

which also happens to be located on the Temple Mount.

Among the "privileges" enumerated by the Moslems are the friendship of the Caliph enjoyed by the Jews; the refusal of the Moslem authorities to be swayed by the arguments of the Christians in the matter of the transfer of the Tiberias Academy to Jerusalem; the appointment of the Jews as guardians of the Temple Mount; and the permission granted the Jews to build a synagogue next to the Foundation Stone - a synagogue which the Jews were allowed to complete without interference.

From *Chronicles - News of the Past - Volume II, No. 17*

"THE NEW MILLENNIUM"

The fact that our planet rotates on its axis a little less than the 24 hours, we know as a day (by 3 minutes and 56 seconds), and that it travels around the sun once every 365.25636 days, created confusion over the centuries about exact dates, and induced calendars to make compromises.

The Romans may have been accurate in building aqueducts and coliseums, but they erred when it came to the calendar. They started with ten months, then added two more months, while fiddling with the numbers of days in February which at one time had 30 days.

Just for the record, in 46 BC Julius Caesar reformed the previously erratic Roman calendar. He took the length of the year to be 365.25 days, beginning on 1 January. As a result of a tremendous mistake by Roman priests, the calendar had to be reformed again in 10 BC. Even so, by 1582 the Spring Equinox had slipped back from 21 March to 11 March. To prevent further slippage, Pope Gregory XIII reformed the calendar and as part of the reforms, ten days of 1582 were removed with 5 October becoming 15 October.

But since the Gregorian calendar, as it was called, necessitated the elimination of a number of days from the calendar then in use throughout much of the Western World, a number of countries balked. The ones that immediately went along with the plan were the Catholic countries in Europe, but the Protestant countries refused.

Slowly but surely, however,

over the years even countries not controlled by Catholics agreed to use the Gregorian calendar since the incorrectly calculated Julian calendar was now throwing the year clearly out of the track with the earth's rotation. One of the nations that delayed converting to the new calendar was England and its colonies, which put it into practice in 1752 and Russia and Finland not until 1918,

The changeover in America, as in England, led to a loss of eleven days in February 1752. This affected among others, George Washington, who as a twenty year old in 1752 saw his birthday moved from 11 February to 22 February. This seems quasi as fiction than a fact. Of course the celebration of George Washington's birthday has now been shifted to the third Monday in February - which has nothing to do with the Julian or Gregorian calendar, but with more important one for most people in America: the federal holiday calendar.

As European power spread around the world, every country eventually settled on the Gregorian calendar as the way of marking the change of year. Surely, other ways of measuring time are in force. We Jews shall have our New Year in 2000 on 30th September and the year will be 5761, and according to Islam what we call year 2000 will be 1420, while the Chinese New Year in 2000 will be 4th February and the year will be 4698.

From the 7th century to the year 1338, the English considered Christmas Day to be the first day of the year, and then it was moved to 25 March for civil purposes and to Easter for religious ones.

Gregory XIII was a Catholic Pope, and of course his calendar is supposed to have begun with the birth of Christ. But most students of the subject say the latest Christ could have been born was 4 BC. Thus, perhaps the Millennium should have celebrated in 1996. According to the "New Catholic Encyclopaedia", Dionysius, who has been termed one of the most learned men of the sixth century, made a serious error which, at that time, went unnoticed and which, since then, has gone uncorrected.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia says that Dionysius "wrongly dated (the birth of Jesus) to 754 A.U.C. some 4 years, at least, too late. Thus what Dionysius said was CE1, should have been four or more years earlier. A.U.C. is the abbreviation for the Latin *anno urbis conditae*, which means "the year of the establishment of the City-Rome."

Leaving aside whether Jesus was a real character in history is certainly far from clear to most academics when he was born, not to mention how he was conceived.

In any case, the Millennium has entered the door of history on 1st January 2000 but not without a controversy from certain institutions such as the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the US Navel Observatory and the Greenwich Observatory, as they claim that right date had to be 1 January 2001, though the Vatican preferred to announce it in a three-cipher-year.

A book entitled "Zero - the Biography of a Dangerous Idea" by Charles Seife (Viking) discussing the history within the larger context of alternative numbering systems developed by various cultures, such as the base - 60 system of the Babylonians who brought us the 60 minute hour and the magnificent zero invented by the Maya, came down to a statement that the absence of nought gave us our "silly" calendar system that goes from 1 BC to 1AD, guaranteeing that the new Millennium actually begins next year.

My personal view is that clinging on to the errors of history in such cases, is not worth a dispute especially after the Millennium has already been fixed and that the decision should be taken as a common sense choice.

Milan

Edward Yamen

Scribe: The seven day week has remained unchanged for thousands of years. Jewish leaders have successfully reinstated any attempt to tamper with that system, such as not to count one day a year in order to have a year of 52 weeks, so that every month will start on a Sunday and so on. Jews have strongly objected to any change in order to keep the Sabbath in a fixed position.

You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs

You cannot expect to get something for nothing. You must be prepared to make sacrifices in order to gain your ends.

Better an egg than a hen tomorrow

This means the same as A BIRD IN THE HAND IS WORTH TWO IN THE BUSH.

SIR SASSON ESKELL



Hakham Heskell Shlomo Dawid was a student of Hakham Abdalla Somekh. In 1873 he travelled to India to become the Rabbi and Shohet of the thriving Baghdadi Jewish Community there. In 1885 he returned to Baghdad a wealthy man. In 1906 he built Slat Hakham Heskell which was one of the prominent synagogues in Baghdad.

