

THE ELIAS FAMILY

I have read with interest your magazine *"The Scribe"* and am wondering if you have in your archive any information about the Elias family. I enclose the immediate family tree and a photograph of Abdullah Elias with four of the five children (youngest not yet born).

I am married to his grandson, David William. I also enclose two copies of photographs taken in Baghdad. Abdullah and his brother Meir were cotton merchants and moved to Manchester in about 1895-1900.

London

Jennie Elias

Top right : Abdullah Elias with wife Sarah Flora (formerly Bassoos) with four of their children outside their Manchester home in 1901.

Middle right : One hundred years ago - picture taken in Baghdad with teachers and the students of the Midrash Talmud Torah Yeshiva

Seated - Abdullah Elias with his son, Eliahoo Victor and his daughter, Messooda Lucy

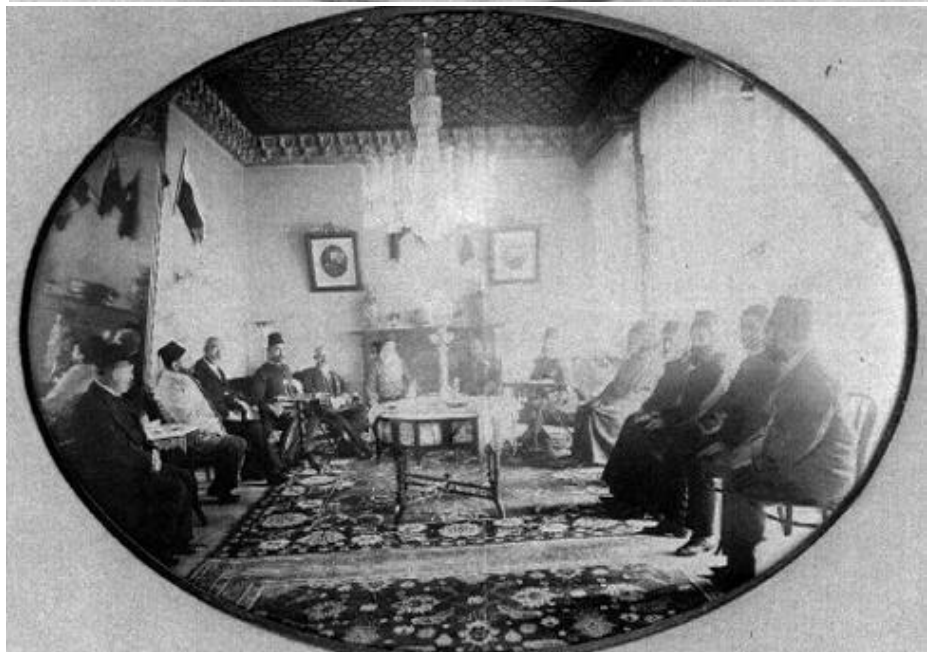
Bottom right : The Turkish Governor of Baghdad with his Cabinet and foreign Consuls in the Sarai c. 1895



Scribe: According to our information from the book by Dr Abraham Ben Jacob, Abdullah Elias was the eldest son of Eliahou Shlomo David, (see family tree elsewhere in this issue).

Abdullah and his brother Meir were cotton merchants and used to travel to Manchester. In 1892 Abdullah returned to Baghdad to marry Sarah Flora of the Bassous family, and there, three of his children were born. He was falsely accused of insulting Islam, but the Wali Haj Hasan Rafiq Pasha who was a friend of the family dismissed the accusation. In 1899 Abdullah moved to London and appointed his nephew Menashi Saleh as his agent in Baghdad. He donated fifty pounds for the repair of the Shrine of Ezra Hasopher near Basra. Sir Sasson Eskell was a cousin.

His brother Meir was also a generous benefactor and in 1910 he built the large Meir Elias Jewish hospital which treated non-Jews also and was only the third in the city. The hospital was opened by the Wali and members of the government and the consular service. He suffered sun-stroke while supervising the building of the hospital and died the same year. After his death his large house was converted into a synagogue bearing his name, where the Emir Feisal was acclaimed on arrival to Baghdad to become King of Iraq.



THE NIGHT OF THE HENNA

by: Albert Khabbaza, MD, New York

Few days before the wedding, it was customary in the Iraqi Jewish society to have a ceremony called the night of Henna - something roughly equivalent to shower in the USA. It was arranged by the family of the bride as a symbol of separation of the bride from them and only close family members were invited. It was customary to use Henna - a red orange solution of leaves of certain trees on the fingers of the bride - so that the colour would remain for a few days.

But the most happy part of the ceremony was the special songs and music. The "Deqqaqa" - a professional woman musician who sang and played on the drums (Neqqara). She was assisted by a small group of women who also sang in response and played a large tambourine (Daff).

Although it was considered

shameful for any woman to sing or play any instrument in the Jewish community, the night of Henna was an exception because, probably, it was originally an occasion for women only. It was even approved by the Iraqi rabbinate.

Another occasion when it was not considered shameful for a woman to sing, even in the presence of men, was at home when the mother put her child to sleep and sing the famous lullaby - "Dillilloli".

Some of the songs at the night of Henna were:

عِنْدَ عَلَى الْبَيْضَةِ

1. Ghannu ala elbaidha.

Sing for the brightness, (of the white flower) meaning, the bride.

يا ابو الورد

2. Yabu elward.

Oh, the father of the flowers. It was addressed to the father of the bride as the bride was described as flowers.

يا ابو الحنه ما جوزه منا

3. Yabu el henna ma jouz menna.

Oh, the father of Henna, I will not leave you alone.

But the most famous one is **Afaki, Afaki**.

It is a very long song - part of it is shown below.

