

The SCRIBE

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WISHING ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY HANUCAH AND A PROSPEROUS 1991

Israel and the Gulf

Benyamin Netanyahu, the up and coming Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, made the following statements (which coincide with our views) in an interview with *Israeli Democracy*, a supplement to the *Jerusalem Post* International Edition:

- ★ People are aware that Iraq presents a threat, but they are unaware that Iraq is only a sample of a new kind of régime that threatens peace in the Middle East and throughout the world.
- ★ In the Middle East, my enemy's enemy is not necessarily my friend. He could very well be my enemy tomorrow.
- ★ Some argue that the Gulf crisis has proven that Israel is not the most important ally of the United States, which needs Arab forces, rather than Israel, to curtail Iraq. But the presence of Israel – with its army, which may not be the largest but is certainly the strongest, with a capable airforce comprised of hundreds of advanced aircraft and



battle-tested pilots – is a great hindrance to Saddam's plans. Certainly it has prevented him from devouring Jordan or moving toward the Mediterranean, and it prevents him from thinking that he has the freedom to manoeuvre toward other fronts, including the American coalition to the south.

- ★ Even though we are asked to keep a low profile, that doesn't mean no profile. There is a very clear understanding of Israel's strategic significance in this area. **The Arab countries may not say it, but many of them are secretly very happy with the fact that Israel is there to check Iraq's expansionist goals.**
- ★ In any peace negotiations, Syria would raise the issue of the Golan Heights, but so would we. That area has an awesome strategic command of our valley below and was used to stage an unprovoked attack on Israel. Syria does not have an automatic right to demand the return of these territories.

- ★ Regarding the Palestinian problem, I believe that certain sacred cows, although wounded and bleeding, have not been slaughtered. The concept of the Palestinian problem as the core of conflict in the Middle East is still alive. The idea that the PLO wants peace is still alive. The idea that territory doesn't count (for Israel's security) is still alive even though Kuwait was devoured in six hours. Our battle today is to see if we can jar the printed circuit of the public mind in the aftermath of this shift in the Middle East.
- ★ Israel's public standing in the United States has improved considerably as a result of the Gulf crisis●

The howling dogs of the BBC

While Independent Television is financed entirely from advertising, the British Broadcasting Corporation receives over one billion pounds every year from the licence fee collected by the Government to enable the BBC to pursue a balanced and impartial presentation of events and politics.

However, the BBC radio and television follow anti-establishment lines: it endorsed the anarchists of Tiananmen Square, the communist-infested African National Congress of South Africa led by Nelson Mandela calling for "Black majority rule"; it provides a platform to IRA and PLO terrorists. *Question Time* has become a venue for fanning anti-Government sentiments. The biased political comments of the BBC must have played a role in toppling Margaret Thatcher. The BBC bites the hand that feeds it and the Government would do well to disestablish this bigoted institution.

But above all, the BBC has taken an anti-Israel stance, giving a one-sided presentation of the *intifada* and the "Palestinian" problem which is also out of proportion to its overall importance. It is possible that Arab money may be oiling the process. So when we happened to watch recently "Children of Fire" on the *intifada* we said to ourselves "Here we go again" and switched off. We were very disappointed when we found out the next day that the 50-minute one-sided documentary was screened by our own Controller of BBC2. We understand that he watches in advance all the output of BBC2. With such friends . . .

We have written to BBC2 voicing our

displeasure at this offensive programme and suggested that the least they can do is to allow us to present the other side of the coin. Our letter remains unanswered●

Victory in defeat

Saddam is said to believe that in the coming Gulf war he would be regarded as victorious by the Arabs merely if he puts up a good show. He would be hailed as a hero if he can hold out for 10 days and inflict heavy casualties on the Anglo-American forces.

This make-believe attitude suits Arab mentality: the 1973 war is viewed by Arabs as a victory – even though Israel eventually routed their armies – because Arab fighters performed better than before against Israeli forces.

While Israel cannot afford to lose a war even once, for the Arabs, defeat is just a technicality. This reminds me of the revolt of pro-Nazi Rashid Ali 50 years ago when he pitched the Iraq army against the British forces and fighting raged throughout May 1941. I was an officer in the Iraq army at the time, stationed at Rashid camp near Baghdad. On 30 May we received a communique from our high command which stated simply, "The enemy has accepted our terms and the war is over."

When I enquired afterwards what were the terms that the enemy accepted, I found out that it was "unconditional surrender" by Rashid Ali's forces!●

We found "deshdasha-clad, *nouveaux riches* aborigines" simply hilarious. We read the item on Saudi intolerance five times●

London

Menashe & Gilda Naghar

To Winter

Winter, Winter, the cold season;
to welcome you there is no reason.

With all your slush and all your rain,
we pass our time in vain.

Your shorter days and longer nights,
do not add to our delights.

But lo! the yuletide bells will ring;
and the New Year new hopes will bring.

For every cloud has a golden lining,
and soon, again, the sun will be shining●

Anon

LETTERS

I fully agree with your editorial **Pax Israelita** and its elaborate plan for stability and lasting peace in the Middle East.

