

# *The* SCRIBE

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**A Happy New Year 5762 to all our Readers and Friends**



**O**ur babylonian Heritage - The Shrine of Ezra the Scribe in Southern Iraq on the bank of the Tigris. In the 5th century B.C.E., the Prophet Ezra Ha-Soffer recorded the Bible, changed the Hebrew alphabet to the current square script, introduced the Synagogue as the place of worship in lieu of the Temple and later led an aliyah to Jerusalem.

It was said of Ezra that if the Torah had not been given to Moses, he would have been worthy to receive it.

It would be desirable for a delegation to be sent to Iraq to inspect our Jewish shrines all over the country.

# Thoughts & Afterthoughts

by Naim Dangoor

## After Auschwitz All European Culture is Trash

The Holocaust represents a seismic fault-line in the history and culture of Europe, and, as such, it augures a major future quake which would rank very high on the Richter scale.

Nineve of old saved itself by undergoing a complete and sincere repentance, but the nations of Europe are not willing to change their ways. Anti-Semitism, now in the guise of Anti-Zionism or anti-Israel is on the increase. One reason for this state of affairs is that no proper punishment was meted out to fit the crime of the genocide of the Holocaust.

It's not too late to do so now to punish our enemies. But who are our enemies, seeing that the perpetrators themselves are either dead or dying?

All those who deny the Holocaust, or commit Anti-Semitism, or commit ter-

rorist acts against Jews are indeed our enemies and must be regarded and treated as if they themselves took part in the murder of the Six Million.

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He who sacrifices his principles for material gain will, in the end, lose both his principles and his material gain.

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Faith goes further and deeper than reason, but Faith must not contradict reason. Religion must adjust to scientific discoveries.

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Some people sow their wild oats at the start of their careers; others do so at the end of their careers. Both approaches are equally valid, it is all a matter of priorities.

## Man's Godly Attributes

99% of what we attribute to "God" is due in fact to the momentum of history and geography. In short, the momentum of nature – the momentum of creation, if you like. (Kismet - Fate).

The other 1% is attributable to the God within us. For when we were created in the image of God we did not only get the outside form but God gave us a spark of love, a spark of justice, a spark of genius, a spark of wisdom, a share of His attributes and it is this God within us that we are trying to assert.

Israel means "one who struggles with the momentum of nature. Islam means to submit to the momentum of nature. Our destiny is to become Gods.

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Racism is terrorism. The proper way to deal with it is by counter-terrorism. ♦



Lord Rothschild, President of the Institution for Jewish Policy Research, organised a fund-raising last June at 11 Downing Street, official home of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to which 130 guests attended. The above photograph shows The Rt Honourable Gordon Brown, MP Chancellor of the Exchequer (on the right) listening attentively to Naim Dangoor's pet theory of interest-free money. The Chancellor has already introduced a basic national dividend which can easily be linked to the working of an interest-free monetary system. Mrs Renée Dangoor looks on with amusement. ♦

# My Thoughts on Israel

by Naim Dangoor

For nearly 2,000 years we have been praying and hoping for the return to Zion. Our generation has been privileged to witness the rebirth of Israel. I therefore often ask myself, what are we doing here? Why are we not back in Israel? The answer lies in the difference between religious Zionism and political Zionism.

From the early days of the Galuth, Babylonian Rabbis came to the conclusion that Israel needs a Mashiyah to make a radical change in its structure. It was no use reviving Israel with the old diseases that killed it on two previous occasions. Ezra's reforms made the Galuth under the Torah self-sufficient and deferred 'sine die' the need for a Mashiyah. Jesus opposed the Pharisees and Mohammed, claiming that he came to revive the pure religion of Abraham, arose as a direct reaction to the spread of the Talmud. Jewish circles not within the Babylonian orbit widely opposed the Talmud and accepted Mohammed as a Gentile Mashiyah, such as the Jews of Arabia and the Jewish exiles in Afghanistan and Kashmir (the Pathans).

