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WISHING ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY HANUCAH AND A PROSPEROUS 1988

The Iraqi Synagogue

For the second year running the Iraqi community in London prayed together on the first day of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur at the beautiful synagogue of the Jewish Preparatory School which was bought two years ago in memory of the late Naima Shamoon and Albert and Mozelle Bekhor, and which is run so enthusiastically and capably by Communal Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy. The synagogue was almost filled to its 500 capacity by people coming from all parts of London and the service was conducted in a relaxed atmosphere as opposed to the more formal one at the Lauderdale Road Synagogue.

The service was conducted by Rev. Eli Darzi, originally of Baghdad, who was flown especially from Israel for the occasion. He sang with his sonorous voice the traditional Baghdad hymns which gave the congregants a nostalgic taste of the old Baghdad minhag. Mrad Dalah, Anwar Shina, Moshi Khadhouri all sang their favourite pieces while Jack and Joe David, great-grandsons of the famous Hakham Yosef Hayim, acted as saganim. A feature was the customary auction of mitzvot. This was capably conducted by Latif Hoory and raised over £30,000 for the school. (Sepher Kol Nidre cost its bearer no less than £7000). Chief of Staff General Moshe Levy opened the Ark at the Neila service. Rev. Elia Isreal supervised the service on behalf of the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue and Rabbi Abraham Levy himself gave the various sermons and conducted youngsters of his school in singing various hymns.

Years ago Rabbi Levy was accused of saying in a sermon that all the Jews from Arab countries who came to England and prayed with the Sephardim eventually formed their own synagogues – except the Iraqis who stuck to the Spanish & Portuguese congregation. Now the Iraqis also have declared their independence. In this respect it can be said that both the Sephardim and the Iraqis are having

The Holocaust in German History

German historians, unable to fit the Hitler era, and the Holocaust in particular, in the context of German history have concluded that the whole experience was an aberration, a geological fault, a one-off tragedy alien to the liberal traditions of Germany, that claimed to be the most educated and civilised nation in the world.

This is wishful thinking.

On the Jewish side it is considered that by continually reminding the world of the horrors of the Holocaust we would prevent such a cataclysm from happening again; the motto being: NEVER AGAIN!

This too is wishful thinking.

The truth is that European civilisation in general is only skin deep; superficial; a thin vencer. Scratch the surface and you encounter a ferocious beast. Yesterday it was Hitler; today it is Le Pen with five million followers in France, the home of *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.*

the best of both worlds: during the year they pray together at Lauderdale, Bevis Marks, Wembley and Holland Park and thus enable the two groups to mix. On High Holy Days they split and thus ease the pressure on the four Sephardi venues and obviate the need for the unpopular overflow service at the Montefiore Hall.

It can be revealed that plans to demolish the ladies gallery at the Iraqi synagogue, in order to build more classrooms, have now been abandoned as the trustees do not wish to spoil the beauty of the synagogue to which the Iraqis have become attached.

However, the school is going from strength to strength and this year accommodates no less than 90 youngsters taught to a high standard with no more than 15 per class. With large offers of financial assistance from wealthy members of the community new purpose-built premises are being sought for the school \bigcirc The Holocaust therefore cannot be regarded as a unique experience. In similar circumstances it can happen again. Lovers of freedom and guardians of moral values must eradicate demagogues who preach genocide and racial hatred as soon as they rear their ugly heads and eliminate them before they carry out their fiendish plans.

Perhaps the reason why European civilisation is not as profound as that of the Near East and other regions of the ancient world is that the ice age took longer to recede. One is reminded of Disraeli's famous reply to an antisemite in Parliament, "Yes, I am a Jew, and when your ancestors were savage cave-dwellers, mine were priests in the Temple of Solomon."

Those who deny the Holocaust are preparing the ground for a repeat performance with impunity. It would be poetic justice to give these people a taste of the gas chambers.

Europe's indifference to the crimes of the Holocaust while they were being committed is matched by its insensitivity to Jewish feelings in its aftermath, The Pope chooses his words carefully when referring to it and fails to condemn it because in a way it was the culmination and fulfilment of the Church's Judeophobia throughout the centuries. The Pope's pro-Arab policies failed to save the lives of 100,000 Lebanese Christians who died fighting for national survival. He fails to recognise Israel not for love of the Palestinian Arabs but for fear of undermining the Church's claim to being the new Israel.

The explanation that Jewish suffering has been a punishment for killing Jesus is a fallacy. The crucifixion was a Roman deed. The remnants of the Jewish people have been persecuted for rejecting Christianity. While Christianity and Islam may have been steps in the right direction for the world at large, they hold no message for the Jews. We have rejected Christianity and Islam because they did not fulfil our expectations

Sephardim and Ashkenazim

From an article in the Masorti Journal

by David Abulafia, Fellow and Tutor of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge

However profound the disagreement between Sephardi and Ashkenazi rabbis, both forms of Judaism are considered equally legitimate. Historical factors moulded the practice of Judaism and conditions in Germany or Poland necessitated a different approach to shechita or the conduct of public prayer to that prevailing in Spain.

