

The Middle East peace talks must not be confined to "Palestine" but should be broadened to cover all the inter-related problems of the region by examining the make-up of all the countries that are "at war" with Israel.

The SCRIBE

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WISHING ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY PURIM

Churchill and a Middle East Confederation

Winston Churchill, according to his official biographer, Dr Martin Gilbert, was an unwavering supporter of Zionism, and maintained that the Jews were in Palestine of right and not on sufferance. He envisaged the creation of a Jewish State "by the banks of the Jordan".

When, as Colonial Secretary, at the Cairo Conference of 1921, he gave Transjordan to the Arabs, he intended that the rest of Palestine – the whole region between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean, the 'Greater Israel' of today, should remain open for Jewish settlement. In 1942, he warned a personal friend "against drifting into the usual anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic channel which it is customary for British officers to follow".

In 1945, during a meeting in Egypt, Churchill tried to involve King Ibn Saud in setting up a Middle East "Federation of Independent States", in which an independent Jewish State would form an integral part. Only his defeat in the General Election five months later prevented him from setting up a Middle East peace conference, and presiding over it, with a view to establishing such a Federation. Churchill was also in favour of establishing a Kurdish National Home in northern Iraq.

Churchill was Minister of Munitions in 1917 when Balfour made his Declaration. As one observer has pointed out, that "statement" was not made to satisfy Jewish aspirations, but rather to serve British objectives during the first world war. The purpose of the Declaration was to obtain the co-operation of world Jewry to achieve three objects:-

- 1) to encourage the new Soviet government, which included many Jews, not to withdraw from the war against Germany;
- 2) to encourage the USA to enter the war against Germany;
- 3) to encourage world Jewry to support the British desire to be given the Palestine mandate by the League of Nations.

As such, The Balfour Declaration must not be celebrated as Israel's charter.

The evidence is the fact that the British administrations in Palestine did all in their power to prevent Palestine becoming a Jewish National Home. Many tens of thousands of Jews were massacred in Russia from 1919 to 1923, and every obstruction was put in their way from entering the "Jewish National Home" of the Balfour Declaration.

A realistic summary of the Balfour Declaration, as applied by the British

Government, would be – "Great Britain to do all in its power to set up an Arab Home (Transjordan) and to do all in its power to prevent the setting up of a Jewish National Home". This policy and attitude of British administrations to Jewish Palestine in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's never changed during a period of profound Jewish persecution. In fact, between 1917 and 1948, the Arab population of Palestine rose more than the Jewish population.

In view of the unending problems in the region it would be appropriate to broaden the Middle East peace process and revive Churchill's idea of a Middle East Federation of Independent States. ● N.E.D.

Jews from Arab countries

On his official visit to London last December, Prime Minister Rabin was the guest of honour at a JIA Dinner attended by 1,100 supporters, at which I had the opportunity to present him with the January issue of *The Scribe*, rushed especially for the occasion.

I explained to Mr Rabin that as the Palestinian diaspora was promised a place in the peace negotiations, Jews from Arab countries not living in Israel should also be allowed to attend. He assured me that the matter was being seriously discussed by the Cabinet.

However, Foreign Minister Peres made a statement in the New Year that "you cannot negotiate with the diaspora" whether Palestinian or Jewish. This throws the whole issue back into the melting pot. It appears that Israel prefers to debar the Palestinian diaspora than to allow Jews from Arab countries to attend. Is it possible that the Israel government is more afraid of our diaspora than of the Palestinian diaspora?

The position should be crystal clear: If the conference will touch on the rights of Jews who were driven out of the Arab countries and who now live outside Israel, then these expatriates have to have their own voice heard at the talks. If, on the other hand, the conference will not touch on these rights, then this matter must be clarified as soon as possible so that these Jewish refugees now dispersed all over the world can press their claims on their countries of origin and reach an adequate settlement on the lines of the German reparations. ● N.E.D.

I acknowledge with thanks receipt of your "voluntary and generous contribution" of *The Scribe*. It's so interesting that I pass it to all the family and friends. It reminds us of our origin. I am sure I'll be addicted to it and hope to continue doing so for many years to come. ●

Tel Aviv

Dorice and Isaac Fattal

20 years on

still

Israel is our business

Some Israelis are touchy about non-Israeli Jews taking an active interest in Israeli politics and they say that with the establishment of the State of Israel the Galuth has come to an end and Jews outside live in voluntary *tefutzoth*, or dispersions. But in fact two conditions have to be fulfilled in Israel before we can say that the Galuth has come to an end:

First, that Israel shall live in security, within secure borders. (Jeremiah 23:6)

Second, that Israel becomes self-supporting.

Until then, Israel is the concern of the Diaspora which must be responsible to defend it, support it, and also to populate it.

Until then, Israel is everybody's business.

From *The Scribe* No. 9 Jan-Feb 1973 ●

From *Chronicles of the Past*

Mosque of Omar was 'temporary'

JERUSALEM, 15 Kislev, 640 CE – After a 3½-hour discussion between a Jewish delegation and representatives of the Moslem government last night, the Moslems gave assurances that the mosque under construction on the Temple Mount is only in the way of a temporary structure.

The delegation had requested the interview after construction on the mosque had begun despite explicit promises by the authorities that, because of the Jews' helpfulness in the uncovering of the Foundation Stone, the holiness of the spot on which once stood the Temple would be carefully safeguarded. ●

Thank you for your January issue which I received the other day. I found the publication most interesting and I enjoyed the lead story on the Jews of Iran, especially since I am originally from Persia.

I must also add my special thanks for the mention you made of our Orphanage. We are working hard and meeting with success in our efforts to better the lives of a number of deserving boys, and your support of this work is greatly appreciated.

As your magazine was enjoyed by all our office staff who saw it, I hope that you can continue to keep us on your mailing list.

I wish you great success in this important work. ●

Tiferet Shlomo Orphanage
Jerusalem

I. Elishahoff
Director

The Jews of Iran

by Israel Ambassador Dr Moshe Yegar

Part II

Even during the reign of Nasr-ed Din Shah (1848-96), who realised the necessity for thorough reform of the whole Persian administration and social structure, the persecution of Jews continued, coupled with legal and social discrimination of the severest nature, including the enforcement of a special Jewish badge and Jewish headgear. The entire community was held responsible for crimes and misdemeanours committed by individual members. The oath of a Jew was not accepted in a court of justice, and a Jew who converted to Islam could claim to be the sole inheritor of family property, to the exclusion of all other relatives.



Nasr-ed Din, bedecked with rows of rubies and carrying a bejewelled sword. (Shah 1848-1896)

But there was some respite. This came with the reforms that took place in the neighbouring Ottoman Empire and as a result of the Shah's visits to Europe. The intervention of leading European Jews also helped to convince the Shah to introduce some reforms. These, however, had a limited effect in the provinces because of the weakness of the central government and the hostile attitude of the general population and the Shi'a clergy.

Reports of the plight of Persian Jews in general and the forced conversion of Mesh'hed in particular, reached Europe and greatly shocked the Jewish communities there. They stirred the Board of Deputies of British Jewry and Sir Moses Montefiore, and later the Anglo-Jewish Association under Gustav Rothschild and the Alliance Israélite Universelle under Adolphe Cremieux to act, urging the intervention of the British and French ministers in Teheran. In addition to their political plight, the Jews of Persia experienced new hardships with the outbreak of a famine in 1871, which the leaders of European Jewry tried to alleviate through a relief fund.

The Jewish leaders in Paris and London were about to send a Jewish delegation to Persia, when news reached them in 1873 that Nasr-ed Din Shah, anxious to appear as a tolerant and progressive monarch, had embarked on a visit to Europe. Seizing the

opportunity, the leaders of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Anglo-Jewish Association launched an effort to impress the Shah in order to improve the conditions of the Jewish community in Persia.

