

Whenever crimes are committed in the name of a terrorist movement, be it Nazi or IRA, it is useless to look for the individual culprits.

The whole movement must be held responsible and punished accordingly.

The SCRIBE

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WISHING ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY HANUCAH AND A PROSPEROUS 1993

We too must join the peace talks

by Naim Dangoor

nothing has been said about the billions in private Jewish property which were simply confiscated by the Arab regimes. The fact that the Jewish refugees no longer constitute 'a problem' is in marked contrast to the refusal of the wealthy Arab states to lift a finger for Arab refugees. But Israel has been woefully remiss in bringing these facts to the world's attention. In this, Likud-led cabinets were no better than those led by Labour. [This negligence cost Likud the last general election. - N.E.D.]

"Nothing puts the Arab-Israeli conflict in perspective better than a full examination of the history of the refugee problem. Nothing makes clearer who wants peace in the region and who has promoted misery, hopelessness and terror. If the Arabs have truly changed, if they now really want to live in peace, they can best prove it by evincing a balanced approach to the refugee problem.

"Moreover, without resettlement of refugees - both those living in Israel and the administered territories, and those in the surrounding countries - all talk of ending terrorism and bringing stability to the region is futile".

The above prompted our Moshe Kahtan to write to the *Jerusalem Post*:

"Your Editorial Comment has finally hit the nail on the head. It may have taken Moses 40 years to bring the Jews to the Land of Israel, but it has certainly taken longer to recognise and to print the fundamentals of the problem in the succinct manner that you offered your readers. Successive Israeli governments regrettably only wanted to admit our claims on Arabs in private and ignore them in public. Israel must set its priorities right by tackling not only what it is ready to offer to the Arabs, but also what it must claim and obtain from them in order to achieve a just and reciprocal peace rather than a one-sided surrender".

Thus, in a private memorandum submitted to the Bush administration, Israel stressed that the area of lands and real estate that Jews left behind in Arab countries nearly equals the area of Palestine. It is ironic that we only learned of this document not from Israeli sources but from an Arabic daily published in London.

But the PLO continues to increase its demands. It now wants official recognition as the sole negotiator on behalf of the Palestinians, and that the "right of return" must be on the agenda. If the Rabin government is true to form, it will be persuaded to make further concessions.

When the Madrid Middle East peace conference was being convened 15 months ago, I let it be known to the Shamir Government that the Israeli delegation should include Jews from Arab countries, especially those not living in Israel, who have claims on the Arabs that exceed Palestinian demands. The Prime Minister's office replied: "Since we have denied diaspora Palestinians to attend, it would be wrong to include in our delegation a representative of Jews from Arab lands who live outside Israel."

But since the Rabin administration has been forced into office by the \$10 billion loan carrot, things have changed dramatically. Even without a clear mandate, the Labour Government has been making sweeping concessions to the Palestinians. After a snap visit by the Egyptian foreign minister to Jerusalem on behalf of the PLO, Israel agreed to allow diaspora Palestinians to participate in the peace talks.

Thereupon I sent the following FAX to whom it may concern in Jerusalem: "Now that diaspora Palestinians can join the peace process, it is only right that Jews from Arab lands, not living in Israel, should also be allowed to join in the negotiations, and submit their claims on their countries of origin. We can field a formidable team to represent half a million Jewish refugees from Arab countries living outside Israel".

The *Jerusalem Post* published my letter, and followed it up by an eloquent editorial in which it stated: "To consider only the Arab refugees as victims of the Arab-Israeli wars is not only asymmetrical, it is offensive and unjust. If the government agrees to the representation of Palestinians living abroad, it must insist that Jewish refugees from Arab countries who are now living abroad are also represented.

"The world seems to have forgotten that the number of Jews forced to leave Arab countries as a result of the Arab-initiated conflict was larger than the number of Arabs who left Israel, and the property they left behind was vastly more valuable. And while the Palestinian Arabs' claim of ancient ancestry in Palestine is propagandistic nonsense and historically baseless, the Jews of Iraq, Syria and North Africa had indeed lived in those areas for hundreds of years before the Islamic conquest.

"Moreover, the Arabs who left Israel did so in the heat of war. The Jews left Arab countries because repression imperiled their lives. Since then, much fuss has been made over Jewish settlements on 'Arab lands' but

The last I heard from Jerusalem is that my suggestion is being considered by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. It is, however, possible that, all along, Israeli governments want to use our claims merely to off-set Palestinian material claims on Israel. If the Israel Government thus wants to swallow up the rights of Jews from Arab countries who immigrated to Israel, there can be no justification to apply the same approach to those Jews who did not go to Israel.

Moreover, Iraq must not be allowed to escape its obligations in a peace settlement.

بين حانة وبين حانة يا منى ضاعت حانان

Between Hana and Mana we have lost our heard!●

Middle East Confederation and the Kurdish Problem

Turkey, Iran and Syria are opposing autonomy for the Kurds in Iraq in case this move would affect the Kurds of these three countries. But you can't swallow up for ever the rights of 20 million Kurds in this day and age.

The problem of the Kurds antedates that of the Palestinians, and both have their roots in the cruel dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire after WWI, with the Arabs getting all the lands. The Middle East peace process must be broadened to include all the trouble spots and the problems of the region.

A regional confederation is the answer, in which the traditional Turco-Jewish friendship whose 500th anniversary was recently celebrated, can play an important part.

The Palestinians, who now appear as the antagonists of the Israelis, would, in a confederation, become their allies. They are the most educated of the Arabs and have acquired in their contact with Israelis much experience and a wider outlook.

It is noteworthy that a Jordanian Senator, Said Al Tal, has recently called for a regional federation but he wants to keep it exclusively Arab. This selfish attitude on the part of the Arabs has been the cause of the turmoil in the area for the last 75 years●

I feel greatly privileged to receive your exquisitely written bulletin. Not only I but teachers, fellow-students, friends and relatives (whom I give xeroxed copies) are equally awed●

New York

Elvera Herbstman

The Jews of Iran

by Israel Ambassador Dr Moshe Yegar

Part I

The origins of the Jewish community in Persia date back to the deportation of the Israelites in the time of Tiglat Pileser III (727 BCE) from Samaria, and again in the time of Sargon II of Assyria (705 BCE) and of his son Sennacherib (681 BCE) and the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar (586 BCE). In his famous "Cyrus Declaration" (538 BCE), King Cyrus of Persia allowed the Jews to return to Judea and rebuild the Temple. However, many of them preferred to remain in the diaspora. Those remaining exiles can be regarded as the nucleus of the permanent Jewish diaspora which gradually expanded from the centres of Babylon to the interior of Persia. Favoured by the tolerant attitude of the rulers towards their Jewish subjects, such personalities as Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Mordechai and Esther emerged and even played a leading role at the royal Persian court.¹

The conquest of independent Persia by the Arab Muslims in 642 and the replacement of Zoroastrianism with Islam as the state religion, transformed the status of the Jews and other minority groups into that of second-class subjects. It also ushered in a period during which Persian Jewry split into sectarian divisions, including the Karaite movement, which, although initiated in the Babylonian centres, was led mainly by Jews of Persian birth and background. Persia became a major Karaite centre and Karaite communities continued to exist well into the sixteenth century.²

Between 645 and 1258, there developed in Persia the Shi'a movement – a combination of Islam and extreme Persian religious nationalism. The Jews became *dhimmi* – a tolerated minority, in return for payment of the *jizya* fee. The Jews lived within a framework of discriminating and humiliating laws which were imposed on the non-Muslim population. For the most part, they did not suffer too much in the days of the Umayyad Caliphs, as well as during the reign of the first Abbasid Caliphs.

The Geographical Setting

The status of *dhimmi* allowed the Jews freedom of movement and settlement within the Islamic realm. During the first six centuries of Islamic rule over Persia, the Jewish Diaspora underwent great expansion and a remarkable geographical diffusion into all the provinces of Persia and beyond.

Economic Activities of the Jews

Persian Jews were engaged in many branches of artisanship and handicraft; weavers, dyers, gold and silversmiths, and also as merchants and shopkeepers, jewelers, wine manufacturers, dealers in spices and antiquities. Due to the imposition of heavy land taxes, their share in agriculture declined greatly. When Baghdad became the capital of the Abbasid caliphate (762) a fundamental change occurred in the economic stratification of Babylonian-Persian Jewry. With the ever-increasing urbanization of the Islamic east and the development of trade and commerce on an international scale, a wealthy class of Jewish merchants emerged in the leading centres

of the Diaspora, such as Baghdad, Ahwaz, Isfahan and Shiraz.

From the tenth century on, Jewish merchants began to participate in banking and moneylending and to play a leading role as financial experts and bankers in the service of the caliphs and their viziers. They carried out financial transactions such as the administration of deposits, remittance of funds from place to place through the medium of *sustaja* ("letter of credit") – a still widely-used instrument of the prevailing credit economy – and supplying loans for the caliphs, their viziers, their courts, and their army commanders.

The 13th-16th centuries

During those centuries, the Jewish community expanded. Jews arrived in the wake of Muslim conquests.

An important change took place during the Mongol era (the Ilkhan dynasty 1258-1336), and at the end of the Abbasid dynasty. The discrimination between Muslims and non-Muslims (e.g. Jews and Christians) was stopped and Jews began to participate even in the political life of the times. Some of them attained prominent positions, like Sa'ad e-Dawla Ben-Moshe (1284-1291) and Rashid e-Dawla (the beginning of the 14th century). Eventually both aroused jealousy. The first was assassinated and the second forced to convert to Islam.

The position of the Jews in Persia deteriorated when the country was conquered by Timur-Lang (Tamerlane). The authorities showed intolerance and the masses were fanatic. The Jewish communities of Isfahan and Shiraz suffered the most.

During the Ilkhans period, literature in a Jewish-Persian dialect started to appear. Most of it was translations from the Old Testament, dictionaries, liturgy based on the Scriptures (*Piyyutim*), and Rabbinic interpretive commentaries. The poet Shahn Shirazi (14th century) was the most important literary personality of that time. The number of Jews living in Persia then was estimated at 30,000.

The 16th-19th centuries

In 1502, Persia was again ruled by intolerant Shi'ism, when the Saffavid dynasty came to power. It lasted until 1736. Jews and Christians were considered "defiled". Discriminatory laws against them were scrupulously observed. From this time onwards we begin to witness a steady decline of the Jewish community in Persia. The population dwindled and its economic conditions deteriorated significantly. Jews were excluded from senior positions in the administration, and they suffered almost a total cultural collapse. The situation improved temporarily during the reign of Shah Abbas I (1588-1629) but worsened again soon after. The second half of the 17th century was particularly difficult. An effort was made to force Jews to carry a "badge of shame" on their clothes and to wear special headgear. In 1622, the Jewish community of Isfahan, the capital,

was forced to convert to Islam. Persecution increased during the reign of Abbas II (1642-1662). In 1656, most of the Jews of Persia were forced to convert and synagogues were closed, but many continued to observe Judaism in secrecy, in spite of the strict supervision (quite similar to what the Jewish communities of Spain and Portugal had experienced some two centuries earlier). There are historical records of that period documented by Persian Jews, as well as accounts written by European travellers.