Sasson Eskell born in Baghdad 17 March 1860 and studied at the Alliance School. He left for Istanbul in 1877 in the company of Menahem Saleh Daniel who had been elected a deputy of Baghdad in the Ottoman Parliament during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. After studying in Istanbul he proceeded to Vienna where he was an outstanding pupil. He returned to Istanbul where he obtained a law degree. He returned to Baghdad in 1885 where he was appointed dragoman for the consular services.

On the announcement of the new Constitution in 1908, he was elected deputy for Baghdad in the first Turkish Parliament, a position he occupied until the end of World War I when Iraq was detached from the Ottoman Empire. He returned to Baghdad in 1920 and was appointed Finance Minister in the first Iraq Government. In 1921 he attended the Cairo Conference under the chairmanship of Winston Churchill at which Emir Feisal was chosen for the throne of Iraq. He occupied the position of Minister of Finance during five consecutive governments until 1925. Thereafter he was Member of Parliament until his death in Paris in 1932 where he was buried at the Père Lachaise Cemetery.



The picture above was taken in Baghdad c. 1927 showing left to right, seated:

Jack Eskell; Sir Sassoon Eskell; Henry Eskell

Standing: David Shaoul Eskell; Frederick Daniel



1927 - Sir Sasson Eskell and his brother Shaoul (standing), with Albert Shaoul Eskell (left) and friend

PHARAOH AKHENATEN

In the last issue, no. 72 of September 1999, we wrote about pharaoh Akhenaten who attempted to introduce in Egypt monotheism which he learned from his Uncle, Joseph, son of patriarch Jacob. The following is an abbreviation of an interesting article about that pharaoh which appeared in *"Aramco World"* Nov/Dec 1999.

CORRESPONDENCE IN CLAY

by: Barbara Ross

"I am going to have a house-warming", read the invitation. "Come yourself to eat and drink with me. Twenty-five women and 25 men shall be in attendance." The party favour promised was "10 wooden chariots and 10 teams of horses" - a lavish gift by ordinary standards, but this invitation was from royalty. It was sent some 3500 years ago by Kadasman-Enlil, king of Babylonia, to Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV), pharaoh of Egypt. The message was inscribed on a pillow-shaped clay tablet, small enough to be carried easily in one hand or slipped into a satchel.

Akhenaten was the first Egyptian king to worship a single deity. He forbade the worship of multiple gods, and he directed an entire society to worship one supreme being represented by the sun, which he referred to as "Aten". With his wife, Nefertiti, and their young daughters, the royal family moved from Thebes, the capital of Egypt, to a palatial city he had built along the east bank of the Nile some 300 kilometers to the north. He named his city Akhetaten ("Horizon of Aten"), and today it is known as Amarna.

Politically, Egypt was at its zenith, the most powerful kingdom the world had known, dominating the lesser empires of Babylonia, Assyria, Khatti, Mitanni and Alashiya (Cyprus), and the provinces of Syria, Palestine, Canaan and Kush. These Amarna clay letters were diplomatic correspondence between the pharaoh and the rulers of these lands, or the vassals who governed towns and cities under Egyptian control.

After a flurry of courteous salutations, most letters included a plea for money, gifts or military troops. This is a typical introduction: "Say to Nimmureya [Akhenaten], the king of Egypt, my brother, my son-in-law, whom I love and who loves me: Thus Tushratta,



Queen Nefertiti

the king of Mitanni, your father-in-law, who loves you, your brother. For me all goes well. For you may all go well. For your household, for your wives, for your sons, for your magnates, for your chariots, for your horses, for your warriors, for your country and whatever else belongs to you, may all go very, very well."

The meat of the letter would quickly follow. In this case, Tushratta announced that he was sending one of his mistresses as a gift to the pharaoh. "She has become very mature, and she has been fashioned according to my brother's [Akhenaten's] desire. And, furthermore, my brother will note that the greeting gift that I shall present is greater than any before."

Akhenaten was the richest and most powerful man in the world, and the Mitanni, in western Mesopotamia, were among Egypt's most important allies, and several princesses had been sent as brides to marry Akhenaten and his father, Amenhotep III.

The written word of the time was cuneiform, a type of writing that had spread from Mesopotamia beginning in the third millennium BC, and was used to write several languages at different times and places. The Amarna Letters are mostly written in Old Babylonian, itself a dialect of Akkadian, a spoken and written language that developed in the city of Akkad, now in Iraq. At the time the letters were written, Old Babylonian had become infused with West Semitic and

Egyptian words, and it had become the common regional language that unified international relations and trade, a *lingua franca*.

Each country outside Assyria and Babylon, where Akkadian was the first language, had to maintain a staff of trusted, educated people who could interpret and write in Akkadian. For example, when the Egyptian king dictated a letter, his scribe probably wrote on papyrus. The scribe would then hand his text to a translator, who would inscribe it into clay in Akkadian. The tablet would then be dispatched by royal courier.

This was an era in which diplomacy was often urgent, for throughout the Amarna period many of Egypt's vassals were at war with each other.

In a tumultuous political sea, what remained fixed throughout Akhenaten's reign was his ardent adoration of Aten. Amarna was built with roofless courtyards, temples, and shrines to facilitate worship directly toward the sun - although shade was provided for the royal family. An Assyrian king protested to the pharaoh on behalf of his emissaries:

"Why are my messengers kept standing in the open sun? They will die in the open sun. If it does the king good to stand in the open sun, then let the king stand there and die in the open sun. Then will there be profit for the king! But really, why should [my messengers] die in the open sun?"

Although many letters contain similarly heated protests of the pharaoh's ways, he appears to have remained largely unmoved, for his power dwarfed that of other empires.

Akhenaten and his wife Nefertiti had at least six daughters, and reliefs found on shrines, temple walls, and burial sites show hints of intimacy and domestic contentment that are unique in pharaonic art. In one painting, the king and queen are seated under a sun-disc whose rays end in tiny hands, which symbolise the life-giving force of the sun. Their three eldest daughters, Meritaten, Meketaten, and Ankhesenpaaten, are often depicted in scenes that display an unusual degree of affection between them and their father.

