

40 Pages

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

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A Happy New Year 5756 to all our Readers and Friends

Silver Jubilee

It is 25 years since the position of Exilarch was revived by Naim Dangoor in 1970, exactly 700 years after it had elapsed with the death in Baghdad of the last Exilarch, Samuel ben Azariah in 1270 – 12 years after the destruction of Baghdad and the Abbasid Empire at the hands of Hulagu. Exilarch, Resh Galutha, Prince of the Captivity, was the title given to the Head of the Babylonian Jewry, since the deportation of King Jehoiachin in 597 BCE.

One of the first activities of The Exilarch's Foundation was to publish *The Scribe* in 1971. In October 1971, Iran celebrated the 2500th anniversary of Cyrus the Great, referred to in the Bible as Koresh. It was he who allowed the exiled Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. It was this biblical reference that kept his name alive as a benevolent monarch.

We let it be known to the Iranian Embassy in London that Cyrus celebrations would, therefore, not be complete without the participation of Babylonian Jewry. After consultation with Teheran, the Embassy invited us to a grand Reception at the Savoy Hotel, which was attended by members of the British Government and the Diplomatic Corp and hundreds of notables from all walks of life. Our 20-strong delegation was received by the Ambassador and was filmed and televised. (Full report *Scribe* No.2.)

The ease with which Babylon was taken by the Persian King Cyrus was attributed in a recent Arabic radio programme to "the treachery" of Babylonian Jewry – as if we owed a duty of allegiance and loyalty to our oppressor, Nebuchadnezzar, and to his son and successor, Belshazzar.

Babylonian Jewry did in fact play a decisive role in the fall of Babylon, a fate which it richly deserved. Likewise, Israel may be called upon to take part in bringing the new Babylon to heel.



The above picture shows the Ambassador and Madame Afshar welcoming René and Naim Dangoor, holding the scroll addressed to the Shah on that historic occasion ●



At the Savoy Hotel Reception, October 1971, to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great.

Left to right: Embassy Minister and lady; Percy Gourgey and his sister Molly Deyong; Naim and Renée Dangoor; Richard and Vivien Moshi; Bertha and Elias Dangoor.

On the wall is a portrait of the Shah.

A catalogue of errors, both by the Shah and by President Carter, has brought Iran to its present pitiful condition at home and its serious threat to world peace●

Changing Scene

(For those born before 1945 . . .)

We were born before television, before penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, contact lenses, videos, frisbees and the Pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens; before dishwashers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes . . . and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint can you be?). We thought a 'Big Mac' was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' we had for tea. We existed before house husbands, computer dating, dual cars and when a 'meaningful relationship' meant getting along with cousins and 'sheltered accommodation' was where you waited for a bus.

We were before day care centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors or young men wearing earrings. For us 'time sharing' meant togetherness, a 'chip' was a piece of wood or fried potato, 'hardware' meant nuts and bolts and 'software' wasn't a word.

Before 1945 'Made in Japan' meant junk, the term 'making out' referred to how you did in your exams, 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double-decker to the bus depot. Pizzas, McDonalds and instant coffee

were unheard of. In our day, cigarette smoking was 'fashionable', 'grass' was mown, 'coke' was kept in the coal house, a 'joint' was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays and 'pot' was something you cooked in. 'Rock music' was a fond mother's lullaby, 'Eldorado' was an ice cream, a 'gay person' was the life and soul of the party and nothing more, while 'aids' just meant beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1945 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder we are so confused and there is a generation gap today . . . BUT

By the grace of God . . . we have survived!
Hallelujah!!!●

From a reader

Whilst visiting London to spend the Passover, I came across your issue no.63 which I found most informative and absorbing.

I will be most delighted if you can add my name to the mailing list.

I am active in the affairs of "Ohel Leah" Synagogue in Hong Kong which was erected by Jacob Elias David Sassoon in 1902 in memory of his mother Leah, and I will be glad to share *The Scribe* with many of the worshippers●

Hong Kong

Robert Sassoon

I was given a copy of *The Scribe* and read the article about Miss Luddy. I was naturally distressed and very touched to read the various tributes paid to her from all over the world.

A line from the Friday night Kiddush "A woman of worth who can find? For her price is far above rubies." This can be so aptly applied to Ramah Luddy. She gave a number of "her girls" a chance in a life-time and also helped to turn many "a life around". I know I shall miss her. If her passing means anything to any of us, it should be that, in some small way try to touch the life of another and help to turn it around.

In the area where we live in Jerusalem, Pisgat Zeev Maraa, a new Sephardic Synagogue is due to be built. Perhaps a plaque can be placed in her memory.

I shall, hopefully, look forward to receiving a personal copy of *The Scribe* from now on●

Jerusalem

Seemah Ezra

Dellal Family donation

A \$1.5 million donation from the Jack Dellal family of London was recently made to help the TA Foundation expand the Suzanne Dellal Center in Neve Zedek. The new wing, designed to serve the needs of the Batsheva modern dance company, will include two studios, an office, storage and dressing room●

Visit to Istanbul

by Elias Dangoor

Being in such a large and historic city, one has to rush all the time to see so many places of interest.

Many Israelis are there and shopkeepers regularly greet us with "Shalom".

Istanbul is divided between Europe and Asia. The interesting part is the European which was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. It contains many beautiful mosques.

Dolmabashi Palace overlooks the Bosphorus, with over 300 rooms, some of them can hold over a thousand guests with the heaviest chandeliers in the world. It was built in the nineteenth century and was occupied by Ataturk after the revolution.

Topkapi Palace was the Sultan's residence for four centuries before Dolmabashi. It is now a museum and contains many interesting items such as:

The diamond and emerald encrusted dagger which the Sultan had sent to Nadu Shah of Iran. When the emissary reached Baghdad, he heard the news that the Shah was assassinated. He, therefore, returned with the dagger to Istanbul.

A diamond of 86 carat.

The Sword and the Bow of the Prophet Mohammed with his seal and other relics together with a letter to the Coptic leader asking him to acknowledge Islam.

Topkapi also contains the famous Baghdad room which was built by Sultan Murad after his return from taking that city in 1638.

In today's Turkey the manufacturing is of a high standard due to the return of highly trained Turkish labour from Germany.

The Lira is falling steeply, making everything Turkish much cheaper. The reason is that the money is being printed without adequate cover, in order to finance the enormous cost of building a dam for the water which used to flow freely into Syria and Iraq. When finished it will generate enough electricity for Turkey, irrigate new farmland, and the rest of the water will be available for sale to Arab countries and Israel.

I first read about that in *The Scribe* some years ago!

The dagger figured in the famous Hollywood film *Topkapi*!

Family Reunion

You were kind enough to publish a letter for me in your issue number 62, in which I was trying to trace relatives for the past twenty years without any success.

As a result, I have had a response from a Mr. Joe Isaac of N.W. London who informed me that he went to school with my two cousins in Rangoon but, unfortunately, they had both passed away. The good news is that they left three sons and he had their addresses.

I wrote to them, and they telephoned me, which led to a visit to Israel by my wife and myself. I have now found the following family:

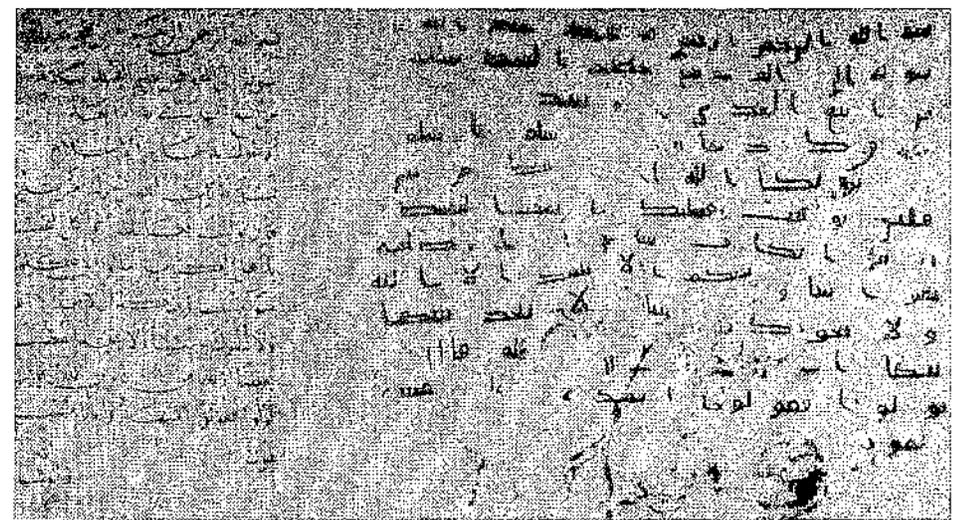
2 first cousins in their 80's but in good health, who are the children of my father's sister. I did not even know that my father had a sister. They have three sons aged 48, 45 and 40.

They have between them 6 sons and 2 daughters. One of the three cousins that telephoned me has four daughters.

So, I am delighted that through *The Scribe* I have had such a wonderful success!

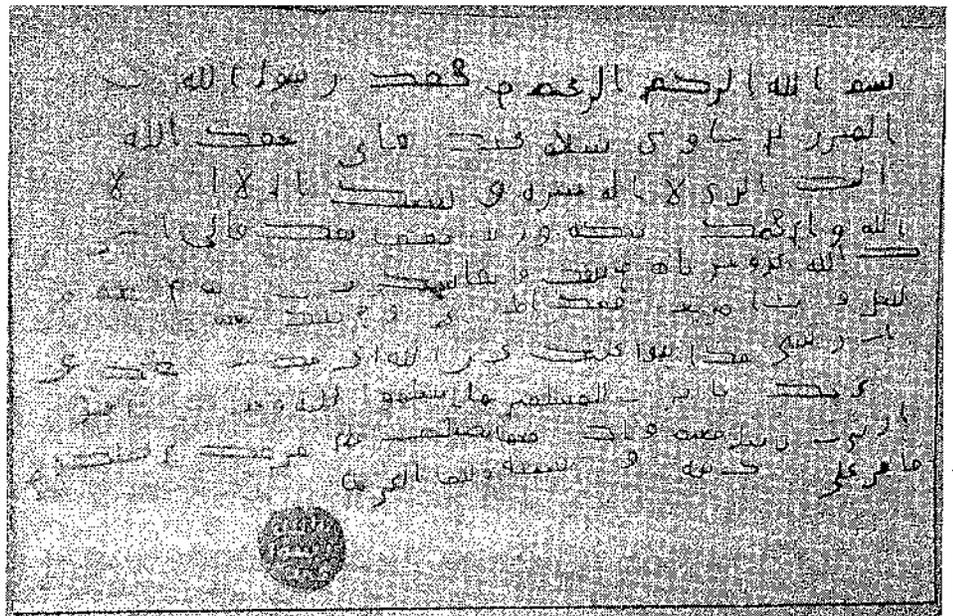
London

Joseph Hai



Mohammed's letter to Al-Muqawqas, chief of the Copts, written on parchment.

It was found in a church in Upper Egypt



"The letter to Al-Mundhir bin Sawi Prince of Bahrain".

The original was found in Damascus.

The seal reads (top to bottom):

Allah - His Missionary - Mohammed.

Zayd ben Thabet was the scribe who wrote Mohammed's letters

I would be very interested to receive more details of the history of Jewish families in Manchester mentioned by Lydia Collins in a recent issue of your journal.

I have only just found out (at 53 years of age!) that my grandfather Menashe was elder brother of Sasson Mashal and head of the family firm of Mashal Brothers Limited, shippers to Persian Gulf and Baghdad. I am fascinated to learn more of him now that I know who he is. He married my grandmother in Manchester and they had eight children. I am afraid that none of my family has told me anything about him until I saw *The Scribe* article. He died in 1922 aged 49 years and was nationalised British before he died. He then called himself Charles M Mashal

Pamela Houghton (Mrs)

Oldham, England

In your last issue you referred to me as director of the "Babylonian Jewry Heritage Centre", when in fact I am only a member of the executive. Mr. Mordechai Ben-Porat is the elected Director

Tel Aviv

Shaul Sehayik

Your last issue was given to me by an Iraqi-born friend (by the way I am too) and I must say that I found it very interesting and I enjoyed it considerably.

I would like to express my appreciation and praise for Moshe Kahtan's remarkable article - The lesson of the Holocaust, did we learn? Unfortunately, we are no good in learning, we are better in forgetting.

The Holocaust should be remembered for many years to come.

We Jews from all over the corners of the world should stick together, we brothers in blood are all for one and one for all.

Only sometimes we Jews are our own worst enemies and what hurts most is that our enemies are those of our own household. This minority with their loud declarations are doing more harm to Israel than the Arabs themselves.

They made of Arafat the Tsadik of all times, the redeemer of the area! . . . They forget who Arafat was . . .

Ramat Efaal

Soud Swery

Hakham Yosef Hayim

The following is the Hespel (Oration) by Hakham Ezra Dangoor on Hakham Yosef Hayim who died at the Maqass crossroads on the Hilla road on Monday 13th Elul 5669 (1909) and was brought to Baghdad on Tuesday night 15th Elul. That same night he was taken to be buried and the Hespel at the cemetery was given by Hakham Moshe Shamash under a full moon.

Wednesday morning the Hespel was given by Chief Rabbi Hakham David Papo. On Thursday morning Hakham Sasson Yisrael spoke, and on Sunday morning Hakham Ezra Dangoor made this wonderful Hespel in the Great Synagogue, of which he was Dean.

This hitherto unpublished document came to light during the recent visit to London of Rabbi Ezra Basri, Chief Justice (Av Beth Din) District Court, Jerusalem.

Translated from the Hebrew by Rabbi Aharon Bassous and abridged:
The Torah (Devarim) says:

And The L-rd said to Moshe – Behold your days are close to death. On this the Midrash comments, it is difficult for The Almighty to decree death on the righteous, as it says (Psalms) – it is too hard for The Almighty to bring death on His righteous ones. Know this because Hashem should have said to Moshe – Behold you are going to die, but He did not say so, but rather said, your days are close to death.

(This is the introduction to the Hespel as it was customary to start off with a statement from Chazal. Now start the next part of the Hespel which is a Kinah (dirge).)

Who would believe the news.

On whom has the hand of Hashem been revealed.

I have not come to lecture.

For this beauty which is in the dust one must surely cry.

Woe to Babel that it has lost the Carrier of Books.

A voice is heard from on high.

Our ears are ringing.

And our tears flow making rivers of water.

Whose eye can stop the tears he sees the multitude crying.

And whose heart will not melt at such a tragedy.

Call out the wailing women.

How suddenly we have sunken so greatly.

We have lost the foundation stone of the world.

Yosef has been torn away suddenly.

The prince, full of understanding has fallen and the pillar of faith is broken.

Silence all rejoicing and raise ones voice in loud lament my people, all of us with sighing and crying.

The visions have stopped and the source of blessing is closed.

The pure soul has returned to its exalted place.

The sun has set.

We have been left alone in the valley of trouble.

The horn of Israel is broken, the cedar tree is cut down, a righteous one has departed from the earth and we have lost our weapons for war.

Who will speak up in defence of the remnant of the people.

The ones who require salvation say, where is the place of his glory.

Where is the light of healing.

Where is the master and his exaltedness.

All inhabitants of the earth cry bitterly.

The upholders of the Torah are bent down with crying and mourning.

Lament for the one of many good deeds.

Let the heavens cloud over and wear sackcloth on the death of the righteous one.

His name is better than good oil.

A holy and upright person.

In all the gates his name was known.

Amongst the whole world his laws are discussed.

The beautiful spice, the shield and prince, head of the country.

Tear open your hearts and clothes and cry for the righteous one who cannot be compared on this earth.

The one from whose lips poured grace.

How have you left your stronghold.

My father, my life, how you have left us so quickly.

Woe, our hopes have finished with you.

The eye which saw your splendour was happy.

I said while you are here my days will be successful, but woe to me the L-rd has made bitter my lot.

We have become like lost sheep.

Who will lead the flock.

To compare to him is a vanity.

Woe, the head of his people has fallen there is none to compare to him.

Lament daughter of Babel, lament for this trouble.

Your beautiful precious vessel is lost.

The crown has fallen.

Death has entered your window.

Your splendour has been thrown asunder.

Who will teach knowledge, who can sit on his seat.

Who will fill his place.

Mourn you House of Jacob, lie down in the dust.

For the genius which has fallen.

Raise your voice in crying for the light of our eyes which has gone to the land of the living.

His portion is in the garden of Hashem in an exalted part of Heaven.

The great genius, wisdom lit up his face.

The crown of the righteous, what a hasid, what a humble man.

All his efforts were to do good.

Harav Yosef Hayim has gone to Heaven.

Who will draw for us wisdom.

Who is so high on the ladder as you were.

Who will lead the mistaken, straighten the crooked.

From you daughter of Babel has been thrown the crown of light.

Mourn my congregation for the ark of the Torah which has been taken from you.

He is the Rabbi the pride of the Hakhamim and their honour.

He leads his flock in justice, he was their shine and pride.

He was a faithful shepherd.

All the hearts of those who knew you are trembling.

Please my L-rd help me and strengthen me, stand as my saviour that my spirit should not be crushed.

The oppressed ones he heard, advised and supported.

He hated pride and thus drew near the young and poor.

He put down quarrels, and stopped hatred.

He sowed peace, love and brotherhood.

Our light shone, our candle was lit up, our head was raised in the merit of the sadiq.

Yosef great things you did here.

You constantly worked on good deeds.

The pleasures of the world were foreign to you.

You chose only the Torah.

You inclined your ear to the poor and destitute.

To the widow and orphan you stretched out your hand.

In this way a constant memory is etched in their hearts.

A good name and greatness forever you have acquired.

In all the gates your praises are sung, and amongst doers of good your name is praised.

Now in the shadow of The Almighty your place is in Heaven.

You have merited to gaze at His Splendour.

Your shadow has been taken from us, our shepherd has left us.

The pride of our congregation, on your departure everyone is grieving, but you rest in the shadow of The Almighty.

(This concludes the Kinnah and now starts the final section; the Divrei Torah).

Happy is the one who grew up with a good name and died with a good name. What does it mean one who died with a good name?

The meaning is: the one who departs this world and does not need to return in gilgul, but goes straight to the place reserved for the souls, since he fulfilled the complete Torah.

Just as the day does not return, his soul will also not return.

The Sadiq Hakham Yosef Hayim was humble and spoke gently with the people and thus people used to love him and surely he will go to ever higher levels in Heaven and not have to return. In the merit of peace will be the Geulah as it says – Hashem gives strength to His people (meaning the Mashiyah) through the blessing of peace.

Thus there are three ways to fulfil the whole Torah:

- 1) Through returning to this world in gilgul.
- 2) Through unity with Klal Yisrael.
- 3) Through good intentions which are counted as if the deeds have been done.

In conclusion I pray, please Hashem make peace and love amongst Your people Israel, look down on us from Heaven and have mercy on our remnant. Remove evil from us and do not let us worry any more, and may Hashem remove the tears from our faces soon, Amen ●

OBITUARIES

Alan Rose



Joyce and Alan Rose (wearing his decorations)

Alan Rose, former Executive Vice-President of Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) died on 18 July in Montreal after a sudden illness which lasted several months.

Over 500 people, more than the capacity of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, came to bid him farewell.

He was eulogised by community and public leaders, and a message of condolence from Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien was read.

Alan Rose was a committed Zionist, with a tremendous desire to see peace in the Middle East. He was a great public servant of the Jewish people.

Many thousands of Jews in the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Cuba and elsewhere owe their safety and security today to Alan. He worked behind the scenes to organise the reunification of many Iraqi Jewish families, thus enabling some 700 relatives in Baghdad to obtain both Iraqi exit visas and Canadian entry visas. This was possible because the Iraqi authorities were anxious to have Canada establish a permanent Embassy in Baghdad.

Alan also played a key role in seeking reparations from Germany for Holocaust survivors. He was well known for his integrity, decency, honour and credibility. When he spoke, people listened because he had the knowledge and eloquence.

Alan Rose was born in Dundee, Scotland in 1921, grandson of Yahya (York) Gubbay of Baghdad who had emigrated to Calcutta in 1840. Educated at London University, he served as tank commander with the British Eighth Army in North Africa, Italy and northwest Europe, where he participated in the D-Day

invasion in June 1944.

Alan volunteered in Israel's War of Independence.

Marrying in 1952, he first went to South Africa and then to Canada in 1957. He first worked with the Jewish Agency and the forerunner of the Canada-Israel Committee; in 1970 he moved to the Canadian Jewish Congress rising in a few years to executive vice-president.

On retiring from the CJC after 25 years service, he accepted an appointment to the federal Immigration and Refugee Board where he carried out the delicate work of screening large numbers of would-be immigrants to Canada.

In recognition of his commitments, Alan in 1980 was awarded the U.S. Presidential Citation of Honour as a liberator of Bergen-Belsen. For his dedication to the cause of human rights, both at home and abroad, he was awarded the Order of Canada which was pinned on him by Mme Jean Sauvé, Governor-General of Canada. Last year, on the 50th anniversary of D-Day, the French government awarded him the Médaille Militaire de la Libération. Last May, at the CJC Plenary Assembly, he was given the Samuel Bronfman Medal, and in June he received the Jerusalem Prize from the World Zionist Organisation.

Alan is survived by his wife Joyce and sister Hazel Tovey in Israel. He is sorely missed by his many friends and family ●

Dr Meir David



Dr David, who died last March, came to Israel in 1950 from Baghdad through Britain and Egypt with a reputation of a very successful doctor in Iraq. In Ramat Gan he interlaced his medical activity, mainly in Kupat Holim Maccabi (Medicare), with his branched public activity, which included ten years later his membership in municipality.

Dr David was born in Baghdad in 1912 and graduated at the American University of Beirut as a doctor. In parallel he acted in Beirut as a member at the Zionist bund Kadima. In 1938 he studied in London in Tropical Diseases and Public Hygiene. In 1946 he married a new emigrant from Germany.

After his emigration to Israel and after serving as a doctor in the army, he opened his own clinic and became chairman of the medical union, national board of preventing accidents

and the cancer fighting union, and was the promoter of the accomplished centre of the Kupa. Most of the donation to raise this centre came from Babylonian people, as shown by the plaque at the entrance.

His sister Bertha Fattal writes:

Meir dedicated his life helping especially Iraqi Jews. This clinic treats hundreds of patients daily

- from Ramat Gan and its surroundings.

He was given the Freedom of Ramat Gan and his funeral was attended by government and medical people, where at his graveside they praised him for his life-long dedication to the State. In October memorial gatherings will be held as a tribute to his work ●

Horace Kadoorie, Philanthropist



The death of Sir Horace Kadoorie in Hong Kong on 22 April at the age of 92 was felt as a deep personal loss by many. His father Sir Elly Kadoorie emigrated to Shanghai in 1886 and succeeded in establishing a vast business. His two sons Lawrence, Lord Kadoorie, and Horace built the company Sir Elly Kadoorie and Sons into the multi-billion empire it is today.

Sir Horace will be venerated as a philanthropist whose role in caring for Jewish school children in Shanghai was one of personal commitment not merely that of a financial benefactor. Free school meals were provided daily in the Sephardi organised Shanghai Jewish School from a Kadoorie Tiffin Fund and even today its former pupils recall how appreciated these meals were.

Sir Horace will perhaps best be remembered for his dedication to the Jewish Youth Association School (SJYA), which he established in 1939 for the use of some three hundred refugees from Nazi Europe. Commonly known as the Kadoorie School, it catered to the education of over a thousand children whose high academic standard is reflected in their success as businessmen and professionals. These pupils in 1940 presented Horace as a token of their esteem, a tablecloth with some 300 names embroidered on it. Over fifty years later at a reunion in Chicago in 1992, former pupils of

خطاب السلام

A Parody of Peace

by Zvi Gabay, M.A.

Israel Ambassador to Dublin

Recently the Jerusalem daily *Al-Nahar* devoted a full page to the publication of a new poem by Mahmoud Darwish, the most famous Palestinian poet, condemning the Israel-PLO peace process. Darwish, the head of the Arab Writers Guild, skewers the idea of an Arab-Israel peace with heavy expressions of typically trenchant sarcasm, castigating those who would make peace with Israel.

Darwish is a 54-year-old poet, who grew up in Israel and left to study in Moscow in the 1970's.