The two major branches of Judaism acted upon one another in medieval times. In 1304 a number of Ashkenazi rabbis arrived in Spain and were vigorously critical of the moral laxity of some Sephardi grandees, who cultivated erotic poetry on Arabic models. Such behaviour was inconceivable in the rigorous communities of central Europe. The tribulations of the Spanish Jews after the pogroms of 1391 and the expulsion of 1492 bred an interest in explaining the causes of persecutions hitherto more frequent in Ashkenaz than in Sepharad.

Persecution also brought the Ashkenazim away from the lands of Christendom into the expanding Ottoman Empire of the late 15th century. Here, Jews were encouraged to settle, and there were many fewer disabilities. It was in the Turkish lands that Ashkenaz and Sepharad had their most significant encounter and had to learn the act of co-existence.

The origin of the differences between the two groups lie in the remote past, in Babylon, in the different minhag of the Babylonian Jews. The so-called Sephardi liturgy is, in reality, a form of the Babylonian liturgy of the early Middle Ages, adopted in Spain and in other parts of the medieval Islamic world, though much influenced by the liturgy of Eretz-Israel; and this other, "Palestinian," liturgy was the core of the Ashkenazi minhag. (Ironically, the medieval Ashkenazim were more interested in the Babylonian than in the Palestinian Talmud). The close similarities of the medieval Spanish liturgy and that of Babylon have led to a rather anomalous position, where the term "Sephardi" is now often misused to designate Jews from every oriental country; the distinguished history of Iraqi or Persian Jewry does not need to be covered by a Sephardi umbrella. The fact is that much later Sephardi missions to the

region introduced the full Spanish version instead of the native ones. The effect is that Sephardim and most oriental Jews can now easily follow the same service. (It was R. Sadqa Hosein, who came to Baghdad from Aleppo in 1743, that Sephardicised the Iraqi minhag. -N.E.D.)

The expulsion from Spain meant the arrival in Italy and the Balkans of large numbers of Jews who retained memories of a Jewish aristocracy in Spain of high standing whose members combined religious and secular scholarship with tax collection and the art of diplomacy. The effect of this on attitudes to other Jewish communities was drastic. There was increasing insistence among Sephardim that they were the cream of the Exile, descended from Babylonian Jews, themselves descended from the nobility of Jerusalem. In Greece, the native Jews were absorbed into the Sephardi communities, but the Ashkenazim were treated with scorn. The existence at Bevis Marks synagogue in London of separate scats at the back for Ashkenazim was all too typical of the "superiority complex" of Sephardim.

On questions where the Sephardim were regarded as lenient there was a tendency for the Ashkenazim to follow the stricter path.

By about the 17th century there had developed two great schools of Hebrew pronunciation based on common features of syllable stress, vowel sounds and consonants. Ashkenazi Jews who moved eastwards to Poland fell under the influence of the local Slavonic language. Perhaps this is why they learned to pronounce tav without a dagesh as sav, instead of thav. And in Spain, Arabic pronunciation influenced the vowel system (less rich than that of Ashkenazim); the Castilians seem to have confused bet and vet, in the same way that in modern Spanish b and v are often virtually indistinguishable; the Sephardim were past masters of the pronunciation of the ayin. Whereas the Sephardim stress the last syllable, the Ashkenazim now stress the penultimate syllable: thus Súkkos (Ashk.) as opposed to Sukkót, or Sukkóth. (Seph.) or Shábbos as opposed to Shabbát or Shabbáth. The hopes of Askenazi advocates of the Sephardi pronunciation came to fruition in the

work of Ben Yehuda and the creation of a predominantly Sephardi pronunciation of modern Hebrew.

It is sometimes said that the Sephardim are more "tolerant" than the Ashkenazim, for instance in kashrut the practice of eating rice and beans in Pesah; but Sephardim occasionally adopted a more stringent position. Generally, though, the Sephardim made a greater effort to live in the wider world. Most of the differences concerned fences around the Law rather than the Law itself. The influence of non-Jews and Karaites as well as the environment were important factors in shaping minhag. The cathedral-like atmosphere of some Sephardi synagogues is not a medieval legacy, but an attempt to meet the standards of the Anglo-Jewish elite of the 19th century. The Sephardim in modern Europe and America have generally been content with a traditionalist theology and a practical reluctance to interfere greatly in the manner of private observance of the members of the community. But in the Sephardi and oriental communities in Israel there has been a substantial shift towards a fundamentalist position which reflects at the most orthodox end of the spectrum, an ability of Sephardim and Ashkenazim to mix and co-exist that is in many ways a reversal of past patterns. It is possible, indeed, that in the process, a powerful force in Sephardi identity, the ability to reconcile the demands of the world with those of religion, will be sacrificed.

[Many] Jewish customs, both Ashkenazi and Sephardi, had their origin in Babylonia which, for over 1000 years, was the undisputed centre of Judaism. These include covering the head and reciting the Kaddish in Aramaic. Just as the Sephardi minhag was based on seder Rav Amram, the Babylonian Gaon, which he sent to the Jews of Barcelona in 870, the Ashkenazi minhag too was established by Rabbis whom Harun al-Rashid sent to Europe in 800 at the request of Charlemagne.

