Catholic, Protestant and Pentecostal, from over 100 different countries. This year's celebration was very special, as it fell on the 3,000th anniversary of the establishment of Jerusalem as the capital city of King David.

We were present in Jerusalem when the violence took place surrounding the opening of the now infamous tunnel. We were shocked at the misrepresentation of these events on CNN and in the Western new media, which portrayed this as a desecration of the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. It took nearly a week and fully 70 dead before the truth began to trickle out that the charge was not true.

This Hasmonean tunnel is 2,500 years old and was used to provide water to Jerusalem. It was actually re-excavated in 1985, and has been open to visitors since then. It must be emphasised that no part of the tunnel runs underneath the Temple Mount at all, nor does it threaten any mosques. Yet the Muslim authorities stated that it cuts under their compound and call it "a crime against Islam".

We know, from first-hand viewing, that the only religion it does touch is Judaism's holiest shrine, the Western Wall. The excavation had been open for eight years. It needed another gate to allow more visitors through to the Via Dolorosa, which, in turn, will help the Arab shopkeepers there. Moreover, the opening of the tunnel exit did not violate the Oslo Agreement, as archaeological restorations in

Jerusalem are not covered by it.

What happened? The Western media were taken in by a version put out by the PLO and the Arab League. At Arafat's urging, the League, within 48 hours of the tunnel's opening, issued a declaration calling the tunnel "part of an Israeli Zionist plot to destroy the Aqsa mosque and set up the Temple of Solomon". We write for the sake of witnessing to the truth of these events, and to expose the increasingly anti-Israel bias in much of the Western coverage of the Middle East.

Signed by many delegation members●

I have pleasure in enclosing a copy of a letter received from a Mr Asher Siev, to whom I sent a copy of *The Scribe*. As you can see he found it most interesting.

Dublin

Zvi Gabbay
Israel Ambassador

Dear Ambassador,

On my return to Dublin last week, I was pleasantly surprised to read the Journal which you sent to me entitled "*The Scribe*".

The initial essays and reports made most interesting reading and contained a lot of food for thought.

I well remember the photograph shown on page 10, when it was published in a newspaper in 1941. I remember giving a talk to Torah and Avodah to the effect that *The Mufti* was a Nazi and a danger to Palestine at the time.

The report on life in Baghdad was most enlightening, while the prayer before lighting the Sabbath Lights taught me a lot.

Tomorrow I will be travelling to England to see two of my daughters who are married to Sephardim and I propose bringing the journal with me for them and their husbands to read.

Finally, I was most interested at the very end to read the Sassoon Family Tree, as my daughters know different members of that family and no doubt they will show them the journal also

Dublin Stanley

Asher Siev●

BETH YOSEF RABBINICAL COLLEGE IN LONDON

We are most proud to announce world-wide, to all readers of *The Scribe* the voice of Babylonian Jewry, after several years of hard work and help from heaven, the Rabbinical Academy "Beth Yosef" has been set up and full programmes are running in London.

Chief Sephardi Rabbi Rishon Le Sion Bakshi Doron flew from the Holy Land in September 1996, to officially open the Academy. A grand dinner was given by Mr Y. MacCaaba, founder of the Academy. Speeches by the Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, Haham Abraham Gubbay world leader of Eastern Jews and Rabbi Moshe Cohen principal of the Academy and other prominent leaders.

Since the "Aliah" from Baghdad, and the east in the 1950's, most scholars emigrated to Israel and now Eastern Jews in England have integrated into Ashkenazi traditions. The Academy will prepare Rabaneem for full programmes incorporating dayaneem from the East and academies of Baghdad by the esteemed Haham Abdullah Somekh, Haham Yosef Hayeem, and Haham Ezra Reuben Dangoor.

We beseech all of our Eastern brethren to sponsor our new programme and contact Rabbi Moshe Cohen on: 0181 202 7624 and wish everyone world-wide

"tizcoo l'shaneem Raboth."●

62 Brent Street Michael Mordecai Berman Hendon



The two volume book "Adey Zahab" written by the Hakham Bashi of Baghdad, Hakham Ezra Reuben Dangoor, O.B.M. and published by his grandson Naim Dangoor is being used by the students of our Colel.

As we approach the period of Passover, it is relevant to share with your readers the work from "Adey Zahab" on Parashath Shemoth 1-11. "So they appointed tax collectors over it in order to afflict it with their burdens." One should note, in Egypt before our first redemption, Pharaoh and Misrayeem are the root of all evils, even until today. Hakham E.R. Dangoor explains: "The Ministers instituted these taxes in order to create argument and hate between the "B'nay Yisrael" as we know, the ministers then appointed Jews to collect the taxes in order to arouse fighting and argument between them. One Jew would say: from him you've taken a small tax and from me a large tax! All this to create separation between Jew and his fellow Jew, and to breakdown unification and brotherhood."

I think Hakham Dangoor's words are concise and deserve deeper thought especially today in Eres Yisrael and abroad. We hope and pray for "Shalom" and for our final redemption soon. Amen●

Beth Yosef Rabbinical College M. Berman London



Thank you for the ten copies of your late grandfather's book "ADI ZAHAB". We have enclosed a video of the opening of our college at which our honorary president Israel Sephardi Chief Rabbi, Rishon Le'zion Hakham Eliahou Bakshi Doron made an hour long sermon●
London Mordecai Michael Berman
(on behalf of Rabbi Moshe Cohen)



AT THE COLEL

Israel Sephardi Chief Rabbi Eliahou Bakshi-Doron giving a long oration at the Colel. On his left Rabbi Ronnie Mansur (who comes from India).

On his right Rabbi Moshe Cohen; Rabbi Abraham Gabbay, Dayan Liechtenstein Ab-Ben-Din of the Federation of Synagogues.

At present, 12 students study at the Colel, 3 of them Rabbis. They come after work to study between 4.30 and 7.30 p.m. 5 days a week and receive a £65 a week each to help with the expenses.

On Sundays 50/60 people come to study together in this Rabbinical College●



The Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rishon Lezion, Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron honoured the Sephardi community of London by his visit to Sephardi Centre last August. The above photograph shows him being greeted by Mr Naim Dangoor●

The concise family tree of the Sassoons (*Scribe* 66 pages 48-49) is a great piece of work and my thanks and admiration goes to you for your archives and to Lydia and Morris for preparing it. It had showed me my exact relations to the Sassoons. However, my grandmother Hanini's father Sassoon never went to Bombay. Her brother Benjamin, known as Sassoons Benjamin, left Baghdad for Bombay and then to Hong Kong and Shanghai where he established the brokerage firm of Benjamin and Potts. He married Rebecca Cohen, an Australian, and had two daughters. He retired to the South of France with his family●
New Rochelle Aziza Moallem
U.S.A.

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of the Birkoth Shamayim (Jewish Blessings for various occasions) which I will surely treasure.

I was very happy to learn that it was reprinted from the original by Hakkam Ezra Dangoor.

We made copies of the front page of *Scribe* 66 and sent it to our friends in Dublin.

Moreover, during the Dublin Summit last December, Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, who attended the Summit, visited my office at the Israeli Embassy, when I had the opportunity to show his adviser your article "Land for Peace?" which received his admiration and approval●

Dublin

Zvi Gabbay,
Ambassador

The Baghdadi Jews in India

Extracts from a dissertation
by: Alex Roy Hayim

The terms Baghdadi came to include all the Jews from Iraq, Syria and other parts of the Ottoman Empire, Aden, Yemen and even Jews from Persia and Afghanistan. Baghdad though was always seen as their spiritual centre, and when Jews came to India, the customs of which they were so proud, remained intact.

Bombay began to enter into Jewish history after the cession of the city to the Portuguese in the mid-sixteenth century, when it was a mere fishing village. It was in the town of Surat, then a successful and important trading post, North of Bombay, where a number of wealthy Portuguese merchants came to do business and eventually dwell. A colony was first established there under the leadership of Shalom Obadiah Ha-Kohen, a businessman from Aleppo. By the time he moved to Calcutta in 1797, there were around ninety five Jewish merchants in Surat with a synagogue and a cemetery.

One of the first Baghdadis to move from Surat to Bombay making his name there, was the rich merchant Soliman ben Yaakob Soliman. As Surat lost its dominant position as a port, Jewish merchants eventually began leaving for Bombay and Calcutta.

In Calcutta, the Baghdadis found themselves the only settled Jews in the city and so had to set-up all Jewish institutions, starting as in Surat with a synagogue and cemetery.

Those Baghdadis who eventually decided to settle into Bombay though – a city of some 200,000 inhabitants in 1832 – found the Bene Israel already settled with functioning Jewish establishments. One can imagine the shock these Baghdadis must have had in witnessing for the first time Indian-Jews, with their Indian dress and customs, worshipping in a synagogue.

It was not until the arrival in 1832 of David Sassoon of Baghdad, a wealthy and celebrated merchant, who spoke Arabic, Persian, Amrani (Jewish-Arabic), Turkish and Hindustani, that the Bombay community really began to flourish. By then, Bombay was under British rule and the freedom of worship and expanding opportunities for trade, no doubt appealed to him. Like the Jews in Calcutta, the initial activities of the Baghdadis of Bombay were in the import and export trade with the Persian Gulf.

In 1855 a religious confraternity bearing his name, Hebrath Beth David – the Brotherhood of the House of David, was established. This constituted a nucleus around which a new model organisation of Baghdadi Jews were formed, equipped with all the requirements of a traditional Jewish Congregation increasing with notable rapidity. In 1861 he built the beautiful Maghen David Synagogue in the then fashionable Byculla district, set in a spacious compound with a clocktower. On the side he erected a hospice for travellers, a ritual bath and a Talmud Torah for the education of Jewish youth.

After the end of the war and India's Independence in 1947, most of the community emigrated to Israel and the West.

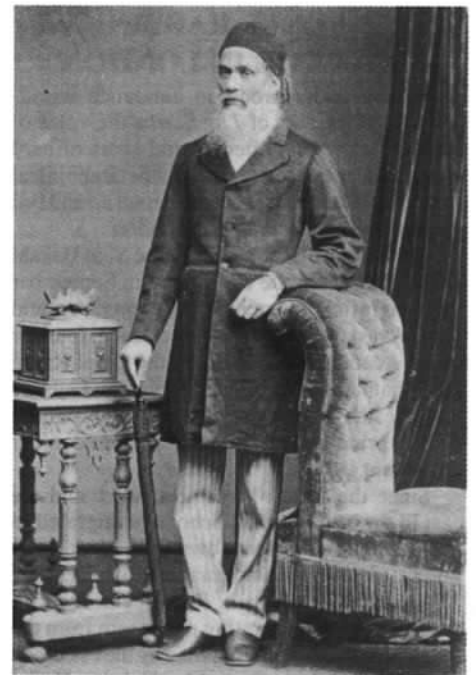
As an illustration of Jewish adherence to their traditions, marriage into other Jewish communities was frowned upon. My father who was born in Bombay was told that he was marrying out, when he announced his engagement to an Ashkenazi. Indeed there were a few eyebrows raised on my mother's side, when it was disclosed that she was marrying an Indian!●

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Hakham Hesel Shlomo David photographed in India in 1876. On his return to Baghdad he built the well known Synagogue bearing his name, "Slat Hakham Hesel." His son Sir Sasson Eskell became Finance Minister in several Iraqi administrations in the 1920's●

As part of the course at my school, City of London, we were required to write an essay of approximately 4,000 words. Spurred on by the encouragement of my grandmother, Flower Elias, I decided to write about something personal and therefore wrote a piece on the Jews of India. My attempt was to discover why the Indian Jewish Community dissintegrated so rapidly in the years following the Second World War.

I enclose a copy of my A-Level History extended essay, for which I received an "A" grade, which you may find interesting.

London **Zaki Cooper**

Scribe: Zaki Cooper gives the reason for the Jewish exodus from India after World War II as being: a) Indian Independence in 1947; b) The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948; c) Lack of opportunities for the rising generation – natural enough reasons. Because of their previous connection with British rule, the Baghdadi Jews and the Jews of Cochin emigrated to Britain, Australia and America. Bene Israel Jews however emigrated to Israel. By 1968 there were almost 13,000 Jews of India in Israel, most of whom were of poorer families of Bene Israel.

Congratulations to Zaki for his well-written paper●

MARK FRANKEL

Mark Frankel who died tragically in a traffic accident came into prominence as the star of "Leon, the pig farmer," and seemed destined for stardom in Hollywood. He was aged 34 and was the son of Grace (née Marshall) whose parents were born in Baghdad and settled in Bombay many years ago.

A relative was David Marshall, who became the first Chief Minister of Singapore in 1955●

P.S.G.

NETANYAHU

speaks out

There is a widespread assumption that if we solve the Palestinians problem we will solve the Israeli-Arab conflict. I don't accept that assumption. Even if we achieve a stable agreement with the Palestinians, as I hope and believe, we will still not solve the Israeli-Arab conflict in its entirety.

A settlement with the Palestinians would not resolve the conflict between Israel and the Arab States. The conflict with the Palestinians is a consequence of the collision with the Arab states and not the main reason for its development.

The conflict will end only when the entire Arab world – and non-Arab Iran, too – is convinced that Israel is here to stay. Or alternatively, when the countries around us go through democratic reform.

Scribe: At last, an Israeli leader has picked up our song, and thus thinks the same thoughts and speaks the same language as we have been uttering for the past 25 years. The Middle East conflict is not with the Palestinians but with Israel's Arab neighbouring countries: The solution therefore must be global and comprehensive●

In your Issue No: 66, Mr Edmond Gabbay wrote a very important article about Gabbay origins, a project which I started a year ago following the research of Dr. Jacob Heskell Gabbay.

About 210 years ago in Baghdad, Iraq, there were two brothers, Heskell Ha Nasi and Ezra Ha Nasi Gabbay (mother's name Rachel of Constantinople).

In 1810, Heskell assisted Khaled Effendi, a special envoy of Sultan Mahmood II (1808-1839) to organise a plot against Suleiman Pasha, the Governor of Baghdad.

As a consideration for his assistance, Heskell was appointed as Sarraf Bashi (treasurer) in Istanbul, the capital city of the Ottoman Empire. Heskell utilised his influence in the Ottoman Empire and he succeeded to expel Saeed Pasha, Governor of Baghdad (1813-1817). He then appointed Dahoud Pasha as the Governor of Baghdad (1817-1831).

For 36 years, Sheikh Sasson was the President of the Jewish community and the Sarraf Bashi. He was replaced by Ezra, brother of Heskell, as Sarraf Bashi from 1817-1824.

Heskell's grandson, Heskell (picture right) was editor of the Istanbul Jewish Journal L'Israelite.

New Jersey

Edward Gabbay

Scribe: The rest of the Gabbay family details sent in by Mr Edward Gabbay were passed to Lydia Collins our genealogical specialist for scrutiny.

Ezra's son, Yosef Rahamin was the ancestor of the Rahamin family●



The Queen accompanied by the Chairman of Lloyd's at the opening of the new building in 1986 at 1 Lime Street, designed by Sir Richard Rogers the same Architect of the Pompidou Centre in Paris●

It is clear that the move into this building did not augur well for the 350 year old Society, which nearly went bankrupt under the heavy load of unprecedented losses. However, the Reconstruction and Renewal offer which was accepted by an overwhelming majority, has given Lloyd's a new lease of life. The above photograph was taken by Naim Dangoor who joined Lloyd's in 1975. Since then, he campaigned vigorously in the National Press for the abolition of unlimited liability of members (which was the cornerstone of the society), which he foresaw as a potential source of corruption and abuse. At last this has now been abolished and members can limit their liability to £250,000●



הקאָל נבא עורך איל ישראלית (העתון השני שהופיע בקונסטנטינא)

Heskell Gabbay

شرط الاول ولا عتبه التالي

Shart el awal wala atab el tali.
– Prior agreement is better than a later argument.

مئقال عقل ولا غطل ذهب

Methqal aqel wala ghatel thahab.
– An ounce of brain is better than a pound of gold.

Tips:

1. If you chew parsley while cutting an onion, your eyes won't water.
2. Ginger is good for colds – A piece of fresh ginger in boiled water with honey and lemon juice. It is said to be good for arthritis too.
3. When frying fish, put the side with the skin on top and then turn it on the other side. That way the fish won't break.
4. When frying eggs, fish or other things, let the oil get really hot before you start frying, otherwise it sticks to the frying pan.
5. Cold tea is very beneficial to plants.
6. Tonic water gives instant relief of a leg cramp.
7. Yoghurt is very healthy especially if taken when taking antibiotic.
8. A raisin put on an infected eye (degdeg), will heal it quickly.
9. A hiccup can be stopped either by drinking water in slow sips or you just surprise or startle the person by telling him something to shock him.
10. Cough syrup: Slice a turnip and spread with brown sugar, cover and leave overnight. The syrup that comes out is good for coughs.

نواي تسند هب

Nwayi tesned heb.
– A small pebble can support a big tank.

الف قلبه ولا غلبه

Alf qalba wala ghalba.
– You can change your mind a thousand times rather than being tricked●

On 26th January 1997, for the first time in the history of Ohel Lea Synagogue of Hong Kong, a Sefer Torah in the Ashkenazi script was officially completed and ceremonially introduced.

This celebration was a very happy occasion which brought indiscriminately together the Jewish Community in HK, predominantly composed of families with their young daughters and sons, Sephardis as well as Ashkenazis. The guest of honour was

Commonwealth, Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks. Sifrei Torah of the Synagogue all in the Sephardi Script brought out to greet the new Sefer Torah.

Mr Robert Sassoon, a reader of *The Scribe*, said the Schehecheyano blessing. The Community continued to sing and dance in a circle round the 'Teba' to complete three circuits (Hakkafots). -

The Chief Rabbi delivered the speech which was stupendous. He was preceded by the Rabbi of the Synagogue Shmuel N. Lopin, who said his part explaining that the idea behind the Sefer was Robert's who donated with his parents the Sefer to the Synagogue.

The massive metallic case of the Sefer, a masterpiece, was donated by the Kadoories in honour of Lord Lawrence and Sir Horace Kadoorie. Lady Kadoorie was present and also Mr Michael Kadoorie as well as Robert Sassoon's parents who live in Stanmore and came to HK for the occasion.

Robert's father told me that he left Baghdad to England in 1931. To my surprise, in the beginning when the Rabbis explained to the public the way a Sefer Torah is written it didn't come to their mind that the use of quill wasn't universal in as much the Sephardis, as I brought it to their notice, write their Sefer Torah in reed-pen. Still the Chief Rabbi looked at me as if he was looking for a city on the map.

This means that for the sake of Jewish continuity, we Sephardis, Babylonians, and Ashkenazis need to know each other's heritage more thoroughly and I do hope that an Ashkenazi Sofer "*Scribe*" in the future will not refrain from even using a reed-pen to write a Sefer Torah.

We should know a very fundamental thing that Minhagh is not Torah and Torah is not a Minhagh●

Milan Edward Yamen (Benjamin)



In the presence of the Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, dignitaries and many members of the Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong, a newly written Sefer Torah was presented at the Ohel Lea Synagogue, Robinson Road, Hong Kong on 26th January 1997.

The new Sefer Torah was donated by Mr Robert Sassoon of Hong Kong who wrote the final letter and said the Shehecheyanu blessing. Amidst song and dance, the Sefer Torah, covered by a Chupah was brought from the Garden room to the synagogue. Additional Sifrei Torah were brought out to greet the new Sefer. Three Hakafot, Divrei Torah Ensue and five specific Psalms were recited by the congregation then the last portion of the Torah was read (without blessing) and all chanted Chazak Chazak, etc.

On Shabbath, 1st February '97 Mr Robert Sassoon read the whole Sidra "Yithro". The new Sefer Torah was much needed because most of the Sifrei Torah of the synagogue are very old, many over 100 years old and were originated from Baghdad.