At the beginning of the intifada, Darwish was the first Arab poet to bless the phenomenon, calling it "The Song of Stones". His efforts gave the stone a unique place in current Arab poetry. He used the stone as a symbol not just to encourage the stoning of Jews, but also - along with other Arab poets such as Nizar Qabani - as an instrument and symbol with which to assail Arab rulers who did not do enough for their people.

Following are extracts from the translation, by Mr Gabay, of sarcastic Arabic poems:

The Peace Speech

By Mahmoud Darwish

Oh people, oh master of miracles and builder of the Pyramids, lift yourself up to the level of the generation.

Silently, silently let us hear what went wrong with us on earth.

What was it that made us be pushed . . .

Three wars - and less land,
Fifty thousand martyrs - and less bread,
And the nationalization of people's mind
who love life - and dance less.

So we can move forward?
Moving forward is destruction - isn't
peace the answer?

Long live peace...!!!
Wars . . . wars . . . wars . . .

The leadership must stop this waste,
And stop producing an obscure future
built on corpses . . .

Do we live in the jungle, killing our
neighbours
who look for a corner on our land?
For war, oh people, is a primitive instinct.
Land is but sand . . .

You search in war, oh my free people, for
sovereignty.

In the West our enemies are spreading lies
on the Arab ruler,

In the West Rambo and Shambo and
Coca, and Jeans, Disco, Circus and
freedom for Cats.

So who are we . . . ?
Are we really mistaken . . . ?

Thirty years have passed since the war,
And the solution is in the West,

Are we really mistaken?
Can a locust eat an elephant or drink the
Nile?

The land is spacious for all.
In the land there is prosperity for all.

Oh dear people, time has come to correct
our history

So we will be like other cultures by word
and by deed,

Time has come to teach our enemies an
adequate lesson in peace:

يا ايها الشعب يا سيد المعجزات ويا بانى
الكرمين
اريدك ان ترتفع الى
مستوى العصر. صمتاً وصمتاً، لنسمع وقع
خطانا على الارض. ماذا دفعنا لكي
نندفع...
ثلاث حروب - وارض اقل
وخمسون الف شهيد - وخبر اقل
وتاميم افكار شعب يحب الحياة - ورقص اقل
قيب نستطيع لنمضي اماماً؟ وهذا الامام
حطام -
اليس السلام هو الحل
عاش للسلام...!!!

وفي الغرب اعداؤنا ينشرون اللغظ
عن الحاكم العربي، وفي الغرب رامبو
وشامبو وكوكا، وجينز، وديسكو، وسيرك،
وحرية للقط.
فمن نحن...؟ هل نحن حقاً غلط...؟
لنقضي ثلاثين عاماً من الحرب، والحك في
الغرب، هل نحن حقاً غلط
فهل نستطيع الجراد ان تاكل الغيل او
تشرب النيك...؟ في الارض متسع للجميع.
وفي الارض متسع للسعادة.
وعاش للسلام...!!!

ويا ايها الشعب. ان لنا ان نصبح تاريخنا
كبي نظاهي الحضارات قولاً وفعلاً
وات لنا ان نلقب اعداؤنا السلم درساً وحلاً
سنقطع عنهم جميع الذرائع كي لا
يفروا من السلم، ماذا يريدون...؟ ماذا؟
يريدون كل فلسطين...؟ اهلاً وسهلاً
يريدون اطراف سيناء...؟ اهلاً وسهلاً
يريدون رأس ابي العول - هذا المراوغ في
الوقت...؟
اهلاً وسهلاً
يريدون مرتفعات الهجوم على الشام...؟
اهلاً وسهلاً
يريدون انهار لبنان...؟ اهلاً وسهلاً
يريدون تعديل قرآن عثمان...؟ اهلاً وسهلاً
يريدون بابك كي يأخذوا رأس نابوه، الى
السبي...؟ اهلاً وسهلاً

سأعطيهما ما يشاؤون منا وما لا يشاؤون كي
أخذ السلم والسلم اقوى من الارض، اقوى
واغنى
فهم بخلاء لثام
ونحن كرام كرام
وعاش للسلام...!!!

سأكبسك المدافع حتى يفترق فيك اللحم
سأكبس ذاكرة الحرب... تأموا كما تم. تأموا
غدا
تصبحون على الخبز والخير... تأموا
غدا تصبحون على جنتي... فاستريحوا
وتأموا
يعيش السلام
يعيش النظام
شلوم... سلام...!!! ●

محمود درويش

We will deny them excuses so they cannot
escape from peace,
What do they want . . . ? What?
All Palestine . . . ? Welcome,
Parts of Sinai . . . ? Welcome,
The Sphinx's head - the time will come for
this too? Welcome,
The heights for attacking Damascus . . . ?
Welcome,
The rivers of Lebanon . . . ? Welcome,
The modification of the Quran . . . ?
Welcome,
Babylonia, to take Nabuko's head, who
exiled them . . . ? Welcome,
I will give them everything they want or
don't want
in order to have peace.
And peace is stronger than land, stronger
and dearer.
For they are wicked and greedy,
And we are noble, noble
Long live peace . . . !!!
I shall destroy all cannons so pigeons can
hatch in them.
I shall destroy the memory of war . . . so
you will sleep well.
Tomorrow, you will be awoken to bread
and blessing . . .
Sleep, tomorrow you will be awoken in my
garden . . .
Rest and sleep.
Long live peace!
Long live order!
Shalom . . . Salaam . . . !!! ●

Khazar capital

Japanese and Daghestani scientists have discovered the capital of the Khazar Kingdom on an island located in the middle of the Caspian Sea. The experts hope thereby to clarify an obscure page of History.

The Khazar Kingdom which existed between the year 700 and 1016 C.E. was to the north of the Caucasus and around the Crimea. It was ruled by kings of Jewish extraction.

Historians consider that one of the main factors of this Kingdom was the prevention of Islam from spreading into Europe from the East.

In this century several archaeological missions looked for the remains of this Kingdom. The efforts of Japanese scientists were successful as they followed the theory of professor Murad Mohamadof of the University of Daghesta, according to which the capital of the Khazars was on the island of Eitel.

Al-Hayat news item.

Scribe: It is to be recalled that Islam also attempted to extend into Europe from Spain and entered North into France, but was stopped in its tracks at the city of Poitier.

As to the attempt to enter Europe from the East, History tells us that Harun al-Rashid waged several wars on the Khazar Kingdoms, but was completely unsuccessful. After his defeat, he took his revenge on the Jews of Baghdad, forcing them to wear a yellow patch on their clothes as well as imposing on them other restrictions.

Harun was contemporary with Charlemagne who used to address him in his correspondence as Aaron, King of Persia.

The decline of the Khazar Kingdom began in 980 when Prince Vladimir of Russia adopted Christianity as the religion of his country which finally destroyed the short-lived Jewish Kingdom and dispersed its inhabitants in all directions ●



New Year's Eve party to welcome the year 1958 at the home of Claire and Morris Chitayat in Baghdad. It was one of the last parties within the Jewish community prior to the July Revolution.

Left to right (in front): Evelyn Shashoua (Shukur); Abe Hillel; Morris Chitayat; Amal Khalastchy (Rejwan); Stella Solomon (Dangoor); Fouad Khalastchy; Renée Dangoor; Naim Dangoor.

Standing: Menashi Shashoua; Saida Hillel; Claire Dangoor; Abdullah Dangoor; Heskell Abed; Hanna Abed; Salim Gurji; Eileen Khalastchy; Sasson Dangoor; Liza Chitayat (Mareuille); Claire Chitayat; Violet Lawee; David Khalastchy; Leon Lawee; Madeleine Gurji ●

JEW OF THE RAJ

by Mavis Hyman

Published by Hyman Publishers,
10 Holyoake Walk, London N2 0JX.
Telephone: 0181 883 3603.
£14.95 + £1.95 P&P.

JEW OF THE RAJ is an account of the daily life of the Jews of Calcutta as eighty members of the community discuss how they experienced it and learnt about their personal histories from their parents and grandparents. They have combined their efforts from all over the world, to preserve the memory of the community which has now all but completely dispersed. This has been done in the spirit of celebration for a past in which they were free to live as Jews without oppression. It is a past which has distinct strands: a Jewish heritage with traditions of Baghdad, living in the multi-religious and multi-cultural society of India, and emulating, wherever possible, the secular British way of life.

The book has a historical background, showing how the political and social circumstances in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries encouraged Jewish merchants from the Middle East to settle in India. The discussion then falls into three main groups. The first is about the domestic situation, such as family, servants, food, holidays and leisure. The second concentrates on values and the rites of passage. The third concerns broader world events, such as the Second World War, Zionism, and the rise of Indian nationalism, all of which influenced the exodus of the community from Calcutta and also from the two other centres of Jewish settlement in India; Bombay and Cochin ●

Aziza Bint Mukamal

In your last *Scribe* of March, I read Dr. Ezra Sharon's letter about Aziza Mukamal, his great-grandmother.

As I am her granddaughter, I remember how she asked me to gather all the fallen flowers of the pomegranate tree in her garden which she kept for people suffering from diarrhoea. She dried and ground them and prescribed 1 teaspoon to be taken in 1 cup of boiled water. For dysentery she prescribed the boiled water of the rice.

She had a tree of Seville oranges (*Narenj*). Its juice was sour and was used in salads and cooking instead of lemons. When the *Narenj* was still small and green, she picked some and soaked for 3 days to remove the bitterness, changing the water everyday; then she boiled them in date syrup (*Silane*) and gave it to people who suffered from indigestion.

She distilled orange blossom (*Qeddah*) and gave the essence for people with heart trouble. She ground dried Fenugreek (*Helba*) and gave it to people suffering from diabetes to drink like tea. The immigrant Jews from Aden to Israel still use it for the same purpose.

She prescribed the dried hair from fresh corns for people who suffered from inflamed prostate to be taken like tea.

Mamyayi is like small brown stones which she heated in a small pan with a spoonful of oil. The paste was used to treat muscular pain. It was really like "Harambam medicine" (*dawa Harembam*).

I still have some which I gave to relatives in Israel and England. It was very effective.

Aziza died in 1930 at the age of 92, suffering from a heart attack ●

Ramat Hasharon Marguerite Zebaida

Aziza Bint Mukamal

Thank you for printing my letter about Aziza Mukamal, my great-grandmother, in *The Scribe*, and what a pleasure to find her picture!

I am currently trying to gather information related to Aziza and the rest of my family, and request readers to write to me.

I was born in Israel and I am learning more about my roots from your journal ●

Dr. Ezra Sharon, MD, FACP (Shashoua)
New York

Why I am a Jew

I am a Jew because I want to belong to the great Jewish Nation which has contributed to human advancement through several millennia in the fields of politics, economics, science, philosophy, literature, medicine and art. Jews contributed many times more than their small numbers would require. The evidence is readily seen in the large numbers of Nobel prize winners, past and present.

Ignorant historians point out that the Jewish Nation had no specific culture or civilisation. Sorry that we did not leave distinctive pottery for archaeological diggers to discover, but we have provided mankind with a religion that has shaped its destiny and would if properly adhered to point the way to its future and salvation.

Thank God for the Jews

Thank the Jews for God

The leading nations of the world are secretly researching for a super bomb to neutralise all bombs and thus put an end to warfare. It is thought that Israel might be the first to discover it. Will the Messiah come with such a bomb in his hand? ●



Thank you for publishing my short story "The Devil's Kite" in *The Scribe* journal No.58, June 1993.

I am pleased to tell you that my first book of short stories, based on events and anecdotes that occurred in Iraq between the years 1940-1950, will be published soon in Toronto. I enclose another short story entitled "The Skullcap".

The Skullcap

In the summer of 1940, I had just completed my fifth grade of public school. My parents decided to send me to the Heder "El-Midrash" for the summer vacation. There I was to study the Bible and prepare myself for my *Barmitzvah*.

It was a very hot summer: the classes were crowded; the students were sweating. On the ceiling of each classroom there was a big manual fan made from wood and fabric. The fan was tied to a long rope. It was operated by pulling the rope back and forth, hoping to gain a refreshing breeze.

The sound of the moving fan was so monotonous, it caused the students, and sometimes the Rabbi, to fall asleep.

The student who was in charge of operating the fan was called "the monitor" (*chahuch*). In general, the monitor was the most powerful and esteemed boy in the class. The students would fear him more than they did the Rabbi. They used to bribe him with money and candies to have a chance to operate the fan.

From day one there was a power struggle between myself and the monitor. We both sought control of the fan. But most of the students considered me as a stranger, a temporary summer student who came from the *goyim* public school. As a matter of fact, they called me the "Muslim". So who was I, wanting control of the fan?

By the end of my first day at Heder, the monitor and his assistant were waiting for me at the gate of the school. Immediately a fight broke out between us. I wrestled with both, dropped them to the ground, and grabbed their skullcaps as a sign of victory.

This incident was repeated almost daily with two or three boys. By the end of the week I had in my drawer a collection of more than twenty skullcaps in different sizes and colours. Some of them were made of pure wool or bright silk. Others had the Star of David hand embroidered. Each night I had the pleasure of sorting and recounting them.

By the end of the second week, the Rabbi announced that the class should elect a new monitor. I was the only candidate. The "democratic" election passed without trouble. I enjoyed the power till the end of the summer.

Two years later, my brother Isaac joined the same summer school. After his first day of attending the Heder, he returned home crying and upset. "What is the matter, Isaac? What happened?" They beat me! And they took my skullcap!" he cried.

"Don't cry, my brother," I replied, "I have a lot of them in my drawer, take a replacement."

By the end of the summer not a single skullcap could be found in my drawer! ●

Joyride to Utopia

By Emil Murad - Tel-Aviv

**Do I have to see flowers flicker and die?
Do I have to hear people whine and cry?
Children play with toy guns, and when they grow
The guns become real, the dead lie row by row!**

**Turning swords into plowshares, you say.
And the world keeps fighting; tomorrow is no other day
For peace and love are still long way away.
Through the narrow tunnel I see no light, no ray.**

**Oh, my God, if only I could peacefully worship the earth
and live anywhere, in a tree house, or the middle of the ocean
if only Your omnipotence could give birth to children who'd pronounce love with every word and motion!**

**Why is it that man was born to be such?
If You really love thy children so much, so much,
Can't You change our hearts with one magic touch
To make us wake up and say : "Love and Peace are the real catch" ●**

The meaning of Maimon

Few Jews recognise the meaning of "Maimon" as in Rabbenu Moshe ben Maimon. The word derives from the Arabic root *Yumn* signifying auspicious circumstances, happiness. It corresponds to the Latin FELIX.

In ancient times Yemen, because of its high degree of civilization, culture, agriculture and advanced system of irrigation, was dubbed by the Romans "Arabia Felix", meaning Happy Arabia. The word Yemen itself is derived from the same root - *yumn*.

Highland Park, N.J.

Jack Zeloof

Scribe: The Garden of Eden was in Aden in Yemen (Arabia Felix). Gan Eden equals Gannat Adan ●



Hakham Eliahou Yehoshua Obadiah (1790-1895) one of the great Rabbis of Baghdad in the 19th century, was an enlightened and erudite talmudist and was dayan and Ab Beth-din for many long years. The traveller Benjamin II who visited Baghdad in 1848 praised him as a wealthy and learned rabbi ●

I would like to express my admiration on the excellent article written by Moshe Kahtan: "The Lesson of the Holocaust: Did We Learn?" of your March issue.

The article is factual, objective, informative and has excellent suggestions ●

London

Morris E. Zelouf

Haham Gaon remembered

I have just finished reading through your March 1995 issue. You have succeeded in achieving significant growth in volume, while maintaining the high level of content. *Hazaq u Baruch* and *Kol Hakavod*. In particular, the obituary on Haham Gaon interested me. I remember the Haham when I was a little boy in the late fifties when he came to Johannesburg. My father had re-started the then defunct Sephardi synagogue which had collapsed many years before. He had hired a large room (we are still hiring premises 40 years later). He brought out two Baghdadi *Sifrei Torahs* on loan from London (still in our possession).

My father had recently engaged Rav Hayim Cohen (son of Chief Rabbi Rav Yamin Cohen) from Tangier on the recommendation of the Haham. In spite of our humble surroundings, the Haham arrived in his top hat and created such an aura of dignity. I remember when I was asked "to whom do we pray" and my considered reply was "to you".

The *Dvar Torah* on monotheism which followed has stuck almost verbatim in my mind ever since. I love coming to London and attending services at the Bevis Marks, Lauderdale Road and the Baghdadi synagogue in Golders Green.

Would it be an imposition to ask your permission to occasionally use some of your articles in our Synagogue's (*Sha'arei Siyon ve Shalom Sephardi Synagogue*) newsletters?

Johannesburg

Alan Sassoon

Scribe: You may freely use in your newsletters any item in *The Scribe* you find of interest ●



League of Nations Delegation at Alliance School, Baghdad

In 1925 the then League of Nations sent a special delegation to Iraq to decide and report on the Mosul question claimed by Turkey. The delegation rejected Turkey's claim and assigned Mosul to Iraq. The League's delegation, headed by M. de Wirsén, was feted by the Iraqi Government in Baghdad. They visited the Alliance schools for boys and girls.

Seated right to left:

Elia Shahmoon; Senator Menahem Daniel; Chief Rabbi Hakham Ezra Dangoor; Delegation member le Comte Teleky (later became Prime Minister of Hungary); Mme Sasson (Directrice); Mr de Wirsén (Swedish head of the League Delegation); Sir Hubert Young (Counsellor to the British High Commissioner); Chief Justice (Ab Beth Din) Sasson Khthoori; Sasson Murad.

Standing right to left: -; -; Eliahoo al-Ani; Ezra Menahem Daniel; Yehuda Zeloof; -; Noori Nahom; Sion Gurji; Abraham Nahom; Sion Nissan; Menashi Gurji; Moise Itta; Mr David Sasson (Director of Alliance School)●

Jewish assets in Iraq

A meeting was recently held in Israel on the subject of assets left by Iraqi Jews who left the country in the mass exodus of the Jewish community.

The meeting was attended by some two hundred businessmen of Iraqi origin, at which Mr Jacob Levy, Director of the Israeli Chamber of Commerce, stated that the value of these assets amounts to 8 billion U.S. Dollars, which was confiscated by successive Iraqi regimes. Mr. Levy pointed out the leading role of Jews in the commercial and financial life of the country and stressed that he had firm evidence of the value of these assets. He urged the Israeli Government to pursue the claim for recovering the valuable property●

Esther Mercado's *Iraq - My Testimony* recounts her experiences in the eventful post-war years until her immigration to Israel in 1951 at the age of 16 and in the first years of the family's settlement in Israel.

The events which befell Mrs. Mercado's family were typical in those years.

The book is recommended reading. It is written in simple flowing prose, yet forceful. The poems at the end of the book recapitulate the main events with poetic touch●

Tel Aviv

Isaac Murad

SUPPLICATION

by Dr. Victor Sasson

Like a tree beside a running stream
Let me be, Lord, and let my roots
Run deep, secure in faith, unseen,
Far from those that scoff and scheme -
The chaff of mankind.
Grant me humility with dignity,
Bestow upon me peace of mind,
And let the leaves of my life-work
Forever be green●

New York

I enjoy reading *The Scribe* immensely and I must say your letter sections, reflect the way I feel, as a transplanted Baghdadian. I spent the war years in Shanghai and knew Eddie Dangoor who was my age. I still remember the black eye he gave me fifty years ago.

I had been receiving your publication in H.K. and am grateful that it now follows me to the U.S. It is gratifying to see how it has grown from a few loose pages to a healthy magazine, and yes, without advertisements!

I wish you continued success●

Florida

Molly Odell

Nee Reuben (Carrady)

The Scribe is such a useful and fascinating publication. I can't tell you how much pleasure it brings my family - especially to my father who is ailing, and whose activities are severely limited.

The Scribe enables him to look back and remember his youth, indulging his nostalgia for an earlier, simpler time about which he has such fond memories.

Your good work is an enormous undertaking, and a truly great service to Baghdadian Jews in every part of the world●

New York

Edwin Simon

I am a 22 year old Ukrainian pianist studying at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In the Ukraine I graduated from the Kharkov School for Gifted Children.

I couldn't pursue my career there because of the economic and political situation and also for being Jewish.

My parents are teachers in the Ukraine but cannot support me.

I am writing to your Foundation to request financial support in my studies in England●

London

Eugenia Chudinovich



Administrative Committee of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce 1938.

Seated left to right: Rahmin Masri; Yousef Moshi; Abdul Razzaq Qadduri; Mohammed Haji Khalid; Sion Aboudi; Abraham Haim Hakham Ishaq (Vice President); Ja'far Abul-Timman (President); Kamel al Khudhairi (Secretary); Khdhouri Lawee; Ezra Ani; Saleh Elisha; Jacob Mukamal.

Standing left to right: Meer Basri (Assistant Secretary); Nouri Fattah; Mohammed Tayeb; Ja'far al Shabibi; Ibrahim Shabandar; Hesel Shemtob.

The Baghdad Chamber of Commerce

by Meer Basri

A Chamber of Commerce was tentatively formed in Baghdad in 1884, but did not last long.

Subsequently in 1910, two years after the Turkish Revolt which proclaimed a modern constitution and deposed the despotic Sultan Abdul Hamid II, a new Baghdad Chamber of Commerce was established. Baghdad, at that time, was a vilayet (province) of the Ottoman Empire, governed by a Wali (governor general) appointed by Istanbul. No economic or commercial department existed in the Governorate and the Chamber was constituted to take care of the country's trade and look after the interests of the commercial community.

The first president of the Chamber was Mr Marcorian, manager of the Ottoman Bank. The Jewish community which had its hold on the local trade was well represented in the new organisation. The vice-president was Shaoul Hakham Hesqail (1858-1934), elder brother of (Sir) Sassoon Hesqail, (at that time member of the Turkish Parliament and later to become Under-Secretary for Trade and Agriculture in Istanbul and the first Minister of Finance of Iraq in 1920).

Other prominent members of the Board were Yehuda Zelouf, Shaoul Shashoua and Abraham Haim H. Ishaq.

The Chamber called on all companies to register and obtain a licence to do business. Nuri Nahom was appointed head clerk and Eliahou Hesqail al-Ani as his assistant.

The Chamber played a prominent role in the economic sphere during the First World War, and remained in existence up to the British Occupation in 1917.

The Baghdad Chamber of Commerce was re-constituted by Law No.40 of 1926, which simultaneously created two other Chambers in Mosul and Basrah.

The Chambers of Commerce were defined by Law as "public institutions formed by merchants to represent and safeguard the interests of commerce in certain areas to be defined by the Minister of Finance." The Law charged the Chambers with several duties, e.g. to furnish government departments with advice and information in regard to commerce, industry and the procedures followed in commercial transactions; to give opinion on the means to promote and extend trade, suggest amendments of the commercial and industrial laws, customs tariffs, matters pertaining to opening roads and means of transport, and concessions granted to commercial and industrial institutions; to register prices of goods, effects and rates of exchange; to arbitrate in the settlement of commercial disputes; to issue certificates of origin of Iraqi exports, etc.