<p>Afaki, Afaki ala elfan le'emeltainu</p>		<p>Bravo bravo for the artful trick you used.</p>
<p>Ana t'abtu wana shquaitu Ala l'hadher akhedhtainu</p>		<p>I toiled and suffered and You took him ready made.</p>
<p>Sheftainu walad alkaif Berritainu menni bilsaif</p>		<p>You found him a very good boy Separated him from me by sword.</p>
<p>Twessalti b'abu yousef Ma a'aref ash t'amtainu</p>		<p>You begged Abu Yousef.</p>
<p>Enti qelti aridu W'hewi amru ma beedu</p>		<p>I do not know what you had fed him.</p>
<p>Rabbi ye'eteq wlaidu Hewi elli yesaleenu</p>		<p>You said I want him. And he was helpless.</p>
<p>Note that in this song, the mother of the groom complained that her son was taken away, or "stolen" from her and blamed (not seriously of course) both the bride and her mother.</p>	<p>G-d bless his son. He who will console him.</p>	

DO YOU PLAY BRIDGE

from: Edward Dangoor

An old, coloured woman was applying for a new position. When asked why she left her last place she said:

"Yessum dey paid good wages, but it was the most awful place I ever seen. Dey plays a game called "bridge", and last

night was a lot of folks dere. As I was preparing refreshments, I heard a man say:

"lay down and let me see what you got"

Then annuder man say:

"I got strength but no length"

Then annuder man say to a lady:

"Take your hand off my trick"

I near dropped dead when a lady say:

"You forced me.....you jumped me

twice when you didn't even have a raise" Annuder woman was talking about her honour.

Well, I just got my hat and coat and as I was leaving, I hope to die if one of dem didn't say:

"Well, I guess I'll go home now, dis is de last rubber".

SIXTY GENERATIONS ROOTS TO BABYLON?

I recently found a branch in my family tree that appears to be Jewish. I do not know much about Jewish beliefs or customs. I have a couple of questions concerning this branch of my tree. There are about ten generations that were all born in Babylon, starting in the year 590 AD. The first generation found had the name of "Hanini David" and had the title of "Exilarch". All of the following nine generations carry the surname of "David". What is the significance of this and what is an "Exilarch"? Unfortunately I live in a small town in Wyoming, USA and there is not a Jewish Temple close, or I would turn my questions to the local Rabbi.

Thank you for your time.

Lander, WY, USA

Annessa Main

Scribe reply:

How are you personally connected to this branch of the family tree? "Exilarch" was the title of the head of the Jewish community in Babylon. It became extinct in the year 1270 and was revived by Mr Naim Dangoor 700 years later in the year 1970, and he is the present incumbent.

Annessa Main's reply:

First, thank you for your response. I will try to list all the generations that I have to lead to this family branch. It is quite extensive. The Jewish part of our history was lost a long time ago.

1. (Myself) Annessa Lynn Huff b. 28 Mar 1972 Scottsbluff, NE, USA
2. Julia Ann Belden b. 13 May 1950 Alliance, NE, USA
3. Vida Lee Hascall b. 20 Mar 1926 Gaston, OR, USA
4. Leslie Earl Hascall
5. Ray Smith Hascall
6. Sarah Caroline Whitman b. 9 Apr 1820 New York, NY, USA
7. Martha Patsey Lucas b. 14 Nov 1796 Harolin County, KY, USA
8. Sarah Phelps b. 1771 Buckingham County, VA, USA
9. Thomas Phelps b. 1725 Albermarle County, VA, USA
10. Thomas Phelps b. 1703 Albermarle, VA, USA

11. John I Phelps b. 1683 Goochland, VA, USA
12. William Phelps b. 1656 England
13. Elinor Howard b. 1626 England
14. Matthew Howard b. 1609 Wardour, Wiltshire, England
15. John Howard b. 1 Dec 1578 Brockdish Hall, Norfolk, England
16. Robert Howard b. Jan 1537, Syon House, London, England
17. Thomas Howard b. about 1512 Ashwell Thorpe, Norfolk, England
18. Thomas Howard b. 1443 Stoke Newland, Suffolk, England
19. John Howard b. 1420 Tending, Essex, England
20. Robert Howard b. 1385 Stoke Neyland, Suffolk, England
21. John Howard b. 1365 Wiggenhall, Norfolk, England
22. Robert Howard b. about 1336 Wiggenhall, Norfolk, England
23. John Howard b. 1310 Wiggenhall, Norfolk, England
24. Joan De Cornwall b. about 1295 Thunnock, Lancashire, England
25. Richard De John Cornwall b. about 1275 Burford, Shropshire, England
26. Richard Plantagenet b. about 1252 Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, England
27. Sancha, Countess of Provence b. about 1225 Aix-en-Provence, Bouches-du-Rhone, France
28. Raymond Berenger V, Count of Provence and Forcalquier b. 1198 Aix-en-Provence, Bouches-du-Rhone, France
29. Alfonso II, Prince of Aragon b. about 1174 Aragon, Spain
30. Sancha, Queen of Aragon b. 21 Sep 1154 Castile, Spain
31. Alfonso VII, Pierre Raimund, King of Castile, Leon and Galicia b. 1105 Castile, Spain
32. Urraca Alfonsez of Castile and Leon b. 1082 Castile, Spain
33. Alfonso VI "The Valiant" King of Castile and Leon b. 1039 Castile, Spain
34. Sancha, Princess of Leon b. about 1015
35. Alfonso V, King of Leon b. about 0989
36. Elivira Garcez of Castile b. about 0971 Castile, Spain
37. Count Garcia Fernandez of Castile b. about 0955 Castile, Spain
38. Urraca Garces of Pamplona b. about 0937 Pamplona, Spain
39. Garcia Sanchez I, King of Navarre b. about 0920, Navarre, Spain
40. Sancho Garces I, King of Navarre b. about 0890 Navarre, Spain
41. Dadilda De Pallars, b. about 0870 Pallars, Spain
42. Daughter of Raymond of Toulouse b. about 0800 Toulouse, France
43. Count Raymond I of Toulouse b. about 0822 Toulouse, France
44. Countess Senegonde of Toulouse b. about 0800 Toulouse, France
45. Bertha D'Aube David b. 0775 Autun, France
46. Theuderic Thierry Makir David b. about 0720, Babylon
47. Habibai Ben Natronai David b. about 0687 Babylon
48. Natronai Ben Nehemiah David b. about 0670 Pumbeditha, Babylon
49. Nehemiah Ben Hanini David b. about 0650 Babylon
50. Hanini Bar ‘ Adoi David b. about 0627 Babylon
51. Bustani Ben Hanini David b. about 0590 Babylon
52. Exilarch Hanini David b. about 0590 Babylon

Does the “ David” at the end of these names mean they are descendants of David? Do you have any more of the family line? Is Exilarch a religious post or more of an appointed leader? If it is an appointed post, by who (i.e. G-d)? Was (Is) it passed down in an “ eldest Son” manner? Why was the post eliminated?