The Ashkenazi community was made up of the following elements:-

- Those who emigrated to Europe before the destruction of the Second Temple;
- The 97,000 slaves sold in Rome after the destruction of the Second Temple;
- The Khazars who were scattered after the destruction of the Khazar empire in 969;
- Jews who went from and via Babylon to Europe through southern Russia.

However, the big barmitzvah on Shabbath is an Ashkenazi innovation N.E.D.]

The Third International Congress of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies

by Dr. Shaul Ben-Abraham

This successful and unusual Congress which was organised by the Society for Judaco-Arabic Studies headed by Professor J. Blau of the Hebrew University, was held in London and Cambridge between 13 - 16 July 1987, with the assistance of several institutes such as Ben-Zvi Institute, British Academy, Genizah Research Unit, School of Oriental and African Studies. This year the Congress celebrated and dealt with "Ninety Years of Genizah Research (1897 – 1987)," Ninety years ago Solomon Schechter, a scholar of Talmudic Literature at Cambridge University brought from the Genizah of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo 140,000 worn and fragile fragments stored for 1000 years.

During four days of the Congress over fifty scholars from various countries including Egypt, gathered to discuss topics related to the study of Genizah manuscripts written in Judaco-Arabic which was used by Jews of the Islamic world, in Hebrew characters. The Judaeo-Arabic of the Jews of the Arab world differs from the Muslim and Christian spoken and written Arabic in style, grammar and vocabulary. Babylonian Jews spoke Aramaic up to the time their centre moved to Baghdad. The modern Judaeo-Arabic dialect of the Jews of Baghdad has its root in the Arabic dialect spoken in the Abbasid period of Baghdad a thousand years ago. (With the inroads of desert Arabs the frontiers of the dialect was pushed north to Ana and Mosul where the local dialect is the same as the Jewish dialect.) It belongs to the dialect known as *Qeltu* while the current Islamic dialect belongs to the Guilit group.

Lectures included "Saadya Gaon on the limits of Liturgical Flexibility," (Dr. R. Brody), "Conversion to Islam and Inter-Marriage," "Magic in a Mediterranean Society," "Anti-Christian Polemic in Judaeo-Arabic," and so on.

One of the most interesting lectures was Professor N. Golb's "The Place of Judaeo-Arabic Studies in Jewish Historiogrpahy." In this lecture Prof. Golb said that "In the past century and early in the present one, the study of the language, history and culture of the medieval Jews of Islamic lands did not have an academic status ... although this was always on a par with other university disciplines in terms of the intellectual challenge it posed and its intrinsic value as a humanistic dis-

cipline. Similarly, early historians of the Jews never fully appreciated the vast sweep and spread of medieval Judaeo-Arabic history, and it has never been satisfactorily integrated into the broader context of general Jewish history, which continues to concentrate on other areas despite the fact that most of the actual text-documentation now extant deals with the Jews of Islamic lands in the Middle Ages." Prof. Golb concluded that "the time has come for a new balance in the study and writing of Jewish history, in which this salient area of the Jewish history (is covered) and in a measure commensurate with its importance.'

It is regrettable that out of 29 lecturers in this Congress only 5 were from Arab countries, among them Dr. Haskell Isaacs who was born in Iraq and is one of the world's experts in Medical Text in Arabic. Dr. Davide Sala was the Chairman of one of the sessions. His comments on the lectures given in this session were brilliant and steeped with Judaeo-Arabic flavour. Only two Professors of Iraqi origin participated in the Congress as listeners. These were Prof. S. Somekh of Tel Aviv University and Prof. Shmuel Moreh of the Hebrew University. Prof. Itzhak Avishur of Haifa University, also of Iraqi origin, was unable to come to Cambridge to deliver his lecture on "A New Approach to the Study of Saadya's *Tafsir.*"

However, the success of the Congress was mainly due to the efforts of Dr. S.C. Reif who is in charge of the Genizah Unit at Cambridge University Library

Buss Baqa

One notable absentee from the conference was Professor Jacob Mansour of the Haifa University who produced three books (in Hebrew) entitled The Judaeo-Arabic Dialect of Baghdad. In a pamphlet given to us by Mr. Shaul Sassoon, Mansour discusses at length the uses and meanings of the particle baga. Mansour points out that the Jews of Baghdad have also a written literature (using the Babylonian form of Hebrew alphabet) but this differs considerably from the spoken language. The illustration is of a letter from my father in the written form of Judaeo-Arabic which until the mass exodus of 1950/51 was the normal medium of correspondence and bookkeeping among Iraqi Jews 🌰 N.E.D.

Medical Texts in Judaeo-Arabic

Abstract of the paper read by Dr. Haskell D. Isaacs.

The Genizah contains a considerable mass of valuable material which would offer the medical historian as well as the lay person a unique opportunity to study Middle Eastern medicine as it was practised by the Jewish doctors in medieval Cairo.

It is convenient to divide such medical material into the following categories:

- a) Description of diseases, causes and treatment including surgery.
- b) Description of simple drugs and medicinal herbs, their action and

uses.