In every European capital through which the Shah planned to travel, committees of local Jewish leaders were organised to present him with petitions calling for the improvement of the Persian Jews' situation. This took place in Berlin, in Amsterdam, in Brussels, in London, in Paris, in Vienna and in Constantinople. In London the Shah had a meeting with Benjamin Disraeli and also received Sir Moses Montefiore privately in Buckingham Palace. In all the petitions the spirit of Cyrus the Great was recalled and the grievances of the Jews in Persia listed. The highlight of these actions was a meeting in Paris on July 12, 1873, between the Shah and Adolphe Cremieux and his associates. Apparently impressed, the Shah promised to protect his Jewish subjects, to establish a special court of justice for the Jews, and above all to help in the establishment of Jewish schools in Persia.

But despite all the well-meaning promises of the Shah, the central government in Persia failed to prevent new outbreaks of hostilities against the Jews. There was, therefore, reason to remind Nasr-ed Din Shah of his previous promises and assurances. On July 4, 1889, a deputation of British Jewry, led by Sir Albert Sassoon, again met with the Shah in Buckingham Palace¹.

The Persian Jews were further assisted in their struggle for survival by the intervention of the U.S. diplomatic representative in the country. Reference to Persian Jews appeared in U.S. diplomatic correspondence in 1918, in connection with the relief activities of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee ("Joint"). The State Department, as well as U.S. diplomatic representatives abroad, helped "Joint" in distributing funds, food and other necessities to the starving Jews everywhere. This intervention also continued after World War I (from 1921 to 1924), through the U.S. representative in Persia, namely the minister plenipotentiary, Joseph Saul Kornfeld, a former Reform rabbi.

The dissolution of the Persian parliament; the deposition of Shah Muhammad Ali by the National Assembly; the reconvening of a second parliament in 1909 by Ahmed Shah (1909-25); the great financial crisis; the steady changes in the cabinet and the government; and the encroachment of Russia in the north and Great Britain in the south - all contributed to a state of unrest and danger, so that at the outbreak of World War I, Persia stood at the very brink of dissolution. Jews suffered accordingly.

In short it can be said that the history of the Jewish community in Persia during the 16th-19th centuries is of an almost continuous chain of forced conversions, blood-

libels, assassinations and various other acts of persecution. A real change came only in 1925 with the establishment of the Pahlevi dynasty, which tried to initiate the reforms of Atatürk of Turkey. Jews received equal rights with the Muslim majority and were relieved of the *jizya* payment.

Social Conditions

(16th-19th centuries)

The number of Jews in Iran in 1660 was estimated at 30-35,000.

From the middle of the 19th century onwards their numbers started to increase.



Sir Albert Abdullah Sassoon

This came as a result of the urbanisation process and some improvement in the economic situation. In 1968 their number was estimated at 80,000 out of a total population of 25 million.

The Jews lived in neighbourhoods of their own, both as a result of the Shi'a concept of their "impurity" and because they themselves preferred to live together in seclusion in order to maintain their communal way of life and for a feeling of relative security. Until the middle of the 19th century most Persian Jews suffered from extreme poverty.

After the ascent of the Safawid dynasty, the central leadership which existed, for example, under the Abbasids, was cancelled. Every community was organised on a local basis and under its locally chosen *Nasi* (magistrate) and *Dayan* (Judge). The *Nasi* was either elected by his own community or sometimes appointed by the authorities. He was responsible for the payments of the *Jizya*. If he failed - he was punished. In some places he had a committee of local dignitaries to assist him. Parallel to this administrative set-up, there was the religious leadership - a *Dayan*, who in small places fulfilled other functions as well - *Shohet* (Kosher slaughterer), *Mohel* (performer of circumcisions), *Hazzan* (prayer leader), etc. He was appointed to this position because of his religious scholarship or his birthright. Quite often sons succeeded their fathers. There were *Day-*

Jewish Doctors in Iraq in modern times

From "The Social and Cultural Development of Iraqi Jews since 1830"
by Yosef Meir, Jerusalem, and from The Iraq Directory of 1936.

Yishaq Ezra Abulnil
Naji Abraham
Ezra Abraham
Samuel Adato
Salim Aghababa
Morris Eliahu Aghasi
Yacub Azachi
Salman Atrachchi
Heskel Isaac
Ishaq Effendi Aljarrah
Aharon Elias
Albert Shaul Elias
Aziza Elias
Shalom Albert Elias
Heskel Eliahu
Anwar Elkateb
Heskel Yosef Elkateb
Shafiq Lekweiti
Eva Abraham Al-Ani
Anwar Eliahu Al-Ani
Naim Al-Ani
Nessim Al Udheimi
Aflatun Yacub
Heskel Ephraim
Abdulla Yacub Arwilli
Yishaq Ephraim
Nadhem Shemtob Bali
Charles Bahari
Heskel Bakhsh
Naim Bakhsh
Sasson Belbul
Meir Ben-Shaul
Shlomo Heskel Basri
Albert Shaul Basri
Amira Mussa Nessim
Hayim Baqshi
Nadhem Meir Barukh
Anwar Gabbay
Dawid Reuben Gabbay
Yosef Gabbay
Heskel Gabbay
Yacub Heskel Gabbay
Menashe Gabbay
Flora Gabbay
Violet Jiji

Reuben Jiji
Albert Selman Gurji
Anwar Gurji
Aziz Gurji
Heskel Dabby
Yosef Ezra Dawid
Meir Shlomo Dawid
Hayim Doctori
Naim Dallal
Yosef Meir Daniel
Violet Haron Darwish
Salman Darwish
Yacub Ezra Wadhan
Samia Dawid Zebaida
Salman Zakarria
Moshe Zlouf
Dawid Salim Zalata
Nadhem Zilkha
Victor Zaarur
Heskel Haddad
Ezra Khezam
Aharon Hayya
Yosef Yishaq Hayya
Heskel Hai
Salim Hayim
Albert Hakim
Anwar Hanania
Aharon Meir Khedhour
Dawid Khedhour
Shmuel Khedhour
- Hardoon
- Khermush
Naim Khetaina
Yishaq Khetaina
Violet Tweg
Nessim Yosef Tweg
Naji Tahhan
Sasson Yadu
Moshe Heskel
Yosef Mirza Yacub
Morris Yishaq
Simha Yishaq
Yacub Cohen
Ezra Cohen
Salim Kubi

Shafiq Kweiti
Salman Menashe Kehela
Heskel Lewi
Menashe Lewi
Dawid Meir
Nadhem Meir
Naim Meir
Sadeq Meir
Edward Mahlab
Naji Mukhtar
Salman Mikhael
Simha Mikha
Najia Mukammel (Dallal)
Jamil Menashe
Sion Menashe
Asaad Muallem
Heskel Muallem
Dawid Muallem Nessim
Naim Muallem
Abdul Nabi Muallem
Nurallah Mussa
Huda Musaffi
Solomon Musaffi
Albert Masri
Latifa Murad (Lewi)
Naji Murad
Nuri Murad
Fuad Yacub Murad
Hayim Moshe
Salman Mashaal
Kamel Heskel Naji
Mansur Nurallah
Mussa Nurallah
Victor Nahom
Heyawi Nisan
Ezra Nisan
Albert Nessim
Dawid Nessim
Khedhour Nessim
Yacub Nessim
Nessim Nessim
Fuad Nessim
Emil Somekh
Abraham Sopher
Edward Abraham Sopher