Ohel Lea synagogue was erected by Sir Jacob Elias Sassoon in 1902 at his own expense, the land was donated jointly by him and his brothers in memory of their mother, Leah.

Enclosed herewith a photograph.●

London

C. Sassoon

אבגדרהו זח טי
כך למם זן ס ע
פך זען קר שאת

Our new Sefer Torah is written in the above Ashkenazi script.

THE PASSION PLAY IN GERMANY

The story of Jesus and crucifixion is staged every ten years at Oberammergau in Bavaria as the "Passion Play." The last time it was staged was in 1990 and the next performance will be in the year 2000. In 1984, the 350th anniversary was celebrated.

There has been a controversy concerning some anti-Semitic topics of its textbook. Some of these have been removed but the general tone of the play remains objectionable. It is scandalous that such a play should continue to be allowed in the light of what Germany did to the Jews of Europe.

We have written to the Central Council for Jews in Germany, Bonn, and to the Pope urging them to cancel or modify this production and not to depict Judas (and by implication the Jews also) as a traitor, since modern historians take a different view of his relationship with Jesus●

"نزحة المشتاق في تأريخ يهود العراق"
تأليف يوسف رزق الله خنيفة
وزير المالية العراقية

تأريخ يهود العراق منذ عهد ابراهيم الخليل لابته درسي في مدرسة
الثيانشه الاسرائيلية وقال في كتابه انه وجد من المدرسين والمدير رحاية كبيرة
ومودة شديدة من زملائه الطلاب اليهود فوجد انه لا يستطيع وفاء ذنبه
للربود الله بكتابه تأريخهم. وقد استند في كتابه الى اوثق المصادر. احدث
طلبه الآن مكتبة المشتاق في لندن وبيروت. قام الاستاذ ميربصري
بتدوين ملحق يتناول تأريخ يهود العراق منذ اوائل القرن العشرين
الى الوقت الحاضر. Al-Warraq Bookshop, 132 Hammersmith Road, London W6 7JP

HONG KONG:

The Sino-British Joint Declaration

After two years of negotiations, representatives of the United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China (PRC) initialled on September 26, 1984 a draft agreement on the Question of Hong Kong. The negotiations were held in strict confidence, although the Executive Council in Hong Kong was consulted throughout. The agreement was signed on December 19, 1984 in Beijing by the Prime Ministers of the two countries. On May 27, 1985 instruments of ratification were exchanged and the Agreement entered into force on that date. On June 12, 1985 the Agreement was registered at the United Nations in New York by both the British and Chinese Governments.

The Documents: A joint Declaration, in which the United Kingdom declares that it will restore Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China in 1997, the Chinese Government declares its basic policies, under the guiding principles of 'One Country, Two Systems', towards Hong Kong after resuming exercise of sovereignty over it, and the two governments agree to implement these Declarations and the Annexes.

Annex I in which the Chinese Government elaborates its basic policies towards Hong Kong in 14 sections.

Annex II which sets out the terms of reference and the working arrangements of a Joint Liaison Group which will operate up to the year 2000.

Annex III which provides for the protection of land rights and for future land leases in Hong Kong and establishes a joint Land Commission.

An exchange of memoranda associated with the Joint Declaration explaining the status after 1997 of people who are now British Dependent Territories Citizens.

Crucial Elements of the Documents: The Joint Declaration and its three Annexes make up an international agreement, legally binding in all its parts. Such an agreement is the highest form of commitment between sovereign states.

The Joint Declaration deals in detail with Chinese policies towards Hong Kong after 1997. It provides a framework within which the people of Hong Kong can work for a secure and prosperous future.

The policies set out in the Joint Declaration were stipulated in a Basic Law enacted by the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, and will remain unchanged for 50 years after 1997.

The Joint Declaration: This provides for:

- Hong Kong to enjoy a high degree of autonomy as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. Socialist policies applied in the mainland will not be applied to the Hong Kong SAR which will maintain its previous capitalist system and life style for 50 years after 1997.
- The people of Hong Kong to continue to enjoy their rights and freedoms under Hong Kong law; and the continued application to Hong Kong of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- The legislature of the Hong Kong SAR to make laws for the Hong Kong SAR. The legislature will be elected. The executive will be accountable to it and must abide by the law.
- Hong Kong's legal system and judicial

systems, including the common law and legal precedents, to be maintained. After the establishment of the Hong Kong SAR, the laws previously in force in Hong Kong will continue to be in force, save for any that contravene the Basic Law. The courts will be independent and free from any interference. A Court of Final Appeal will be established in the Hong Kong SAR.

- The Hong Kong SAR to be able, authorised as necessary by the Central People's Government of China, to negotiate agreements and participate in international organisations in appropriate fields. Hong Kong will be able to continue to participate in the GATT, etc.
- The Hong Kong SAR will retain the status of a free port and a separate customs territory.
- The Hong Kong SAR to have autonomy in economic, financial and monetary fields. There will be no exchange control and the Hong Kong dollar will continue to be freely

convertible. Investors will be able to put in or withdraw their capital freely. The Hong Kong SAR Government will use its own revenues exclusively for its own purposes, and the PRC will not levy taxes in the SAR.

- The Hong Kong SAR to determine its own shipping policies, and to be given authority to negotiate its own Air Service Agreements for flights which do not touch other parts of China.
- The recognition of land rights. It makes provision for the Hong Kong Government to grant new leases extending until 2047 and to renew existing leases up to that date.
- The continuing right of free entry to and departure from Hong Kong. It sets out the criteria for the right of abode in Hong Kong and the issue and use of passports and other travel documents. Residents of the SAR will be able to travel on documents issued by other governments, including British passports●



CHINESE JUNK: Let us hope this is not what Hong Kong will become after 1 July 1997. According to the law of osmosis, if sugar and water are placed together, the sugar soon dissolves in the water. Will Hong Kong and China follow the law of osmosis?●

Though I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting you, your reputation and the quality of your publication, *The Scribe*, are adequate reasons for admiration.

We are grateful to you for allowing us to use Furse Hall for our conference on "the Smiling Face of Fascism."

Our "Academic Response to Anti-Semitism and Racism In Europe" (ARARE) (under the auspices of The Simon Wiesenthal Centre-Europe), now numbers over 500 rectors and full professors of all faiths and disciplines from universities in thirty European countries●

London

Dr. Shimon Samuels

Keep up the good work:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Flora & John Boxer | Toronto |
| 2. Mrs S. Nissan | London |
| 3. Dr. Maurice Semah Shalom | Alberta-Canada |
| 4. Joy Saleh | London |
| 5. Louise Saleh | Manchester |
| 6. Tikva (Amal) Aghassi | Ramat Gan |
| 7. Roy Sophor | London |
| 8. E. Korine | Haifa |
| 9. Doris Shasha | U.S.A. |

TURKISH WATER PROJECT

Condensed from the London Times.

Sent in by: Elias Dangoor

The South-eastern Anatolian Project (GAP) in Turkey is a massive development of 22 dams and 19 hydro-electric power stations which will provide irrigation for 1.7 million hectares (half the size of Belgium), double the country's electricity capacity and create an estimated three million jobs. It is a \$32 billion project which has been called one of the eight wonders of the modern world, alongside the Channel Tunnel, the three Gorges Dam project on China's Yangtze river and Hong Kong's new airport. The completion of the project is now scheduled for the year 2006.

The major element of the project is the Ataturk Dam and the Urfa irrigation tunnels. The dam is like a giant plug, impounding the waters of the Euphrates. The hydro plant has a capacity of 2.400 MW.

Through the 7m diameter tunnels, which will eventually extend nearly 60km, the water will flow bringing new life to the arid Harran Plain.

There is some concern in Syria and Iraq on how the water is distributed, as these two countries may end up getting very little of the Euphrates water●



The above picture was taken in June 1935 at the Zawra Jewish Club in Baghdad shows all the employees of the Department of the Comptroller and Auditor-General, Government of Iraq. The occasion was the departure of Mr Joshua Parlby, the British Comptroller and Auditor-General. He was succeeded by Tawfik-al-Suwaidi, a former Prime Minister, who was educated at the Alliance Israelite School for boys, and in Istanbul and in the Sorbonne in Paris.

With the exception of Joshua Parlby and Minass Minassian, all the persons in the picture are Jews, well known members of the community. How come?

Mahmoud Ramiz, an opposition member of Parliament, got up in the chamber and said, "it appears that when Parlby wants to make a new appointment he goes straight to the Synagogue to find a recruit." Prime Minister Nouri al-Said told him in reply, "Ramiz, you can oppose as long as you live but you will never become a minister."

In fact, Ramiz once asked Parlby why there was not one member of the Moslem majority in his department? Parlby assured him that he always advertised in the local press but no Moslem would apply. It appears that Moslems did not appreciate the "dry" position of that Department and preferred to apply for a job which gave them contact with the public and possible extra benefits.

Left to right:

Sitting: Albert Shamash; Joury Elwaya (assistant Comptroller); Joshua Parlby; Sion Balass; Israel Hai.

Standing: Naim Soffer, Eliahou Houry; Naim

Dabby; Yusuf Houry, Shawky Dallal; Yamen Semah; Daoud Muallem; Edward Rabie; Sabih Bekhor; Minass Minassian; Sasson Bashi.

The pictures affixed at the bottom were of the auditors, who were absent on a tour of duty outside Baghdad. They are from left to right:

Naim Dabby (not the same); Gurji Soffer; Dawood Tweg; Haron Shukur; Salman Dabby; Ishaq Sadka; London Shawky Dallal

Scribe: The Comptroller and Auditor-General's Department was attached directly to Parliament and was absolutely independent of the Government executive authority. It was under the control of the Ministry of Finance with regard to the supervision of its budget only.

The "Comptroller and Auditor-General" was appointed by Royal *Irada* on the proposal of the Prime Minister and with the approval of the Council of Ministers. His discharge from duty on his transfer was to be made by a decision of the Senate of the proposal of the Prime Minister.

The "Assistant Comptroller and Auditor-General" (Mr "Ezra" Joury Elwaya in the above picture) was appointed by Royal *Irada* on the nomination of the Comptroller and Auditor-General and with the approval of the Prime Minister.

In 1935 the late Abraham Elkebir was promoted to become Director-General of the entire Ministry of Finance ●

The Jews monopolised the three British banks then in Baghdad. The Ottoman Bank, the Eastern Bank and Imperial Bank of Persia, (later Iran)

and lastly the British Bank of the Middle East, when Iran established her own Bank Mellie Iran. The Jews had Bank Zilkha and all the "Sararif" until late in 1940, Abdul Amir al Sarraf opened an office but he used to close on Saturdays and Jewish holidays. The British Banks used to observe Saturdays and Jewish holidays.

The Jews also filled most of the Iraqi Railways jobs including the Station Masters and assistant Station Masters, as well as Port authority, Fao Dredging Scheme and Basra Electricity Board. By 1935 when government schools were turning more "Effendis" which cannot wholly be absorbed by the Iraqi government requirements of new employees or by the yearly Education Mission, grumbling started among the Moslem graduates that the Jews are having a disproportionate share of government jobs. Arshad al-Omari, Director General of Posts and Telegraphs terminated the employment of a long list of his Jewish employees headed by Sion Zilkha his secretary general.

When Mr Parlby left in June 1935 many of the Jewish employees started looking for jobs elsewhere. Sabih Bekhor, Naim Soffer and myself joined the Ottoman Bank; Albert Shamash and Ishaq Sadka joined the Basra Port Directorate; Gourji Soffer joined S. S. Abed and Co-agents of British cars; Salman Dabby joined Whinney Murray then their parent company in London. Strangely enough Haron Shukur instead of leaving the employment of the government became a cashier at the Ministry of Defence when a high ranking officer at the Ministry wanted a Jewish cashier to secure that there will be no misappropriations in his ministry; he remained there until 1948 when the State of Israel was established; Dawood Tweg joined Nuri Fattah's office, who own a spinning and weaving factory. Sion Balass went into business in 1941 and in 1951 joined Nuri Fattah as his senior accountant until 1960 ●



Mozelle and Michael Amron in Indian costume/Evening costume●

The above photographs are of my cousins Michael and Mozelle Amron of Iraqi origin, who were married in Calcutta at the Magen David Synagogue on V.J. Day on 19th August 1945 and who recently celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary at the Sephardic Synagogue Tifereth Israel in Los Angeles. They had reflections of their lives together displayed on an 8ft x 8ft screen to music like "Love Story", "The Way We Were", etc., and the reviews were great. Rabbi Benzaqen performed a second marriage ceremony, with Ketubbah, etc., which bordered on humour.

Prior to emigrating to the United States in 1963, Michael and Mozelle lived in Calcutta and were well known in prominent circles there for their excellent ballroom and Latin dancing abilities, having won the West Bengal Championship in 1952, including numerous other trophies. After almost 52 years of marital bliss they are still dancing more than ever.

The Amrons have been globetrotters since 1951 and, in October/November 1996, they journeyed back to India after 36 years to experience the "Palace on Wheels" (similar to the Orient Express in Europe) through Rajasthan for 7 days, then on to Agra and Delhi for 7 days to visit the Taj Mahal and the historic sights.

They finally retraced their steps back to Calcutta for a very emotional and sentimental journey as guests of Ellis Joshua who welcomed them to his beautiful home. They renewed old acquaintances among the approximately 60/80 Iraqis still residing in Calcutta●

London

Ruby Wakefield

THE MIDDLE EAST

by Edward Gabbay, New Jersey

The Middle East is the region where Asia, Africa, and Europe meet. The modern countries make up the Middle East, in the most common current usage, can be divided into four groups:

Northern Africa: Egypt and Libya.

Fertile Crescent countries: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan.

Arabian Peninsula: Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates.

Northern Tier: Turkey, and Iran.

Other areas are sometimes also considered part of the Middle East such as: The rest of North Africa, Sudan, Afghanistan, Greece, and Cyprus.

The New Muslim states of former Soviet Central Asia: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Geographic factors help define the Middle East, but historical experience has been crucial in creating a regional identity. Part of the Middle East's identity is the product of the expansion and contraction of its sociocultural borders throughout its history. Following the death of the prophet Mohammed (632) and the rise of Islam, the entire Middle East was again unified, the creation of the Arab-Muslim empires of the Omayyeds and the Abbasids. The modern Middle East roughly coincide with the areas included in these empires. As the Islamic empires expanded and contracted, the sociocultural borders of the region has been changed. The later expansion of Islam integrated new peoples into the Middle Eastern sphere and created a larger Islamic world, of which the Middle East is just one part.

In the post-World War II era the Middle East has become increasingly important politically and economically●

My Palestine Medal

by

Capt. S. A. Shemtob-Reading MBE (mil)

On two separate occasions, two presidents of Israel both ex-servicemen immediately recognised the Palestine medal I was wearing although many other medals were displayed by the members of our Association of Jewish ex-servicemen and women.

The first occasion was during the visit of AJEX solidarity mission to Israel at the time of Saddam Hussein's missiles. We were invited for tea with President Haim Herzog at his residence. After the speeches the President approached me. He pointed to the Palestine medal and shook hands.

An official photographer took pictures of the President recognising the medal and, because of the interest shown, an enlarged copy of the photograph has been placed at AJEX H.Q. House as part of the Jewish Military Museum.

The second occasion was last March during the International Conference of ex-servicemen in Jerusalem. We went to the residency to meet President Ezer Weizman as he had expressed a wish to meet us because of his war service with the RAF. While our National Chairman was speaking the President made a straight line towards me and pointed to the Palestine medal, saying he knew its significance.

The significance and historical interest of the medal is that, from the beginning of the second world war to the end of the British mandate in 1948, no military personnel of the Jewish faith were allowed to serve in Palestine. However, I earned this medal as I served in H.M. Regular Army in Palestine from 1936. The late Harry Curtis, former Remembrance Parade Marshall of AJEX was another holder of the medal●

See picture *Scribe* 64 page 33.

BARODA CEMETERY, INDIA

Thank you for the generous donation of the Exilarch's Foundation towards the repair of the cemetery affiliated to Magen Abraham Synagogue Ahmedabad, which is much appreciated.

The Jewish Cemetery Committee of Baroda, India, consisting of senior members of the Baroda Jewish Community, are in the process of building offices and stores adjacent to the cemetery. The two main cities in the State of Gujarat are Ahmedabad and Baroda. These cities are close to each other and there is a sizeable Jewish population involved. Gujarat State lies to the north of Bombay. This Project will help, not only to make the cemetery more secure and safe, but also help to raise much needed funds, from the rental of the offices and stores, to maintain various Jewish cemeteries all over India. The total cost of this Project is estimated to be 500,000 rupees, about \$15,000.

The Bene Israel pre-dominated the Jewish presence in India, having possibly descended from the Jews who fled in 175 B.C.E. from the Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes●

Baroda India

Isaac Ellis Erulkar,

Honorary Secretary

Deputy Commissioner of Police

With reference to my letter on Sir Winston Churchill in the last issue of *The Scribe* No: 66, I have been called all sorts of names in my life but this is the first time that I am called "Muriel." London Manuel Cansino

Scribe: Sorry Manuel, someone misread your signature. It would be useful if letter writers would print their names below their signature●



The long journey to CHINA. Painting by Zhang Jinfeng, reproduced from an article, "Legends of the Jews of Kaifeng".

IN SEARCH OF THE KAIFENG JEWS

by: Valerie Collis, Cambridge

The Jews of Kaifeng, a community virtually lost for some hundreds of years are almost legendary. Like Jews in various parts of India, they lived in China without persecution or prejudice, took up indigenous customs, adapted their own, and integrated into the society. I went there last year in the hope of meeting some of them.

Jewish traders from Baghdad, had travelled the Silk Road for hundreds of years but it was not until the twelfth century that they settled in China. It is likely that some came by sea, mainly from India, and the Chinese maintain that Chinese Jews still have Indian features. Some settled along the coast, but many were attracted further inland to Kaifeng, the then capital of the northern Sung Dynasty, and important trading city with more than a million inhabitants, at the centre of land and river communications. Jews were warmly welcomed in China, and Marco Polo who encountered them there refers to their powerful commercial and political influence. They built their first synagogue in 1163, kept in contact with other communities have since disappeared but the one in Kaifeng has clung on. They lost touch with the West as their commercial activities declined, and in fact their existence was forgotten until Christian missionaries came to China in the 1600's and found five or six hundred members there. The locals called them "the people who do not eat the sinews" (according to Genesis 32:32) and confused them with the large numbers of Muslims in the city. Although they assumed Chinese names and adopted numerous Chinese customs, one of which was to take second wives who would almost undoubtedly have been of Chinese parentage, they preserved their identity which they perceived to be through clan rather than race. However, by the time the Jesuit missionaries arrived, the Jews, at least biologically and culturally, were almost indistinguishable from the Chinese amongst whom they lived.

The Jews continued to conduct their services in the synagogue – with some elements of Chinese influence – until the beginning of the 19th century. They followed the yearly cycle of Torah readings and celebrated festivals and kept kashrut. But when the synagogue was damaged by floods in 1849, it was not rebuilt. Travellers from the west reported that they lived in abject poverty and had asked Peking for money to rebuild their synagogue, without success. There was no longer a religious leader, observances waned, knowledge of Hebrew was lost, and with it the significance of certain rituals which were still practised, such as circumcision. In the 1900's Jews from abroad made an attempt to revive the community and save it from total assimilation; but they could not find a rabbi who spoke Chinese. Nevertheless, the seven or so families in Kaifeng today who claim Jewish descent possess a strong sense of identity.

Kaifeng is a large and bustling city. The imperial palaces from a past age which flank its wide main street have been rebuilt many times because of floods from the Yellow River 10 kilometres to the north. The Jewish quarter appears to comprise one narrow lane called Teaching Torah Lane and the taxi driver found it easily. (I later discovered that it was the focal

THE OLD JEWS OF CHINA

Already in the seventh century there were Jews in China, according to some manuscripts found somewhere on the Silk-Road. In these manuscripts the language was Persian with Hebrew characters. Then the Jews lived in many cities, but now disappeared except for Kaifeng, by the yellow river. There lives still Chinese that are aware of their Jewish origin.