Thank you for your time. This has been very helpful.

Scribe reply:

The reference to David in the name definitely means a direct descent from King David through King Yehoyachim and all the previous Kings of Judah. We are sending you by post a copy of the Babylonian Haggadah where you will find on page 91 the earlier generations of Exilarchs and on page 90 all the previous kings to King David.

The Exilarch is a political post of Royal descent, but many Exilarchs were eminent Rabbis in their own rights as was Rabbi Makir, mentioned in your ancestor No. 46, who was sent by Haroun Al-Rashid, Calif of Baghdad to Charlemagne, King of the West at his request, who wanted to establish in Europe a middle class based on a Jewish

Continued on following page

nucleus. Rabbi Makir was received by Charlemagne and was given the title "King of the Jews". The office and dignity of Exilarch was hereditary in the royal line, passed down not necessarily to eldest son, but more often to the most suitable candidate. The post came to an end in 1270 following the Mongol devastation of the Middle East.

We would be very interested in having copies of original documents to support your family tree.

Annessa Main's Reply :

In reference to your e-mail and August mailing - all received. Thank you for the information; it is very interesting.

The information from myself to generation no. 6 is from word of mouth and family history from my grandmother. From gen no. 7 onto gen no. 35 was found through the Mormon church information, in the ancestral files that they have. From gen no. 36 onto gen no. 50 was found in the international genealogical files found at the Mormon website (familysearch.com). This information was posted by:

John Feagin Sr.
9632 Rocksparkle Row
Columbia
MD
USA 21045

I have written him a letter and have not received a response, nor do I have any other way of getting a hold of him. I came across this information looking for the ancestors of gen no. 35 and have not come across any other information. But, as I have only been doing this for a little more than a year, that may change.

I have never heard of this book. Why is it debatable? Why is it doubtful that there could be Jewish settlers in France? Toulouse borders Spain. I have found information that states that the Count Raymond of Toulouse was a very prominent and powerful man who had several descendants that married into Royal families (Biography of Eleanor of Aquitaine). I suppose I do not find this information to be improbable.

Anyway, as far as paper in my hand-proof of this line, I have yet to receive information from the person who posted it in the website. I also hope that it is not false.

Thank you for your time.

Annessa Main
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USA

FAMILY TREES

After meeting you a few years ago, I started to work on a family tree.

Recently you started to print various family trees and so I decided to send you what I had developed over the last few years. It took time to meet and contact family in Israel (the main source for my information). They were kind enough and patient enough to agonize and remember under my persistent questioning (I guess I could be cited by the Human Rights organizations for my interrogations).

Anyway, attached is the result of my work. It has been suspended due to my recent marriage.

I have researched the following:
Father's father's family - Yossef Ajemy-Chitayat and Baruch Tahan
Father's mother's and Mother's father's family - H'baba and Aziz Peres
Mother's mother's family - Shelomo and Habiba Hour

I have enclosed the family list in tree form and in outline form. Regrettably the program cannot accommodate first cousins getting married. This leaves us with the problem of names being repeated.

Save the above caveat, I would love to contact other families who might assist me in seeing where our mutual trees intersect.

I know that the Moreshet in Or Yehuda is putting some effort into this and have sent them the enclosed information. Just to be sure however, I am sending it to you as well.

Thank you again for your continued efforts in maintaining contact with our tradition and keeping us informed.

S David Moche
1700 York Avenue, 8P,
New York City,
NY 10128
USA
Tel. No. 212-876-3893
Fax No. 212-876-3498

Scribe: We have passed your family tree information to Ms Lydia Collins, our genealogy specialist, who would be glad to correspond with readers on ancestry matters c/o The Exilarch's Foundation, 4 Carlos Place, London W1K 3AW, U.K.

The Horesh-Baher Family Tree

In the last issue of The Scribe dated September 1999 I happened to look at the genealogical tree of the Horesh-Baher family and was surprised to note that my brother-in-law, Rouben Horesh, whose father is Raphael Horesh and brother Charles Horesh (hanged by the Tikrity regime on January 27 1969) were not mentioned in that genealogical tree. I asked my brother in law who dismissed the whole subject as superfluous. Could you clarify this to me? Thanks.

E-mail **Maurice M Sawdayee Ph.D**

From The Editor:

This is a line we don't know about. Can you send us details going as far back as possible - we may then be able to join them to the main tree.

In your *Scribe No. 72* I read that EliaShahmoun came to open the school bearing his daughter's name: "Rachel Shahmoun".

I remember my mother used to say that only if "Ezra Joseph Hakham Saleh", my father, will take charge of the building, because he trusted my father, Elia Shahmoun will accept to have the building done.

My father accepted to take charge.

My father finished the school but he died on the 27th July 1927.

Elia Shahmoun came over for the inauguration of the school - shouldn't my father's name be mentioned? After all Elia Shahmoun trusted my father, he was his friend, and he wouldn't have anybody else to be in charge.

Please, I would like you to look into the matter and mention that without my father the school wouldn't have been built. Is it also possible to try to find a photo of my father and put it with it?

The Scribe this time was wonderful. Yom Kippur helped me reading all you wrote. I don't know how you have the time and the energy to find all these lovely things, to put it so nicely together.

You are a genius - G-d Bless You!

London

Violette Levy

The following article is intended not only to remember my beloved father Shaul Darwish, but also to celebrate our beautiful Iraqi heritage.

by: **Tamara Ruben**
Westfield NJ

MY KING SAUL

In Ramat Gan, Israel, I remember day-dreaming in Bible classes about King Saul, the defeated biblical King, whose tragic destiny alienated him from G-d, from his people, from living life to its fullest. I remember thinking how he had it all but had nothing as he was consumed by an invisible yet devastating disease of melancholy.