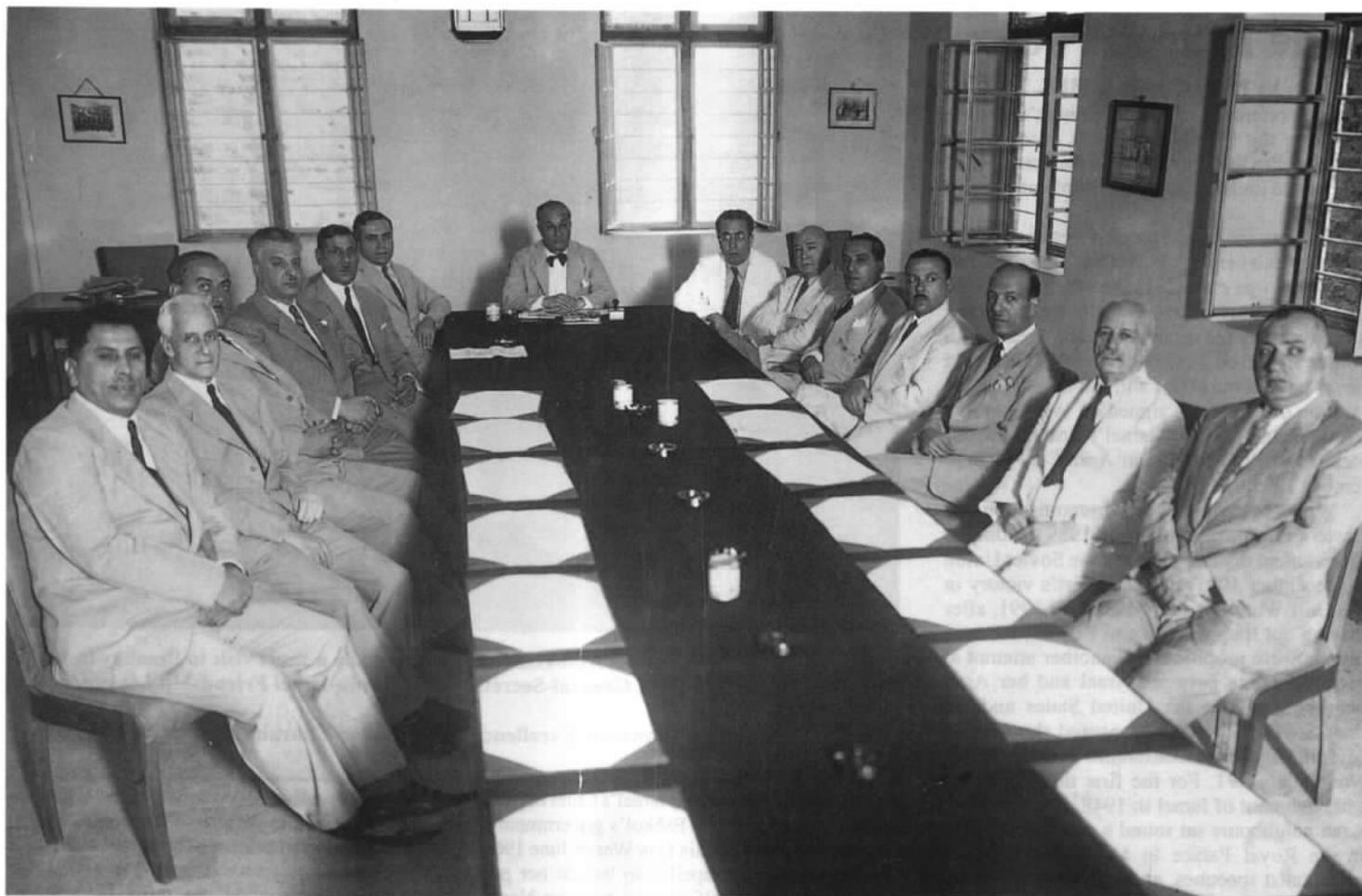
The affairs of the Chamber were managed by an Administrative Committee composed of

not less than 15 and not more than 18 members, to be elected from the merchants who have joined the Chamber and who possessed special qualifications. The Administrative Committee selected from among its members a president, vice-president and secretary for a term of one year who were eligible for re-election.

The first presidents of the Chamber were the British Bank managers until 1929, when Qassim al-Khedhairi was elected president. Abraham Haim H. Is'haq (1859-1957) was elected vice-president in 1935, and re-elected annually until 1948, when he was succeeded by Hesqail David Shemtob (1880-1954). Eliahou Hesqail al-Ani was the first honorary secretary (1926-1935). Ezra Eliahou Ani also held this position in 1939.

In 1938-1939 Membership of the Baghdad Chamber consisted of 212 Jews, 81 Sunni Moslems, 87 Shi'i Moslems, 43 Christians, 6 Kurds and 9 Subbis.

In the 1930's more than half of the members of the Administrative Committee were Jews. Among the prominent merchants and bankers who formed the Committee in those decades we may cite Khedhoury Lawee, Rahmin Masri, Shaoul Shashoua (and after his death his son Menashi Shashoua), Khedhoury Shukur, Saleh Elisha Sassoon, Sion Shelomo Aboudi, Yamen Shasha, Ya'coub Yusuf Iny (father of the well-known philanthropist Frank Iny), Jacob Mukamal, Abraham Mukamal, Gourgi Shalom Levy, Haron Shamash, Joseph Moshi, etc.



Administrative Committee of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce, 1946.

By Courtesy Mrs. Violet Shamash of Milan

(Left to right): Hafidh al-Qadhi; Ezra Ani; Muhammad Tayib; Abraham Mukamal; Abdul Aziz al Baghdadi; Mhd. Jawad Ja'far; Kamel al-Khedhairi (president); Abdul Sattar Qadduri; Hesqail Shemtob; Haron Shamash; Kadhim Makkiyah; Sabri al-Tuaimah; Abraham Haim; Abdul Hadi al-Chalabi ●

A prominent member of the Basrah Chamber of Commerce for many years was Hesqail Soffer, father of the well-known financier Sasson Soffer of Geneva.

I was appointed chief executive of the Baghdad Chamber in 1935, first under the title of assistant secretary and then director. Before that, I had served as secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and controller-general of Telephones. I served in the Chamber more than ten years, and edited its monthly journal. At the same time I was acting controller of the Commercial Exchange and, during the World War, I served as secretary to the Supply Committee. I was delegated in 1937 as assistant commissioner of Iraq to the Exposition Internationale of Paris. In 1944 I was a member of the Iraqi delegation to the International Business Conference held at Rye, New York. I stayed in the USA for six months and gave talks on the economics of Iraq at the New York Association for Trade and Industry and other institutions, I also spoke on the radio and briefed the Department of State.

I left the service of the Chamber at the end of 1945 and was succeeded by my assistant Ya'cov Belboul (Lev) who remained as Director until 1951 when he left Iraq in the Mass Exodus.

The Baghdad Chamber of Commerce faded away in 1964 when the Republican Government nationalised foreign trade and industry ●

I was thrilled to have seen a picture of my mother, nee Flora Murad, when she was only 14 and attending the Alliance School in Baghdad, when she saw that photo she was delirious!

Through your publication, you are "technically" reviving the diaspora of a great community. One has just got to read on and there pops a name or a picture of a long forgotten relative, a fellow student or a friend – be they in Australia or Austria, the United States or the United Kingdom, etc ●

New York

Fuad Baruch

I found your journal very interesting, specifically, as I was born in Jerusalem and grew up among Jewish people who emigrated at that time from Iraq.

I wish you much success in your devoted work and efforts for your lovely Community ●

**M. Hacohen – Consul General
Israel Embassy, London**

Attached is a cheque for the sum of \$175 as follows:

1) \$75 for the complete volume of *The Scribe* from No.1.

2) \$100 for my appreciation of the wonderful and outstanding Journal you provide all the Iraqi Jewish people on their culture and their traditions ●

New York

Saeed Herdoon

The last day of April is a big holiday in Sweden and we usually drive to our country house, after the long winter, to work in the garden. This year, for the first time in 150 years, it snowed the last two days and we had a few inches of snow.

I decided to stay at home and finish reading the last issue of *The Scribe*. It took me almost half the day, and I wondered how long it must have taken you to write your articles and edit such a fantastic publication ●

Stockholm

Salim Dangoor

I am a Canadian citizen who had escaped from Iraq to Iran in 1950.

I was very surprised to read in *Iraq – My Testimony* by Esther Mercado about my attempted escape to Iran and return to Baghdad, as all routes were closed. Esther was my old classmate and I recently met her in Israel after 40 years of separation. It took us both some time to overcome our emotions and recount our life experiences ●

Montreal

Claire Sayegh

We wish to thank you for the regular delivery of *The Scribe*. We thoroughly enjoy it and save it ●

Ra'anana, Israel David and Seemah Saul

The Peace Process

by Percy Gourgey, MBE.

With reference to Moshe Kahtan's leading article in the March issue, it is necessary to consider the background of the current peace process, to understand its full implications and potential.

The current peace process between Israel and her Arab neighbours has had many ups and downs, as was expected when the talks began just over two years ago in Oslo. Its most constructive outcome is Israel's Peace Treaty with Jordan signed on 26 October 1994. This would never have come about without the prior Declaration of Principles signed on Washington's White House Lawn by Israel's Prime Minister Rabin and PLO Chairman Arafat on 13 September 1993.

With the collapse of communism in the Eastern Europe revolutions in 1989 (leading to the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991) and the West's victory in the Gulf War of January-February 1991, after driving out Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the conditions were propitious for another attempt at securing peace between Israel and her Arab neighbours. Thus the United States and the then Soviet Union co-sponsored the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference in October and November 1991. For the first time since the establishment of Israel in 1948, Israel and her Arab neighbours sat round a conference table in the Royal Palace in Madrid, made their maximalist speeches, and no-one walked out. As a journalist there, I was impressed by the determination of all concerned to arrive at a settlement. It was envisaged in three stages, the opening session (completed at the time with speeches from the American and Soviet presidents and leaders of all delegations), the bilateral negotiations, and the multilateral negotiations later.

As this process made little progress after a year, the Israeli government, elected in June 1992, embarked on the secret talks in Oslo culminating in the historic ceremony on the White House Lawn. It was because King Hussein of Jordan was a few yards behind his grandfather, King Abdullah, when he was assassinated in 1951 by Palestinian Arab extremists, that Hussein feared for his life if they thought that he was going to do a secret deal with Israel behind their backs. The peace treaty with Jordan, signed by King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin in the presence of President Clinton and many others, including Likud leaders, is making great progress now.

The grand precedent for it was the crucial Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt of March 1979, concluded by Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat, sponsored by US President Carter, after proper security arrangements were made for Israel's total withdrawal from the Sinai peninsula.

The main obstacle in the current process is Syria demanding Israel's total withdrawal from the Golan Heights, without ensuring proper security arrangements for Israel. Another obstacle is that of the PLO Authority in Gaza and Jericho, unable or unwilling to control Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel. As Shimon Peres, Israel's Foreign Minister said on 2 July after many hours of talks with Arafat, "I can only state that we will make absolutely no concession on issues relating to security." He was merely reiterating the present labour government's stand on security ever since the current peace process started. This is not



Mr Ephraim Doweik Israel Ambassador to India, made a short visit to Bombay last June where Ms Sophy Kelly, the General-Secretary of the Indo-Israel Friendship League, hosted a lunch in his honour.

The above picture shows his Excellency Ambassador Ephraim Doweik with Ms Sophy Kelly●

surprising since Rabin was Israel's Chief of Staff, and Peres a Minister in Eshkol's government at the critical time of the Six Day War of June 1967, when Israel was compelled to launch her preemptive strikes in self defence because Nasser sought to invade Israel, Jordan shelled West Jerusalem from her base in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and Syria attacked Israel's northern cities and settlements from the Golan Heights. It is essential to recall these events, as also the Arab aggression against Israel in 1948 in flagrant violation of the UN Resolution of 29 November 1947 providing for a Jewish State and an Arab State in mandatory (western) Palestine accepted by the World Zionist Organisation. Subsequent Arab aggression in 1956, 1968-9, 1973 and Iraq's scud missile attacks in 1991, clearly indicate the need for Israel's security, often overlooked by western and other pro-Arab elements.

Jews in Israel and the Diaspora, and her well-wishers, need to mount an intensive public relations campaign to counter the ignorance and prejudice that prevail resulting in unjustified pressure exerted against her. Public criticism of Israel's policies by Jews and Zionists are welcomed by pro-Arabs as boosting their case. Are the former happy with this? Israel's critics offer no constructive alternative to ending a permanent state of war against her. It is quite conceivable that as Begin's Likud government withdrew from the bulk of territories seized by Israel in 1967 for her self-defence, after commendable security arrangements were made, the present Labour-led government would do the same, as mindful of Israel's security interests as its predecessor was in the seminal victory of 1967 under Eshkol, and in 1973 under Golda Meir. Israel has complete justice on her side and one must know the facts●

Scribe: The peace process would make more sense if carried to its logical conclusion – namely, a federation of the whole region, with Israel, Jordan and Palestine as its nucleus. This is necessary to take care of the eternal threat from a top-heavy Iraq.

I was greatly moved to see in the last issue of *The Scribe* the picture of the late Khatoun, which inspires goodness of heart and charitable spirit. She represents a virtuous generation that has almost disappeared. I admired the effort to perpetuate her memory, and was inspired to write the following verses which I present to the family with my sincere condolences●

London

Jihad

د صفة على خاتون -

دمى الله خاتونا فلبت نذره
وخاتون لانت للاله سميعا
كريمة اصل ذات خلقى وسود
فني كل خير مارسته بديقا
فيا آل "دنكدر" عزاتو بنفقا
فهذا قضاء الله فينا جميعا
مكونا لها الذكر الجميل فذكرها
سيعبه على مر الزمان ربيعا

Congratulations for the excellent work and devotion you are putting in the publication of *The Scribe* which is a great joy to read.

Please add to your mailing list my Uncle's name who is enthusiastic to read your journal on a regular basis●

London

Edward Obadiah



Alliance School for Girls 20.5.1939.

Certificat D'etudes Primaires by courtesy of Violette Shasha

Back row (standing) L to R.: 1) Habiba Haron; 2) Fahima Shebairou; 3) Evelyn Menashe; 4) Violette Mikhael (Shasha); 6) Violette Peress.

2nd row (standing) L to R.: 1) Serafine Haron; 2) Louise Levy (Chitayat); 3) Louise Shashoua (Birshan); 4) - ; 5) Suzette Denous (Shemie); 6) Khatoun Masri (Shemtob); 7) Rachel Abdou (Abdel Ezeir); 8) - ; 9) Daisy Chitayat; 10) - .

3rd row (sitting) L to R.: Helene Ishayek; 2) Victoria Birshan (Naji Sasson); 3) Miss Cohen (Mrs Yahya) English teacher; 4) Louise Dangoor; 5) Mme Darwish (French teacher); 6) Violette Bakhsh; 7) Violette Somekh.

Front row (sitting): 1) - ; 2) Henry Laredo; 3) Henriette Meir.

I enjoy reading *The Scribe* which I pass on to friends. Through it I gained valuable information about former friends and acquaintances who are scattered all over the world.

Your articles are impressive, especially our old Arabic proverbs●

Haifa

I am writing to thank you for sending me issues of *The Scribe* for the past few years and to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading your fascinating journal. They have given me an insight into the warm lifestyle of Babylonian Jewry – both historical and contemporary – that I could not possibly have obtained from any other source.

On a broader note, I have learned a great deal about Sephardi life and attitudes, as well as the importance attached to family connections. In particular, I have been moved by the photos you print from time to time of boys and girls in Jewish schools. Perhaps some of the girls shown in the pictures (taken in 1925) were mothers to girls in the Alliance Girls' School shown in the photo taken in 1946.

A visit to my daughter in Hong Kong a year or so ago gave me an opportunity to have a clear look at the community there.

Although not a Sephardi myself, I was a little saddened to observe that the Sephardi atmosphere was being gradually eroded in favour of other Jewish cultures from America and Europe. But there is no doubt in my mind that the cultural and commercial influence of the original Baghdadi founders will last as long as the community and perhaps as long as Hong Kong itself●

Harrow, Middlesex

Monty Kolsky

A friend of mine lent me your March edition of *The Scribe* which I found to be very inspiring and interesting in view of my Iraqi background.

I was born in Basra in 1923, the fourth child conceived by my parents, Joseph and Rima Mathalon. My paternal grandparents were Menashe and Rachel Mathalon. My maternal grandparents were Shaoul and Aziza Kadoorie. Shaoul Kadoorie was brother of Eliahou and Eli Kadoorie who had left for Shanghai and later to Hong Kong. My mother's maternal uncle was Yacoub Noah.

My father died in 1929 following which, my mother, two brothers and sisters emigrated to Alexandria, Egypt, where we resided from 1930 through 1957. In the early fifties, we lost our Iraqi nationality along with the property we had in Basra. We were able to emigrate to the United States in 1961 and have become American citizens.

Even though I left Iraq when I was only a child, yet I retain a nostalgia for my roots●

Saul Mathalon

Woodland Hills, California

Pray to God as if you see Him. For even if though you can't see Him – surely, God can see you●

Hadith

Violette Shasha (nee Mikhael)

As a volunteer of our new Isaac Waldman Jewish Public Library, housed in beautiful quarters in Vancouver's Jewish Community Centre, I have been asked to write and request that you so kindly place our library on your mailing list in order that we may receive regular copies of *The Scribe*. We know that Vancouver's thriving Sephardic Community, as well as all library patrons, will appreciate having your publication so readily available●

Vancouver

Sharon Isaacson

My family, the Sauls and Judahs originally of Baghdad who now live in the UK, USA, Australia and Israel are avid readers and adherents of *The Scribe* and the Foundation's philosophy.

My Uncle Sauly Saul of Albuquerque has contributed reflections of our family life in Burma●

Denver Co. USA

Ben Moses

I find your journal very informative and interesting, it brings to us the scattered memories of our childhood and our Iraqi social life as a big Jewish Community in Iraq. Keep going●

New York

Latif Diagam

Babylonian Jewry

By Mordechai Ben Porat

Translated from Hebrew
by Maurice Shohet

1. The Babylonian Jewish Heritage Center – Israel

In the town of "Or Yehuda" near Tel Aviv, where 50% of its inhabitants are of Babylonian Jewish descent, a heritage research center and a museum were erected more than six years ago, and both have been engaged in a research on Babylonian Jewish history and traditions. The purpose of these institutions are:

1. To safekeep, gather and collect all the available documents about the Iraqi Jewish community, whose majority immigrated in the fifties to Israel, and left behind its possessions, testimonials, photographs and other documents that authenticate its past.

2. To open a window for the people of Israel to its tribes, both in the State of Israel and abroad, through which it would be possible to look at the life, culture and contributions of a Jewish Community in an Arab Country.

This center is the only one of its kind in Israel, and for that matter, in the whole world. More than 129 thousand people have visited the center so far. About 60% were Israeli students. Others included researchers and youth delegations from abroad. The center has progressed to a level where it currently receives a variety of requests for information from institutions in Japan, Russia, USA, Canada and others about the Babylonian Jewry's history, culture, etc. During the Gulf War, the center became the focus of information and interest for that period due to the tested knowledge of the members of the Babylonian Jewish community in Israel and their interest about Iraq in general. The center contributes to the normalization of the Jewish traditions by strictly maintaining that such contributions represent the whole spectrum of the rainbow of the people of Israel. This will hopefully prevent a domination of one tradition over the others.

2. A Brief History

The beginning of the Jewish settlement in Babylon was the outcome of this community's exile from the kingdom of Yehuda, after the destruction of the first Temple and the loss of the Jewish people's independence in their land. Those exiled Jews quickly adapted themselves to their new environment and established significant and important communities. So when Koresh, the King of Persia, conquered Babylon, he permitted those Jews among them who were willing to leave the country and go back to the land of Israel to rebuild the Temple, to do so. Many of them took advantage of this offer, while others preferred to remain in Babylon.

The cultural and religious success of the Babylonian Jewry reached its peak about 750 years after the destruction of the first Temple in Jerusalem. At the end of the second century C.E., important and large midrashim began to flourish such as NAHARDEA, SURRA, and POMPADITTA.

With the completion of the Babylonian Talmud (in 499 C.E.), these Yeshivoth served as religious and spiritual centers for the World

Jewry. The Mesopotamian Jewish Community's contribution became particularly important at the time of the occupation of that land by the Moslems.

In the middle of the eighth century, highly talented Geonim emerged among the Babylonian Jewish Community, while the Jews in the land of Israel were at a lower cultural knowledge. During the 10th century, the exiles in Babylon had already established a Rabbinical decisive authority in all spiritual and religious matters to serve Congregations in Israel, Egypt, North Africa and Spain. At the beginning of the eleventh century, the Abbasid Caliphs' power began to diminish and so was the standing of the Babylonian Jewry.

The Mongolian occupation of Iraq during the 13th century brought on the downfall of the Babylonian Jewry. But in the beginning of the 17th century, this community succeeded to re-establish its contacts with other Jewish communities within the Ottoman Empire. In the nineteenth century, and following the important economic prosperities that came about in the aftermath of the opening of the Suez canal, Iraq's trade and commerce expanded to the Far East, and Iraqi Jewish merchants and traders had a good share of this business development.

In the year 1864, the first Alliance Israelite School (Kol Yisrael Haverim) was established in Iraq for the purpose of teaching secular studies to the Jewish community's children and to expose them to the western civilization. This "education revolution" took place in spite of the resistance that the Alliance administration faced from certain Babylonian Rabbis who considered the schools' training a deviation from the traditional Babylonian Jewish heritage. As a result, the Jewish community gradually began to change its purely Eastern character and members of this community began to travel to Constantinople in Turkey as well as to other European capitals to complete their education and to learn a profession. They came back as doctors, engineers, pharmacists, businessmen and merchants, and they heavily contributed to the social, economic and civilised life of the Iraqi Jewish community.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I and the British occupation of Iraq, served as an ample opportunity for the Jews to demonstrate their capabilities. They contributed their share in helping the British mandate authorities to lay the foundation for the new Iraqi administration. A delegation of Iraqi Jews, among other communities, met with the British Colonial representatives and gave its support for the crowning of Feisal the first as the King of Iraq. Sir Sasson Yeheskel was appointed as the first Iraqi finance minister, and Mr Abraham El-Kebir was appointed as director-general of the same ministry. The basis for the Iraqi Judiciary system was formed by members of the Jewish community, as well as the Post Office, Telegraph, Railways and Customs. The Jews cooperated with their Arab compatriots and did their utmost to create the image of the emerged kingdom that began to rule Iraq at the time. They gave their best potentials and qualifications for the success of the new regime.

The "Golden Period" between the Arabs and Jews in Iraq lasted for ten years (1923-1933 when King Feisal died), during which the Jewish community established a chain of schools, hospitals, and clinics. The community was well represented in the Iraqi parliament. Seven Jews out of 120 members were elected to the Iraqi legislative body, as well as one Jewish

leader was elected to the Senate. This situation infused a deep sleep and false feelings for a bright future. In 1932, at the termination of the British Mandate, the Iraqi national fanaticism increased and troubles began to foment. With the rise of Hitler, a connection was established between Arab militants in Iraq, and the Nazis in Germany.

The militaristic state of Iraq and the establishment of the State of Israel, heavily influenced the Jews' consideration to leave their country of birth. Many fled to Iran and from there to Israel. They were assisted by the underground Zionist Pioneer movements. The mass exit reached its peak success in the legal operation of EZRA and NEHEMIA in 1950-1951, which almost ended the Jewish exile in Iraq.

Today, the Babylonian Jewish community are roughly estimated to total about 300,000 worldwide, out of which about 260,000 are living in Israel. Members of this community who are living outside Israel, succeeded in many endeavours that they took on their initiative, and excelled in medicine, science, technology and various business fields. Those who were integrated in the Israeli society, made a great contribution to their own welfare as well as to that of the State of Israel. They were able to achieve important goals. They were able to pride themselves on having five Iraqi-born ministers, and an Israeli-born minister of Iraqi descent, within various Israeli governments from different parties. At least another 15 members of the Knesset of Iraqi descent have served so far in the Israeli parliament. Several senior military personnel from the community also served in the Israeli Defence Forces, and one reached the rank of the Chief of the General Staff. Also 3 chief rabbis, who were born in Iraq or of Iraqi descent, have served for almost 38 years since Israel was established as a State. Other professionals, such as judges, doctors, university professors, scientists, spiritual leaders, authors, writers, poets, businessmen and economic experts have their major share in the contribution to the success of the Israeli society.

Scribe: The size of the community in 1950 was exactly the same as that at the time of Koresh, 2500 years earlier●



Torat Street, a typical Koucha in the old Jewish quarter of Baghdad●

deb-deb skins (like grapefruit but thicker) were made into jam.

In winter oranges were purchased, squeezed by hand (as no machines were available), mixed with sugar and made into *sharbat*, bottled to be used in summer for guests. Seville oranges were squeezed and bottled to be used for cooking all year round. Tamarind or pomegranate seeds were used for cooking also.

In summer, the season of dates, a man comes to the house with a big press and makes *silan*, date syrup from dates.

Nothing was bought from the shops. Everything was home made.

Rose water and orange blossom water were distilled at home.

Every Thursday it was the custom to bake at home various pastries and bread.

There was no central heating, no electric heaters, but they had a charcoal brazier (*jafoof*) in the living room. They used to grill chestnuts on the embers.

