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EDITORIAL

E.E.C. and Refugees

The recent proposal by the Common Market countries (The Group of Ten, *Times* report, 29 May) to establish a fund of about £15 million to help the Palestinian Arab refugees raises a serious question. And not only on the moral aspect of the matter.

The Jewish people, who more than any other in history knows what it is to be refugees, certainly within living memory, before and after the Second World War, can sympathise with the plight of the Arab refugees, though Arab states which sent invading armies against the infant State of Israel in 1948 must bear the main responsibility for making them refugees. There is a deplorable lack of balance in the approach to the Middle East refugee problem. For apart from there being an Arab refugee problem there is also a Jewish refugee problem created as a result of the policies of Arab governments.

Since 1948 nearly 850,000 Jews have left Arab countries with little more than a few personal possessions. That Israel has welcomed them and sought to rehabilitate them does not absolve the world community and all right-thinking people of their responsibility for concern for, and support of, these Jewish refugees. The fact of the matter is that despite Israel's strenuous and often admirable efforts to provide for them, much more needs to be done towards closing the economic and cultural gap between "the two Israels", especially in view of Israel's enormous defence burden imposed by the continuing hostility of her Arab neighbours. (The Lod Airport massacre is a recent drastic example of this.)

The E.E.C. proposal, known as the Deniau Plan (after its author, Jean-François Deniau, of the E.E.C. Commission) envisages three kinds of aid for the Arab refugees, (1) for food, to supplement the efforts of U.N.W.R.A., (2) for education and train-

ing, and (3) for specific economic development projects. The Plan has yet to be adopted by the Council of Ministers. Except for food in which T.G., Israel is self-sufficient, she could do with the other two kinds of aid. Sympathisers of the Arab cause who fail to encourage them to negotiate settlement of their grievances with Israel help to create the atmosphere for more violence against Israel.

Negotiation with Israel is the best assistance that the E.E.C. governments or any other could give for the Arab refugees. Failing this the claims and needs of Jewish refugees from Arab countries cannot in justice be overlooked.

Knesset Speaker

The election of Mr. Israel Yeshayahu, a former Deputy-Speaker of the Knesset, as Speaker of the Knesset to succeed the late distinguished Mr. Reuven Barkat, is the highest public office attained by an Israeli of Oriental origin. For Mr. Yeshayahu was born and grew up in the Yemen from which he emigrated to Israel as a young man in 1929. He has held various high public offices, such as Executive member of the Histadruth, Member of the Knesset from 1949, Minister of Posts in the Eshkol Government, Secretary-General of the Israel Labour Party until his election to the Speakership. This office is second only to that of the Presidency in Israel's order of precedence.

Mr. Yeshayahu will be received warmly in London when he arrives in July as head of an Israeli Knesset delegation invited by Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, the Speaker of the House of Commons, who himself has held high public office in various British governments, including that of Foreign Secretary which, incidentally, covered the drama of the 1956 Suez-Sinai campaign.

Mr. Yeshayahu is a warm, genial personality held in high esteem in Israel no less for his record of public service than for his brilliant oratorical powers in Hebrew. We take this opportunity of wishing him every success in his new high office.

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The six issues of *The Scribe* that appear in a year coincide with Rosh Hashana, Hanucca, Purim, Passover, Pentecost and lastly Tu b'Ab (15th of Av) which is the occasion of the present issue.

Tu b'Ab was a minor festival in the days of the Second Temple marking the beginning of vintage in Israel. This full moon occasion was celebrated in Babylon until recently by excursions, picnics and other festivities.

As *The Scribe* completes its first year, we feel gratified by the worldwide support and interest shown in our publication. We look forward with confidence to the next year.

The Campaign against Jews in Arab countries

by *SHLOMO HILLEL, Israeli Minister of Police*

While the world is struck dumb by the glorious struggle of Soviet Jewry, we are filled with anxiety and helpless fury at the fate of the Jews in Syria, who are subject to persecution and torture and cannot even raise their voice. The tale of the struggle of the Jews in Arab countries for their right to aliya and participation in the upbuilding of Israel still has to be told. This has been a long and glorious struggle in which entire communities were rescued from extinction and conversion and which brought to Israel mass-immigration to increase our strength and fortify the chain of border settlements in distant and dangerous areas.

This struggle was silent and unsung, carried out underground, and it remains largely unknown to this day, perhaps because it is still incomplete and perhaps because it is too soon to tell.

In 1948, on the eve of the declaration of statehood, there were 100,000 Jews from Arab countries in Palestine (excepting Jews from other Islam countries and Sephardi Jews from overseas who numbered another 100,000).

When the State was proclaimed it caught up the Jews of Arab countries in a wave of messianic enthusiasm. Old and young got up and left everything: home, business, ancestral grave, and made their way to Israel. The Yemen Community were the first; then they came from Iraq, Morocco and Tunisia.