My thoughts would then drift to my own father, Saul, whom I secretly anointed as my King, as early as I can go back in time. My King also had moments of melancholy. Moments that seemed like an eternity to a growing child. When my King Saul was triumphant over life's yoke, I would rejoice, my soul would celebrate. Our lives would be transformed into exotic trips in northern Israel to virgin places, magnificent in their beauty and simplicity. I recall laughters, practical jokes, abundance of fresh food, and the exotic aromas of spicy meals. The King's Chamber would once again be bustling with people coming and going, with rich stories that only my father, the Master Story-Teller, could tell about his life in Iraq. About his life in the desert as an officer in the British Oil Company with his favourite dog and horses, his travel to Palestine in the 30's, his audacity to face some hoodlums in the market place in Baghdad, his firm stand for what he believed was just and right even at his own expense and ours, his unmatched ability to deal in commerce with people while tending to his unmarried sisters.

And we listened with thirst to the stories and "travelled" with him until he no longer could...

His profound passion for learning, for nature's wonders and animals became his nourishment, sustaining him in those dark moments when his soul ached. When he felt trapped. When darkness ascended upon his spirit. When even a soft touch of his child of 5 or 10 was dismissed, unheard.

On Tu B'shvat of 1984 at the dawn of spring, as nature awakens in Israel with the first signs of spring, my King Saul died, spared by the oncoming

snowstorm that day which he so dreaded in his last years. He died fighting his own battles as the mighty King of Israel, in a quiet hospital room in New York. The King's Chamber was once again silent.

Recently, at my role as a Director of Jewish education at Temple Emanu-El in Westfield, New Jersey, I wrote the article below. It was written in celebration of the beautiful and fertile Iraqi Jewish community, and above all, in celebration and memory of **my beloved King Saul, my father Shaul Darwish Z"L, the son of Benyamin and Salha of Baghdad, Iraq.**

1950, Baghdad, Iraq. A baby is born to Shaul and Violet Darwish, a Jewish family who was a part of a splendid Jewish community in this ancestral part of the Middle East. A community which remained intact and proud of its heritage in spite of being exiled from Judah by the Babylonian Empire in 586 BCE. While many returned to rebuild the second Temple with the help of Ezra & Nehemiah, the prophets, a good number of the exiled remained in Babylon/Iraq.

1950, Westfield, New Jersey. A Jewish congregation in Westfield is charted after years of dreams and vision of its founding members. In her magnificent Historic Narrative, one of the founding members and author, Evalyn Averick, writes: "It seems that during a social afternoon...six women turned the conversation to their dreams of starting a Temple in Westfield...They spoke to other women, then to their husbands, and to the other Jews of the community, resulting in the gathering...the first official meeting."

I often wonder about these two births and the hand of fate that has linked them together. Two worlds seemingly apart, yet in many ways connected. Both communities struggled with maintaining their Jewish identity and the continuation of Jewish life, while being a small minority. Both communities used their vulnerable state to build strong and healthy societies that will serve them and the generations that will follow.

With the inspiration of the Prophets in the Babylonian exile, a profound sense of hope guarded the Jews against despair and extinction. Zeal for learning and Jewish scholarship resulted in the establishment of the Academies for the study and interpretation of Torah in Babylon. The Jewish community there began to thrive and served as a guiding light to the rest of the world's Jewry.

As a minority in the early '50's in Westfield and other places in America, "Jews found that the United States Constitution with its noble ideals, nevertheless, was no substitute for Torah." Here too, the Chalutzim, the pioneers of Temple Emanu-El, listened to the call of Ezra the Prophet and his contemporaries to build a Jewish community in spite of all the obstacles. With a prophetic spirit and a keen sense of vision, they set to create various segments of the Temple. The fascinating history of the Temple is a story of Livnot Ulhibanot, to Build and be Built.

Two weeks after my birth, my family, along with thousands of other Jews of Iraq and other countries, set out to Israel to realize yet another vision, another dream. A dream that travelled with our people since antiquity. "Veshavu Banim Ligvoulam," and the Children of Israel have returned to their Land. Jeremiah's prophecy was realized. Building the country, providing physical and emotional refuge for its wandering sons and daughters of Israel were central to the newly found State.

During these years, in Westfield too, there was a sense of yearning to build the newly formed community and developed it. "The 'togetherness' concept perfectly fit the mood of Westfield Jews who were searching for identity, who were building a Jewish community and were concerned about relating to their neighbors." (Ibid)

When I assumed the position of Director of Education at our Temple Emanu-El in 1989, I was thrilled to discover a community infused with deep commitment to Jewish learning, and an unconditional love for its young ones. I was excited to join a Temple whose passion to Israel, to social justice and Tikun Olam are a way of life. Standing on the shoulders of others before me in Baghdad, Israel and Westfield has been a guiding light for me in working with a superb staff and most committed parents at Temple Emanu-El Religious School. Together we have transformed it into a true Beit Midrash, a House of Learning. A place where our children and many of our parents have evolved to become informed Jews who experience in so many creative ways Judaism as a source of joy, beauty, meaning, consolation and hope.

At 50, I bless you, Temple Emanu-El and the entire congregation. At 50, I bless myself and those I cherish.

BOOK REVIEWS

To Baghdad And Back

by Mordechai Ben Porat

Reviewed by: Anna Dangoor

"To Baghdad And Back" by Mordechai Ben Porat is the remarkable true story of the mass immigration of many Iraqi Jews to Israel between 1949-52. The book portrays both moments of courage, and loyalty, as well as some of the worst traits of human nature. It is an extremely moving account of the difficulties faced by the Jewish community in Iraq, and those trying to facilitate the Aliyah of almost 130,000 Jewish men, women and children, a number which represented over 80% of the Jews in Iraq at that time.

Sent to Iraq as an emissary by The Mossad in 1949, Ben Porat writes first-hand, describing the way in which he was smuggled into Iraq assuming a false identity. Ben Porat's family had left Iraq themselves in 1944, and his Iraqi appearance, and fluent Arabic helped him spend nearly two years there with his true identity remaining undiscovered.

The book begins almost as a spy novel, with descriptions of the activities of the underground Zionist movement in Iraq, "The Halutz", and the methods of smuggling many people illegally across the borders. However this book is also much more than that. Ben Porat describes intricately the way in which influential members of the Jewish community in Iraq were asked, persuaded, and even pleaded with, to use their connections to put pressure on the Iraqi government to allow Jews to emigrate. He also depicts the balancing act in which emissaries from Israel found themselves, juggling the desires of the Jewish community, members of the Halutz movement, and the Iraqi authorities, all the while pushing the emigration process forward.