It is believed that the Jews of Kaifeng came originally from Persia, according to some old Chinese manuscripts hand-written with some Persian words. These manuscripts are at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Furthermore, there are 13 Sefertora kept in London, Oxford, Vienna, New York, and, of all places in Dallas, Texas. Some are in good shape, others are shabby, but all were written in Kaifeng 300 years ago. An expert can recognise their Chinese origin from the form of the characters. It has many faults and should not be used in services. But the Chinese in Kaifeng had no choice, either to use the faulty rolls or nothing at all. The characters are written in the same way as is customary in the Orient.

One interesting manuscript contains a list of the members of the congregation, who had both Chinese and Hebrew names. The names of the women were written separately. Many Jews intermarried but not before their spouses converted and added to their names, Bat Adam.

Your September 1996, Edition No: 66, was of great interest to me and brought back many memories. It was delightful to see the photos and sketches and to read the notes and articles in your pages during my short stay in Israel. I would appreciate receiving a copy since I only covered a small part of it.

Thanks for making it possible to relive memories of my youth in Baghdad! I am looking forward to receiving my own subscription for my personal library●

Kingston, Ill.

Dr. Simon M. Simon

The congregation had a Rabbi, a synagogue and cemetery. In Kaifeng lived also Moslems and Christians, and each kept their diet and were called by that. Moslems were called "those that do not eat pork", and the Jews "those that pluck out the tendon" (because removing certain tendons makes the meat kosher). Many Jews lived in a street called "the lane of those that pluck out the tendons." Now, that street has a better name "the lane of those that teach the Holy Scriptures."

Being considered an ethnic minority, the Jews of China, like the Moslems are not restricted as to the number of children they can have. Other Chinese are allowed only one child per couple.

Jesuits came to Kaifeng in the 16th and 17th century and through them we know much about the congregation.

At one time it was not allowed for foreigners to visit Kaifeng. But, after 1978 tourists were allowed to visit the city. Many Jews from Israel and the US went there and visited their co-religionists.

One member from the Kaifeng congregation went to the US years ago to study with a Rabbi. Others went to Israel to study at Yeshiva●

Extracts from an article by:

Theodore Kats, Israel

Sent in by: Salim Dangoor of Stockholm

I am an Israeli student doing a research for my Masters in Jewish Education. the topic of my thesis is "Processes of Change in the social status of Jewish women in Baghdad" during the first half of the 20th century.

Having seen recently one issue of the periodical "The Scribe", I would like to order a full volume from No1, as well as to receive future issues. This will serve as an important contribution of the great heritage of Iraqi Jewry culture●

Jerusalem

Nilly Gabbay



Mme Zhao and the writer

point of every bus load of Israeli and American Jewish tourists who come to China to establish a momentary contact with this ancient remnant of Judaism.) He left me at one end of the lane and waited while I went to find the Jews living there: there was not a soul to be seen. As I walked past the crumbling buildings, partially painted a pale green as a form of decoration, I noticed a house at the far end which had its door open. The two *mezuzot* on the lintel gave me some hope; but there was still no sign of life. The dingy little room I entered was a complete shambles. A bare mattress on the floor was strewn with items of clothing and, on the table, amongst the rice bowl and chop sticks, was a menorah, a miniature Israeli flag – such an unlikely place as to be almost comical – and various photographs. Overwhelmed by a sense of intrusion, I turned to retrace my steps only to face a row of Chinese women staring at me, menacingly silent.

Miraculously, my driver materialised from nowhere and explained that I was an innocent, interested, lone Jewish tourist. Mme Zhao looked exactly like all her companions, dressed in identical traditional black and white. She gestured me into the room from which I had emerged, not speaking any English and seemingly not at all put out that I had already invaded her privacy without invitation. She pointed to what was the most curious and interesting item of all: a model of the ancient synagogue, carelessly perched on top of a cupboard, which looked exactly like a Buddhist temple. (This has been reproduced for the permanent exhibition at Beit HaTvuzot in Tel Aviv). One of the photographs was of her late husband, leader of what community there was.

As we left, the driver pointed to a house with Arabic writing on it. He said this doubled up as a mosque on Thursday nights and a synagogue on Friday nights. Since Jews were often referred to as 'Muslims who wore blue caps' I would like to believe him.

On the way back to the hotel we stopped at the site of the old synagogue. It is now the courtyard of a hospital; but the ancient stele

found there bears the names that testify to past members of its congregation. In the precincts of the synagogue, marble tablets were also found, dating from the 15th and 16th centuries commemorating the rebuilding of the synagogue. Its inscription is of enormous value, giving a contemporary account of the character and history of Chinese Jews. "Composed by a promoted (Chinese) literary graduate of purchased rank" it says "where they (the Jews) are met with, they all, without exception, honour the sacred writings and venerate Eternal Reason in the same manner as the Chinese, shunning superstitious practices and image-worship...". And it ends: "they excel in agriculture, in merchandise, in magistracies, and in warfare, and are highly esteemed for integrity, fidelity, and a strict observance of their religion."

As I entered the hotel, I found Mme Zhao Jr. She and her husband looked like any other Chinese couple. In the few minutes I had before the train was due to leave they told me, in very broken English, that there were perhaps 300 Jews in Kaifeng; there was no community as such but they knew each other socially; they do not eat pork; they burn their dead; they can say only 'Shalom' in Hebrew but were learning the language and they read the Torah in Chinese; they know about Yom Kippur but were not quite sure whether they observed it; and there was no question but that they were Jewish.

This fact in itself, I thought happily, was important enough. Perhaps as time goes on and China appears less remote, more Jews will stay longer to visit a community so conscious of its ancestry, so determined not to lose its traditions and so eager to shake the hand extended to them by other Jews●

The Scribe is always a fascinating read●
London Michael Mowlem

To avoid lumps when preparing belawa, sieve flour after frying, then add all the sugar and water all at once and stir●

100 YEARS OF ZIONISM

(Summary of a talk by: Percy Gourgey
to the Limmud Annual Conference
at Worcester University, December 1996)

In 1897, Dr. Theodor Herzl, a successful Viennese Jewish playwright and journalist convened the First World Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland. It was the first political assembly of representatives of the Jewish people since the destruction of the temple and Commonwealth in Jerusalem, nearly 2000 years ago. Its aim was to establish a national homeland for the Jewish People motivated largely through the cycle of persecution and wandering homeland, existing since biblical times, over 3000 years ago, by the Roman invaders of Palestine. This persecution was personally observed at the infamous trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus in Paris, wrongly convicted and imprisoned by a French court-martial, of selling military secrets to the German Army. The judges shocked Herzl by their open anti-Semitism.

Realising that the best solution for overcoming the problem of anti-Semitism, Dr. Herzl penned his famous work 'Der Juden Staat' (The Jewish State) a year before the Congress. He issued a clarion call to the Jewish People based on Psalm 137, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither away" first uttered by Jews carried off to the Babylonian Exile after the destruction of the first Temple of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.

The terrible pogroms in Tsarist Russia in the 1880's provided an added incentive resulting in over 1 million Jews emigrating to the West, though over six million Jews remained in Central and Eastern Europe to be massacred in Hitler's holocaust in World War II. The World Zionist Organisation, formed in 1897, carried out a programme of education, also settlement in Palestine, and organisation of the Jewish People as their national liberation movement.

David Ben-Gurion who proclaimed the State of Israel in Tel-Aviv in May 1948 as a result of the U.N. Palestine Partition Plan of November 1947 (which the Arabs totally rejected to their cost and launched several wars of aggression against Israel to destroy her) emigrated to Palestine as a Labour Zionist from Poland in 1906. He became Israel's first and longest-serving Prime Minister as Leader of the Israel Labour Party which had won the majority of seats in the World Zionist Executive from 1935 to 1975.

The first President of Israel was Dr. Chaim Weizmann (uncle of the President) who was mainly responsible for the Balfour Declaration of 1917 subsequently becoming WZO President. The Basel Programme was replaced by the Jerusalem Programme in 1951 at which Zionist Congress, I was a delegate●

The brilliance of Eileen Khalastchy in remembering the past in Baghdad as reflected in *The Scribe* is wonderful. I didn't remember them when I wrote my book "Dead End Lanes" otherwise I would have mentioned some of them in the book. She is doing a great job which is greatly esteemed by those who read *The Scribe*.

My second book "Jews under the Shadow of Islam" is now with the editor. I hope it will be ready during the coming months.

The review by professor Shmuel Moreh shows the antithesis of my book and "Victoria"●
Qiryat-Ono Yehuda Gurji Barshan

To Baghdad and Back

by Mordechai Ben Porat
reviewed by Sasson Mayer, Toronto

A long-awaited book (in Hebrew) of Mr Mordechai Ben Porat was published in Israel last November. It is not a novel or a fiction, it is a book that tells the story of the Iraqi Jewry and reveals the drama and intrigue of the Iraqi Aliya to Israel and the role of the (Tnuaa) the underground Zionist movement and the role of Mr Ben Porat as a chief emissary of Israel to head and direct this phenomenon that was created in Iraq especially after passing the Bill in 1950 allowing the Jews to leave upon renouncing their Iraqi nationality. He described the huge and dangerous task that faced him and the whole community. It is a historic document that will stay as a valuable treasure for generations to come for historians and researchers to continue writing about our glorious history in Iraq.

With a lot of nostalgic excitement and interest I went through the pages of the book which awaken some of many memories and stories back from that era. In the winter of 1946 the water of the river Tigris rose and the Iraqi military camp Al Rashid was flooded and there was a need to remove its contents to an open field near the "Masbah" area. I was asked to take pictures of the tanks, armoured cars, jeeps and other hardware which I did quietly and secretly from the roof of one house. There was a need to a close up of a pile of wooden boxes in order to conclude the intelligence task. I returned on Friday with a beautiful Jewish girl around ten thirty, (Friday is a weekly leave for the army). The camera was inside its leather box and hung from my neck. We started playing, laughing and chasing and trying to catch each other, when we came close to the area we started teasing loudly each other that, she won't be able to climb on the tank for photographing her... "yes I can".. "no you can't..." In the meantime during our 'play' we came few feet from the armed guard and when he knew what we were fighting about he said "you can't climb on the tank it is a military object and you are civilian."

We began turning back, and he started marching in the front of the field, and when he reached close to a point that a picture of the wooden boxes could be taken we rushed and made him an offer that he could not refuse, a picture with her. He stood proud after fixing his belt and collar, holding his rifle in different positions... Mission accomplished.

For years I worked, gathered and reported several intelligence projects and the only persons I report to and supply the materials to were Joseph Khabbaza and later Joseph Basri. In September 1950, I tried to leave Iraq with my brother Salim (Dan) to Iran and we were captured together with Mordechai Ben Porat and other members. We stayed in jail for twelve days before we were successful to be released on bail for 150 Dinars cash for each of us.

In May 1951 I started to be worried from the over exposure of some of the Jews and their recklessness and even getting drunk in night-clubs. This might have been a "show" to develop good and friendly relations with police officers and other officials, never the less it gave me



Mordechai Ben Porat and Sasson Mayer at Niagara Falls.

some concern that something might happen, and on May the 13th after several delays and postponements I insisted to Basri and Ben Porat that I must leave and the next day I was on the plane to Israel. A couple of weeks later tragedy hit the Jewish community, bombs, arrests, tortures and persecutions that were followed by jails and hangings.

Some might not agree with Ben Porat's ideas, thoughts and methods, but his integrity, efforts and charisma and love to Israel, Zionism and Iraqi Jews have no equal.

Scribe: Although a living hero, Ben Porat remains first and foremost an Israeli agent. All his activities are subordinated to this task. The Or Yehuda Babylonian Heritage Centre is merely a slow hobby, and WOJAC (World Organisation of Jews from Arab Countries) which he started with such fanfare and expectation has withered on the vine.

WOJAC could have been very useful within the Peace Process by making substantial claims from Iraq and other Arab countries. However, it appears that the Israeli government is not interested in pursuing such claims.

In a recent reply, WOJAC surprisingly stated that it is not concerned with pursuing claims, but only in giving out information.

The Palestinians will soon press for their compensation claims, and we will not play Israel's fancied game of set-off, in which case we shall lose our rights by default●

Dear Uncle Naim,

I'm taking this opportunity to write to you and tell you how much *The Scribe* means to me. Being first generation in Sweden my father's background have always felt as something far away and not reachable, due to the circumstances in Baghdad. It doesn't seem like I will ever see my father's birthplace. That thought always made me sad, but thanks to *The Scribe*, I have gotten so close to my father's origin. I enjoy reading everybody's stories and I love all the fantastic photos. Your journal has also given me and my father inspiration to talk about his childhood.

I want to thank you deeply for that, dear Uncle Naim●
Stockholm

Bibi Engdahl

TO BAGHDAD AND BACK

by Mordechai Ben-Porat
Hed Artsi Publishing House
Ma'ariv, 1996, Pp 357

Reviewed by Professor Lev Hakak of Hebrew Language and Literature at University of California, Los Angeles

About 130,000 Iraqi Jews emigrated to Israel in 1949-1952. 110,000 of them flew from Baghdad to Israel in 1950-1951. Some emigrated through Iran. About 9,000 Jews remained in Iraq (today there are only 65 Jews in Iraq, most of them are old).

The author of the book, Mordechai Ben-Porat, fled in 1945 from Baghdad to Israel through Syria and Lebanon. In 1949 he was sent back to Iraq to organise and direct the emigration of the Jews of Iraq to Israel. This is the story of Operation Ezra and Nehemiah in which Ben-Porat played a major role.

Ben-Porat provides us with first-hand evidence as a witness and a participant in that Operation. The story of this very successful Operation includes sacrifices, dangers, devotion, conflicts, arrests and torture.

In 1950-1951 there were five bombing incidents in Baghdad which resulted in property damage and loss of life, four incidents involved the bombing of Jewish targets and one American. There is widely-spread rumour that Israel sent agents who bombed Jewish institutions in Baghdad in order to sow panic and expedite the Jewish emigration to Israel. The book includes the first time publication of the full report of the 1960 Ben-Gurion appointed investigation Committee in this matter. "The Committee did not find any factual proof to bombing by any Jewish organisation or individual" (p.245); "The Committee is convinced, that no entity in Israel gave an order to perpetrate such acts of sabotage" (p. 246).

Mordechai Ben-Porat dedicated his life to public service as an Israeli Cabinet Minister, Member of the Knesset and Chairman of the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Centre. This is an impressive, well written, thrilling and important book, it is a most significant contribution to our books about Iraqi Jewry. It has to be part of our personal library●

Obituary

THE HISTORY OF MY LIFE

by: the late, Renée Elkabir

All my life from when I was a child I never thought of myself. I always liked to help people who needed it. I remember when I was six years old we had a boat trip on the river. We were a big crowd of Mother's friends. Suddenly the boat was leaking – there was plenty of water coming. Everybody panicked and they said we are going to sink. I started crying and saying my poor Daddy is going to be left alone. The ladies were cross, they said he will marry again. That hurt me a lot at that time. At school I always used to help poor girls, giving them my clothes and buying them things they needed if I could afford it. When I married, my husband, bless his soul, encouraged me to follow my instinct.

A lady wanted to found a school for the Jewish blind. She asked me to join her and we both worked very hard collecting money and the school started with 50 boys. We had teachers for Braille and teachers for oriental music. It started in 1927 and finished in 1951 when all the Jews, 120,000 of them emigrated, mostly to Israel and a few other countries as they were fed up with being persecuted by the Arabs.

Our blind boys were so good in music that they played, and are still playing on the radio and television in Israel.

I was a member of the Arab Red Crescent Society in Baghdad. I was the only Jewish lady. I used to give cookery demonstrations on television and the money went to the Red Crescent Society in Baghdad. They appreciated my hard work and gave me the Red Crescent decoration which I still have. Few Moslem ladies got it.

During the second war in 1941 the British Ambassador asked a few ladies from different diplomatic corps to produce an international cookery book. I was chosen as the Iraqi lady. All were ambassadors' wives, American, French, Italian, Turkish and Persian. The book was really very interesting as each one gave what was the best in their countries. It was reprinted many times.

I used to work in two canteens for the British troops giving them tea and cookies. I used to make 200 oriental cookies every week. The troops were thrilled and they always asked to have 'Mrs Elkabir's cookies'. After the war they gave me a Certificate of Merit. It was presented to me by General Wilson who was guarding the troops through the Middle East.

I studied First Aid with the Princesses, daughters of King Faisal the 1st. They specially brought a Matron from England to teach us. I was present at the weddings of the princesses, of King Ghazi and of the Regent Prince Abdul Ilah and the last was the engagement of the last King who was King Faisal the 2nd. The poor King they killed before he even got married.

Getting married was not easy, it needed a match-maker. I did 16, 4 poor girls, 4 Moslems and the others were well-to-do girls. They were all successful matches. I still see most of them. I helped a girl from a good family whose father lost his money. I spoke to a rich man Senator Menahem Daniel and asked him to send the girl to study handicrafts to help her family, and he did. The girl went to France and came back to a successful business. I asked him to help a young boy who was brilliant and finishing his education to go to London to learn engineering. Mr Daniel did send the boy who stayed in



A lecture gathering of Iraqi ladies in 1994.

Left to right: In front: Amal Rejwan; Doris Zeloof; Suad Shamia. Seated: Bertine Rabee; Suham Gareh; Charlotte Joory; Bertha Bekhor; the late Renée el-Kabir; Renée Dangoor. Standing: Suzanne Shahrabani; Valentine Barukh; Leonie Zilkha; Dina Zilkha; Noor Rabee; Joyce Abraham; Alice Shashou; Gizelle Fattal●

London, did well, married and has children.

I helped a Moslem lady whose father-in-law was Prime Minister in Baghdad. They came here on a visit and the revolution happened and they were stuck without money. She wanted to buy a flat. A friend of mine was converting flats. I asked him to reduce the price and he did. I am grateful to him but still she could not afford £5,000. I knew of a Moslem who made a lot of money through the Prime Minister and I wrote and told him and he sent her the money. All these things needed hard work and sleepless nights to do.

Here in London I was in the Synagogue Guild. I worked doing parties to get money for charity and even gave cookery demonstrations.

I was very happy to get from the JIA an Award for my work in Iraq. It was given in the Dorchester Hotel with three hundred people for dinner. They presented me with the figure, Moses on Mount Sinai – the body of Moses clad in old-fashioned clothes. It was in silver and the stone was real stone from Mount Sinai. I am very grateful and God helped us.

On the first revolution we were in Persia, the second, we were in Turkey, and the third in 1958, we were in London when they killed the King and all the family. Of course we never went back. They confiscated our property and they never sent us any pension although my husband did all the finance of the country since 1922 when Iraq had no oil and we were poor. He had to work hard to pay all the employees of the Government through different banks.

In 1951 when 120,000 Jews left for Israel the Iraqi Customs did not let them take nice clothes or bedding or tablecloths. The Committee brought them to us. We hired a place, and I and other friends brought Assyrian girls, and paid them to change all these things into dresses and underwear, and we distributed them to the poor people, and that took us a month of hard work.

My life was at both extremes – extremely happy and good and terribly sad and miserable.

I lost a daughter of twenty who was studying medicine. I lost my daughter-in-law who was twenty five and left two young children, one

three, a boy, and the girl was two years old. I had to work hard to look after them for three years, and then my husband had cancer and I had to look after him.

Thank God my Grandson and my Granddaughter are both doctors now – that is also a reward from God. I have written all this to show that if one can help and do good, one will die happy.

I want to tell people of our community, especially Iraqis to be less selfish and try to enjoy helping and use their money which they can afford, for good causes. God Bless you all.