However, I cannot understand why, in recommending that Mosul and other Kurdish provinces as well as Karkuk be returned to Turkey, you are only giving the Kurds autonomy within the Turkish republic and not full independence.●

Lexington, Mass Prof. Fred Ezekiel
(Karkukli)

Scribe: By their declarations during WWI, the Allies were committed to support the claims of certain nationalities including the Kurds. But after the war the greatest problem was the difficulty of finding representative Kurdish leaders. This situation still applies today and the Kurds are not united either by language, religion or purpose. Autonomy would give them the opportunity to work out a common destiny and speak with one voice. As King Feisal the First of Iraq used to reiterate: "Independence is taken and not given."●

You cannot imagine how glad I was when I found in the July 1990 number of *The Scribe* a picture of the Finishing Class of June 1948 of Shamash Secondary School, Baghdad. I could see again the masters, my classmates and myself in that picture. I must tell you that I had a copy of that picture until 1968 when I was obliged to destroy it for fear that the authorities in Baghdad would get hold of it, which would mean problems and trouble for me, not to speak about the danger with which it could bring. By the way, we left Baghdad (legally) at the beginning of 1972 only.

We would appreciate getting previous copies as we are interested, among other things, in the Iraqi Jewish recipes.●

Amsterdam Joseph & Hilda Somekh

As a Baghdadi Jew, I would be most interested in receiving *The Scribe*. Mr. Salim Mahlab of Hackensack, New Jersey introduced me to your publication.

It may be of interest to you to know that my name in Baghdad was Khatoon, the daughter of Naima and Nissim Rabie. My father was given the honour of being the manager of telecommunications in Iraq. After marrying my high school English teacher, I travelled and moved all over the world. While living in Kenya for five years, I learned to speak Swahili and French fluently. I presently teach Hebrew and Bible at the Solomon Schechter Day School in Cranford, New Jersey. I also have taught Arabic in the Israel public school system, being certified to teach through matriculation level. I have an M.A. in Arabic and Islamic studies from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where I was also a Lecturer in Hebrew.●

Staten Island, N.Y. Shoshana Cohen,
M.A., B.A.,

On my return from a very long trip abroad, I have read the latest issue of *The Scribe* and am writing to say how much I admire the new style of your publication. I am sure that you have put a great deal of effort and research into bringing *The Scribe* to such a high standard. I am sure most of your readers look forward to receiving it every time.

You are rendering the community an excellent service for which I say well done and *Kol Hakavod*.●

London W1 Dr. Davide S. Sala

Congratulations on your excellent article on "Pax Israelita", with which I agree. It is a *tour d'excellence*.

We Jews are the real Palestinians since Joshua's time and even before. All subsequent conquerors left: Assyrians, Babylonians, Persian, Greeks, Romans, Crusaders, Turks, British.

The Arabs are the only conquerors of Palestine who did not leave. They should go to Jordan which was given to them in 1922.●

Cottingham, East Yorkshire Dr. I.L. Hardy



PAX ISRAELITA. If only it could come to pass!

The fact is that not all those who know have admitted that the real problem is not Zionism but the Arabs. The trouble is that with all the turmoil in the Lebanon, the expulsion and killing by King Hussein of some twenty thousand Palestinians, the world is only told of the "massacre" of 21 rock-throwing Palestinians and no U.N. condemnation was sent to the Syrians who killed at the same time from 200 to 750 Christians in Lebanon. The Christian Pope and the Christian Archbishop are silent on this, but are one with most of the world in condemning the Israelis.

It's certainly true that Israel has the experience, the ability, and the proven expertise to destroy Saddam Hussein. And even if Israel would be drawn into a confrontation and finishes the job for the assembled but as yet inactive world, there would be voices from friends and foes alike condemning her and calling her the aggressor; just as they did in 1981 when Israel destroyed Iraq's nuclear capacity.

I just HOPE that YOUR prognosis is right and that PAX ISRAELITA will come about in our lifetime. For it is perhaps now or never!●

London NW2 Josef Ben Selig

A Ladino speaking Sephardi from Egypt, I have recently come across *The Scribe*. I would very much like to be placed on your list of subscribers.●

London SW15 Roger Saoul

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

Mrs. Vivian Shahrabani, Westport, Conn.
Mr. Elliot Shakarchi, Brooklyn, New York
Mr. Franklin H. Aghassi, New York.●



I was very surprised and delighted when going out of the Shemesh Synagogue in Tel Aviv I saw a copy of *The Scribe* relating the stories of the Baghdadi Khakhameem. I was born in Baghdad in 1933. My family left Baghdad in 1941 for Lebanon after Rashid Ali's Revolution during which my uncle Itshac Asher was killed. I lived in Beirut until 1985 and then left for Italy.

My grandfather Shaoul Toba was a well-known and respected person in Baghdad (whose mother was Toba El Helwa).

Even though we lived in Lebanon we maintained close relations with all Iraqi Jews living or transiting through Beirut and also continued to live in the frame of Jewish Iraqi traditions.