It is said that history repeats itself. In fact, like a good teacher, history only repeats itself when the lesson is not learned. So what are the problems that a Mashiyah has to solve? And where did we go wrong?

Firstly, that Eretz Yisrael by itself is too small as a viable homeland for the Jewish people. While Israel is our national home, the whole Middle East is our regional home. For a long time the Jews did occupy Hejaz and parts of the Yemen. The Hebrews came from Arabia in the fourth wave of Amorite migration around the peninsula through Kuwait and Iraq and thence to Canaan. All this shows our historic connections with all parts of the region. Israel should aim for a kind of confederation, based on the communal autonomy that was applied by the Ottoman Empire. In a sense Israel's strategic frontiers are on the borders of Iran and Turkey.

Secondly, that Israel must not be caught in superpower politics. The defeats of 586 BCE and 70 BCE were the outcome of involvement in the struggle

between Egypt and Babylon and between Rome and Persia. Today, Israel's dependence on American Jewry which, in every way, is the modern counterpart of the Babylonian Diaspora could embroil the Jewish State in America's problems.

Thirdly, economics. It is said that Israel is a nation of rich people in a poor country. The rich are the moneylenders and those who are fortunate to own land and property. Have the prophets not denounced again and again the economic system whereby the rich get richer and the poor get poorer? As we see today, this is particularly dangerous in a country such as Israel.

But the Torah forbade usury, i.e. interest on money. Moslem banking is an artificial way to get around usury. The correct way is an interest-free monetary system, whereby money is issued in the name of the borrower and not in the name of the lender.

Likewise, the Torah forbade freehold titles in land – "And land must not be sold in perpetuity" – and commanded the Jubilee system which means in modern terms, index-linked leasehold tenure with rent reviews every fifty years. It would ensure that the land of Israel remains forever in Jewish hands.

Fourthly, relations with the Arabs. Why did we weep then and why are we concerned today? Perhaps the next three words of the psalm can give the answer - Al Arabim Betokha (because of the Arabs who were there). What is the sense of offering full employment to Arabs in Israel or who come to Israel, while neighbouring Arab countries import labour from India and Far East and while many Israeli Jews are forced to emigrate? Perhaps to their detriment, Jews never tried to drive out natives from Israel. It was the Arabs who applied such a policy so that by massacres, conversions and forced emigration they made Arabia 100% free of Jews until now.

The Arabs accuse Israel of being expansionist but it is the Arabs themselves who have been expanding since the rise of Islam.

Fifthly, Aliyah.

At the inauguration of the

Commonwealth Jewish Council last year, Francis Pym who was Foreign Minister remarked in his speech that it was no longer true to say that the sun never sets on the British Empire. But that it is true to say that the sun never sets on the Jewish Diaspora. The Diaspora can be looked upon as Israel's Empire. There is no need for Israel to swallow up the communities of the Diaspora one after another. In the absence of a Mashiyah, Diaspora Jews want by and large to stay put. The Diaspora has no desire to liquidate itself. However, under proper conditions many more Jews would want to immigrate to Israel. In the meantime there is a case for encouraging half-Aliyah whereby Diaspora Jews can establish permanent second homes in the Holy Land.

Israel needs millions more people. But these can be produced from within and would cost Israel less than immigrants. The national dividend can be tailored to encourage large families.

Sixthly, a Mashiyah will give us a moral uplift and may also develop our religion to realise the vision of Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah when the whole world accepts and submits to God's rule.

We must realise that the new Israel is part of a changed Middle East.

But even in the absence of a Mashiyah we should do our utmost to facilitate his job.