Scribe: Mrs Elkabir who died last December at the age of 91 wrote the above story of her life sometime ago, to be published after her decease. She was alert to the end, playing Bridge two days before she died. Her last contract was a grand slam in 7 no-trumps. To her surprised partner, she said "leave it to me" and she made it. She died happy amid her loving children and grandchildren. Sorely missed by her many friends and admirers●

I have today received your complete volume of *The Scribe*.

Needless to say that I am short of words to thank you for this valuable TREASURE. Leafing through this volume has already given me the feeling that many many hours of enjoyment are in store for me. My thanks to the Foundation through the proper channels.

On the first page of *The Scribe* of March 1991 someone had written in Hebrew the word (Tizlaroon), which means "May you live a lot of enjoyable years." This reminds me of my uncle in Bahrain who received a telegram from my father in Baghdad on the eve of Rosh Hashana as usual. The telegram contained one word only: Tizlaroon. It was during the second world war, and for good reasons he was called to Censor. "What does this word mean?", asked the official, and when my uncle explained the meaning of this word (four words in Hebrew) the Censor burst with laughter. "Jews, after all", he said●

Israel

Nathan Aluf

Reading *The Scribe* is a continuous and everlasting pleasure. I am writing to you about a subject that concerns each and every one of us. Over one year ago I started noticing the mushrooming of the number of Arabic newspapers in Toronto, also the increase of the anti-Semitic writing and articles against the Jews. I raised my concerns and I have met a few months ago, the executive vice president of Bnai Brith of Canada Mr Frank Dimant who shared his concern with me. After translating all the articles he asked me to write a small article that was printed in the Jewish Tribune on 27th June 1996 and that is to see the other side's reaction because we are certain they are watching us as we are watching them.

I also met three persons who are "responsible" on the subject matter in the Canadian Jewish Congress. I had informed both Jewish organisations my willingness to take legal action against one of those newspapers under the existing defamation Act. I was led to believe that some action will be taken. I know of no action taken by either Jewish Organisations as of 1st October 1996, but I know one thing for sure that there was no article or writing against the Jews published or printed in any Arabic newspaper here since the "Tribune" article was published. I am wondering whether this is coincidence or that they got the message that someone is really watching them?

Ontario **Sasson Mayer**



Moise and Rachele Mayer with their children – 1928.

MOISE MAYER

by: his son **Sasson Mayer**

Moise Mayer was born in Salonika, Greece in 1894. When he was in the second year at the Medical University in 1916, the University was closed because of the war and he was sent by the Ottoman Government to Baghdad to teach in the only secondary school "Sultani". He spoke, read and wrote several European and Asian languages. In 1917 he preferred to give his services to the Jewish Community rather than the Public Schools. He taught in the Nourael, Alliance School and Rahel Shahmoon as a teacher, Assistant School Master, and in 1926 as a School Master. In 1928 he was transferred to Shamash School as a Deputy Head Master and then as a Head Master until 1936.

He left school to manage one of the three privately owned textile factories in Iraq. During the second world war 1942-1946 he was advisor, consultant and a member of the British headed M.E.S.C. "Middle East Supply Centre" with its Head Quarters in Cairo. This office was responsible in controlling the products and supplies of all the Middle East countries under the British influence.

In 1924 during his services to the Jewish Schools, he was the first to introduce and establish the laboratories in the Iraqi Schools, twenty years later he donated his own and private laboratory to Frank Iny School.

He was a member of the Histadroot Hazaionist in 1918-1919 together with Rabbi Dr. Moshe Ventura and in 1921 he was one of the founders together with Haron Sasson "Hamoreh" and he was elected as secretary for

the first Zionist Organisation in Iraq that gained the approval of the British High Commissioner. He resigned less than a year later when he disapproved the Hamoreh policy.

He always respected and helped the poor and the orphans and in order to lift the moral of the very poor and needy students, he organised free kitchen meals, magician and competition shows and even he supplied clothing to the very poor. In 1932 when there was a need to build a new wing and a gym to Alwataniya School and because of the difficult financial situation in the community he realised that the funds will not be provided, he convinced Saleh Aljabi (who was responsible for all the Lotteries in Iraq) to lend his professional knowledge, direction and equipment to hold a Lottery and the benefit went to build a new wing and a gym.

In Purim 1949 he was brought in front of the military court and was accused of "being a Jewish foreigner spreading the Zionist and Communist ideas", and when the Prosecutor failed to prove his ridiculous case the judge asked him to pay a thousand dinars cash as guarantee for good behaviour for a period of three years.

In 1951 he left to Israel. He was elected a member of the religious Community in Ramat Gan as well as a Trustee member of the Iraqi Synagogue in Ramat Ishak. He died in 1963 in the same anniversary day of his birth.

He was married to Rachele, daughter of Eliahou Beckor and Simha Abu Reuben (of the Sassoon family). He is survived by Joseph – Surgeon, Naim – dentist, Sasson – Developer, Salim Dan – Post Office Director and Violette – Housewife.

See also *Scribe* No 58, June 1993, pg 9●

My Father and Palestine

In the winter of 1942 some of the high ranking officers of the M.E.S.C. requested my father and persuaded him to fly to Cairo in order to discuss a "whole" supply strategy. My father was to take a military plane and the route was with a stop in Palestine. All the arrangements were laid down for the trip on a certain date. Two or three days before departure my father was informed that the discussions will take place in Baghdad rather than in Cairo and he was pleased with this change.

Business was going smoothly and friendly relations developed between the British officers and my dad. More than a year later, my father in a conversation with one of the officers discovered that the British learned that he was the one that applied as a member and secretary to the British High Commissioner in Baghdad in 1921 for a permit to establish the first Zionist Organisation in Baghdad, and that led them to suspect that he might try to stay in Palestine on his way to Egypt, and that might have caused them a big embarrassment with the "White paper" in effect, and that the British will be accused of helping the Jews to enter to Palestine, and the British colonel went on and very seriously offered my father his assistance if he wished to go to Palestine. My father politely explained to him that he had no intentions to leave Iraq. We did not know whether it was a genuine offer or a trick●

Ontario **Sasson Mayer**

WHY DID THE JEWS LEAVE IRAQ

by: *Sasson Mayer*

A summary of his recent article in the Toronto Arabic Weekly – Al-Mughtarib

The Jews lived in Iraq for over 2500 years when they were exiled in the 597, and 586 B.C.E., after the destruction of the Temple. They lived and watched the many changes that the country went through. They shared and suffered from the oppressions and many occupations, epidemic diseases and tragedies and at the same time they enjoyed together with the rest of the population the resources, good neighbours, peace and friendship.

The population of the capital Baghdad was two hundred thousand according to the last census done by the Ottomans around the first world war and the percentage of the Jews then was 40% and the percentage of the educated and the professionals was very high among them.

When the first Chamber of Commerce was established in 1926 it consisted of ten members, five Jews, four Muslims and one Christian. The Jewish community in Iraq was like a healthy tree, its roots extended deep and expanded its shade and its fruits were enjoyed by the far and near, but the conspirators in the middle of the century conspired to uproot her; to uproot her they should kill her, and to kill her they should weaken her and to weaken her they should starve her and that is how the big conspiracy started. Several books and researches were written and the historians will need many more

years to search and investigate and the years might extend to decades waiting for the secret documents to be declassified (if ever) and that is to tell the story about the secret plans related to the immigration of the Jews from Iraq, and then and only then the whole story in its confusion will be known.

Let us start with the WWII when all the seaways transportations were almost shut off entirely and most of the products and manufactured goods were not available in the markets, and Britain who used to control the Iraqi markets failed to provide and supply the goods needed for the local consumption, and this led Iraq to seek the import of many goods and products from Palestine where the Jews had started to produce and manufacture all kinds of products in spite of the lack of raw materials in hand.

The goods started to arrive and fill the markets. The British were assisted by these imported products to fill the needs of the Iraqi people and to keep the peace and order; and when WWII ended the British began to see this growing industry as a danger to their export and they started planning to stop it by all means. As a first step the British gathered the only seven (independent) Arab States and formed the Arab League in 1945 and this League adopted the boycott of the Zionist products and then they started to put the plans to monopolise the markets and how to keep it for themselves only.

Iraq at that time used to import large quantity of cotton yarn for local consumption and Britain through her factories in England and India was the only supplier for the yarn for many generations. But after WWII new suppliers such as the US and South American countries were ready to sell cotton yarn cheaper than the British by about 30-40%. The British started thinking and came up with an idea (establish national factory) and so a factory was built, they formed a new company with 100 shares sold to Prime Ministers, Ministers, Lords, Members of Parliament, elite personality and of course to the Regent of the throne). The British supplied the machinery and the experts and the know how. The plant was built and started producing the cotton yarn. The prices were similar to the British prices and in order to close the doors on importers they found the help of an old law in Iraq called (protection of national products). The British knew that this is just a small solution and a temporary one which will control a single product only. What about the rest of the market? They knew that the importers and the merchants the majority of whom were Jews, believes in the freedom of commerce and the rules of free and honest competition, will refuse to pay higher prices for any English products while it could be obtained cheaper somewhere else. The big conspiracy began, it was a complete one against the whole Jewish community in Iraq, it had such a big effect, went far beyond what they thought. They conspired and decided to get rid of the Jewish community in Iraq and for this they had to do what is usually done to a tree by cutting the water in order to dry it.

In May 1948 the Independence was started in Israel and martial law was declared in all Iraq. Tens and hundreds of Jews from all levels were brought to the military courts, young and old, rich and poor and they were charged with all kinds of phoney and ridiculous charges. They arrested ten prominent merchants most of them were over sixty years of age, they were

charged that they participated in pro-Communist demonstrations and they were sentenced to pay a fine of ten thousand pounds each. They paid it and they were released but the effect of it and its aim was very clear to all the Jewish community. At the city of Basra they arrested the famous Jewish merchant S. Adas and charged him selling arms to Israel, he was sentenced to death by hanging and to pay a fine of five million pounds. These barbaric and phoney trials continued and no one was spared not even the supreme court Jewish judge, or the close friend of Mezahem Al Pachachy the Prime Minister of those days. The Jews were forbidden to leave Iraq.

At the same time began the relieving and firing of the Jews from the government offices that they served since its establishment in 1920. The Jews were the top directors of almost all the ministries and they were the knowledgeable and responsible to direct the affairs of the country. The pressure continued and included the importers, and the Jews began facing all kinds of delays and difficulties from the office of the "directory of imported goods".

In all Iraq it was still going on all the unjust oppressions, unemployment, difficulties and dangers of killing, kidnapping, throwing bombs as well as blackmail by all kinds of threats. All the above started showing its effects on all the Jewish community who began realising that behind all the laws, directions, investigations, trials and tortures, there is a complete plan and arrangement and this fact became very clear. The time came to know that the Jewish community was conquered.

A word of truth should be said here for the sake of truth and history that most of the Iraqi people were not agreeing with the events against the Jews and they knew that there is someone who is instigating and steering the spiteful and blind hatred.

The Jewish community realised that the Iraqi authorities started to use the fact that there were about 1000-2000 persons known to approve and wanting to immigrate to Israel and the authorities acted like the wolf that wanted to devour the little lamb saying (here your grandparent insulted my grandparent). The government of Iraq used this to hide its shameful defeat in Israel and to misrepresent it to the public. They started new and wide campaign of arrest, torture and interrogation. They arrested fathers and mothers for not knowing where their sons and daughters were, and the number of those arrested reached over two thousand and the girls over 230; all arrested in the late hours of the night. The conspirators knew that the Jewish community in Iraq was paralysed and reached the lowest situation morally and emotionally and they decided that the time has come to complete the last chapter and most important part of the plot. At the beginning of 1949, Nuri Al-Said came again as Prime Minister and the martial laws that were declared in May 1948 were still enforced. The Prime Minister took advantage and used it to establish and strengthen his position by liquidating his opponents especially the communists; several were arrested, jailed and some of them were hanged and it was announced that all their documents and records were captured.

Al-Said realised that his star will shine and glow if he takes the extreme line in the Palestinian situation and the opportunity came

with the events that followed the cease-fire agreements with Israel. His anger showed when he met at the beginning of 1949 the Prime Minister of Jordan Samir Elrefa'at at the presence of the British Ambassador in Jordan when he (suggested to load the Jews of Iraq on military trucks accompanied by armoured cars to Jordanian Iraqi borders). In the newspapers and the radios around the world started appearing several rumours and news about (the problems of the Jewish community) (population exchange), (to achieve quietness in the Middle East), (sale), (remove the Jews), (repatriation of the Palestinian), (the part of Britain and the US), (news denials), (suggestion of Al-Said), (the suggestion is just a threat to Israel), (Jewish properties against compensation to Palestinian refugees), (if Israel refuses to return the Palestinians, the Arab government will drive away the Jews from their countries), (Iraqi proposal will be presented to the Arab league to exchange all the Jews from the Arab states with the refugees), (the war in Palestine cost Iraq heavy losses and she intended to take compensation from Jewish money) and between rumours to expel the Jews, Britain (the mediator) started to play its role "to solve" the problem and suggested "her readiness" to assist and mediate between her agent Nuri Al-Said and the other side. And so the role of the judge who rules between two sides and keep his own interest, and while the arrests and persecution continued in July 1949 Nuri Al-Said as Prime Minister of Iraq suggested (primary suggestion) to arrange a population exchange by transfer of Jews of Iraq to Israel and settle the Palestinians in Iraq. These proposals were sent to Israel's representative in France through "special" channel, in the same time Britain supported the solution and her will to assist. The documents and correspondences of the British Foreign Office to its ambassador in Iraq mentioned how to deal with Al-Said's "threat" to expel the Jews. In October 1949 a "rumour" was published that Iraq presented a suggestion through one of the committees of the United Nations (to exchange the Jews with the refugees) and (the Israeli foreign ministry did not receive official note of the Iraqi suggestion) and so the New York Times published a letter from Abdullah Bakr the Iraqi ambassador in Washington and it quoted (we rejected definitely the idea of population exchange and the idea is just a Zionist idea). In December 12, 1949 and after his several failures to solve the Arab countries on the Palestinian subject, Nuri Al-Said resigned, soon afterwards a new government was formed, by Tawfiq-Al-Suwaidi which was followed by several discussions, announcements and meetings secretly, and in the open and there was a one clear and sure fact that Britain played a part and that part was dangerous and very important, whether she played it by herself or by her agent Nuri Al-Said.

On the 10th March 1950 the Law of Denationalisation of the Jew Wishing to Renounce his Iraqi Nationality was presented to the Iraqi Parliament and it was passed the same day by two houses as well as the Royal consent. This law was received by a great deal of astonishment and oddity mixed with hope and despair. The Jews of Iraq had realised that the curtain had come down on them and they had no choice but to face the bitter fact and leave the country, their country of origin and indeed the origin of the Jewish people®

FAMILY BUSINESS CONSTITUTION

by Samy Dallal

It is estimated that 76% of UK businesses are family run concerns. They vary enormously in size – from the one-man concern to large multi-national organisations. Many, however, will have been started from home. Unfortunately, few of these survive to the third or even second generation.

Family life and business life are essentially incompatible. Families are held together by deep emotional ties; the behaviour of family members is often influenced by the subconscious (the need for brother to dominate brothers, fathers to be stronger than their sons, and so on); families are inward-looking and anxious to minimise change so as to keep family equilibrium intact.

Business life, on the other hand, revolves around accomplishing tasks, with little room for emotional considerations. It is driven by conscious behaviour that emphasises performance and results. To help ensure survival, businesses must be outward-looking and dynamic, operating to make the most of change, not to minimise it.

Questions about who will lead the business, work in it, own shares in it, and how family members will be remunerated are usually the major causes of conflict.

Yet, it is not surprising that so few families establish policies on these critical issues.

The decisions are often difficult ones and there is a fear, often unfounded that unpleasant confrontations will be provoked.

Even so, the penalties of not facing up to the issues are even greater.

If you are running a family business, you can minimise, and even avoid many of these problems.

Probably the most important overall consideration is whether the family or the business take precedence in the family's value system.

Some parents, for example, would consider sacking a son or daughter out of the question. Others, for the sake of the company, would take the step without thinking twice.

Most families try to find a balance that allows them to run the business properly while not disrupting family harmony – which can be a delicate task.

Whatever your priorities (and there are no rights or wrongs here), you will have a much greater chance of gaining acceptance and commitment within the family if your rules are crystal clear to everyone involved both in the business and out of it.

You can, of course, include anything you want in your family constitution, but I would suggest that as a minimum you establish policies on the issues listed below.

If more families talked through these questions, I am convinced that the mortality rate for family-owned businesses would be far less serious than it is today – The Stoy Centre for Family Business research suggests less than one third of family businesses reach the second generation and just 13 per cent reach the third.

Anything that can be done to increase these figures is not only good for the business and the family themselves, it is also good for the country.

WHAT A CONSTITUTION SHOULD CONTAIN

As a minimum, a family constitution should include the family's agreed long-term goals for the business, the core elements of its management philosophy, the conditions under which family members can enter the business, equity ownership policies, and the agreed criteria for management succession. The main headings are likely to include the family's conclusions on the following issues:

Long-term goals

- What are the family's objectives for the business?
- Keep it in the family?
- Sell it eventually?
- Go public?

Management philosophy

- The best interests of the family should be paramount?
- The best interests of the business?
- A combination of the two – and if so what is that combination?

Family members in the business

- Do family members want to work for the business or do they want the business to work for them?
- What should be the criteria for entry?
- Should in-laws be allowed to join?
- How will the roles of the family members be determined?
- How should family members be remunerated?
- How should their performance be evaluated?
- What if the family members do not perform up to appropriate standards?

Share ownership

- Should shareholders regard themselves as owners of an asset that will yield them capital sum in due course, or simply as custodians of the shares (which are perhaps placed in trust) for the next generation?
- If the shares are viewed as a realisable capital investment, is everyone aware of this and are procedures in place to accommodate holders who want to cash in their shares?
- Alternatively, if the shares are seen as non-transferable trust for future generations, is everyone aware of this and is the company geared up to provide income and pension rights in place of capital asset status for the shares?
- Who will be allowed to own shares in the company?
- Who should have voting control?
- What should the dividend policy be?
- What will happen as regards share ownership in the next generation?
- Should family members who are active in the business be treated differently from those who are inactive?

Management succession

- What should be the criteria for selecting the next leader?
- When will the transition take place?
- What should be done if the choice is wrong?
- What are the owners aspirations in retirement?
- How can the family help the owner to achieve them?

Relationship within the family

- What responsibilities do family members have towards each other?
- What is the best way to ensure an atmosphere that enhances mutual respect and support?
- How should intra-family differences be dealt with?

Other matters

- Should the business have independent directors?
- If so, how should the family protect the security of loyal employees?
- How can the family protect the security of loyal employees?
- What role should the business have in the community?

It will be clear from this listing that formulating a family constitution is a significant undertaking. It is time consuming (usually a matter of months) and, if the process is to be successful, a major commitment is necessary for everyone involved. Also, it is an "all or nothing" process – to a significant extent the matters listed above are interlinked and interdependent, and it is not generally possible to formulate policies on some of them while ignoring the others. In the end, of course, it is possible that not all family members agree with every single provision of the constitution, but at least the rules have been thought about, discussed, written down, and are clear.

SUCCESSION

We're all mortal and it follows that leaders have a responsibility, during their lifetime, to identify, train and install a successor who will safeguard the continuity of the business.

Very often succession only becomes an issue when the owner dies, or becomes ill or simply decides he or she has had enough. This departure precipitates a crisis with an unprepared spouse or child suddenly thrown into the job of running the business. But, properly managed, succession should be a carefully planned, evolutionary process rather than an event.

Dealing with the succession issue is the key to the on-going success of the business:

- Start planning for it early;
- Draw up a written succession plan;
- Involve the family and colleagues in your thinking;
- Take advantage of outside help;
- Establish a training process;
- Make retirement timely and unequivocal.

A formal constitution for a family business is so important that it may be the key to the survival of both the firm and the family.