At points, the detail with which Ben Porat describes events become tedious, although his memory is astounding, and situations he relates can sometimes be confusing in their complexity. This is only a problem towards the middle of the book where the busiest period during 1952 of the 'Ezra and Nehemiah Campaign', as the emigration process became known, is described.

Overall, this is merely a minor fault, in a book which has the qualities of covering many attributes of its subject,

such as 'political manoeuvrings' and maintaining radio communication with Israel, and also has the benefit of the strong sense of emotion which only a first-hand account can give.

One aspect of the book which Ben-Porat feels especially strongly about is the issue of the bombing of Baghdad. In 1951 a number of bombs were thrown at a synagogue, and a shop owned by a Jew, amongst other Jewish targets. Eventually Yousif Bari and Saleh Shalom, both Jewish, were accused of carrying out the attacks, and they were subsequently hanged for this crime. It was claimed that The Halutz Movement were behind the bombs, in an attempt to scare more Jews into leaving Iraq for Israel. "To Baghdad And Back" contains the full report of an Israeli Inquiry Commission on The Bombing of Baghdad which was produced in 1960, and since then the Halutz, and all its activists have been 'completely vindicated' of an accusation which to Ben Porat 'is almost like a blood libel'. The book contains an incredibly distressing account of the tortures Basri and Shalom were forced to endure before they signed their confessions admitting to the bombings, and it seems highly likely that the pair were framed by Iraqi police, desperate to charge someone for the crimes.

Apart from the tragedy of these two young men, and others who were taken prisoners in Iraq, overall the Ezra and Nehemiah campaign was a success. A huge number of Jews managed to leave Iraq in a short space of time, and settle in the land of Israel. Ben Porat concludes by hoping that although many Jewish treasures had to be left behind in Iraq, the rich heritage of Babylonian Jewry will not be lost, and this is something which we must all make sure of.

Beyond Hitler's Grasp: The Heroic Rescue of Bulgaria's Jews

by Michael Bar-Zohar

Adam Media Corporation

Holbrook Adams Media Corporation-
268 pp

US \$24.95

Can \$36.95

Reviewed by Linda Dangoor-
Khalastchi

On the eve of World War 2 Bulgaria aligned itself with Germany,

largely on the promise of recovering the territories of Thrace and Macedonia lost in World War 1. As the war progressed, Germany put pressure on its ally to implement its anti-semitic legislation and to send its Jews to Labour camps. In a concerted effort, the leaders and the people of Bulgaria resisted bravely to the end. Not one of the 50,000 Bulgarian Jews was deported to the death camps.

How could such a small country defy and stand up to Hitler's regime?

The answer is in Michael Bar-Zohar's book "Beyond Hitler's Grasp". It transpires that the Bulgarian people and most of their leaders were not in the least anti-semitic and not understand Germany's "problem" with the Jews. In a letter to his government in Berlin, the German Ambassador explains the difficulties his country was to face in Bulgaria,

"The Bulgarian Society doesn't understand the real meaning of the Jewish question. Besides the few rich Jews in Bulgaria, there are many poor people who make their living as workers and artisans. Partly raised together with Greeks, Armenians, Turks and gypsies, for the average Bulgarian the racial question is totally foreign to him."

We learn that most of the Jews were non-observant (very few went to synagogue), almost none kept Kashrut and most of them worked on the Sabbath. The reason for their popularity was their "normality", their non-Jewish behaviour, if you like. They were totally integrated Bulgarians. When King Boris was asked by Hitler to transfer the Jews of Bulgaria to German camps, he refused to do so on the pretext that they were needed in Bulgaria to construct roads and railway tracks. Although King Boris was an ally of Germany, anti-semitic legislation was not always observed and many times ignored. Most surprising was the pro-Jewish position of the country's leading Christian figurehead, Metropolitan Stefan, who voiced his opposition time and time again against anti-semitic actions.

The feature of this thriller-like book is that the author, Bar-Zohar, lived the drama of those times first-hand.

Scribe: Bulgaria was not without her anti-semitic in the ranks of power.

Bulgaria is the only country that had shot down in the early post-war years an El-Al aeroplane with the loss of the lives of hundreds of passengers.

HITLER'S POPE

The fight to reveal the secrets that threaten the Vatican

Taken from *The Sunday Times* 12.9.99 (abridged)

Ever since a young German playwright, Rolf Hochhuth, accused Eugenio Pacelli, Pius XII, the wartime Pope, a saint of the Catholic church, of not having done enough to save the Jews from the death camps, the debate over his culpability has gone to and fro. Did his reticence condemn millions of Jews to the gas chamber?

A practising Catholic and a former seminarian, I always believed Pacelli was innocent. I could not imagine that a pope of such evident holiness could be guilty of silent complicity in the Holocaust and I originally set out to write a definitive book in his defence. I knew of the sworn depositions in the Jesuit's keeping and I was eager to have sight of them. After a number of meetings with one of Rome's top prelates, the German Jesuit Father Peter Gumpel, at the headquarters of the Society of Jesus situated next door to the Vatican, he agreed to let me read the 1,000-page typed transcript: the testimonies of 40 years, his doctor, his nephew and his priest secretaries, as well as various bishops and cardinals.

I read the testimonies in an enormous dust-laden reading room filled with portraits of Jesuit missionary martyrs. Gumpel agreed to photocopy, personally, any of the pages I wanted. His courtesy was clearly dependent on his conviction that I would write a glowing portrait of Pacelli, whom he frequently described as "that beautiful, saintly man".

Eventually I flew back to Britain with 650 pages of documentation. The material was to give me a deep and unique insight into the personality and motivations of arguably the most powerful churchman in modern times.

After reading through the combined archives alongside a huge amount of historical scholarship on Vatican diplomacy in Germany during the 1920's and 1930's - in which Pacelli had been the dominant figure - I found myself in a state that I can only describe as moral shock. The material I had gathered, taking the more extensive view of Pacelli's life, amounted not to an exoneration but to a wider indictment.

Spanning Pacelli's career from the beginning of the century, my research told the story of a bid for unprecedented papal power that, by 1933, had drawn the

Catholic church into complicity with the darkest forces of the era. I found evidence, moreover, that from an early stage in his career Pacelli betrayed an undeniable antipathy towards Jews.