Two thousand years ago, only the Jews worshipped the One True God. Now three-quarters of humanity submit to the God of Israel. Single-handed, Mohammed created a new monotheistic religion on the lines of the Revelations to Abraham and Moses, having today two billion followers all over the world. Islam does not conflict with Judaism but confirms it. We should have no difficulty in acknowledging that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammed was his missionary. The conflict started when Mohammed tried to convert the Jews, and the Jews rightly refused because they already acknowledge God. Just as Christian-Jewish enmity started not because of the baseless accusation of "deicide", but because Jews refused to convert to a paganised Christianity. ♦

To those who say Zionism is responsible for all the trouble in Palestine,  
We say Arab imperialism is responsible for all the trouble in the Middle-East.

# Shlomo Hillel in London

Last May, former Knesset speaker Shlomo Hillel paid a ten day private visit to London with his wife Temima and their daughter Hagar who was researching old documents at the Public Records Office at Kew.

Baghdad-born Mr Hillel emigrated with his family to Palestine in 1934 at the age of eleven. He returned to Baghdad on an Iraqi passport in 1946, staying there for one year. He was again in Baghdad in 1950 to negotiate the mass immigration of the Jews of Iraq in the historic Operation of Ezra & Nehemia.

During his stay, a reception was held in his honour at the Mayfair headquarters of the Exilarch's Foundation when he was welcomed by leading members of the Iraqi Jewish community.

Following is Naim Dangoor's welcoming speech:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome to our midst Babylonian Jewry's favourite son, the honourable Shlomo Hillel, Cabinet Minister, Speaker of the Knesset, Chairman of Keren Hayasod, who was the prime mover of the historic operation Ezra and Nehemia in 1950-51 by which most of the Jews of Iraq made the Aliyah to Israel for which we were waiting for generations and centuries.

Shlomo was recently awarded the Freedom of Jerusalem and I take this opportunity to extend to you our heartiest congratulations for this well merited honour.

I would like to take this auspicious

opportunity to express, if I may, my thoughts on the endemic Middle-East problems.

Israel is accused of occupying Arab land, and of persecuting and oppressing Palestinian Arabs. What are the facts?

Since 1948, a hundred new nations came into being and are now living in peace and security, while the Jewish state remains a festering sore. Where did we go wrong?

Forget about the Balfour Declaration which became a dead letter soon after it received the smudged signature of its author. Forget about political Zionism which managed to uproot the Jews of Europe and of Arab countries but failed to completely repossess our ancient homeland.

To understand and evaluate the Arab-Jewish problem of the last eighty years, we must realise that it is not simply a conflict between Israelis and Palestinians as, unfortunately it has been narrowed down to become. In fact, it is a wider, regional problem. But Israel has managed to drive herself into a corner, allowing the Arabs to proclaim, "what is ours is ours, and what is yours is also ours".

With the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the Arabs were given all the benefits in the region.

In particular, Iraq was not entirely Arab, but was given over to Arab rule to the exclusion of the other nationalities, especially the Jews and the Kurds.

Turkey ruled the Middle-East for 401 years under a successful millet system of

autonomous communities which was changed over arbitrarily to a number of nation states to suit the ambitions of the imperialists' conquerors.

Alarmed by the news that Iraq was going to be given to Arab rule, the Jews of Iraq petitioned to become British subjects. But the petition was turned down. Among the petitioners are the following: President of the Jewish Lay Committee - Shaul Hakham Heskell

Acting Chief Rabbi and President of Religious Council -

Hakham Moshi Shamash

Yehuda Zelouf

Menahem Daniel

Sasson Khezzam

Murad Djouri

Yehouda Y Noonoo

Sion E Dangoor

A H Elkebir

Abraham Hayim (Shabander)

Shaoul Shashoua

Abraham Haim (Aqerib)

For 2,500 years the Jews had a prominent position in Iraq, a thousand years before the Arab invasion, a position which was maintained throughout the Persian, the Abbasid, the Mongol and the Ottoman Empires. For all that period of twenty five centuries the head of the Jewish community in Iraq was the Exchequer of the Empire ... a position which continued to the early years of modern Iraq in that the Minister of Finance and pillar of the government was Sir Sasson Heskell. ←