In one family business I know, a daughter's marriage was put under great strain when her new husband belatedly learned there was no place for in-laws in the company. In another, a brother ran the business for years and then found to his amazement that he would never be entitled to more pay or a larger shareholding than his incompetent younger brother.

I read with interest the articles by Naim Dangoor on the holocaust (*The Scribe*, September 1996). I suggest addition of the following to The Holocaust Nightmare reading list:

The Question of German Guilt, Karl Jaspers (NY: Capricorn Books, 1961); The Swastika Poems, William Heyen (NY: Vanguard Press, 1977); The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H. George Steiner (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1979); When God and Man Failed: Non-Jewish Views of the Holocaust, Harry James Cargas (NY: Macmillan, 1981); Holocaust Poetry, Hilda Schiff (London Fount Paperbacks, 1995).

With your knowledge of the war, I wonder why you did not include Italy and Switzerland in your list of condemned countries?

Toronto

Norman S. Track

THE USE OF OFF-SHORE TRUSTS BY FOREIGN AND UK DOMICILED INDIVIDUALS

by: Samy Dallal

The UK offers a particularly favourable tax treatment to those individuals who, having close associations with another country, have come to live here, but do not intend to settle here permanently. They are classed as foreign domiciliaries indicating that their connection with another legal system is stronger than that with the UK, and accordingly, the UK's ability to tax them is limited. To remain foreign domiciled they should retain ties with their country of birth through, for example, keeping a house there and making regular and extended visits home, maintaining local business interests, bank accounts and investments. It is also advisable to execute a Will taking effect under local law.

We are going to look at the UK capital gains tax, inheritance tax and income tax privileges enjoyed by such individuals who hold their property in off-shore trusts. We will consider the position of an individual settling property on an off-shore trust for the benefit of himself and his spouse. A trust is an obligation binding a person to deal with property in a particular way for the benefit of one or more beneficiaries, and the individual who puts property into a trust is called the settlor.

CAPITAL GAINS TAX

The main reason foreign domiciliaries set up off-shore trusts is to shelter their capital gains. The requirement that a trust is off-shore is satisfied for capital gains tax purposes if the majority of the trustees are resident outside the UK and the general administration of the trust is carried on abroad. Being non-resident, the trustees are not liable to capital gains tax.

As the sheltering of capital gains through off-shore trusts was attracting widespread press criticism, the government acted to change the tax laws. They have imposed an immediate tax liability on a UK domiciled settlor when a gain is realised by the off-shore trustees if he or his children or their spouses are actual or potential beneficiaries of the trust or derive some benefit from it. These provisions will also bite where property is added to the trust. However, provided the settlor is domiciled outside the UK when the trustees make the gain, he will not pay any tax on the trust gains, even if resident in the UK.

Thus, unless the beneficiary class is non-family or skips down a generation to the settlor's grandchildren there are no tax advantages for a UK domiciled individual in establishing an off-shore trust.

Furthermore, provided the settlor of an off-shore trust is not UK domiciled when he set up the trust and when the gain is made by the trustees, the beneficiaries of the trust are not liable to capital gains tax on any capital payments they receive from it. But once the settlor becomes UK domiciled the beneficiaries may also become liable to tax as and when they receive capital payments from the trust. However, if a beneficiary is not resident or domiciled in the UK in the year the capital payment is made, he will not be liable to tax.

Foreign domiciliaries clearly receive favourable treatment under the capital gains tax

regime. It is essential however to ensure that they retain their foreign domicile. If on the fact a settlor is likely to lose his foreign domicile, it may be necessary to take action to eliminate the accumulation of gains by, for example, investing in life assurance investment bonds or off-shore roll-up funds which are not chargeable to capital gains tax.



ABOUT THE WRITER:

Samy Dallal B.Sc., FCA was born in Baghdad, and after finishing Frank Iny and Shamash Schools graduated from Al-Hikma University with B.Sc. (Hons) in Business Administration. Then he came to the UK to finish his education and qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1975. He is now a partner with BDO Stoy Hayward which specialises in advising entrepreneurs, and is one of the leading firms of accountants in the UK with representations through their membership of BDO Network in 79 countries making them the 7th largest firm of accountants in the world.

APPEAL FROM AUSTRALIA

Od Yossef Hai Congregation has been going for 7 years. We provide daily shiurim Tefillot, extensive outreach programme for Sephardi Jews who are thirsty for their tradition.

There are many Sephardi families here in Melbourne who have been attracted to our small but strong centre. We have now outgrown our rented premises and we are in urgent need of a new larger complex. We provide a rich Sephardic Library and two rooms for free boarding, for lost souls.

In the past seven years there has not been a single day without someone boarding in our centre. We have a cassette and video library with Shiurim of our great Sfaradic leaders in Israel. We have many times stopped intermarriage and family breakdowns.

Until now we are renting a property at a very dear price and our goal is to establish our own permanent premises, to be able to extend our services to the community.

Our dear friend Mrs Daisy Ben David has kindly undertaken to help raise funds for this urgent cause and any donation will help fund our services to the community. May Hashem bless all those who help in the spreading of Torah and fear of Heaven●

Congregation Rabbi Ezra Douek
Od Yossef Hai Centre,
28 Oak Grove Ripponlea,
Victoria, Australia 3183
Tel: 61- 395238501

INHERITANCE TAX

Individuals are liable to inheritance tax on their world-wide assets if they are domiciled in the UK. Assets held overseas by a foreign domiciliary, however, are excluded from the inheritance tax net. Thus property held in an off-shore trust does not attract inheritance tax where the settlor is a foreign domiciliary at the time the trust is made and the property is situated outside the UK. The status of the beneficiary is not relevant and a settlor can safely include himself in the beneficiary class.

Once the settlor becomes UK domiciled, inheritance tax will be chargeable on his world-wide assets, but the excluded property held in the off-shore trust generally remains exempt. The settlor can remain a beneficiary even after he becomes UK domiciled, but must not then add any property to the trust. It should be noted that if an individual has been resident for not less than seventeen out of the previous twenty tax years, then for inheritance tax only he will be treated as if he were domiciled here (deemed domicile).

INCOME TAX

Generally speaking, individuals who are resident in the UK are liable to income tax on their world-wide income. For UK residents with a foreign domicile however, income arising to the trustees of an off-shore trust from foreign sources is only taxable on the remittance basis i.e., on the amount of the sums received in the UK.

CONCLUSION

Foreign domiciled individuals of substantial means should take advantage of the tax privileges granted them through the use of off-shore trusts. If the law of domicile is reformed making it easier for the Revenue to establish that individuals have acquired a UK domicile their tax favoured status would be considerably reduced

Scribe: Reserving a burial plot may establish a domicile of choice●



New disclosures on the Tenua society:

The Arabic Newspaper Alif-Ba published in June 1996 an interview with Abdel Rahman Hemood al Samerra'e who was an officer in the Special Branch of Baghdad Police in the early fifties.

Having studied the police file of the events around the mass exodus of Iraqi Jews in 1950/51, Samerra'e gave the names of fifteen people who were thought to be members of an underground Zionist movement. These were, in addition to Ismail Salhoun and Nessim Moshi, the following:

Naim Shasha, Ishak Elias, Saleh Yona Yusef, Ezzat Yona Taqu, Saleh Naji abu Shwareb, Hanina Zilkha, Meir Elias, Salman Ezra and Salim Daoud and Naim Moshi "Nessim's brothers", Eddie Soffer, Yusef Dalah, Salim Khabbaza, Salim Ezra, Ezzouri Edward.

Simultaneous investigations in the homes of all the above suspected members of the Tenua, disclose no connection with criminal offences of any of them.

The newspaper report did not disclose anything new of importance●

ISMAILI AGA KHANS

Extracted from *The Aga Khan's*
by: Willi Frischauer
Published by: Bodley Head
London 1970

On 8 June 632 the Prophet Mohammed died, leaving the succession in doubt.

Although Ali became the fourth Caliph, Shias hail him as the first legitimate successor of the Prophet. A Yemenite Jew, Abdullah bin Saba, is thought to have been the first to acclaim him in that position. Ali was succeeded by his younger son Huseyn as Imam and Caliph of Iraq.

The battle with the Umayyads flared up again. Hoping for popular support, Huseyn crossed the desert with a small band of relatives but was cut off without access to the water of the Euphrates. At Kerbela, Imam Huseyn and his men were massacred. The date of the tragedy was 10th Muharram in the sixtieth year of the *Hijra*, a day of deep mourning for all Shias. They lost more than their Imam. With him they forfeited their political power and did not regain it for centuries. Fanatical Shias still celebrate the memory by flogging themselves with chains until their blood flows and attend a passion play commemorating his martyrdom.

In 732, Jafar al-Sadiq became Imam. The rule of the Umayyads came to an end and a new dynasty assumed power. The Abbasides (descendants of al-Abbas, and uncle of Mohammed and of Ali) were no less hostile to Ali's heirs. Shias were cruelly persecuted.

When Jafar Sadiq was killed he left a new succession tangle behind between his sons Ismail and Musa Kazim whose followers accepted him as Imam (he is buried in Kadhimain, North of Baghdad).

Musa's descendants succeeded him until the twelfth in line, Mohammed Mahdi, who is said to have gone into concealment and for whose reappearance the Twelver Shias are still waiting. This branch of the Shia faith became the official religion of Persia where the Shah was revered as the deputy of the Mahdi.

Those who remained loyal to Ismail – 'Ismailis' – were persecuted from all sides.

Driven underground, they practised their faith in secret, starting a tradition of secrecy which became second nature to all Ismailis and has survived to this day. Hiding their religious conviction – *taqiya* which means disguise – became a matter of life and death and permissible as a perfectly honourable practice.

Ismail first turned up in Basra, then fled to Syria, where the Governor of Damascus became his loyal follower.

Although Marco Polo never came to Syria he does discuss a sect who in 1271 had their headquarters at Masyaf, the order known to history as the Assassins (Hashasheen).

The Assassins were a militant wing of the Isma'ilis. For a short time in the eleventh century the Isma'ilis had gained political power in Egypt under the Fatimid caliphs, but in Persian and elsewhere in Islam they remained an unpopular minority who were intermittently persecuted. "To kill them, 'wrote one Persian mullah, ' is more lawful than rainwater.

It was in response to this persecution that the Assassins were founded, and under their first Grand Master, Hasan-i-Sabbah, they became the original terrorist group. Their first victim was the Seljuk vizier of Persia, Nizam al-Mulk.

Hasan built up his followers into an order, united in strict obedience to himself. During the twelfth century large numbers of princes hostile to the Isma'ili met their death by the Assassins' daggers: the Prince of Homs was followed by the Prince of Mosul, the Wazir of Egypt and even the heavily guarded crusader king, Conrad of Jerusalem.

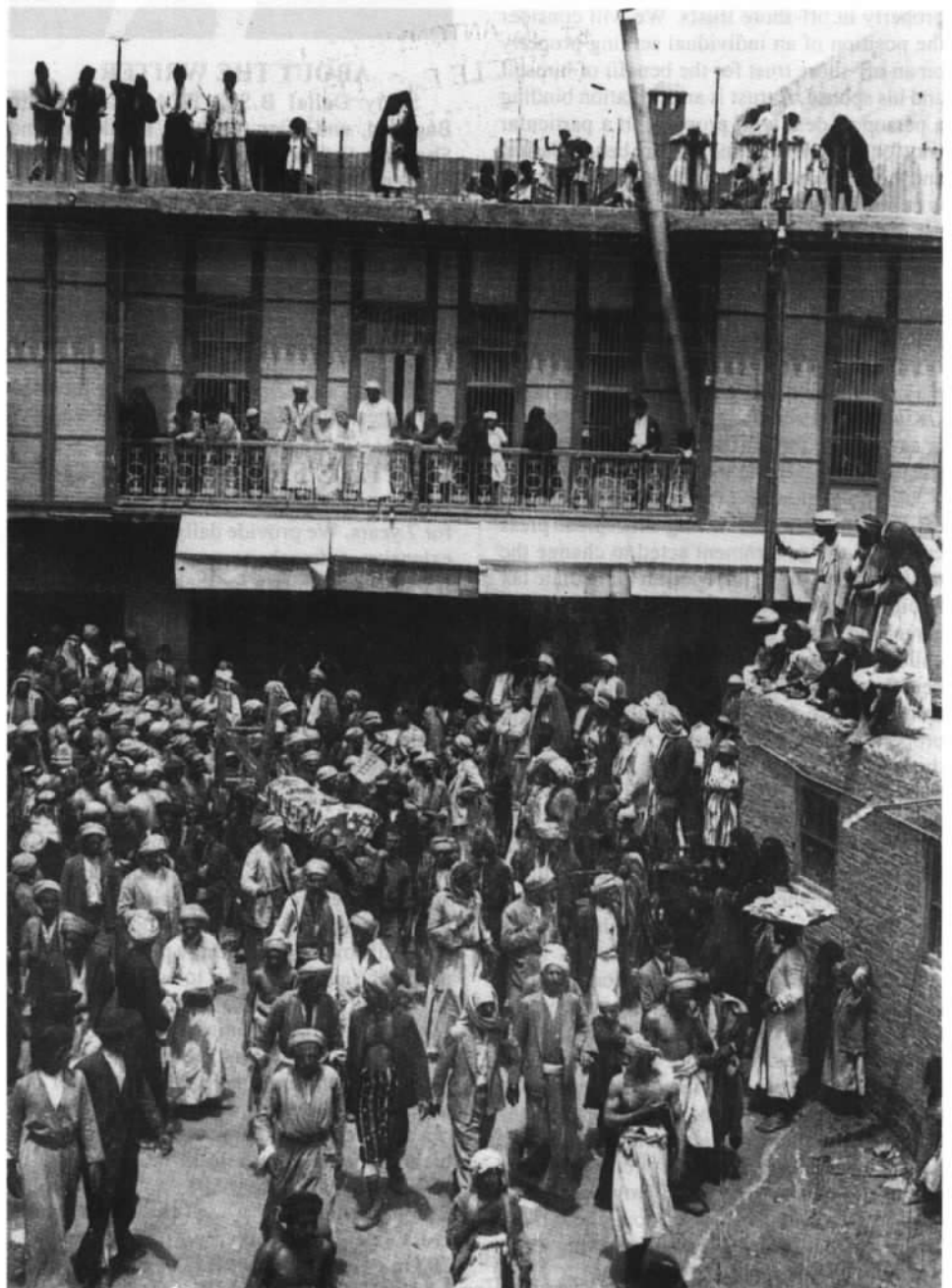
Polo's description of the sect is one of the most beautiful passages in his Travels:

Now the Old Man of the Mountain caused a certain valley between two mountains to be enclosed, and had it turned into a garden, the largest and most beautiful that ever was seen, filled with every variety of fruit. In it were erected pavilions and places, the most elegant that can be imagined, all covered with gilding and exquisite painting. And there were runnels too, flowing freely with wine and milk and honey; and numbers of ladies and all the most beautiful damsels in the world, who would play on all manner of instruments, and sung most sweetly, and danced in a manner that was

charming to behold. For the Old Man desired his people to think that this was actually paradise..

Now no man was allowed to enter the garden save those who were intended to be his Assassins. And there was a fortress at the entrance to the garden, strong enough to resist all the world. The Old Man kept at his court a number of youths of the country and to these he used to tell tales about paradise. Then he would introduce them into his garden, some four or six or ten at a time, having first made them drink a certain potion which cast them into a deep sleep, and then causing them to be lifted and carried in. So they awoke and found themselves in the garden, and deemed it was paradise in very truth; and the ladies and damsels dallied with them to their hearts' content, so that they had what young men will have; and with their own good will they would never have quitted this place.

Now when he wanted one of his Assassins to send on any mission, he would cause that potion



10 Mulharram, Ashura in Baghdad, 1932, Freya Stark, St Anthony's College, Oxford.

whereof I spoke to be given to one of the youths in the garden, and then had him carried into his palace. So that when the young man awoke he found himself in the castle and no longer in paradise; whereat he was not over well pleased. And the Old Man would say to such a youth: "Go and slay So and So; and when thou returnest my angels shall bear thee to paradise." In this manner the Old One got his people to murder anyone whom he desired to be rid of...

Polo's story of the Garden of the Old One is based on the Assassins' Persian stronghold, Mulehet, the Eagle's Nest. But in 1271 this no longer existed, having been overrun and destroyed by the Mongols a few years before, leaving Masyaf as the headquarters of the order. To a certain extent the early ideals had degenerated by the end of the thirteenth century, and the *fida'i* were frequently hired out as mercenary assassins. Yet they were still capable of heroics. When the crusader prince, Henry of Champagne, visited Masyaf he was taken around the battlements of the castle by the Grand Master. The Grand Master asked the prince if he had any subject as obedient as his own, and without waiting for a reply made a sign to two of his *fida'i*. They immediately jumped off the tower on which they were standing and plunged to their deaths on the rocks below.

But even complete obedience could not save the Assassins. As befits fairy-tale villains they came to a sticky end. They had fallen foul not only of the Mongols, but of the other great power of the day, the revolting Mameluke sultan, Baibars. In 1273, he marched and laid siege to the castle. It was taken by storm less than a week later and every Isma'ili was put to the sword.

ISMAILIS TRADITION:

Ismail himself remained in hiding throughout his Imamate (765-775) and neither he nor his successors could defend themselves against false accusations some of which are still in currency.

Ismaili followers met in secret lodges, novices were obliged to swear an oath of secrecy, initiation was by seven stages but the esoteric truth which reposed in the living Imam, descendant of the Prophet and God-inspired leader, was inaccessible to the ordinary man. When the Crusaders came in touch with Ismailis, they adopted the idea which gave birth to many religious and secular societies in Europe.

The Freemasons copied Ismaili lodges and initiation.

From Salamiyya in Syria where they settled, Ismaili Imams sent their *dais* (clerics) and missionaries to spread propaganda in distant lands. They became known as Fatimids, after the Prophet's daughter Fatima.

Fatimid propaganda made tremendous headway in North Africa where, the eleventh Imam of the Ismailis, was proclaimed Caliph at Qayrawan. Coming out of the shadows, The Ismailis entered the most glorious period in their history.

To undermine the Caliph's authority, enemies spread rumours that he was descended from a Jew, and was not the real Imam at all. However, responsible historians acknowledge Mahdi Mohammed as the founder of the Fatimid empire, biggest of all Islamic kingdoms, which eventually included Morocco, Algeria, the whole of northern Africa and the greater part of Somaliland. It stretched to Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Sind in India.

Fatimid admirals developed the techniques of attacking enemy ships with fire throwers which,, Ismaili historians claim, the English employed five hundred years later when they

routed the Spanish Armada. In 969 the Fatimid established Cairo, where the Caliph's right-hand man, Yakub b Killis, a Jewish convert to the Ismaili faith, founded the University of al-Azhar which is still the greatest seat of Islamic learning.

The next Caliph was only eleven when he came to the throne, was said to be under the influence of the extremist Druzes and is blamed for provoking the Crusades.

The Fatimids Caliphs are regarded as the ancestors of the modern Aga Khans, although historians dispute the linkage. Aga Khan I (Hasan Ali Shah) (1800-1881) was the governor general of the important province of Kerman in Southern Persian and son-in-law of the king of Persia who bestowed on him in 1818 the title of Aga Khan (chief commander). Hasan fell-out with the next ruler. His attempt to seize the throne in 1840 forced him to flee to Bombay where he was allowed to settle with several hundred followers because of his help to the British. He later encountered opposition from some of his followers, who contested the extent of his spiritual authority and in a famous lawsuit challenged his control over the community's funds, but he won his case in 1866, and was thus confirmed in his title of Aga Khan and Imam and world leader and position of the Nizari Ismaili sect of the Shi'i Muslims. He was given the title of "His Highness" by the British government for his services.