In 1661 a *fatwa* was issued which allowed the Jews to openly practice their faith in return for a variety of payments and the wearing of a "badge of shame". Many seized the opportunity and emigrated to other countries.

The situation of the Jewish community did not improve much under the rulers that followed Abbas II. The influence of a Shi'a priesthood remained dominant. In 1678, a number of Jews were executed. Christians were persecuted too, but not to the same extent because Pope Clement X and European governments interceded on their behalf. The Jews had no protector.

During the reign of Husein Safi (1694-1722) and later, Persia experienced internal difficulties: rebellions by Afghan tribes and Ottoman invasions. These upheavals caused great difficulties to the Jewish community.³

The situation improved somewhat when, at the end of the Safavid dynasty, Na'fir Shah came to power in 1736. He expelled the invading Afghans and expanded his kingdom. Being a Sunni, he showed some religious tolerance, abolished the discriminatory laws and weakened the authority of the Shi'a clergy.⁴ In 1747 he was assassinated. Disorder prevailed in the country until 1794. The situation of the Jews deteriorated as it always did in conditions of instability. The discriminatory regulations were again enforced. Heavy payments and fines were imposed upon them.

The Qajjar dynasty came to power in 1794 and remained until 1925. This was an especially difficult period in the history of the Jewish community of Persia. Shortly after the ascent of the new dynasty, hundreds, and maybe thousands, of Jews were massacred in Tabriz in northern Persia. The reason was a blood-libel. The influence of the Shi'a clergy dominated and the situation of Jews (and Christians) was extremely difficult throughout the 19th century which was characterized by an uninterrupted sequence of persecution, oppression and discrimination. Many Jews were forced to convert. The most widely-known case was the forced conversion in 1839 of the whole Jewish community of Mesh'had (during the reign of Muhammad Shah – 1835-1848). It happened on the *Ashura* day. The incited mobs emerged from the mosques, entered the Jewish quarter and killed, looted and raped. 32 Jews were murdered and the rest were forced to accept Islam if they wanted their lives spared. Those forced converts became known as *Jedid-i Islam* (new Muslims). However, most of them continued to

preserve their Jewish tradition in secrecy. They circumcised their sons and married among themselves as much as possible. Some of them managed to leave Iran through neighbouring Afghanistan and returned openly to Judaism. During the 20th century most of the *Mes'h'hedis* left Persia and settled in Israel. Others went to the USA and to Europe.

To be continued ●

1534. The greatest of all Ottoman rulers, Suleiman I, the Magnificent (1520-1566), took Baghdad from Shah Tahmasp I.

1623. Abbas I retakes Baghdad.

1638. Sultan Murad IV reconquers Baghdad. His army of 100,000 contained 10,000 Jews.

1655. Shabbetai Zvi proclaimed Messiah.

1666. Shabbetai Zvi converts to Islam. ●



Ambassador Dr. Moshe Yegar and his wife Dr. Dvorah Yegar

Dr. Moshe Yegar joined the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1956 and was posted to Bucharest, Rangoon, Kuala Lumpur; was Consul in Los Angeles, Consul-General in Philadelphia and in New York and was Ambassador in Stockholm (1988-1990). He is now Deputy Director-General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in charge of Asia, Oceania and Africa ●

My father, Salim Mahlab, receives several copies of *The Scribe* and always puts one aside for me. It is a terrific publication.

In the July 1992 issue there was a poem entitled "Mother's Advice". I enjoyed reading it, but did not care for the response that followed in the October 1992 issue, entitled "Ode to Sandra".

Therefore I have written a poem in response entitled "Ode to N.M." Perhaps N.M. would see the lighter side of Sandra Khadhouri's poem.

New York Nanette Mahlab

Ode to N.M.

Your sense of humour is surely lacking,
Since your response was overly hacking.

Sandra's poem was quite amusing,
It did not warrant your abusing.

Some of her points were very true,
And it was silly to misconstrue.

Can't you take it nice and light,
And enjoy the poem without a fight.

Things have changed since our parents' time,
We're not the same, but we don't mind.

We are a mix of both present and past,
And may not get married quite so fast.

Our culture is special, it is true;
But we all may not end up with an Iraqi Jew ●

Notes by Naim Dangoor:

1. At the height of its expansion, the Persian empire extended from the Nile to the Indus. The empire was divided into enormous self-administered satrapies. Judah belonged to the Satrapy "Beyond the River" (Abar-Nahara) which extended from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. Darius III lost the empire to Alexander the Great in 330 BCE.

Under the Parthian dynasty (249 BCE-226 CE) there were large numbers of Jews in every city. Josephus refers to the Jews beyond the Euphrates as "an immense multitude and not estimated by numbers."

The Babylonian Talmud is a product of Babylonian Jewry in the Sassanid period (226-642). It was completed in 499. At about that time the Mazdakites took over the Persian government and started persecuting the Jews on religious grounds. Mazdak presented himself as a reformer, teaching that since men were born equal, private property and marriage were human inventions. Supported by the masses, the Mazdakites proceeded to share out the wealth and the women of the upper classes.

The Jews were forbidden to practice their religion, carry out *shechita* or light Sabbath candles. The Babylonian Exilarch proclaimed independence that lasted seven years. The revolt was crushed and the fortunes of the Jewish community reached a low ebb. Constant warfare between Rome and Persia sapped their energies and the Jews of Babylon, who numbered about one million, turned their attention to the Arabs in Arabia and helped them to emerge as a force to be reckoned with, united, in due course, under the banner of Islam, itself modelled on Judaism.

The Jews invited the Arabs to come over, and gave them immense help, both financial and military, in their conquest of the region. They also helped in organising their administration and shaping their religious doctrines. The Caliph and the Exilarch Bostanai became brothers-in-law. Two daughters of the defeated Persian King Khosroes II were taken prisoner by the advancing Moslem forces. Omar married one of the princesses and offered the other one to the Jewish Exilarch.

2. An earlier sectarian movement was initiated during the Umayyad caliphate by a Persian Jew called Abu Isa. He proclaimed himself messiah and advocated fundamental changes in Jewish ritual and prayer, acknowledging Moses, Jesus and Mohammed as true prophets. The movement continued after his death. Babylonian Jewry made their influence felt on the Persian communities by controlling their education, and by exercising their prerogative of appointing *dayyanim* (judges) and rabbis for them.

3. Brief reference is made in the article to the condition of the Jews under Abbas I and Abbas II. In a book written at the end of the latter's reign, which we discovered at the Public Records Office in London, the events of that period are given in detail. The book is by John Evelyn and was printed in 1669 in London.

It starts by saying that Shah Abbas I (the Great), realising that the most urgent requirement for Persia was increased population and economic ties with the outside world, encouraged the immigration of foreigners – merchants, settlers and artisans – granting them freedom of religion and special privileges.

Many Jews came over in the process, and apparently grew rich by their industry. Their enemies tried to devise ways of getting rid of them but the Shah would not introduce discriminatory laws against the Jews in case it would alarm the others.

In the end the religious leaders claimed that there was a provision in the Koran requiring the Jews to convert to Islam within 600 years after the promulgation of that religion. Armed with this *fatwa*, the Shah ordered all Jewish leaders and rabbis to appear before his tribunal, requiring them to change their faith. The terrified Jews told the emperor that they were not allowed to change their religion until the arrival of their expected messiah, who would by his miraculous power deliver them from their oppressors and subdue all the world to his obedience.

The Sophy (Shah) then asked them when this messiah was due to arrive. Their reply was that they didn't know! This was rejected by the Shah and he asked them to set a date, promising that he would protect them for the time they should assign. After a long deliberation, they came back with the answer that according to their books and prophecies the expected messiah would appear in 70 years, hoping that either the matter would be forgotten then or that they all would be dead anyway.

The book continues: The Emperor accepts of the Answer, and immediately causes it to be Recorded in form of a solemn Stipulation between them. That in case there were no news of their Messiah within the Seventy years assign'd (to which, of Grace, he added five more) they should either turn Mahumetans, or their whole Nation utterly be destroyed throughout Persia, and their substance confiscated: but with this clause also inferred. That if their Messiah did Appear within that Period, the Emperor would himself be obliged to become a Jew, and make all his subjects so with him. This instrument drawn, was reciprocally sign'd and seal'd and the Jewes for the present dismissed; with the payment yet of no less than two Million of Gold for the favour of this long indulgence.

Seventy years passed during which the Persians have been so molested by the Turks, and by continual Warr in the East Indies, &c, 'till by Accident this Writing was found. Upon this the Sophy, Abbas II, summons a Council and requires their advice, what was to be done and the rather, for that there began now to be great Whispers, and some Letters had been written to them from Merchants out of Turkey, of the motions of a pretended Messiah, which was the famous Sabatai. The Emperor and his Council immediately conclude upon the destruction of the Jews, and that this wicked generation of Impostors and Oppressors of his people were no longer to be indured upon the Earth.

Proclamations are issu'd out and published to the people, and to all that were Strangers and Inhabitants amongst them, to fall immediately upon the Jews in all the Persian Dominions, and to put to the Sword Man, Woman and Child, except such as should forthwith turn to the Mahumetan Belief: and to seize on their Goods and Estates without any remorse or pity.

Happy was he that could escape the fury of the enraged people, now more encouraged by the dwindling of their pretended Messiah. Nor did the Persecution cease for several years, beginning from about 1663 till 1666 at Ispahan and through the whole Empire. And in truth this late Action and Miscarriage of their pretended Messiah has rendered them so universally despicable that nothing but a determined obstinacy could possibly continue them in that prodigious blindness out of which yet, GOD, of his infinite mercy, one day, deliver them, that they may at last See and Believe in Him whom they have pierced; and that so both Jew and Gentile may make one Flock under the One Shepherd and Bishop of our Soul, Jesus Christ the True MESSIAH, Amen!

The period was marked by wars between Persia and Turkey over Iraq. (These have their echo in the current Iran-Iraq confrontation). Because Turkey favoured the Jews, Persia persecuted them. It would be interesting to know if the appearance of Shabbetai Zvi in Izmir reminded the Persians of that unfortunate agreement, or its approaching deadline prompted his appearance.