Breakfast used to be either scrambled eggs and cheese, clotted cream with date syrup.

In winter, being very cold and having no heating facilities, breakfast used to be something to keep the body warm. Rice and *mung bean* porridge; rice pudding, boiled dried black-eyed beans with Seville oranges squeezed on top at the time of eating; cheese and onion stew.

Tea was brewed on a samovar.

Wall decorations were usually either family portraits or valuable Persian rugs.

Hand-embroidered linens were used as loose covers for settees and bedspreads.

Saturdays used to be the reunion of the family at the grandmother's house (*Beit Setti* or *Beit Yemma*) of children and grandchildren.

New Year: (*Reshana*). In every home they used to slaughter a sheep as a sacrifice, and the meat was distributed to the poor.

On New Year's eve, sugar is used at the table instead of salt.

Special blessings are said over the following before dinner: Apple jam, lamb's head meat, spinach, chives, courgettes, pomegranate, dates, *lubia*.

We don't cook sour food for the New Year.

Yom Kippur: The head of the family used to offer for atonement a live cockerel for a son and a hen for a daughter and reads a blessing while rotating the poultry over their heads. More recently money was offered to the poor instead. Usually the dinner before fasting is chicken soup and rice. After dinner tea is drunk with lemon juice so that it stops the thirst (as it used to be very hot in Baghdad on Yom Kippur). Then, everyone goes walking to synagogue. (Synagogues were not very far).

The next day (Yom Kippur). Prayers did not occupy the whole day and there was an afternoon break of 3 hours for a nap.

For the little girls and boys it was fun because they could eat.

To break the fast, it was and still is the custom to make *hariri*, which consists of the extracted milk of ground almonds (Daisy Iny's book p.6) or (Alice Shashou's recipe p.82). Before the liquidizer was known, *hariri* used to be squeezed by hand in a cheese cloth, which took a long time; but now in the liquidizer it is much easier. Also a table full of different drinks were prepared, like pomegranate juice, lemon juice *sharbat*, rose water *sharbat*, tea and also cakes and *makhbuz*.

After an hour or two, if one is still hungry, there is cooked chicken from the day before.

Succoth: In every house they used to build a *succa* a few days before the feast and it remains till after the feast. Houses used to be very big and the courtyards opened to the sky. Later when the houses were built in a more European style with big gardens, the *succa* was built out on the veranda. The *succa* was covered on top with palm branches and also on the sides. Curtains were hanged all around the three sides of the *succa*. Benches covered with white hand-embroidered loose covers were put inside on the three sides (called *takht*); a big table also for kiddush and dinner. On one side was put a small chair – "the chair of Elijah" – with prayer books. Some used to sleep inside the *succa*.

The night of the 6th day of Succoth, prayers were read the whole night (*hathima*); and, to stay awake, women used to twist small pieces of dough into grain – like shapes called "*sheiriyi*", dried and cooked with rice.

In Baghdad during the whole summer it doesn't rain, but always the first drop of rain comes on Succoth. It was known among the Moslems that when it rains, they know it is Succoth, which they call "Id al-Arazeel".

As for the bread, we didn't have *challah* in Baghdad, but instead a large round flat bread which was baked in a *tannur*, clay oven (see page 120 of Daisy Iny's book), lit with wood and the bread is stuck on the sides, and when ready, they peel off.

New Year of Trees: All sorts of dried fruits were bought, also coconut, fresh fruits, and all arranged in plates on a table. It used to be fun for the children, especially the next day when they took a bag full of goodies to school to share with their friends.

Purim: For Purim we make *malfouf*, *baklawa* and *macaroons* and other sweets. Sweets were sent to close relatives.

Brass bands used to go round to Jewish houses and play popular tunes.

Chickpeas (*tawa*) *sambusak* and *zingula* were also made on this occasion. Sometimes the *sambusak* was dipped in eggs and fried again.

Passover: We used to do spring cleaning and the night before we used to remove all traces of *hametz*. For matzo we used to bake thin crisp bread at special bakeries.

For *haroseth* we used date syrup with ground walnut. Details as given in the Baghdadian Haggadah.

Shavuot: The custom is to make *kahi*, which is puff pastry fried and eaten with sugar or syrup.

9th of Ab: From the 1st to the 9th of Ab no meat is eaten. On the eve of "Teshaa be Ab" *emghees* was made from crisp thin bread "*jradeq*", crushed and mixed with melted butter and sugar. On Pesah and Succoth, after morning prayers, it was de rigueur for men to exchange visits. During the week, Hol Hamoed, women used to visit the family.

In the good old days the King's representative in the Government and the Diplomatic Corp used to visit the Chief Rabbi at home.

People used to buy new clothes for these festivals.

When a baby is born the *sitti* is celebrated on the eve of the 6th day. A mixture of popcorn, nuts and sweets is prepared and distributed in individual bags. A girl is named on that occasion. An amulet consisting of a double gallnut with a turquoise bead was attached to the clothes of mother and baby against the evil eye.

For a boy, in addition, on the eve of the 8th day, a high chair with ornaments and prayer books, covered with gold embroidered cloth and rue leaves (*ezdab*) put on top. The family gather for the *Aqd El-Yas*.

Brith milah is performed on the 8th day and the baby boy named. The father's mother presents the baby to his father or his grandfather, who holds him on his lap for circumcision.

Barmitzvah was celebrated at home on a weekday by putting on the *tefilim* followed with a party in the presence of family and friends.

Engagement was considered a binding contract. To break it would require divorce.

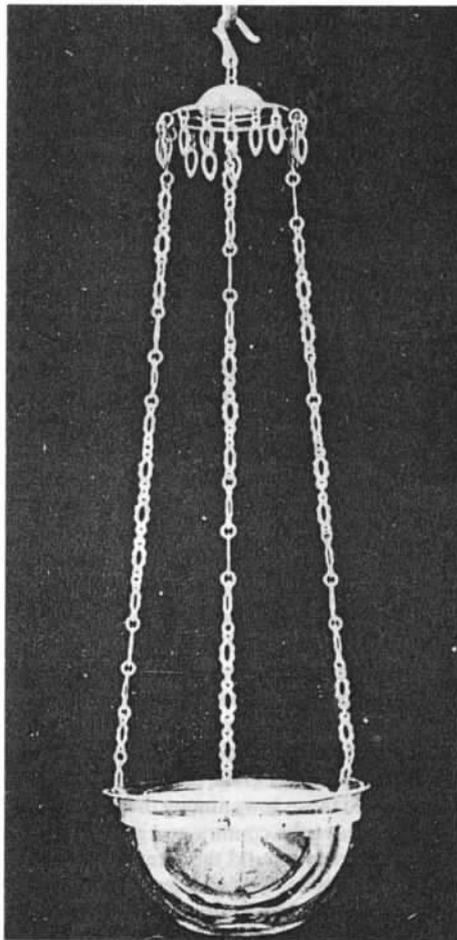
After that, preparations were made for the wedding.

The *henni* party took place two nights before the wedding at the bride's home. And henna paste was put on her ten fingers and on the small finger of the groom. Wedding songs were recited by the *Deqaqa*.

The **wedding ceremony** took place at synagogue where men were offered small bouquets of flowers and a dinner party was held at the newlyweds home for close relatives and friends. The seven wedding blessings (*Shebae Brakhoth*) was recited for the first week.

The first Saturday after the wedding, the couple had an open house for ladies to visit the nuptial home.

For information about superstitions, see *Scribe* No.46, page 4●



Qerraye – Seven wick oil light for Shabbat

I want to express my gratitude for a job well done in the service of the Iraqi Jewish Community. Your publication is certainly the best that I know of. Please accept my congratulations●

New York

Dr. Joseph M. Koreen

Babylonian Jewry

By Mordechai Ben Porat

Translated from Hebrew
by Maurice Shohet

1. The Babylonian Jewish Heritage Center – Israel

In the town of "Or Yehuda" near Tel Aviv, where 50% of its inhabitants are of Babylonian Jewish descent, a heritage research center and a museum were erected more than six years ago, and both have been engaged in a research on Babylonian Jewish history and traditions. The purpose of these institutions are:

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The Mongolian occupation of Iraq during the 13th century brought on the downfall of the Babylonian Jewry. But in the beginning of the 17th century, this community succeeded to re-establish its contacts with other Jewish communities within the Ottoman Empire. In the nineteenth century, and following the important economic prosperities that came about in the aftermath of the opening of the Suez canal, Iraq's trade and commerce expanded to the Far East, and Iraqi Jewish merchants and traders had a good share of this business development.

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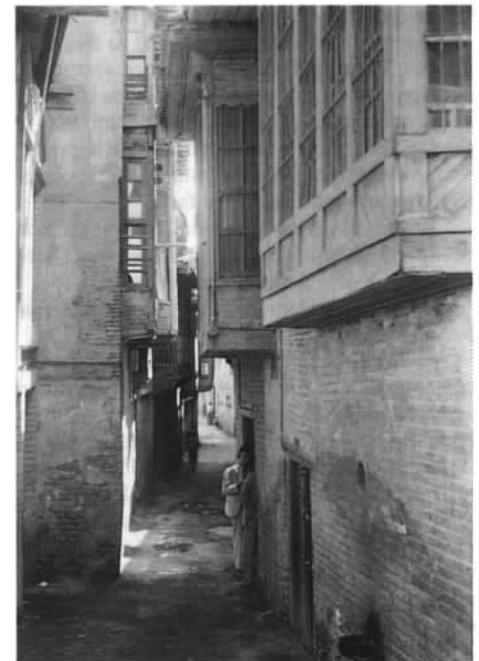
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Scribe: The size of the community in 1950 was exactly the same as that at the time of Koresh, 2500 years earlier●



Torat Street, a typical Koucha in the old Jewish quarter of Baghdad●

Born on the exodus flight

Last year, an evening to salute the Pilots of the mass aliya from Iraq of 1950-51 was held at the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center in Or Yehuda.

The event was attended by President Ezer Weitzman and other high dignitaries, as well as by several pilots who took part in the operation, which had been negotiated by Shlomo Hillel and Roni Barnet.

Stewardess Ilana Marcus told the assembly how during the flight one woman went into labour and gave birth to a baby. But, she continued, "in my excitement I forgot to find out if the baby was a boy or a girl. I have tried to locate the mother and the baby, but without success."

As Ilana was telling her tale, to everyone's surprise a man in his forties went up onto the platform. "My name is David Cohen, I was born on 5 August 1950 on that flight. I was always known as the one who was born on the *tayara* (aeroplane). At last this evening I am finally meeting those whom I have to thank for my being here today." Ilana and all present were greatly moved by the appearance of "the new born baby"●

Jerusalem is ours

King David established Jerusalem as his capital and for the Jews to eternity. It is ours and we will never under any circumstances share it or give it away. For thousands of years Jews all over the world turn several times a day during their prayers towards Jerusalem, a reminder to the world at large that we cling to it and we will never surrender it.

As for the building of the Mosque of Omar which is on the site of the Jewish Temple, it must be considered illegal because as a conqueror of the land no one could utter a word of protest.

So let the Arabs forget about Jerusalem and choose another spot for their capital. Let them take away the whole structure of the mosque and put it wherever they wish; it will be a monument to enhance the prestige of their capital.

Montreal **Munir Ata**

Scribe: It is noteworthy that Moslems in Jerusalem pray towards Mecca which shows the weak religious connection they have with our city.

To emphasise the continuity of Islam with the Mosaic Revelation, the first Qibla was Jerusalem, and prayers were directed towards it.

When Islam became firmly established in Arabia, the Kaaba was cleared of the old idols, Mohammed himself in his lifetime abolished the Jerusalem Qibla and directed prayers towards Mecca.

When Omar built a structure over the site of the Temple, it was to protect and venerate a Holy Jewish site, and not to claim it as a Moslem shrine.

The Aqsa Mosque is in fact a long distance away from the Dome of the Rock.

Palestinian Arabs try to trace their line to the early Canaanites. This has no historical validity whatsoever. In fact, the language of Canaan was Hebrew and not Arabic.

The children of Israel who conquered Canaan under Joshua were returning to their land of origin●



Above: Mordechai Ben Porat with Pilots and Shlomo Hillel shaking hands with Ilana●

The Hittites

I find your article about the Hittites very interesting. I think they contributed a great deal to the Jewish blood stream.

Abraham must have had many encounters with them when he tarried in Haran on his journey to Canaan. That was also Hittite Territory. They occupied the highlands of Syria – Palestine, but then vanished from history. They must have been totally absorbed by the Jewish/Canaanite inhabitants.

Then there is our heroine, Batsheba, whom I would speculate was a Hittite in Hebrew clothing. The bible identifies her husband as Uriah the Hittite whose name indicates that he was a follower of Yahweh.

Batsheba's name means the daughter of seven. In ancient Mediterranean mythology the number seven is considered lucky, which may have been based on the seven bright stars of the Dipper in the Constellation Ursa Major.

Batsheba was obviously determined to become the Queen Mother, and she succeeded.

Montreal **Naim Mahlab**

Naim Dangoor writes:

According to Josephus, the 1st Century Jewish general and historian, the number seven was venerated by Abraham and his generation to symbolise the sun, the moon and the five planets known to them at the time. Abraham coincided the movements of the heavenly bodies as proof of the existence of God who was manipulating them up there in Heaven. These seven objects remain commemorated in the seven days of the week – Sunday, Monday (Lundi), Tuesday (Mardi – Mars), Wednesday (Mercredi – Mercury), Thursday (Jeudi – Jupiter), Friday (Vendredi – Venus) and Saturday (Saturn).

Batsheba was not a Hittite but a Hebrew woman●

Thank you for sending me *The Scribe* at the request of my friend Samir Naqqash.

In future, please send it to me in Arabic if possible. Otherwise, continue to send it in English●

Malmo, Sweden

Morad Kolapak

Churchilliana

The Communist slogan:

"From each according to his ability – to each according to his needs", was rendered by Churchill as:

"From each according to his laziness, to each according to his greed!"

When Churchill was with the Liberal Party, he described Conservative policy as: Dear food for the millions, cheap labour for the millionaires.

This is being used by Tony Blair in the run-up to the next general election●

Ishtar Gate, Babylon

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. It houses the restored Ishtar Gate of Babylon.

They did a superb job of reconstructing the gate from the rubble they found. It is really a very impressive structure and should appeal to anyone who has an interest in that part of the world.

Also restored was a cuneiform tablet that states that the builder of the gate was none other than our erstwhile "friend" Nabuchadnessar. This would date the gate to the time of the exile and may have impressed our ancestors.

One item I found interesting was a listing of the months in the Babylonian calendar, which are similar to the Jewish months. It reveals how closely Jewish and Babylonian cultures are related●

Montreal

Naim S. Mahlab

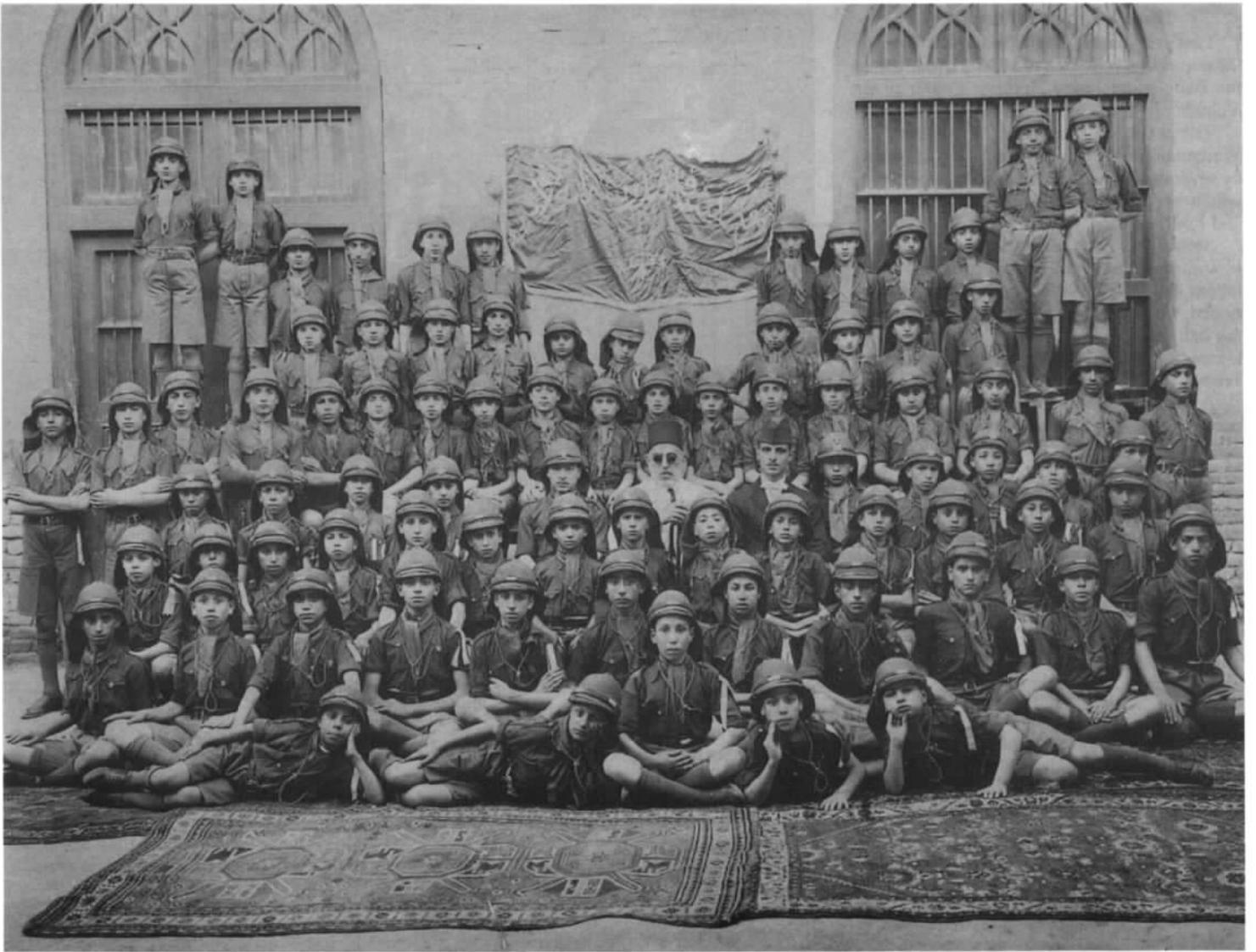
I was informed by Samir Naqqash that you publish an interesting journal with old photographs of Iraq. I would enjoy reading about our Iraqi heritage and seeing the ancient pictures. As I have myself written books on literature and other subjects. Please put me on your mailing list●

Dr. Adnan Al-Rashid
King Saud University, Ryath

I continue to find *The Scribe* a most interesting and spiritually valuable publication●

Bat-Yam, Israel

Judith Dattner



1926 – Boy Scouts of the Taawen (Rahel Shahmoon) School, Baghdad. In the centre, Headmaster Shimoon Muallem Nessim and Sports teacher Tawfiq Heskel Basri ●

Joseph family reunion

The Joseph family, one of the first Jewish families in North America, has organised a family reunion in Montreal from August 11 to 15.

The gathering marked the 100th anniversary of *The Moon*, an annual family publication which was founded in 1896 by A. Pinto Joseph, the great-nephew of Aaron Hart and the great grandson of Henry Joseph who came to Canada in 1760 and 1770 respectively.

The Joseph family were founding members of the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue, where the main get-together was held on August 13.

An exhibition of photographs and family artifacts was displayed and several members of the clan made speeches and provided some of the entertainment.

Members of the Pinto and de Sola families, who are related to the Josephs through 19th century marriages, were also there.

Approximately 150 people from across Canada, the United States, Israel and Europe attended the reunion, which was three years in the planning.

Activities included open houses at several locales, as well as tours of Quebec City and the Spanish and Portuguese Cemetery on Mount Royal ●

أحبة من قاري

بِإِقَامِكُمْ ، يَا نَعِيمٍ ؟
فَاذْكُرُوا الْوَدَّ الْقَدِيمَ
بِحُضَائِرِ وَنَعِيمٍ
غَابَ فِي لَيْلٍ لِهَيْمٍ
وَدَّ مَا رَأَى سَلِيمٍ
رَفَرَتْ مَثَلِ النَّعِيمِ
مِنْ حَبِيدٍ وَقَدِيمٍ
كُلٌّ مِنْ فِيهِمْ حَلِيمٍ
لِلْمُورِيِّ الْوَدَّ الْعَظِيمِ
رَبَّنَا السَّامِي الْكَرِيمِ
نَنْ هُوِيَ الْفُكْرُ السَّقِيمِ
مِنْ لَدُنِ رَبِّ رَحِيمِ

هل وجود الدهر يوماً
أُتِمُّوا أَهْلَ وِفَاءٍ
نَقَرُوا " الْكَرِيمِ " نَخْلِي
فَبِجَا أَهْبَارِ دَهْرٍ
عَمَّ صَحَابِ كَهْمٍ لِي
وَالصَّوَابِ تَبَدَّتْ
ذِكْرِيَاتِ عَالِمَاتِ
دَمٍ لَنَا ، يَا فُخْرَ قَوْمٍ
مِنْ فَطْرِ الْوَدِّ وَيَرْعَى
نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى
أَنْ يَصُوِّبَهُ الْقَلْبَ لِيَوْمًا
مِنْ عِبَادِ سَلَامًا



1925 – Boy Scouts of the Alliance School Baghdad ●



19.6.1937 – A graduating class at the Alliance School

Left to right (front row): Shlomo Ishayek; Mr Abdul Ahad; Mr Bonfils; Mr Sabbagh (assistant director); Mr Dayan; Jacob Menashi Mahlab.
 2nd row: Meir Abraham; Naim Eliahou; David Yoseph; Yoseph Ishak; Jamil Mashaal; Simon Moshi; Yoseph David; Gourji Abraham; Ezra Nissan.
 3rd row: Jacob Leb; Naim Shaoul; Victor Dabby; Rahamim Sulman; Jamil Aharon; Heskell Dangoor; Morris Saleh.
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Abridged from the lecture by Sasson Peress at the Jewish Community Center of Harrison, New York.

By now you all know I was born in Iraq, Mesopotamia, the Land between the Two Rivers. “Aram Naharayim”. Abraham and Sarah, our ancestors, were born there. So, it may surprise you, you are all from Iraq.

When I listened to a lecture on the German Kristalnacht of 1938, I realised how similar our experiences were, all the result of Nazi anti-Jewish activities.

Kristalnacht is etched in Jewish memory and history and rightly so because of the holocaust horrors that followed. Our night of terror rates perhaps as a small paragraph in Jewish history books. We were luckier. Our area then fell in Allied hands, and we finished the rest of the war years in peace.

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A coup by the pro-German faction, headed by Rashid Ali Al Gaitani, forced the young King Feisal – then about 4 years old – and his uncle the Regent – into exile. The pro-British ministers were replaced and the Iraqi army marched to Habbaniyah – where the British army camp was – to wage an open war.

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Business came to a standstill. Since it was mostly in Jewish hands, the Jews realizing the enormity of the situation, a tacit moratorium became acceptable among them – we all withdrew into our own shells trying to devise means of survival.

My father with me at his side buried Mother's valuables in the garden. He wanted me – then 16 years old and the oldest boy in the family – to know where they were in case we got separated.

One day Mother learned that my brother Albert, then 12 years old, was arrested. He was fair with red hair. A policeman thought he must be an English boy and brought him to the station. Mother did not want my father to be involved for fear that he might get into trouble. Trembling, she went to the police station to argue for his release – somehow managed to do so. In leaving she wanted to thank the Muslim officer in charge and told him “Merci”, the way she always thanked anyone at home. That almost started a storm. “Merci, merci – what is ‘merci’ why can't you talk like us?” But she got out of it. This may sound “funny” now – but imagine how she felt then!

A few days later my father was arrested and required someone to post bail for him. It was important not to go to jail as he might not come out of it.

He was accused of “sending money to India”. It was pointless to argue – first, there was no currency restriction or prohibition to remitting money to any place outside of the country. Besides, as father related it, he told the judge in charge that for over 20 years he had been importing goods (textiles) from India and how could he do so without paying by sending money to India.

A Jew could not be found or expected to accept the responsibility and the risks involved to bail out another Jew. Mother begged Dr. Chopanian, an Armenian doctor and friend who was for years a tenant in Uncle's building. He refused her request.