Aga Khan II succeeded his father but died four years later. His wife, the mother of Aga Khan III, was a sister of the last of the absolute Persian monarchs, Nasr-el-Din Shah (r. 1848-1896). Aga Khan III (Aga Sultan Sir Mohammed Shah) (1877-1957). He succeeded his father when he was eight. In 1906 he was one of the founders and first president of the All-India Muslim League which later helped to create the independent nation of Pakistan. The Aga Khan was well known as a successful owner and breeder of thoroughbred racehorses, having won the Epsom Derby five times.

In famous ceremonies, the Aga Khan was weighed in gold (1936); in diamonds (1946); in platinum (1954). He donated the money raised to co-operative business ventures, low-interest

funds, etc., available to all Ismailis. This was consistent with his belief that self-help and financial independence were the foundation of human dignity. He did not abstain from alcoholic drinks: he claimed he could recite a formula which turned the alcohol in his mouth into water! He married four times and lived mostly in Europe. His favourite residence was in hot, dry climate of Aswan in upper Egypt where he was buried. A clue to his thinking may be found in the reasons he gave for designating his grandson Prince Karim, rather than one of his two sons, Ali and Sadr-el-Din, to succeed him. He thought it is the best interests of his people to be led by a young man brought up in the midst of the new (atomic) age.

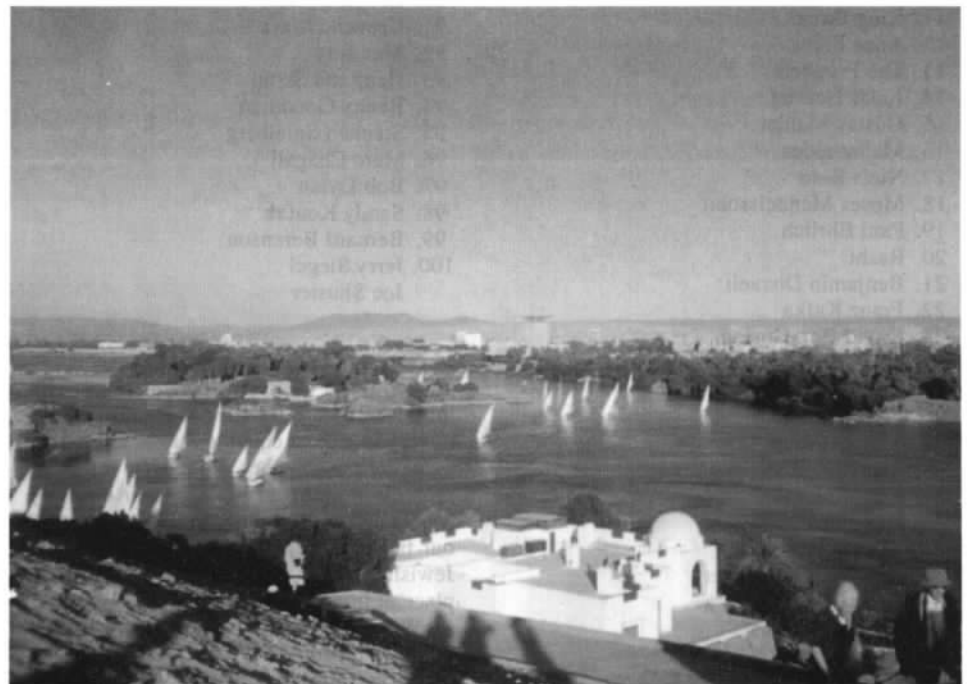
Aga Khan IV elder son of Ali Khan by his first wife, daughter of the 3rd Baron Churston, was born in Geneva in 1937 and was chosen 49th Imam in 1957 while he was a student at Harvard University. After investiture in Dar es Salem, Tanganyka, and travels to make contact with his people, he resumed his studies at Harvard in 1958.

The Ismaili community is estimated to number 20 million in Africa and Asia, including a large number of converts who were no-doubt attracted by the successful economic programmes of the leadership and the help accorded to members of the sect.

The new Aga Khan initiated visits to his scattered Ismaili peoples in the first year of his reign. He became a strong leader, ordering his followers to become citizens of the countries in which they resided and to leave countries where they faced trouble and persecution.

Scribe: This is reminiscent of the advise given to our Babylonian Jewish community by the Prophet Jeremiah 2 500 years ago which said "Build Houses And Live In Them; Plant Gardens And Eat Their Produce; Marry Wives And Beget Sons And Daughters.. And Seek The Welfare Of Any City To Which I Have Carried You Off And Pray To The Lord For It For In Its Peace Will You Have Peace.

The Jews were caught in the Holocaust and in other pogroms, perhaps because our leaders failed to tell us to hurry up and leave countries where we faced trouble and persecution●



Caption: Aswan Lake. In the foreground house of the Begum, French widow of Aga Khan III. Photo by Naim Dangoor.

THE TOP 100 JEWS

From an article by: Catherine Pepinster
The Independent on Sunday

The Jewish 100 by: Michael Shapiro, New York lawyer, published this year in Great Britain. He compiled the list with its accompanying biographical essays to celebrate the achievements of the Jewish people. He believes that for too long, Jewish people's place in history has been associated with suffering and he wanted to create something that was really positive.

The list is dominated by religious leaders, thinkers and philosophers.

Shapiro decided on Moses, receiver of the Ten Commandments to head the list, because his story dominates the Bible and he is recognised by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He led a great rebellion by an enslaved people and developed the first system of beliefs that respected human life. He is the fundamental figure.

When setting out to compile the list, Mr Shapiro consulted Rabbis, philosophers, writers and other leading Jews. "I needed to ask whether it was possible to compare a political figure to a musician, or someone who lived a thousand years ago to a person alive today. I was trying to assess not so much greatness as influence."

What emerges from a perusal of the list is the influence of Jews on all forms of the written word – something which Mr Shapiro says is due to the early spread of literacy among Jews.

Britain has a poor showing, with just Disraeli, Daniel Mendoza (a 19th century boxer who invented the "bobbing and weaving" style of fighting); and Sir Moses Montefiore, Queen Victoria's advisor, making an appearance.

The list in Shapiro's judgement:

1. Moses
2. Jesus of Nazareth
3. Albert Einstein
4. Sigmund Freud
5. Abraham
6. Saul of Tarsus (Saint Paul)
7. Karl Marx
8. Theodor Herzl
9. Mary (mother of Jesus)
10. Baruch de Spinoza
11. King David
12. Anne Frank
13. The Prophets
14. Judas Iscariot
15. Gustav Mahler
16. Maimonides
17. Niels Bohr
18. Moses Mendelssohn
19. Paul Ehrlich
20. Rashi
21. Benjamin Disraeli
22. Franz Kafka
23. David Ben-Gurion
24. Hillel the Elder
25. John Von Neumann
26. Simon Bar Kokhba
27. Marcel Proust
28. Mayer Rothschild
29. King Solomon
30. Heinrich Heine
31. Selman Waksman
32. Giacomo Meyerbeer
33. Isaac Luria
34. Gregory Pincus
35. Leon Trotsky
36. David Ricardo
37. Alfred Dreyfus
38. Leo Szilard

39. Mark Rothko
40. Ferdinand Cohn
41. Samuel Gompers
42. Gertrude Stein
43. Albert Michelson
44. Philo Judaeus
45. Golda Meir
46. The Vilna Gaon
47. Henri Bergson
48. The Baal Shem Tov
49. Felix Mendelssohn
50. Louis B. Mayer
51. Judah Halevy
52. Haym Salomon
53. Johanan ben Zakkai
54. Arnold Schoenberg
55. Emile Durkheim
56. Betty Friedan
57. David Sarnoff
58. Lorenzo Da Ponte
59. Julius Rosenwald
60. Casimir Funk
61. George Gershwin
62. Chaim Weizmann
63. Franz Boas
64. Sabbatai Zevi
65. Leonard Bernstein
66. Flavivus Josephus
67. Walter Benjamin
68. Louis Brandeis
69. Emile Berliner
70. Sarah Bernhardt
71. Levi Strauss
72. Nahmanides
73. Menachem Begin
74. Anna Freud
75. Queen Esther
76. Martin Buber
77. Jonas Salk
78. Jerome Robbins
79. Henry Kissinger
80. Wilhelm Steinitz
81. Arthur Miller
82. Daniel Mendoza
83. Stephen Sondheim
84. Emma Goldman
85. Sir Moses Montefiore
86. Yizhak Rabin
87. Boris Pasternak
88. Harry Houdini
89. Edward Bernays
90. Leonard Auer
91. Groucho Marx
92. Man Ray
93. Henrietta Szold
94. Benny Goodman
95. Stephen Spielberg
96. Marc Chagall
97. Bob Dylan
98. Sandy Koufax
99. Bernard Berenson
100. Jerry Siegel
Joe Shuster

Scribe: The list is only a representative collection of important personalities. The influence of the Jewish people throughout history is at least equal to that of the rest of mankind put together. Moreover, the three most important personalities Abraham, Moses and Jesus alone can tip the scales in our favour. The majority acknowledge the Jewish God, who should perhaps occupy the place of honour at the head of the list.

Whether by suffering or by achievements the Jewish people have shown mankind the road to the future that will receive the approval of God and thus escape the fate of extinction suffered by the Dinosaurs●

THE MAKE UP OF THE PRESENT KNESSET IN ISRAEL

A statistical analysis gives the following interesting information on the make up of the present Knesset consisting of 120 members. 34 members carry high military ranks – two attend the highest rank of Chief of Staff, namely Rafael Eytan current Minister of Agriculture and environment and leader of Tsomet Party; and Ehud Barak, Foreign Minister in the last Labour administration.

Seven have the rank of Brigadier; two Colonels; one Major; five Captains; eleven Lieutenants; 6 Second Lieutenants.

By language, after Hebrew, English ranks second, spoken fluently by 100 members, followed by Arabic spoken by 20 Jewish members as well as the Arab members; followed by French (19); Russian (10); Yiddish (8); German (5); Spanish (5); Polish (4). In the first Knesset of 1949, 61 members spoke Polish.

By education, 101 studied beyond secondary level of whom 8 are Professors; 12 are Doctors; 14 have a Master's degree; 54 have a Bachelors degree; 13 graduated from a non-University College; 19 completed full or partial second.

It is notable that all 11 Arab members studied beyond secondary level, two have Doctorates and 8 lower University degrees. Eleven is the highest number of Arabs in the Knesset.

By profession, 22 members studied law; 3 Engineers; 3 Physicists; 3 Mathematicians; one stage actress; 37 came to the Knesset via Municipal elections; (5 present Mayors and 14 former Mayors).

By birth, 78 members were born in Israel; 26 were born in Eastern countries; and 16 in Western countries.

By origin, 64 are Ashkinazi, 45 Sephardi or Oriental. Of the latter 19 are of Moroccan origin; 10 Iraq; 6 Yemen; 2 Tunisia; 1 Afghanistan; 1 Iran; 1 India and 1 Ethiopia. Also the 11 Arab.

By age, this is the most youthful Knesset, the youngest being 35 years old; 75 (37-56); 39 (57-66); 5 (69-74).

More than a third of the members were elected for the first time. 13 members were preceded by a father, mother or brother, such as: Beny Begin (son of Premier Menachem Begin); Yael Dayan (daughter of Moshe Dayan, defence minister in the six day war).

For the first time there are two brothers in the Knesset being David Levy, Foreign Minister, and Maxim, mayor of Lod●

From the Arabic

London Daily

Sharq-al-Awsat

Israel's population in 1996 reached 5,764,250, being 81% Jews, 14.5% Moslems, 3% Christians, and 1.5% Druz●

From the Arabic London Daily, Al-Hayat

I want to thank you for sending me the magazine *The Scribe*, which is most interesting to read. Having left Baghdad March 1932 I must confess I do not know most of the people mentioned in the magazine.

As for having the pleasure meeting you in London and Folkestone just before the war and also attended your wedding whilst I was on a two month visit to Baghdad in 1947.

I met a family of Dangoor here in Sydney who are distant relations to you and I said about our family relations that Hakham Ezra Dangoor's wife was also the sister of my grandmother●

Australia

Henry-Heskel Smouha

I would like to thank you for your excellent journal, which not only myself, but thousands of Iraqi Jews enjoy reading. It reminds us of that noble Jewish congregation of which we are proud of being members.

You are doing a tremendous work, your journal does not only give us news, it gives us the impression that we are still together and the incentive to look more deeply into our roots.

I am enclosing three photos from the late thirties or early forties of Jewish boys and girls picnicking by train or truck and swimming in the Tigris; funny, girls with their own clothes while the boys in swimming suits! That was in Baghdad, in Israel it is different.

I can't remember the names of all of them. Practically all of them are married and with the rank of grandma or grandpa. I will name them as I knew them then, and will try my best●

Ramat-Gan

Dr. E. Nissan

PICTURE NO: 1

Left to right:; ... Khdhoury; Shlomo Ishayek; Khdhoury;; Emile Tchwellia;; Ezra Nissan; Hanina Basri.

PICTURE NO: 2

Left to right:

Front row: Battat; Hanina Basri; Abood Hardoun.

Second row: Ezra Nissan; Sylvia Hayim; Akram Nissan; Bertine Khazzam;

Nour Battat; Naaman; Raymonde Khazzam;; Madeleine Tchwellia.

At the back: Violette Haddad and Emile Tchwellia.

PICTURE 3:

Left to right:

Front row: Fuad Tchwellia; Jamal Nissan; Sylvia Hayim; Dorine Tchwellia; Ezra Nissan; Nour Battat; Rosine Nissan; Emile Tchwellia; Alfonsine Nissan; Akram Nissan;

Hanina Basri; Abood Hardoun.

At the Back: Salim Hayim;Naaman; Shlomo Ishayek.

The boy outside the truck and the girl behind him, names unknown●

I enclose a draft manuscript I have been working on for twenty three years, and is constantly being improved.

There is no doubt that it could never have been written, but for an inexplicable Divine Providence, and yet my being the chosen instrument is beyond understanding. I am not a writer, even when I began aged 57 I had no ambitions, having achieved more than I could ever have hoped for, I had no qualifications, other than wide experience in small scale industry, wide travel and a deep care for the future of my family and friends.

I maintain that we Jews have lost our way and that if we are indeed a Chosen People, then we must be chosen to do what I am convinced we now can do, namely show the world a new and immeasurably better way of life that has nothing to do with Kashruth, circumcision, ritual baths or kissing the Torah. To me this is like idolatry.

Proud as I am to be a Jew, I cringe at the sight of some of the actions performed in the name of orthodoxy.

Jews and Arabs will only be able to live in harmony in the kind of society I write about and explain how to achieve●

Bournemouth

Leonard Brown



MODERN EUROPE

A History from the Renaissance to the Present Day

by: John Merriman,
Professor at Yale University

1200 pages, 550 illustrations

Published by:
W. W. Norton & Company Ltd, 1996.
Price: £18.95

Reviewed by: Naim Dangoor

The changing face of Europe, in the last decade of the twentieth century, makes this an ideal time for a new history of Europe and this is what Professor John Merriman has provided, as seen from the detached viewpoint of a non-European.

Below are extracts from the section on the Holocaust:

Hitler's obsessive racial theories had become official policy in Nazi Germany before the war. For the Nazis, the process of forging the "national community" meant the elimination of groups they considered to be "outsiders". In 1939, Hitler had ordered the killing, often by injection, of Germans who were mentally deficient and handicapped. At least 70,000 mentally retarded people perished, including children, before public objections halted this practice in August 1941. In addition, the Nazis sterilised over 300,000 German "outcasts" between 1934 and 1945.

Hitler announced to the Reichstag on January 30, 1939, that the result of the anticipated war would be "the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe," the "final solution" to what Hitler considered the problem of the Jews.

Nazi plans to exterminate Jews took shape as German military defeats mounted in Russia, where the massacre of Slavs had already begun.

Before the war ended, at least 3.3 million Soviet prisoners of war were killed.

In July 1941, the Nazis began to prepare for the Holocaust, the genocide of European Jews. By the end of 1941, a million Jews had been massacred. At the Wannsee Conference of January 1942 Hitler and his officials drew up even more systematic plans for Jewish genocide.

The murders of Jews began, first in mobile vans, using carbon monoxide gas, then in the concentration camp of Auschwitz in Poland, which had been built near the Warsaw ghetto. By 1942, Treblinka, also in Poland, and a number of other camps surrounded by barbed-wire, electrified fences, and watchtowers, had been turned into death camps. But most victims were exterminated in air-tight gas chambers with Zyklon B gas, chosen because it killed with assembly-line efficiency. Gold from their teeth, eyeglasses, and all other valuables became the property of the Reich.

Germany's allies, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Fascist state of Croatia, as well as France, participated in the extermination of the Jews.

Some people protected the Jews. In Amsterdam, a Christian family hid a bourgeois Dutch Jewish family in a secret apartment in their house for several years. In her resolutely cheerful diary, the young Anne Frank described her family's hiding place as "a paradise compared with how other Jews who are not in hiding must be living." It frightened her to think of her friends who had fallen into the clutches of "the cruellest brutes that walk the earth." Several months after her fourteenth birthday, the Germans discovered the Jews hidden in the secret apartment, the girl and her family were

deported to Auschwitz and then Bergen-Belsen, where she and most of her family died late in 1944.

Danes saved virtually the entire Jewish population of the country in October 1943. When word came that the German occupying forces were preparing to deport Danish Jews, Danes ferried Jews across the straits to nearby neutral Sweden. Perhaps fearing that mass deportations might spark Danish resistance, in this case German authorities looked the other way.

German doctors performed barbaric experiments on prisoners. These included measuring the pain a patient could survive when being operated on without anaesthesia; how long one could live in sub-freezing temperatures; or whether prisoners would allow themselves to be killed if they thought their children might be spared.

One of the most haunting questions of World War II is at what point the leaders of the Allies and of neutral states actually learned that the Nazis were undertaking the extermination of the Jews.

Rumours of mass exterminations had begun to reach Britain and the United States in 1942. But even after confirmation provided by four young Jews who escaped from Auschwitz in the summer of 1942, and by information arriving via the Polish underground and diffused by the Polish government in London, it seemed simply too much for leaders of other states to grasp. By the end of that year, however, news of the Holocaust had become widespread.

Many people – including even some leaders of the Jewish communities in Britain, Palestine, and the United States – at first refused to believe "the terrible secret." Pope Pius XII (pope 1939-1958), who had served as the Vatican's representative in Berlin before his election as pope, proclaimed the Vatican's neutrality in the war. By the end of 1942, he knew of the death camps. Yet, despite the efforts of some clergy in a number of Catholic Church limited its protests to occasional reminders of the necessity of "justice and charity" in the world.

President Roosevelt certainly knew by the summer of 1942, but rejected the idea of retaliatory bombing of German civilians. He believed that only a sustained military effort could defeat the Nazis. The Allied governments feared that if too much publicity was given to the disappearance of hundreds of thousands of Jews, it might generate calls to aid them directly. This, they worried, might undercut the united war effort. Hitler's "final solution" – the Holocaust – went on until the very end of the war, resulting in the extermination of 6 million Jews.

Scribe: When German people objected to the killing of handicapped Germans, the killing was stopped. The fact that they did not object to the Jewish genocide renders all Germans guilty of the Holocaust.

The Nazis took notice of public opinion not only inside Germany, but even in the occupied countries where Jews could have been saved as happened in Denmark.

In the darkness of the Holocaust, the rest of Europe's history has no relevance●

Hitler's Willing Executioners Ordinary Germans And The Holocaust

by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen
Published by Alfred A. Knopf Inc. New York
Little, Brown and Company, London

It became fashionable after the war to speak, not of German, but of Nazi atrocities against the Jews and others, as if the German people as a whole were innocent of such atrocities.

But, as this book shows, some half a million ordinary Germans were involved in the Final Solution, in rounding up, transporting and murdering the Jews of Europe.

Some may say that these half million represent only one percent of the German people. Yes, but this one percent could have been any half million. Thus they are a representative sample of the entire German people.