4. Nadir Shah intended to create a universal religion, a synthesis of all existing ones. He eagerly pursued his religious studies at his court in Meshed, and promoted discussions between Jews, Christians, Moslems and Zoroastrians ●

Dr Weizmann and Sephardim

by Percy Gourgey MBE

In 1933, Dr Chaim Weizmann made a statement indicating his belief that Jews of Arab countries could serve as a bridge between the future Jewish state and its Arab neighbours, in view of their invaluable experience acquired over many centuries of residing there. It is appropriate to recall this to mark the recent 40th anniversary of the passing away of Israel's first President and world-renowned statesman and scientist.

In a rich and varied career Dr Weizmann had many achievements to his credit, such as President of the World Zionist Organisation for many years before Israel's establishment in 1948 and also President of the British Zionist Federation; founding the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in which Albert Einstein participated; setting up one of the foremost scientific institutions in the world, the Weizmann Institute at Rehovoth. His crowning achievement was the issuance of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 promising a Jewish National Home in Palestine – the first time, a superpower, as Britain was during the First World War, recognised the Jewish people's historic claim to their ancient homeland. Weizmann had assiduously worked for this.

When Weizmann made his statement in 1933 he, more than most Zionist leaders, showed a welcome appreciation of the implications of their stay in those lands and the crucial role the Jews played in the development of their respective societies.

When I had my first interview with Dr Weizmann in Rehovoth in 1949, he stressed this point and also showed a keen interest in the Jewish community in India and the development of its Zionist movement of which I was the secretary at the time. Through his secretary, Mr Kimhi, Dr Weizmann wrote "to say how impressed he was by your personality and the keen interest shown by you towards Israel and its future relations with India, and wishes you every success in your work". In his fascinating autobiography, *Trial and Error*, Dr Weizmann wrote how in 1947 he met the Indian delegation to the UN General Assembly which adopted the Partition Plan, and their invitation to him to visit India and advise on their food problems and discuss an exchange of students and professionals to their mutual advantage. When Dr Weizmann died in 1952, great tributes were paid to him by Indian leaders and the press. But Weizmann's wish for an accommodation with the Arabs was shown by the pact he made with Feisal, son of Sherif Hussein, leader of the Arabs in the First World War who sided with the Allies against the German-Turkish coalition. This pact was made in January 1919 and it indicated that if the Arabs gained independence in their territories, which were part of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, they would welcome Jewish and Zionist settlement and independence in Palestine.

To Israel's considerable disadvantage, Zionist leaders have ignored this pact and the contribution its implementation could have made to Arab-Jewish relations which Weizmann believed could have been furthered by Jews from Arab lands.

Dating the Jewish Calendar

What impelled Bishop Ussher to choose 4004 BCE for dating the Eden episode and, indeed, the Creation itself? (*Scribe* 55).

The answer can be found in the Midrash. In the opening passage of the second chapter of *Tanna de be Elyahu* we find:

... The world [in its present form] is to last six millennia; the first two millennia [from Adam to Abraham] are to be an age of *tohu* (chaos).

The next two millennia – an age of Torah,

The next two millennia – the age of the Messiah.

Bishop Ussher, along with other scholars, dates the birth of Jesus to the year 4 BCE, the year of Herod's death, and thus reckoning 4004 BCE for the date of Creation, fits in exactly with the above midrash, that 4000 years after Adam (= 4 BCE) ushers in the messianic era!

Was Ussher aware of this midrash?

This was a well-known midrash that must have enjoyed wide circulation. In the Babylonian Talmud it is quoted twice, in *Sanhedrin* 97a and *Avodah Zara* 9a. James Ussher was a most learned scholar. He studied Hebrew at Trinity College in Dublin, where later at the age of 26 he was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity.

It is almost certain that Ussher knew of this midrash and its messianic chronology and that the midrash influenced his computation. On the other hand, if one assumes that he was entirely unaware of the midrash, we are forced to accept a most remarkable coincidence!

Rabbi Saul Leeman
(*Jewish Bible Quarterly*)

Scribe: If the division of history according to the above midrash originated before the time of Jesus then it must have encouraged him in claiming that he was the messiah. If, on the other hand, the tradition was started after the time of Jesus, then all we can say is that our Rabbis were a bit careless.

According to Ussher's calculation, the 6000 years will expire in 1996, but according to Jewish calculation we still have 247 years to go! ●

Orphans' homes in Israel

Two charitable institutions in Israel that merit financial help are:

General Israel Orphans' Home for Girls, P.O. Box 207, Jerusalem. Its Director, Rabbi F. Weingarten writes: The girls in our Home are from 6 to 23 years old. We encourage them to remain with us until they get married. When they marry we give each girl a small money gift and a full trousseau and allow them to live rent free for three years in some apartments that were left to us. We also have a day creche for babies from 2½ years upwards.

Tiferet Shlomo Orphanage – Home and Torah education for orphans and homeless children, P.O. Box 379, Jerusalem. Its Director, I. Elishahoff writes: Our boys range in age from 13 to 16. Most marry within three or four years after they leave us and tend to have large families. We help our former students in many ways, even after they leave us, by arranging marriages and helping them find employment. ●

BOOKS

God, Sex and Kaballah

by Rabbi Allen S. Maller
Culver City, California

This is an interesting and stimulating book written by a scientific rabbi who tries to reconcile the account of Creation in Genesis with the discoveries of science.

It is accepted that the earth was a chunk of the sun, but Genesis asserts that the earth was created before the sun appeared. Maller endorses the Bible version by saying that the earth came into being before the sun exploded into a fiery blaze.

However, one needn't take everything written in the Bible literally but one should sometimes read between the lines.

Regarding the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, God had told Adam, "On the day you eat of it, you will die". In fact, however, Adam and Eve did not die on the day they ate it. God did not lie. What he meant was that, unlike animals, man would become aware of death.

Listen to the statistics: It now takes light ten billion years to travel from one end of the Universe to the other, at a speed of 186,000 miles a second.

Our sun is one of two hundred billion stars in our galaxy. There are billions of other galaxies in the Universe. There must be thousands of planets with some form of life, many of them more advanced than ours – at least 500 planets with space-age civilisation. Why then has there been no communication with them? Maller gives a neat answer: There are barriers of time and space.

It took almost a billion years for life to appear on our planet, but the lifespan of our space-age civilisation may not be more than a few thousand years before we destroy ourselves. The Midrash asserts that our civilisation will last only 6000 years.

It is clear that the chances of the civilisations of various planets existing at the same time are negligible. Besides, a message to and fro may take hundreds of years.

Rabbi Maller believes that every civilisation culminates in a Messianic Age when people have solved their social, economic and political problems.

Regarding Kabbalah, its main tenet is "tsimtsum" – that God withdrew into himself to give mankind freedom of action. I believe this theory is invalid, since Darwin has discovered that the laws of physics are universal, and that there is no place which is not subject to the laws of God.

A free copy of the book will be sent to the first 20 readers who write for it to *The Scribe*. ●

Are we all Arabs?

In 1918, immediately following the Armistice, Emir Feisal made a speech in Aleppo in which he appealed for unity on secular rather than religious grounds. His basic theme was that the Arabs had been Arabs before they became Muslim, Christian or Jew! ●

Golden Apples

by Rabbenu Hakham Yoseph Haim

Reviewed by Jack H. David

The book comprises English translations of extracts from the original Hebrew text by Rabbenu Hakham Yoseph Haim Alav Hashalom (my great grandfather).

Golden Apples is a collection of short stories containing homilies and parables that Rabbenu used to relate in the course of his *Shabbath Drashoth* (preachings). In the introduction to his famous book *Ben Ish Hai* he attached great importance to elucidating a point of *Halacha* (code of law) by use of parables. "In a sermon" he said "the *halacha* should only take up approximately one third of the material with *Aggadot* (stories) and parables making up the remainder". His audience of young and old, men and women, captivated during his sermons, were vividly introduced to the Torah teachings and commandments.

Wanting to prove the need for Torah teachings, Rabbenu relates a story where elders of a city who, on hearing that a bandit with a record of lawlessness, was advancing towards their city, took upon themselves to collect ransom money to stave off the calamity. They approached a well-known miser who, while paying his share asked the reason for being their first choice. The elders explained that other people will need far less convincing when they hear of his generosity.

Rabbenu then asked why the Torah was given to Israel and not to a selected personality such as the Patriarch Abraham? If it was given to the latter, being a noble and saintly man who would have no difficulty observing its commandments, people might deduce that the masses don't need it. But since the Torah was given to Israel, being a strong-willed and stubborn people accepting its burden, this proves that everybody needs the Torah.

Rabbenu's father Rav Eliahou, well known for his philanthropy, who used to replenish his purse every day with coins to distribute them to the poor, made a deep impression upon his son. In two parables he quoted the same verse in Devarim (15:10) "Without grudging heart surely give the poor for the Almighty will bless you".

Rabbenu's prime purpose was, of course, to urge his audience to obey Hashem's commandments, and to learn the Torah. Through exegesis he revealed to us that the Torah reading substitutes the atonement by sacrifice carried out during the time of the Beth Hamikdash.

His love for his people was well manifested in his warning against evil inclinations which he considered are the paramount cause of deviating from the Torah teachings. In one of the stories he declared that Hashem loves us even if we don't come up to His expectations since, despite our failings, we are still better than other nations.

In summary, Rabbenu responded to the challenge of lack of observance or ignorance of religion in his community, not by direct edicts or rulings, but by a more subtle and effective approach – the cloaking of the correct path to follow in a popular and easy-to-understand homily.

Rabbenu Hakham Yoseph Haim is introduced as one of the all-time great composers of parables on a par with Hafetz Haim.

Scribe: It is not, as the above parable suggests, that the Torah was first offered to Israel over the heads of other nations. On the contrary, a tradition relates that the Torah was first offered to the nations of the world who, one by one, rejected it and refused to have anything to do with it, because it is too onerous.

God first went to the sons of Esau, who asked what was written in the Torah? God told them, "Thou shalt not murder". And they replied, "Sovereign of the Universe! The very nature of our ancestor was bloodshed, his father promised him, 'By thy sword thou shalt live'". Other nations, likewise, found the Commandments, "Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not commit adultery" equally unacceptable.

In the end it was offered to the Jews at Mount Sinai who accepted it unconditionally, saying "*Naassei ve Nishmaa*" – "We do, and we obey." If there had been no nation to accept the Revelation, the purpose of Creation would have failed, since the Torah is its *raison d'être*.

Precisely because we are an obstinate and stiff-necked people, we have been the ideal guardians of the Torah. The Torah may have preserved us, but we too preserved the Torah at the cost of untold suffering.