Father was resourceful. He asked for the Muslim porter in his office building – an illiterate, barefooted, but nice man we called “Khalil El Khanchi” and asked him to bail him out. “But, Uncle (so he called my father), I don't have any money for the bail.” Father asked him, “Don't you have our office in your hand?” He said “Yes.” “So what are you worried about?” This apparently convinced him, and Khalil, the porter, bailed out my father with his “thumbmark” on the court documents.

Meantime, the battle between the British and Iraqi forces was raging – the Germans did not provide the armed support that was expected. Apparently their war strategy changed, and they abandoned the objective of the Persian Gulf. Their focus changed to Russia which they invaded a month later in June '41.

By the end of May the British forces prevailed and the news spread out fast that the Iraqi army was returning to base defeated and the British forces were marching towards Baghdad. The rumour was that the Regent and the King were returned to their place and a pro-British government was being formed. We, the Jews, felt a tremendous burden was lifted and we could breathe more freely. But this was not

to happen. The mayhem was to follow.

It was the first day of Shavuoth. We went by taxi to visit my aunt who lived 3 miles from Baghdad Central. On coming back home that evening I told my father I wanted to go to the movies. I had been confined to the house too long and wanted to stretch out. He told me to leave it be that night and, in one of my rare moments of total obedience, I accepted his advice. Had I gone to the movies that night, as some of our unfortunate Jews did, I would not have returned alive. That very night the killings took place.

That night we heard bullets being fired all over. We did not know what to make of it. There was no broadcast nor any telephone communication. We learned later that Jews were being killed indiscriminately. They were pulled from buses and shot or stabbed by unruly armed youths.

My aunt's brother – Jacob Mussafi (18 years old) – ventured out that night, was stabbed and left bleeding in the street. His brother Joseph learned about it, risked his life, went out to fetch him – he was bleeding but not yet dead. He took him – how, I don't know – to the general hospital. The doctors and nurses there – Muslims all – finished him off.

My cousin Abraham Battat – 14 years old, was returning from his sister's house that evening by bus going to the heart of the Jewish quarter, tells me their bus was stopped by a gang of armed youths who ordered all the Jews in the bus to get out. There were five or six Jews including Abraham. They dragged out by force an elderly Jewish man and a Jewish lady and started beating them and later killed them. The bus driver, a Muslim, a decent man, knowing there were other Jews in the bus, pulled out at the risk of his life and saved the remaining ones in the bus.

In fairness I must state that a good many Muslims did not like what was happening to the Jews, and many risked life and property to provide shelter, succour, protection for Jewish friends and non-friends. We know that Mr. Orphaly, a prominent Muslim, hearing of the events, gathered his sons and his men, armed them, and stood at the gate of one Jewish quarter warning the armed raiders that he would shoot at them if they ventured in that Jewish district. They turned away.

I don't know exactly how many Jews were killed that night. The count ranges from 150 to 300.

Kristalnacht was a full night affair. Ours lasted 24 hours. The killings were mainly at night, but the looting of Jewish shops and houses went on the next day.

The next morning we became fully aware of what went on the night before, and we were scared more for our lives than our property.

There was also the fear of rape as usually happened in such times. My sister Violet was 18 years old. Mother was concerned about her. We had Armenian neighbours – Mother pleaded with them to take Violet to keep with them. They refused her request.

The only other avenue of escape in case they broke into our own house was to go to the rooftop and vault from rooftop to rooftop in the hope of escaping.

Our house was on a street between two main shopping streets. The looters were busy looting the shops and storing their loot in an empty lot to park their loot and go for “seconds”. I looked out of the window and with my own ears heard them running with all sorts of wares and shouting “Farhood, farhood – intissar al Islam ala el Yehood!” So the cry was “Loot, loot, it's the victory of the Muslims over the Jews!”

Our house was not broken into. They couldn't empty the shops around us fast enough to get to our house before order was restored in

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I do not have a comprehensive knowledge of all that happened in that horrible month. I can only report what happened to us from recollections that remain vivid in my mind.

Business came to a standstill. Since it was mostly in Jewish hands, the Jews realizing the enormity of the situation, a tacit moratorium became acceptable among them – we all withdrew into our own shells trying to devise means of survival.

My father with me at his side buried Mother's valuables in the garden. He wanted me – then 16 years old and the oldest boy in the family – to know where they were in case we got separated.

One day Mother learned that my brother Albert, then 12 years old, was arrested. He was fair with red hair. A policeman thought he must be an English boy and brought him to the station. Mother did not want my father to be involved for fear that he might get into trouble. Trembling, she went to the police station to argue for his release – somehow managed to do so. In leaving she wanted to thank the Muslim officer in charge and told him "Merci", the way she always thanked anyone at home. That almost started a storm. "Merci, merci – what is 'merci' why can't you talk like us?" But she got out of it. This may sound "funny" now – but imagine how she felt then!

A few days later my father was arrested and required someone to post bail for him. It was important not to go to jail as he might not come out of it.

He was accused of "sending money to India". It was pointless to argue – first, there was no currency restriction or prohibition to remitting money to any place outside of the country. Besides, as father related it, he told the judge in charge that for over 20 years he had been importing goods (textiles) from India and how could he do so without paying by sending money to India.

A Jew could not be found or expected to accept the responsibility and the risks involved to bail out another Jew. Mother begged Dr. Chohanian, an Armenian doctor and friend who was for years a tenant in Uncle's building. He refused her request.

Father was resourceful. He asked for the Muslim porter in his office building – an illiterate, barefooted, but nice man we called "Khalil El Khanchi" and asked him to bail him out. "But, Uncle (so he called my father), I don't have any money for the bail." Father asked him, "Don't you have our office in your hand?" He said "Yes." "So what are you worried about?" This apparently convinced him, and Khalil, the porter, bailed out my father with his "thumbmark" on the court documents.

Meantime, the battle between the British and Iraqi forces was raging – the Germans did not provide the armed support that was expected. Apparently their war strategy changed, and they abandoned the objective of the Persian Gulf. Their focus changed to Russia which they invaded a month later in June '41.

By the end of May the British forces prevailed and the news spread out fast that the Iraqi army was returning to base defeated and the British forces were marching towards Baghdad. The rumour was that the Regent and the King were returned to their place and a pro-British government was being formed. We, the Jews, felt a tremendous burden was lifted and we could breathe more freely. But this was not

to happen. The mayhem was to follow.

It was the first day of Shavuoth. We went by taxi to visit my aunt who lived 3 miles from Baghdad Central. On coming back home that evening I told my father I wanted to go to the movies. I had been confined to the house too long and wanted to stretch out. He told me to leave it be that night and, in one of my rare moments of total obedience, I accepted his advice. Had I gone to the movies that night, as some of our unfortunate Jews did, I would not have returned alive. That very night the killings took place.

That night we heard bullets being fired all over. We did not know what to make of it. There was no broadcast nor any telephone communication. We learned later that Jews were being killed indiscriminately. They were pulled from buses and shot or stabbed by unruly armed youths.

My aunt's brother – Jacob Mussafi (18 years old) – ventured out that night, was stabbed and left bleeding in the street. His brother Joseph learned about it, risked his life, went out to fetch him – he was bleeding but not yet dead. He took him – how, I don't know – to the general hospital. The doctors and nurses there – Muslims all – finished him off.

My cousin Abraham Battat – 14 years old, was returning from his sister's house that evening by bus going to the heart of the Jewish quarter, tells me their bus was stopped by a gang of armed youths who ordered all the Jews in the bus to get out. There were five or six Jews including Abraham. They dragged out by force an elderly Jewish man and a Jewish lady and started beating them and later killed them. The bus driver, a Muslim, a decent man, knowing there were other Jews in the bus, pulled out at the risk of his life and saved the remaining ones in the bus.

In fairness I must state that a good many Muslims did not like what was happening to the Jews, and many risked life and property to provide shelter, succour, protection for Jewish friends and non-friends. We know that Mr. Orphaly, a prominent Muslim, hearing of the events, gathered his sons and his men, armed them, and stood at the gate of one Jewish quarter warning the armed raiders that he would shoot at them if they ventured in that Jewish district. They turned away.

I don't know exactly how many Jews were killed that night. The count ranges from 150 to 300.

Kristalnacht was a full night affair. Ours lasted 24 hours. The killings were mainly at night, but the looting of Jewish shops and houses went on the next day.

The next morning we became fully aware of what went on the night before, and we were scared more for our lives than our property.

There was also the fear of rape as usually happened in such times. My sister Violet was 18 years old. Mother was concerned about her. We had Armenian neighbours – Mother pleaded with them to take Violet to keep with them. They refused her request.

The only other avenue of escape in case they broke into our own house was to go to the rooftop and vault from rooftop to rooftop in the hope of escaping.

Our house was on a street between two main shopping streets. The looters were busy looting the shops and storing their loot in an empty lot to park their loot and go for "seconds". I looked out of the window and with my own ears heard them running with all sorts of wares and shouting "Farhood, farhood – intissar al Islam ala el Yehood!" So the cry was "Loot, loot, it's the victory of the Muslims over the Jews!"

Our house was not broken into. They couldn't empty the shops around us fast enough to get to our house before order was restored in

the afternoon.

Eight weeks later, my sister, brothers and I left for India where my uncle lived. My parents joined us two months later. I never returned to my homeland nor want to see it ever again.

That is our sad story!

I would like to conclude with what happened in this temple a few weeks ago, and it is going to happen again here tonight. It is a tribute to our Jewish gumption, our fortitude, our endurance and, above all, our faith in our destiny.

Well, we the people who have been reviled and persecuted at every turn and every age, and every corner are indeed different. Our lot is indeed difficult.

But I say to you, and this I do believe:

Our lot..... is good;

Our future is hopeful;

And our destiny – forever bright.

Sasson Peress tape transcript:

Naim Dangoor writes:

Sasson refers to the 30,000 German troops that were parachuted onto Crete, and goes on to say that subsequently the Germans changed their plan to take Basrah and launched their invasion of Soviet Russia. In fact, there is much more to it than that.

It can be said, without much exaggeration, that Hitler lost the second world war on the island of Crete. The taking of Basrah would have barred any Allied aid from reaching Stalin, and Germany would have been able to attack the Soviet Union simultaneously from the west and the south.

The battle for Basrah was fought on the island of Crete where Britain, at great loss in men and materials, destroyed Germany's sole airborne division, and thus barred German forces from reaching Iraq. I well remember that Crete surrendered to the Germans the same day that the Iraq Army surrendered to the British forces, on 29 May 1941.

With the cheap Rashid Ali option denied to Hitler, he launched Operation Barbarossa on 22 June 1941, the anniversary of Napoleon's attack on Russia in 1812. The delay in this move resulted in the German Army being beaten by the extreme Russian winter, just as Napoleon was 129 years earlier.

It is said that Operation Barbarossa would have been a success if it was launched a month earlier. But the Iraq adventure robbed Hitler not only of a cheap option to the Indian Ocean and to linking with Japan, but also spoiled his timetable for the invasion of Russia.

I was an officer in the Iraq Army at the time, and I well remember that on 29 May we received the Daily Orders from the Army Headquarters which said, "The enemy has accepted our terms, and the war is over." I later found out that the terms which the enemy accepted were "unconditional surrender" by the force of Rashid Ali.

In World War II Churchill laid down the rule that the Allies can accept nothing less from their adversaries than unconditional surrender●

I have enjoyed very much reading *The Scribe* for the past few years, and am always happy to receive it.

The greatest joy in life is making other people happy, and you manage to do that with every copy of your journal. I am sure all your readers will agree with me on that●

Ontario Shlomo Mahlav

Having received *The Scribe* for over two years, I find it an informative and highly worthwhile publication●

Herzlia Gideon Selinger

From Elias Shohet, Great Neck, N.Y.



I salute you and thank you for the excellent job you are rendering to the Iraqi Jewish community dispersed worldwide.

I enclose herewith a brief description of the tense atmosphere and the tragedy that happened in Baghdad in June 1941. I am quite sure that our contemporary respected brothers and sisters will refresh their memories about those ominous days, and that their siblings should know what occurred to their predecessors fifty-four years ago.

The revolution of Rashid Ali Al-Gailani and the Pogrom (Al-farhood)

The month of June is just round the corner. It reminds us, we the contemporary Jews, about the tragedy which happened to the Jews of Baghdad in 1941. We tremble when we imagine the horrible scenes of the horrified people, jumping from one terrace to another escaping from savage, wicked, cruel and blood-thirsty monsters, looking for shelters.

Hitler, "Yimah Shemo V'Zikhro" (May his name and memory be wiped out), was at the top of his triumph. The German forces conquered central and western European countries, North Africa and reached Al-Alamain, on the Egyptian frontiers. The Nazi sympathisers in Iraq wanted to stab the British from behind, to get a share in the German triumph.

Rashid Ali was in secret contact with the Axis Powers through the Italian Consulate in Baghdad, who promised to get him substantial financial aid and military supplies if he joins them.

At the beginning of April 1941, at a coup d'etat, Rashid Ali Al-Gailani, encouraged by the Mufti of Palestine, Amin Al-Husseiny, seized power on the shoulders of four army officers, known as the "Golden Square". The Regent Abdul-Ilah, the Prime Minister Noori Al-Said and his government fled to Jordan.

According to the British-Iraqi agreement of 1932, the British forces had the right to use the Iraqi air and land space at the time of war. On 18 April a British brigade landed in Basrah. The Iraqi troops opposed and confronted them, but failed to resist them.

War was officially declared on 2 May and fighting began. The Iraqi troops sealed the Habbaniyah airfield and over eleven thousand British troops and civilians were trapped. The situation deteriorated rapidly.

After getting help from Egypt and Palestine, the British forces turned the tide and prevented the country and its oil resources from falling under Axis control. The promised German support did not arrive. The Royal Air Force at Habbaniyah and She'aibah, near Basrah, flew hundreds of sorties and destroyed the Iraqi lines of communications and air fields. The Iraqi resistance crumbled and their forces were routed. They made a number of miscalculations. They had no adequate leadership and

the revolution was crushed. The dream of a short war and a speedy victory that would bring easy glory and rich pickings came to an end.

Rashid Ali, the four officers and the Mufti of Palestine escaped to Iran. The Iraqi army unconditionally surrendered to the British forces and to the Jewish brigade, the Palmach, who fought alongside the British troops. Forces retreated in total disarray and desperation.

During the first two days of June, which happened to be the two days of the *Shavuot* feast (the Pentacost feast, known as Eid Al-Ziyarah), the Arabs attacked the Jewish quarters of Baghdad like birds of prey. They killed 179 Jews, men, women and children, and wounded 2118 more. Some women were raped. Thousands of houses, shops, stores and even synagogues were looted. Losses were estimated at several millions of dollars. That savage behaviour left misery and desolation in its wake.

The Iraqi police and the army, instead of protecting the people and restoring law and order, had participated in the looting.

The British forces, who were at the suburbs of Baghdad, stood aside and did not interfere for purposes of their own.

However, humanity always prevails. We have to confess that there were many righteous gentiles who put their lives at stake and saved several Jews. Their services were much appreciated. Special thanks to the Muslim Shi'ah leader, the late Abu Al-Hassan Al-Mussawi *Allaw Hashalom* may his memory be blessed, who instructed the Shi'ah Muslims never to participate in the killing of the Jews or in looting, and he had been obeyed, otherwise the losses would have been much bigger●

Story behind the pictures

Thank you for publishing the two pictures of the Alliance School in your last issue. They have an interesting but sad story. It was during the rebellion of Rashid Ali Al-Gailani 1941, that my parents decided that we stay at our grandparents for a while, because there was an overwhelming feeling that something was going to happen.

The Farhood took place when Rashid Ali ran away with some of his followers. The massacre of the Jewish population started one evening and continued during the following day until a British Brigade arrived from Jordan to help restore order to the city. I was very young, but I could remember a few things: the cries of women pleading for mercy from their attackers and the screams of those stabbed and killed.

A few days later, when things settled down, my parents went to find the fate of our house. They found that the door was smashed and the house was totally looted and left empty. Looking here and there, we found an envelope fallen behind the door of the bedroom. My mother picked it up and those two pictures were in it. They were the only things left in the house, reminding us with sad memories of the past.

Thanks for the important message you convey in *The Scribe*●

Nepean, Ontario

Sami Sourani

I wish to tell you that it has become a tradition with our family to celebrate the Seder using your Haggada, in preference to the Haggada printed in Baghdad.

My mother Victoria and myself indulge in the Arabic (*Sharh*), my children read the English and we all read the Hebrew text and there is every year a vote of thanks to you●

London

Ezra Hakkak

«رئيس وزراء» لا يشتغل بالسياسة!



● في مطلع الحكم الملكي
بالعراق ، دخلت محرمات
الصفحة البريطانية على صفحة
السيد عبدالرحمن الكليب رئيس
قوة وزارة العراق ، فرحب بها
ثم سألها عما ترمي اليه ، فوجبت
اليه عن طريق مترجم مجلس
الوزراء انذاك (حسين اللتان)
بعض الاسئلة السياسية اجاب
عليها السيد الكليب ...
- كاتون مسألي كل شئ ما عدا السياسة ، فانا لا اشتغل
بها ، ثم التفت الي وزير المالية ساسون هسكل قائلا :
- ابو كخدوري انست جابوب الفسائين بكفاني
ثم حيا وانصرف !

(المؤرخ الصغير)

**A Prime Minister
who doesn't deal in politics**

At the beginning of the National Government in Iraq, a newspaper correspondent visited the first Prime Minister Abdul Rahman al-Naqib for an interview to find out his views on the country's affairs. After asking him various political questions through the official interpreter Hussein Afnan, he replied . . .

Khatoun (Madam) ask of me anything except politics, as I don't deal in it. Turning to his Minister of Finance, Sasson Heskell, he said, "Abu Khdhouri, you answer the Khatoun in my place." Then he greeted them and left the room ●

from Jack Darwish



“Abu Khdhouri” – Sasson Effendi Heskell (later Sir Sasson Eskel) founder of modern Iraq.

At the 1921 Cairo Conference to decide the future of Iraq he recommended to Churchill to make Emir Faisal, King of a United Mesopotamia.

This created an increasingly nationalist Arab administration and proved to be the beginning of the end of the 2500-year-old Jewish community. It also led the way for the current reign of terror in Baghdad.

Middle East Federation

A Middle East Federation at the present time is not only immature, but impractical. At this moment Israel should be more concerned with its survival, not only because the Arab governments are carving parts of Israel, but because the present Israeli government is insensitive to the needs for Israeli security, in this and future generations. As a matter of fact you pose a question: Who would give the Arabs a Balfour? I think Peres is the Palestinians' Balfour. The pivotal point that will affect Israel is the status of the refugees. Hussein and the PLO are demanding the return of 800,000 Arab refugees to the West Bank. Israel is willing to admit 200,000 and that is too much for Israel to absorb. The Arabs should not be allowed to forget that in 1948 there was a de facto population exchange imposed on Israel by the Arabs. So, Israel had to absorb one million penniless Jewish refugees from Arab countries in exchange for 600,000 Arab refugees from Palestine. Whereas Israel accepted the Jewish refugees as equal citizens, the Arab League imposed a prohibition on the Arab governments from granting citizenship to Palestinian Arab refugees.

The refugees problem is a humanitarian issue. Yet, nobody presses the Arab League to rescind its resolution and allow the Palestinian Arab refugees residing in the Arab countries for the last five decades to be citizens of those countries. Look what happened in Kuwait. They kicked out 250,000 Palestinian Arabs who lived there for the past 50 years – the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren being born in Kuwait knew no other home, yet they were all thrown out. This was shameful, but nobody raised an eyebrow of protest. The solution of the refugee problem is very essential for the peace process and it can be mostly accomplished by accepting the Arab refugees in their present countries of residence and resettling the others in Iraq and other Arab countries where manpower is needed. I would put your federation idea on ice, put the peace process on hold, and solve the refugees problem quickly, so that peace can be more easily achieved.

New York Prof. Heskell M. Haddad, MD

Naim Dangoor writes:

The Arabs do not recognise that Jews from Arab countries were refugees. Unfortunately, this attitude is shared by Mr. Shimon Peres and the Israeli government who have regarded those Jews as Olim; so the refugee problem cannot be solved on the basis of exchange.

A Federation arrangement maybe difficult now, but it will be impossible in the future ●

I define love simply as the equation, the only equation, which proves that there are other people in the world besides oneself ●

The Editor reserves the right to abbreviate and suitably amend Readers' letters ●

Lottery is a tax on fools. It is also a redistribution of wealth. Taking from the many and giving it to the few ●

Jewish life in Beijing

by Wendy Wolfe Fine

With the establishment of the Israeli Embassy in Beijing on 24 January 1992, the Chinese people were given a vehicle through which they could learn about world Jewry.

At one time, a sizable Jewish population lived in China. By the early 1930s, the Jewish population numbered 15,000. Some of these Jews were Baghdadi Jews from Iraq and India, while others came as entrepreneurs and traders from the West. Still others came as refugees from Russian pogroms or fled the Bolshevik Revolution. By 1939, another 18,000 Ashkenazi Jews from Germany, Austria and Poland fled to China. However, between the end of World War II and the "liberation" of China by the Communists in 1949, most of the Jews in China had emigrated.

At present, approximately 40 Jewish families reside in Beijing, mostly expatriates studying or working in the diplomatic service, varied businesses and projects, the media, or education. They come from Israel, the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina and Hungary.

Beijing does not have a synagogue. During Pesah of 1994, 80 non-Israeli Jews attended the first night's seder at the Embassy. The second seder catered mostly to Israelis and a few non-Israeli families who maintain close relations with the Embassy; 120 people attended.

Last September, the Embassy planned a traditional High Holiday meal for Israelis with food prepared by the Jerusalem Hilton. The weekly El Al flight from Tel Aviv to Beijing serves as an important link for Israelis in Beijing to their families, their country, and their religion.

There is a fair amount of intermarriage among Chinese and Jews, with the majority being Jewish men married to Chinese women. Chinese people, who were brought up after 1949, were not raised in religions, such as Buddhism. In addition, the Chinese local religions, which generally consist of prayers to a variety of spirits as well as ancestor worship, do not require them to believe in one god or spirit at the exclusion of others. As a result, unlike the conflict that might exist in Christian-Jewish households, the Chinese spouse may not actively participate in Jewish religious life.

In May 1994, 1,000 Chinese and Jewish people attended a Yom Haatzmaut reception.

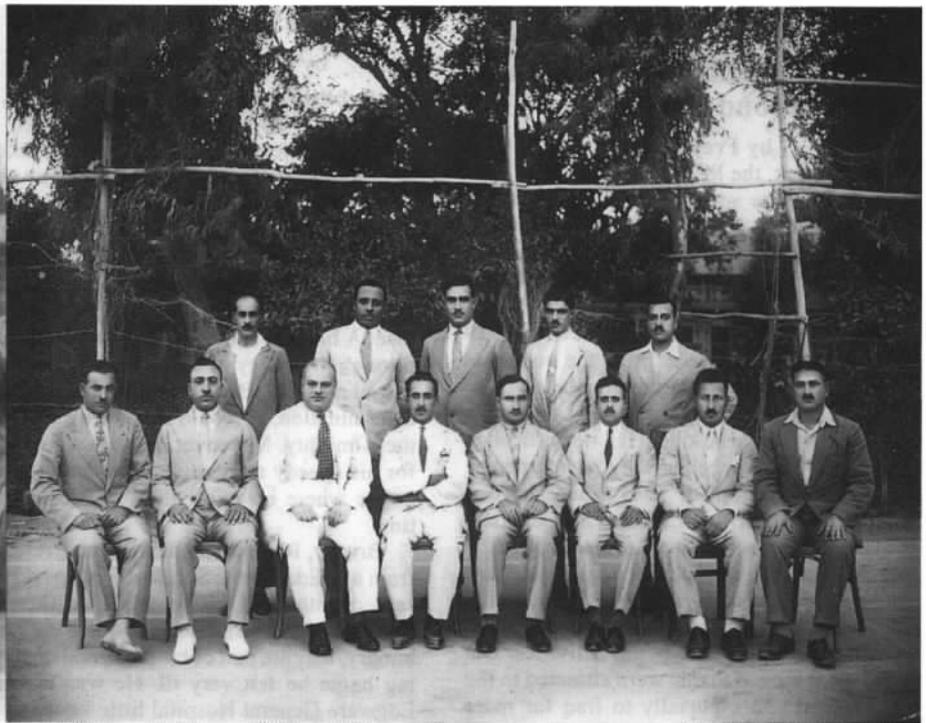
The Embassy publishes a magazine in Chinese three times a year to educate about Jewish holidays, Judaism and Israel. The Chinese government has been receptive to the activities of the Embassy, and its citizens have been interested in learning about Israel and Judaism.