Yacub Sopher
Salim Sopher
Naim Sehayeq
Morris Seltoun
Naim Seltoun
Ezra Seltoun
Nuri Salim
Munir Salman
Marcelle Salman
Ihsan Dawid Samra
Dawid Farid Samra
Heskel Samra
Salman Ihsan Samra
Saida Gurji
Heskel (Hazim) Abed
Fadhel Murad Abdul Nabi
Albert Ezra
Emil Hai Ezra
Yishaq Ezra
Samir Salman Attar
Abraham Aqri
Samira Naji Paniri
Yishaq Peress
Yosef Sayegh
Jamil Saleh
Salim Sadqa
Violet Surani
Isaac Surani
Morris Yosef Surani
Sion Surani
Naji Chitayat
Elias Semah
Rauf Semah
Meir Qojaman
Dawid Gahtan
Yosef Katan
Canti Katan
Ezra Korine
Albertine Reuben
Naji Reuben
Albert Rabi
Gourji M Raby
Naji Rabi
Naim Rabi
Joseph Rosenfeld

Gurji Raymond
Jack Abudi Shabi
Josephine Abudi Shabi
Fahima Shabi
Nadhem Shahin
Abraham Elia Shaul
Akram Shaul
Yishaq Shebbath
- Shahrabani
Albert Shoheit
Alfred Gurji Shina
Dawid Gurji Shina
Yosef Shina
Simha Shina
Salim Dawid Shakarchi
Edward Shalom
Eliahu Shalom
Barukh Shalom
Yishaq Shalom
Kamal Ezzuri Shamash
Felix Shaul Shamash
Abraham Shemtob
Zamir Jamil Shemtob
Aharon Shamia
Reuben Shamia
Nadhem Shashoua
Naim Shashoua
Meir Sasson
Naim Sasson
Aharon Tawfiq
Yacub Terzi
Naji Terzi
Ezra Terzi
Max Makowski
Eric Raubitcheck
Marie Rabinovitch
Hubert Saustman
Khedhour Darzi
Dhafer Eliahu
Khaldia Eliahu
Violet Tweg
Ihsan Shahrabani
Albertine Abraham Menashe
Meir Yacub Muallem Nessim
Yosef Salman Rahamim Attar
Moshe Menashe Ezra Rehaima

In 1936, 20% of all doctors and 33% of all pharmacists in Iraq were Jews●



18 December 1928 – Faculty and students of the Royal College of Medicine, Baghdad. Photo kindly supplied by Mrs Aida Hakim

Left to right, front row: Shlomo Basri, Abdul Majid Shahraballi, Albert Elias, Ali Albir.
Second row: Gourji M. Raby, Salman Fayiq, Mr. A. Brotman, Mr Raymond, Dean (Sir) Harry C. Sinderson (Pasha), Mr Norman, Mr Cortril, Habib Kallou (Secretary), Jack Shabi.
Third row: Ibrahim (clerk), Mudhaffar al-Zahawi, Yacub Azachi, son of Mirza Yacub, Shawkat Mahmud, Rauf Semah, Hamid Shlash, Sion Menashi, Beithun Rassam, Ihsan al-Qaimaqchi, Fuad Murad al-Sheikh, Anwar Najib.
Fourth row: Yusef Shina, Mahmud Abdul Khaliq, Albert Nessim, Jamal Rashid, Abdul Amir Allawi, -, Hashim Allawi, Kamal Rashid, Rassam, Hasan al-Hasani, Naim Iny.
Fifth row: Khalil Ismail, Albert Hakim, Mahmud Nasser, Ahmed al-suhail, Qasim al-Bazergan, Halat, Yusef Daniel, Mohammed Hasan Salman, Abdul Rahman Qattan. The college was founded in 1927 and a third of its students were Jews.

Jewish Medicine in Iraq

Doctor Agha Elazar Levy arrived in Baghdad in 1870 from Persia and settled among his Jewish brethren. He made a living from all kinds of manual work, and had special hours for treating patients at his house and preparing their medicines – all without charge. The rich patients used to send him gifts and presents which he would use for the benefit of his patients. His son opened a community centre in the Jewish quarter, known as Club Shalom Agha Elazar.

Agha Elazar was a meek and humble person. One Saturday he returned from synagogue to find that all his Persian carpets had been stolen from his house. But he did not bother to report the theft. The next day the police came with the thieves and the carpets. Agha Elazar sent them away, saying, "These men did not steal the carpets. I gave them the goods to sell and feed their families". A few days later the thieves returned with the carpets, kissed his hands and apologised for what they had done. They also brought with them precious presents which he refused to accept, thinking that these too might be stolen property!

Aharon Agha Elazar Levy studied medicine through his father and specialised as a dentist.

Yehuda Agha Dahud studied medicine in Teberan and gained his experience with his father-in-law, Dr Agha Elazar.

Mirza Yacub

He was the last physician to come from Persia, achieved an important position in the country and had many friends and admirers. But since he had no diploma or authority to practice medicine, he employed Dr Nurallah Mussa. Both used to examine the patient. Dr Mirza gave his diagnosis and Dr Nurallah wrote the prescription. This went on for seven years until Dr Nurallah decided to work on his own. Mirza remained jobless until his son Aflatun finished his studies in Paris, and joined him in his profession. He treated poor patients free of charge and faithfully.

Ishaq Effendi (Al-Jarrah)

He was born in Constantinople in 1880. He was a certified male nurse who studied surgery. On coming to Baghdad on his military service, he befriended Abudi Shemtob, whose sister he later married. He was the first surgeon who treated wounds and performed surgery. He worked at the Meir Eliahu Hospital and made a good name for himself!●

Our mutual friend, Mr Morris Khalastchi was kind enough to hand me a copy of your January issue of *The Scribe*, in which you listed the names of the Jewish engineers who practised their profession in Iraq in the 20th century.

May I suggest that you add to the list the name of my brother Joe Menashi Shahin, who graduated from the American University in Istanbul, along with Salim Zebli and Abraham Shakarchi, and served for many years as the Head of the Engineering Department in the city of Diwanniya during the 1940s.

We receive regularly *The Scribe* in Montreal and we find it a source of joy and pride to all of us!●

Montreal, Canada

Albert Shahin

Why not a second Jewish state?

by Moshe Kahtan

At the beginning of December 1992, an Islamic conference took place in Riyadh in which no less than fifty Islamic countries participated. Of these, twenty-two were Arab. If a similar but Christian conference were to be convened, it could muster no less than seventy delegations making their way to the conference centre. A conference of Jewish states would only find a lonely delegate representing the one and only State of Israel.

Since after the 1967 Six Day War when it was discovered that it was fashionable to claim upon Israel the setting up of a second Arab state to share what was previously the western part of a Palestine already partitioned, people seem to forget that the East Bank of the River Jordan and which covered nearly three-quarters of the land known as Palestine, was freely, though illegally, given away to accommodate a throneless Arab prince. The idea which is now being promoted is that the inhabitants of that area have lost any connection with their origin, culture and kinship and suddenly became a different nationality under the "Jordanian" banner. Therefore, the need still remains for a "Palestinian" state to fulfil the aspirations of those currently residing west of the river and who, in the majority of cases, are the Arab refugees of 1948, who were rejected by their Arab brethren when they were under their occupation. If the argument goes that these particular refugees require a state of their own, then by the same token, the other refugees, the Jews expelled from Arab countries have also a valid claim for statehood. So why not talk about a second Jewish state in Judea, Samaria and Gaza?

At least, from Israel's point of view, it will not be hostile with evil intentions. The ratio of Arab to Jewish states will thus drop from a staggering 22 to 1 to a still very respectable 11 to 1; and those Jewish refugees whom the world has forgotten because they are no longer physically on their lands in Arab countries could then consider setting off their territorial claims against areas of land which were allocated to them anyway after World War I by the victorious allies in a similar spirit to the one applied in the distribution of the rest of the Middle East to the Arabs. The Arab refugees can then be settled on these Jewish lands with some form of mutual compensation to be agreed upon, taking account of the hardships suffered by the two sides and those bearing the responsibility participating in shouldering the burden.