By accepting God, we became the Chosen People. In this capacity, we were required to propagate the Torah and not just keep it to ourselves. But we were no more successful in this respect than God himself was at the outset. The nations of the world rejected the Torah before it was given to the Jews and, after reading the small print, rejected it after it was given to the Jews. As a result, Christianity and Islam erupted – adumbrations of Judaism.

We have been continuously vilified by our Prophets and Sages and blamed for every disaster that befell our nation. We became, in the end, scapegoats for the wickedness of mankind and for the impotence of our leaders. We are marking time, awaiting the coming of the Messiah to introduce a universal religion.

When was the Torah offered to the Nations?

Monotheism, the acknowledgement and worship of the One God, Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, was first offered by Adam to mankind, who soon rejected it. As the Koran attests, there was a time when mankind followed but one religion, but they gradually lapsed into idolatry. The call was next taken up by Noah who too had no success, and after him by his direct descendant, Abraham, who even had to flee his birthplace because of his beliefs.

Five hundred years later, Monotheism, in the form of worshipping the sun disc as the visible source of all life, was offered to the people of Egypt by Moses, alias Pharaoh Akhnaton. They rejected it and deposed him. He was sent into exile, where he stayed for forty years. He then returned to Egypt to take the Children of Israel out of bondage and lead the newly-formed Hebrew nation to Mount Sinai to receive the full Torah. N.E.D.



Tel Aviv

I have pleasure in enclosing, as a souvenir, first day cover and stamps bearing the portrait of Rabbi Yoseph Haim. There was a gathering at Or Yehuda Babylonian Heritage Centre on the occasion of this issue. Ⓢ

Abraham S Mansoor

Chambers Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions

Editor Rosemary Goring

587 pp. £25

This book takes each major system of beliefs and breaks it down into its most significant parts. It is gratifying to note that the Jewish method of naming the years is followed – BCE (Before the Common Era) instead of BC (Before Christ); and CE (Common Era) instead of AD (Anno Domini – the Year of Our Lord). However, the anti-Jewish bias of some of the 17 contributors is evident.

In the list of major festivals of Christianity there is no mention that 1 January marks the circumcision of Jesus. The early Church strictly followed Jewish tradition in which circumcision is a more important event than birth itself. In the Christian year, 25 December was deliberately chosen as the date of the birth of Jesus so that his Brit Milah falls on the first day of the calendar year.

Until recently, calendars, diaries and almanacs used to mention this fact, but nowadays such information is suppressed as being too Jewish. This de-coupling between Judaism and Christianity, on both sides, has been going on for 2000 years – if they stand, we sit; if they kneel, we bow; if they highlight the Ten Commandments, we give them passing reference. Catholics were required to eat fish on Friday, but, perhaps by coincidence, after I explained in a letter in the *Jewish Chronicle* that this was an ancient Jewish custom in order that fishermen returning for the Sabbath could dispose of their catch, the Vatican decided that it was no longer obligatory to eat fish only on Friday.

Everybody used to wear a hat or a cap but, since the war, most people go bare-headed. Those who still cover their head are most likely to be Jews. In hotels, the complete Bible used to be provided in every bedroom, but in New York recently I only found the New Testament plus Psalms and Proverbs.

In the process of shedding everything Jewish, will Christians one day shed even Jesus himself as being too Jewish?

The Dictionary comprises 3000 entries, such as:

Deism – belief in the existence of a supreme being who is the ground and source of reality but who does not intervene or take an active interest in the natural and historical order.

However, there is no mention of Karaites.

We must give up all non-essential work and concentrate on trying to fathom the sweet mystery of our universe. In the end, neither revelation nor science will give us the answer. The human race will eventually disappear, not as a result of a natural disaster, but from sheer frustration. Ⓢ

N.E.D.

Israel watches:

Exit Bush, Enter Clinton

by Moshe Kahtan

Is the Clinton-Gore Presidency going to signal the end of the Bush-Baker relentless bashing of Israel – Quayle not having been a relevant factor? The answer cannot be guaranteed. What they uttered as candidates seeking to be elected has yet to be proven valid when they are actually on the job. What we know for sure is that the outgoing team has demonstrated beyond the shadow of any doubt, through the policies it conducted in the Middle East, the devious nature of its intentions as far as Israel was concerned. When it came to the Gulf War, the US Administration required Israel to take the blows of Saddam Hussein without defending herself so as to ensure, as we discovered later, his continued survival to suit its policies. Then, Bush and Baker did not even wait for a decent interval before turning around and exerting utmost pressure on Israel to comply with providing their Arab friends with unacceptably one-sided concessions and give rich rewards to their years of hostility and aggression.

Bush and Baker talked a lot about principles, a new world order and other heavy-sounding yet empty slogans. Was it "principles" that prompted Bush to shun Yitzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister of the democratically elected government of Israel, a friendly country which has been the only reliable long-time ally of the United States in the region, whilst at the same time found it possible to meet with his "old friend" Hussein of Jordan, Saddam's supporter and the tolerated sanction buster of the un-imposed embargo of Iraq? Was it "principles" that led him and his Secretary of State to blatantly and openly interfere in the Israeli elections by indicating their readiness to provide financial help to another government but not to the one in power? And what about the New World order? No more arms to the region except, as we saw later, arming the Arabs to the teeth whilst imposing all sorts of limitations on Israel and obliging her to yield even on matters concerning her future security if not survival? Therefore, the departure of this clique can only be a source of relief and let us hope that the new administration will prove its worth and merit after its actual installation in the seat of government. If only it would start its days by talking less about justice and doing more about practising it, then America would have chosen well and that, no doubt, will be for the good of America and of free people everywhere. ●

My friend Mrs. Hermine Serkis is extremely interested in *The Scribe* and gets excited when I pass a copy to her, as she knows so many of the people mentioned in it. She is Iraqi of Armenian origin and is very pro-Israel. She and her family fled during the trouble years ago and have lived in Switzerland for many years. I shall be happy and thankful if you will put her on your mailing list.

I read *The Scribe* as it arrives. I can't tell you how I enjoy it; it is wonderful. ●

Lausanne-Ouchy

K. M. Reuben

Jewish engineers in Iraq in the 20th century

From "The Social and Cultural Development of Iraqi Jews since 1830"

by Yosef Meir, Jerusalem

Eliahu Yosef Abuttimman	William Hai Hardoon	Selman Rahamim Abdulla
Charlie Yosef Abultimman	Wasim Tweg	Emil Eliahu Saleh Abdul Nabi
Gurji Abraham	Yishaq Riadh Tweg	Dawid Aziz Abdul Nabi
Abudi Aharon	Yehuda Yehuda	Zaki Aziz Abdul Nabi
Yvette Asher Atraqchi	Samira Yehuda	Morris Eliahu Saleh Abdul Nabi
Dawid Gurji Atraqchi	Saleh Yosef	Abudi Abdel Nabi
Ezra Asher Atraqchi	Dawid Ephraim Yamen	Edward Meir Abdel Ezair
Rosie Asher Atraqchi	Victor Morris Yamen	Shaul Yosef Abdel Ezair
Baruch Elia	Sasson Ephraim Yamen	Jack Meir Abda
Khedhoury Salim Albassun	Haim Yacub	Dawid Meir Abda
Farid Moshe Elhakim	Heskel Yacub	Said Meir Abda
Sabiha Moshe Elhakim	Naim Merza Yacub	Sasson Abudi
Gurji Eliezer	Abbud Yacub	Linda Abdulla Obadia
Abraham Yishaq Almulla	Yosef Yishaq	Richard Abdulla Obadia
Naji Yishaq Almulla	Eliahu Cohen	Dawid Yacub Ezair
Abraham Khedhoury Al-Ani	Emil Naji Cohen	Hafedh Ezra
Alfred Eliahu Reuben Al-Ani	Anwar Cohen	Meir Naim Attar
Nabih Elsayegh	Yishaq Cohen	Oded Amit
Akram Haim Elsarraf	Yaqhdan Naim Cohen	Dawid Naji Paniri
Heskel Aslan	Menashe Yosef Cohen	Yacub Naji Paniri
Naim Aslan	Moshe Cohen	Meir Naji Paniri
Ezra Arz	Naji Cohen	Samir Naji Paniri
Yishaq Salem Asher	Naim Cohen	Morris Naji Peress
Morris Ezra Bakhsh	Selman Cohen	Ezra Fattal
Abraham Bettat	Samir Naji Cohen	Shaul Sayegh
Naim Bekhor	Elias Naji Lewi	Naji Saleh
Abraham Gurji Belbul	Nabil Menashe Lewi	Nadhem Saleh
Dhafer Gurji Belbul	Naim Haim Lewi	Yosef Soref
Ephraim Ben-Moshe	Dawid Meir	Yigal Sion
Meir Heskel Basri	Yosef Mayer	Farid Selman Chitayat
Sabah Saleh Basri	Naji Meir	Shlomo Chachag
Edward Naji Bassa	Nadhem Meir	Shaul Sarraf
Abdulla Naji Gareh	Selman Meir	Heskel Menahem Qojaman
Suad Zaki Ghabawi	Ezra Meir	Rita Selman Katan
Said Zaki Ghabawi	Dawid Mukhtar	Emil Yosef Korine
Dawid Khedouri Gabbay	Ghali Mukammel	Wilma Yosef Korinc
Saleh Gabbay	Naim Mansur	Shmuel Reuben
Robert Jamil Gabbay	Yehuda Ezra Yehuda Muallem	Sasson Reuben
Raymond Khedhoury Gabbay	Yishaq Eliahu Muallem	Yosef Rejwan
Abraham Jaber	Meir Muallem	Tariq Heyawi Rashti
Said Yosef Ghazal	Naji Muallem	Yehuda Shaul
Salim Abraham Jury	Naim Muallem	Aziza Sasson Shaul
Abraham Yosef Dali	Adel Eliahu Muallem	Shaul Sasson Shaul
Dawid Yosef Dali	Morris Abudi Moshe	Eliahu Shbeiru
Naim Daborah	Habiba Sasson Moshe Mashaal	Saleh Shbeiru
Dawid Dabby	Shua Ephraim Mashaal	Moshe Shebbath
Yosef Khedhoury Dabby	Edward Nawi	Ezra Naim Shahrabani
Dawid Selman Douri	Heskel Nabaa	Yosef Abraham Shoheit
Elias Abraham Dellal	Fuad Naji Nounou	Alfred Salim Shina
Elias Yacoub Dellal	Murad Shineon Murad Nessim	Saleh Elishaa Shina
Gurji Selman Dellal	Moshe Naim	Abraham Shkuri
Moshe Selman Dellal	Elisha Ben-Sasson Neqqar	Naji Shkuri
Sabah Shawqi Dellal	Elisha Shaul Neqqar	Eliahu Shuker
Said Shawqi Dellal	Salim Neqqar	Khedhoury Victor Shuker
Naim Dloumi	Sion Neqqar	Abraham Shakarchi
Naim Eliahu Dangoor	Yishaq Salem	Shlomo Dawid Shlomo
Reuben Sasson Dangoor	Jack Meir Sawdayee	Gurji Aharon Shamash
Abraham Elias Dennous	Yosef Heyawi Sawdayee	Dawid Salim Shamash
Rahel Dennous	Naji Sawdayee	Naim Shamash
Yacub Darwish	Emil Ezra Somekh	Selman Ezzuri Shamash
Ezra Darwish	Baruch Somekh	Saleh Aharon Shammash
Sami Hilali	Heskel Somekh	Sabah Ezzuri Shamash
Ezra Hindi	Meir Shlomo Somekh	Albert Shemtob
Salim Zebli	Abdulla Somekh	Dawid Shania
Meir Eliahu Elisha Zacariah	Saleh Somekh	Sami Naim Shania
Selman Zacariah	Sasson Ezra Somekh	Ezra Shaya
Shua Zelouf	Nessim Soussa	Kamil Shashoua
Salim Zleikha	Salim Sopher	Naji Shashoua
Elias Zelkha	Salim Ezra Sehayek	Zuhair Shaul Sasson
Meir Zelkha	Samir Heskel Sehayek	Selman Shaul Sasson
Yosef Zangi	Shaul Sehayek	Samir Shaul Sasson
Said Moshe Hayek	Abraham Selman	Abudi Sasson
Anwar Khebbaza	Albert Farid Selman	Reuben Sasson
Salim Khebbaza	Aziz Selman	Maurice Ezra Bekhor
Sasson Hugi	Sion Selman	Albert Ezra Bekhor
Naim Houri	Samira Abdulla Samra	Ezra Meir Hakkak
Abudi Heyawi	Farid Dahud Samra	Jamil Hillel
Sami Abraham Haim	Yosef Saati	Morris Khalastchi
Selman Eliahu Khalastchi	Prince Saati	Jack David
Salim Halabi	Diana Naji Said	Joe David
Anwar Khedhoury	Meir Said	