Close to 800,000 Jews came to Israel from Arab countries in those few years after the State came into being. Whole communities vanished, or left no more than a relic. In 1948, there were in the Yemen 50,000 Jews—today there are 1,000; in Egypt 70,000—today 600; in Iraq—130,000—today 1,000; in Morocco 300,000—today 40,000; in Tunisia 110,000—today 7,500; in Syria 15,000—today 4,500.

Before 1948 there were 840,000 Jews in the Arab countries; today, less than 60,000 or only 7 per cent are left. Not all reached Israel, some strayed from the path . . . but most arrived, and the others will come.

The number of Jews who came to Israel from the Arab countries after the War of Liberation is larger than the number of Arab refugees who left it as a result of the war. This is a classical case of population exchange, as often happens as a result of war—except that the Arab states kept their refugees in camps and prevented them from becoming productive citizens, whereas we undertook the humanitarian and national task of absorption.

PERSECUTION

The situation of the Jews in Arab countries was not the same everywhere. In some, they were allowed to live in relative peace; in others, like Saudi Arabia, no Jew was allowed even to set foot on pain of death. In North Africa, the Jews lived in comparative freedom, whereas Yemen reduced its Jews to the status of second-class citizens subject

to restrictions. In the period between the two World Wars, when the neighbouring Arab countries acquired their independence, there were outbreaks of blind hatred and intolerance towards the minorities in their midst.

And at this point came the miracle. Instead of breaking under their suffering, the Jews rose in determination to organise and prepare; they undertook their own self-defence and prepared to live and be reborn as proud Jews. When soldiers from Eretz Israel reached Iraq after the downfall of Rashid Ali, they found organised groups of young Jews, ready for action to defend their lives and faith. During the war, with the help of emissaries from Eretz Israel, underground pioneering movements sprang up in the countries of the Middle East. In these movements, Hebrew was taught secretly; songs of the Jewish homeland were sung in dark cellars, at the risk of death. They prepared Jews to defend themselves. They sought secret ways of reaching Eretz Israel.

For the right to aliya the Jews of the Arab countries were ready to pay any price: loss of property, detention and torture, and even their lives. All the secret routes of the Middle East—mountains, deserts and sea are sown with the graves of those who did not survive the ordeal.

When they arrived they did not find apartments or ulpanim waiting for them, only an iron bed in a leaky tent in the transit camps of those days, and relief work for perhaps two days a week. For them, Aliya often meant a drastic and brutal lowering of the standard of living they had been accustomed to.

In Zionist parlance there are two terms used of aliya. Pioneering aliya and mass immigration. That of the Jews of the Arab states was both.

VENGEANCE FOR DEFEATS

If before there was an Israel, Jews in Arab countries suffered, subsequently they were held as hostages, and each time we defeated our enemies they paid the price as victims of the lust for vengeance. In 1957, after the Sinai campaign, the Jews remaining in Egypt fled that country.

Then came the Six Day War, with the Jews the first sacrifice to the belligerence of the Arab countries. On the day the war broke out, the rabble attacked the Jews in Morocco and Tunisia. In those two countries the authorities did in fact try to protect the Jews.

In Libya, however, the mob was given a free hand to make a pogrom in the best traditions of the Diaspora, and 20 Jews were butchered. No national poet has ever sung a dirge for them. Then there were the countries like Syria, Iraq and Egypt in which the persecution of the Jews was official policy. In Egypt on the morning of June 5, 1967, police and secret agents arrested all Jewish males from the age of 17 and upwards.

The fate awaiting the Jews in Iraq was even graver. The dementia and bloodlust of the Iraqi rulers, culminating in the public hanging of 11 Jews, and the death from torture of many others, finally awakened the conscience of the world. These were accompanied by new discriminatory laws and the seizure of their property. The situation worsened towards the end of 1968, when there were new arrests and fictitious charges of espionage. Secret martial courts were set up and only in December did it emerge that Jews had been executed.

A witness reports that the "trial" of one of the Jews who was sentenced to death, lasted exactly five minutes. On January 27, 1969, Baghdad radio announced that 14 people were to be executed, nine of them Jews, and the masses were invited to come and watch the hangings. Later, another two Jews were hanged and many others died in prison under terrible torture.

THE JEWS OF SYRIA

Worst of all is the plight of Syrian Jewry today. There, the regime is uninhibited by world opinion and international protest and has imprisoned the Jews in ghettos in three towns: Damascus, Aleppo

and Kamishli. They live on the verge of starvation and degeneration, subsisting on support from foreign charities. They are subject to physical and mental torment to a degree arousing the deepest anxiety, and denied elementary civic rights. The plight of Syrian Jewry was bitter enough before the Six Day War. Out of a community of 15,000 before 1948, two-thirds succeeded in escaping, and in 1967, there were still 4,500.