As a result of the liberal policies of the Chinese government toward religion, the few Jews of Kaifeng, whose community thrived over 700 years ago, are declaring and not hiding their roots. Last year, an Israeli Consulate opened in Shanghai, so now yet another bridge exists for Jewish people visiting China. As for the future, in ten years time the Embassy may have a permanent building and a synagogue, and a Hebrew school will be established.

In the largest and fastest growing economy in the world, foreigners are coming everyday to try to get a stake. It is expected that the Jewish community will grow with the expansion of business and trade, and other important areas of cooperation, such as research and teaching, of which Jews are a vital part ●



1) 1914 in Constantinople
 Left: Salem Saleh (non-commissioned officer)
 Right: Second Lieutenant Yamen Joseph (my father)●



2) Early 1930's (Officers Club, Baghdad).
 Front row: Third from left (my father)
 First from right (Salem Saleh)●

No surprise your bulletin is greeted with the highest of praise. I came across the last three issues and read every page of them with interest and sentiment.

The Scribe is a monument from a life which has, for good or for bad, disappeared and which 50 years ago no one could have guessed or foreseen our present situation as it is today, which was really a huge "imponderable" in any forecast at that time. True, fate and history were to play their hand, but we should never forget that the governments which ruled Iraq determined the scheme and feasted on our banishment which was their specific target.

Now, I would like to say something about the following:

1) Dorothy Shasha's letter from Buenos Aires, page 5 issue 61. I wonder if Dorothy is

the daughter of Jamil Yamen Shasha. He was my friend and my classmate in the Alliance School in Baghdad. Never contacted him since he left Baghdad in the late forties. Somebody told me a long time ago that he was living in Argentina.

2) Mr Abdulla Dangoor's letter about Abdul Karim and Salem Saleh (Aboo Ghazi), made me to send you herewith two interesting photographs which could be of interest to the readers.

3) The answer of Lady Kadoorie regarding your suggestion of taking the initiative to establish a club in London with their financial support was disappointing, because they have the stuff and they can do it with a stroke of a pen. Very bad if they are not intending to follow the steps of Eliezer Kadoorie who did a lot! Hope Lady Kadoorie will give serious consideration to the matter, given the under-

standing that they need not care about the welfare of the Hong Kong Jewish Community which is sitting now on a cache of US \$150 million (yes, this is the exact figure). I repeat the amount is expressed in American Dollars and not in Hong Kong Dollars.

Very sorry to say that the excuses given were not in place and ambiguous and only a "shock of recognition" can bring about a favourable action. They are well-to-do and it is still probable that Lady Kadoorie can change her mind and pay the whole £5 million.

The Scribe throws new light on vexing problems, opens up new vistas on ourselves, makes a strong impression on our histories of the past and maybe sometimes it brings about a "shock of recognition"●

Milan

Edward Yamen

I am delighted to see the continual advance in the presentation of *The Scribe*. Full praise to the inauguration of a paper which has bound together the hearts of an ancient community now scattered over the four corners of the earth.

It was a worthwhile effort and merits the appreciation and thanks so extensively felt●

London

Joseph R. Masri

I would much appreciate it if you could put me on your mailing list. My kids find *The Scribe* a great treasure to revive our past. My thanks and appreciation for connecting us throughout the world.

In your March edition No.63, in the picture on page 22, the 5-year-old child with a *fez* is my husband Jamil Mooallem, first cousin of Albert Mooallem of London●

Canada

Gladys Mooallem (nee Peress)

The Scribe means so much to me as it gives me memories of my home and life in Baghdad●

Haifa

Suzanne Sudai

You are to be highly commended for producing and editing *The Scribe* which I have been receiving for the past several years.

I lived for many years in one of your apartments near the "Masbah" which was called at the time Dangoor and Safwat Building. On few occasions, I had the pleasure of meeting you. The last instance was in your office, previously, Shamash family home in Ras el Qaria sometime in 1955 or 1956●

Zurich

David I. Korine

I have read Mercado's book *Iraq - My Testimony* with great interest. Indeed, it carried me back to both wonderful and horrible times. Every Iraqi Jew should remember those times●

Ramat Gan

A. Salsberg

Readers' comments: I know why you call your journal *The Scribe*, you want us to subscribe●

London

V.B.

I spent many enjoyable and informative hours reading *The Scribe*, copy of my father Albert Mowlem. However, whilst I make every effort to read each edition, I would very much appreciate receiving my own copy●

London

Michael Mowlem

Many thanks for *The Scribe*, we find it very essential in knowing our culture in detail.

My husband Yaacov is a very proud Jew from Basra, and I was born in Baghdad. We treasure every edition of *The Scribe*. Each time it lightens our hearts and touches our souls●

Hong Kong

Flora Zipora Ozer

The reading of *The Scribe* is spectacular and most interesting.

My sincere congratulations to you all for the extreme hard work, resulting in such statistics as outlined in *The Scribe*●

St. Louis, Missouri

Sass Ezekiel

BOOKS

Beyond Euphrates

by Freya Stark

Freya Stark, the Middle East traveller, was an antisemite; as such, she disliked anything Jewish – whether it was the Zionist pioneers on board the ship to Haifa in 1929, the shrine of Ezekiel near Hillah, or the Hebrew Kings mentioned in the Bible.

After the Hebron massacre of Jews in 1929 she heard some Italians express the hope that the Palestine mandate should now be given to Italy. She felt like telling them that in that event not only Jews would be killed! It is not difficult to guess, then, who was behind the Arab murderers.

After the pogrom of 1941 when she was attached to the British Embassy in Baghdad, she labels the Jews there as trouble-makers.

Like Gertrude Bell before her, Freya Stark belonged to a breed of travellers who went into the Middle East ostensibly for archaeological work to cover up their spying activities. But above all these old maids were attracted to the Middle East and especially to Iraq for more personal excitement and adventure.

During the British occupation of Iraq, officers' wives were allowed to go to Baghdad on holiday, but the authorities soon had to put a stop to this. In his book, *The Heart of the Middle East*, Richard Coke makes clear reference to this problem, stating: "There were many married men who had grave cause to regret that their wives had ever been allowed to set foot in Mesopotamia."

Nor was this limited to the women. The British Tommy debased himself with the local Arab, so much so that some believe this lax behaviour encouraged the uprising of 1920, which was the beginning of the end of British involvement in Iraq.

In December 1929, Freya Stark attended a Jewish wedding in the Adhamiya District north of Baghdad. The house was filled with Moslem women in their black *aba's* who came uninvited to admire the bride in her Parisian fashion. The writer adds that next to the bride, on a table was a bouquet of flowers sent by King Faisal himself. It would be interesting to know whose wedding it was.

Up to 1930-31 many Jews lived in Adhamiya (see photograph on page 16 of *Scribe* No. 62). Then they started moving to the new suburb of Battaween and Orfalia south of Baghdad ●

You have been kindly sending me *The Scribe* for five years now and I have always read it with much interest, sometimes with emotion.

The history of our Community, as well as your book reviews, hold all my attention and your photographs bring back to my memory people and places I have well known: my students of the year 1946 – thanks to Eileen Khalastchy – Laura Kadourie School where I taught for more than ten years; The Shrine of Ezra Hasofer – what a beautiful picture! – which, till the age of twelve I used to visit every year on the occasion of Id El (Ziara) Shavuot; my grandfather being the Gabbay of the place, etc.

Thank you for your wonderful work of communication so precious to the members of our community who have been scattered all over the world ●

St. Maur, France

Flora Barmaimon

The Will to Live

by Roy & Caroline Hayim

Published by Janus Publishing Co.,
£8.99 (paperback)

This publication is a most moving account of remarkable courage in the face of adversity of a very serious kind. It is the story of Roy Hayim who was struck with a dreadful form of food poisoning called Botulism from which few survive. It is said that one spoonful of Botulism is sufficient to kill the whole human race. A biblical subtitle could be: "We walked through the valley of the shadow of death, but feared no evil." Because of his and his wife's determination, he would survive, by the help of the Almighty. Moreover, prayers were recited for his speedy recovery, at Lauderdale Synagogue where he was Parnas President at the time.

Briefly, Roy and his family were returning from a holiday in the South of France and were served with their kosher meal on the plane which, however, smelled very bad. As he felt hungry, Roy ate part of his meal, and on returning home he felt very ill. He was rushed to Edgware General Hospital little knowing that he was to stay there for many months, paralysed and totally incapacitated. He could only communicate with Caroline with a gentle squeeze of his thumb. Relatives and friends visited him frequently. When I visited him I was surprised to notice his condition, but concealed my true feelings to avoid causing alarm.

Roy and Caroline have been interviewed on the media, as theirs is a story which could provide a shining example of courage and faith to others so afflicted ●

P.S.G.

Books received

From the prolific pen of Dr Abraham Ben-Yaacov, we received two new books.

1) A collection of songs, writings and teachings by the famous Babylonian Rabbi Hakham Joseph Hayim.

2) The life and writings of Rabbi Sasson Mordechai Shindoukh ●

The prolific Babylonian author Dr Abraham Ben-Yaacov of Jerusalem ●

The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination

by Tony Kushner

Published by Blackwell, Oxford, U.K. and Cambridge, USA

The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination is a bold and finely researched study of the responses and reactions of the democratic world to the attempted destruction of European Jewry. It seeks to explain rather than to condemn, and to focus on the Holocaust's impact on ordinary people as much as on state politics and international diplomacy.

Drawing on perspectives often ignored in Holocaust studies (including gender, labour and cultural history), this book argues that the Holocaust, then and now, is a crucial part of the experience of many countries, far away from the killing fields. It is consequently as much a contribution to Western social history generally as it is an account of the Holocaust. It deserves to be widely read and discussed.

Tony Kushner's book is a scholarly and

highly readable dissection of some of the most disturbing myths which prevail about the Holocaust: not racist or fascist, but ones which prevent those who consider themselves members of liberal societies from coming to terms with the extent to which the Holocaust is an integral part of their history and their story ●

Policing Shanghai 1927-1937

by Frederic Wakeman Jr.

Published by the University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

In the first study in any language centred on a modern Chinese police force, Frederic Wakeman creates a detailed and exciting panoramic tale, based on archival sources, about the Nationalist secret police and its confrontation and collaboration with the multilayered Shanghai underworld. He argues that twentieth-century China has not, ultimately, been dominated by discontinuity but rather that autocratic government, whether Nationalist or Communist, has survived, as have its tools of control and coercion.

Chiang Kai-shek wanted to prove that the Chinese deserved to rule Shanghai and the country by themselves, rather than be exploited and dominated by foreign powers. The primary weapon in the effort to reclaim the crime-ridden city was the new Chinese police force, which competed with the French, International Settlement, and Japanese consular police for control.

The Nationalist effort failed, partly because of the war with Japan that broke out in 1937, but also because its police force was corrupted by the city itself. This process is best understood by placing the Shanghai police squarely in the midst of the forces it faced: casino and brothel owners, Green Gang racketeers, narcotics syndicates and gun-runners, underground Communist assassins, and Comintern secret agents.

Policing Shanghai illuminates and exposes all the elements of a decade of revolutionary change in what was, during this period, the most colourful and corrupt city in the world ●

I was interested in the articles in your issue No.63 on the Indians who believe they are descendants from the Tribe of Menashe.

A large number of youths from these N.E. States have been studying in an International Jewish Institute in Bombay – ORT India; where not only Technical and other professional trades are taught, but also Hebrew and Judaism.

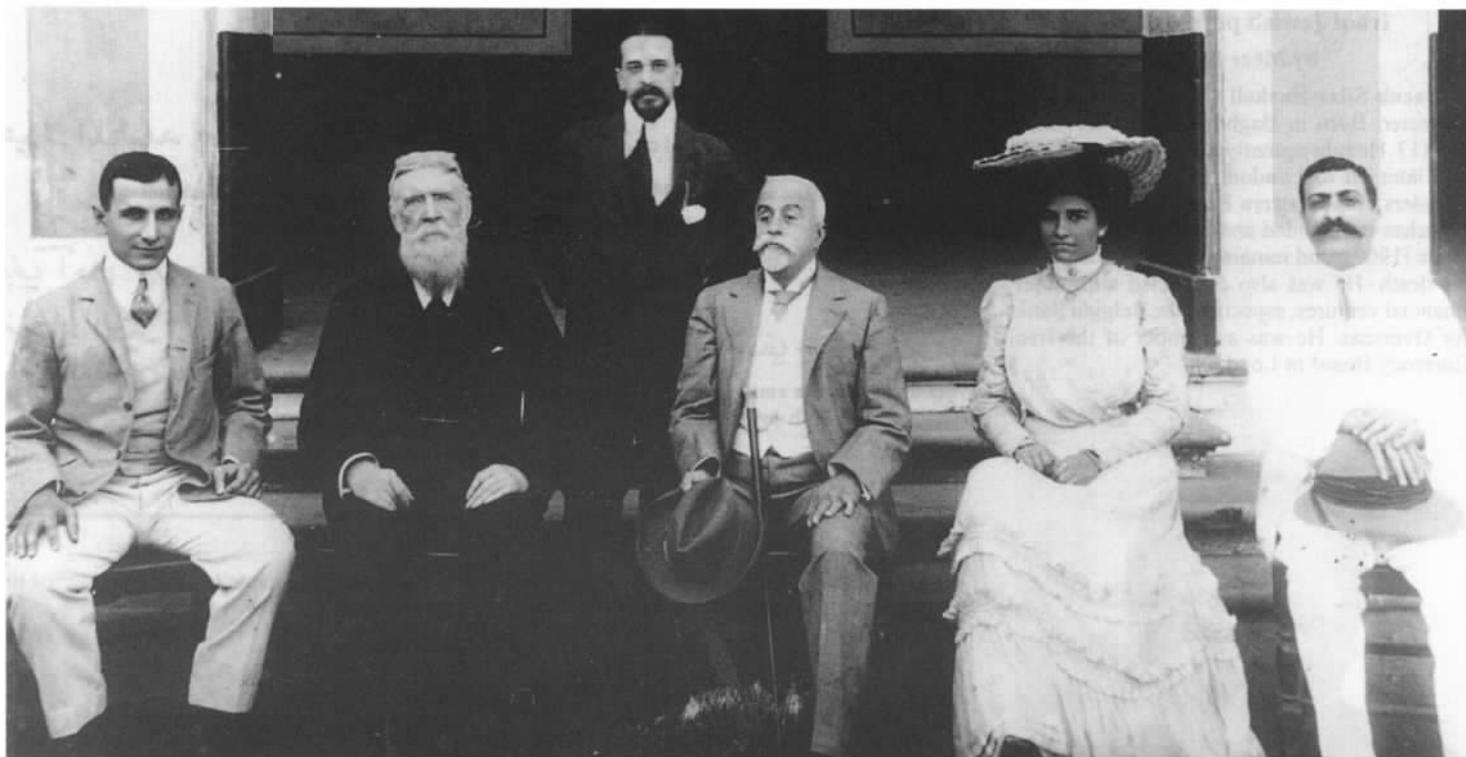
Gideon Rei from N.E. India visited Israel and spent quite some time studying Hebrew and Torah and Judaism. On his return to India, he started a synagogue where he not only conducts prayer services, but also conducts classes for Hebrew and Religious Studies.

My books:

- 1) *Jewish Holidays and Rituals* US \$10.00 per copy
- 2) *Jewish (Hebrew) Rituals*, with English alphabets US \$10.00 per copy.
- 3) *Natural Remedies* US \$15.00 per copy ●

Dr Nagavkar Asher

Apt.No. 10 Bldg.No. 33
Yoseftal Street
Netanya 42395 – Israel



Founder of Sir Jacob Sassoon High School and friends, Byculla, Bombay, 1905.

Left to right: Sassoon Nissim (nephew); James MacDonald (Principal); Sir Jacob Sassoon, Baronet; Miss Hannah Nissim (niece, later Mrs Gourgey, Jacob Macmull ●
Standing at the back, Mr. S. Abelson (Sir Jacob's Private Secretary from London)

Sir Sassoon Jacob Hai David of Cochin 1849-1926

I am writing a biography of Sir Sassoon J. David, philanthropist, entrepreneur and civic leader. Any reminiscences, information, letters, etc. from readers would be gratefully appreciated. Please contact:

Professor Brian Weinstein
Department of Political Science
Harvard University,
Washington, D.C. 20059, USA

Circumcision

Statistics shows that 60 per cent of all American males are circumcised. As these cannot all be Jews, it is clear that most Americans undergo circumcision for health reasons.

There is a movement in the United States which tries to discourage circumcision, claiming that removal of the foreskin has several disadvantages in the performance and enjoyment of sex by both partners. However there is no evidence that this is the case, and circumcision remains an accepted hygienic measure, rather than as a religious ritual ●

Too much!

Scribe: A man wanting to convert to Judaism was told that he had to be circumcised. He first went to a hospital who quoted £250 for the operation. "Too much!", he told them, and left. He then went to a clinic. The surgeon quoted £150. "Too much!", he told him, and left. Finally, he went to a *mohel*, who quoted £75, "Too much!", he told him, and left.

By now he gathered that it was a simple operation and decided to do it himself in his own kitchen. As the chopper came down, he looked at the board and shouted in horror, "TOO MUCH!" ●

Rangoon revisited by Aaron Solomon

I visited Rangoon, Burma, after an absence of 52 years. I was born and educated in Rangoon and became an evacuee in 1942 on account of the Japanese invasion during World War II.

On my return to Los Angeles, I have been asked too many questions about conditions in Burma and could do no justice with my verbal answers. So I decided to put my "impressions" in writing and give a copy to those of my relatives and friends who enquired about my visit.

I am told that the account of my visit to Rangoon is interesting. I am enclosing a copy thereof for summarising to your readers.

Eddie Lincoln and I arrived in Rangoon in November 1994 for a stay of 21 days.

We were met at the airport by Moses Samuel, the only trustee of our Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue.

The interior of our Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue is clean, well kept and well maintained, but the outside is neglected. The compound is not what it was. Around the perimeter on three sides of the building there are 27 shops/stalls selling a variety of goods and services. The rental income is used to cover maintenance expenses of the synagogue and cemetery. We used to visit the synagogue very often and while we were there, we found Jewish tourists visiting the synagogue and most of them leave with a donation. With the exception of Moses Samuel and his brother Jacob, there are no Jews in Burma and there are no prayer services. On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, the Israeli Ambassador conducts the services with Jews from other embassies or other international organisations.

The Rangoon Jewish community had about 40 Sepher Torahs, most of which were transferred to Israel, now only 2 Sepher Torahs remain in the Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue.

The Jewish school was sold for a very low price and is now demolished. The proceeds from the sale was used to send the remaining Jews to other countries where they desired to

settle. Most were sent to Israel.

All English names of the roads and streets have been changed to Burmese names with the exception of Sule Pagoda Road and Strand Road. Most of the roads and streets are one-way. The people are very friendly and kind and it is very safe to be out in the streets at any time of the night.

The night bazaar on Frazer Street is still going strong. The city sleeps at about 10 o'clock every night. Saturdays and Sundays are public holidays.

Although Rangoon is under military government, we did not feel their presence. In Rangoon, one can find everything one needs, but the prices are beyond the reach of most of the inhabitants.

The old landmarks of Rangoon are gone. Except for television and the radio there is no other form of entertainment. But the city is alive at night with many people on the street and many shops are open and street vendors selling fruits, food and all kinds of merchandise spread their wares on small platforms and do business till 10.00pm. Office hours are from 9.30am till 4.30pm on week days.

In 1966 our synagogue will be a hundred years old, so trustee Moses Samuel, his brother Jacob Samuel and consultant Aung Kywe, are gathering material for a booklet describing the history of the Rangoon Jews and arranging a centennial celebration by inviting the Rangoon Jews to come to Rangoon and enjoy the celebrations. This idea is now in a talking stage. Whether it will come to pass or not is anybody's guess.

I shot five rolls of film, but most were damaged by the baggage x-ray machines at the airports. The films passed through two x-ray machines at Seoul (Korea) airport two times, at Bangkok two times, and at Rangoon airport two times. It is a great disappointment to me not to have the pictures I treasured.

A word of thanks to trustee Moses Samuel, his brother Jacob Samuel and consultant Aung Kywe for the help they extended to us which made our stay very pleasurable ●

Iraqi Jewish personalities

by Meer Basri

Jacob Silas Haskell (1857-1939) an able financier. Born in Baghdad he left for India aged 13. He subsequently moved to Hong Kong and later on to London. He was one of the founders of the Eastern Bank in London, with branches in Baghdad and other Iraqi and Gulf cities (1909), and remained its chairman until his death. He was also connected with other financial ventures, especially the Belgian Bank for Overseas. He was a member of the Iraq Currency Board in London.



Dr Jack Aboudi Shabi (1908-1980) eminent Iraqi doctor specialised in nervous and mental diseases (neurologist). Studied in Baghdad and London and subsequently with the famous Professor Hans Hoff of Vienna who lived in Baghdad during the Second World War. Dr Shabi was for a time director of the Baghdad Mental Hospital and professor at the Royal College of Medicine. He left Baghdad in 1971 for London where he served as doctor in the Prison Department.

Scribe: On a visit to the Mental Hospital, Dr. Jack saw an inmate with a fishing rod in his hand over a dry pond. To humour the patient, Dr. Jack asked him how many fishes he had caught so far. The inmate looked at the Dr. in surprise, "Can't you see the pond is dry, how can I catch any fish in it?"

We always look forward to receiving *The Scribe* and we read it from cover to cover.

Your Journal should be useful in tracing missing relatives and friends so that they can establish new contacts

Brisbane, Australia

Ezra Ben Ezra

We acknowledge with thanks receipt of *The Scribe* of March 1995 issue. We deeply appreciate your kindness in sending this material to our Library, and hope to continue receiving future issues

Washington D.C.

Library of Congress

Baghdadi sayings

رحت بيت السلطان مثل بيتي ما شفت

Rehtu beit el sultan methel beiti ma sheftu.

Even after visiting the royal palace, I found my home more comfortable.

انا امير و انت امير - مني يوق المير ؟

Ana amir wa-enta amir-mani yesouq el hamir?

If we are both princes who will drive the donkeys?

الف قلبة ولا غلابة

Alf qalba wala ghalba

Better to change your mind a thousand times rather than be sorry.

ويهد يهابش ويهد يسهش

Waihed yehabesh waihed yeseesh hesh

The one toils and the other takes the credit.

زمر ابنك يا عجوز

Zammar ebnek ya ajouz

A man was going on holiday, and his friends asked him to buy for them various items; but one old lady asked him to buy a whistle for her child and gave him the money. He told her, you may consider that your child will have his whistle.

حلموم اللاشي بطول

Halom el lash batoul

Bad dreams are invalid.

فد الأصيل ولو كان نايم على الصير

Kheth el aseel walaw nayem al haseer

Marry someone with a good background even if he is penniless.

لسين الطيب يكسر عظم الجبار

Leseen el tayeib yekser athem el jebbar

Gentle words can break the mighty.

ما تعرف خيرتي لما تجرب خيرتي

Ma te'eref khairi lema tejareb ghairi

You can't appreciate my worth until you try others.

صمنا لما صرنا هنايا وما الحقنا بأهل

العطايا

Semna lema serna henaya wema lehaqna beahl el ataya

No amount of fasting can equal charitable donations.

جوز المهدود بجراب المهدود

Joz el maadud bejrab el meshdud

The number is limited.