There are many others, now living in Europe, USA and Canada, who studied abroad but had no opportunity to return to Iraq. ●

1917 Petition of Baghdad Merchants at Manchester by Lydia Collins

On the declaration of war between Britain and Turkey at the beginning of November 1914, Ottoman subjects residing in Britain became alien enemies subject to the limitations imposed under the Aliens Restrictions Act 1914.

There was at Manchester a small but growing community of immigrants from the Ottoman Empire, which included a number of Jewish textile merchants from Syria and Baghdad. Those who had not already acquired British nationality before the outbreak of war became subject to the restrictions.

In January 1915 a special Order in Council had been passed relaxing the restrictions in the case of Ottoman subjects who were Christian by religion and Greek, Armenian or Syrian by race, or a member of a community well known to be opposed to the Turkish regime.

In May 1915, a Petition signed by eight Jews born at Baghdad and five born at Aleppo was presented to the Home Office asking for some relaxation of the restrictions for their own community. The request was not granted, but a second Petition signed by twenty Baghdadians and submitted to the Home Office in March 1917, after the occupation of Baghdad by the Allies, was successful. Restrictions were lifted in the case of natives of Mesopotamia who were Jews or Arabs.

The Petition

To The Right Honourable Sir George Cave K.C., M.P., His Majesty's Secretary of State for Home Affairs

The humble Petition of the undersigned natives of Baghdad in Mesopotamia members of the Jewish faith and dwellers and traders in or about the City of Manchester.

Sheweth:-

1. Your Petitioners by reason of their birth in the Ottoman Empire in or near the city of Baghdad are technically alien enemies of the British Empire.
2. Your Petitioners are in fact loyal to the British Empire where many of them have lived since childhood and hope to remain for the remainder of their lives. Many of them had applied for Naturalization before the War.
3. Your Petitioners are all Jews and they are properly Arab Jews - their native tongue is Arabic. Your Petitioners are all reputable traders and their credit in the City of Manchester and County of Lancaster is good.
4. Your Petitioners are informed that according to the official returns the exports of Lancashire goods to Persia and Baghdad amount to between 2 & 3 million pounds and they believe that the bulk of these exports are made by themselves and the other members of their race and religion who have already become naturalized subjects of or been born in this Country.
5. Your Petitioners further believe that notwithstanding that their trade has been during the War with a Country where friend and enemy may be easily confused they have been successful in scrupulously adhering to the Laws of this Country against trading with the enemy.

And your Petitioners do humbly respectfully and sincerely pray that they may be relieved of the stigma of being described and treated as alien enemies of a Country which has become the country of their adoption and that they no less than their brethren in the East who are now most graciously invited to participate in the management of their civil affairs in collaboration with the representatives of Great Britain so that they may be united with their kinsmen in the North South East and West in realizing the aspirations of their race may enjoy the free and benevolent rule which is accorded to the subjects and friends of the British Empire.

And your Petitioners ever pray etc.

[signed by]

1. **Charles Jacob Ini** 76 Spring Gardens Manchester. Of the firm of Inis Grey Cloth Merchants and Shippers to the Persian Gulf and Bagdad, resident in this Country since boyhood, applied for naturalization and subscribed to last War Loan.
2. **Ezra Sion Jacob Mical** (known as S. Michel) 16 Mosley Street Manchester. Salesman with James Lee & Bros Ltd of 16 Mosley Street Manchester, Preston and Burnley, applied for naturalization and subscribed to last War Loan.

Notes on the Petitioners

1. Charles Jacob Ini, son of Jacob Ini and Hannah, born 1887/8, came to Manchester in 1899, married Manchester 1945 Phyllis J. Collister.
2. Ezra Sion Jacob Michel, son of Jacob, born c.1879, came to Manchester 1901, married Martha Alexandra ..., died Manchester 1923.
3. Fred (Ephraim) Shohet, son of Jacob Shohet (no.4) and brother of Sassoon Shohet (no.7) born 1881, came to Manchester 1896, married 1904 Angelina (Lena) daughter of Habib Ades of Aleppo, died Cheshire 1970.
4. Jacob Shohet (father of nos. 3 and 7) son of Reuben Shohet, died in Cairo.
5. Menashi Saleh Shlomo David, son of Saleh Eliahou Shlomo David and Aziza, and nephew of Meir Elias.
6. Leon Isaacs (nephew of no. 10) son of Isaac Yehouda Hakham Isaac (known as Isaac J. Isaacs) and a daughter of Ezra Elia Sopher, born 1884, came to Manchester c.1901, married Manchester 1921 his cousin Georgette daughter of Ezekiel Yehouda Hakham Isaac (no. 10), died Bulawayo, S. Rhodesia 1952.
7. Sassoon Shohet, son of Jacob Shohet (no. 4) and brother of Fred Shohet (no. 3), born 1872/3, came to Manchester 1892, married Damascus c.1899 Rachel daughter of Elias Ades of Damascus, died in Egypt.
8. Joseph M. Shasha, son of Moses, born 1878/9, came to Manchester 1905, married Manchester 1909 Rachel daughter of Jacob Elia Abdela of Manchester formerly of Arta and Corfu, died 1953.
9. Khedouri Shasha, probably brother of no.8, born 1887/8, came to Manchester 1911.
10. Ezekiel Yehouda Hakham Isaac (father of no.11, uncle and father-in-law of no. 6) son of Yehouda Hakham Isaac and Toba Menahem, born 1849, married Hannah Eliezer, died Paris 1927.

3. **Fred Shohet** 3 Brazil Street Manchester. Member of the firm of J.R. Shohet & Co. Shippers to Egypt, applied for naturalization and subscribed to last War Loan.
4. **J.R. Shohet** 3 Brazil Street Manchester. Shipper and subscribed to the last War Loan.
5. **M. David** 34 Princess Street Manchester. Member of firm M.S.S. David and A.J. Shashoua, Shippers to Persian Gulf and Bagdad and subscribed to last War Loan.
6. **Leon Isaacs** 43 Dickinson Street Manchester. Member of firm Isaacs Bros Sons & Co. Shippers to the Persian Gulf and Bagdad.
7. **Sassoon Shohet** 12 Oxford Street Manchester. Member of the firm Shohet and Shamamah. Shippers and Merchants, applied for naturalization and subscribed to last War Loan.
8. **J.M. Shasha** 44 Whitworth Street Manchester. Shipper to the Persian Gulf and Bagdad, applied for naturalization and subscribed to last War Loan.
9. **Khedouri Shasha** 44 Whitworth Street Manchester. Member of the firm J.M. Shasha & Co. Shippers to the Persian Gulf and Bagdad and subscribed to the last War Loan.
10. **Ezekiel Yehouda H Isaac** 6 Dickinson Street Manchester. Shipper to the Persian Gulf and Bagdad, member of the firm of Yehouda Heskell & Co.
11. **Jack Heskell** 21 York Street Manchester. Shipper to Persian Gulf and Bagdad.
12. **Daniels** 22 Lloyd Street Manchester. With Messrs. J. & H. David, Shippers to Persian Gulf and Bagdad.
13. **Haron Meir Somekh** 3 South Parade Manchester. Member of firm of M.J. & H.M. Somekh, Shippers to the Persian Gulf and Bagdad.
14. **Sassoon Mashal** 12 Sackville Street Manchester. Member of Mashal Bros Ltd. Shippers to Persian Gulf and Bagdad.
15. **J. Sassoon** 74 Princess Street Manchester. With R. Hassan & Co. Ltd. Shippers, subscribed to the last War Loan.
16. **Khedouri E. Dunnos** 86 Princess Street Manchester. Shipper to the Persian Gulf and Bagdad.
17. **George Dellal** c/o K.E. Dunnos Shipper 86 Princess Street. Student in Manchester since July 1914.
18. **Chas Sopher** 32 Queen Street Manchester. Merchant and Shipper, subscribed to last War Loan.
19. **Khedouri Shasha** 29 Minshull Street Manchester. Shipper to Persian Gulf and Bagdad, subscribed to last War Loan.
20. **S.J. Shashoua** 81B Mosley Street Manchester. Calico Printer and Shipper to Persian Gulf and Bagdad, applied for naturalization and subscribed to last War Loan.