The above picture shows left to right:

Renée Dangoor - David standing (reading his father, Naim Dangoor's welcoming Speech, who is sitting next); Shlomo Hillel, Abdullah Dangoor; Doreen Dangoor; Maurice Khalastchi; Menahem Barukh; Eliahou Abraham; David Khalastchy; Abraham Fattal

[Photograph by Eileen Khalastchy]



**The honourable Shlomo Hillel receiving the Freedom of Jerusalem from Mayor Ehud Olmert**

...When Miss Bell once asked the Iraqi Prime Minister Abdul Rahman al-Naqib a certain question about Iraq, he replied, I don't deal in politics; please ask Sasson Effendi" (who was present).

The last Ottoman report on the Vilayet of Baghdad gave the number of Jews as 80,000 out of a total population of 202,000, which included Moslems, Christians and Kurds.

Under the self-determination principle, Ottoman Jews in Iraq, Syria and Palestine, should have been allocated at least 20,000 square miles, which is greater than the total area of Israel and the so-called occupied territories.

Trans-Jordan was part of the Palestine Mandate and its separation in 1921 should have been regarded as the national home of the Palestinian Arabs, who with Zionist money went over and bought lands cheap there and prospered.

In the early twenties, Jews and Arabs were considered natural allies. Thus when King Feisal made an official visit to the Jewish Community in Baghdad in 1924 he asked my grandfather, Chief Rabbi Hakham Ezra Dangoor, if the Jews of Iraq were Zionists. To the satisfaction of Feisal, my grandfather replied... "We are all Zionists since we pray three times a day for the return to Zion".

Where do we go from here?

Israel frittered away all the gains of the Six Day War. That was the time to finalise the Palestinian problem.

It seems to me that there can no longer be a negotiated settlement with Arafat that the Jews could afford to make and the Arabs would accept in the long run.

There can only be an imposed settlement on the basis that Israel would cover the whole of Palestine West of the River Jordan, and the Arabs including Israeli Arabs who now call themselves Palestinians in Israel, should be given autonomy of people, but not of land based on the Ottoman millet system, which in fact is what the Albanians are now demanding in Yugoslavia. Arafat, is of the Hussaini family, which is of Albanian origin, a nephew of Amin Husseini, the notorious Mufti of Jerusalem who met Hitler in November 1941, when he assured him of Arab support for Germany in return for not letting Jews get out of Europe which also suited British policy with regard to Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Palestinians often ask why should they suffer for what Hitler did to the Jews. The answer is that they played an important part in the Holocaust. The Arabs, who were on the side of Hitler, received all the benefits of World War II while the Jews, who were on the side of the Allies, are still struggling for a coastal strip of rocky territory.

The principle of land for peace must apply to Syria. She must give away the whole Golan for the sake of peace with Israel.

There is no room for a separate Palestinian state.

Israel should apply the Biblical Jubilee fifty year system all over the country to ensure that the land of Israel will remain forever in the hands of the Jewish people.

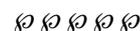
Arabs have proved themselves unable and unwilling to live at peace with Israel.

Ashkenazim should not be afraid to put forward the right of Jews from Arab countries, to support Jewish claims in the region, especially in the important matter of the exchange of refugees.

The problem of the Middle-East is regional. We only ignore that to our peril.

The exile to Babylonia was to demonstrate that the Middle-East is one region. There can be no peace in Israel unless Iraq is pacified. Like a good teacher, history will keep repeating itself until the lesson is learned. Saddam has rebuilt Babylon and is training an army to liberate Palestine. Why are we waiting?

Dear Shlomo, in conclusion, I believe that you can still play a big part in shaping the future policy of Israel. ♦



### **Jews expelled from Arab Countries left behind \$30bn in assets**

**T**EL AVIV (January 3) - Jews who emigrated from Arab countries between 1922 and 1952 left behind an estimated \$30 billion in assets, according to former internal security minister Moshe Shahal, who chairs a world organization of Jews from Arab countries.