- c) Household remedies which were written specificially for the laity. Diet for the invalids, personal hygiene and first-aid instructions.
- d) Quasi-medical subjects such as natural philosophy, magic, astrology and occultism.
- e) Miscellaneous fragments dealing with etiquette and medical ethics, medical education and training, and financial aid for the invalids and the handicapped \bigcirc

We give below the text of an ancient wedding song of the Iraqi Jewish community

מן בית אלובי גובתן מבייצה זוגיך סהיל עלה עלא מיזאני תטע אל חיר ועסבר אל צלטאני יא ליבסי ספיפא ויא אצילה ואגלי אכופי אלדי זרע אל מוארע באסמהו פוק אל ספיפא שפכי ריתאני זרע אל מזארע ופסר אל נתראני ווגיך אלרי לכס אל מחייר באסמתו עמף אלויי סבפו אל סבאייף באסמהו דקו טבולו וקאל אנא ההאני סבפו אל סבאייך הסאב אל וואני חלף אבופי וקאל עודי גווורא עמף אלרי סייר אל מראפב באסמהו גוהר עתיק מן לזנת אל צלטאני סייר אל מראפב ושגו אל בחראני הלף ווגיך וקאל אכדתו נוהרא כאלך אלרי עלה באב אל חיבא ואקפן נהר מליח מן כזנה אל צלטאני ואתנאעצולו גטעה אל הכאמי רי ארויני טולף ריחו טולך לא כלא כאלף אלרי מא כל בצירה מתלחו טולף ישאבה שטכת אל ריחאני לא מל בצרה ולא בארץ אל שאמי די ארויני ונהף ריתו ונהך לא כלא ואנתי בה מן בה אל מלוף אל מהתשם ונהד ישאכה דורת אל אנפאני דאטך עלינה טאעייה אל רחמאני די ארויני שערך ריתו שערך לא כלא ואנתי בה מן בנה אל נכיל אל שאמכא שערף ישאבה בריסם אל שאטי ושמחלהא מן דר אל אלוואני די ארויני עיונד ריחו עיונד לא כלא כורת עיונף ואל חוואנב מצרעה עיונף ישאבה עיון אל מלאני קצח גבינך בירפו אל ההמאני די ארויני כדף ריוזו כרף לא כלא די ארפעי עינף ועאייניני בלא כֿגל כרך ישאבה תפאה אל שאמי בטוואד עינך כנלת נטוואני די ארויני טנונף וזיתו טנונך לא כֿלא די אפתחי תומד יא אצילה ואטלבי טנתף ישאבה לולו ומרגאני שצר אל עתונ ולולו מן בהראני רי ארויני פפֿך ריתו פפֿך לא כלא אבופי אלרי חלפו אל עוואלם באסמהו פפק ישאבה לווינת אל צפראני חל אל משפל סאערו רחמאני די ארויני זנדף ריתו וגדף לא כלא וומף נכאת ומעם ריקף טופרן סוואר אל דהב טלעת מן אל וואני ומאה כדף וורדת אל בסתאני די ארויני צדרק ריתו צדרך לא כלא אכֿופּי אלדי לבס אל מוון־ באסמהו נוק אל דהב מלעת מן אל האני די ארויני סאקך ריתו סאקך לא כלא גוך אל רפע אל תלבטו חלאמי חגל אל התב טלע מן אל האני יא סת בנת אל סת ויא סת אל נסא די ארויני צרחך ריהו צרחך לא כלא אטף להא פֿצלן עלת נסוואני צרחד טיירת ריני ואימאני אבופי נמר עמד טרייא בסמא

הל אל הלאל ועלה אל הלאל אחוושעו בת אל מלוך וכוואלפי שנעאלי פרשו אל זוואלי ואל אמארא הנכלו עלה ציט אבופי אתקתלו צבייאני בה אל אציל עלה אל וצול ואצלו עלה חסן כרך אתקתלו צבייאני אכופי אלדי דאס אל בצאט בועלהו צחך אל וויר ואחבסם אל צלשאני מן בית אבופי פתילתן מא להא תמן בלנים פצה חור בל פרוואני מן בית זוגיף חס אל שנרא המחמת הריד אל עליג מן תמן אל מוולאני פן כית אבופי סבע ויבאייח הבחן סודן וביצן ואסמן אל כרפאני מן בית זוגיף סבע זוואלי מפרשא תסע אל היר ועספר אל צלטאני מן בית אבופי סבע ספארי מנצהא חס אל כדה מן מטבך אל גֿוואני מן בית זוניד חס אל צנא ולנלנא פפפיר אל ז'הם חלעב עלא מוולאני עמר אלדי עלא באב אל נמרג ואנפן יעשי אל חסאב מן ענם לי הורפאני עמף אלרי עלא סיפמלי אל עאלי גאלטן ואתנאעצולו נמעה אל הפאמי גרף אלדי פהח אל מצאחף באסמהו. פתח אל מצאחף וקאל אנא אל מולאני מו בית אכופי סבע נדורה מנצבא ושמאש ינאדי זאר לל נועאני מן ביה בייך ימלע אל ציף שאפרן ערבל מלאן מן לחטן אל כרפאני ספרת גרודף ארבעין אצראע טולהא תכסי אל יתים וישבע אל וועאני

According to the late David Solomon Sassoon, who visited Bagdad in 1910, the above song, with the first two lines as refrain, was still chanted by the *deqqaqat* at the *jalwa* of the bridegroom and bride during the wedding night celebrations.