Reliable reports reaching us add up to a dread picture of rape, torture and intimidation. Jews are afraid to enter the Damascus synagogue and although there is an Alliance school in the capital, it is forbidden to teach Hebrew there. The principal is a Syrian Arab and in one of the textbooks there is the sentence: "The Jews are criminals and should be destroyed."

This is the situation in Damascus and we can imagine the situation in the remote Aleppo and Kamishli, where 350 Jews live under restraint.

The Jews of Syria were unable to send their greetings to the Zionist Congress. The Congress sends its message to them: Be strong and of good courage!🇲

From an address to the 28th Zionist Congress

1,000 years ago Sepharad Ransoms a Babylonian Rabbi

by EXILARCH

ONE THOUSAND YEARS AGO ARAB PIRATES, EVEN THEN, ROAMED THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND ALGERIA WAS THE HAVEN OF HIJACKERS AS IT IS TODAY. NOT LONG AFTERWARDS, IN THE 11TH CENTURY, LEBANON BECAME THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE ASSASSINS,¹ WHO LIKEWISE CALLED THEMSELVES FEDAWIYA (FEDAYEEN). TODAY'S PARALLEL EVENTS ARE THUS DUE MORE TO A FORCE OF HABIT THAN TO A CAUSE. THERE IS GROWING EVIDENCE THAT THE ASSASSINS ARE AGAIN TRYING TO USE TERRORISM TO INFLUENCE WORLD AFFAIRS; BUT HISTORY HAS PROVED THAT NO AMOUNT OF TERRORISM CAN HOLD BACK THE MARCH OF PROGRESS.

In those days Babylonian Talmudic rabbis, who were engaged in unlocking the words of the Torah, were as much sought after as a present-day nuclear physicist engaged in splitting the atom. The reason for this scarcity was that neither the Talmud nor the prayers or blessings were committed to writing, perhaps in order to keep the Jewish communities under the control of the Babylonian academies. An accomplished Talmudist had to carry in his head all of 2,500,000 words of the Talmud.

In 972 (some say 945), four distinguished Babylonian scholars from the academy of Sura—Hushiel, Shemariah, Moses ben Hanokh and another—were on a goodwill tour of Mediterranean communities. During a voyage from Bari, Italy, they were captured by Arab pirates. To avoid falling into the hands of her captors, Moses' wife asked her husband in Hebrew whether those who were drowned in the sea could look forward to resurrection, and when

he answered, in the words of the psalm, "The Lord saith . . . I will bring them again from the depths of the sea", she cast herself in the waters and was drowned. Self-destruction was an accepted procedure among Jews in imminent danger of falling into enemy hands (cf. Massada).

HANOKH'S SCHOLARSHIP

Subsequently the three men were sold to three different countries: Shemariah to Egypt, Hushiel to Ifriqiyah and Moses was taken to Cordova with his little son, Enoch, where he was redeemed by the Jewish community. While there, he went to the schoolhouse, took his seat in a corner, and listened quietly to the Talmudic discourse of the local judge and rabbi, Nathan, not a very learned man. Some of the stranger's remarks, afterwards, attracted attention and his ready answers astonished the whole assembly. Nathan on that very day resigned his office and confessed himself Moses' pupil. The wealthy community of Cordova, headed by the statesman Hasdai ibn Shaprut, immediately elected Moses rabbi and showed him much honour. He organised an important Talmudic academy at Cordova and his responsa were regarded as authoritative as those of the Babylonian geonim. This marked the real beginning of Talmudic learning in Spain and enabled Hasdai to make the community independent of Babylonia, which was desirable in view of the hostility between the caliphates of Cordova and Baghdad🇲

1. Assassin comes from Arabic Hashasheen (takers of hashish). They acted under the influence of the drug and like the Japanese murderers at Lydda airport, were assured of their place in paradise!

THE FALASHAS—A neglected Community

by DAVID KESSLER, Chairman of the Jewish Chronicle

The Jews of Ethiopia, known to outsiders as Falashas but called Beta Israel by themselves, represent the most neglected Jewish community in the world. Now numbering about 25,000, the Falashas have practised Judaism for some 2,000 years. Their origin is obscure, but it is probable that they are the descendants of an indigenous Ethiopian tribe known as the Agau who adopted Judaism about the time of the destruction of the Second Temple.

At that period of history, Ethiopia was less isolated from the main stream of civilisation than it became later. Communication existed along the valley of the Nile which brought the community into contact with Nubia and Egypt. Ships sailed freely through the Red Sea and into the Indian Ocean thus bringing the country into touch with the civilisations of the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and Arabia. Greek became an official language of the Court of the Axumite Empire which ruled Ethiopia from the first century B.C.E. to the tenth century C.E.