11. Jack Heskell, son of Ezekiel Yehouda H. Isaac (no. 10) and Hannah Eliezer, born 1880, died Manchester 1950, unmarried.
12. Daniels. No information.
13. Haron Meir Somekh, probably son of Meir Abraham Somekh and Toba daughter of Aaron Shuker, and nephew of Rabbi Abdullah Somekh, married Mazli daughter of his cousin Yehouda Yusuf Ezra.
14. Sassoon Mashal, son of Heskell Nissim Mashal and Aziza, born 1886/7, died Manchester 1918.
15. J. Sassoon. No information.
16. Khedouri E. Dunnos (uncle of no. 17) son of Eliahou Dunnos and brother of Ezekiel Dunnos who signed the 1915 Petition but who died before the 1917 Petition.
17. George Dellal (nephew of no. 16) son of Meir Moses Dellal and a daughter of Eliahou Dunnos, born 1894/5, married 1928 Naima daughter of Abraham Heskell Shashoua, died Liverpool 1956.
18. Charles Sopher. No information.
19. Khedouri Shasha, son of Choua Shasha and Chahla Shashoua, born 1891/2, came to Manchester 1912, married Manchester 1926 Jeanne daughter of Saul Dabby, died 1988.
20. Samuel J. Shashoua, son of Jacob Shashoua and Aziza, born 1878, came to Manchester 1905 but later went to Alexandria where he was President of the Jewish Community, married (1) ... (2) Hannah (3) Beirut 1936 Elvira Talio, died Beirut 1946.

If any readers are related to the people mentioned, I would be very interested to hear from them, as I am compiling a history of the Sephardi families of Manchester. Please write c/o 20 Queen's Gate Terrace, London SW7 5PF

Ambassador Shlomo Dayan

Mr Shlomo Dayan, Israeli Ambassador in Nepal, recently telephoned our office from Copenhagen on his way to Israel and Kathmandu. He was happy to receive *The Scribe* and admired the effort of its publication. He left Baghdad in 1951 and still speaks fluent Arabic.

He is related to the Dangoor family whom he remembers visiting in 1933 with his father Abraham Shlomo Gurji (Gurji effendi) at their house on the Tigris by crossing the Maude Bridge – a pontoon bridge built by British engineers after the First World War.

In Nepal there are only two Israeli families but thousands of Israelis come every year for trekking.

Mr Dayan writes:

On the Eve of Rosh Hashanah, we had in the large courtyard of the Embassy some three hundred youngsters. After the Service, refreshments in the Rosh Hashanah tradition were served. Youngsters who come for sightseeing and trekking usually come in Spring after the cold Winter, and in Autumn after the Monsoon●



Ambassador Shlomo Dayan presented his credentials to King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev at the Narayanhity Royal Palace, July 1991. Picture shows His Majesty offering Attar of Roses to the Ambassador after the ceremony●



Education and Culture Minister Govinda Raj Joshi with Ambassador and Mrs. Grace Dayan (née Silverman) at the opening of the paintings exhibition by Israeli artists entitled "Mountains Round About"●



The Riverside houses in Baghdad●

Waking to a new reality

As an Iraqi-born front-line soldier in Israel's two lightning wars of 1956 and 1967, I was happy when the time came to trade Sinai for peace with Egypt. I didn't come to Israel in 1951 to conquer Arab land, but I was, and am, prepared to fight for the borders I came to stay within at that time.

That is why it is disconcerting to read many of the letters and erudite articles in *The Scribe*, written by well-meaning armchair generals, exhorting us Israelis to vote Likud or hold on to every single inch of Greater Eretz Yisrael. Smaller Israel has enough land for all the Jews who want to come to live in it, now and in the future. Israel can also give a good account of itself in any showdown if its survival is at stake.

Sensing the dictates of the hour, Rabin will hopefully shed the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights, not out of fear, but simply because we Israelis cannot assimilate them. Besides, Saddam did prove that Ramat Gan is only five minutes from West Iraq. But of course that goes in both directions.

But Iraqi-born Jews who write to *The Scribe* from all over the world, and who have never fired a shot at the Arabs, seem to have ensconced themselves in their outdated 1940 mentality. So please, next time you catch yourselves having those grandiose dreams, don't run to tell us about them. We have been there●

Ramat Efal
Israel
Ezra S. Soffer
Lecturer on Public Relations

Scribe: 1) Jews from Arab lands not living in Israel are also involved in the conflict with the Arabs.

2) Why should the Arabs succeed in getting at the negotiating table what they failed to achieve in five treacherous wars?

3) Will you give up Jerusalem? Will you tolerate a Palestinian state?

4) After going back to the 1967 borders, they will clamour for 1947. So why not go back to 1917 and give all nationalities their fair share of the region?

5) Why should Israel remain armed to the teeth to defend itself? We favour a Middle East confederation to reduce arms expenditure and to share out the wealth of the region.

6) Diaspora Jews help Israel to the best of their ability. Many come to take up arms when danger looms●

In recent years *The Scribe* has arrived to nourish my insatiable curiosity about my "Babylonian" side. I much enjoy the Baghdadi reminiscences from my father's time and before. And the rather shocking statements, that Democracy is not the answer to the instability of the Middle East, set me testing my long-held assumptions.

I am a bit concerned that your journal does not become a clubby in-group society bulletin for the London community. Perhaps a clear editorial separation between the chatty and the scholarly article will help.

New York
Maurice Heskell Ezra Peress

Scribe: Our journal does not aim to become a highbrow publication; it covers the whole spectrum of interest of the community. Articles and photos are welcome from all readers●

Mazeltov

The wedding took place last September of David Salim Dangoor, now executive vice-president of Philip Morris International, and Ide Weitzen of New York.

The American conglomerate, known for its successful take-over bids, boasts Lady Thatcher on its payroll, as adviser.

The ceremonies included civil weddings in Stockholm and New York and a religious wedding followed by a magnificent banquet and dance at the Rockefeller Center, Rainbow Room, New York.

Congratulations and best wishes to the new couple●



David and Ide in Stockholm

Babylonian Jews in the Indian Navy

There were a handful of Jews who had joined the Indian Navy – formerly the Royal Indian Navy – and served during World War II and thereafter. Amongst those of Iraqi ancestry there are from the Executive Branch my older brother Henry, who retired as Captain and now lives in Sydney, and Maurice Sassoon and myself who retired as Commanders and live in London. The three of us joined as Sub-Lieutenants in 1940 in the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserves and after the war were granted permanent commissions.

Then there were those also of Iraqi origin who did short spells as Volunteer Reserve officers during the war. Shuly Cohen of the Executive Branch and from the Supply Branch, Percy Gourgey, his brother-in-law Eddie Keadan, Benjamin Hayeem and Edward Nathan, who was born in Basra and served in the Special Branch.

It may be of interest to readers to know that there also were three others, not of Iraqi origin, the seniormost of whom was Rear-Admiral Benjamin Samson, a brilliant officer of the Executive Branch who in this rank was Flag Officer Commanding, Indian Fleet. Next was the late Captain Mike Samuel who joined as a stoker in the Engineering Branch and by dint of hard work rose to the rank of Captain and became the first Provost Marshal of the Indian Navy. After retiring he settled in Israel. Both Admiral Samson and the late Captain Samuel are from the Bene-Israel community. The third is Jack Japheth, who is of Adeinte descent, who went on to become a Commander in the Engineering Branch before retiring and settling in Israel●

London

Fred Sopher
Commander I.N. (Ret.)

I was fortunate enough to have recently been given a copy of your very interesting periodical. My mother's family have a long and well documented Iraqi Sephardic lineage via my maternal grandfather (Namoordi/Saul) and grandmother (Judah), having left Baghdad around the turn of the century and settling in Calcutta and Rangoon. After the war, my mother's relatives moved on to Israel, England, Australia and the United States.

As you may recognise that my name, Mares, is definitively Spanish (my parents having met and married in Calcutta where Dad was stationed during WWII), I assumed throughout my life that I was half Jewish and half Spanish. However, a recent and energetic ancestral tracing by the extensive Hispanic population here in the southwest U.S. has determined that many, many original colonists from Spain were Jews that had either converted or hidden their Jewish faith as a result of the Spanish edicts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Many revelations and articles about the retention of ceremonial religious practices have been presented. I therefore may as likely as not be all Jewish and all Spanish, much to my delight! I wonder if there are any other Spanish-surnamed Jews in your readership and if so, would it be possible to communicate with them?

P.O. Box 621402

Littleton,
Colorado, USA

Ben E. Mares

Petroleum Engineer

Scribe: Welcome to the fold. Halachically, you are all-Jewish●

I enjoy *The Scribe* and Moshe Kahtan's articles in it. His article "The Judge of Israel" (*Scribe* 54), especially, was most interesting●

London NW6

Flower Elias

When I can get hold of *The Scribe* I enjoy reading every bit of it, particularly due to the fact that a member of my family happens to be Iraqi. Other than that, all of us, regardless of our various Jewish origins, we all share the same concerns regarding Israel's safety as well as the dangers that surround her.

Your political column by Moshe Kahtan always strikes a sensitive note. For, it goes without saying, we all identify with his subject matter. I appreciate very much how he states basic facts regarding the Middle East, analyses them, confirms them and reiterates them. Hopefully, such writings would help to "counter-balance" other writings in newspapers that go as far as an obscene denial of the Holocaust.

I hope that Moshe Kahtan continues to write. I also hope that if at all possible I may be placed on your mailing list in order to read all your publications●

Cote St-Luc, Canada

Sema Krupp

The Scribe arrived just before Rosh Hashana, and my brother Eli read with great interest the article titled "The Great Confession of Yom Kippur". He made 200 copies of it and we placed them inside each of the Yom Kippur prayer books in our synagogue. We belong to the Iraqi Jewish Association of Toronto. I am sure the congregants enjoyed reading it in English●

Toronto

Rahele Benaiah

I was born in Iraq and am now married, living in Brazil. I enjoy reading your journal; I think it is a wonderful magazine, having plenty to offer, especially Alice Shashou's column●

Rio de Janeiro

Raymonde Aslan

The Jewish Vote

Napoleon once said that big events are often decided by small incidents, but he didn't elaborate.

The explanation is that situations that have no opposition usually prevail before they become big. Situations that become big are those that are opposed by equal forces; and, as the confrontation grows, a small force can tip the scales one way or the other. This illustrates the significance, the importance and the power of the Jewish minority vote in a democracy which, by its nature, divides the electorate and, as a rule, polarises them into two equal and opposing camps.

Take the recent French referendum over the Maastricht treaty. The populace was divided almost 50-50 over the issue. Only half bothered to cast their choice. But most of the one per cent Jewish minority went to the polls, and solidly voted in favour of Maastricht on the basis that it is better to have a European Germany than a German Europe! The result was 50½% in favour and 49½% against. But, either way, Germany is a threat to peace.

In the American presidential election, which is conducted in two stages, the Jewish vote assumes an even greater importance. The popular vote was close – 46 million to 39 million and could have been even closer. But the Jewish factor was decisive in a number of key states to give Clinton 370 electoral college votes against 168 for Bush.