Akhenaten died after 17 years of reign and was succeeded by Smenkhare, who had married Meritaten. Smenkhare

Continued on following page

ruled for 4 years, and was himself succeeded by Tutankhamen, who may have been either Akhenaten's younger brother, or Akhenaten's son by a minor queen. The nine year old pharaoh married Akhenaten's youngest daughter, Ankhesenpaaten, and ruled until his untimely death nine years later. This left his wife a widow while she was still, presumably, only in her teens.

During Tutankhamen's reign the capital was moved back to Thebes, and the old polytheism was reinstated. It is widely believed that the young king Tutankhamen was manipulated by older, craftier advisors who saw a return to past ways as a means of restoring their own power. One of the closest advisors to the king was a nobleman named Ay, who had been a faithful follower of Akhenaten.

But after the political climate changed following Akhenaten's death, he had become sympathetic to the Theban priests who still prayed to the ancient Egyptian pantheon. In the absence of a male heir to Tutankhamen's throne, Ay became the designated candidate - but the pre-requisite of his ascent was marriage to Tutankhamen's young widow, who was at least 30 years his junior.

What survives today of Akhenaten's legacy is but a small part of what once existed, and Horemheb's destruction is part of the reason that the reign of Akhenaten sank into obscurity until its re-discovery in the early 19th century. As for the Amarna Letters, although the form of communication doubtless continued, there have been no corresponding caches of correspondence found in Thebes, and thus the record ends approximately a year after the capital was moved back there from Amarna, during the reign of Tutankhamen.

The Amarna Letters are our only intimate glimpses into lives lived in a world so distant from our own in time, yet so similar in its humanity.

Learn to walk before you run

Knowledge cannot be acquired all at once; it must be gained step by step. Don't try to spell 'catastrophe' if you cannot spell 'cat'.

Little and often fills the purse

Small sums of money frequently received soon mount up.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF ISRAEL BETWEEN REALPOLITIC AND JEWISH FOREIGN POLICY

**Yizhak Mualem Ph.D.
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Yizhak Mualem completed his studies by means of a scholarship from The Exilarch's Foundation under the patronage of NAIM DANGOOR

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

In this paper the purpose was to examine whether the Israeli foreign policy is affected by the fact that the State of Israel is the state of the Jewish People or whether this has no impact on the conducting of foreign relations of the State of Israel. That is, that the Israeli foreign policy is a policy which is conducted and based primarily on realistic foundations, its meaning being focused political activities for the purpose of realising the state goals in order to reinforce its independence and status as nationality-state in the international arena.

The theoretical framework which has been adopted to deal with the fact that the State of Israel is both a State and the Jewish State is constructed on combination of two theoretical approaches, the realistic and that of extra-national relations. The State of Israel, due to the structure of the Jewish people which is a case that cannot be for the analysis of foreign policy of a state. Therefore, it is not possible to explain this policy according to the realistic model alone. Hence, to be able to present an effective analysis we needed a complementary theory. The extra-national theory enables us to analyse the phenomenon of the State of Israel and the Jewish world, the structure of which, as noted, goes beyond the framework of a regular nationality-state.

The empirical framework of the research is comparative: three different illustrative cases in respect of their time and place of occurrence. The illustrative cases are: A. Israel-France relations and the future of Algerian Jews between the years 1958-1962; B. The Jewish Community and the Israeli foreign policy toward South Africa under the Apartheid regime 1960-1967; C. The campaign for USSR Jews after the Six Days War. This is while focusing on issues-field which is defined by set rules of behaviour of the

actors: the State of Israel, the Jewish organisations in the Diaspora and other states that took part in this field of activity.

The historical message on which this research is based has its source in the central foundations of the Israeli foreign policy as it was formed in the first decade. In that decade the Israeli-Jewish politics was based on the statehood principle. This approach considered it necessary to subject all the internal and external means within the State of Israel and the Diaspora for the realisation of the primary goal of the Jewish People, which is making the State of Israel a central state factor within the Jewish People. This unique political approach had, therefore, impact on the formation of the Israeli foreign policy, and it is also manifested in the illustrative cases, which were examined in the course of this research paper.

In the first illustrative case there was an attempt to examine the nature and essence of the Israeli foreign policy in two fields of activity which have influenced each other. The first is the field of Israel-France relations, and under the second we have dealt with the question of the rendering of spiritual and material assistance to a non-Zionist Jewish community in Algeria throughout the 1950's and early 1960's. The research in this case focused, as noted, on two parallel lines the first of which and the prominent and significant one being the discussion of Israel-France relations which has affected the other, more inner line, which dealt with the relations of Israel and the Jewish community in Algeria.

The involvement of the Israeli Government in South Africa and in the new states in that continent had influence on the status and welfare of the Jewish community in South Africa. In this case the policy of the Israeli Government regarding the question of preferring the interest of the Jewish community, which emanated from the context of the Middle-East conflict, over the interest of the Jewish community was examined. The Israeli Government has deepened its political and economic ties with the new states in Africa and supported motions of the UN organisation to condemn the inter-racial separation regime in South Africa and to impose sanctions on this state, while this notwithstanding the harming of the welfare status of the South African Jews. The political interest was dominant and essential whereas the overall Jewish interest was marginal in

the interest scale of the State of Israel. This is because the harming of the South African Jews was limited, as a result of the policy of the Israeli Government, to the political and economic fields alone and did not spread to the physical one.