Shahal told a news conference in Tel Aviv that the organization was raising the issue to balance the claims of Palestinian refugees in the peace negotiations. He maintained that Jews should also be compensated for having been exiled from Arab countries, including Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

Shahal said that a political settlement with the Palestinians should take into account that some 850,000 Jews once lived in these countries. Many were stripped of their assets and expelled in the aftermath of Israel's establishment in 1948, or due to the rise of Arab nationalism in the 20th century.

In all, some 600,000 Jews emigrated from Arab countries, while other Jews of Middle Eastern origin emigrated from elsewhere.

Shahal said his organization planned to submit a report about public Jewish property in Arab countries, on the basis of affidavits submitted by people once involved in community affairs in those countries.

In his statements after the Camp David summit in July, US President Bill Clinton mentioned the need to resolve the issue of Jews in Israel and abroad who became refugees due to Israel's founding. ♦

## Israeli Statistic

The latest economic figures for the State of Israel show that the Jewish State of Israel is one of the leading five nations in the world in technology. The gross national income reached 110 billion dollars. Israel's export amounts to 40 billion dollars. The average income per capita was 18 thousand dollars.

Israel's budget for 2001 is 60 billion dollars "which nearly equals the budgets of all the Arab countries".

Before World War II there were 20 million Jews and two million Moslems in Europe. Now the figures are 20 million Moslems and two million Jews.

According to Mr Ben-Porat there are 305 thousand Iraqi Jews in Israel and elsewhere. Although this figure appears too low, considering that they were over 160 thousand fifty years ago. However, a close scrutiny reveals that the correct figure is not even 305 thousand. The latest official statistics in Israel show that Jews of Iraqi origin number 252 thousand. Add to that 20 thousand in the United States, 8,000 in the UK, 2 thousand in Canada, 2 thousand in Australia and the Far East, we have a total of only 284 thousand!

According to former President Navon, the average number of children for a Jewish family in Israel is only 1.6, not enough even to replace the previous generation, whereas the Palestinians are doubling and re-doubling their members every generation. Add to that, that a million Jews have already left Israel, we can see that there is going to be a serious demographic crisis in Israel in the years to come. But according to Mr Navon, Jews prefer quality to quantity, by which it means that Jews prefer a television, a computer, a motor car and a freezer to more babies.

Just before the Six Day War, Israel was going through a crisis not dissimilar to the present day situation. Jews were leaving the country in great numbers in search of greener pastures, and the joke was that a large notice was affixed at the Ben Gurion airport that the last person to leave, let him please switch off the lights! Let us hope that the present situation will also end up in a political triumph of the magnitude of the Six Day War. ♦

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Quote...

Ability is of little account  
without opportunity

Napoleon Bonaparte

## From : Dr Zvi Shtauber Israeli Ambassador - London

Dear Mr Dangoor

I would like to thank you most sincerely for sending me a copy of *The Scribe*. The issues raised in the *Journal of Babylonian Jewry* present an important insight into Diaspora and indeed Israeli life.

I note that this year sees the 30th anniversary of your publication. May I take this opportunity to congratulate you and wish you every continued success in the future of *The Scribe*.

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Dear Mr Shtauber

Many thanks for your most kind letter and for your good wishes on the occasion of *The Scribe's* 30th anniversary, which I was not mindful of!

Allow me to welcome and congratulate you in your position as Israel's Ambassador, not only to the Court of St James but also to the Jewish communities of the United Kingdom. I hope to have the opportunity to liaise in matters of mutual interest. I recall I was sitting next to you at the meeting with Prime Minister Ehud Barak early last year, when I noted your sympathy for the rights of Jews from Arab lands.

I feel sorry that Israel now finds herself dealing with the growing Palestinian problem all alone, having released, in practice, all Arab countries from any responsibility in this regard.