I would appreciate it if you would add my name to your mailing list and send me all the old copies.●

Milan, Italy Akram Darwish

Recently I saw a copy of *The Scribe* at a friend's. I read it from cover to cover and found it very enjoyable. Most importantly, it gives Jews of Iraqi origin a sense of identity and self respect. After all, Babylonian Jews were the first among Jewish communities in the world that made education free, that is, the teaching of the Torah should be given free to children with the support of the community. This was the origin of Beth Hamidrash and the Yeshiva of Babylon.●

Nepean, Ontario Sami Gurji Sourani

I congratulate you for editing and publishing *The Scribe*, which commemorates so many aspects of life of the Iraqi Jewish community and also for being the pioneer of fighting against discrimination in Israel.

This discrimination affects primarily Iraqi Jewish academicians who are prevented from studying, teaching or researching in Israeli universities. Most of them are thus obliged to go to American or European universities, while others, like myself, are obliged to accept a government job that does not really match their academic qualifications.

Thank you very much for contributing towards my book *Hebrew Alphabet: its Invention, Development and Transliteration*. The book deals with the invention and development of the 22 Hebrew characters from Hieroglyphic writing and also with alphabetic scripts developed from the Hebrew script, such as Greek, Latin and Arabic.

The book emphasizes the fact that the Iraqi pronunciation and appellation of Hebrew characters are the closest to the original ones.

Concerning the first alphabet, it is very reasonable – as you have mentioned – that it was invented by Hebrew tribes in Sinai in the period of Abraham, because most of the scientific sources mention that it was invented by Semitic tribes, at that period, and in Sinai; and also because before Abraham there was no alphabetic writing.●

Givat Zeev, Israel Dr. Yehezkel Shabath

FLAME – Facts and Logic About the Middle East – of San Francisco, is an organisation whose purpose is to expose false propaganda that might harm the United States and its allies in that area of the world.

In a recent advertisement entitled "Israel, the Arabs and Human Rights" it compared Israel's democracy with the despotic regimes of neighbouring Arab countries where mass executions and killings of civilians take place regularly.

I take this opportunity to extend my best regards to my ex-boss, Mr. N. Dangoor ●
Great Neck, N.Y. Benjamin Yehuda

In a subsequent letter Benjamin Yehuda writes:

I left Baghdad with the Aliyah of 1951 and lived in a camp with my wife for about three months. When my wife gave birth to our son David we left the camp to live with my brother-in-law in Ramat Gan until my flat was ready.

I worked with Barclays Bank which was amalgamated with Israel Discount Bank in 1972. I resigned in 1980 as a manager to join my three children who emigrated to the U.S.A.

My two sons survived the Yom Kippur

war by a miracle. The first was pulled from the engineering school at Hatechnion of Haifa to the front line of Ramat Hagolan without any ammunition and the second was sent to the front line at the Suez Canal.

Now I am in charge of the financial department of my son-in-law's auto parts store which is a well established business. My son David is in the jewellery business importing pearls from Japan and my son Ronnie is in construction. I am grandfather of five ●

B.Y.



Baghdad 1944 – Naim Dangoor and his partner the late Ahmed Safwat Alawa, directors of Eastern Commercial Corporation Limited, with their staff ●

Standing on the right, Nadhem Yacoub, now Benjamin Yehuda, (brother of Shawqi Dallal). Next to him is Eddie Rose, father of Patricia, 41, who married the richest man in America, 75-year-old John Kluge whose self-made wealth is now estimated at £4 billion. They have recently separated ●

I saw a copy of the magazine *The Scribe* recently and I would very much welcome the opportunity of being on your mailing list. My mother's family – Smouha – originated from Baghdad – indeed a family member was the Chief Rabbi of Baghdad.

My grandfather, Wing Commander E.R. Smouha, O.B.E. of Geneva, would also like to keep in touch with the news of the Iraqi community and if it is not going to be too much trouble he would also like to receive your journal ●

London W1 James Espir

Many, many thanks for publishing and sending me your excellent periodical. Although I am Ashkenazi (and I hope this does not sound patronising) I feel that *The Scribe* is doing a great deal to maintain awareness among Jews of oriental origin, of their culture, as well as being a source of information and great interest to all.

I think it's terribly important for everyone to uphold his/her family tradition. I feel a particular need to express this in the case of the "Babylonian" tradition as I have the "zehuth" to pray frequently at Ohel David Synagogue and consider the rendition on the Baghdadian *minhag* of service an essential ingredient of my Jewish life ●

London NW11 R. Rosten

A month or so ago I didn't know that *The Scribe* existed. Congratulations on the fine work you are doing. Quite by accident my brother-in-law James Shasha gave me his June 1990 copy. Imagine my surprise to find in the wedding photo most of the family of Percy Gourgey. Archie Gourgey, Percy's twin brother, now deceased, was a good friend of mine, also of my husband Frank Yamen Sasha.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would put us on your mailing list. I am a native born American of Iraqi descent. My husband is a U.S. citizen of Iraqi birth.

We have been residing in Argentina for the past 30 years. I am sure your journal brings joy and a sense of belonging to all your subscribers. Good luck and best wishes to you ●

Buenos Aires, Dorothy Battat de Shasha
Argentina

Thank you for including my name on your mailing list. I do identify myself closely with the subjects and people that your journal covers.