Having realised the sort of book that I have written, Gumpel attempted to wreck it - not on the basis of inaccuracy, but by legal threats based on the claim that he had never technically given permission for me to use the material in the first place, which was untrue.

Gumpel's anger and dismay went much deeper than mere disappointment at seeing his hero depicted in a bad light. The process of making Pacelli a saint, a project much supported by Pope John Paul II, has enormous implications for the future of the Catholic church.

Pius XII has become an icon of the ever-growing constituency of Catholic traditionalists who want to restore the reactionary policies abandoned by the Second Vatican Council after his death in 1958. A book critical of him has implications for a looming titanic clash between Catholic traditionalists and progressives in the billion-strong worldwide Catholic church.

Vatican II urged a decentralised, more democratic church, which admitted its fallibility and extended friendship to other denominations and religions. But the traditionalists believe that the future and unity of the Catholic church can be secured only by concentrating all authority in the person of the Pope. John Paul II has increasingly endorsed this view.

The canonisation of Pius XII is a key move in the attempts to restore a reactionary papal absolutism. My book shows that the failure of Catholics to resist Hitler, and the failure of the wartime Pope to speak out against the final solution, were precisely linked to the politics of that same absolutism.

Gumpel, in a piece of special pleading, has written that critics of Pacelli "should realise that they are trampling on the sensibilities of Catholics and in doing so hinder efforts to build better relations between the Catholic church and Jews".

After my own journey through the life and times of Pacelli, I am convinced that the cumulative verdict of history reveals him - on political grounds alone - to be not a saintly exemplar for future generations, but a deeply flawed church leader from whom Catholics can best profit by expressing their sincere

regret.

The documents also show him to be a deeply neurotic, narcissistic and arrogant man in his private life, the very antithesis of the saintly model he was said to be - and I intend to reveal details of these flaws.

Freud, Dora, and Vienna 1900

by Hannah S Decker

Free Press - 299 pp

Reviewed by Linda Dangoor-Khalastchi

Everyone has heard of Freud but no-one has heard of Dora. Who was she? Freud's mistress? Daughter? Mother? No. Dora, alias Ida Bauer, was a patient of Freud for many years and about whom the Viennese psychoanalyst wrote extensively. One of Freud's unhappiest cases, her case history became a pioneering vehicle in theory and practice for subsequent analysts.

But don't let that put you off!

Although the book is about Dora, her story (and that of Freud's) is told within the broader framework of Bohemian and Viennese Jewish history.

From their first settlements in the 11th century, the Jews of Bohemia were a people apart, their lives hallmarked by unpredictability. While certain stable times allowed them to practice numerous crafts and trades and allowed them to live "normally" these were always short-lived. Changing times brought with them restrictions, special taxes, physical attacks and repeated expulsions.

Hannah S Decker with great insight describes how these anti-semitic conditions had a lasting and negative psychological effect on the Jewish psyche which was passed on from generation to generation. We learn, for example, that in the 18th century a programme of deliberate population curtailment had begun in Bohemia. In 1726 a law was passed which caused much suffering to the Jewish community. It disrupted family life by limiting the number of Jews eligible for marriage. Only the eldest son was allowed to marry and this not before the age of twenty four and only after his father's death. If children, other than the eldest son wanted to marry legally they had to leave the country as marriages not conforming to the new conditions were considered illegal.

The Law had the desired effect. In thirty years the Jewish population of
Continued on following page

Bohemia fell by a quarter.

By placing Dora and Freud and their respective families in their historical, religious and socio-economic context, the author does a wonderful job in reconstructing Jewish lives, attitudes and aspirations and showing how ineffectual conversions to Christianity was as a means to being accepted.

Dora was born at the end of the 19th century into an upper middle-class Viennese Jewish family at a time when masculine qualities and feminine ones mistrusted and ridiculed.

"In Christian society, middle-class Jewish girls and women felt especially powerless. In addition to the continual negative sentiments they had to bear as women and as Jews, they had to cope with the very real disadvantages that barred their admission to higher education and careers."

Misogyny (woman hating) and anti-sensitive went hand in hand, the denigration of both, women and Jews being part of social conventions "Even the most superior woman was immeasurably below the most debased man, just as Judaism at its highest was immeasurably beneath even degraded Christianity". Hannah S Decker explains that it was the general consensus that women were inferior and the insistent proclamations of anti-semites that the proof of the "Jews' deficiencies lay in their exhibition of traits commonly associated with women. Thus did anti-feminism and anti-semitism unite at the turn of the century. A young Jewish woman like Dora could be filled with more self-doubt, and even self-loathing than a Jewish man.

It is disheartening to learn that an important and influential man such as Freud held the same views as some of his contemporaries. "At no time in his career, was he prepared to recognise women's sensibilities".

It begs the question: how much harm was done and can be done by psychoanalysts' bigoted views and ideas?

Freud, as the author explains, was from a most traditional background, leading a conforming married life. He "cannot be blamed for his conventional views. But his lack of empathy with Dorafurther narrowed her circumscribed situation.....".

Half-way between a documentary and a novel, Decker's book makes fascinating reading. Although repetitious at times, it raises questions that are still pertinent today.

Brief Encounters of a Legal Kind

by Aubrey Rose

Reviewed by: Anna Dangoor

Aubrey Rose's book "Brief Encounters of a Legal Kind" is a wonderful insight into the many different facets of human nature. Rose talks with a frankness and honesty that makes this book almost autobiographical, although I found his style sometimes too confident, and sure of itself.

The book is divided into chapters which consist of an introduction followed by the story of a related legal case. In the introductions Rose reveals his multitudinous knowledge of a great variety of cultures, and communities that he worked with closely, and marvels at how he was often taken deeply into their trust, having been invited to become the leader of a Torvil council in England, and mediating for a West Indian community during the fraught time of the Brixton riots.

Rose's own Jewish background also features in the book, Jewish ideas often being turned to, when he is contemplating the situations he has experienced; situations which have taken him to New York, Paris, Geneva, and allowed him to work with Jamaicans, Nigerians, Sri Lankans and many other peoples.