The tension between the state interest and the Jewish interest was intensified in the campaign for the USSR Jews, especially in the period following the Six Days War when the diplomatic ties between these two countries were severed and the bilateral political chains have been removed. The Israeli Government dared and commenced acting decisively on the issue of the USSR Jews. It took advantage of the structural changes which started to form at that period, when a new international reality started to come into being which was based on the policy of amelioration - *the détente* - between the two superpowers. At that period the Israeli Government laid the issue of the USSR Jews openly on the Jewish and even the international agenda. It has initiated a battle for the granting of immigration-permits and not departure-permits and this contrary to the policy which has been determined by the large Jewish organisations in the United States, such as the Jewish-American Committee and the World Jewish Congress. These organisations demanded to provide assistance to the USSR Jews to run their cultural life independently, and to campaign for the cessation of persecution and detention of Jews, as well as for their departure to Western countries apart from Israel. These goals were defined by them as primary and essential goals.

From the facts which have been revealed in those three cases we conclude that the Israeli Government finds it difficult to conduct foreign policy which is based on the political realism alone, as a result of the international and inter-Jewish reality. It was forced to take into account the magnitude and impact of extra-state factors in the Diaspora. The Israeli Government accorded weight to the overall Jewish goals, when it has defined the shape of the national interest of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish People. This accession means, politically speaking, that the Israeli Government was forced to conduct foreign policy that is not focused from the purely state viewpoint, which did not provide full explanation of this foreign policy. Through the complementary model, the real-political viewpoint has offered a more precise explanation of the foreign policy of Israel.

According to the findings of this paper it seems therefore that two things are present in the Israeli foreign policy, and these are: the fundamental-declarative aspect and the operative one. The foreign policy was characterised by the declarative aspect in the parallel commitment both to the state interest and to the overall Jewish interest. Moreover, in this aspect it has been relatively easy to create an overlap between the two so that the realisation of the state interest was defined as clear manifestation of the overall Jewish interest. On the other hand, in the operative aspect there were discovered contradictions and contrasts between the two types of interests. Examination of those issues is what stands at the heart of this paper.

THE ACCOMPLISHED LOSER

Shimon Peres considers his options after losing the presidency of Israel to a political lightweight

His opponent was a nonentity. The press had predicted victory. His political allies had counted more than enough votes for a win. All that was left was for Shimon Peres to wait out the official balloting in the Knesset for the largely ceremonial post of the nation's President, a position well-suited to the country's most senior statesman. But when the final tally came in last week, the result was written all over Peres' stricken face. Contrary to the general expectation, Israel's new head of state was not Peres but the underdog, Moshe Katsav, a decent guy by all accounts but a political lightweight.

Actually, the secret 63-57 vote should not have been such a shock. It was in keeping with Peres' long and inglorious electoral record. Though he is the most accomplished politician in Israel-and a seasoned world figure as well- Peres, 76, has not once managed to win outright an election for public office. In Israel's entire 52-year history Labor has lost at the polls only when Peres was its leader. The Likud's Katsav, Israel's eighth President, is the first from a party other than Labor.

Katsav, 55 who will take over from the ailing and disgraced Ezer Weizman, served as a cabinet minister in various governments but never rose above such second-tier posts as

transportation and tourism. Peres, by contrast, has held every important job in government including Minister of Defence, Finance and Foreign Affairs and was Prime Minister three times. Peres was the chief architect of Israel's military-industrial complex, including its nuclear weapons programme, and a key drier behind the 1993 Oslo peace accords with the Palestinians, a role that earned him a Nobel Peace Prize.

Peres' wit and elegance have made him a favourite among foreign dignitaries, but those qualities make little impression on Israeli voters, who prefer their politicians rough-cut and earthy. Early in his career, Peres gained a reputation as a self-promoter, an image reinforced by old party rival Yitzhak Rabin, who reflecting on what he saw as sabotage by Peres during his first stint as prime Minister, memorably dubbed his competitor a "tireless subverter".

At a Labour convention three years ago, Peres famously addressed the crowd: "They say I am a loser. Am I a loser?" His fellow members thundered back, "YES!" Yet neither that nor other humiliations, including rejection for the presidency, motivated Peres to quit public life. Last week he revoked his resignation as Minister for Regional Development, tendered in anticipation of victory in the presidential vote, and vowed to continue working for peace. There was some speculation Barak might name him Foreign Minister after David Levy quit the post to protest the Prime Minister's peace policies. Peres said he would not seek the job. But perhaps he has simply learned by now that admitting he wanted it would spoil his chances of getting it.

From Time Magazine

'Palestine is a myth'

An Arab writer, Joseph Farah says that prior to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, there was no serious movement for a Palestinian homeland.

Farah says Palestine has never 'existed - before or since - as an autonomous entity'. He adds: 'There is no language known as Palestinian. There is no distinct Palestinian culture. There has never been a land known as Palestine governed by Palestinians.'

In his scathing article, Farah continues by lambasting the Arabs for 'wanting it all'. 'No matter how many land concessions the Israelis make, it will never be enough.'

From the British Library

THE HEBREW COLLECTION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY

by Ilana Tahan, Curator in the Hebrew Section

The history of the Hebrew collection of manuscripts and printed books is rooted in the British Museum foundation collections. The libraries of Sir Hans Sloane, Sir John Cotton, and Robert Harley, the First Earl of Oxford which had been acquired by the British Museum in the 18th century, contained important Hebrew manuscripts some of which finely illuminated. The Sloane library yielded some thirteen Hebrew manuscripts, the most notable of which being a 14th century translation of Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* by Samuel ha-Levi Abulafia and the handsomely illustrated *Leipnik Haggadah*, dated Altona 1740. The most significant contribution of Hebrew manuscripts derived from Robert Harley's collection and consisted of 130 manuscripts. Outstanding among those were the lavishly illuminated two volume copy of *Maimonides' Mishneh Torah* completed at Lisbon, 1471-72, a beautiful 13th century Biblical Italian codex in two volumes and a large Sephardic Bible from the 14th century known as the Harley Catalan Bible.