I am a Jew, born in Germany, of Polish parents, raised in Bolivia, educated in the United States, and make my home in Israel. At the same time I have been deeply concerned about my brethren, whatever their origin. Shana tova ●

Raanana, Israel Carl Redel (Eng)



Prince Philip with Pat Kluge ●

During my recent visit to the US, I happened to carry in my briefcase a copy of *The Scribe* which caught the attention of my sister-in-law, Mrs. Doris A. Koukou of Great Neck, N.Y. Being an avid reader she was totally absorbed by its fascinating contents and eventually expressed her earnest desire to be on your mailing list.

Many, many thanks in advance ●
Tel Aviv Haim E. Meer

I wish to congratulate you on the beautiful work you are doing with *The Scribe*. You have cultivated a most remarkable positive line of communication among Jews of Iraqi origin all over the world. It is a pleasure to leaf through your journal and see the variety of places the letters come from. Kol Hakavod! ●

Tel Aviv Mrs. Simha Horesh

I want to respond to the letter of Mr. Yusuf Meer of Montreal. Right wing Turkish politicians are asking for the return to Turkey of Mosul and Kirkuk. Kirkuklis speak Turkish at home and in their daily life.

The Ottoman empire lost the province of Mosul after WW1 to Iraq with the help of the British government, not on the battlefield ●

Brewster, N.Y. Dr. A. Sofair

My wife and I would be very happy if you include us in your circulation list.

We both left Iraq in 1971. In Iraq we knew very little about the history of Iraqi Jews. Your journal will surely fill the gap.

Very recently I got a copy of the very fresh book of Gourdj Bekhor, *Fascinating Life and Sensational Death*, about Iraqi Jews. A wonderful book ●

Tel Aviv Salman Sasson

Superstition among the Jews in Baghdad

Condensed from an article by Morris Cohen, English Master at the Alliance School, Baghdad, which appeared in the Annual Report of the Anglo-Jewish Association of 1895-96. (Sent by Rabbi Abraham Gubbay).

From the cradle to the grave, women wade through a maze of superstitions and unmeaning practices to which they attach the utmost importance, while they invariably disregard modern precepts for the preservation of health or the improvement of the heart and mind.

The most respected, and the most important men in the Jewish community, as well as all the spiritual leaders, are on the very same level in matters of superstition as the women themselves.

Marrried at the age of 12 to 14, and becoming mothers very soon after, a young girl is absorbed at once in all the cares and troubles of infant life, with its innumerable senseless precautions against the evil eye and its quack medicines.

If a woman thinks her husband does not love her sufficiently, she is recommended to wear a charm made up in a certain fashion. Charms and amulets are also employed to drive out devils, to prevent miscarriage, and many other things.

Fortune-tellers exist here in great numbers, some being held in repute, while others are looked upon as less skillful. One fortune-teller in particular has an office in a much frequented part of Baghdad. Every day, on my way to and from school, I find this fortune-teller very busy telling fortunes or preparing charms. His room is always full of men, women and children. He earns about £100 a year, at the very lowest computation.

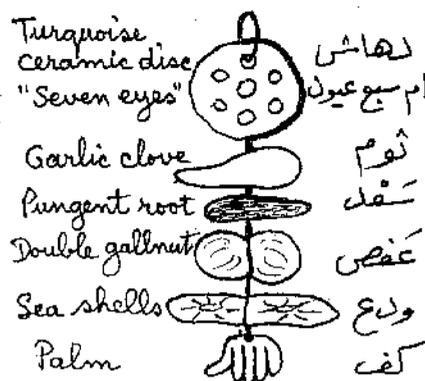
Some fortune-tellers go about the town dressed in a peculiar fashion, and call out, every now and then, "Fawwal, Fawwal," (فوقال فوقال) that is, "Fortune-teller". Of course they are often called in to be asked something about sterility or pregnancy, and in some instances they are asked about the welfare of absent friends. Their replies are treasured up as truths in many cases, and they are sent away with a few halfpence and many blessings. They occasionally perform a few conjuring tricks, which have been common in Europe for ages, and astonish their hearers and spectators in order to attract confidence in their marvellous powers, which they openly attribute to supernatural influence - that is to say, the influence of angels or devils.

No amount of argument will convince Jewish women here that there is really no harm in appearing before male strangers, and that it is perfectly ridiculous for them to run away and hide themselves as if in shame when gentlemen come into the house to speak to their husbands or fathers.

The Evil Eye (عين)

It is imagined that certain persons have the faculty of harming people by simply looking at them with an eye of jealousy. Thus, if a woman returning from a visit has a headache, loses an article of jewellery, or tears or spoils her dress in any way, she attributes it to the eye of one of the persons she has visited, and avoids them in future as dangerous people. If a person who

builds or repairs a house, or is known to have made good profits in business, becomes ill, or if anything happens to any member of the family, it is similarly attributed to someone's eye, and explained by saying that the unknown person is jealous of the other's good fortune, and has influenced him with his eye. In order, therefore, to be prepared against the attacks of the evil eye in all cases where it is supposed that there is some cause to excite jealousy, precautions are taken beforehand. Thus, when a new house is building, a gazelle's head is hung up in a conspicuous place in the court-yard to prevent the evil eye from acting in any way upon the building or the inmates. A small ornament made of straw is also hung up for the same purpose; and, similarly, a few flat beads of blue china are strung up together with some small sea-shells and a few double gall nuts (عصى). Blue china beads, sea-shells and double gall nuts are also sewn onto the children's hair and clothes for the same purpose, more especially in the case of the first-born, or when several children have died before the one surviving. The survivor is termed "a child of mourning or misfortune." (ولد عازة). Young animals, such as foals, calves, house-bred sheep, goats and asses, are similarly treated, so that no jealous person may annoy them with his eye. Native boats are also furnished with sea-shells and blue china to prevent them from sinking.