FLOURISHING RELIGION

Judaism was a flourishing religion on the opposite side of the Red Sea in South-West Arabia and at one time dominated the Himyaritic Kingdom with which the Axumite Empire had close links. In Egypt and Greece, with which Ethiopia maintained commercial and cultural relations, Jewish settlements were firmly established before the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. The Greek version of the Bible, the Septuagint, was already established in Egypt and in Greece and could easily have found its way to the Axumite Empire in Ethiopia. The Greeks themselves had an important port and trading post at Adulis, south of present-day Massawa.

Thus, it is clear that the Ethiopians, of whom the Agau were an important tribe, were not strangers to Judaism even before the arrival of Christianity at the end of the third century and we should not be more surprised that the Jewish religion penetrated North-East Africa than that it reached Southern Russia or Bokhara or even distant China. What is astonishing is that a Jewish community should have continued to exist in Ethiopia long after that country had become almost completely isolated from the main areas of civilisation and long after all contact with Jewish communities elsewhere had been broken.

It speaks volumes for the capacity of the Jewish religion to survive and for the tenacity of its adherents that in the face of enormous pressure from their Christian and Moslem neighbours the Jews of Ethiopia maintained their religious integrity unaided by Jews elsewhere. It would be shameful if, after all the suffering and courage displayed by this long-forgotten branch of *Klal Israel*, we allowed them to become extinguished.

SURVIVAL AT RISK

It is, however, no exaggeration to say that this is indeed a grim possibility. If world Jewry does not come to their assistance, the Falashas will disappear perhaps in a generation or two. The pressure to assimilate is greater than it has ever been notwithstanding the hardships suffered in past ages. This is due principally to the extreme poverty of the people. In a country where the average annual income of the population has been put by the United Nations as low as US \$45 per head, the Falasha income per head is estimated at only \$30. Illiteracy afflicts about 95 per cent of the population including the Jews.

The Falashas are an agricultural people but over the centuries they have been deprived of their lands and today are mainly tenant farmers and small artisans at the mercy of rapacious landlords. Social prejudices and their own fanatical adherence to the laws of the Torah make it difficult for the Falashas to mix freely with their Christian and Moslem neighbours and to take employment with them.

Sheer economic necessity is obliging them to forsake their villages and lands in order to seek a livelihood in the towns and cities, and at the same time it encourages a loosening of their religious ties and pushes them towards assimilation. A further impetus in this direction is provided by the attentions of the Church Mission to the Jews, under the patronage of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which has been active among the Falashas for more than 100 years. In recent years missionary activities have increased and there is ample evidence to show that they are doing serious damage to the community.

HELP NEEDED

What can be done to remedy this parlous situation and to save the Falashas for the Jewish people?

Aid is required on two fronts. It is desperately needed to reinforce the minimal programme which is at present operating in the educational and medical spheres. Elementary and secondary schooling are urgently in need of development. The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Anglo-Jewish Association have never operated in Ethiopia as they have elsewhere in the Middle East, India and North Africa though the necessity for such activity is just as great. Could not ex-pupils of those splendid institutions bring succour to our co-religionists in Ethiopia? Technical training, such as O.R.T. has developed so magnificently in many lands, is also badly needed. The whole of Ethiopia would benefit from the establishment of a trade school in Gondar which is the town nearest to the Falasha villages.

British O.S.E., with help from the C.B.F. and the Joint, is bringing minimal medical aid to the Falashas but its resources are pathetic compared with the size of the problem, and the whole pro-

(continued on page 6)

Babylonian origins of the Ashkenazi tradition

YEQUM PURQAN....

by N. E. DANGOOR

(May salvation from heaven, with grace, loving-kindness, mercy, long life, ample sustenance, heavenly aid, health of body, a higher enlightenment, and a living and abiding offspring, that will not break with, nor neglect any of the words of the Torah, be granted unto the teachers and rabbins of the holy community who are in the land of Israel, in the land of Babylon (and in all the lands of our dispersion)¹; unto the heads of the Academies, the Exilarchs, the heads of the Colleges and the judges in the gates; unto all their disciples, unto all the disciples of their disciples and unto all who occupy themselves with the study of the Torah. May the King of the universe bless them, prolong their lives, increase their days and add to their years, and may they be saved and delivered from every trouble and mishap. May the Lord of heaven be their help at all times and seasons; and let us say, Amen.) (A similar prayer is recited for the congregation.)

These two prayers, composed during the Gaonic period in Babylon and recited in Aramaic every Sabbath in Ashkenazi synagogues after the Haftara, as a sign of allegiance, points to the Babylonian origin of Ashkenazi rites.