These beasts are still bent on dominating Europe and even the world; to continue where the Kaiser and Hitler had left off. Europe and the world will ignore the threat at their peril●

N.D.

Democracy and Disagreement

by: Amy Gutmann,
Professor of Politics at Princeton University
and Dennis Thompson, Professor of
Political Philosophy at Harvard
Price: £18.50

Why moral conflict cannot be avoided in politics, and what should be done about it. The core idea is simple: when citizens or their representatives disagree morally, they should continue to reason together to reach mutually acceptable decisions. The authors call this process Deliberate Democracy, which can allow diverse groups separated by class, race, religion, and gender to reason together. This is superior to *simple majority rule*●

DICTIONARY OF IRAQI JUDEO – ARABIC DIALECT

by: Gila Yona – Swery and
Rahamim Rajwan

Published by:
Association for Jewish Academics

Dr. Davide Saia's Library – P.O. Box 1147
Mevasseret – Jerusalem

for Jewish Authors from Iraq

Introduction by: Prof. Shmuel Moreh,
President of the Board.

The dictionary consists of Arabic words in Hebrew and Arabic letters with their Hebrew meaning●

THE JEWISH BIBLE QUARTERLY

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Provides timely, authoritative studies in English on biblical themes. Current subscription rate: \$24

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published by:
The Jewish Bible Association,
POB 29002, Jerusalem, Israel

Send us interesting
school essays for publication●

BOOKS RECEIVED:

Conflicting Accounts

The Creation and Crash of the Saatchi and Saatchi Advertising Empire
by Kevin Goldman
Published by Simon & Schuster, New York
400 pp. \$26.00 or £17.99.

The War of Gods

Religion and Politics in Latin America
by Michael Löwy
Published by Verso, London - New York
163 pp. Price £12.00 paperback, £40.00
hardback.

The Greco Persian Wars

by Peter Green
Published by University of California Press
344 pp.

Moral Politics

What Conservatives Know That Liberals Don't

by George Lakoff
Published by The University of Chicago
Press
400 pp. \$24.95, £19.95.

In the Beginning

A new reading of the Book of Genesis
by Karen Armstrong
Published by Harper Collins
181 pp. £14.99

The Dervish Wars

**Gordon and Kitchener in the Sudan
1880-1898**
by Robin Neillands
Published by John Murray
230 pp. £19.99

The End of the Nation State

**The Rise of Regional Economics
How new engines of prosperity are re-
shaping global markets.**
by Kenichi Ohmae
Published by Harper Collins
214 pp. £16.99

Simon Wiesenthal

A Life in Search of Justice
by Hella Pick
Published by Wiedenfeld & Nicolson
349 pp. £20.00

The Double Flame

Essays on Love and Eroticism
by Octavio Paz
Published by The Harvill Press - London
206 pp. £14.99

The Civilization of Europe In the Renaissance

by John Hale
Published by Harper Collins
648 pp.

Germany Hitler and World War II

by Gerhard L. Weinberg
Published by Cambridge University Press
347 pp.

Out of Their Minds

**The Lives and Discoveries of 15 Great
Computer Scientists**
by Dennis Shasha and Cathy Lazere
Published by Copernicus, New York
291 pp. U.S.\$ 23.00

Shechita In the Light of the Year 2000 Critical Review of the Scientific Aspects of Methods of Slaughter and Shechita

by I. M. Levinger
Published by Maskil L'David, Jerusalem
240 pp.

The Middle East

**2000 Years of History from the Rise of
Christianity to the Present Day**
by Bernard Lewis
Published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson
433 pp. £20.00

**A History of the Jews in the English-
Speaking World: Great Britain,**
by W. D. Rubinstein, Macmillan Press Ltd.
539 pp.

Jewish Schools in Baghdad 1832-1974, Picture Album,

by Zvi Yehuda. 100 pp. U.S. \$55.
The album may be ordered at the offices of
the "Babylonian Jewish Heritage Center."
P.O. Box 151, Or-Yehuda 60251, Israel.
Fax 972-3-5339936. Internet web site: <http://www.BabylonJewry.org.il>

Fifty key Jewish Thinkers

by Dan Cohn-Sherbok. Published by
Routledge-London, 132 pp. £9.99

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exceptionnels et il nous a semblé naturel
d'organiser une manifestation pour rendre
hommage à la mémoire d'Elie J. NAHMIAS et
remercier sa famille pour leur générosité jamais
démentie vis-à-vis de notre institution.

Nous espérons que vous pourrez annoncer
cet événement à vos lecteurs, et nous sommes
prêts à fournir à vos lecteurs les compléments
d'information qu'ils puissent souhaiter.
Jean-Claude Kuperminc Conservateur

Yalkut Minhagim (Customs of Jewish Communities)

Edited by: Asher Vasertil
Published by: The Israel Ministry of
Education 1996
555pp

THE RULES OF THE BLESSING ON THE TREES

Extracted and translated from
"the Rulings of Pesah"
by: Rabbi David Yosef
(son of Rav Ovadia Yosef)
in Ogrot Yosef, (Jerusalem, 5757)

One who goes out of his home in the month
of Nissan and sees flowering trees, say a special
blessing, named "the Blessing of the Trees"
(Birkat Hailanot):

Blessed art Thou O Lord, our God, King of
the Universe, whose world is lacking in nought
and he created in it good trees and good creatures
with which to benefit the children of man.

The blessing is said only once a year in the
month of Nissan. Had a person said the blessing
in the month of Adar, he need not repeat it in
Nissan. Had the month of Nissan passed without
the blessing being said, it is permitted to say it
in the following month, Iyar. In places like
South America, where the spring is in the
month of Tishrei, the blessing can be said at that
time.

Some people gather in the first day of Nissan
(Rosh Hodesh) and say the blessing in public.
If a *Minian* cannot be obtained on that day, the
blessing should be said anyway. At any case,
there is no obligation to say it on the first day of
Nissan.

It is allowed to say the blessing on Saturday.
However, it is preferable to say it on another
day. It is preferable to say it in a garden outside
the city, but if one cannot leave the city, he can
say it within it. The blessing is said only at the
sight of trees which bear fruits. One needs to
witness at least two trees in order to say the
blessing and it is even better to say it while
seeing different species of trees.

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providing a well-structured scholastic and social
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educational approaches.

On the Rivers of Babylon:

Treasury of Proverbs of the Iraqi Jews

by Yehoshua Meiri
Published by Reuven
Mass, Jerusalem 1996
518 pp. 84 NIS

1001 Baghdad Proverbs

by Moshe Hakham
Published by Yaron Golan
Tel Aviv 1993
318 pp.

OBITUARY



Abdullah Obadiah

by: Meer Basri

It is sad to report the death of the eminent educator Abdullah Shaoul Obadiah in Montreal, Canada, on January 8, 1997.

Abdullah Obadiah was born in Baghdad in 1908, the scion of an old Jewish Iraqi family. His great grandfather was the famous Rabbi Eliahou Joshua Obadiah (1790-1895), Ab Beth Din in the 1840's and '50's.

Abdullah completed his secondary studies with honours and was sent by the Government to study higher mathematics at the American University of Beirut. He returned to Baghdad in 1931 having obtained a BSc, and was appointed teacher of maths in the Secondary schools in October of the same year. In 1945 he was transferred to teach at the Engineering College and became assistant professor two years later.

In 1951 he was appointed principal of the Frank Iny School and held this post up to the summer of 1973 when the school was closed. At the same time he continued to give lectures at the Engineering College and the Technical University. He wrote mathematical books for use in Iraqi Secondary schools.

His tenure of the hardship of the Frank Iny School for more than twenty years was very successful. The school had at one time about a thousand students of both sexes and contained a kindergarten and elementary, intermediate and secondary classes.

It was a prestigious institution and many Moslems and Christians of the higher society enrolled therein.

Abdullah Obadiah left Baghdad definitely in 1983 and settled in Montreal. On September 3, 1983, his graduates held a gathering in his honour in New York, attended by hundreds of the Frank Iny and Shamash schools alumni and their relatives. He spoke at the meeting, and looking back at the illustrious performance of the school, he mentioned, with genuine pride, the successful preparation of many students for the London University G.C.E. and the French Certificat d'Etudes and Brevet Elémentaire, while still strictly following the courses of the Ministry of Education. Mr Obadiah also arranged the examinations of the "Scholastic Aptitude Test" and the "Achievement Test" through the "College Entrance Examination Board" of the Princeton University of New Jersey. These examinations were instrumental for many graduates to be admitted to American Universities, especially the M.I.T. of Boston,



Graduation Meeting at the Frank Iny School, Baghdad, 5 January 1971.
Seated (right to left): Mrs Marcelle Basri, Meer Basri, President of the Jewish Community, Abdullah Obadiah, the school Principal.

where some of them graduated with honours.

The late Abdullah Obadiah will always be remembered as one of the finest educators that the Jewish Community of Iraq has had in the post-mass exodus period of 1950/51.

Scribe: When the Government once did not want to appoint men mathematic teachers for the girls' school, they decided that the position would be safe in the hands of Abdullah Obadiah being a Jew and a Moslem teacher who happened to be blind●

Abdullah Obadiah

by: Isaac Cohen, Ex-headmaster of Frank Iny School

I was very sad to hear about the passing away of my good friend and colleague Abdullah Obadiah.

Abdullah Obadiah was born and educated in Baghdad. In 1927 he travelled to the Lebanon to continue his education in the American University where he got a B.Sc. degree in mathematics. When he returned to Baghdad, he was appointed as a teacher in "T'ldadyah Al-Marcaziyah". As there was a shortage of such brilliant maths teachers, in 1944 he was appointed as a teacher in the engineering college, where I was a student; he was my teacher for the first three years. In 1950, there was the big exodus of the Jewish people out of Iraq, and consequently there was a shortage of Jewish students to fill the many Jewish schools that existed at the time, and so they all amalgamated into one school building and became "Frank Iny School and Shamash Secondary School." And, Abdullah Obadiah became the Headmaster of both of them.

We met again in 1952 and he encouraged me to join him and become a teacher there. We became colleagues for 20 years thereon. But, in 1963 he realised that he hadn't fulfilled the official period of teaching for the state to earn a state pension. He went back to teaching in Baghdad University and I became the Headmaster of Frank Iny until 1972. I also was the Headmaster by Proxy of Shamash Secondary School until 1968 when Miss Simha Nissim became its Headmistress. Both schools were closed in 1973 because most of the students had left Iraq. During all this time Abdullah Obadiah

was an Honorary Headmaster sharing with us in decision making, and in the responsibility of educating a generation of students.

As we worked so closely, I got to know him well. He was hard working, single minded when it came to the good of the students, tough but kind hearted and dedicated to his friends and the community. He had a dream of giving the students the opportunity to have as much education as possible in order to be well prepared for the future. He used to go to any length, even travelling abroad just to find a proper English teacher from Oxford University so that the students would learn proper grammar and accent.

His dream came true and the proof of it is that most of Frank Iny and Shamash Secondary School students went on to do very well in all sorts of fields, in all corners of the world.

When we met again in England, we talked about the achievements of our students and he was very proud of all of them, he said he had great faith in their abilities.

Abdullah Obadiah was a unique dedicated man who spent most of his working life for the good of the Jewish community in Iraq●

You have become close friends to many of us who read, quote and discuss *The Scribe*.

Risking redundancy and copy-cating, I would still air how grateful all of us are. I wish you many healthy years to come, and still carrying the pole.

It is of no surprise that Winston Churchill's enthusiasts sprung after your review of March '96. To me, while still young and in Baghdad, his roar was the Rock of Gibraltar, beaming confidence and hope, equal to the elation drawn from Abba Eban's speeches at the UN immediately following that period (WW II).

More than one source have it recorded that Churchill championed the Dardanelle's area invasion and that, at Gallipoli, he never agreed to abandon the fight, despite the casualties and the bungling by the British Officers. It was Lord Kitchener, then as War Minister, who gave the retreat order after his special visit to the area. You rightfully pointed out, it was after the fact, documents showed that Turkey was ready to call it quits, and World War One would have ended sooner. That was in 1915. Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty●

Florida

Abraham Haya

Professor Eliahu I. Jury

Our brother-in-law, Professor Eliahu I. Jury left Iraq in 1941. Since that time he has accomplished a significant career in academic life, which might be of interest to your journal readers.

We are enclosing a copy of a forward to a book published in his honour on his 70th birthday. Enclosed is a photograph taken in June 1992 of Professor Jury with his Ph.D. students taken on this occasion. He is standing on the first row, the third from the left.

The following forward was written from the White House, during President Bush's administration by the Scientific assistant.

Miami Beach, FL Joseph & Varda Dayan

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
WASHINGTON D. C. 20506**

This collection of papers has been prepared in honour of Professor Eliahu I. Jury, a pioneer and a leader in the theory of systems and control for four decades. The list of distinguished authors of this volume attest to the stature of Professor Jury's contributions. I am sure that they join me in dedicating the volume to him with warm affection and admiration.

Let me begin with a brief summary of professor Jury's career. He was born in Baghdad, Iraq, in May 1923, and received his early education there. After a brief period of study at the American University in Beirut, he attended the Technion as a Goldberg Scholar in the then Palestine, and received the Diplome Engineer degree in Electrical Engineering from that institution in 1947. He arrived in the United States in 1947, and began his graduate studies at Harvard. He received his M.S. degree from Harvard in 1949, and his Ph.D. degree in Electrical Engineering in 1953 from Columbia University, where he was a Higgins Fellow.

In 1954, Professor Jury joined the faculty of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences of the University of California at Berkeley, and began a career there that spanned nearly three decades. He became Emeritus Professor at Berkeley in July 1981, but continued his active career unabated as Research Professor at the University of Miami, in Coral Gables, Florida. Since 1988, he has been an Emeritus Research Professor at Miami.

In addition to the two universities that served as his full-time professional home for four decades, Professor Jury spent significant periods as a Visiting Professor at institutions all over the world. These include both Cambridge and Imperial College in the United Kingdom; the DFVLR Institute of Dynamical Systems in Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany; the Universities of Paris and Rome; the University of New Castle, New South Wales, Australia; where he had a fruitful collaboration with Professor Brian Anderson; the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, where he worked with his long time friend and collaborator professor M. Mansour; and the University of Kiev, USSR, where as a Distinguished Fullbright-Hayes Professor he worked with Professor Ya. Z. Tsympkin, with whom he had conducted an active technical correspondence over several decades.

Professor Jury was a mentor and an inspiration to several generations of students and junior colleagues, who include myself and many of the contributors to this volume. His generosity and help at critical junctures of our careers are remembered with warmth and gratitude. During his tenure at Berkeley and Miami, he supervised about 30 Ph.D. and 50 M.S. students, many of whom have gone on to illustrious careers.

With his Ph.D. thesis on "sampled data control systems," Professor Jury pioneered the field of discrete time systems, which with the advent of the digital



revolution has come to dominate the world of systems and signal processing. Professor Jury has been very much a part of that revolution. His early work led to a monumental career-long contribution to the understanding of the stability of discrete time systems. His work on z-transforms has become a standard part of the technology of digital signal processing. His invention of "inners" provided a much needed unification of the theory of continuous and discrete time systems. Finally, his work on multidimensional filters in recent years have contributed much to the development of image processing and the application of other multidimensional signals. In all these areas, Professor Jury's work has been important, influential, often seminal and pioneering. Through some 250 research papers and three major books, he has exerted an extraordinary influence on the field of systems and control.

Professor Jury's outstanding achievements have been internationally recognised by awards that are too numerous to list in completion. They include the Routh Centennial Lectureship from IEE, London in 1977; the ASME Centennial Medal in 1980; an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, in 1982; the First Education Award of the IEEE Control and Systems Society in 1986; the Oldenburger Award of ASME in 1986; the First Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award from the University of Miami in 1988; the Technion Founder Award in 1991; the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Medal from the University of California, Berkeley in 1991; and the University of Rome Medal in 1992. He was elected a Life Fellow of IEEE in 1989, and an Honorary Member of Phi Beta Kappa in 1992.

As full and rich as it is, Professor Jury's career is hardly over. He continues to be as active as ever, working both in his office in Miami and with his collaborators all over the world. All of us who have come to know him and his work wish him and his wife Joyce many years of happy and productive life to come, and we continue to look forward to the benefit of his wisdom and contributions. ●

**Associate Director Eugene Wong
for Industrial Technology January 1994**

كلمتي بين شفقتين تصير بين الفين

Kelmi bain sheftain tseer bain elfain.

— Once spoken, a secret becomes public.

تغددي وتهددي وتغشي وتهمشي

Tghada wethada wetasha wetmasha.

— After lunch sleep a while, after dinner walk a mile.

THE JEWISH VOTE

by Naim Dangoor

Before the war, American Jews numbered six million – five percent of a total population of 120 million. Now American Jewry numbers under six million out of a total population that has doubled to 240 million! This erosion has been due to a small extent by emigration to Israel, but is mainly the result of marrying out.

With the coming down of racial and religious barriers, more and more Jews are seeking partners from outside the community. As one cynic had put it, you can't kill the Jews by persecution – kill them by kindness and tolerance.

Today, of the Jews who get married, more than half take non-Jewish partners. This situation is even more serious than it looks. It means that of a hundred Jews who get married, the 50 who marry-in produce only 25 marriages while the 50 who marry out produce 50 marriages. In fact, it may even be 20 Jewish marriages to 60 mixed marriages, a ratio of 1 to 3 against. But most of those who marry out do not do so with intent to leave the community.

Rather they meet a non-Jewish friend, fall in love and get married. Usually, it is the Jewish partner who is more attached to his/her roots and is more likely to bring the other partner to his circle and traditions. For this reason we must not sever connections with mixed marriages and even if we cannot accept their children as halachically Jewish, even if they end up going to church rather than a synagogue, we must treat them as associate Jews, as a grey area of our community.

This is the growth area of American Jewry and a useful catchment area for increasing our numbers. Our motto should not be – "those who are not with us are against us" but rather, "those who are not against us are with us." The Jewish partner of a mixed marriage can, if properly assisted and encouraged, bring into his orbit not only his or her partner but also his or her in-laws.

On this basis I reckon the Jewish vote in America be equivalent not to 6 million but to 20 million with a great growth potential, turning our lemon into a lemonade!

Such a potential can affect decisions concerning Israel, minority rights etc. ●

As it is impossible to visit our places of birth, for the last 20 years, *The Scribe*, has given the Babylonian Jewish Community in Israel and the Diaspora a nostalgic pleasure across a panorama of pictures, stories, recollections, comments and lovely articles.

In Montreal last November I realised how much *The Scribe* is appreciated by Babylonian Jewry around the world.

At a dinner party at the invitation of Tami Khmara, *The Scribe* was one of our pleasant subjects. On behalf of all present I was to express to you personally our appreciation and thanks for your wonderful magazine.

The enclosed picture was taken at the party

Left to right:-
Simha & Maurice Peress – Selim & Doris Mashaal – Marcelle Haya – Edward Dangoor – Violette Khmara – (Tami & Leila Khmara)
In front – Dina – Sherry and David Khmara ● Paris Edward Dangoor



I read with much interest in *The Scribe* the possibility that the Arabs may have a legal obligation to compensate the Jews from Arab Countries.

Now I will discuss the Palestinian's demands on Israel. If my memory is correct it was the Palestinian's Arab brothers who convinced them to leave their land by promising not only their part but the Jewish part of Israel. The Israelis did not throw them out. Then surely the responsibility for that lies with their Arab brothers who should now compensate them. If it can be agreed with the Arabs about compensation for Jews from Arab lands, a percentage of that compensation could go to their Palestinian brothers.