The song is preserved in a book of Judaeo-Arabic folk songs – Sassoon Ms.485 – and appears in a long article on the Jews of Basra by David Sassoon in the Jewish Quarterly Review Vol.17. N.S. of April 1927, published in Philadelphia, U.S.A.

Sassoon finds in this song a reminescence of the first Persian siege of Baghdad and its liberation by Sultan Murad in 1638.

On that occasion, so the story goes, a brave Jew escaped from Baghdad in disguise and made an arduous journey to Constantinople and managed to bring to the attention of the Sultan the terrible suffering of Baghdad's population at the hands of the Persians. Sultan Murad soon raised an army of 100,000 including 10,000 Jews and marched on Baghdad. On arrival he entered the city disguised as a dervish and knocked on the door of an elderly Jewish widow who was baking bread, begging for food. He said to himself if the woman gives him a whole loaf he will take Baghdad – if half a loaf he will fail. The woman gave him a whole (resh loaf and agreed to let him stay the night in one room. The next day he went back to his army and was successful in defeating the Persians and taking Baghdad. He went back to the old woman and after declaring his identity asked her to make a wish. The woman asked for a cometery for the Jewish community. The room where

he slept the previous night was kept

locked until recent times in the house known as bet Parizat. Meer Basri informs us that when Time magazine printed in 1957 a cover story on Nuri al-Said, the Iraqi prime minister claimed in the interview that the person who went to alert the Sultan in Constantinople was an ancestor of his, a mullah!

However, I don't think Sassoon's theory is plausible.

The song praises the bride's family and refers to her grandfather, father and maternal uncle as learned rabbis of Basra; her paternal uncle as having a shipping line, sitting in a high chair at the gates of the customs house and whose name was struck on gold ingots. These indications show that the bride was the niece of Jacob Aharon Gubbay, the wealthy, influential and philanthropic Nasi and Sarraf-Bashi of Basra. The bride must have been Sarah, daughter of Hakham Saleh Aharon Gubbay and the bridegroom was Michael, son of David Yeshua Gubbay (Gurji) and younger brother of Sheikh Yitzhaq Pasha, Nasi and Sarraf Bashi of Baghdad. The leading Rabbi of Baghdad at the time was R. Sadga Hosein.

The song refrain goes, "The new moon appeared ..." because this Baghdad wedding of the decade took place on the first of Tebeth 1765. The governor of Baghdad was Omar Pasha and of Basra was Soleiman Pasha – both friends of the Jews.

The song which begins, "Unroll the carpets and welcome the princes," records the opulence of the occasion: a

priceless charger, with a silver bit, leads the bride's caravan going to her husband. At the farewell party given by the father the banqueting table was thirty yards long – the *wali* and the whole garrison were invited. The poor were not forgotten; the shamash was at the door handing out dinners to the needy.

The marriage document (Sasson Ms.204) was witnessed by: Hakham Saleh Joseph Masliyyah, who later succeeded Sadqa Hosein in the Rabbinate; Saleh David Jacob Saleh David (father of Sheikh Sassoon, who later married the bride's cousin); Saleh and Moshi (brothers of the groom); Aslan Heskel (Elkabir).

The *ketuba* gives details of the bride's trousscau: personal jewellry and gold articles; six upper garments and one cloak; seven gabardines (zboon); seven under vests; seven silk kerchiefs; seven trouser girdles; four handkerchiefs; three fancy headkerchiefs (yashmagh); three kerchiefs embroidered in gold; two silk wrappers (izar); bath sheets and bath towels; night gowns; six pieces of household copper; one looking glass; one carpet – the whole dowry was valued at 10,651 Asads N.E.D.

A popular parody before the mock plebiscite that gave Emir Feisal the throne of Iraq:

Haykalu kaluka – ya bint el mlouka wahlik ma yerdouka – ella bil halalu' Haykalu haykalu – mahhad dayer balu azzel abu shabga – wuku'd yabu'galu

Mahhad dayer balu which means "no one is paying attention to what is taking place" is about the only murmur that the Iraqi Jewish community made at the conspiracy of Col. Lawrence and Miss Bell to hand over the country to Arab rule, contrary to earlier promises.

This step resulted, inevitably, in the liquidation of the community thirty years later and its mass emigration in 1950/51, mainly to Israel.

No Middle East settlement can be valid unless it takes into account Jewish historical rights in Iraq.

The fourth conference of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic studies will be held in Israel in 1989, probably at Tel Aviv University. The general theme will be "Encounters in Judaeo-Arabic Civilisation." Princeton University has been suggested as the venue of the fifth conference in 1991 with a possible opening day session at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

Attempts are being made to gain access to the Judaeo-Arabic materials found in the Second Firkovitch Collection at the Saltykov Schchedrin Library in the Soviet Union

Spot an Ancestor

A FURTHER SELECTION from the Register of military taxpayers of the Baghdad Community of 1892.