In this way, this ugly and long-lasting tragedy can be finally laid to rest making the best of a bad situation. History cannot be reversed and what has happened cannot be undone, but after such a settlement, at least one can look forward to a new beginning: an era of peace which will hopefully lead to new horizons of co-operation between the nations of the region. Even the British Foreign Office will derive the benefit of a clearer conscience at the realisation of their undoubted objective of bringing peace. Moreover, it will no longer be necessary for them to maintain an in-house Camel Corps devoted to deny the fact that they carved up the East Bank of Palestine on a hot summer day, and created the Kingdom of Trans-Jordan. We can then all call it quits and get on with our lives!●

"Palestinians" and Bosnia

by Dr Manfred R. Lehmann

In 1386 Turkey invaded Bosnia. In line with the tenets of Islam, the entire population was forced into conversion. But from 1691 Turkey lost one Balkan area after another, until in 1878 Turkey lost Bosnia to Austria.

The result was a stream of Moslem refugees pouring out of Bosnia looking for haven in the Ottoman Empire, because – just as today – the Christian Serbs who had been suppressed brutally by the Moslems were out to take bloody vengeance on the Moslem Bosnians in an effort to settle very old accounts.

In 1878, an Ottoman law granted to the Moslem refugees from Bosnia lands in Palestine, which was sparsely populated. In the Carmel region, in the Galilee, in the Plain of Sharon and in Caesarea, lands were distributed to the Moslem refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The refugees were further attracted by granting them a 12-year exemption from taxes and military service.

This colonisation policy brought in Moslem refugees from Georgia, the Crimea and the Caucasus, called Circassians and Turkmenians – settling in Abu Gosh, near Jerusalem, and in the Golan Heights. About 18,000 Egyptian *fellahs* immigrated in the 19th century to Jaffa, Gaza and

Jericho. Algerian refugees, running away from the French, were settled in the Galilee.

The English-Jewish traveller, L. Oliphant, described the new arrivals in 1885: "The curious spectacle is presented of a Slav population migrating to Palestine in order to be under a Moslem government". Thus the oft-repeated Arab claim that the "Palestinians" are descended from the ancient Canaanites is just a lie.

Now that Bosnia is independent again, it should invite the Palestinian refugees to return to their motherland!

Hitler's friends – the Husseinis

During World War II, the most vicious hater of the Jews was the infamous ex-mufti of Jerusalem, Amin Hussein, whose kinsmen today are Feisal Hussaini and Yasir Arafat Hussein.

Blue-eyed Amin Hussein was probably also of Slav origin. Among his many pro-Nazi steps was to form in Bosnia, after meeting with Eichmann, Himmler and Hitler, an SS Legion of Bosnian Moslems called "Legion Handjar". Nineteen thousand such Bosnians were trained in France, and were used mainly to commit atrocities against the Jews of Yugoslavia, the area which was under Nazi Kurt Waldheim's control!●

I would like to have some information concerning my great grandfather, Agha Elazar Levy (Junior), also named Zaccaria Laurence, and his brother, Shimon Levy, also named George Laurence.

I am the son of Naim Shamash, son of Hanina, daughter of Habiba, daughter of Salman, son of Agha Elazar Levy (Junior), who left seven sons and one daughter.

Amsterdam, Holland D Shamash

Scribe: On 5 May 1957 the *New York Times* published the following report:

Two hundred Israeli Jews are now locked in a bitter legal struggle with the Bank of England, and other British banks over a fabulous \$392,000,000 inheritance.

The affair began in Baghdad in 1816, when two brothers Elazar and Shimon Levy, decided to expand their junk-dealing business by opening a branch in neighbouring Persia. One day, while sorting out the junk they bought in a small Persian city, they came upon an old cracked earthenware kettle. When it was dropped accidentally, thousands of precious gems spilled out on the dirty floor.

Fearing the authorities would confiscate the jewels, they decided to take the jewels to Britain, which they did, selling them in London and investing the money in stocks and shares and in banks. They became millionaires and returned to Baghdad.

There was a flurry of excitement in the Press when Princess Anne, divorced daughter of Queen Elizabeth, was married to Tim Laurence last December. Commander Laurence is a descendant of Zaccaria Laurence who changed his name from Zaccaria Levy, indicating a possible link with the Levy brothers of the above story.

Zaccaria Levy was married to Simcha Anna, daughter of Moses Haim Montefiore, at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in London on 10 October 1787. The witnesses were Mordecai Shalom and Daniel Hakham Cohen de Azevedo.

We understand that Ruth Montefiore received a reply last January from the Bank of England that there was a distribution in 1856 and the case would not be reopened unless it can be shown that other heirs were involved.

We intend to publish a comprehensive family tree of the Elazar Levy descendants in a future issue.

Claims of Jews from Arab Countries

According to the *Jerusalem Post*, Mr Shlomo Toussia-Cohen, Chairman of WOJAC (World Organisation of Jews from Arab Countries) is inviting Jews who left Arab countries to register the property they left behind. We wrote to WOJAC as follows to find out what is behind that surprise announcement:-

- 1) Are you suggesting that those who register might get back all or some of their claims?
- 2) If so, why can't the Israeli government pay something on account, since it holds Palestinian assets?
- 3) The Israeli government has said all along that it will not pay Jewish claims because it spent billions on settling Jews from Arab lands.
- 4) If you know this is the case, you should in all honesty say so, and not mislead people and give them false hopes, adding insult to injury.
- 5) Why is this exercise being done 43 years after the mass aliyah, from Iraq, when most immigrants have died or have forgotten what they had?
- 6) Jews from Arab lands have the right to claim a share of the Middle East and not just the chattels they left behind.
- 7) Some cynics say that WOJAC was formed to let Israel appropriate Jewish property in a set-off against Palestinian claims.
- 8) If the miserable claims you collect in 1950 values be placed on the agenda of the Middle East peace talks, it will only weaken our case.

Two months on there is still no reply from Mr Cohen.

It's interesting to learn the wanderings of Persian Jews to Iraq. It makes things clearer why so many Iraqi educated Jews here in Israel look somewhat Persian.

Your *Scribe* is a most interesting window to a noble, active and dynamic tribe of our people.

Thanks a lot, and expecting more interesting reading hours of whatever you publish.

Givatayim, Israel

Sarah Collins

The Scribe is nostalgic, sentimental and informative. I want you to know that I keep a binder with your issues - because one day it will be an encyclopaedia of our history.

Scarsdale, N.Y.

Alfred Shasha

I read with much interest (as always) the article by Percy Gourgey entitled **Dr Weizmann and Sephardim** (*Scribe* January 1993). He referred to the pact that Dr Weizmann had with Emir Feisal in 1919. This pact indicated that if the Arabs gained independence in their territories, they would welcome Jewish and Zionist settlement and independence in Palestine.

Mr Gourgey then states: "To Israel's considerable disadvantage, Zionist leaders have ignored this pact and the contribution its implementation could have made to Arab-Jewish relations . . ."

No Sir! Zionist leaders were irrelevant, because in 1929 the following statement, which referred to his meeting with Weizmann, was circulated by Feisal (who was now King of Iraq). "His Majesty does not remember having written anything of that kind with his knowledge".

So much for pacts or agreements with Arabs. Israel's politicians and diaspora's Zionists cannot afford to suffer from such lapses of memory, a condition which appears to be endemic in the Arab world. For deporting Hamas leaders and activists, Israel is accused of carrying out "ethnic cleansing". Perhaps if Israel undertook "ethnic cleansing" to the same degree as exists in other Middle East states, there might be peace in the area.

Jews are forbidden not only to live in Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (their absence being a result of earlier "ethnic cleansing") but also to enter into these countries for any reason.

London NW2

Dr John Slome

Scribe: The Arabs did their ethnic cleansing before the BBC came into being; and they did it not by deportation but by forced conversions and massacres. In any peace process, Israel must take these facts into account and act accordingly. The fate of pockets of secret Jews still hiding in Arabia should also be investigated.