No wonder our enemies seek to destroy democracy. James Baker will live to regret his treatment of Shamir and his remark: "'Bless' them, they don't vote for us!"

The irony of the presidential election is that both Jerusalem and Baghdad have celebrated Bush's defeat●

N.E.D.



OBITUARIES

Isaac David Isaacs

Isaac David Isaacs, who passed away last October, was born in Baghdad in January 1903. He was brought up in a traditional Jewish environment where Hebrew was taught as a must. He studied at the Alliance School where he learned French, English and Turkish. In 1920 he went to Burma to join "Saul Brothers" in Mandalay, a firm established by distant cousins.

In 1927 he made his grand tour of Europe, thus enhancing his experience and global outlook. In 1935 he returned to Baghdad to become manager of BGSS (British General Supply Stores). Being a British subject, he had to flee Iraq during Rashid Ali's coup in 1941, eventually settling in Britain.

He and his wife Claire became very active in establishing the present Sephardi Synagogue at Wembley. His hospitality and kindness are well known to his friends and associates. **H.D.I.**

Rachel Kehela



My beloved elder sister Rachel Kehela who died in London last July was well known among the Iraqi Jewish community there.

Gentle and very helpful, her house in Golders Green was always open for advice and help to friends and relatives. She left Iraq with her husband and three sons in 1941 for Bombay, and after ten years they emigrated to London. She was 80.

Ramat Gan, Israel Abraham Yadid
Scribe: She was the mother of international Bridge champion, Sami Kehela of Canada. ●

I am sending £10 for the Board of Deputies but cannot afford further payments. You may remove my name from your mailing list if necessary. Thanks for all the past issues, and I hope your magazine will continue to thrive.

London W13 J.J.

Reply to J.J.: We were very touched by your generous donation in response to the Community appeal. The Torah's commandment that we must pay 10 per cent to charity and community needs, also contains a promise - namely, that if we pay 10 we shall receive back 100. The enclosed cheque is in fulfilment of that promise. *The Scribe* is sent out free of charge and will be sent to you as usual.

Reply from J.J.: I very much appreciate your returning to me my donation tenfold on the prescription of the Torah. But I feel I cannot really accept the money and am returning your cheque.

To tell you the truth, I am a bit puzzled. Did everyone who donated money receive it back ten times over? ●

For the last few months I have been receiving *The Scribe* which I find very interesting and educational.

I left Baghdad at a very young age. *The Scribe* brings me lots of memories, also a useful source to know my roots, and to transfer this knowledge to my children who are very curious to know their roots. ●

Parlin, New Jersey James Cherazie

میر بصیرت

انغخوا في الصور
بناسبة رأس السنة العبرية

انغخوا في الصور في يوم الخلاص
انغخوا في يوم غفران الذنوب
انغخوا، قد نال في الأرض المصامى
زاله الأشجار تموت والخطوب.

وأنت عهد السلام الزاهر
فوداعاً للمآسي والحروب
أسفر الحق لعينه المناظر
ونوى العدل مكنياً في كقلوب.

انغخوا في الصور، نادوا في السهول
والجبال السقيم: قد غاب الضلوع
غاب مني يعنى بجهل وفساد.
انغخوا في الصور... لكتن الدنيا
نظمت في عيطة علم الظلام
والكنافح المر في جوف الوهاد.

Meer S. Basri

Blow the Horn

on the New Year 5753

Blow the horn for the day of deliverance,
Blow for the day of forgiven sins,
Blow, requital has ended on earth
And an end has come to worries and calamities.

The era of perfect peace has dawned.
We say farewell to tragedies and wars.
The Truth has appeared to the beholder's eyes
And Justice is entrenched in the people's hearts.

Blow the horn, call over high mounts and dales:
The transgressor has failed,
The iniquitous has decayed in ignorance and
corruption.

Blow the horn ... But we, the humans,
Prefer in our life the dream of darkness
And the bitter strife in the deep abysses. ●

I recently came across your publication *The Scribe* and am extremely impressed by it. I would be most appreciative if you would add my name to your list of subscribers.

I am the daughter of Yehuda Gourdgi and widow of Khedouri Menashi Abraham-Haim. ●

Tel Aviv Daisy Menashi

Sport

As a measurement of time, a second is small enough. So when I hear that someone won a race or broke a record by 1/100 of a second I wonder if it can have any real meaning.

Who can measure to 1/100 of a second accurately? Human error or mechanical tolerance can be more than that!

Yet, a very close result like that can be expressed in a different and better way. A speed of say 60 m.p.h. is equivalent to 100 km per hour or 27 m per second or 27 cm every 1/100 of a second. Thus it is more meaningful to say the race was won by 27 centimetres than to say by 1/100 of a second. A horserace is sometimes won by a nose which is only 2 or 3 centimetres. ●

Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale have become the established winter resorts of the Iraqi Jews of New York and Canada. Every year there are more than 400 visitors over the New Year period.

Unlike other holidays, the migration to the South lasts, on and off, all through the cold season. In a similar attempt to find a comfortable climate, the stork (*laglag*) used to shuttle between the minarets of Mecca and the minarets of Baghdad. He used to come in June and return in November. As he flew off on a cold morning, we used to chant:

**El yom barda w'hashsha
W'tar el-laglag min eshsha.**

(Today is cold and crisp
and the stork flew away from his nest).

Increasing numbers of our London community now join in this seasonal movement for company, but most find the long return journey too tiring. ●

By way of introduction, the A.A. Society, Inc. is a charitable foundation founded in 1934. Its sole function is providing cemetery and grave sites for Jewish members of the Iraqi community in the United States and their descendants. The bylaws of the Society state that we must provide the services without charge to anyone who fits the description that I gave above.

As you probably are aware, the Jewish Iraqi community in the United States has proliferated extensively and I find that many of the names on your mailing list are not on our list.

At the present time we are engaged in planning the future needs of the community. Would it be possible for us to acquire your list of Iraqis in the United States so as to enable us to maintain as complete a list of our potential audience.

**A.A. Society Inc Herbert N. Somekh
American-Israeli Planning Committee
Jewish Community Chairman
Hasbrouck Heights, N.J.**

Scribe: We sent to the Society a confidential list of over 400 Iraqi subscribers in the United States.

A community must rightly offer free burial for its members, whether they pay finta or not. Abraham's purchase of Machpelah cave is often cited as a precedent that each person has to provide for his own burial. But Abraham acted not as an individual but as head of his clan. ●

I have been receiving *The Scribe* for the last three/four years and each edition, I confess, is read by me from the first page to the last and is passed by me to my near relatives to remember our origin and our roots. Without your journal we would feel thirsty as we have become addicted to its articles and directives and nostalgia. ●

Kiryat Ono, Israel H.N. Soffair

I was very happy to see in *The Scribe* the article about the Gala Evening on 10 May. Thanks for the warm words about my performance.

I was blessed to meet the people of the Babylonian community and while I watched the video-cassette, I was very moved by the love and warmth expressed there. It was painful to watch Dr. Davide Sala giving his last public speech, wise and humane. His death was a loss for all of us. ●

Tel Aviv Shosha Goren

Mr Morris Chitayat of Montreal sent us the following cutting from LES NOUVEAUX CAHIERS No. 102, published by the Alliance Israélite Universelle of Paris:

A Travers Les Revues

Dans le numéro 44 du Scribe, le toujours intéressant "journal du judaïsme babylonien", publié à Londres par des exilés d'Irak, Elias Dangoor se souvient d'une projection du film tirée par Orson Wells du Procès de Kafka. C'était en 1964, dans un cinéma de Bagdad. Bloqué en Irak pendant un an, en attendant de rejoindre à Londres sa femme et ses enfants, il se trouvait en compagnie de son ami d'enfance Charles Horesh, qui jugea peu crédible l'exécution du personnage interprété par Anthony Perkins. L'auteur de l'article estima au contraire que cette histoire se répétait quotidiennement dans un pays comme l'Irak. En Janvier 1969, après un procès kafkaïen, Charles Horesh fut l'un des onze Juifs innocents pendus à Bagdad et à Bassorah.

Scribe: Shaul H. Sasson tells us that he was detained with Charles Horesh in the "death row" prison of Qasr al-Nahaya - a former royal residence. For 3½ months they were not allowed to wash, shave or change their clothes, and had to sleep on the bare floor of their cell. A year later, Charles was hanged and Shaul was released. He had been imprisoned in an attempt to silence his father, Hakham Sasson Khedouri, head of the Community.

What is in a name (and face)??

The faces of the Iraqi Jews are characterised by special features which distinguish them from the Moslems', however dark their complexions are. No one can describe what makes an Iraqi Jew a Jew except to say that there is "Jewishness" in his face.

Another way of recognising an Iraqi Jew is by his name. Most family names are specific, including mine. Private names underwent tremendous changes in the early 20th century by the influence of the western civilisation. Female private names are particularly sensitive. Even Hebrew names such as Sarah or Rachel were considered "old fashioned" and young girls were ashamed to mention the name of their mothers or grandmothers if they happened to be Chahla, Masooda, Farha, Salha ... Why should one be ashamed of one's traditional name???

Great Neck, N.Y. Albert Khabbaza, M.D.

You are doing a very important *mizwah* in publishing *The Scribe*. I do agree that population relocation in times of war could be one of the keys of future co-existence.

In the case of Yugoslavia, it was a mistake from the beginning to recognise Croatia prematurely as a separate state before clarifying the position of the various populations.

However, your very good *Scribe* should be above political parties, here or in Israel. You speak out against the "Loony Left", but you do not mention the danger from the "Loony Right". I think you have made a mistake with regard to Lawrie Nerva. He was one who had resigned from the, at that time, very left Brent Council.

Yes, I agree with you, that ISRAEL has to be protected from the Loony Left and the Loony Right.

Harrow, Middlesex

Sam Smith

Gulf Crisis Financial Support

The following table, published by the *Turret* magazine of Brooklyn, enumerates the financial support given by the United States to various countries during the Gulf War.

Egypt	\$18.693 billion
Syria	\$1.750 billion
Turkey	\$2.316 billion
Jordan	\$.533 billion
Morocco	\$.530 billion
Lebanon	\$.099 billion
Somalia	\$.069 billion
Djibouti	\$.021 billion
Total to Muslim States	\$24.011 billion
Israel	\$166 million

Egypt also received debt forgiveness totalling \$21.8 billion from the US and Arab countries.

In the light of the above figures, the rejection of Israel's request, not for cash or loans, but just for loan guarantees to settle refugees, speaks volumes of the "morality" of the Middle East policy of the Bush administration.

I was very impressed by the article on Adam by Naim Dangoor - a great man with a noble and creative mind. I enclose a copy of my book - *God, Sex and Kaballah*, which may be of interest to your readers.