This list is arranged alphabetically in accordance with the Hebrew alphabet which was taught in Baghdad schools, Jewish and Moslem, to be memorised as follows:- ABGaD HaWaZ HaTaY KaLMaN SaAFaS QaRSHaT. It is interesting to note that when enumerating pages or paragraphs Arabic printers still use the Hebrew alphabetical order, as above, instead of the Arabic one, which is completely different.

In Arabic the first four letters are pronounced ABJaD instead of ABGaD as in Hebrew and Egyptian Arabic.

When Kemal Atatürk converted Turkish to Latin alphabet, which itself was based on the original Hebrew alphabet, he made the third letter C to be pronounced as G.

Yosef Nessim H. Sasson Musliyah Sasson Dawid Mahleb Abraham Shimeon Mableb Eliahu Shimcon Mahleb Heskel Shimeon Mahleb Yosef Dawid Mahleb Menashe Heskel Shimeon Mahleb Aharon Abraham Shalom Mahleb Dawid Shalom Mahleb Dawid Sasson Mahleb Dawid Sasson Mikal Yishaq Mikal Yacoub Mikal Joharchi Saleh Yosef Mdawayi Nessim Yosef Mdawayi Yishaq Moshe Nessim Memoukha & Bros Yacoub Selman Mraidekh Abraham Yacoub Dawid Mraidekh Yishaq Heskel Mane'e Dawid Eliahu Meir Ezra Yosef Hayim Eliahu Meir Selman Heskel Eliahu Meir Nessim Heskel Ezra Dawid Menahem Yishaq Heskel Ezra Dawid Menahem Yacoub Heskel Ezra Dawid Menahem Eliahu Aharon Shalom Menahem Meir Eliyya Heskel Menahem Abraham Moshe Menahem Kendarchi Moshe Ezra Mettana Menashe Ezra Mettana Shaul Mensahe Mettana Heskel Meir Moshe Meni Abdulla Meir Meni Ezra Heskel Meir Meni Reuben Moshe Meni Ezra Matuq Abraham Matuq Dawid Heskel Matuq Sasson Nessim Reuben H. Mordechai Aboudi Yacoub Mathalon Yishaq Abraham Mathalon Hougi Ezra Mathalon Abraham Yishaq Mathalon Yacoub Abdulla Mathalon Yacoub Ezra Mathalon Eliahu Ezra Mathalon Salch Ezra Mathalon Salch Abraham H. Abdulla Mesaffi Ezra Heskel Qojaman Mesaffi Heskel Reuben Mesaffi Heskel Nessim Abraham Mashaal Heskel Yishaq Mashaal Nessim Mordechai Mashaal Yona Dawid Yona Mashaal Moshe Heskel Mashaal Dawid Heskel Mashaal Nessim Dawid Yona Mashaal Moshe Abraham Nessim Mashaal Abraham Heskel Mashaal Yosef Heskel Mashaal Selman Abraham Nessim Mashaal Yishaq Mordechai Mashaal Ezra Dawid Mashaal Shaul Mordechai Mashaal Shaul Eliahu Moshe Mualim Moshe Sasson Mualim Saleh Eliyya Moshe Mualim

Menashe Eliahu Moshe Mualim Reuben Aharon Moshe Mualim Shaul Aharon Moshe Mualim Yehuda Aharon Moshe Mualim Yacoub Eliahu Moshe Mualim Selman Eliahu Moshe Mualim Reuben Eliahu Moshe Mualim Moshe Meir Mezzala Sasson Meir Mezzala Saleh Ezra Mezzala Abed Meir Mezzala Eliahu Yishaq Merroudi Shaul Mordechai Merroudi Yishaq Heskel Merroudi Abraham Yishaq Merroudi Saleh Yacoub Meghzib Yishaq Shua Mulla Azariah Aboudi Mrayyed Meir Yacoub Mjalled Dawid Shlomo Mrad Sasson Hayim Shlomo Mrad Aharon Nessim Yamen Musa Mordechai Musa Heskel Yosef Mandelawi Nessim Selman Mandelawi Dawid Selman Mandelawi Mordechai Selman Mandelawi Aharon Shalom Abraham Mekhanchi Sasson Abraham Mekhanchi Abraham Sasson Mekhanchi Abraham Yamen Mekhanchi Heskel Yosef Mdallal Menashe Yosef Mdallal Eliahu Dawid Nisan Selman Dawid Nisan Menashe Yahya Nisan Reuben Salch Nisan Shaul Saleh Reuben Nisan Ezra Saleh Reuben Nisan Reuben Heskel Nisan Eliahu Nathaniel Heskel Nathaniel Nathaniel Heskel Nathaniel Heskel Hayim Nathaniel Abul Ghas Nathaniel Hayim Nathaniel Saleh Nathaniel Hayim Nathaniel Aboudi Hayim Nathaniel Shuwa Hayim Nathaniel Selman Eliahu Neqqar Dahud Selman Neqqagh Yacub Selman Neqqagh Eliahu Yacub Neqqagh Mordechai Selman Eliahu Neqqagh Yacub Eliahu Neqqar Abraham Eliahu Neqqagh Abraham Shlomo Newwama Dawid Abraham Newwama Eliahu Abdulla Newwama Reuben Yishaq Shimcon Newwama Eliahu Yishaq Newwama Sasson Heskel Barukh Moshe Nahom Hougui Saleh Nahom Barukh Yacub Nahom Eliahu Abduila Shimeon Nahom Saleh Nahom Moshe Nahom & Sons Dawid Abdulla Shimeon Nahom Shaul Abdulla Moshe Nahom 🛑