When a person who is not well known leaves a house after a visit, water is sometimes poured on the ground on his foot-steps after he has left, in order to counteract the effect of the person's eye upon the children of the house, especially if they are surviving children, or are considered pretty and likely to excite jealousy in the breast of the visitor. In addition to the water poured on the ground, some dust is taken from the threshold, moistened with a little water and smeared over the forehead and palms of the child or children to be saved from the eye (بد هجر). Often, too, an only surviving child is dressed in rags or old clothes begged from others, so that the eye may have no power over it.

A special form of evil influence, called **Kabssa** (كاسة) gives rise to a number of strange practices. **Kabssa** means "com-

ing unawares." If a person leaving a house where a woman has been confined wishes to go to another house where another woman has been confined, he or she must first cross the threshold of some other house, (بدس عبة) otherwise it is supposed that the woman in the second house will come under the influence of **Kabssa**, that is to say, she will either be unable to nurse the child, or become sterile in the future, or some other misfortune will happen to herself or her child. In order, therefore, that such accident may be prevented, all persons coming to a house where a woman has been confined within forty days, (نفاء) are questioned at the street door before they are allowed to enter the house, and are asked where they have just come from. If they have come direct from a house where another woman is within forty days after her confinement, or where a marriage is being celebrated, the person is not allowed to enter until he or she first crosses the threshold of some other house where there is neither marriage nor confinement. This practice is carried out very strictly indeed, and I have known many cases of persons leaving a house in which a marriage was being celebrated, and going into some house or other merely for the purpose of breaking the spell before going to their own homes, where a mother, wife or sister happened to be within forty days of her confinement.

When it so happens that neighbours have a confinement in their houses within forty days of each other, it is considered that even a cat passing on the roof from the one house to the other also carries with it the same baneful influence of **Kabssa** as a person, and in order to prepare beforehand for any such emergency, a certain practice is resorted to at once, and the passing of cats, birds, etc., from one house to another becomes quite harmless.

Looking at the face of corpses is considered very beneficial, and whenever a sterile woman hears of a person's death, she goes to the house to have a look at the face of the dead person. When a criminal is hanged or executed, great value is attached to pieces of the criminal's clothes, and money is freely paid to have such pieces brought to them. There is no limit to credulity here, as the following incident will show. A strong wind one day tore away an old trap-door from the roof of our school and carried it into the courtyard of a neighbouring house, fortunately without injuring anyone. It was soon rumoured that a door had fallen from heaven, and hundreds of persons crowded to the house to see it. Barren women rushed eagerly to see and touch the door from heaven, and it was only after two or three days that our trap-door was recognised as something earthly and finally restored to us.

Rabbis from Palestine often visit Baghdad to collect funds for themselves and charities in the Holy Land, and barren women are in the habit of applying to them for advice and remedies. It is quite a

A visit to Malta

by Elias Dangoor

Malta attracted a lot of attention during the last world war, and it is easy to know why, when you see the deep creeks of water which are ideal for the ships to take refuge in, especially when you realise that all the shores facing the island on the north and on the south were controlled by the Germans and that the nearest friendly shores were in Egypt and Gibraltar. Had it not been for the heroic defence displayed by the British, the Mediterranean sea would have been a safe lake for the Germans. Malta was awarded the George Cross after the war.

Malta was invaded in 800 BCE by the Phoenicians who used it to service their ships which dominated the trade at that time. Therefore the basic language is Lebanese mixed with Italian and English. The Arabs brought olive and palm trees to the Island.

In 60 CE, St. Paul and St. Luke were shipwrecked near Malta and had to stay there for three months, the result of which was that all the inhabitants became Christians.

When the Arabs invaded it in 870 CE, many Jews settled there and, being non-Muslims, had to pay taxes. The Christians pretended to be Muslims and avoided taxes. Now the population is almost totally Catholic. Napoleon invaded it and the British got him out and stayed there until recently.

My visit coincided with that of the Pope.



The writer in Valetta. The banner reads: *Qalb wahda maal-Papa* - We are all one heart with the Pope

All the streets were lined for hours by people to catch a glimpse of him, and banners welcoming him were everywhere. The Pope went to a tiny island where St. Paul landed, to bless a statue of Christ while being sunk in shallow water to protect the fishermen. In that same spot we went on a boat which has a lower deck with glass windows, to see the thick plants on the sea floor, and so much fish. We saw a



Robin Zebaida, grandson of Violet Shamash, who recently gave an excellent solo piano concert, *An Evening with Liszt*, lasting two hours, which he played entirely from memory, to a large and appreciative audience.