SETTLEMENT IN EUROPE

Small Jewish communities had settled in various parts of Europe from early times and by the third century C.E. Jews had penetrated as far north as Cologne, Germany. In the Middle Ages the feudal system provided for only three social classes: the nobles—who did the fighting; the priests—who did the praying; and the serfs who did the work. There was no merchant class and this field was left open for the Jews. Charlemagne, King of the Franks (768-812), encouraged Jews to come to his empire to settle in cities and foster trade and industry. In 797 he sent an embassy of three (which included Isaac, a Jew from Aachen) to Harun-al-Rashid to establish friendly relations with the Caliph of Baghdad.²

Isaac was the only one to survive the long journey and returned four years later with an elephant,³ an astralabe, silks, perfumes, and other magnificent presents from Harun. He was also accompanied by Rabbi Makhir, a leading Baghdad scholar of Davidic descent who was sent by Harun on Charlemagne's request to teach European Jewry the proper rites and liturgy of Judaism.

Charlemagne, who in the meantime was crowned in Rome Emperor of the West on Christmas night, 800, received with great honour both Isaac and Rabbi Makhir in July, 802 at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) which he chose as his capital because of its mineral springs. In recognition of Jewish help to win Narbonne, in Southern France, Charlemagne gave a third of the city to Rabbi Makhir, gave him the title of "King of the Jews" and allowed the Jewish community a large measure of self-government.

Harun and Charlemagne were parallel figures dominating the East and West. Harun was more powerful and represented a higher culture. Isaac's return journey was a symbol for the beginning of

the shift in world power from Baghdad to Europe. In the meantime Abbasid power was at its highest and the hot-headed Harun could address a letter to the Byzantine emperor as follows: "From Harun, the Commander of the Faithful, to Nicephorus, the dog of the Romans; verily I have read thy letter, O son of an infidel mother. Thou shalt not hear but see my answer." In the subsequent fighting the emperor sustained a heavy defeat.

NARBONNE ACADEMY

Rabbi Makhir founded a Talmudic academy at Narbonne which vied in greatness with those of Babylonia and attracted students from many distant points. This was the first yeshivah in Europe and on its model other yeshivot were later founded. This trend later produced such scholars as Rabbenu Gershom (c. 965-1028) who put a Herem on polygamy and Rashi (Rabbi Shelomo Yitzhaki, 1040-1105) whose complete commentary on the whole Babylonian Talmud, based on the work of R. Gershom, has become an integral part of Talmud study. **From France and Germany the tradition passed to Spain.** The academies provided education for the Jewish masses and became the model for the European universities of the 12th century. In contrast, even Charlemagne could not read and write.

In those days all prayers, blessings and even the Talmud (2,500,000 words) could not be written down and everything had to be memorised.⁴ But in 870 Rav Amram ben Sheshna, the Babylonian Gaon, sent his complete compilation of domestic and synagogal liturgy to the community of Barcelona. This came to be known as Seder Rav Amram and was the basis of all subsequent prayer books. Seder Rav Amram did not contain Yequm Purqan—hence its absence in Sephardi prayers—for political reasons. Babylonian leaders required this prayer as a symbol of allegiance to them and since the Moorish regime in Spain was hostile to the Baghdad caliphate, it was not considered appropriate for Spanish Jewry to profess allegiance to Babylonia. In fact a century later the Cordova minister Hasdai ibn Shaprut sought to make the community completely independent of Babylonia by inviting another Babylonian rabbi, Moses ben Hanokh, to establish an academy there.⁵

But Ashkenazim were not hampered by considerations of rival loyalties and included Yequm Purqan in their liturgy. It first appears in Mahzor Vitry of 11th century.

It is noteworthy that in Yequm Purqan the rabbis are mentioned before the exilarch. This is evidence of how, during the Gaonic period, the power of the exilarchs was whittled away under rabbinical onslaughts.

(continued overleaf)

In 1204 R. Abraham, only son of Maimonides, was appointed at 18, head (Nagid) of the Jewish community of Egypt. Controversy broke out over the practice of invoking his name in Yequm Purqan (as was the custom with the exilarchs in Babylonia), and so this practice was dropped.

In his book *Ashkenazim and Sephardim* Rabbi Dr. Zimmels adopts the simple formula that Ashkenazi tradition came from Palestine and Sephardi from Babylon. But he quickly points out that sometimes it was the reverse. In fact both traditions came from Babylon, the fountain-head of the Talmud—first to the Ashkenazim and later to the Sephardim (used here as referring only to the Jews of Spain). Both Ashkenazim and Sephardim view the Babylonian Talmud as their ultimate authority in belief and practice.