A Palestinian peace settlement, especially as regards refugees and compensation, can only be achieved in a Regional context to involve all countries that went to war against Israel. Egypt and Jordan who are enjoying bilateral peace treaties should also be involved in a Regional peace settlement.

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It was a great evening yesterday, for Israel and for the Bonds.

Syria has inadvertently walked straight into my trap by declaring that there will be no separate peace deal with Israel, but only one jointly with the Palestinian negotiations. This is a welcome development that should be acknowledged and endorsed by Israel. It makes the peace negotiations a regional matter which can impose on Syria the principle of land for peace, i.e. Syria has to cede the Golan Heights if she wants to make peace with Israel.

Moreover, history has taught us that there can be no real peace for Israel unless Iraq is tamed. 2,500 years ago Nebuchadnezzar was subdued by King Cyrus. Luckily the United States is willing and eager to tame Saddam, the latter-day self-proclaimed Nebuchadnezzar, and this process should really take place within the Middle East peace settlement. There are a number of other problems like the Kurds that could be solved under the same umbrella.

Labour's announcement to join the government of national unity is a good starting point.

**Naim Dangoor**

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Dear Naim

Just a quick note to thank you for your fax and interesting article "Where did we go wrong" of 10 July, we hope to be able to use this in our information work.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your continued help and solidarity with Israel at this most troubling time.

**Dr Zvi Shtauber**

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Mr Eli Yerushalmi  
Minister Councillor for Public Affairs  
Embassy of Israel

Dear Mr Yerushalmi

It pained me to hear this morning the BBC Radio 4 interrogator questioning the Israeli spokesman about Israel's army incursion into PA territories and "assassinating" suspected terrorists, instead of arresting them and bringing them to justice. His reply that Israel has no power to enter and arrest people inside Palestinian areas does not sound satisfactory.

When I was an officer in the army (i.e. the Iraqi army) we were taught the doctrine of "Hot Pursuit" which allows a State to enter a neighbouring State in pursuit of an enemy and dealing with that enemy in a warlike manner. It seems to me this is what Israel has been doing legitimately. This is what Turkey is continuously doing in Northern Iraq.

Is there a vacancy for me in the Cabinet? ♦

**Naim Dangoor**

# WOJAC

1 February 2001

Dear Mr Dangoor

13 November 2000

It is with pleasure that we are informing you that the General Assembly of WOJAC, in its meeting of 3.10.2000, elected the Honorable Moshe Shachal, former Cabinet Minister and Member of Knesset, as Chairman of the Presidium of the Organisation. Advocate Moshe Shachal immigrated to Israel from Iraq, served as Member of Knesset for 29 years, as Deputy Speaker of the House for ten years and was in office as Cabinet Minister for 12 years with four governments - as Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, Minister of Communication and of Minister of Internal Security; he also fulfilled the role of Permanent Observer at the Council of Europe and as Permanent Representative at the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Currently he is head of one of the leading law firms in Israel.

We hope to convene an international conference in the course of the year 2001, with the participation of the representatives of WOJAC worldwide, in order to outline the policy and ways of action of the Organization in Israel and throughout the world concerning the claims of the Jews originating from Arab countries for their property that was confiscated and expropriated when they left their countries of origin due to persecution and threat to their life and safety. The Organisation will claim compensation on behalf of the Jews originating from Arab countries worldwide for suffering, oppression and the loss of communal and private property abandoned in their countries of origin.

The Organisation will appeal to public opinion in the United States and the rest of the democratic world and demand that the rights of Jews from Arab countries be ensured and realised.

**Tel Aviv, Israel**      **Shimon Avizemer**  
**Secretary-General**

Copy: The Honorable Moshe Shachal,  
Chairman of the Presidium  
Mr Oved Benozair, Chairman of the  
World Executive

Dear Mr Shachal

First, let me congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Presidium of WOJAC, especially after WOJAC first decided to fold up and put the organisation into liquidation. Now that WOJAC has now come back from the cold I, as a member of the Presidium, feel a bit confused. Please let me know what the aim is in reviving WOJAC, who is financing this revival, is it going to be a tool of the Israeli government to cancel the claims of the Palestinians? If so can that set-off include the property of Jews from Arab countries who never went to Israel? If not, who is going to look after the claims from Jews of Arab countries who never went to Israel?