The following decades witnessed a steady expansion of the Hebrew manuscripts collection. This resulted partly from the dispersal of libraries owned by English aristocratic families as for instance that of the Duke of Sussex, King George IV's brother, but also from the judicious acquisition policies pursued by some of the Museum Keepers in charge of manuscripts, particularly Josiah Forshall and Sir Frederic Madden. Their major contribution was the purchase in 1839 of the elegant manuscript known as the *North French Miscellany* copied around 1280, and of the famed *Ashkenazi and Barcelona Haggadot*, which were added to the collection in 1843. By the mid-nineteenth century the Hebrew manuscript collection totalled about 300 manuscripts, half of which were biblical codices.

The breakthrough in the development of the Hebrew manuscript collection occurred in 1865 when the Museum acquired the library of the Italian bibliophile Joseph Almanzi comprising 332 fine manuscripts

covering all fields of Hebrew literature. One of the jewels in the Almanzi collection is undoubtedly the exquisite *Golden Haggadah* copied and illuminated in Catalonia in the 14th century.

The contents of the collection was further shaped by two important developments, namely the acquisition between 1877-1882 of nearly 300 mostly Karaite and Yemenite manuscripts and the addition in 1925 of 1300 manuscripts from the library of Moses Gaster, who, for many years acted as the Hakham of the Sephardi and Portuguese community in England. His collection was rich in Samaritan works as well as Hebrew biblical, midrashic and cabalistic manuscripts.

Today, the British Library holds one of the most representative Hebrew manuscripts collections in the world numbering some 3,000 volumes and about 10,000 fragments deriving from the Cairo Genizah.

Besides manuscripts the collection boasts valuable printed book holdings numbering some 80,000 volumes. They too came into the possession of the British Museum at various stages after its foundation. At its inception in 1759, the Museum owned a single Hebrew work among its 500,000 printed volumes. This was the first edition of the Bomberg Talmud printed in Venice 1520-1523, from the library of King George II. That same year a gift of 180 books of great significance was offered to the Museum by Solomon Da Costa Athias, a merchant broker from Amsterdam who had lived in London for many years. A turning point occurred when the book collection of Michael of Hamburg - 4,420 volumes embracing all fields of Jewish learning - were purchased by the Museum in 1848. Subsequent acquisitions have included both religious and secular works leading to further expansion of the collection. Among the printed book material the most significant category are the Hebrew incunables (i.e. books that were printed before 1500), numbering over 100 works. In the collection there is also a fine assortment of 16th century imprints, and many unique examples testifying to Hebrew printing activities over the centuries in many parts of the globe.

Most of the manuscripts and printed books have been recorded in scholarly catalogues, copies of which are

placed on open access in the Oriental Reading Room (see below). The most important are:

G Margoliouth's "Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum", 3 vols. & Index, London, 1965 (reprint)

J Zender's "Catalogue of Hebrew books in the British Museum", London, 1867 (reprint 1964)

Van Straalen's "Catalogue of the Hebrew books in the British Museum acquired during the years 1868-1892", London, 1894

Second Supplementary Catalogue of Hebrew printed books in the British Library, 1893-1960. 2 vols. London, 1994

The Hebrew collection of manuscripts and printed books forms part of the Oriental and India Office Collection and is housed in the British Library's new building at 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB. Hebrew material can be viewed and consulted in the Oriental Reading Room, which is located on the third floor of the building. Admission to the Reading Room is by valid reader's pass only. A display of Hebrew illuminated manuscripts is on view in the Treasures Gallery of the Library, open daily to the public. One of the most beautiful manuscripts in the collection, the Golden Haggadah is displayed on the Turning the Pages interactive electronic system, which is accessible free of charge in the Treasures Gallery.

Dear Mr Dangoor

It gives me immense pleasure to write to you to express my thanks for the warm welcome extended to me during my recent visit to The Exilarch's Foundation's offices.

It was indeed an honour and a privilege to be permitted to view the manuscripts of your grandfather, the Gaon Rabbi Ezra Reuben Dangoor Z.L., illustrious 20th Century Chief Rabbi of Baghdad and provinces, and prolific editor and printer of Hebrew books. Rabbi Dangoor's vast knowledge and love of Torah and the superb calligraphy exhibited in all his manuscripts particularly impressed me.

Rabbi Ezra Dangoor's recently published edition of '*Adi Zahav*' a copy

of which you have kindly donated to us, constitutes an important addition to the Library's Hebrew collection of printed books and is greatly valued.

As a token of my appreciation I am enclosing a list consisting of 53 Baghdadi imprints held in the Hebrew collection, many of which were printed at your grandfather's publishing house. I would like to take this opportunity to cordially invite you to visit the Hebrew Section and the Oriental Reading Room. I will be delighted to show you and your circle of friends not only books printed at your grandfather's printing press, but also some of our treasured manuscripts.

Hebrew Section **Ilana Tahan**
Oriental & India Office Collections
96 Euston Road
London NW1 2DB
From the British Library

Dear Mr Dangoor

I understand that The Scribe will from now on be issued electronically on the Internet. Though I realise the importance of keeping abreast of new technology, I must express my personal regret that many of us will no longer enjoy the benefit of handling the printed version of this excellent publication. In the Library's Reading Rooms users and researchers have no access to the Internet as yet; consequently none would be able to read The Scribe in its new format. This is a great pity indeed! Besides I know of many library users who would much prefer leafing through the printed pages of a journal than scrolling through endless web pages. One of the sections of The Scribe most of its readers would no doubt miss is the visual material. The photographs accompanying the text were absolutely delightful!