Early Baghdadian merchants in Manchester

by Lydia Collins

The following Baghdadians in Manchester had been naturalized before the outbreak of the First World War, so the aliens restrictions would not have applied to them. (The date of their naturalization precedes their name).

- 1886 **Ezekiel David Isaac** (1855-) son of David Isaac.
 1890 **Raphael Shemtob** (c.1858-) son of Joseph Shemtob and Simha.
 1891 **David Eliahou Somech** (1857-1937) son of Eliahou Somech and brother of Charles (below).
 1894 **Isaac J. Isaacs** (1857-1947) son of Yehouda Hakham Isaac and Toba Menahem, father of no. 6 and brother of no. 10. **The present writer descends from him.**
 1899 **Isaac Eskell David** (1863-1941) and Henry Eskell David (1871-) sons of Eskell David and Massouda, and brothers of Sir Sassoon Heskell.
 1902 **Charles Eliahou Somech** (c.1875- 1957) son of Eliahou Somech and brother of David (below).
 1903 **Joseph Jacob Ini** (c.1875-1950) son of Jacob Ini and Hannah, and brother of no. 1.
 1904 **Joseph Sasson Sykes** (1868-1960) son of Sassoon Ezra Sehayik and Simha Michel, and brother of Eskei Sykes (below).
 1904 **Joseph Smouha** (1878-1961) son of Ezekiel Jacob Smouha and Habiba Djedda'a.
 1905 **Benjamin Shamash** (1883-) son of Shelomo Shamash and Esther.

- 1906 **Joseph Ezra Shamash** (1883-) son of Ezra Moses Shamash and Musuda.
 1906 **Nessim Dangoor** (1869-1940) son of Eskell Dangoor and Rachel.
 1906 **Yehouda Heskell** (1874-1943) son of Ezekile Yehouda Hakham Isaac (no. 10) and Hannah Eliezer, and brother of no. 11.
 1907 **Eskel Sykes** (c.1883-) son of Sassoon Ezra Sehayik and Simha Michel, and brother of Joseph Sassoon Sykes (above).
 1911 **Menashi Mashal** (1872-1922) son of Heskell Nessim Mashal and Aziza, and brother of no. 14.
 1914 **Sulman Aboudy Dellal** (1880-1940) son of Aboudi Moses Dellal and Rahma.

Charles Isaac Sassoon, naturalized in 1882, had died in 1906; **Abdullah Elias** (brother of Meir Elias and uncle of no. 5), naturalized in 1886, had died in 1911; and **Solomon Garat (Selman Gareh)** (formerly headmaster of the Alliance Israelite School in Baghdad and brother-in-law of Charles and David Eliahou Somech) had died in 1901, but had not been naturalized.

Naim Dangoor is in the process of handing over to Mrs Lydia Collins (of the Yehuda Hakham Isaac family) all his genealogical records of the Baghdad Community.

Mrs Collins has shown remarkable interest in this field and devotes much of her spare time to reconciling and tabulating family trees.

Lydia and Morris Collins are worthy custodians of this ancestral material. Best wishes to Lydia's Labour of Love.

One-Way Ticket

Condensed from an article by Helen Kaye sent in by Estelle Hilaly

Baghdad-born Israeli actor Arye Elias recently did his one-man show, **One-Way Ticket**, for an audience of pensioners in Givatayim. They laughed, wept and applauded. "You've told our story", several of them told him after the show. "That's the way it was for us, too".

Which is strange, because **One-Way Ticket**, written and directed by poet/playwright Yossi Alfi, is about Iraq, and the audience was pure Ashkenazi. For an hour and 10 minutes, Elias fills the set with the people of Baghdad's Jewish quarter.

The show, which will be touring the country, tells his story, and that of most Iraqi Jews who fled to Israel, in a series of vignettes that start before the hero's birth and end with his arrival in Israel. "One-way ticket" is what was written on the back of the travel documents of Jews leaving Iraq.

We meet the cafe regulars, the Christian midwife, the schoolteacher. We learn how to ward off the evil eye and share with Baghdad's Jews the excitement of a visit from the pro-Jewish King Faisal I.

Then, as the years go by, the sometimes uneasy coexistence between Jew and Moslem begins to unravel and, as the Nazis roll closer to the Middle East, old hatreds flare up and the killings begin. Then come the years of the Zionist underground and, finally, the exodus to Israel.

Elias left for Israel in 1947 in the back of a produce truck, one step ahead of the secret police who mistakenly wanted to arrest him for his activities in the Zionist underground. "And it wasn't me", Elias says virtuously, "it was my sister. She was the one running things from home".

During the War of Independence, he served under Yigal Allon and got his demobilisation papers in 1951.

It was hard for an actor from Iraq to get work in those days. It still is. The Israeli theatre establishment opens its arms to all immigrant actors provided they come from Eastern Europe!

Elias's big break and the start of his lifelong commitment to volunteer work came more or less together. In 1966, he starred in a film called **The Boy Across the Street**, in which he played a down-at-heel father trying to raise a delinquent son. The film, with its four-handkerchief happy ending, was a monster hit. During those years, he also starred in a musical called **Our Father Abraham**, which made him even more well-known.

During the last few years, he has been working with prisoners at the Ma'asiyahu prison. In 1989, he presented **The Road to Harcourt Harbour**, which toured the country with an all-prisoner cast. Now he's doing **Nasser e-Din** with a cast of 45 prisoners.

Work with the prisoners is not to make actors out of them. "It's a way of passing the time and of teaching them to communicate".

Nasser e-Din is a musical he did with Haim Topol and Uri Zohar during the decade he was almost a household word. He was in a lot of movies, including

Snooker and **Kazablan**. He played the title role in **Zorba the Greek** and, in 1970, got the Jerusalem Prize for his Arabic production of **Nasser e-Din**, as well as other prizes.

He is not surprised that **One-Way Ticket** appealed to that audience in Givatayim because "of roots. It's about a place where you grow up and know everything and everybody. Then, all of a sudden, you're someplace else. The pressures, the strangeness are enormous. It's something all immigrants can identify with" ●

From *The Jerusalem Post*



Peter O'Toole and Arye Elias

The Messiah is coming

Half-paralysed 90-year-old Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, may be a holy man, a saint; but the King Messiah?

When Christians claim that Jesus was the Messiah they mean, of course, that he was the Jewish Messiah. In this respect he must come up to the qualifications that the Jewish Scriptures require of such a personality. Operation Judaism, which has been set up to combat Christian evangelism and disprove Christian claims, lists the criteria of the Messiah as they appear in various parts of the Bible:

- *The Messiah will bring an end to all wars.
- *Wild animals will become docile.
- *There will be no more illnesses.
- *No more sorrow.
- *No more death.
- *The exiles of Israel will all return.
- *These will include the Ten Lost Tribes.
- *The dead will rise from their graves.
- *The nations will be gathered for judgment.
- *No sin will be found among Israel.
- *The cities of Israel will be rebuilt with gems.
- *The Divine Presence will return to Israel.
- *Sacrifices will again be offered in the Temple.
- *All the nations will unite under one rule.
- *All mankind will worship the One God of Israel.

No more death?

If this is what we have to wait for, then forget it. It is not a convincing way of disproving messianic claims.

Traditional Jewish expectations are much more modest; and every day that passes brings the advent of the True Messiah one day nearer.

Until then, the Exilarch will continue to be historically "King of All Israel"! ●

In the Beginning

From *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* of Jerusalem.

Sir,

I was fascinated by Rabbi Maller's article in your Spring issue in which he highlights the importance of Adam in world history as the father of our civilisation. I myself have always held the historical Adam in great reverence, not only as the discoverer of wild wheat, as a result of which settled agricultural communities began, but also as a prophet who started Monotheism, the weekly day of rest, the belief in man's free will to choose between good and evil, and other tenets which form the basis of Judaism. Adam was subsequently honoured by naming him as the first man of creation. Islam regards him as a major prophet and he is reputed to be buried in Hejaz.