The concert was held at the historic setting of Apsley House, Hyde Park Corner, home of the Duke of Wellington, whose postal address is simply - No. 1 London

Daide Sala honoured

During his stay in June, Dr. Davide S. Sala was awarded the Solomon Bublick Prize, which is one of the two prestigious prizes the Hebrew University awards every few years.

The prize is given for a lifetime dedicated to the well-being of the Jewish people and the State of Israel, alternately to an Israeli and to a personality from abroad.

Some former recipients of the Solomon Bublick Prize are: David Ben-Gurion, President Harry Truman, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, Judge Edward S. Silver, Michael Sacher.

Dr. Sala writes: "It came as a very great surprise to me to be honoured with such a prestigious award, especially as I have not contributed anything to the Hebrew University for some time, although it is true I rendered them some services every now and then"

fish cater close to a school of fish without being noticed!

Churches, full of arts and splendour, are almost the only old edifices worth seeing. Most interesting is Mosta where a German bomb fell through its dome, during the last world war, but failed to explode. That bomb is now on display.

It was amazing to see the amount of bones of elephants and hippos in Ghar Dalam (the cave of darkness).

The old capital is called Mdina, another town in the west is called Gharb. Two small islands are called Kemmauna and Filfla.

Malta is basically a rock island with shallow sediment. It therefore has large patches without plants, and practically all the buildings are of stone.

The British are well-liked and respected, with many of them living there.

The weather was good, and it was a pleasant and relaxed holiday

Bad debts

There was a time in the sixties when everything was going up and interest rates were low. A man's importance was measured by the size of his overdraft. But nowadays prices have generally stabilised and interest rates have soared so that it no longer pays to depend on borrowed money. Many businesses are going under by the weight of their debts.

We publish below an exhortation to the Baghdadian community in Arabic written in Hebrew characters 70 years ago on the dangers of going into debt and advising people to be thrifty and careful in their spending habits. It quotes Scott who said that a man who earns £20 and spends £19 is well-off; but another who earns £20 and spends £21 is in trouble.

It advises people to spend not more than ten per cent of their income on accommodation; 25 per cent on food; ten per cent on the wife and children.

Being in debt is a bad habit and should be avoided as much as possible

הודו 4 דאודייה

הון מהקל ימעט וקובץ עליך ירבה
(משל י' י')

כיס המלא יבירא חולה. ישמין כחוש וזיוק רפה :
אך הסרוט מכה קשה. לא תועיל בה חכמת רופא

א אנסאן ינהד יקות נפשו כמגב תמכרתו :
מסער דאך א רגל אדי יסלך פי אווואלדו א
דאכלייה כמגב אקדארדו ולם תדאין מן אחד
ול דין אתקל כל תקיל ויקולן אהל א מל" אל
דין עמאת א עין אידא תעודו א אנסאן דאהו א
עדה א מהמטה. יתעצעץ פתור ויגלוב לא א
שאת א מדני אדי יסבב לרו אן יביע כל מא ימלכרו
נבריי לים אכתיאייין ויצבב הליף א פק. אף
א שקא. ימר דודו לא א ביר יתשפה מן אם א
נעי. יבכי מן קלת א מוגוד.

אש נכרך איידא א אנסאן ען כל דאך לו תראעי
שרוט א תרכי! ותנפץ ען נפסך ג'באר אל
תפאר וי סבאדאט! ותצרה פי קצא לוואמך
אקל מן תמכרך! אולא מן וקיעך פי א דין אתי
די אמר א חלאט ואצעבא. שוף איידא אל
אנסאן אן א עאם יקולן איראד ומצרה ומא יקולן
מצרה ואיראד יעני א אנסאן לאום ישוף איראדו
ובקדין יערה ולאום עליך אן לא תסכן פי מחל
אמיד מן עשר איראדך ולא תאפל אה תרכיבן
רבע איראדך. ולא תשתרי מטלובאט זונגתך
ואוולאדך אה כל עשר מן איראדך. ובדאך
תדאון אווקאטך. ואידא לם תואון וקתך תפון
נתגתך דוגייה. והנא נגנחך אן לא תפון פתיר א
אנקיידא לראי א נסא פי מלכאתהן וכל כץ אידא
שפת מנהן א מיל לא א תבדיר ולם יקרון א
עוואקב. ולם יצרון א מסתקבל: קא ספות אל
רוואאי א אנגליוו בלסאן אהר אשכאן רוואייתו
רגל מחצולדו א סנוי 2 פאון ומצטרדו 2 פאון
אה שלן ואחד. וגי'דרו דכלדו א סנוי 2 פאון
וברנדו 2 פאון ושלן ואחד. פמא אל פק
ביינעמא? א אוול יקודו א אקתצאד לא דייער
א סקאדת. וי תאני יגרהו אמראפוט לא האוויית
א סקא וי עואב. ונהאיית א קיל עליך אן תפון
כציד פי אמרף. חלים פי א תערף פי אמרף.
לא ככיל ותנפרה ותגום. ולא פרים ותוקע פי א
אפלאם. ולאכן ביר א אמר אווסמטה.