There may have been early Palestinian influences on European Jews but at the time when Jewish communities in Europe were being firmly established, around 800, the superior authority of Babylonian rabbis was recognised even in Palestine, because under Roman and Byzantine oppression the Palestinians often had had to modify certain Jewish laws and observances. (Baron's *History of the Jews*, Vol. V/25.) In the 9th century European Jewry numbered no more than 30,000, compared to 1,500,000 elsewhere⁶ and could not have had a separate minhag but was still dependent on the mainstream of Jewish teaching which was in Babylon. (The number of Ashkenazim rose steadily to 15 million by 1939 but that of non-Ashkenazim remained at around 1,500,000.)

Up to the 13th century Hebrew pronunciation was everywhere uniform. Subsequent Ashkenazi divergence was due to environmental influences; differences in writing existed from early times.

Apart from Yequm Purqan there were other Babylonian customs which were followed by Ashkenazim and not by Sephardim. R. David Hehasid (13th century) noted that covering the head during prayer (a strict Babylonian custom) was observed by Ashkenazim and not by Sephardim. (Vide, Zimmels, above.)

We salute our Ashkenazi brethren who have kept to old traditions for so many centuries●

1. Added in some communities in modern times.
2. Charlemagne referred to the Caliph as Aaron, King of Persia.
3. The elephant, called "Abu Rabiz" was later killed on a military campaign and its tusks were made into chessmen which are still in existence.
4. This difficulty was probably solved by the introduction of the cursive script, reserving the square "Assyrian" type for writing the Torah.
5. Semah bar Hayyim, Gaon of Sura (879-885), explained historically the custom of paying homage to the Babylonian academies even among the remote tribes of Israel. During the First Exile, he declared, "The chief sages and prophets were deported to Babylonia, where they founded centres of learning and an academy on the Euphrates from the days of Jehoiachin, King of Judah, to the present day. Here rests the chain of wisdom and prophecy, and from here the Torah radiates to the whole people." (Baron's *History of the Jews*, Vol. V/25.)
6. In the census held by Emperor Claudius in 42 C.E. Jews numbered nearly 7 million in the Roman Empire or 10 per cent of the total population. But the rise of Christianity wiped out all but a few.

The Falashas *continued from page 4*

gramme needs the injection of more money so that skilled supervision and the establishment of an adequate number of clinics can be assured. The educational and medical programmes are at present run on a shoestring with an annual budget which is not greatly in excess of £5,000.

The other front on which aid is required is to assist in agricultural development. During the last two or three years a new prospect has been opened up which, in time, could revolutionise the economic and cultural state of the Falashas.

Not long ago the Government decided to set aside a large tract of virtually uninhabited land in North-West Ethiopia running along the Sudanese frontier. It is good land capable of growing cotton, dura (sorghum) and sesame without irrigation. The Falashas saw their opportunity and staked out a claim to an initial 5,500 acres (2,200 hectares).

In the true pioneering spirit, reminiscent of the Chalutzim of Israel, a party of young Falashas left their homes in the mountain region near Gondar and began the arduous task of clearing the bush around the new town of Abderafi. The physical conditions in this region are extremely difficult and the climate in the torrid plains is very exacting.

AN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY

The pioneers were faced not only with physical problems but they also had to adapt themselves to a strange neighbourhood and agricultural conditions which were totally different from those to which they were used. From the primitive methods of tilling the soil with wooden ploughs and oxen, they had to adjust themselves to the use of tractors and modern mechanical means. Their initial capital for the purchase of agricultural machinery came from a few American well-wishers, but a far greater injection of capital is required.

There can be no doubt of the enthusiasm and courage of the settlers, but further capital is urgently needed if the scheme is to be properly developed. It has been proved that agricultural enterprises can be successfully carried out in this area. Assistance in building the infrastructure is being provided by the World Bank and the United Nations agencies under the supervision of the Ethiopian Government. If they can firmly establish themselves on this site, the Falashas will be able to create a self-supporting economy which will enable them to raise their standard of living and make themselves independent of the landlords who dominate their existence in the mountain villages. Another advantage is that they will be able to set up their own schools and medical clinics and in this way avoid the attentions of the missionaries who are unlikely to follow them into the plains.

The overall picture of the Falasha community is of an ancient branch of the Jewish people who have maintained themselves with courage and dignity for 2,000 years, but who now, owing to the changed conditions of today, are obliged to look to world Jewry to assist them in their endeavour to continue their existence. It is a challenge which we dare not leave unanswered●

A TASTE OF GAN EDEN

by GASTRONOME

Work is not natural to Man. In ancient times we lived in the bliss of paradise, in the Garden of Eden,¹ where we neither had to build houses nor make clothes; neither grow food, nor cook, nor go to school. Then Adam met his Eve.

What did Adam tell Eve when he first met her?

—"Madam, I am Adam."