Genealogical Research

Jews, more than most other people, take a great interest in tracing their roots. That is why there are many institutions in Europe, America and especially in Israel for the collection and tabulation of documents, registers and records concerning world Jewry.

The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, in Jerusalem, possesses the most extensive collection on the subject from the twelfth century to the present. It has assembled and microfilmed more than 3 million documents being records of Jewish communities themselves as well as information obtained from governmental, provincial and municipal archives in different countries.

Other depositories of information are The Jewish National Library of the Hebrew University, The Diaspora Research Institute of Tel Aviv University and the Archives of the Sephardi Community, Jerusalem, which contains records of Jewish communities in the Ottoman empire since the 16th century.

America contains many libraries and archives on Jewish family history but, strange as it may seem, the best records for Jewish ancestor hunters are to be found in the Mormons' Genealogical Library in Sait Lake City and 64 Exhibition Road, London SW7. The Mormons are very ancestorconscious and devote 10 million dollars a year to maintain their archives of six million family trees, 36 million index cards, 90 million feet of microfilm and 250 microfilm machines all kept in massive storage vaults, blasted out of the insides of Granite Mountain and protected by nine-ton metal doors, iron gates and closed-circuit television systems. The aim of the Mormon Genealogical Society is to assemble family trees for the entire population of the world, clearly an impossible task. However they take a special interest in Jewish ancestry on the theory that other people's ancestors may turn out to be your ancestors too.

For further information on the subject of Jewish Genealogy the researcher is referred to *Finding Our Fathers* by Dan Rottenberg, published in 1977 by Random House, New York \bullet

Received for Review Economic Policy in Iraq 1932 – 1950 By Joseph Sassoon Published by Frank Cass £28.

The author left Iraq when 20 years old. He graduated from St Antony's College, Oxford, and currently works with an American investment bank in London.

A full review of the book will appear in the inext issue \bullet



Born in 1931, Emil Murad graduated at the American College of Baghdad. He developed a flair for writing during his early school years. Since his arrival in Israel in 1949, he has been a frequent contributor to American magazines and periodicals. He wrote short stories and two novels, lyrics and songs.

Among his published books are: Babylon in the Underground, My Friends the Kurds and a psychological novel, Deep into the Soul. Emil Murad has two volumes in verse in English and two in Hebrew. He was chosen "Poet of the Month" for his book of verse, Rose Petals Down the Stream in which he likens our young lives to rose petals strewn over the everflowing stream of life, all going to one final destination.

Following are two poems which Emil sent to *The Scribe*:

IN SEARCH OF LIGHT

Come, Brother Let's go together. Hand in hand. This beautiful world to discover; To forge through the darkness of life, fearlessly, courageously. Till we come to the darkness of death; Keep on searching to the last breath For light, for eternal peace. Brother, I command! Let's go here and now, hand in hand Both, blindfolded though, as we are; The one the other's guide.

To explore, near and far, With love, understanding, to abide All the way, I plead, brother, In search of eternal peace, eternal light; All the way, without fear, From darkness to darkness, then from darkness

to light, Humbly, steadily, hand in hand to go, Till light we shall find, and cry out joyfully, Light, Light! Make Love and Light!

IF I WERE.....

If I were given for once the right to choose From the wishes of life but one, I'd ask for that which none'd want to lose, But once lost, regaining it can never be done! If you are past it, only your offspring will catch up;

And, O, 'tis a crown on the heads that possess it. No matter how you feel, act, smile or chin-up; If you are old, fellow, alas! You lack it! YOUTH! That's the word for it, the big thing! Summer, winter, spring, storm, sun or rain! I have but one wish, only one song to sing! O, God, if I were to be young again!!

Readers who wish to receive *The Scribe*, Journal of Babylonian Jewry regularly, free of charge, should write to:

The Exilarch's Foundation 20 Queen's Gate Terrace London SW7 5PF Some back numbers also available.



The Board of Directors of the "American Iraqi Jewish Community of Los Angeles" (1987).

From Left to Right: Dr. Abe Kattan, Chairman; Prof. Lev. Hakak, Legal Consultant; Mr. Victor Ozair, Secretary; Mrs. I. Denis, Social Committee; Mr. E. Denis, Treasurer; and Prof. Shmuel Moreh.

RESPONSA – Questions and Answers

Should a woman get up when her husband, father, uncle or brother are called to the sepher?