COOKERY CORNER

by Alice Shashou

Lentil Soup

Ingredients:

1lb red lentils
3 onions
3 leeks
3 sticks celery
3 cloves garlic
2 chicken stock cubes
3 pints water
Salt and pepper to taste
Cumin powder
Croûtons

coarsely chopped

Method:

Overnight soak the lentils in a large bowl and cover with cold water. Next day, place in a sieve and rinse under the cold tap until the water runs clear.

In a large saucepan, sauté the onions, leeks, celery and garlic in the oil. Do not brown.

Add lentils, water and stock cubes and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the lentils are tender – it takes about 1 hour.

In a blender, purée until smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste. Adjust to desired thickness by adding more boiling water if needed.

Mix cumin powder with a little soup until blended, then add to the soup.

Serve with croûtons●

Ka'ak Asmar

Ingredients:

1½lbs plain white flour
1½lbs whole wheat flour (not too dark)
2 sachets yeast (Harvest Gold easy blend dried yeast mixes directly with dry flour)
¾ cup Mazola oil
1 level tablespoon salt
2 tablespoons fennel powder
About 3½ cups of tepid water or a little more

Method:

In a large bowl, mix together flour, salt, fennel powder and yeast. Rub in the Mazola oil. Mix all ingredients. Gradually add tepid water and mix and knead to a soft, smooth dough which does not stick to the sides of the bowl. (The dough should be very soft).

Heat the oven 1 minute only. Cover the bowl with a dampened cloth and place it in the oven until the dough nearly doubles in size. Punch the dough down and knead again for a few minutes.

Repeat.

Take lumps of dough the size of a small tangerine (according to the size you wish to have).

Oil the palm of your hand and roll them and bring the ends together and press them firmly against each other to make bracelets.

Brush the tops with lightly beaten eggs, using a pastry brush.

Place the *Ka'aks* on an oiled baking sheet, spacing them and allowing them to rest and rise again in a warm place.

Bake the *Ka'ak* in a preheated oven 350°F 180C gas mark 4 for a few minutes or until a pale golden colour●

A variation of Patcha

The following are the ingredients for 1 *Patcha* but you can make as many as you need.

Take 2 breasts of spring lamb with the fat and bones already removed by the butcher. Sew the 2 pieces of meat together, leaving an opening for stuffing.

Stuffing Ingredients:

1 cup rice, soaked; ½lb finely cut meat, but not minced; 2 tomatoes, cut with the skin; 1 tablespoon tomato paste; ½ teaspoon mixed spices.

Mix the above ingredients and stuff the meat pocket loosely, allowing for the expansion of the rice. Boil the stuffed ribs once and throw away the water.

In a pan put 1 small chopped onion, 2 small tomatoes cut with their skin, 1 carrot, 1 celery stick, 1 teaspoon tomato paste, put the stuffed ribs on top and cover with water, adding a little salt. Simmer on low fire until the water disappears and it browns nicely. It takes about 4 hours or more. Add more water if not cooked enough.

Remove the thread before serving●

Kebab or Shefta

Ingredients:

1lb finely ground beef or lamb with the fat
1 big grated onion
½ cup finely chopped parsley
1 tablespoon bread crumbs (some use a slice of bread, crust removed and soaked in water then squeezed)
Salt
Pepper (optional)
Pinch mixed spices (optional)

Method:

Mix above ingredients very well, including the juice of the onion. Cover and place in fridge for 30 minutes.

Make individual long cylinder shapes around a skewer pressing firmly with wet hands.

Grill the *Kebab* over a hot broiler or over charcoal, turning them until browned on all sides. It should be *moist*. Serve immediately.

You can make a *laffa* (sandwich) with pitta bread. Open and fill it with *Kebab*, tomato salad, parsley, turshi or mango pickle. It is very delicious!●

Mekhalela or pickled turnips

Ingredients:

4lbs small white turnips
2-3 small beetroots
About 8 cups water. It should fill the jar
6 level tablespoons salt
1 carrot

Method:

Boil the water with the salt. Let it cool. Wash the turnips and carrot and dry. Cut off the top and make a cross as if cutting in four, but they should stay whole. Do not peel them.

Place them in a jar and fill to the top of the container. Close it tightly and leave in the kitchen for 3 days.

Peel and thinly slice the beetroots placing them between the layers of turnips and also on the top. The red colour of the beetroots will give the turnips and water a lovely dark pinkish colour and also a

delicious taste. The *Mekhalela* should be ready in about 7-10 days. When ready, keep in fridge.

Note: Only the turnips are eaten.

To serve with a sweet and sour taste:

Cut turnips into thin slices. Place in a bowl, mix some of the pink liquid with some lemon juice and date syrup. Taste and adjust. Pour over the sliced turnips. Leave in fridge for 1-2 days to get the taste●

Tips

When beating eggs for a cake, add a little hot water, it makes the cake lighter.

Use a smear of vaseline and a soft cloth to clean up patent shoes and handbags.

When frying with butter or margarine, add a little oil in order not to burn the butter.