Would it be at all possible to continue sending the Hebrew Section of the Library and other interested customers (such as myself for instance) hard copies of The Scribe? I hope I am not the only one voicing this request.

Ilana Tahan
Curator in the Hebrew Section

Scribe: We had to go on the internet in order to move with the times and go forward rather than stay where we were. We acknowledge that this new practice may at the beginning cause

inconvenience to some, but we feel in the fullness of time this will be overcome and when the word has spread as to where we are and how they can 'connect up' in order to receive what we think will be an even more informative and flexible way of publishing due to its versatility.

On the question of visual pictures, this should not be a problem because we are getting an excellent reproduction on the internet of both colour and black and white pictures.

As an alternative to producing hard copies, we are prepared to provide a print-out of each issue to anyone interested at a cost of £10.00 plus postage. For your information, the old method of producing The Scribe used to cost £7,000 per edition!

NEW ALEXANDRIA LIBRARY

The Egyptian Government is planning to open later this year the new Alexandria Library to be named Bibliotheca Alexandrina. This is an ambitious project reviving the famous Library of Antiquity which was destroyed 16 centuries ago. The new library is being financed by donations from various Arab and International countries and is planned to contain 2.5 million books and manuscripts for the benefit of scholars from all over the world.

When, during a recent visit to London, Suzanne Mubarak wife of the President, was asked whether the new library will be subjected to censorship or freedom of expression, she said "I hope so".

We must recall at this stage that Alexandria was the great centre of the Jewish diaspora in classical times. According to Josephus, the famous Jewish historian of the 1st century CE, Jews settled in Alexandria from its establishment in honour of Alexander the Great in the 3rd century BCE. In the Roman period, they constituted a considerable proportion of the population; of the five districts two were inhabited by Jews, totalling nearly a million. The Great Synagogue of Alexandria was so vast, that the Shamash had to wave a flag every time the congregation had to say Amen.

The Jews of Alexandria played an important economic role. The

community was autonomous, but its legal position deteriorated under Roman rule. The Jews aspired to civic rights while the pagan Alexandrians, strongly anti-Jewish, objected; against this background, grave riots broke out in 38 CE against the Jews. In 66, under the influence of the rebellion in Judea, disturbances broke out among the Jews, but were suppressed with cruelty by the Roman governor, the convert Tiberius Julius Alexander. In 115-7, at the time of the general Jewish revolt, the Alexandrian Jews were heavily attacked and punished, their Great Synagogue being burnt down. As a result of these risings, the Jewish population diminished. Their condition deteriorated further with the establishment of Christian predominance. In 414, owing to the inflammatory preaching of the Patriarch Cyril, they were expelled from the city, but many evidently returned; as at the Arab conquest (642) their number was again considerable. but by then leadership has passed from Alexandria to Cairo.

In 1937, the Jewish population numbered over 24,000, but after the advent of Nasser only 2,760 remained; very few remained by the 1970's.

Septuagint (from Latin), mentioned above, refers to the oldest Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, based on legend according to which 72 elders of Israel translated Pentateuch into Greek in Alexandria in 3rd century BCE, for the benefit of the large Greek-speaking Jewish population of Alexandria. Designation extended to the entire Bible as translated into Greek during the following two centuries.

The United Nations must make sure that the Egyptian Government does not gloss over or diminish the outstanding role of the Jews in the history of Alexandria.

Visiting Alexandria and wanting to keep up with your e-mail? Take coffee in the Cyber Access Cafe in the Smouha Shopping Mall, in Laurent (Louran) on Abdelsalam Aref Street (Tram Street).

Smouha Mall is named after Baghdad-born Joseph Smouha who came to Egypt in the 1920's and established there the modern Smouha City which was appropriated by Nasser after the Suez war.

Abdulsalam Aref was one of the leaders of the 1958 Revolution in Iraq. He was a pro-Nasserite and once boasted to him regarding one of Nasser's enemies, "You want me to kill him? A bullet costs only 20 fils!"

JOY AND THE JOY OF GIVING



Above : Joy Eliahu

Joy Eliahu, the 31 year old daughter of an Iraqi Jewish family who immigrated to London a year before her birth, is an Israeli citizen and a licensed lawyer specialising in European and International Law.

Since last September Joy has been living in Kosovo as the Red Cross representative. Her nights are spent in a modest room in a bomb-wrecked neighbourhood, her days bearing the weight of human misery. Joy is the first (and so far only) Israeli to serve as a representative for the International Red Cross, the neutral Swiss humanitarian aid organisation established in 1863. Joy was relaxing in front of her TV after an exhausting, productive day when she chanced across a documentary about Kosovo. She contacted the Red Cross about doing volunteer work with the Kosovar refugees who were arriving in Britain. A few months later she contacted them again about becoming their representative in Kosovo. This entailed a series of interviews and a five week training course in Geneva. "They teach you about reuniting families, caring for prisoners, staying neutral, tracking down missing persons, keeping track of the people held in prison monitoring the adherence to the various Geneva conventions" she says. The goal is to provide humanitarian aid without any finger-pointing and above all protect the minorities.

Joy is not afraid of living on her own in such a dangerous area. She is protected by an unarmed Albanian guard. Generally the workers are treated very well. However, the place is very sad; everything is in ruins. The power and

water supply often break down and generally there is nothing to do.

The neutrality of the International Red Cross requires that Joy keeps all information she receives strictly confidential which makes it very hard at times not to be able to share her experiences.

She had gotten used to, she says, taking bodies across the border in her car - her perspective has definitely changed.

She is scheduled to spend until September 2000 in Kosovo and hopes to continue working for the International Red Cross, perhaps in another country.