However, I am unable to find any corroboration for Rabbi Maller's statement that according to Rabbi Yosi ben-Halafta in his second century book, *Seder Olam Rabba*, Adam exited from the Garden of Eden 3760 BCE. Surely this is the date given for the creation of the universe.

London

Naim E. Dangoor

Rabbi Maller's response:

The word *olam* has many different meanings in Hebrew, just as the word "world" has in English. For example, when the Sayings of the Fathers states that the world is sustained by three things, the world referred to is the world of society, or civilisation. I believe that the statement "from the beginning of the world" refers to the world of human society, i.e. the social world, and specifically in terms of the calendar the historical world, i.e. the world we know about from written records.

It is true that some rabbis specifically include the creation of the natural world within the historical time-span of the Jewish calendar, but I believe this is in reaction to Aristotle and his claim that the world was not created, but is eternal. [To emphasise that the world was created] ●

Calver City, California Allen S. Maller

Jews of Iraqi origin have been widely dispersed all over the world; they acquired various citizenships and languages and intermarried with Jews of other origins. Still they maintained an invisible strong bond among themselves. From London to Sydney, from Israel to Los Angeles, they clamoured to receive *The Scribe*, which has become their mouthpiece, cementing that invisible bond. In their letters to *The Scribe* they display a dire thirst for news of their near and distant relatives, even mere acquaintances, and they nostalgically reminisce about the years they spent together in Babylonia, where they first opened their eyes upon the world.

Will that invisible bond survive in the next generation?

Publications like *The Scribe* of London and the Periodical of Congregation Bene Naharayim of New York, as well as the activities of the Heritage Center in Israel, can play an essential role in preserving and perpetuating our bond and heritage ●

New York

Salim Khabbaza

Religious Jews but Iraqis to the bone

The exodus of Babylon

by Sraya Shapiro

(condensed from an article in the *Jerusalem Post*)

Sent in by Roger Saoul

Jews felt pretty secure in Baghdad in the good old days, before it became the capital of the new-fangled State of Iraq. Hadn't they lived in the place for 1200 years before the Moslems came over?

Until the mass *aliya* in 1950/51, Jews made up more than a third of Baghdad's population, but their position in business and intellectual life made them prominent far beyond their count. They opened the first modern school in Baghdad in 1864.

The majority of the Jews were artisans or petty merchants, but the higher stratum of their society was influential in banking and international commerce. Most bank employees were Jews. Some reached high positions in politics, administration and the judiciary.

Deeply religious, the Jews nonetheless considered themselves Iraqis to the bone. But they were a vulnerable minority. The arrival of the former mufti of Jerusalem, Amin Husseini, and other exiles from Palestine heralded government restrictions on Jews. Judaism was equated with Zionism.

The bells of doom first sounded in 1941 when 180 Jews were killed in the *farhood*, and much property looted, following the defeat of the Nazi-sponsored Gaylani revolt, while the British Army stayed outside the city. Jewish youth reacted in a number of ways. Some embraced Zionism, others were lured to Communism, which promised equality for all, but most resolved to confirm their attachment to the state.

Nevertheless, after sending troops to fight Israel in 1948, the government started a Jew-baiting campaign at home. Jewish employees were dismissed, physicians were refused permission to practice, importers had their licences revoked, and additional taxes were imposed. Jews were barred from leaving Iraq and were held as hostages. Zionism, like Communism, was punishable by the death penalty.

Two events in particular shocked the Jewish community. One was the execution of Shafiq Ades. He was arrested in 1948 and charged with selling British surplus material to "the Zionists". His Moslem partners were not prosecuted, nor allowed to testify in his favour.

And there was the case of former Justice Reuben Battat, a legal luminary and former member of the Iraqi Parliament. He was accused of allowing the transfer to a Zionist fund of £140,000 of a legacy left by Gurji Shemtob in 1923. Battat was sentenced to three years in prison, but released after a year because of his advanced age.

Young men, fleeing for their lives, made for Iran, crossing the border illegally with the help of Zionist emissaries, paying exorbitant bribes to frontier guards. The practice reached such proportions that it endangered the stability of the regime, while mass sales of property shook the country's economy. Prompted by protests of Jewish communities, Britain and the U.S. interceded with the Iraqi authorities.

As was his style, Iraqi strongman Nuri Said gave way in February 1950 to the relatively moderate Tawfiq Sweidi, who had graduated from the Alliance Israélite school and was a personal friend of Heskell Shemtob, deputy head of the Jewish community. Advised by Mordechai Ben-Porat, a Zionist emissary, Shemtob arranged a deal, favoured by America and Israel and welcomed by Britain: Jews would be allowed to leave Iraq legally on condition of renouncing their citizenship and abandoning their property. It was to be the first leg of an exchange of populations and assets with Palestinian Arabs.

It was estimated by the Iraqi authorities that 10,000 to 15,000 would make use of this opportunity. In Israel, it was considered that up to 70,000 might come. In fact, 124,000 registered for the exodus. When operation "Ezra and Nehemiah" was completed, within 18 months, only 6000 Jews remained in Iraq. Their number dwindled ultimately to today's residual of 120.

Ben-Porat and Shlomo Hillel, both Iraqi-born, maintain that the love of Zion pushed the Jews of Iraq to go the moment the possibility presented itself. In fact, it was only when the authorities launched a regime of persecutions that the whole community packed up.

That the Promised Land was quite different from what the migrants could have imagined is another story. But, compared with what befell the Jews of Europe just 10 years earlier, the Jews of Iraq must consider themselves lucky.

The run-up to WWII

Revisionists are blaming Churchill for not negotiating peace with Hitler during the phony war of 1940/41. If Churchill had accepted Hitler's terms, Britain would have become not just Germany's satellite but Germany's football. And the British Empire would have been a stepping stone to Hitler's racist world domination.

In those days, Churchill, Stalin and Hitler were each wishing that the other two would start fighting. Hitler was bound to lose the war as his was the only wish that couldn't come true.

The real question to ask is why was Hitler allowed to re-arm Germany freely in contravention of the Versailles Treaty?

As a teenage student at London University in the early thirties, I could think of three answers to that perplexing question.

1. That Britain wanted Germany to destroy Bolshevism.
2. That Britain wanted to engage and have a decisive victory over Germany not achieved in the first world war.
3. That the aim was the destruction of European Jewry.

I still believe that even if the war wasn't started expressly for the last point, it was steered in such a way as to achieve it. The mufti of Palestine, as a double agent, played a primary role in that conspiracy.

N.E.D.

I am happy to hear so much praise for your *Scribe*. We all admire the wisdom you show in your writings. Kol Hakavod. Please keep up your good work.

Tel Aviv

H. E. Dangoor



Your January 1993 issue listed the names of Jewish engineers in the 20th Century in Iraq. My father, Yusef Mayer (Joseph E. Meer in the U.S.), was

a prominent architect

in Baghdad during the 40's and early 50's, when our family emigrated to the U.S. in 1953. He continued his successful career in the U.S. until retirement, and recently passed away at the age of 84. Shortly before his death, he and my mother, Helen, celebrated their golden (50th) wedding anniversary.

Enclosed is a contribution to *The Scribe* in his blessed memory. He enjoyed reading your fine publication, and my mother, who resides in Florida, and I, continue to look forward to each issue. Her favourite column is Alice Shashou's "Cookery Corner".

Fair Lawn,
New Jersey

Joseph L. Meer

You mention in your critique of Goring's Dictionary that 25 December was chosen by the Church to fit in with 1 January as the date of the circumcision of Jesus. I beg to disagree. 25 December was celebrated as the birth date of Mithras, a Persian deity. For some reason, the Roman legions flocked to the Mithraic religion, and the Church, being much more pragmatic than the Synagogue, adopted the festival as the birth date of Jesus. Actually the Gospels do not confirm that, when they state that the shepherds were sleeping on the hills near Jerusalem on that night. Anyone who knows that area, should know that anyone sleeping in the open on the Judean hills on 25 December is more likely to freeze than see stars and angels, or maybe that is why they saw stars and angels!