I have been in touch with Judge Avraham Sofaer regarding such claims but now the whole matter is again in the melting pot. Where do we go from here? Are our claims going to be in millions or in billions? Whom are we going to claim against?

Kindly let me know in order to satisfy my curiosity.

**Naim Dangoor**

Reply:

**A New Lease of Life for WOJAC**

Thank you for your letter of 13 November 2000.

I was asked by my good friends to be the Chairman of the Presidium of WOJAC after the last Camp David peace talks where the question of the refugees, from both sides, was included in the agenda, and President Clinton declared that all refugees, Arabs and Jews should be compensated.

We asked the Government of Israel, and the Jewish Agency, to support WOJAC and to finance its activities for the next year. ♦

**Tel Aviv**      **M. Shachal – Adv**  
**M Shachal & Co Law Offices**

I read with pleasure the latest issue of "The Scribe" and I want to congratulate you on both the design and the packaging.

I do want to call your attention, Naim, to the matter of compensation for property. Before I resigned as Co-Chairman of WOJAC, I approved the decision that was published and sent to the Foreign Ministry of Israel. If a situation should arise, wherein the State of Israel should agree to balance the claims of Jews from Arab countries against the claims of the Palestinians for properties left in Israel, then it is clear that compensation is due to Jews from the Arab countries, and that this compensation will be the burden on the budget of the State of Israel.

A second issue is that it is not true WOJAC is only interested demanding the rights of Israeli citizens. The opposite is true. WOJAC is concerned with all the people who have left property in the Arab countries, whether they are in Israel or in other countries.

Another thing is that it is most important not to create confrontations between the Jews from Arab countries and the Palestinians. The solution that I have proposed for the last ten years is that there should be an international fund that would compensate all those who have legitimate claims, whether they be Palestinians or Jews from Arab countries. The suggestions of former President of the U.S., Mr Clinton, is a wise one that would answer this need. That is, that eight wealthy countries, and in this I include the wealthy Arab countries and the State of Israel, would create a fund for this purpose.

I enclose a research paper by ITA-MAR LEVIN concerning Jewish properties in Arab countries.

**Chairman of the Centre**  
**Mordechai Ben-Porat**

**Scribe:**

According to the research paper by Itamar Levin mentioned in the above letter, the top estimate of Jewish assets left behind in Iraq amounts to \$4 billion in today's value.

The policy of the Israeli government ever since 1951 concerning the Jewish assets left behind in Iraq is stated in Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett declaration at the Knesset on 19 March 1951 vis: "The government of Israel notifies the appropriate UN institutions, that we will reckon the value of Jewish property"

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[www.scribe1.com](http://www.scribe1.com)**

...frozen in Iraq in making the account of the compensation we have undertaken to pay Arabs who have abandoned property in Israel."

The Jewish community of Iraq as a whole have also a right to claim a share of the wealth of the country they were forced to leave.

Naim Dangoor's reply to Mr Ben-Porat:

Thank you for your letter explaining the position of WOJAC, which we shall include in The Scribe.

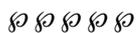
The question remains that if Jews from Arab countries are entitled to compensation from funds personally held by Israel, why do they have to wait until the whole generation is dead? ♦

## Congratulations to Mordechai Ben Porat

Congratulations to Iraqi born Mordechai Ben Porat who was one of three recent recipients of the Israel Prize. The other two were, Yitzhak Shamir 86 and Abba Eban 86. Mr Ben-Porat was cited for his work in the Hagana and later risking his life while organising a wave of immigration from Iraq, which brought some 120,000 Jews to Israel from 1949-1951.