Of all Rose's "encounters" my two favourite are most definitely "A Night for St Patrick" and "The One Day Case". "A night for St Patrick" tells of a case in which Rose was acting in defence of a man called Danny who had been involved in a pub brawl in Kilburn. The police had arrived to break up the fight, and having seen nothing, arrested Danny. The main witness, who had had to have 48 stitches in his face, because a broken bottle had been thrust into it, allegedly by Danny, took the stand. Rose summarises what was said, and it quickly emerges much to the embarrassment of the prosecution, that the witness has no idea who in fact had injured him. Furthermore, even after sustaining his injuries he threw himself wholeheartedly back into the fight, claiming to have "given more than I got". The different perspective that this witness could take on a situation, which to the prosecution, Rose, and also myself seemed horrific, is fascinating, and as Rose notes it indeed provides a window into "another world".

My other favourite anecdote "The One Day Case" reveals Rose's

ability for perception, and quick thinking. He describes how he was approached by a South African mother whose son David had been taken into custody in "one of Johannesburg's most notorious police stations". The reason for his incarceration was simply that he had been teaching English to black students, and although his mother had mounted an international campaign for his release she had had no success; the South African government would not budge. Action was required immediately but the English courts could do nothing to help, and Rose realised that he would have no sway in the South African courts either.

Inspired by the actions of a Polish lawyer years earlier, Rose decided the only course of action was to write to the Prime Minister of the time, Margaret Thatcher. The timing was perfect, as Thatcher was due to attend a Heads of the Commonwealth meeting in which she was one of the only figures defending South Africa against sanctions. Rose sent a copy of the letter that he was sending to Margaret Thatcher to the South African embassy, and because the loss of her support would have been so detrimental to South Africa, David was released by 2.00 pm that afternoon. As Rose had expected, a week later he received a reply from Margaret Thatcher's secretary saying that regrettably she could be of no help in the matter.

"Brief Encounters of a Legal Kind" is a book about generosity and greed, cruelty and kindness, about the best, and the worst sides of human nature. Through his stories Aubrey Rose confirms that time old saying that gives its name to the penultimate chapter of the book, "there's nowt so queer as folk"!

Naim Dangoor writes: Mrs Thatcher's reply that she cannot help is what she is supposed to write, that she cannot interfere in the course of governmental business. However she often took action behind the scenes if the case merited her help.

In fact, she helped our community in London twice; once by instructing the Inland Revenue not to charge us Capital Gains Tax on the profits of sale of our property and secondly, by helping us with our planning application.

No answer is also an answer

If you ask a person a question and he does not reply, his very silence is an answer in itself.

Britain's Withdrawal From East Of Suez

The Politics Of Retrenchment

by Jeffrey Pickering

Reviewed by: Anna Dangoor

This book was an unusual read for me. Having not studied history for a few years now, such an in depth analysis of a single historical event on which I had no previous knowledge was not my standard bedtime reading. Light it was not, but I was astounded at how enjoyable I found reading the study.

Pickering's self-professed aims in this book are to investigate the causes of Britain's decision in 1968 to withdraw from almost all her military outposts east of Suez. He explains that the issue of retrenchment in general, has been dealt with too superficially in the past, and he seeks to dig deeper, and piece together a fuller picture of the factors that precipitated Britain's withdrawal from the 'East of Suez' bases. Ultimately Pickering aims to create a framework in which other instances of retrenchment can be studied.

The work is clearly set out with a lengthy introduction outlining how this 'longitudinal' study is to be carried out. Pickering takes care to explain all the unfamiliar terms he uses, ensuring that one does not need any background on the subject to get the most out of the book.

The study focuses on three crises in the post-war years up until the decision to retrench. Within this focus, Pickering examines both Britain's increasingly fragile, economic state, and the political movements going on at these times.

The first crisis period is between the years 1945-1951, in which the new world order taking shape after the war, has left the global situation highly unpredictable. In this period the government of Clement Attlee is examined, and his political relationship with his Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, which biographer Alan Bullock claims was one of the most successful partnerships in British history, is explored.

The second crisis to be investigated is the well known Suez crisis of 1956, and here the political wizardry of Harold Macmillan, who managed against all odds to restore faith in the British government after the shame of Suez, is revealed.

Finally Wilson's government is depicted, concerning the economic crises of the 1960's, explaining the way in which he continually juggled his cabinet in order that his position of power should

never be challenged.

Throughout these periods Britain's old notions of being a world power, a symbol of which, to many, were the 'East of Suez' bases, restricted any major policy movement towards retrenchment. This was the case, even though, from Attlee's time, it was clear that in upholding these overseas roles Britain was overstretched both economically and militarily. This imperial hangover, and other factors explored in the book, ensured that it was not until 1968, when what Pickering calls 'a triacle of factors' came together, that the need for retrenchment was finally accepted.

"THE LAWS OF BAR MISWAH"

Reviewed by: Anna Dangoor

"The Laws of Bar Miswah" by Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe is divided into two sections, one Hebrew, and one English. The English section is a summarised translation of the Hebrew part, laid out in point form, and detailing laws and customs relating to all aspects of a Bar Mitzvah.

This book is of interest to both those actually planning a Barmitzvah, and those who are purely intrigued by Jewish culture, and traditions of the time old practices that make up part of the celebration of a Bar Mitzvah. The Mitzrot of Sisith, and Tefillih are described in great detail, explaining the ten laws which must be followed when making the latter as well as such customs as making sure to touch the Sisith before the Tefillih when one comes to pray in the morning.

The book also discusses the Rabbinical opinions, as to when a boy actually reaches the required age of thirteen and one day, on which he has come of age, and can celebrate his Barmitzvah in order to show G-d that we are happy to take on the burden of his commandments.

Batmitzvahs are also briefly examined in the book, and it was interesting to discover that unlike with other commandments which women are exempt from, if a woman chooses to carry out the Mitzrah of Sisith she is considered proud and conceited.

All in all, although the English portion of the book is short, it is packed with a great deal of information and guidance, as to the intricacies of a subject which is important to all of us as Jews; the time of our lives when we accept responsibility before G-d for our actions; the Barmitzvah.