The Church adopted a great deal from pagan religions. Even the story of the crucifixion and resurrection was lifted, almost verbatim, from Sumerian mythology. The Sumerian goddess Inana was killed and hung from a pole for three days, after which she was resurrected and was seen by her followers in various Sumerian cities.

While the gods of the old Pantheons were discredited, Judaism was gaining many followers. The Jews, unfortunately for them, went further and locked themselves in a spiritual ghetto by "choosing" themselves into the position of "a nation of priests". Thus, they dropped the ball which was picked up by the Church and the Mosque with dire consequences for the Jews.

Montreal, Canada

Naim S. Mahlab

Scribe: You are right; the date for Christmas may have been taken from when the day starts getting longer, which was also the birth date of Mithras. However, whether by design or not, it is a fact that 1 January marks the circumcision of Jesus. The point we were making is that calendars and diaries used to mention this fact, but nowadays it is being generally suppressed.

Israel's options

With the disappearance of the Communist danger from the world, Islamic fundamentalism has replaced it as the rising threat to democratic societies. The *ayatollahs* share many of the characteristics of the former Kremlin rulers – fanaticism, the aggressive export of ideology and the belief that the end justifies the means.

In the short term, Israel can co-operate with liberal Moslem countries to combat the fundamentalist threat. In the medium term, Israel should continue to develop alliances with regional non-Arab countries and minorities, but in the long term there is no substitute for a Middle East confederation that would ensure the rights of all the nationalities of the region, reduce the crippling arms expenditure for regional conflicts and make the union strong enough to withstand threats from all directions. ●

I receive regularly and read with much interest and delight *The Scribe* journal, above all reading Naim Dangoor's most interesting and incisive articles.

Being of Babylonian background, I am very much interested in reading and understanding more and more about my people's history, their contribution to Judaism and Jewish culture. I shall therefore be much obliged if you will please give me a list of books dealing comprehensively with this subject.

New Jersey, USA

Jack H. Zeloof

Scribe: We recommend **The Jews of Iraq: 3000 Years of History and Culture** by Nissim Rejwan, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London. **Jewry of Iraq** by Abraham Twena, Published by Geoula Synagogue Committee, Ramla, Israel. Also several books in Hebrew by Dr Abraham Ben Jacob. ●

Creation Wonders

In an article in *Arthritis News*, the writer disparages the Genesis statement that God made man after his image. But the painful foot problems the writer is complaining about are not the result of a design defect by our Creator.

Those of us who have spent a lifetime endeavouring to unravel the complexity of the human body have long stood back in awe at how fearfully and wonderfully man is made.

To have articular cartilage with a coefficient of friction better than glass sliding on ice is amazing. To find it is lubricated by a system completely unknown to mechanical engineers (boosted lubrication) should not have startled us – but it did.

Likewise, we struggle in vain to devise a replacement shoulder joint in any way comparable in efficiency to the natural shoulder. Reversing the geometry of the joint has helped, but it is still woefully short of the excellence of the original design.

When Genesis says man was made in the image of God, this does not refer to his physical being, since God is a spirit. It refers to His creativity, His morality and His spirituality, for which there is abundant evidence. To ignore this is to doom ourselves to frustration and futility, and finally to court disaster. ●

University of Leeds Professor V. Wright

Dr. Giladi asserts in your April issue that while Ashkenazim in Israel are helped by the State, "Sephardi Jews are channelled to technical schools which do not help them to acquire a profession and do not qualify them to enter a university". As a matter of fact, on the very subject of qualifying for admittance to a university, I have often heard that it is virtually impossible for an Ashkenazi ex-serviceman to gain admittance to a preparatory course, given to ex-servicemen with the view of enabling them to enter a university. In this connection one might mention what is known as "integration in education". This is a scheme under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, jointly with the municipalities, whereby children from slum areas, inhabited almost entirely by Sephardim, are offered free transportation to and fro to enable them to attend daily the schools of their more fortunate counterparts, living in the richer quarters of the cities. No, there is no discrimination against Sephardim of the kind Dr. Giladi has in mind.

The causes of the unfortunate failure of Oriental pupils in the test, on the ground of which the study of the Haifa University was made, must be sought elsewhere. One ought to beware of generalisations, yet there are some traits that appear to stand out. For one thing, Ashkenazi parents, by and large, take a more lively interest in their children's academic progress. Too many parents of Oriental descent underestimate the importance of formal education.

One thing remains certain. Surrounded as we are, at odds with potential and actual enemies, we must safeguard, at all costs, the intellectual superiority of all Israelis, *Sephardim and Ashkenazim alike*. This lies at the root of our very existence. ●

Bat Yam

Shlomo Dagon

Prostate Microwave

Men who suffer from enlarged prostates now need not go under the knife. Dr. Richard Chen, a urologist in Mississauga, Ont., is using microwaves to shrink enlarged prostate glands, a condition that affects half of all men over 50. A tiny antenna in a catheter inserted in the prostate emits microwave energy that burns away enlarged cells.

Dr. Yisrael Levine and his team, of Beersheba's Soroka Hospital, have developed a natural remedy in the form of capsules made from the petals of the cactus flower of nothorn prickly pears grown in Israel. It is reported that this remedy results in a marked improvement of the prostate condition. ●

My name was not included in the list of Jewish engineers in Iraq, as also Adel Saleh Darwish and Haim Moshe Aqerib. ●

Tel Aviv

Salman David Sasson

Democracy in Iraq

In his book on Jewish Autonomy in Iraq, the late Abraham Twena gives an interesting insight into how democracy worked in Iraq in the twenties.

It was the parliamentary elections of 1928 in which Baghdad Jewry were allocated two seats, one of which had to go to the indispensable Minister of Finance, Sir

Sasson Heskell. The remaining seat was contested by Advocates Reuben Battat and Naim Zilkha. The Zionist Organisation supported Battat, who was a faithful Zionist like all his family, but the Government favoured Zilkha.

Parliamentary elections were held in two stages: The people elected secondary electors who then elected the members of parliament. Twena gives an eye-witness account of the election as he saw it: "Our Rahel Shahmoon School was chosen as a polling station. On election day, the election committee met in the school's synagogue away from the din of the pupils and I was asked by Schoolmaster Moise Mayer to be in charge. I was surprised to find that not a single Jew came to vote in this all-Jewish district. I asked the (Moslem) chairman if he wanted me to call some neighbours to come and vote. Smilingly, he replied "Why should you involve Jews in this dirty work? Wait and see how it will end".

"By and by, some tough Moslems came in with a menacing attitude, browbeating anyone who dared to approach the ballot box. They cast voting cards, went out and came back to vote, again and again, some ten times. The election committee began to count the 1,370 votes and a protocol was duly drawn up and signed. It all took two hours, after which sweets, coffee and soft drinks were served". Zilkha, as was required, won the day. ●

Letters to Naim Dangoor:

I sincerely congratulate you for your priceless publication of *The Scribe*. It is a piece of literature and history which fills something that was missing in the life of our community all over the world.

I am your age and I used to pray in the Great Synagogue (of the Exilarch) in Baghdad with my late father, Saleh Sehayik. I used to be one of the children who read the *Zemiroth* or the *Maftir* on Saturdays, and I was privileged to kiss the hands of your late grandfather (Chief Rabbi Hakham Ezra Dangoor, Dean of the Synagogue) and to receive the blessing from him. These are memories which I still cherish.