When making *kibbi bel siniyah*, if there is excessive shrinking from the sides of the pan, not enough burghul was used.

Tarts: To prevent a tart sticking to the bottom of the baking tin, dip the bottom of the tin in a little cold water as soon as you take it out of the oven.

Fish oils help to protect against heart attacks and angina. It helps make the blood less liable to clot. Fish oil is found in red mullet, mackerel, herring and salmon. There's much less in white fish.

Olive oil can actually reduce the cholesterol level in the blood and is a good source of Vitamin E. Never use olive oil for deep frying.

The best quality olive oil comes from the first or "cold pressing", meaning no heat or water is used when the olives are squeezed. It is low in acidity and called "extra virgin". "Virgin" oils will have a slightly higher acid content. "Pure" olive oil is produced from the pulp of previous pressings.

How to murder a recipe

(not by Alice Shashou)

Alice Shashou prepares her recipes with love, dedication, respect for tradition and attention to detail. Those who are fortunate to be entertained at the home of Alice and Saim Shashou can testify that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. *Sefra daima*.

I know a frustrated husband whose wife continues to find new wrong ways of doing things. He was obliged to put a notice in the kitchen for her attention that says: **WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, PLEASE FOLLOW DIRECTIONS.**

For perfect results our published recipes should be worked out meticulously. Not to use patna instead of basmati rice or substitute haddock for bass fish; not to grill when you are required to fry or boil when you are supposed to steam. If you find some dishes contain too much oil or fat, then eat less of it rather than spoil the recipe. Salt and sugar are often essential for the success of the dish and must not be tampered with casually●

My wife does wonderful things with leftovers – she throws them out.

No matter if your food is dry or oily, it looks much better when placed on a doily●

State of Israel Bonds

The State of Israel Bonds held on 22 November a Salute Dinner and Award Giving Ceremony at the Synagogue and Hall of the Jewish Preparatory School in Kilburn to honour nine personalities "for their extraordinary devotion and dedication to the strengthening of Israel's economy and their life-long work for the Jewish people." The Guest of Honour was Mr. Moshe Nissim, M.K., of Iraqi origin, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and Trade who, with the charming Mrs. Nissim, flew in especially from Israel for the occasion.

Present were H.E. Yoav Biran, Israel Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, Chief Rabbi Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, and Rabbi Dr. Abraham Levy, Communal Rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation and Honorary Principal of the School, who made the welcoming address.

Those honoured of our community were: Messrs. Menahem Baroukh, Naim Dangoor, Uri David, George Elias, Salim Soffair, Victor Tchenguiz.

The others were: Messrs. Martin Boston, Dr. David Khalili, Willie Nagel.

Mr. Moshe Nissim told the audience of 400 Israeli Bond supporters that especially because of the Gulf crisis and the Russian Aliyah, Israel has to rely more and more on borrowing from her own people and friends. The Bonds are not a charity but a sound investment at favourable commercial rates, paying prompt dividends.

To the question of what security investors have for these Bonds, one speaker quoted Golda Meir who replied: Our children are your security!

The Minister then presented the annual "Moses on Mount Sinai" awards to the nine honorees and to the hosts - Sir David Alliance, Mr. Sami Shamon and Dr. Davide Sala. Because of the lengthy speeches, the buffet dinner, which was scheduled for 8.30 started at 10 o'clock.

The caterers were the Dizengoff Restaurant of Golders Green and the total cost of £15,000 was covered by the hosts and other friends of the Bonds.

Mr. Gideon Selinger, Managing Director of the State of Israel Bonds in the U.K., said he was pleased with the outcome of the function and that the nine honorees pledged over one million pounds●

Dear Naim,

I am writing to you on behalf of Deputy Prime Minister Moshe Nissim to thank you for the central part you have played in our State of Israel Bonds Sephardi Salute Dinner and Award Giving Ceremony on 22 November 1990. You were one of the first to recognise the importance of Bonds and you have always encouraged others to follow your example - *Kol Ha'Kavod*.

These days when the prophet Jeremiah's prophecy fulfils itself: "Behold I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth . . . a great company shall return thither . . ." (Jeremiah 31,8).

Israel needs people like you on her side.

As you know, I am an enthusiastic reader of *The Scribe*, together with my colleague Freddie Knoler and together with many Ashkenazim who became so close to the wonderful Iraqi community through *The Scribe*.

State of Israel Bonds were the first to recognise the importance of the Babylonian Jewry and it was General Yehuda Halevi and Colonel Arik Ezuz, our former directors, whose footsteps I now follow.

Bless you for your wonderful work for Israel and the community.

State of Israel Bonds
London

Gideon Selinger
Managing Director



The Jewish Preparatory School choir who sang Israeli songs at the function.



Messrs. Naim Dangoor, Menahem Baroukh, Percy Gourgey and Minister Moshe Nissim.



Dr. Davide Sala, Mr. Sami Shamon, Minister Nissim, Sir David Alliance.



Mr. Menahem Baroukh, Mr. Naim Dangoor, Mr. Uri David, Mr. George Elias.



Dr. David Khalili, Mr. Willie Nagel, Mr. Salim Soffair, Mr. Victor Tchenguiz.