Joy sees her Judaism as one source of her altruism - she learnt about the Holocaust in High School where she volunteered to help survivors in Jewish nursing homes.

She believes that Judaism means being able to identify with people's suffering - "I hear stories about the Holocaust and wonder why people did nothing to prevent it. I put myself in their place and say: I won't be that way."

Abridged from *Ha'aretz Magazine*

صمنا لمامنا سنايا وما لحقنا بأهل العطايا

Semna lema serna henaya w'ma lehaqna b'ahlel ataya.

We fasted until we became hunchbacked but could not catch up with those who make charitable donations.

أبن الحاخام يسوم ويسال وأبن الرشاح يرقص ويفتي

Ebnel hakham yesoum weysalli w'ebnel rasha'e yerqess weyghanni.

Son of the Rabbi fasts and prays while the son of the wicked dances and sings.

I have recently discovered your wonderful publication. When I was a small child in the late 1940's my American mother married the son of a prominent Iraqi politician, and in the early fifties we went to live in Baghdad. I remember driving around the city with my parents looking with a mixture of wonder and vague dread at "abandoned" properties that had belonged to Iraqi Jews. Some houses stood empty for years, tied up in legal wrangling between certain of the rich and powerful who sought possession. Why I remember this so well, at an emotional level, is that a peaceful sector of the community that had been a part of the city for ages could arbitrarily be uprooted and driven out. Since then I learned that Baghdad's Jews had constituted a very large fraction of the city's population. With them the city lost much of its best and brightest, especially in terms of culture.

Now the Jewish victims of forced emigration have been joined by new waves, a continuing Iraqi diaspora. One can actually follow the threads on the internet, as Yezidis, for example, try to find one another. It is significant that many disparate ethnic groups are linked together on the internet's Iraq sites, which is how I found you. The times are changing rapidly. Who could have predicted the changes in the Soviet Union? With any luck at all, it will be only a matter of time before the peoples of the Middle East, including those in current partial diaspora, reconstitute in mutual self-interest to form a brighter, more mutually understanding and tolerant society. With any luck at all.

Carbondale, IL

Jim May

THE REUBEN BROTHERS

Extracts from the article in *Fortune* magazine dated June 19 2000

Last June *Fortune* magazine featured a long article on the Reuben brothers, David and Simon and their spectacular rise to great fortune in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the help of two Russians - Lev Chernoy and his brother Michael.

The Reubens brothers were born in Bombay and raised by their Iraqi-born mother and grandmother after their parents separated. As poor teenagers, like so many ambitious kids in post-colonial India, the brothers made their way to London, where they landed briefly in a Jewish shelter. Simon eventually went into the rag trade and scraped together enough money to buy his first pieces of real estate. David spent his early years trading in scrap metal, later co-managing a Soviet metals-trading venture with Merrill Lynch - and eventually laying the groundwork for TransWorld by founding his own company in 1977.

When the Soviet Union fell, its entire military-driven aluminium industry collapsed with it. David Reuben says he had built TransWorld into one of the largest aluminium traders in Russia by that time, and he seized the opportunity to expand into the void. At that time everything in Russia was up for grabs. It wasn't long before Simon was enlisted in the project as well.

Of course, Russia was even then a fairly lawless mafia infested society, with overlapping business rules, rampant corruption, lax or naïve regulators, and state-appointed factory bosses who suddenly found themselves de facto capitalists - and in dire need of cash. Then, as now, a foreigner soon learned that these stormy seas were far more navigable if he had a local partner to help. As David tells it, not long after he opened his Moscow office, in 1992, a man with a heavy cane limped through the door. In the pre-perestroika shadow economy, Lev Chernoy had become a big trader in timber and fish, among other things, "Lev said that only those with money can solve everything", recalls David. "He said, 'Fly with me.'" Lev soon introduced David to his older brother, Michael, now 48, who proved a valuable asset to the fledgling enterprise. Michael who speaks no English has useful connections, and a partnership was born.

Of TransWorld's four principals,

only Michael Cherney wasn't interviewed face to face by Fortune. Instead, he responded to selected questions faxed to him in Israel. "I do not possess any exclusive information on the so-called Russian mafia", he wrote. As for questions about bribes, murder, or money laundering, they "have nothing to do with me....."

Scribe: The lucky break came when the bosses of the International Monetary Fund gave Russia a \$20 billion loan and made the foolish stipulation that the Rouble be made freely convertible into Dollars. Many privatised industries and businesses quickly obtained heavy borrowings from their banks and converted the Roubles into safe deposits in Switzerland. The \$20 billion were cleaned up in a matter of days driving the Rouble to an all time low, and businesses were thus able to repay their bank borrowings in a depreciated Russian currency.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE PARENTS OF GENERAL KHALED AL-ZAHAWI

At a friend's house I recently came across a few back copies of *The Scribe*, which I read with great interest, especially your answers to readers' enquiries.

I would be very grateful if you could help me, too, by providing more detail about the persons in the following piece of oral history:

In order to escape from an unwanted marriage, a girl from a well-known Jewish family sought refuge in the house of Muhammed Faidhi Al-Zahawi (1803?-1891?), Mufti of Baghdad. Since the Mufti did not consider it proper to have an unmarried girl living under his roof, he married her to his son Mahmood. A son from this marriage was General Khaled Al-Zahawi, director of the military academy in Baghdad in the 1930's.

Since I do not have regular access to *The Scribe*, I would appreciate it if you could send an answer to my address. I am enclosing a self-addressed envelope and two international reply coupons for this purpose.

Brisbane, Australia

Ms Z Zahawi

Reply: We give you below the story as we know it.