بني آدم طير ويهد الطير نبالو
فاحل الخير

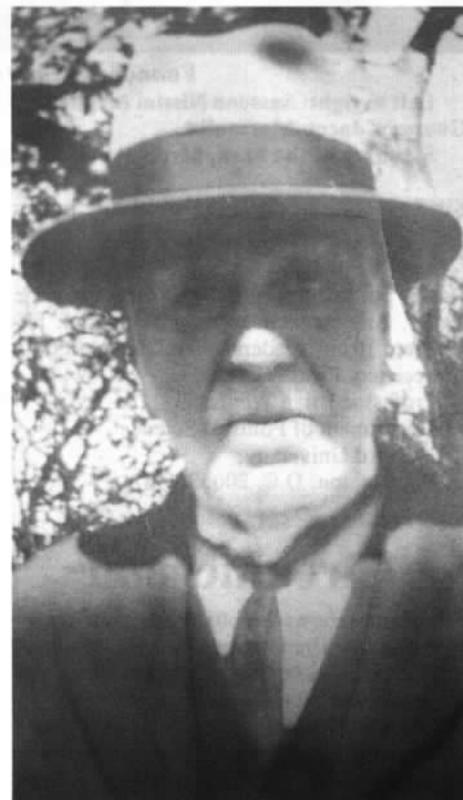
Bani adam tair wa yehsed el tair neyalu fael el khair

A man is like a bird but envies the bird; lucky is he who does good deeds

Please add my name to your mailing list to receive your journal

London

Tariq Al-Abdi



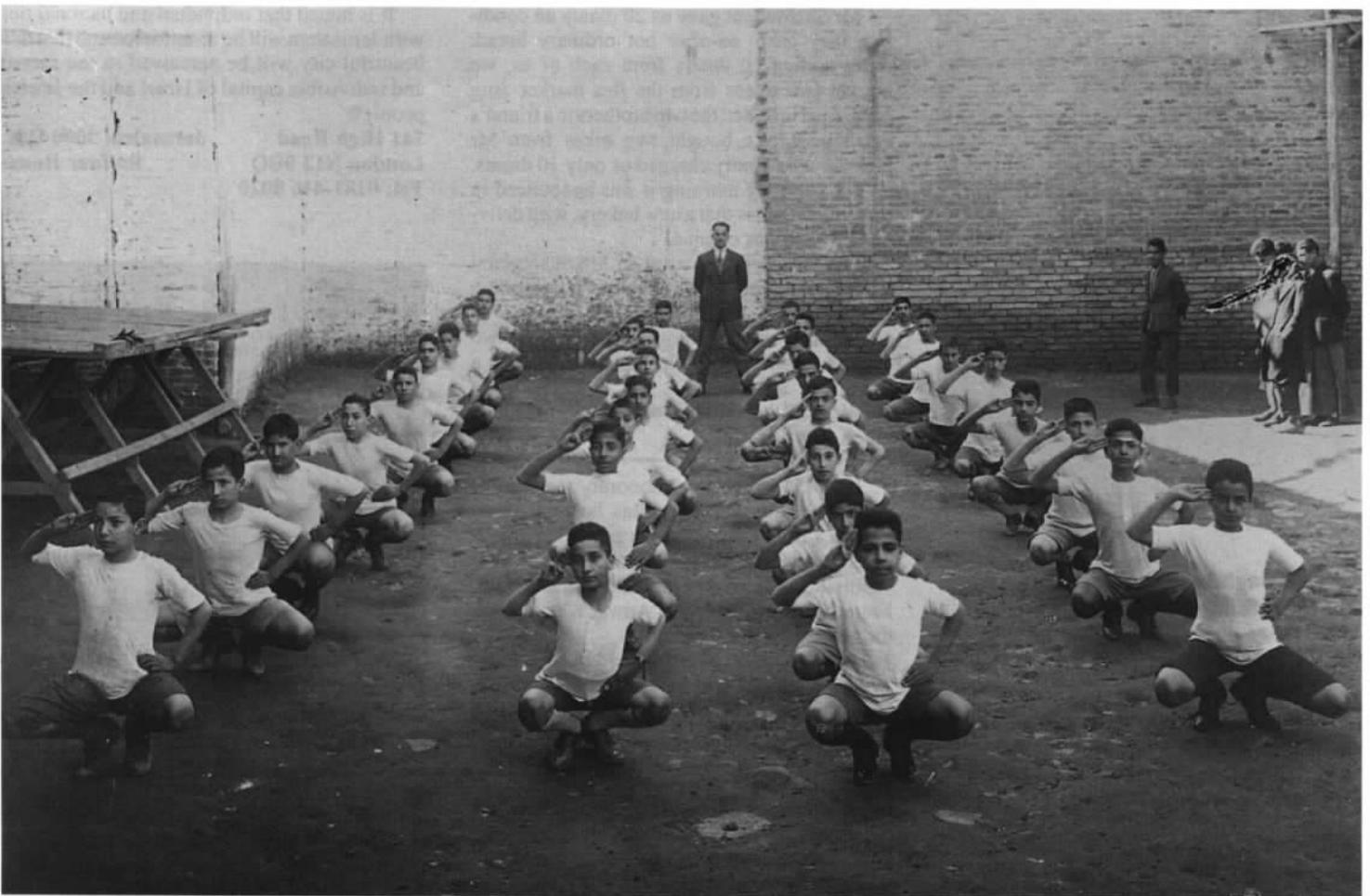
In an article about the Baghdadi Jews of India (*Scribe* No.62) Rachel and Sarah Manasseh mentioned my (great grand) uncle E.E.E. (3 E's) Sassoon.

I would be very grateful to know what his initials stand for. Also, what was his relationship to David Sassoon. It must have been very close, because I remember my parents telling me that he and his sister Salha (my mother's grandmother) were born on the Sassoon estate, a picture of which, incidentally, appeared in *Scribe* No.62. I remember when we were young, my sisters and I would visit him very often in his home on Cuff Parade. He did a lot of entertaining, both local and overseas guests, but we never asked many questions about our family background in those days.

The above is a picture of my Uncle

Sydney

Dolly (Dayan) Shadler



Physical training was not neglected in Iraqi Jewish schools. The above picture shows students of Rahel Shahmoon School during exercises taken in 1925●

The picture below shows Girls' Kindergarten taken in 1924●





Baghdad reminiscences

I am a pharmacist graduated in Baghdad in 1941 (my name in Iraq was Eliahou Karim). I left for Israel with my wife Violette Korine with the exodus in 1951, leaving all belongings as others, and my pharmacy (Karim Pharmacy) in Bab-el-Sheikh, which I think still exists bearing my name.

During the years 1944/45/46 I was a Physics teacher in Shamash School preparing the students for Matriculation exams and the High Secondary School diploma. Most of my students are successful professionals, doctors, engineers, accountants, business elites as Dr Heskell Haddad, Dr Naji Cohen, Edward Shemtob, Naim Mahlab and many others.

In Israel I served in two wars '56 and '67. I had a good pharmacy in Ramat Gan. I came to Toronto in 1969 with my wife and two sons, who became doctors. Abraham, a family doctor, and Zion, a cardiologist, and daughter Bella a teacher. All married with children, thank God.

Since I came to Toronto, I tried with friends to bring the Iraqi Jews together. First I managed to arrange the High Holiday services *Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur*, in a place where we can pray according to our tradition and melodies. In 1977 we established The Iraqi Jewish Organisation of Ontario, of which I am the treasurer and the ritual coordinator.

The following 2 stories of my life in Baghdad might be of interest to your readers●

Toronto Eliahou Sasson

The Farhud of 1941

In the pogrom of June 1941 (Farhud) I was in my fourth year of pharmacy, had two close friends, Yosef Zloof and Nissim Sulman, in their third year of law school. We were worried about each other, as the three of us lived in muslim areas.

On Tuesday morning after the curfew partially lifted, I met them in Ghazi Street. We discussed the situation and decided to do what we could do to help the Jewish victims.

We went to see the Chief Rabbi and reported to him the situation; with tears in his eyes, he said he knew all the details and referred us to Yamen Aslan, head of the welfare.

We explained to Mr Aslan and Salman Shahrabani, who was with him, our plan to help two brothers re-start their bakery in Battaween which had been looted.

Mr Shahrabani gave us 20 dinars on condition they bake *be-abee* not ordinary bread. After adding 10 dinars from each of us, we bought two ovens from the flea market (*sug haraj*) and installed the two brothers in a friend's *mushtamal*. We bought two bikes from Mr Hakkak who kindly charged us only 10 dinars.

On Saturday morning it was announced in three synagogues that a new bakery, with delivery service, was opened.

The first delivery went to Mr Shahrabani who then asked us to add more seasoning (*Hweyej*).

We had enough money left to buy two sewing machines to help two women earn a living.

We had the satisfaction to help others as much as we could.

In 1945 I was to act as honorary secretary to the Committee of Meir Elias hospital, even though I didn't have the necessary qualifications for the job.

Eliahoo Shohet was the chairman and Naim Murad the vice-chairman. Anwar Khtaina was the administrative director.

At a committee meeting held in November 1946, Mr Shohet said now we have an important decision to take which is to fire Mr Khtaina from his job immediately, which Naim Murad accepted without giving reasonable reason. I was shocked at the decision and submitted my resignation.

After a few weeks I heard that Mr Khtaina committed suicide.

I was later blamed for not standing up for my principal●

Jerusalem 3000

Rosh Hashana, this year, heralds the start of Jerusalem's 3000th anniversary year, and Jewish communities throughout the world will be celebrating the establishment of Jerusalem as King David's capital 3000 years ago.

Jerusalem 3000 National Committees have been established around the world to promote, encourage and orchestrate celebratory activities, and the U.K. committee, chaired by Brenda Katten, is well ahead in coordinating the special festivities and programmes for the anniversary year.

Most exciting of all are the events which will be taking place in Jerusalem. Some of these will focus directly on the connection between King David and Jerusalem, such as the Sight and Sound spectacular directed by Franco Zeffirelli, a multi-media show describing the life of King David, and "David's Psalms", performed by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra at an open air concert directed by Zubin Mehta.

Other events will relate more to Jerusalem as an artistic inspiration. Verdi's opera "Nabucco" and Beethoven's "Fidelio", as well as plays, exhibitions and a grand pageant in the streets of Jerusalem, are just a few of the exciting events which are planned.

An archaeological site along the extension of the Western Wall beyond the prayer area has revealed the remains of a street from the period of King Herod (first century BCE). This will be opened officially during the anniversary celebrations; Herodian streets will become a pedestrian walkway, and a number of ancient gardens to be reconstructed, each devoted to a different period of the city's history.

It is hoped that individual and national ties with Jerusalem will be re-enforced and that this beautiful city will be perceived as the sacred and indivisible capital of Israel and the Jewish people●

741 High Road Jerusalem 3000 U.K.
London N12 0BQ Balfour House
Tel: 0181-446 8020



A Baghdad Jewish beggar 200 years ago●
An old painting, by a German artist, now in the possession of Mr Ezekiel Nathaniel●

الفقير

يحيى الفقير وكل شيء صده
والناس تغلق دونه ابوابها
هذا يعيبه وهذا يهينه
ويرى العداوة ولا يرى اسبابها
حتى الطلاب اذا رآه عابرا
نهيته عليه وكثرت اناياها
واذا رأت يوقا خنيا وقيلك
حفظت لديه وصركت اذناياها

The Poor

by Albert Khabbaza

Everything seems to go against the poor man.

People close their doors in his face
One blames him, the other insults him
He feels the hatred but cannot understand the cause.

Even the dogs, when seeing him passing by
Bark at him and try to bite him
But when they see a rich man approaching
They surrender to him and oscillate their tails●

THE BRITISH ARMY CAMPAIGNS
IN IRAQ & SYRIA – 1941



By Captain S A Shemtob-Reading MBE (mil)

After the expiry of the 50 year limit under the Official Secrets Act, I reported on the advance of the British Army from Palestine, through Trans-Jordan to crush the regime of Rashid Ali in Iraq. Rashid Ali was heavily backed by Nazi Germany and had deposed the Regent Abdul Ilah.

After the surrender of Baghdad to the British Forces which included the Chief of Military Intelligence and myself, and the escape of Rashid Ali and his ministers to Iran, severe riots and massacre took place.

I was a member of Military Intelligence at the British Army High Command and I was present when the Regent, Abdul Ilah, accompanied by Dawood Pasha El Haidari arrived at British Headquarters at Habbaniya to see the G.O.C. I distinctly heard the Regent thanking the British Government for saving the situation and requesting that the British Army enter Baghdad to stop the riots and massacre taking place. The GOC replied that he was well aware of the serious situation, but acting on strict orders from London, was unable to enter Baghdad.

All the victims were Iraqi Jews – a Community whose ancestors had lived in Iraq and Babylon for the last three thousand years – their houses and shops were looted and more than 130 men, women and children were killed and hundreds wounded.

Syrian Campaign & the Battle of Palmyra. (Baalbek)

The campaign to crush the Vichy Regime in Syria started after a few days rest outside Baghdad. Our Unit was with the advance column when we encountered a French army colonel with his wireless operating unit at the Syrian frontier. After surrendering, he admitted that they had since sent an urgent message to the French High Command in Syria stating that the British Army had crossed the frontier and were advancing towards Damascus. We obtained valuable intelligence from the French colonel that a big force of Germans and 400 military

aircraft had arrived in Damascus. Shortly afterwards we were bombed and strafed by Vichy planes, causing some casualties, but the Army continued advancing.

Just before the Battle of Palmyra, the Vichy planes were joined by Nazi German war planes and the bombings and strafings became intense. Unfortunately for us, we had almost no air support and the desert being wide open provided no cover. A fellow officer brought out a bottle of whisky, which after imbibing plentifully, he handed to me – this certainly helped to ease the tension. Another officer had dug a slit trench to escape the strafing but was crushed and killed by the concussion of a bomb falling nearby. Thirty yards away I had been sitting in the back of a staff car when a shell, which did not explode hit the mudguard.

The very worst experience of the whole operations was at the Battle of Palmyra. Heavy fighting against the entire French Foreign Legion and Vichy French took place at this historic oasis which was the central military airfield protecting Damascus. We lost a lot of men. There, the Vichy French planes supported by the Nazi Germans as well as Mussolini's bombers and fighters bombarded, shelled and strafed us continuously. The bombings and in particular the strafings were so intense that many of our senior Army Commanders including the chief of military intelligence – and myself – became casualties.

While the air raids and fighting were in progress, the medical orderlies had a difficult job in collecting the many casualties and putting them in ambulances to be taken to advance Casualty Station. The three other men in my ambulance were badly wounded. Next to me a young soldier was calling 'Mum .. Mum, I am cold'. He was later found dead.

The ambulances had just started to go to the nearest casualties station when a swarm of German and French fighter-bombers appeared. On previous strafing, many ambulances were attacked despite the large Red Cross painted on four sides of the vehicles. These ambulances which were attacked were set on fire with many casualties. Because of this, instructions were given to remove all casualties from the ambulances and to place them flat on the ground until the end of the raids.

As we were laid facing the ground, the war planes were diving on us with all their machine guns firing. I saw the bullets hitting some of the forward casualties. I knew that within seconds it will be my turn. I was saying the 'Shema Israel Prayer' when the planes flew low overhead still firing. The casualty on my right was killed instantly; the casualty on my left was wounded. I escaped.

Reinforcements and Scouts

After a twelve day delay in the advance, reinforcements from Egypt and north Palestine were brought in, while British, Australian and Indian troops, preceded by Scouts recruited from the Hagana were converging on Syria. Damascus was eventually captured and the Vichy French regime in Syria was completely crushed.

Finally we were taken by a column of ambulances to Haifa and from there by a special military train to Tel Hashomer military hospital near Ramle and Rishon Le Zion where I had to stay for a considerable time before I was fit enough to be discharged from hospital to join the Eighth Army and Long Range Desert Group in North Africa●

Yacob Meridor and Rashid Ali

Yacob Meridor died in Tel Aviv last June aged 81. As a successful businessman and politician, he preceded Menahem Begin as commander of the Irgun.

In its obituary, *The Times* of London writes: "During the war the Irgun declared a ceasefire in its activities, in order to join forces with the British in a common fight against the Germans, and in 1941 Yacob was sent to Iraq on a commando operation for the British. With him was David Raziell, then Irgun commander, and two Arab-speaking Jews (see Shemtob Reading's article on this page).



Yacob Meridor

"A coup in Iraq had led to Rashid Ali's pro-German regime, and British forces still in the country were coming under Luftwaffe attack. The Irgun group was to penetrate behind the lines, carry out sabotage missions, and determine the strength of the enemy forces holding Baghdad. Their mission resulted in intelligence that allowed a successful British push against the capital – but Raziell was killed during a German bombing raid. After Meridor returned home, the Irgun command elected him to replace Raziell.

"Two years later Meridor surprised everyone by handing over command to Menahem Begin."

Scribe: At the outbreak of war in 1939, David Ben-Gurion decreed: We shall fight the war as if there is no White Paper, and we shall fight the White Paper as if there is no war!●

Readers of Esther Mercado's book should remember the contribution in the creation and strengthening of the State of Israel.

Those who complained about life in the immigrant camps were perhaps lucky to have escaped the hard conditions in Iraq●

Ramat Gan

V. Cohen

I came across a copy of *The Scribe*, Journal of the Babylonian Jewry, and was really enchanted and impressed by the great work put into this magnificent publication.

I would very much thank you to put me on your mailing list●

Ramat Gan

Shimon J. Somekh

The silence of God

Abridged lecture of Cardinal Lustiger at the Conference on the Holocaust held at Tel Aviv University last April.

"We Jews must all see ourselves as Holocaust survivors."

The last time I visited the Yad Va'Shem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, was in the summer of 1973 when I decided to spend the day fasting, in prayer and meditation. I sat alone at the side. After several hours the caretaker became worried about me. He came up to me and said, "Don't drown yourself in sorrow, say *Kaddish* and go home." I did as he said, and at the same time I silently thanked God for this caretaker who comforted me.

I would like to share with you my thoughts about the destiny of all Israel, that means the Jewish people in the Diaspora, together with the reunited nation in the State of Israel.

On this 50th anniversary, we ask ourselves again why God was silent, did God forget his promise?

God had promised Noah, not to curse the Earth again. This alliance with the whole of humanity gives free hand to people capable of doing the best and the worst. God left man with the ability to destroy humanity, more evident now that he acquired nuclear power.

In this century something terrible happened that had no historic precedent. People of all nations of the world were involved in the extermination of the Jews, and so they were directly or indirectly responsible for it. As instigators or partners, by cynicism or by silence, that is how it seems today when we examine the events of 50 years ago.

We Jews, all of us together must see ourselves as Holocaust survivors.

Likewise, all nations have discovered that they too have survived the suicidal tendencies of humanity. But the Jewish people cannot stand aside, nor can they quit the human race. They would destroy themselves. It was exactly this destruction that Hitler's Germany sought, and that received the consent of the "Kings of the Nations".

For the past 2000 years, the Bible has been transmitted to the nations of the world and translated to all languages.

People gain from the Bible the consciousness that they belong to a unique history, the history of humanity, and through it are able to discover their dignity and destiny through the people by which God reveals Himself. All modern tendencies are not generative unless nourished by the revelation of the Bible.

This raises two questions:

How should the Jews view the nations and how should the nations of the world view the Jews?

In the past, there existed in Christianity, the wish to dispossess the legitimate guardian of the divine word, and even to exterminate the guardian in order to take his treasure.

The destiny of the Jewish people and that of all nations is indissoluble.

Because the Jewish nation is the bearer of the messianic promise, the nations are called upon by God to enter into an alliance with Israel.

What is good for the Jews is therefore good for humanity.

If the Jewish people is not "like the others", this is, first of all, because it was created as a people of God. This constitutes its uniqueness.

God who chose Israel to reveal Himself, is God of the universe, the One whom all the nations will recognise.

But we know that pagan messianism, de-

prived of divine unction, leads to political, social and ethnic imperialism.

Thus emerges the paradox of Israel's destiny.

What is true for the people who have settled in the state of Israel which was recreated for the Jews, is true for the members of the Jewish people who are dispersed throughout the Diaspora as citizens of the various countries, altogether a people not like the others, but rather for the others as God had promised Abraham "and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." But this vocation of testimony is in the hands of God, and not in the power of man.

The destiny of Israel is that its destiny overtakes it over and over.

Lessons of the Holocaust

Like other readers of Baghdadian heritage I read *The Scribe* with pleasure. The March 1995 issue is generous and informative.

But I find it difficult to understand how an issue which begins with an impassioned "Lesson of the Holocaust" which eloquently expresses outrage at the devastation of European Jewry, could also include a statement "Can the Holocaust be regarded as a violent form of natural selection, so that those who have survived it are now of superior strain?"

Do I detect in one of our own a belief in the long discredited social Darwinism that has too often been trotted out to absolve the survivor guilt of people of a certain class?

As a Baghdadian descendant whose Ashkenazi mother, at great sacrifice to her parents, had the good fortune to emigrate to America before Hitler destroyed the rest of her family, I find *The Scribe's* possible answer to the Holocaust question irresponsible. It blames the victim while contemplating that some possible good could come from unspeakable honour.

Let us not say that the Holocaust was the will of God lest the Germans escape any blame.

In answer to the question "Where was God during the Holocaust?" being part of a civilization whose musical works... rooted in religious inspiration... I celebrate and am inspired by in the course of my life's work, I have struggled to find a way to incorporate the "idea of God". But I cannot give credence to an all powerful, all-knowing, entity that watches over his chosen, a God in whom I can submerge myself. Of course I am not alone in my loneliness. I am more comfortable with the notion that each man must be his own God.

But one does not look to God for an answer to the question "Why it happened?" Can we understand madness?

It is sad to say, many Western Jews declined to mobilise any help to save European Jewry.

New York Prof. Maurice Peress

Naim Dangoor writes: The Holocaust did not only affect the Ashkenazim. Many Sephardim were also slaughtered. The trauma involves the whole Jewish people and all references to this event in *The Scribe* must be taken with complete sincerity and involvement. We must continue to debate, deep and long, this earthquake in human history, until we come to a conclusion, however unpleasant. It serves no

purpose to direct the blame on me.

The forces that led to the Holocaust are still abroad and are now directed against Israel. These are also evident in the rise of extreme right wing parties, due mainly to increasing unemployment and the widening gap between rich and poor.

Many people no longer ask, "Where was God during the Holocaust?"

But simply ask - Where was man? ●

Holocaust debate

The renewed interest in discussing the Holocaust and its painful meaning is due to the fact that 50 years on it will soon be relegated to the pages of history. At a time when many people are beating their breasts over Hiroshima, which was necessary to put an end to Japanese aggression, it is well to remember that the Holocaust was equivalent to 300 Hiroshimas, and was carried out against docile and peaceable Jewish communities all over Europe. Neither the German criminals nor the world at large expressed adequate remorse or sympathy.

To say that the Holocaust was a punishment for our sins, puts the blame on God and elevates the wicked Hitler and his fellow Germans, to being his messengers. That won't do.

My own conclusion in which I find some comfort, is that we suffer not only for our own sins. Because the Jews accepted to be God's witnesses, we suffer, even more, for God the wickedness of this world. Can there be no reward for such a role? Those who feel no advantage or reward can compensate for the suffering, have been leaving the fold. The Remnant can only hope for the coming of the Messiah.

The Holocaust was not an aberration but a new trend in human relations. With the world population doubling every 50 years, everything becomes more expensive, while Human life becomes cheaper and cheaper ●

N.D.

Where was man at Auschwitz?

From the address by Lord Jakobovits

Some have called for a new post-Auschwitz theology, with the cry: Where was God at Auschwitz? Yet others have echoed the leading Jewish Sage earlier this century who said: For those with faith there are no questions, and for those without faith there are no answers.

The real question is: Where was Man at Auschwitz? Where was the humanity of a cultured nation mesmerised by a rabble-rouser, to turn into millions of mass-murderers and their accomplices? Where was Man when numerous civilised nations remained silent and closed their borders to those fleeing from fiendish persecution? Where were the leaders of great faiths when the cries of the tormented evoked no response? Where was Man when millions were shipped in cattle trucks to their death for the crime of being born as Jews?

Auschwitz has been liberated from the Nazi barbarians. But the world has not yet been completely liberated from Auschwitz. Nazi propaganda can still be freely disseminated in Europe and many other parts of the world, and when the cloak of respectability can be claimed by fake historians who deny that the Holocaust ever took place, we have the ultimate evidence that, fifty years on, the legacy of Auschwitz - city of death - is itself not yet dead ●

Those who deny the Holocaust or express approval of it, should be treated as if they took part in that crime and deserve to be punished accordingly ●

Shoah – The Day of Remembrance

by Commander Fred Sopher (I.N. Ret'd)

My wife Matilda and I were holidaying in Israel staying with our daughter Elisabeth and her family in a town north of Herzliah called Raanana.