Culver City, California
Rabbi Allen S. Maller

Thank you for your excellent publication and for your recent article on the Bombay Habonim.

I would appreciate it if you could add these names to your mailing list:

Ariella Fattal Vaskevitch, Herzeliya-Pituach
Donna S Sofaer, San Anselmo, CA
Ruth Sofaer, Venice, CA
Shoshana Sofaer, Washington D.C.
Symcha Gabbay Weinblatt, Potomac, MD
Yedida Kalfon Stillman, Binghamton, NY
May Yacoub & Claude Salem, Washington, DC
Seema and George Shemash, Los Angeles, CA
Maggie Menashy, Ramat Hasharon, Israel
Sylvia Brenner, Ramat Gan, Israel

Washington D.C. Marian Scheuer Sofaer
Attorney at Law

I recently found your magazine in the waiting room for Jewish Social work. The people there had never heard of it nor had I.

Since 1985 I have been doing family research. I am interested in Egyptian Jews and the Jewish community in Wales.

Amsterdam Elizabeth V. Embden

We were sent a *Scribe* publication by our cousin Noel Ezekiel and we were completely enthralled, as we are both of Baghdadi extraction. Please put us on your mailing list and inform us of our obligations.

Los Angeles Solly and Helen Jacob

Scribe: Our journal is sent out free of charge.

The Centre for Implant Surgery in Haifa will conduct the 15th International Annual Symposium on 28-29 March 1993. The subjects will include:

Joints and bone implants
Bone healing and bone remodelling
Bone graft and bone substitute

Further information from:

P.O. Box 4940 Haifa
Telephone: 972-4-359244
Fax: 972-4-374046

It was so refreshing to read reminiscences by Mr. Percy Gorgey on the birth of the Habonim in Bombay; and I would like to add the "two stalwarts" he missed mentioning of the Byculla Habonim group. They are my late sister Rachel J. Hemi who was a hard worker and was very helpful to Mr. and Mrs. A. Menashie (née Rachel Ani, Albert's wife). He was the next top to Mr. Solomon Ezra. I was a Rosh Gedud in Byculla when my office transferred me to Bangalore, Mysore State, in 1938. Mr. Jack Moses is the elder brother of Mr. Sas Moses (mentioned in the above article).

It was Jack, a great violinist, who started a dance band at Byculla, a team of 4 players. Mr. Nissim Aaron, Jazz; Mr. Manuel David, trumpet; myself, Hawaiian (steel) guitar; and Jack, violin. I don't remember if Sas Moses, a mandolin player, may have been the fifth player. Pity circumstances do not allow me to visit Bombay.

Kefar Saba, Israel Fred J. Hemi

P.S. My sister Rachel was invited by the late Lady Baden Powell to the Queen's coronation, along with my other sister, Mozelle, who was a high-standing Girl Guide Captain for many years. Rachel attended the coronation, but another sister, Aziza, attended in place of Mozelle.

Jack Japheth, who contributed to the organisation of the Habonim movement in Bombay, used to attend the weekly meetings held on Sunday mornings at the Calcutta Jewish Girls' School as well. He was usually dressed in the immaculate white Navy uniform. A portion of each meeting was devoted to the teaching of close-order drill with the commands spoken in Hebrew.

Albuquerque Solly Saul
New Mexico, USA

I have been living in the UK for 47 years, but only recently have been receiving and reading *The Scribe*.

My elder brother, Victor Moses, was an active member of Habonim, a very good friend of Percy Gorgey and was, like him, an officer in R.N.V.R. I wish the Bombay reunion every success.

Redbrige, Essex Fred Moses

I enjoyed the reminiscences of Bombay Habonim. I too was a member of that movement. I was in the water polo team captained by Percy's brother Archie. We won the city-wide tournament and I still prize the medal they gave us on our victory.

New Jersey Fred Sion

I would like to congratulate Percy Gorgey on his article "Beginnings of Bombay Habonim", as he outlines the character and identity of the community.

London N3 M. Cohen

Needless to say how much I appreciate your publication, like many thousands all over the world.

Brussels Mrs. Clarissa Haim

I was indeed fascinated by reading your journal of October and would appreciate it if you would kindly put me on your mailing list.

Jerusalem Emile V. Menashy

Economics of the dowry

In poorer societies the father of the bride usually receives a dowry from the prospective husband in return for the economic worth of his wife. But in our Babylonian society where the wife was merely relegated to housework, the father of the bride usually gave the young couple a dowry to help them in the burden of starting a family in accordance with their station in society. Such dowry usually took the form of the father endowing his daughter with a family residence which would at the same time give economic security to the girl by not leaving her to the mercy of the husband's whims.

It must be remembered that until recently a girl was married at a very early age. In the absence of a dowry she would either have to marry an older, better-off man or wait till a suitable suitor of comparable age came forward.

The system of the dowry is economically sound as it acknowledges the responsibility of one generation to the next. The rising generation must expect to find full employment. Parents who beget children must provide for their future until they become self-supporting. If this principle was followed, western countries wouldn't have the high level of unemployed people we see today.

The late Hamid Rifaat, long-time director-general of interior of Iraq's royal regime, was a wise man who often attended Jewish yeshivas to listen to Talmudic discussions. After the 1958 revolution, he asked his son-in-law to define "fatherland". Akram replied, "Fatherland is the place of one's birth and for which one has to make sacrifices". "No, my son", Hamid interjected. "Fatherland is the place that protects me and ensures my livelihood. Iraq no longer fulfills these requirements. I advise you to pack up and leave!" He did.

Compare this approach with President Kennedy's foolish exhortation to the American people, "Don't ask what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." This, to me, is a charter for slaves! ●

N.E.D.

Mother's cooking

At all weddings with an Iraqi bride, the cooking of the bride or her mother usually receives acknowledgement and praise.

But the merits of our Iraqi girls go beyond the preparation of good food. They are loyal, unspoiled and genetically clean. We carry in us more of Abraham's genes than other people.

Unfortunately, mother's cooking is sometimes attracting the wrong kind of man to ask for the daughter's hand! ●

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

Mrs. Naima Saleh, Palm Beach, Florida
Mr. & Mrs. Yaary-Cohen, Holon, Israel
Mr. Maurice Sawdayee, New York, USA
Miss Elvira Herbstman, New York, USA
Mrs. Marian Sofaer, Washington, USA
Mrs. Nanette Mahlab Jiji, New York, USA
Mrs. Sema Krupp, Cote St-Luc, Canada

نخب كحيلة الخبزة (بنيامين كوهيليت)

وكبة يتمنى الكل مآكلها

صارت تلاحقني في الصحو والنوم

شهية لا يجارى حسن منظرها

ولا مثيل لها في الريح والطعم

مرت بلا غصص في الحلق سائخة

كموجة سلسلت في هاديء اليم

سميدما في صفاه مثل مرمرة

فيه احتضمت كفتة من فاخر اللحم

لو عفت كل طعام في الدنا شيئا

تفريك بالأكل بل تفريك بالثمن

اني هجرت رجيمي عدد رؤيتها

بل قد عقدت على نسيانه عزمي

وقلت لما سمعت الناس تتسألني

هيهات يرجع عهد الجوع والصوم

فيا صديقتنا مرحى لما صنعت

يداك من طيب في الكيف والكم

واكثري مثلها ما شلت من كعب

فهي العزاء لقلب همد من هم

كأنها اقتبست من نفس صانعها

لكي تكون غذاء الروح والجسم

Benyamin Koeleth now a judge in Israel

The Kubbah

(Iraqi rice-and-meat ball)

A *Kubbah*, which everyone would like to eat, has been pursuing me day and night.

Tasty, its beautiful shape equals its savour and fragrance.

It went gracefully into the throat like a gentle wave into the calm sea.

Its pure rice covered a ball of excellent meat.

I would forsake every food to satiate my hunger when it entices me to a ravenous appetite.

When I beheld it, I left my "regime" and decided to forget it.

And I said to those who questioned me, "No more hunger, no more fasting".

O, our lady friend, I praise you for making such nice food in quality and quantity.

Make more *Kubbahs* to satisfy a heart crushed by pain.

As if these pies emulated their maker's gracious soul to be the nourishment of body and spirit.

Translated by Meer Basri ●

Latkes

Ingredients:

4 large raw potatoes
1 large onion grated, 2 large eggs
4 tablespoons self-raising flour
Salt, white pepper, oil for frying

Method:

Grate the potatoes and drain in a sieve. Beat the eggs until fluffy. Add salt and pepper, the finely grated onion and finally the flour. Blend with the potatoes.

To fry the *latkes*

Shallow fry in a frying pan. Put teaspoonfuls of the mixture into the hot oil, flattening each *latke* with the spoon.

Fry until browned on both sides. Drain on kitchen towel. Eat hot ●

COOKERY CORNER

by Alice Shashou

Burghul Pelau

Ingredients:

2 cups burghal
3 onions, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
3 tablespoons olive oil
4ozs sautéed button mushrooms
3½ cups chicken stock or chicken cube dissolved in water
½ teaspoon each of powder cumin, powder coriander and ground cardamom
Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

In a large pan, brown onions and garlic in olive oil. Add the burghal and cook for another moment. Season with salt, pepper, cardamom, coriander and cumin. Stir all together. Add chicken stock and cover the pan. Bring to the boil; then lower heat and simmer until all water evaporates. Cook just as you would cook rice. Add cooked mushrooms just before serving. Serve hot.

Tip: Can be served with roast chicken ●

Tips

Add salt to water when washing bright clothes the first couple of times. It will stop the colour running.

Try mixing cold tea with the water you use for your house plants. They thrive on it.

To prevent biscuits going soft, place a couple of sugar cubes in the container. Any moisture will soak into the cubes instead of the biscuits.

When preparing a pie, do not stretch the pastry as you roll it.

To improve the flavour of French dressing, insert a halved clove of garlic in the bottle and let it stand for a day.

New potatoes contain more Vitamins C than old ones.

Fruits that won't set in jelly include kiwi and pineapple. They stop gelatine working as normal.

Olive oil is likely to turn rancid during prolonged storage. Keep in the refrigerator.

When handling poultry, wash hands before and afterwards.

Cereals that have gone soft can be crisped up if left in a warm oven for a few minutes.

Tenderise tough stewing steak by adding a few drops of lemon juice.

When making a salad with onions (for instance *Tabuleh*) immediately squeeze some lemon juice on top of the onions so that no smell remains.

If you want to add garlic to a salad, sauté in an oiled non-stick pan, it will give the taste, but not the smell.

We should drink at least 6 glasses of water every day. But we must not think that because we are drinking lots of water in tea or coffee it will do instead. It won't. Both drinks are diuretics and they promote water loss ●