Our place in the Great Synagogue was "Hekhal Bet Sehayik" and the oldest member of our family that I remember was my great uncle Shlomo Sehayik. ●

Kew Garden Hills, Norman Naim Sehayik
N.Y.

During the past few years, I have had the opportunity to read some copies of *The Scribe* and was always impressed by its quality, scope, editorial, and all over dedication. It is an exciting journal. When I met my friend, Maurice Khalastchi, in Miami during the New Year holidays, he told me of your dedication and sacrifices in the cause of Babylonian Jewry.

Our community is indifferent when they are required to coalesce, or to unite for a cause. Who knows, maybe you are the angel sent from above to crystallise us. Together we can form a potent power that can shake mountains.

I applaud and respect your mission. ●

Beverly Hills,

Abraham Kattan Ph.D
California

Every time a copy of *The Scribe* arrives at my home it is read thoroughly and enjoyed tremendously. I have learned a great deal from Naim Dangoor's provocative articles and writings on historic events. Your format is excellent. Just when I feel that this is the best I have read, the next copy arrives even better than the last. You are doing a great service to the community and beyond.

I would like to share a lovely experience with you and your devoted readers. This past October, while in Israel, I visited the "Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center". It was just the time when sixteen members of the original Zionist group, Ahi-Eber, from Iraq, had a reunion. This group was active in the early 1930s when Israel was a dream; and what a sight to behold when you visit this wonderful country some sixty years later when the dreams of these idealists have become a reality.

The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center is a fascinating place to see. Wonderful models of streets that light up to show where the schools, hospitals and synagogues were, brought a great deal of excitement to me, a non-Iraqi, who was always fascinated by stories of my husband's life in Iraq. Scaled down versions of the lanes with shops, and the main synagogue coupled with displays of wonderful pictures of family life and samples of clothes from years gone by, gave me a grand feeling and taste of what it was like. This Center is a central meeting place where people can avail themselves of a library and a good resource centre. As children grow up, they get curious about their backgrounds, and what a treasure of a place to have for them to explore and discover so much of their past.

It is a Center worthy of everyone's pride and support.

Willowdale, Ontario Bernice Mukamal

What is the story behind Hana and Mana and our lost beard (*Scribe* 56)?

Once upon a time, a sheikh in his middle age took a young girl, Hana, to be his second wife. Wanting him to look young, she used to pluck out the grey hairs in his beard. His first wife, Mana, not wanting her husband to look younger than her, used to pluck out his black hairs. As a result very little beard was left. Hence the saying.

I have recently heard of your wonderful journal and managed to "extract" a past copy from a dear friend. Is it at all possible that you would be willing to put me on your mailing list?

The information, book reviews, recipes and general tone of the journal has quite delighted me.

Gwent, Wales Mrs Meg Thomas

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Mr I. Segal, Montreal, Canada**

COOKERY CORNER

from *Indian-Jewish Cooking*

by **Mavis Hyman**

10 Holyoake Walk, London N2 OJX

Chicken Hurikebab

This dish is a great favourite. I shall first outline the traditional way of preparing it which was suited to brick and clay fires and then an adapted method using oven cooking. The ingredients for either method are the same.

Traditional cooking: Joint and skin a 5lb roasting chicken. Wash and set aside. Slice and sauté a small onion in 4 tablespoons of vegetable oil or 3ozs of chicken fat. Add 1 teaspoon grated ginger, ½ teaspoon turmeric, 1 teaspoon garlic (optional), 2 teaspoons salt and pepper to taste, 3 cloves, 3 cardamom pods. Stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the chicken pieces, and stir until thoroughly blended with the spiced onions. Put the lid on the saucepan and simmer for 15 minutes. When the juices have evaporated, add the required whole onions (small) and peeled, but whole potatoes for five or six people. The contents of the saucepan should be alongside rather than on top of each other. Add just enough water to cover the chicken pieces. Bring to the boil and simmer for ¾ of an hour with the lid on. Remove the lid for the last quarter of an hour of cooking to brown the chicken. Serve hot. Eat with salads or cooked vegetables or pilaw.

An alternative method: Joint the chicken and wash, but leave the skin on. Place the chicken pieces alongside each other. Add potatoes and onions as required (optional). Sprinkle with ginger, turmeric, salt and pepper, adding the cardamom pods and cloves. Pour on the oil or chicken fat, but do not add any water. Cover and cook for three quarters of an hour on the middle shelf of a pre-heated oven on 400°F-200°C Reg. 6. Remove the lid and continue cooking for another quarter of an hour or until the chicken browns.

Serve as above.

One of our cooks prepared *hurikebab* in the traditional way, without onions or potatoes. When the chicken was cooked, two large onions would be sliced thickly in rounds and glazed in the *hurikebab* oil or fat and heaped over the chicken with shredded capsicums (green peppers) and cucumber slices.

For a traditional chicken sandwich, shred the cold *hurikebab* chicken. Mix the potatoes with Dhunia Chutney, see above, add the chicken and use as a filling.

The death of Mr Sas Moses, aged 75, is a loss for the Bombay Jewish community. He was born and brought up in Bombay and played an active part in communal affairs, particularly in Maccabi. He led a delegation to the Third Maccabiah in Ramat Gan, the first in the State of Israel, in 1950, where it distinguished itself in winning bronze medals in water-polo.

Following his emigration to London some years later, he became president of the local branch of B'nai B'rith in Edgware, and was an active member of Edgware United Synagogue. He is survived by his wife, Helen, two sons and grandchildren.

Percy Gourgey

Chiturney

This a sweet-sour chicken curry and is generally eaten on a bed of boiled rice or pilaw. Some people prefer to delete the curry powders so that the chicken is cooked in a sweet-sour sauce only. It is, in fact, the way it used to be prepared in Baghdad. The addition of curry powders is an Indian development.

Joint, clean and skin a 5lb roaster and set aside.

Liquidise together, or chop very fine, 3 large onions, 4 large cloves of garlic, 1oz fresh ginger and ½lb fresh or canned tomatoes.

Heat 3 tablespoons vegetable or corn oil, add the liquidised mixture and cook over a low heat until the onions are sautéed. Add 2 teaspoons salt, pepper to taste, 1 teaspoon turmeric powder and 4 tablespoons tomato purée. Mix thoroughly.

Add the chicken pieces and seal on a high flame. Reduce to medium heat and cook with the lid on for a quarter of an hour or until most of the juices are absorbed into the chicken. Add 1 cup boiling water, cover and simmer or bake on gas mark 4 (450°F - 230°C) until the chicken is tender (about half to three-quarters of an hour). Add 1 teaspoon chilli powder (or to taste), 4 teaspoons coriander powder (Dhunia), 3 teaspoons cumin powder (Zeera), 2 teaspoons sugar and the juice of 1½ to 2 lemons. The balance between the lemon juice and sugar depends on the extent to which the sweet-sour flavour is preferred.

Tamarind paste may be substituted for lemon juice, in which case use 3 teaspoons, but many people prefer vinegar (either malt or wine variety, depending on the edge or smoothness preferred).

Stir for 5 minutes to blend all the flavours.

Serve hot with boiled rice or pilaw.

Coconut Milk

Coconut milk can be used for making cakes, cookies, ice cream, coconut jam, curries and as a base for exotic cocktails. It comes in tins and also in instant powder form.

Benjamin Koheleth's poem "The Kubbah" (*Scribe* 56) is a delicious piece of writing and I wish to thank *The Scribe* for publishing it.

Humorous poetry concerning Iraqi dishes has always been a favourite of mine, like for instance the verses describing the "Salona".

صالونق صالونقي هراء ما احلاها
لذيذة محببة عاشت يد الوها

Since I have read Judge Koheleth's poem, I have not managed to keep my hands off Kubbah, whilst constantly apologising:

لا تلم بطلي اذا هلامي قلت
حانرا الدهر اذا الكبة استوت

Bon Appétit!
Ealing, London

Dr Menashe Tahan