Next morning, Eve (Hawwa) told her husband, "Darling, I have nothing to wear", which became the refrain of the daughters of Hawwa ever since.

After Adam ate the apple of the Tree of Knowledge and knew good and evil, we fell from God's grace, were driven out of the Garden and were cursed with work. "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the earth." (Gen. 3:19.) What Hawwa did to us made History: a history of woes and suffering (for happiness is never recorded). We had to hunt, build; till, sow, reap and conquer empires; and what savages we have been.

"And Adam knew Hawwa his wife." Some associate the Fall with our evolutionary transition to a sex-life; but we have to go very far back to the time when our predecessors managed without sex, when we were merely a one-cell amoeba. That was the time when we really could divide and multiply!

SIGNIFICANCE OF SABBATH

The Sabbath, which commemorates God's rest after creating the universe, has for mankind a more intimate significance, which was not disclosed by the prophets and is only briefly mentioned in the Talmud. THE SABBATH IS INTENDED TO GIVE US, ALBEIT ONCE EVERY SEVEN DAYS, A TASTE OF GAN EDEN AND OF THE MESSIANIC AGE WHICH IS THE PROMISED DESTINY OF MANKIND, an ideal which has been kept alive in Judaism.

Sunday and Friday were never intended as substitutes for the Jewish Sabbath. Christians celebrated Sunday as a day of prayers in memory of the Resurrection and for two centuries observed Saturday as the day of rest. It was only in 321 that Constantine made Sunday a day of rest, sacred as the Sun's day. (*The Sunday Question* by Kenneth de Greet.) The nomad Arabs could not afford a weekly day of rest and Friday was observed as a day of in-gathering (Jum'aa) in imitation of Jewish home-coming on that day to prepare for the Sabbath. (*Muhammad at Medina* by Montgomery Watt.) Thus the Jewish Sabbath remains unique and may one day be universally observed as a holy day for all mankind.

If you cease to tread the sabbath underfoot,
and keep my holy day free from your own affairs,
if you call the sabbath a day of joy
and the Lord's holy day a day to be honoured,
if you honour it by not plying your trade,
not seeking your own interest
or attending to your own affairs,
then you shall find your joy in the Lord,
and I will set you riding on the heights of the earth,
and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father;
the Lord himself has spoken it.

Isaiah, 58:13, 14

The Talmud advises that a man should always teach his son a clean and easy trade. One might ask, Who then will do the dirty work? The answer is: Nobody. Life can be arranged in such a way that

all work becomes easy and pleasant. The Sabbath rest, which was rejected by the ancient Gentile world (addicted to slavery and human exploitation) as a waste of time, demonstrated that it is not necessary to toil continuously and showed the way to leisure. Centuries of hard work are giving way to increasing leisure: now the five-day week and soon, we're told, we'll have to work but a few hours a week. Thus the Sabbath was not only the cessation from work but the forerunner of a better regime for mankind.

All preparations for the Sabbath were done the day before and a process of slow cooking was developed to provide a hot meal without any work done on Saturday.

There is an Arab saying, "In paradise they eat banya and rice", but the Jewish week-end menu was a little more sophisticated. It was almost identical in all households for many generations:

Friday lunch: Kubba Hamedh.

Friday dinner: Fried fish and chicken marag.

Saturday breakfast: Tbeet eggs.

Saturday lunch: Tbeet.

We give below a recipe for Tbeet which is cooked overnight together with the Tbeet eggs.

Tbeet (Tabyit)

1 fowl	2 cups rice
½ lb. tomatoes	1 onion.
Salt, pepper, cardimon and mixed spice	
2 tbsp. frying fat or oil	

Pluck, clean and singe the fowl. Retain the edible giblets, liver, heart, and gizzards and chop them finely with one tomato. Add half a cup of well washed rice and season with salt, pepper, ground cardimon and spices. Mix well, stuff the fowl and sew up the openings. Make the oil very hot, add the chopped onion and a little salt and pepper. When the onions are slightly browned, add the remaining tomatoes, one cup of water and cook till the fluid has evaporated and the chicken begins to brown. Brown it thoroughly on both sides and then add 3 cups of water. Boil for 15 minutes, remove the fowl and add 1½ cups of rice previously washed and soaked for 15 minutes, and one tablespoonful of salt. Cook till the water has evaporated, then put the fowl into the rice and leave on a very low fire (overnight) till the rice is dry and that part which is touching the bottom of the pan has become somewhat hard. Before serving add a little water to detach the rice which is sticking to the pan.

In London the best Tbeet is made by Mrs. V. L., Mrs. V. H., Mrs. A. K., Mrs. D. D. We were also pleasantly surprised lately by Mrs. A. R.'s cooking☺

1. It is possible that the first chapters of Genesis were written in East Africa (widely held as the cradle of the human race) and that Eden was at Aden "towards the East". Both words are the same in the parent Semitic language which was spoken by everyone.