The parents of a Jewish girl wanted to marry her to an elderly Jew, but she was friendly with a young Moslem neighbour and decided to elope with him. So she went to the Mufti Muhammed Faidhi Al-Zahawi for the marriage formalities. According to the arrangement between the Moslem and Jewish communities the girl had to stay a week at the Mufti's house who was required to persuade her to return to her parents and would only marry her if she refused at the end of the week to return to her parents.

When the Mufti was satisfied that the girl had no intention to return to her parents, he advised her that instead of marrying her poor Muslim friend, she would be better off marrying his own (the Mufti's) son. In fact this is what happened and that's how the girl married the father of Khaled Al-Zahawi.

We are informed that Khaled was born in 1889 and if that is the case the marriage of his parents would have taken place around 1888, but certainly not in 1803.

Khaled Pasha was Governor (Mutasarrif) of the Baghdad district at the time of the Farhood in 1941. He came to our house on the morning of the rioting at which over 200 Jews were killed, and informed us that although he asked permission from the British military authorities and Nouri Al-Said to disperse the rioters by firing into the air, they refused to give him permission.

Reply from Lisbeth Zahawi

Thank you very much for your detailed answer to my letter concerning the marriage of Mufti Al-Zahawi's son. What a lucky coincidence that this story can now be verified from another source.

Since I am going to be in London in August, I am planning to contact you then in order to find out whether it would be possible for me to look at some back copies of your publication and maybe have a look at your reference library.

As to any photographs that might be of interest to you, I am afraid there is nothing earlier than the 1930's. I'll bring some group photos with me and you can have a look at them. I, on the other hand, am very hopeful that you might have a portrait of the Mufti in your picture archive!

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY

8 - 13 JULY 2001

Dear Mr Dangoor

The Programme Committee for the 21st International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, to be held in London from 8 - 13 July 2001 has much pleasure in inviting you to present a paper. The Seminar is being organised by members of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain and will be held at the Intercontinental Hotel at Hyde Park Corner.

Over 600 participants from the 80 member societies of the International Association of Jewish Genealogy Societies are expected. We are inviting other European Genealogical Societies to contribute to the programme.

The suggested subject for your paper is Babylonian Jewry but if you prefer others, this should be no problem.

We sincerely hope you will be able to accept this invitation to speak. For more information, please contact us at the addresses or numbers below.

George Rigal: 14 Pembridge Place, London W2 4BX

Fax No: (0)20 7221 7302 Tel. (0)20 7229 6845

Arlene Beare: arl@dircon.co.uk

Saul Issroff: Saul@swico.demon.co.uk

Some of the Speakers:

Morris Bierbrier

Tracing your Ancestry in Italy and the Ottoman Empire

Dr Nardo Bonomi

Italian Jewish Resources for Genealogy

Hal Bookbinder Vice President, International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies

Changing Borders of Europe
The Khazars

Judith Langer-Surnamer Caplan

Tombstone Translation - how to read a Hebrew Tombstone almost anywhere in the World

Frederick E Cohen

Jews in the Channel Islands during the Nazi Occupation of the Islands

Rabbi Frank Dabba-Smith

Photographs of the Holocaust: from "Propaganda" to "Bearing Witness". A

comparison of Nazi Propaganda Photos with those taken by Jews or witnesses.

Professor Jerry Esterson

Jewish Given Names - A Unique Database

One Name Studies - A Methodological Approach

Anton Felton

Jewish Carpets - A cultural chronicle for 4000 years

Professor Ruvin Ferber

A History of the Jews of Latvia

Dr Helen Forde of the Public Record Office

Problems in the preservation of Archival Material

Karen Franklin

Genealogical Holdings at the Leo Baeck Centre and Archives (New York)

The Centre for Jewish History, Genealogy Section, New York

Dr Stewart Green (Paediatrician, Birmingham)

Halachic Aspects of Inherited Diseases, Genes, Jews and Genealogy

Nigel Grizzard

Who are the British? Who are the Jews?

Phyllis Horal

The Jews of Kaifeng

Professor Bruce Kahn

Genealogy on the Internet

Ezra Kahn

Genealogical sources at the library of Jews College, now the London School of Jewish Studies

Rabbi Abraham Levy

The Jews of Gibraltar

Ros Livshin

The Manchester Jewish Museum

Professor Vivian Moses and Neil Bradman

Genetics of the Jews. The Cohens and Levis

Peter Nash of Australia

China - Tracing the former European,

Russian and Sephardi Communities

Steve Paulsson

Jews in Hiding, the actions of "The Joint" after the Warsaw Uprising

Miriam Rodrigues-Pereira

Bevis Marks Records, from the oldest surviving London Synagogue

Raphael Siev

The Jews of Ireland, a brief history and background

Ilana Tahan

Illustrated Hebrew Manuscripts in the British Library

and with Hazel Dakers

British Library Genealogical Resources

Theon Wilkinson

Jewish Communities and Memorials, Cemeteries, and Burials in the Near and Far East, from Aden to Japan

SEARCH FOR DON MATVAY (MOTTLE)

May I take this opportunity to wish you and all your loved ones a peaceful and prosperous New Year, and well over the Fast?

I am writing, firstly to thank you for your most pleasing journal in its information on Babylonian Jewry.

Secondly, may I enlist your esteemed help?

A sad Jewish lady in Israel is in search of her missing relative. Is it possible that you could give a few lines of your journal for her personal search?

MILYA PECHERSVY, Levanon 21/11, Kyriat Shmona 10200, Israel is looking for:

DON MATVAY (Mottle) d.o.b. 1921/2 "somewhere in the London area"

If anyone has information please write to Milya at above address or P.O. Box 3589 or telephone (06) 6943785.

I am most grateful to you for kindly receiving this request.

Gwent, Wales

Meg Thomas