BOOKS RECEIVED

A Divinely Given Torah In Our Day and Age

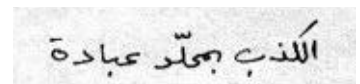
Studies on the Weekly Torah Readings from Bar-Ilan University
Designed and produced by
Laser Pages Publishing Ltd,
Jerusalem, Israel - 479 pp

In these studies a number of prominent writers give their interpretations and views. They include Professor Moshe Kaveh, President of the University; Dr Aharon Arend; Professor Nathan Aviezer; Professor Elazar Touitou; Professor Jacob Klein; Professor Hannah Kosher; Dr Zohar Amar; Professor Dov Schwartz, Rabbi Yaakov Charlap; Rabbi Dr Pinchas Hyman; Dr Avraham Elqayam; Dr Penina Meizlish; Dr Meir Bar-Ilan; Dr Dvorah Ushpizai; Dr Meir Gruzman; Rabbi Yehezkel Lichtenstein; Professor Ephraim Chazan; Dr David Elgavish; Yona Bar-Maoz; Dr David Eglavish; Hillel Neuman; Dr Zvi Betzer; Professor Eric Zimmer; Dr LeB Moskovitz; Naftali Stern.

Naim Dangoor writes: In Parashat Lekh-Lekha, G-d's command to Abraham to "Get thee out from thy land, thy birthplace and thy father's home", is usually interpreted as in this study as demonstrating the painful decision that Abraham had to make in leaving his homeland, so that G-d had to sweeten His command by promising Abraham to make him a great nation.

But I have a deeper, more subtle and more meaningful interpretation of his historical phrase. G-d's emphasis that the land of the rivers is Abraham's land and the house of his fathers is to remind him that the Jews must always regard Mesopotamia as their rightful homeland and any forgetting of this fact would result in disaster after disaster as has happened in our history - exile to Babylon, the destruction of the second Temple and finally Saddam's missiles on Ramat Gan.

Israel cannot hope to survive in peace unless she attempts to passify Iraq and consider the whole Middle East as one country.



Al kethib bem'hallu ebada.

Lying in its proper place is equal to worship.

Hiding Places

A Father and his Sons Retrace their Family's Escape from the Holocaust
by Daniel Asa Rose
Simon & Schuster - 377pp
U.S. \$25.00
Can \$36.00

In this innovative memoir, part travel narrative, part spiritual quest, prize-winning author Daniel Asa Rose describes the remarkable journey in which he and his young sons retraced their relatives' escape from Antwerp during the Second World War and also embraced, with ample amounts of wit and irreverence, the Jewish heritage that had pained and mystified him.

Alexander the Great

The Unique History of Quintus Curtius
by Elizabeth Baynham
Ann Arbor
The University of Michigan Press - 219 pp

In recent years much attention has been given to evaluating the surviving ancient histories of Alexander and their own sources.

In this book Elizabeth Baynham examines these issues concerning first century historian Quintus Curtius' account of Alexander which, until now, has received very little attention from Alexander historians.

The Middle East

2000 Years of History from the rise of Christianity to the present day
by Bernard Lewis
Phoenix Press - 387 pp

In this book Bernard Lewis charts the successive transformation of the Middle East, beginning with the two great empires, the Roman and the Persian, the development of monotheism and the growth of Christianity; the astonishingly rapid rise and spread of Islam; the waves of invaders from the East and the Mongol hordes of Jengiz Khan; the rise of the Ottoman Turks, and the changing balance of power between the Muslim and Christian worlds.

A People Apart

The Jews in Europe 1789-1939
by David Vital
Oxford University Press - 898 pp

David Vital explores the Jews' consistently tense relationship with the rulers whom they were subject and the peoples in whose midst they were embedded. He documents the struggle of this ancient but almost uniquely non-territorial people to establish a place for itself within an increasingly hostile political and social environment.

Jews and Arabs

Their Contacts Through the Ages
by S D Goitein
Schocken Books - New York - 252 pp

In this new edition, which carries the story of Arab and Jewish cultural developments into the 1970's, Professor Goitein explores the social and intellectual contact between Jews and Arabs since their beginnings three thousand years ago.

Sun, Sea and Soul

A little bit of heaven on holiday
by Lionel Blue
and Jonathan Magonet
Hodder & Sloughton, London - 246 pp

This is no ordinary holiday guide. True, it tells you how to help and not hinder your quest for a happy holiday, how to plan, budget, deal with queues, lost luggage, holiday rows and romances, loneliness in five star hotels, and enjoy the culture, but the insights go much deeper..... into the bigger journey of life itself.

Laced with Jewish humour and personal anecdotes, Rabbis Blue and Magonet talk us through the holiday experience in all its unpredictable glory. They pass on their delightfully upbeat wisdom, gleaned from a complete mix of holiday destinations - the disco floors of Benidorm, the Chapels of Malta, the cultural delights of the Edinburgh fringe and much more. They share their wisdom on how to have a truly happy or at least happier holiday and how every bit of a traveller's body, mind and spirit can benefit from the experience.

Lionel Blue is a popular and much loved Rabbi whose thoughts for the day have become a national institution.

Coming Home to Jerusalem

A personal journey
by Wendy Orange
Simon & Schuster - 291 pp
US \$25.00
Can \$37.00

An American Jewish woman uproots her family to live in Jerusalem, searching for a new home. For Wendy Orange, a writer in her early forties, what starts as a ten day conference in Jerusalem, stretches into a six year residence in one of the world's most captivating cities, where she undertakes an illuminating and evocative trip to this ancient land.

Dear Sirs,

The last issue of The Scribe I received was on September 1999. I was wondering what happened to the next two issues?

I have been receiving this valuable journal for several years. If you have had a change of policy regarding subscription, please let me know and I will be glad to oblige. This journal is a resource and, a very good one at that, to all of the Babylonian Jews such as myself.

I would like to continue receiving this excellent journal. Thank you.

Sincerely yours

Shamoon Salih

USA

Issue 73 on-line is a magnificent accomplishment, but now that you are only on-line, spare a thought for your hundreds of older readers who used to look forward with such eagerness to receiving their copy of 'The Scribe'.

Is it possible to have a re-think on the subject?

Helen Bekhor

Australia

Scribe : We have to move with the times. However, we are willing to provide a colour print-out of issue 73 which covers 76 pages at US\$20 including air-mail postage.

Like AIDS, life is a sexually transmitted terminal disease; and, like AIDS, it has got out of hand.

From BBC Radio 4