Letters to the Editor

From Mr. Albert Hayim, Hong Kong

I found your magazine most interesting. I was very intrigued as to how you got the information concerning the late Mr. N. E. B. Ezra, Editor of *Israel's Messenger*, the paper of the Shanghai Zionist Association which was at one time affiliated to the English Zionist Federation. Mr. Ezra was a very well-known personality before he passed away over 35 years ago●

From Mr. David Kessler, London

I have read Mr. Dangoor's letter in your magazine with interest. In my view Mr. Dangoor takes a too limited view of the State of Iraq. The parts of the Assyrian Empire to which the Ten Tribes who were sent into exile from Samaria were settled, included the mountainous region of Kurdistan, much of which lies within the boundaries of Iraq.

It is true that some of the exiles who were settled in Babylonia by Nebuchadnezzar did not return to their native land, and it is more than likely that they mingled with those Jews who had remained over from the first exile. Confirmation for this view may be found in *The Exiled and the Redeemed* by Itzhak Ben-Zvi, the former President of Israel (page 60). Together with subsequent converts to Judaism (as mentioned in the Book of Esther, VIII/17) the exiles from the two dispersals formed a very large Jewish diaspora.

Mr. Dangoor is, I think, a little unfair to the victims of the first exile when he says that "the Israelites did not have a well-developed religious tradition and fell an easy prey to subsequent Christian and Moslem conversions". The tradition of descent from the Lost Ten Tribes which is held in common by many Jewish communities from Central Asia would not exist if those communities had succumbed to wholesale conversion●

[Comment from Mr. Dangoor: It is a well-established fact that the majority of the Babylonian Exiles remained in Babylon and that Ezra the Scribe based his reforms and teachings on the missions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the prophets of Judah. Thus the core of the dynamic Babylonian tradition embodied in the Talmud was Jewish and not Israelite and remained the case even if remnants of the Lost Ten Tribes and other elements joined the Community. In contrast, the religious scope of the Ten Tribes is embodied in the narrow and rigid traditions of the Samaritans.]

Comments and articles welcomed. The views of individual contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the journal.—Ed.

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BOOK REVIEW

by PERCY S. GOURGEY, M.B.E.

"THE GRANDEES"—The Story of America's Sephardic Elite

by Stephen Birmingham. 309 pp.

\$1.50 for First Dell (paperback) printing, April 1972

"The people on *The Mayflower* were mere ragtag and bobtail." This has been the attitude of America's Sephardi Jews—descendants of the original 23 aristocratic Jewish families who arrived in New York in 1654 from Recife, in Brazil, and who began a tradition of wealth, pride and exclusiveness that has continued to this very day. The Sephardim were never without their outstanding personalities such as Uriah Levy, who fought anti-Semitism in the U.S. Navy, Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo, a towering figure, beautiful Rebecca Gratz, who became the prototype of Rebecca in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Emma Lazarus, the poetess whose words, "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free", form the famous inscription on the base of the Statue of Liberty, Maude Nathan, a leading suffragette and her sister, Annie, who founded the famous Barnard College at the age of 22, Bernard Baruch, the multi-millionaire and adviser to eight U.S. presidents whose ancestors were Sephardim, etc. The snob social register of the leading Sephardi families included those whose ancestors went to the United States before 1840, thus excluding many famous American Jews!

Many of the Sephardim found themselves on both sides in America's War of Independence—supporters of the legendary George Washington, America's First President, and those of King George III, fiercely denouncing each other for being treacherous to the cause!

This is a fascinating story, extremely well told. And yet one wonders whether amidst all this scintillating, wealthy aristocracy who passionately shunned publicity of any kind, the voice of the Torah enjoining humility and knowledge of the Talmud, "an ocean of learning and scholarship" was ever heard. For after all it is in the Daily Sephardi Prayer Book, that the famous phrase, "*Talmud Torah Keneged Kolam*", i.e. "the study of the Law is superior to all (the mitsvoth)" is explained to mean that this is "because it combines theory with practice". Individual worth is of supreme importance●

IN THE COMING ISSUES:

- **The Prophet and the King**—who leads the nation—the prophet or the king? Scriptures show that the king, not the prophet, is the leader of the nation.
- **Reform or Perish**—The far-reaching reforms of the Babylonian Ezra the Scribe ensured the survival of Judaism and paved the way for the emergence of Christianity and Islam. Rigid sects—Sadducees, Karaites, Samaritans—could not survive.
- **The Frontiers of Israel**—where can be found the secure borders that Israel is seeking?
- **The Power of M.E. Oil**—Main cause of the present monetary crisis!