Yes, of course. People stand up for their elders firstly as a sign of respect, secondly to show family solidarity and identify with the oleh, thirdly, and most importantly, to share in the mitzvah, especially as in the case of a woman she cannot be called up to the sepher. Some women argue that they don't stand up for their father, uncle or brother as they now belong to their husbands; and they don't stand up for their husbands because of sex equality, women's lib, etc. This is rebellion. I felt it was only natural to stand up for my son when he was barmitzvah and I have seen mothers stand up for their sons.

In ancient times everybody used to stand up when reading the *parasha* but this was changed, to be different to the Karaites.

After 40 years of prosperity and peace some women tend to forget a man's traditional role of toiling to provide for his family and risking his life in the battlefield in defence of his nation. In any emergency the cry has always been – women and children first.

A gentleman opens the door for his lady and lets her walk first not because she is superior.

Women cannot keep these privileges and also ask for equality. Women who challenge a man's supremacy, as prescribed in Judaism, do so at their peril

Foundation to Boost Birth Rate

The creation of the World Foundation to Promote Jewish Population Policies to encourage Jews to have more children, was announced in the Knesset last month.

With funds amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars to be raised from philanthropists all over the world as well as from the Israeli Government the foundation would make grants and loans to encourage Jews in Israel and the Diaspora to have more children.

It is hoped that these measures would counteract the rising tide of marrying out and opting out of the Jewish community.

It is Israel, even more than the Diaspora, that needs to boost its Jewish population in the face of rapidly rising Arab numbers in Eretz Israel and neighbouring countries. The Scribe has always recommended a programme to "RAISE A CHILD IN ISRAEL" whereby Diaspora sponsors would look after particular newborn children, to be named after victims of the Holocaust, or even send a child as oleh which would create a more intimate relationship between Israel and the Diaspora. It is hoped that the proposed foundation would explore such a plan 🔵

The Sephardi Community Centre had their first major function, a dinner/dance, on Sunday 14 November, which turned out to be a social and financial success. The aim of the Centre is eventually to raise enough funds to purchase premises suitable for various cultural, sporting and social events. At the moment its functioning from 13 Cheyne Walk, London NW4.



1951 – The year of the mass emigration of the Jews from Iraq; the nucleus of an Iraqi Jewish community in London was already forming, as recorded in this picture. From left to right:

Top Row: Maurice and David Saatchi; Roy Hayim; Charles Saatchi;

Middle Row: Jonathan Bekhor; Hilda Shamoon; Ronnie Fattal; Stella Shamoon; Diana and Monica Shahmoon.

Front Row: Valerie Schayek; David Dangoor (celebrating his birthday); Diana Fattal; Olivia Shamoon.

Mr. Roy Hayim is still in intensive care at the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, slowly recovering from the effects of botulism poisoning contracted on an Air France flight.

Messrs Charles and Maurice Saatchi are tipped to receive Knighthoods in the New Year Honours List. We extend to them our heartiest congratulations.

As Others See Us

Before Prince Vladimir decided to choose Christianity for Russia in 988 he interviewed a mulla and a rabbi. His comments on Judaism was that it appears to disperse its followers all over the world. As he wanted to unite the Russian people on their own land he declined to adopt Judaism. One hundred years earlier Babylonian rabbis were successful in converting the Khazars of Southern Russia to Judaism.

Vladimir chose Christianity of the Greek Orthodox variety, based on Constantinople, with an eye perhaps on acquiring one day that strategic city on the Bosphorus – a Russian ambition that has never been fulfilled \bullet

"A magical and colourful occasion" was the description applied to a wedding in a toast to the host and hostess.

This was the wedding of Mr. Alan Gourgey, younger son of Mr. & Mrs. Zaki Gourgey of Sutton, Surrey and Miss Rosalyn Samuels, of Grimsby. When bride and bridegroom entered the Reception Hall immediately the band struck up the tune *hava nagila* and guests joined in the dance to strike a cheerful note to the whole evening \blacksquare P.S.G.

I was interested to read the article on the Holocaust and Sephardi Jews. This is a little known aspect of the terrible crime and it deserves greater publicity. London A Greenberg (That article was written by Mr. Percy Gourgey – Scribe) Arthritis

The 10th International Symposium for the Surgical Treatment of Arthritis will be held in Haifa during March 28 – March 31, 1988. The topics for the Symposium will

include:

- 1. Modern concepts of Arthritis.
- 2. Joint reconstruction. Overview and future.
- Diagnostic modalities in surgery for Arthritis.
- 4. Allograft and Artificial Implant.
- Rehabilitation after Reconstructive Surgery.
- 6. Arthroscopic Surgery of Major Joints.
- 7. Material design and technique in tissue
- substitutes. 8. Advancements in Orthopaedic Surgery.

It appears that many members of our community, having come from a dry warm climate to a damp cold one, suffer from troubles of the joints. The outcome of this Symposium should therefore be of interest to their doctors.

The Jews of Iraq between 1920 and 1970 Selections from the paper by Simha Horesh. Part 4 will appear in the next issue

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