It was Thursday, 27 April 1995 – it was Yom ha-Sho'ah, the Day of Remembrance, for the six million Jews so brutally murdered by the German Nazis.

That morning we attended the ceremony which was held on the forecourt of Beth Yad ha'banim (Memorial to the Youth). A large crowd was assembled, the youngsters dressed in black skirts/trousers with white tops which I understood was traditional.

Precisely at ten the sirens sounded and everyone and everything came to an absolute standstill.

After the silence came the most sombre and heart-breaking part of the day when the names of relatives and friends of residents of Raanana who had been slaughtered by the Germans, were read out, sometimes by surviving members of the family or by school children, from lists that seemed to be endless. Whole families, completely wiped out of existence. This went on for about three hours and was continued in the evening.

Inside the memorial was a room lit by a red light on a pillar in the centre. The walls, ceiling and floor were all in black marble and on the wall in raised lettering in gold were the names of the youth of Raanana who had died in the many encounters with the Arabs.

Moshe Kahtan in his article in the March 1995 issue asks – Did we learn? I say not only we learnt but we must ensure that we will never forget●

Mr. Edward Chitayat, an old friend, gave me a copy of *The Scribe* to look at. I turned the page, what do I see, the picture of another very old friend, Mr. Salim Dangoor. I met Salim Dangoor in 1950 when I was serving as a junior diplomat at the Iranian Embassy in Sweden. The Ambassador was my brother-in-law. Salim had become a friend of the family and we were always enjoying his hospitality and that of his charming wife. When Dr. Mossadegh's government collapsed, changes were inevitable. The Ambassador, a pro-Mossadegh, was dismissed and I was recalled. My replacement arrived very soon. We needed some time to prepare our departure; that was when Mr. Dangoor's hospitality came to our help. My wife, our two year old daughter and myself were their house guests for over a month and were treated like royalty until we left Sweden.

Unfortunately, since then, except perhaps for one or two very short occasions, I never had the pleasure of seeing him again. I would like him to know that I never forgot the warmth, friendship and hospitality that he extended to us at that time and wish him and his family long healthy life, full of prosperity.

The stories that he recalls, I am sure, are only some occasions when he made his friendship and assistance available to many others. That is a good proof that Oriental hospitality does not limit itself to cast, religion, clans or countries. His endeavours are another proof that Middle East people irrespective of religion could live together happily if there was no outsider interference.

The Scribe itself in every page is another vivid proof of the friendly atmosphere that existed in the past between the people in the Middle East and it may revive if opportunity prevails●

Tampa, Florida

Ahmad Tavakoli

Family Trees

The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Centre in Or-Yehuda, Israel, intends to catalogue and computerise the Jewish families that resided in Iraq as far back as possible.

Anyone of Iraqi Jewish descent who has put together a family tree or who can take the time to put together as much information as possible about their families should send the information to:

M. Ben-Porat
Genealogy Project
Babylonian Jewry Heritage Centre
83 Hahagana Street
Or-Yehuda 000251
Israel

The people who are in a position to supply a great deal of the facts needed are by now fairly advanced in age and therefore the window of this unique and wonderful opportunity to put the valuable part of our heritage in record form is very limited.

Any information about your present family and your ancestors should be forwarded at your earliest convenience to the address mentioned above.

This project when completed can be a great guide and point of identification for those descended from a people who played an important part in Jewish history

New York

Herbert N. Somekh

Scribe:

We understand from Mr. Ben Porat that there will be no charge for feeding the genealogical information into the computer●

We are so happy to read *The Scribe* and renew our souvenir from Iraq. The children also are interested to know more of our roots●

Natanya

Joseph Sabha



1927 – The Baghdad Maccabi group, headed by Naim Heskell Basri, who later joined the BBC Arabic Programme, sent by Salim Dangoor, Stockholm●

We acknowledge with thanks receipt of voluntary and generous contributions from:

Mr F Baruch, N.Y.

Mr Moradian (Shasha), Zumikon, Switzerland

Mr S Sopher, Geneva

Mr E Shohet, London

Mr S Ezekiel, St Louis, USA

Mrs T Jacob, Toronto

Dr & Mrs M Tahan, London

Mr J R Fraser, London

Dr N Adam, Cheshire

Mr H Samra, Tarrytown, N.Y.

Mrs S Lyons, Jerusalem

Mr E Rahamim, Orange, Ohio

Dr Edward Mahlab, N.Y.

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Mr I Sigal, Kindersley, Quebec

Dr A Khabbaza, N.Y.

Mr D Korine, Zurich

Mr J Nathaniel, Montreal

Mr N Raphaeli, Falls Church, USA

Mr M Muslawi, N.Y.

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Mrs R Sopher, Los Angeles

Mr L Lawee, N.Y.

Mr D Lawi, N.Y.

Mr & Mrs I Caplan, Montreal

Mr S Somekh, Ramat Gan

Mr J E Benjamin, Madrid

Mr W Shashoua, Jerusalem

Dr & Mrs E Meiselles, Kiryat Tivon

Mr E Sasson, Toronto

Mr J Irani, Newport Beach, Calif.

Mr M Jonah, Los Angeles

Dr Joseph Koren, N.Y.

Mr M Miller, London

Mr J Judah, London

Mrs P Cohen, London

Mr M Ozer, Paris

Mr J Gottesman, Colchester

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Mr E B Ezra, Brisbane

Mrs V Nounou, N.Y.

Mrs A Mowlem, N.Y.

Mr J Masri, London

Mr J Darwish, N.Y.

Mrs M Odell, Boca Raton

Mr D Balboa, N.Y.

Mr N Aboody, Vancouver

Mr B Mares, Colorado

Mr M Kolsky, Harrow

Mr D Bahary, N.J.

Mr P Saddik, Perth

Mrs V Tchenquiz, London

Mr S Herdoon, N.Y.●

The last issue was excellent. *The Scribe* is always forwarded by me to colleagues and is a subject at lively discussions, even among Ashkenazim!●

London

Dr Amiram Ur



15 August 1995 was celebrated as marking 50 years to the end of the Second World War in the Far East. The Emperor of Japan has at last expressed regret at the suffering caused by that war. The dropping of the atom bomb forced Japan to offer unconditional surrender as she was earlier bargaining for better terms.

The above picture shows Morris Chitayat shaking hands with Emperor Akihito when he was Crown Prince. He was on a visit to Baghdad in 1958 at the head of a trade delegation. In the picture appears also the Japanese Ambassador who made the introduction.

Some historians believe that the Japanese royal family is of Jewish origin. They identify the Shindai or holy class of Japan as descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.

They maintain that OSEE who became the first King of Japan in 730 BCE is none other than HOSEA, the last King of Israel, who was exiled to an eastern destination and died in 722 BCE. On a recent visit to Japan, Claire and Morris used the photograph to great advantage, thus obtaining special service in hotels and restaurants●



As promised, I enclose the above photograph of myself in a "Coracle" reading *The Scribe*, which proves that your journal reaches those parts others cannot reach!

Incidentally, it is the first time this Season for this Coracle – if any – to be on the Teify at Cenarth, this glorious Salmon river●

Swansea

Gruffyd Thomas

Where the World's Jews Live

United States	5.8 million
Israel	4.42 million
France	600,000
Russia	600,000
Ukraine	446,000
Canada	360,000
Britain	300,000
Argentina	250,000
South Africa	114,000
Australia	100,000
Brazil	100,000
Hungary	80,000
Germany	60,000
Uzbekistan	45,000
Moldova	40,000
Mexico	40,000
Belgium	35,000
Belarus	34,000
Italy	31,000
Uruguay	30,000
Holland	30,000
Iran	25,000
Azerbaijan	25,000
Turkey	20,000
Switzerland	19,000
Venezuela	18,000
Chile	17,000
Sweden	16,000
Kazakhstan	15,000
Romania	15,000
Spain	15,000
Latvia	15,000
Georgia	13,000
Poland	10,000
Austria	8,000
Colombia	8,000
Morocco	7,500
Denmark	7,000
Lithuania	6,500
Slovakia	6,000
Czech Republic	6,000
India	6,000
Tadjikistan	5,000
New Zealand	5,000
Peru	5,000
Greece	5,000
Panama	4,500
Kyrgyzstan	4,500
Bulgaria	4,000
Estonia	3,000
Ethiopia	3,000
Serbia and Montenegro	2,500
Costa Rica	2,500
Tunisia	2,500
Croatia	2,000
Hong Kong	2,000
Turkmenistan	2,000
Puerto Rico	2,000
Ireland	1,800
Finland	1,300
Ecuador	1,000
Japan	1,000
Norway	1,000
Zimbabwe	975
Paraguay	900
Yemen	800
Guatemala	800
Bolivia	700
Gibraltar	600
Luxembourg	600
Monaco	500
Kenya	450
Bosnia	400
Cuba	400
Virgin Islands	400
Curacao	350

The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Centre

by Dr Naim Dallal



Left to right: Dr Naim Dallal; Mrs Arlene Rae, wife of the Premier of Ontario; The Hon. Mordechai Ben Porat; Mrs Renee Dallal.

The Iraqi Jewish Association of Ontario sponsored last April an important cultural function related to the history and heritage of Babylonian Jewry. The association is a registered and recognised charity. Its main function is to promote religious and cultural activities pertinent to the Iraqi Jewish tradition (*Menhag Habably*). The association earned some prominence when President Elbakir of Iraq issued an invitation to the Iraqi Jews, who left Iraq, to return. This invitation was published in the Western press, including the Canadian newspapers. In our response we proved that the invitation was phoney and that its purpose was only to embarrass Israel in its stand on the Arab refugees issue.

The event took place at the North York Memorial Hall, attended by over 200 people.

The exhibition included many pictures of historical value from the Morasha Centre. The Morasha Centre at Or Yehuda in Israel is of great value to us and to the generations to come.

The President of the Association, Mrs Renee Dallal, welcomed those present and thanked all those involved in arranging the exhibition and preparing the delicious Iraqi Jewish gourmet dinner.

The Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Bob Rae, was represented by his wife who addressed the meeting and thanked Mr Ben Porat for giving her a nice tour of the exhibition. She promised that she would visit the centre with her husband on their next visit to Israel. She praised the Iraqi Jews who preserved their heritage and tradition.

The next speaker was the Honourable Dror Zeigerman, the Consul General of Israel in Toronto, who praised the Babylonian Jews of Israel for their contribution to the State of Israel.

In his introduction of the main speaker the Honourable Mordechai Ben Porat, the M/C Dr N Dallal gave details of his patriotic activities in saving Jews from Iraq, Iran and Ethiopia. He also served the State of Israel in his capacity as Knesset deputy, speaker, member of Cabinet, representative to the United Nations and to WOJAC, of which he was the founder.

The Honourable Mordechai Ben Porat emphasised the importance of unity of all Jews, regardless of their ideological diversity. He detailed the founding, funding and the future expansion of Morasha and concluded by saying that if the present generation did not establish the Morasha today, nobody else would in the future. He received a standing ovation.

All the proceeds went to Morashat Babel.

(The writer was born in Baghdad and graduated from:

The Dental Faculty of the Syrian University in 1947.

The Dental Faculty of the University of Toronto 1963.

He was founder and past President of the Iraqi Jewish Association of Ontario, Canada.

He served on various committees of the Canadian Jewish Congress and is associated with many other organisations●

Zaire	320
Syria	300
Armenia	300
Portugal	300
Jamaica	300
Singapore	300
Thailand	200
Bahamas	200
Dominican Republic	150
Surinam	150
Honduras	120
El Salvador	120
Iraq	80

Communities with 100 or fewer Jews:

Egypt, Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea, Taiwan, Botswana, Zambia, Aruba, Algeria, Mozambique, Barbados, Namibia, Trinidad and Tobago, Lebanon, Bermuda, Cyprus, Slovenia, Albania, French Guinea, Martinique, Malta, Swaziland.

Largest Jewish cities in the Diaspora:

Greater New York 1.45 million
Los Angeles 490,000
Paris 350,000
Philadelphia 254,000
Greater Chicago 248,000
Boston 208,000
London 200,000
Moscow 200,000
Buenos Aires 200,000
Miami 189,000
Toronto 175,000
Greater Washington 165,000
Ft. Lauderdale 140,000
San Francisco 128,000
Kiev 110,000
St. Petersburg 100,000
Montreal 100,000

Source: Academic demographic surveys and reports from communities to the WJC●

Healthy Living

By: Gila Khabbaza, A.C.H., R.Hy.

Whether you are looking to lose weight, lower your blood sugar, cholesterol, blood pressure, or simply to feel better about your life, adopting a new life style is the key.

Many patients referred to me by their doctors have come in with preconceived images of nasty starvation diets, rabbit-food and sweating at a gym are often shocked (and rather relieved) that they do not have to do any of that. In fact, anyone who loses weight too rapidly tends to gain it back. Why does this happen? Well, the body has its own survival mechanism and when people starve themselves on fad diets, it starts turning down its metabolism and STORING fat, thinking that there is a shortage of food, thus making the limited amount last longer! It is of no surprise to me that people tend to gain weight on this type of diet, and feeling deprived, they give up the whole idea, become depressed and go on binges with their "comfort" food (like chocolate, ice-cream, cake, bread, sugar).

So what is a person to do? Adopt a healthy lifestyle which is going to work for you FOR LIFE. This only "seems" hard in the beginning, but two weeks into the programme, you will be very happy having made these changes.

Start with small things, like replacing white flour with whole grain whole wheat flours; replace white rice with brown rice, which is a lot healthier, and since it is so high in fibre and so filling, you need less to eat to fill you. Lentils and chopped mushrooms (very high in minerals, iron, B-vitamins and FIBRE) can be substituted for minced beef. Try out different things and see what works for YOU. My mother took up my suggestions and now makes a delicious stuffed dolma dish ("EMHASHAH") with brown rice, lentils, chopped mushrooms and all the Iraqi spices used in this traditional dish. Also, many traditional meat dishes can be substituted with fish, and for the more daring, TOFU, which is soya bean curd (since tofu is very bland by itself, you need to cook it with more garlic, onions and spices, since it takes on the flavour of whatever you cook it in). Speaking of spices, why not reduce salt by adding healthier spices like garlic, ginger, cumin, celery, cayenne pepper and other delicious spices. Also strained yogurt can be substituted for many cream dishes and all-fruit-no-sugar jams and cookies can be purchased in many health food stores. You can even make healthy ice cream by freezing bananas (and other fruits) and putting them through an ice cream machine. I personally use daté paste instead of sugar as it is healthier.

Also, natural juices like red grape juice can be substituted for alcoholic drinks. New studies are now showing that the substances found in red grape juice are sufficient to raise the "HDL" (the friendly "High Density Lipoprotein," which prevent cholesterol from sticking to the arteries) the same way red wine does - without the unwanted alcohol (which does raise blood sugar, blood pressure, is a depressant, and is loaded with empty calories).

You may also try (and grow to love) some of the newer soya milk products (like Vita Soya), Rice Milk drinks and "Rice Dream" Ice Cream (non-dairy, no sugar, preservatives, etc.). Also "CAROB" is a good substitute for chocolate. Train the little children early to start on a healthy life style. Give them dried fruit, natural



Children of Baghdadian origin, Bombay 1935.

Photograph from Dolly Shadfield (nee Dayan).

Left to right. Back row (standing): Essie Sargon (London); Archie Gourgey (died in New York); Mary Dayan (Australia); Maurice Nathan (London).

2nd row: Helen Simon (Israel); Joan Perry (Australia); Nancy Dayan (Israel); Percy Gourgey (London),

3rd row: Mozelle Joseph (Israel); Ruth Simon (Israel); Byramjee Carver (died in Bombay); Madeleine Nathan (Israel).

4th row: Katie Joseph (United States); Margaret Dayan (Australia); Dolly Dayan (Australia); Eric Sargon (London); Eddie Simon (Israel); Hilda Nathan (Singapore); Rebecca Sargon (London)●

juices, un-buttered popcorn, whole wheat pretzels, fruits, nuts, yogurt, and thinly sliced baked potatoes, instead of chips and colas; and let them go outside and run and play (which is what children were intended to do) rather than watch TV five hours a day! Remember children copy what you DO not what you SAY, so start by being a good example to your kids today and enjoy reaping the fruits of health later on in life!

Speaking of longevity, there is nothing like exercise to make you feel better, increase your energy, help you sleep better, give you a better self-image, control your weight, strengthen your cardiovascular system, control your blood pressure, blood sugar, etc. and add as much as TWENTY YEARS to your life. Start out by walking a few blocks and GRADUALLY increase it every day. Make sure you wear comfortable shoes, and STRETCH before you go out. Also, gradually warm up and increase your pace. When you are done, gradually slow down your pace into a stopping position, stretch,

and enjoy the rest of the day. This 30 minute investment, will be the best investment you will ever make!

Also, why not try out other fun exercises like dancing, yoga, tennis, swimming, bicycling, and anything else that you think you might ENJOY! The idea is to remain ACTIVE. And remember, it is never too late to start a healthier lifestyle. Who knows, you might discover a part of yourself you never knew before.

Gila Khabbaza P.O. Box 234364 Great Neck, New York, N.Y. 11023, USA) is a gifted healer, an internationally published writer specialising in nutritional consultation, athletic endurance, pain management, and inner child healing. As a Board Certified Advanced Clinical Hypnotherapist, she has helped many people with self confidence, stress management, weight loss, eating disorders, addictions, body imaging, stamina, smoking, anxiety, insomnia, phobias, overcoming problems with the opposite sex, and using playfulness to accelerate achieving goals●

COOKERY CORNER

By Alice Shashoua

Chicken Casserole in Beer

Ingredients:

8-10 roasting chicken portions
10 shallots whole
3 celery sticks
2 cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped
1 bay leaf
1 cup beer
1/2 cup water
1 teaspoon paprika
Salt and black pepper to taste
2 tablespoons of oil
Tomato paste to taste

Method:

Place all the ingredients in a large saucepan and saute for a minute. Cover the pan and bring to the boil; then simmer gently until chicken and vegetables are well cooked and the sauce reduced.

Just before serving, bring to the boil until a little thick sauce remains. Serve hot with Mushroom Rice served separately.

Frozen broadbeans mixed with frozen greenpeas can be used to accompany this dish.

Note: The cup of beer will give a special flavour to this casserole.

This dish can also be prepared with poussins cut in half.

To prepare Broadbeans and Greenpeas:

Pour a little hot water over frozen broadbeans to help remove skins.

In a pan, fry one chopped onion with a little hot oil until golden brown.

Add the broadbeans and greenpeas and saute for a second. Add water or preferably the sauce from the cooked chicken, a little tomato paste and salt. Bring to the boil, then simmer gently until the vegetables are cooked with a little thick sauce.

Serve with the cooked chicken or separately.

Mushroom Rice (in my book page 213). You can prepare this rice without the mushrooms●

Spinach and Mushroom Frittata

Ingredients:

1 large onion, sliced
1 garlic clove, sliced
4 oz (125g) fresh spinach, roughly chopped
4 oz (125g) mushrooms, sliced
2 tablespoons oil
3 oz (75g) Gruyere cheese, cut into cubes
3 oz (75g) Edam cheese, cut into cubes
4 eggs, beaten
1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
Salt and plenty of freshly ground black pepper

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan, about 9-inch base. Saute the onion and garlic stirring occasionally until golden brown. Remove onion and garlic from pan and add spinach and mushrooms and stir over low heat until all liquid has evaporated. Return the onion to the pan with the cheese and eggs mixing all the ingredients.

Cook over medium heat until base and sides are set and golden, loosening the edge with a spatula. Cover the pan handle with a foil and place under a hot grill until the top is set and golden brown. Serve with a salad and Barbari bread●

Spiced Sponge Apple Cake

Ingredients:

2 medium baking apples (Bramley), peeled, cored and sliced
100 gms nuts (walnuts or pecans) finely chopped
3 oz sugar

Cake mixture:

4 oz soft margarine
5 oz caster sugar
3 eggs (size 2)
8 oz plain flour mixed with:
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon bicarbonate soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 1/2 teaspoons spices
5 fluid oz of cider or apple juice
Mix nuts and flour in separate bowls
You need a baking tin 12" x 8" x 2"
Bake in a Gas oven on No. 5 (375°F)

Method:

Cream the margarine and sugar until fluffy, then beat in the eggs one at a time and stir in the flour mixed with spices, bicarbonate and baking powder.

Grease tin and pour half the mixture in the tin, then lay half the apples on top of the mixture and half the sugar mixture, then add the remaining mixture and apples, and sprinkle the nuts on top.

Bake for 35 minutes.

Serve hot or cold●

I look forward to reading each issue of *The Scribe* from cover to cover. I would like to share with you some of my recollections as a young man living in Baghdad.

In early 1951 with the approach of my *Barmitzvah* late in April 1952, my father, Isaac Sasson Mukamal, asked his personal friend and mentor, Hakham Sasson Khithouri, to instruct me. He obliged by teaching me the entire portion of the *Torah* and *Haftarah*. During this period of time, I was also taught to become a poultry *Shohet* because of the fear that, in the near future, there would be a need for *Shohatim* in Baghdad. When I was proficient in the practice, Hakham Khithouri presented me with a set of knives, one of which dating back to the early 1900s. It was a thrill for me to perform my first job for the High Holy Days in 1952. Soon after that my family emigrated to the USA. I was fortunate enough to be able to take the knives with me. I still have them in my possession.

Years later, in the early 1970s and 1980s, now a surgeon living and practising in a small southern town in North Carolina, I was urged by my local Rabbi to apply for a licence to become a *mohel*. The New York Board of Rabbis obliged me and, subsequently, I officiated at the *mila* of ten Jewish boys born in the area.

Thank you for enriching my life and my memory●

Baltimore, Md.

Dr Ronald Mukamal

An eye for an eye

There is a question which has arisen several times during discussions I had with non-Jews, particularly Christians.

The question is how can the Jewish religion which is logical and divine advocate revenge to be used as law? I refer to the proverb "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth".

Christians state that this proverb contrasts sharply with their teachings of "turning the other cheek" which is a philosophical way to show Christian humility and kindness as opposed to the Jewish law of arrogance and harshness.

This Jewish proverb has been printed in newspapers and many books at one time or another, and shows prominently in Christian teachings about Judaism. When a priest stands in the pulpit saying "we do not use the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth to educate our people as the law of Moses says . . ." then naturally the congregation will feel contempt for the Jews.

I asked several rabbis about this proverb, and none of them gave me a convincing explanation. In fact no two gave me the same answer.

I think that laws in the Torah were made for humans, in order to protect them against themselves, to oblige them to behave themselves, and also to protect the weak.

The strong and powerful in the old days, and also in these days, can use their power to do almost whatever they like. Thus if a weak person causes a powerful one, intentionally or not, to lose an eye, or a tooth, or a cat, or a car, or just causes him annoyance, then the stronger one can use his power to cause the weak to lose not only an eye, but if he so wishes, a hand, a head, a house, or even his life! The powerful can always find a reason for his reaction, and no one can stand in his way lest they get the same treatment. This law of Moses therefore is meant to legally limit the reaction of the powerful to be not more than what has been caused to him by the weak. It is a way of keeping the punishment to fit the crime.

I am not of course explaining the torah, but I think that this explanation could be used as a consistent one by everybody.

I wonder whether I am right in my thought.

London

Menashi Naghar

Scribe: You are right in your explanation and the formula is meant to provide a basis for just compensation.

Any use for the "eye for an eye" statement by non-Jews is merely an expression of antisemitism.

"A life for a life" is still central to all legal systems, and no one finds it strange. So, why not "an eye for an eye?"

Moreover, the importance of the eye-for-an-eye law is more as a deterrent than a punishment.

In practice, however, compensation is substituted for bodily injuries, just as it is for homicide in some societies. Likewise, where there is no capital punishment, life imprisonment is substituted.

Unfortunately, the law nowadays tends to protect the criminal more than the victim; the rule being: let a thousand criminals go free, rather than one innocent person be wrongly convicted. That is why the world is slowly sinking into anarchy●