Somebody, perhaps yourself or the Jewish Board of Deputies should tackle Bill Clinton, Malcolm Rifkin and Jaques Chirac to make them aware that: a) the Jews have a greater claim on the Arabs for their losses; b) the Palestinians also have a greater claim against their Arab brothers for misleading them than on Israel. Why is it Jews are always the ones who have to pay? Is it because we are the chosen people? ●

London N. M. Hakkak

I believe that every sensible person would agree with Mr Naim Dangoor's definition, when he said in his article "The Holocaust Nightmare" in *The Scribe* 66/page 10, that WWII may be regarded as "the war to get rid of the Jews of Europe".

In this connection, I mention that Sir Winston Churchill in the preface to his WWII Memoirs, told of a conversation with president Roosevelt in which he was asked to suggest what the war should be called. Churchill replied that it should be called the Unnecessary War, for "there never was a war more easy to stop than that." ●

Milan Edward Yamen

My original name is Saleh Ambarchi, the nephew of the late Naim Heskell Basri, brother of Amouma Basri (my late mother). I read the article about the late Naim Basri written by his cousin Meer Basri. I wish to advise that Naim had two boys by the names of Anthony and John and they live in England. Anthony lives in Croydon and John is in Bucks.

My wife Rachel and I would like to be included on your mailing list ●

Australia Sam Inbari

Having known Naim Basri since he joined the BBC, may I add some anecdotes to what my learned cousin Meer Basri had written in your last issue?

Naim Basri built a comprehensive Arabic library. Once he invited me to meet a representative of the Columbia Broadcasting Corporation of America who was planning to visit all the Arab states of the Middle East and North Africa in order to study the various aspects of the Arabic Music. "You do not have to go to all that length," he told him, "you can peruse all types of music here at the BBC." It was Naim Basri who orchestrated the music to Umm Kalthum and when Abdul Wahab heard about it, he asked him to do the same for him. There was a long and fruitful co-operation between them which lasted until death parted them.

He was well liked and very popular among his Egyptian and Iraqi colleagues, but did not fare well with Christians of the Lebanon. A Christian Journalist wrote a venomous article in a leading Beirut newspaper condemning the BBC for employing a Jew in such a responsible position in order to interpret the Arabic music to the Arabs. "Are there no Arabs who can play such a role?" he asked, oblivious of the fact that an Iraqi Chalghi band composed entirely of Jews won the first prize some years earlier in an International Competition in Cairo.

His colleagues were enraged at this religious prejudice whose sole purpose was to create a wedge between Jews and Muslims. One unlikely defender of him was a Saudi Arabian listener who attacked the Lebanese press for their anti-Jewish attitude. "Mr Basri is doing a great job," he wrote to the BBC. "We should not discriminate between various people because of their religion."

He excelled in his playing of the lute (ud) and the violin. He was greatly admired and loved by all who knew him, and members of the Arabic section of the BBC wept when they heard of his sudden death and bade him a tearful farewell ●

London Abdulla Sion Dangoor

زلة القدم تبرا' و زلة اللسان لا تبرا'
 Zallat el qadam tabra'e wa zallat el lisan la tabra'e.

– A slip of the foot heals but a slip of the tongue does not heal.



Seraphine Basri sings accompanied by her husband playing the lute ●



I wish to tell you how much we enjoy reading *The Scribe* and how much more interesting it has become since Eileen Khalastchy came on board. She has added a personal and everyday twist on our lives in Baghdad, that makes the information very relevant to our memories. If this information does not get recorded then it will not be passed on to our future generations.

I enclose a picture taken in 1957 of a "Fancy Dress Party" taken at the home of Ingrid and Suad Bekhor (daughters of the late Anwar Bekhor). I haven't seen Ingrid since then!

The maiden names of the girls are as follows:

Left to right:

Front row:.....; Janet Shamash;; Sandra Chitayat; Charlie Shamoan; Olivia Shamoan; Said ...; Saida ...

2nd row: David Shamash;; Farah Dabi.

3rd row: Amal Abraham;; Vivi Shina; Stella Ades; Suad Bekhor;; Jamil

4th row: Gilda Abraham; William Nurallah; Jack Attraktchi.

Daisy Shina; Stella Baher; Joyce Kazaz (married name); Lydia Korine; Delizia Baher;

Audrey Chitayat; Jimmy Shamash; Lisette Shashoua; Edna Gurji.

5th row: Liza Chitayat; Katy Baher;; Ibtisam Heskeli; Lydia Dabi; Grace Gurji;

Ingrid Bekhor; Lorette Nurallah.

Back row: Naomi Dabi; Joyce Masri; Carmella Mashaal.

This may be the first time that a picture of members of my generation is shown.

O Boy! To think that was 40 years ago! ●

Canada

Grace Hillel

THE MAD GERMAN DISEASE

by: Naim Dangoor

Of all the nations of Europe, Germany has shown the greatest concern regarding the consumption of British beef, for fear of the BSE mad cow disease and its human counterpart the CJD.

But, anyone who can recollect the frenzied rantings of Adolph Hitler would realise that the Germans were stricken with madness long before they started consuming British beef.

But surely one mad führer does not constitute a mad nation. The fact is that German madness was not restricted to their leader. Hitler was voted into office by the majority of Germans. He was aided and abetted by Goebbels and his lies, Goering and his bragging, Streicher and his obscenities; and egged on in his aggressive adventures by the zeig heels of German youth. It was half a million ordinary Germans who carried out the brutal policy of the Holocaust. Some may say that's only 1 per cent of the German people, but it could be any 1 per cent, and thus a fair representation of all Germany. The German people appear to have a propensity for irrational action.

In banning British contaminated beef the German government wants to preserve the present apparent sanity of its people.

But madness is an art, and mad people have an ability of hiding their condition until a new opportunity presents itself. Every now and again small eruptions are there to see: denial of the Holocaust, neo-Nazi movements, and continued attempts to dominate Europe ●

THE BEDOUINS & NOAH'S ARK

by: Salim Khabbaza, New York

The Bedouins in the Arab Desert are usually associated with the camel, which they use for transportation, food and clothing (camel hair). Young Bedouin children often wonder why the camel's male organ is so small compared to that of the donkey, although the camel is much bigger than the donkey. The Bedouin elders explain this phenomenon as follows:

The story goes back to the time when God instructed Noah, the Hebrew Patriarch, to build an Ark in which he and his family and a pair (male and female) from all living animals would live during the Flood which would destroy the rest of mankind for their wickedness. Noah's wife noticed that her husband was worried, and asked him why. He explained to her that the coming Flood would continue for a long time, during which the animals might reproduce and multiply, and there would be no place for all of

them in the Ark. After a moment's thought she solved the problem by suggesting that Noah should take away the male organs of the animals, keep them in a safe place in the Ark, and return them to the animals at the end of the Flood, thereby preventing any possibility of reproduction. According to the Bedouins, Noah found this a good idea and acted accordingly.

At the end of the Flood, Noah ordered the animals to stand in line near the exit to the Ark, and, as each male animal exited, he gave him back his male organ. But the camel, being a slow moving animal, was late when his turn came, and the donkey overtook him and received the big organ belonging to the camel. Noah had no alternative but to offer the camel the small organ belonging to the donkey. The camel, however, was offended and refused the offer. He left the Ark without taking anything.

Noah was upset and explained to his wife that the camel, a God's creature, would become extinct. She took the small organ, ran after the camel, and threw it at him from behind, thus saving the animal from extinction, but pointing in the wrong direction.

Albert B adds: Every camel caravan is usually headed by a donkey. As they plod across the desert, the leading camel, nodding his head tells the donkey "give it back." The donkey however, shakes his head as if to say "I won't." ●

THE SWISS BANKING THIEVES

It's hard to find a good word to say about these Swiss bankers who are utterly without morals.

Swiss bankers have been sitting silently, these past 50 years, on a hoard of Nazi gold – some Jewish concentration camp victims.

For most citizens of the civilised world, custody of those ingots would carry a moral strain too excruciating to bear. But not for the money-men of Zurich, Geneva and Lugano. Isolated from the currents of world opinion by geography and their own special brand of parochialism, the Swiss bankers are different.

In 1944, as the Allied started winning the war, the Swiss were eager to make financial terms with the United States, whereby German funds were frozen in exchange for assurances that Allied bombing would not come close to the Swiss border.

Ironically, the actual laws which protected secret accounts that were enacted in 1934, in reaction to the huge flow of funds leaving Germany to escape the attention of the Nazi regime, have now been used to hide and deny the existence of the Jewish accounts.

It is estimated that currently, Switzerland is the repository of some 40 per cent of the world's private wealth, much of it illicit.

From the London Daily Mail

The double-crossing Swiss

Just as the Swiss double-crossed the Jews during the war, taking the assets of those who came to seek asylum and then handing them over to Germany for certain execution, Switzerland in the last year of the war double-crossed Germany as well.

As it became certain that Germany was not going to win the war, the Swiss Government gave maximum assistance to the Allies and made certain that all the Nazi loot stored in the vaults of Swiss banks would be swallowed by the greedy Swiss bankers.

The Swiss Government has now decided to establish a humanitarian fund of \$7000 million for Holocaust victims and others.

This will be taken from the apparently huge gold reserves of the state ●

RUDOLPH HESS and RASHID ALI

The Truth about Rudolph Hess

by: James Douglas-Hamilton
Reviewed by: Naim Dangoor

When deputy Fuhrer Rudolph Hess landed in Scotland on 10 May 1941 after his epic solo flight from Germany to visit the Duke of Hamilton, one of the major terms he brought with him was that Britain should evacuate Iraq as "Germany could not leave Rashid Ali and the Iraqis in the lurch." This sensational revelation which appears in the above-mentioned book by the son of the Duke of Hamilton is largely overlooked by historians who fail to appreciate the prime importance of Rashid Ali's revolt to Hitler's war aims, and that its failure may actually have cost Germany the Second World War!

The position of the British Isles where they are, not too far from Continental Europe, and yet not too close to it, played an important part in European military history and, as a result, in the history of the world as a whole.

After the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, Spain was riding high in the New World, but her shipping was constantly harassed and raided by British "men of war". Spain sent her fleet to "neutralise" Britain, but the smashing of the Spanish Armada resulted in the North Atlantic becoming open to Western Europe, resulting in North America becoming a British instead of a Spanish zone of influence.

Napoleon faced the same problem; and his failure to conquer Britain resulted in his eventual downfall.

Hitler faced the same dilemma. In the autumn of 1940 Germany controlled most of Europe but the Luftwaffe failed to subdue Britain by air power alone. So an invasion was ruled out as Britain had a pipeline under the Ocean (PLUTO) that was capable of putting to flames all potential landings. Throughout the following winter Germany faced two enemies - Britain and the Soviet Union - The "two fronts" that Hitler dreaded in Mein Kampf. While preparing to invade Russia, Hitler was making peace overtures to Britain: give me a free hand in Europe and you can have a free hand in the Empire.

When Hess landed in Scotland on 10 May 1941, hostilities between Britain and Rashid Ali were in full swing, Germany's sole airborne division was landing in Crete in the face of stiff British resistance. Hitler was planning to encircle Russia through Iraq and the Caucasus. The importance of the Iraqi campaign can be measured by the fact that the British Army did not relinquish Crete until Rashid Ali was defeated on 29 May. Britain suffered heavy casualties in Crete amounting to 15,000 in order to prevent Germany from linking up with Rashid Ali.

Churchill was not interested in Hess's offer. When told that Hess had landed in Scotland, he said, "Are you telling me that the deputy Fuhrer is in our hands?" "But", he added, "Hess or no Hess, I am going to the Cinema to see the Marx Brothers."

This British *sang froid* can be illustrated by the following anecdote:

The cars of a British and a French diplomat going in opposite directions met on a one way



Former Sephardi Israel Chief Rabbi Rishon Le-Zion Mordechai Eliahu at the unveiling of a street plaque in Jerusalem in the name of the late Shimon Muallem Nissim, well known Baghdad educator, with members of the family. (see Sadka Family Tree)●

bridge. Neither was willing to lose face by going back, so the Frenchman took out a newspaper and started to read. Five minutes later the Englishman sent him word saying, "When you finish reading please let me have the newspaper so that I can read it myself." Thereupon the Frenchman decided to go back and to let the Englishman proceed.●

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

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Mrs Anne Gabbay-Apostolatos	New York, USA
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Edward Khamara & Dr. Nejla Burton	Victoria & NSW, Australia
David M. Khalastchi	Ascot, Berkshire

إذا ما تبني النوة من الغاس أشي ينعف
كلام الناس

Etha ma teji el makhwa men el ras ash
yenfa'e kalam el nas.

-Unless you have the inclination, people cannot make you do it.

الكواز يهغيب بشغبة الماكسوغه

Al kewaz yeshghab bshaghbet el maksougha.
- The potter uses a broken bowl.

الدب من يطعمه ل بنو آشنيتم يفككون
والدب من يطعمه ل د بوند آشنيتم يفككون

El ab men yet'ee l'ebnou ethnainem
yethekhkon wel eben men yet'ee l'abounou
ethnainem yebkon.

• - When a father gives to his son, they both
laugh. When a son gives to his father, they
both cry.



The above picture taken in 1927 in Baghdad shows:

Right to left: Selim Samouha, my father born June 1896; Latif Yehouda Semouha, my cousin; Shaoul Semouha, my dad's brother●

New York

Alice Aboody

Couscous
from Mesody Adler
Morocco p.44

3lb shin of beef or 1 large chicken
1 large chicken
2 onions
4 carrots
2 lb red pumpkin
1 glass of chickpeas
2 pt (approx.) water
1 lb couscous

Garnish:
1 onion
½ glass oil
½ glass stock
1 tbsp sugar
a few stoned prunes or raisins
toasted blanched almonds

"Every festive occasion deserves a couscous! Opportunities to make it are never missed, even if it is just a birthday or a family reunion." This recipe serves 8.

Place the meat and the onions in a saucepan and cover completely with water, add pre-soaked chick peas and bring to the boil, removing the scum which rises to the top. Place a lid on the pan and simmer for 1 hour. Then add the carrots and the pumpkin which have been cut into chunks. Cook for further 15 minutes or until the vegetables are soft. Arrange these ingredients in an oven-proof dish and add 1/2 glass of the stock reserving the remainder. Sprinkle with sugar and return to the oven for about 40 minutes to brown.

Wash the couscous in a strainer and drain. Transfer it to a deep bowl and add 2 tablespoons of light oil, salt and pepper. Add the rest of the stock and boiling water to cover and break up any lumps which might form. Cook in the microwave oven on defrost for 5 minutes - stir and add more water if necessary, then microwave for another 5 minutes. The traditional method is to steam the couscous over the stock until the grain is soft for about half an hour, but this is simpler.

To garnish, slice the onion and fry it in a little oil, adding the prunes or raisins. Add a teaspoonful of sugar and 1/2 glass of stock. Cook until brown and the sugar caramelises. Decorate the couscous with this mixture and the blanched almonds. To serve, place the vegetables, meat, stock and couscous on separate dishes●

Sweet and Sour Baked Fish

from Doreen Dangoor
Salona
Iraq p. 22

2lb haddock or cod salt
3 large onions
1 green pepper
2 tomatoes
oil for frying
juice of 3-4 lemons
2 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp tomato purée
2 tsp curry powder
salt & pepper
parsley

Clean and salt the fish. Cut into portions and arrange them in a greased ovenproof dish. Slice the onions and fry them until they are transparent, then place on the fish. Slice the green pepper and arrange the slices on the fish. Slice the tomatoes and garnish the dish with them.

In a small saucepan, combine the lemon juice, sugar and tomato purée, curry powder (optional), salt and the pepper (optional). Cook on a medium heat, stirring continuously until it thickens. Pour it over the fish and cover the dish with foil. Place it in a preheated oven at 200C for 15 minutes. Remove the foil and allow it to cook for a further 20 minutes until the sauce thickens. Sprinkle chopped parsley over it and serve.

It is much tastier if the fish is dipped in flour and fried before arranging it in the ovenproof dish. It will require less cooking time in the oven, as less water will be released. You could also add sliced fried aubergine on top of the onions before placing in the oven●

Fresh Herb & Meat Stew

from Louise Berchanpour
Kormeh Sabzi p.48
Iran

2lb cubed beef or lamb
2 onions
4 tbsp of oil
3½ cups of boiling water
16 oz tin red kidney beans
salt & pepper
2 cups parsley
1 cup chives or scallions
½ cup spinach
¼ cup coriander
3 tbsp dried fenugreek or
5 tbsp lemon juice or 8 dried limes

This is a typical Persian dish which uses large quantities of fresh herbs to produce a fine flavour.

Chop the onions and sauté them together with all of the meat in 3 tablespoons of the oil with salt and pepper until brown. Pour on the boiling water, and when the sauce bubbles reduce the heat and allow it to simmer for one hour. If you are using dried limes then pierce the skin with a sharp knife and add them at this stage.

Meanwhile chop the parsley, chives or scallions, fenugreek, spinach and the coriander and sauté in the remaining oil.

When the meat is cooked, add the herb mixture and the lemon juice. Cover and simmer for another 30 minutes. Add the drained beans, adjust the salt and pepper to taste and simmer for another 15 minutes.

Serve with rice●

Rice with Fish
from Bertha Bekhor
Pelau b'Samek p.19
Iraq

2 large onions rings
4 tbsp corn oil
3 lb haddock fillets
2 tsp mild curry powder
1 dsp dried lime
2 tomatoes
1 small onion
1 stick celery
4 oz margarine
4 cups boiling water
1 tsp salt
1 tsp turmeric
3 cups rice

This dish is a great favourite at parties in the Iraqi community.

To make the fish, fry the onions rings until crispy in the oil. Remove the onions from the oil and set aside. In the same oil fry the fish on both sides and arrange it with the onions in an oven-proof dish. Mix in the curry and lime (Numi Basra'), slice the tomatoes and use them to garnish the fish.

To make the rice, chop the small onion and the celery and sauté them in the margarine. Add boiling water to the saucepan, then the salt and the turmeric and finally the rice. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat. Simmer covered, for about 15 minutes.

Make a bed with the rice, warm the fish and spread it over the rice. Serve immediately●

Walnut and Chocolate Cake
from Amal Rejwan
Pesah Dish p.113

8 eggs
1 glass sugar
1 glass fine matza meal
1½ glasses ground walnuts
¼ lb butter
2 tsp baking powder
2 tsp cocoa
1 tsp lemon juice
1 tsp vanilla essence

Separate the eggs. Beat the yolks in a mixing machine until they become thick and gradually add the sugar, beating all the time. Melt the butter and allow it to cool. Add it to the egg mixture together with the matza meal, ground walnuts, baking powder, lemon juice and vanilla essence and beat well.

In another bowl whisk the egg whites until they are stiff but not dry. Carefully fold them into the batter. Bake at 180 C for 35-40 mins●

THE BOOK OF JEWISH FOOD
by: Claudia Roden

Published by: Alfred A. Knopf, New York
668 pages. U.S. \$35.00

In this definitive book of Jewish cooking, Claudia Roden traces the fascinating development of the Jewish cuisine. More than 800 recipes were gathered by the author during almost fifteen years of travelling around the world, tasting, watching, and talking to cooks - too many cooks in fact. This demonstrates the well known saying that too many cooks spoil the broth which is evident in one or two mixed up recipes.

The Cairo born author encompasses in this tome, Ashkenazi as well as Sephardi recipes especially from Iraq, Iran, India, China, Bukhara, Greece, Morocco and Israel.

We learn that in Israel the army prefers couscous to gefilte fish for Friday night dinner.

The book also contains the interesting history and anecdotes of various Diaspora communities.

Some of these difficult recipes with their interesting historical background can be enjoyed as much in the reading as in the eating. It may be possible that one day difficult recipes will be available in a dehydrated form already prepared with instructions: "Just add boiling water and serve."

The book is available at the following bookshops:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Books for Cooks
15 Blenheim Crescent
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The Queen and the President on their way to the Palace.
Right: The President giving a helping hand to The Queen.



The State Procession along the Mall, decorated with the flags of Britain and Israel.