Later he served as head of the Or Yehuda local Council then as a Knesset Member and Cabinet Minister in the 1980's. Ben Porat, who also founded a centre for Iraqi Jewish heritage, was cited for having contributed to Zionist education, love and protection of his homeland.

Recently the Hahagana Street in Or Yehuda was re-named the Ben Porat Avenue in his honour. ♦



## To Crack a "Nut"

To legislate against the ownership of hand guns in order to prevent ethnic crime, is a case of cracking a nut with a steam roller. A determined criminal can always get hold of his weapon. Nip the crime in the bud. Preaching ethnic violence should be treated as first-degree murder, carrying top penalties. This is the most correct way of treating racist nutcases who achieve widespread publicity by their crimes. ♦

## From Kensington & Chelsea WIZO

Dear Mr Dangoor

I am writing to thank you most sincerely for your kind donation to our Summer Lunch and to tell you a little of why we are raising money for WIZO and where our money goes.

Over eighty years ago in 1918, the British Federation of the Women's International Zionist Organisation was created in Manchester and at that time Rebecca Sieff and her colleagues were eager to organise social and welfare services for the pioneers in Palestine. The underlying principles of WIZO remain as relevant to Israel today as they were in pre-State Palestine.

There are now in Israel today a WIZO network of 800 projects and services ranging from daycare centres, special schools, youth clubs and WIZO family centres. WIZO also plays a significant role in supporting the socially oppressed and with the mass immigration of the many poor immigrants.

The Kensington & Chelsea WIZO group was started over 40 years ago by an enthusiastic and energetic group of women, most of whom are sadly no longer with us. They decided to raise money and build their own Mother and Baby Home (as they were then called) for WIZO and with the help of money from husbands, parents and many friends, they were soon able to lay the foundation stone in Kiryat Nordau for the home which has now been in operation for well over 30 years. These Mother & Baby homes are now called Day Centres and The Kiryat Nordau Day Centre caters for poor immigrant children who are looked after all day, receiving food and care.

Unfortunately, we as a group can no longer fully maintain the upkeep for this centre, which is now under the general umbrella of WIZO, but our commitment to WIZO is directed to help in the general umbrella of WIZO, but our commitment to WIZO is directed to help in the general maintenance of the Kiryat Nordau Day Centre and we are happy to know that in our way we are participating with WIZO in helping with their many commitments in Israel.

It is with the generosity of people like yourself that make our efforts worthwhile and help us to continue.

Attached with our grateful thanks is our official receipt.

**Jane Hodes**  
Treasurer

Dear Mrs Hodes

Thank you for your letter explaining the work of the WIZO and the various projects which you have undertaken, to make life easier for various people (which I presume includes Israeli Arabs).

I recently watched a television programme on cave dwellers in Mount Carmel 15,000 years ago – one cave was occupied by human s and the other by Neanderthals. The Neanderthals vanished from the surface of the earth because they did not reproduce sufficiently to replace previous generations. It is as simple as that.

Recently, former President Yitzchak Navon gave a talk at our synagogue when he explained to us that merely a quarter of Israelis now live abroad, another quarter being religious do not want to fight for Israel. The remaining Israelis are only producing 1.6 children per couple, while Palestinians and other Arabs are doubling and re-doubling every generation.

This is our problem and WIZO would do well to tackle this anomaly. We need quantity more than quality. It is a matter of life and death. ♦



I am very impressed with your online publication as well as your links page. I think it is wonderful that you are recording Iraqi Jewish history and current events. My father escaped Baghdad and came to the United States, and I am very interested in learning more about my Sephardic/Mizrachi heritage. I would also like to meet other Jews of Iraqi ancestry. Do you know if there are any online communities (such as email groups or web-based newsgroups) of Iraqi Jews? I would think that in these days of the internet it would be fairly easy to form an online community for sharing stories and meeting people. I would also like to know if there are any Iraqi Jewish organisations, either cultural or religious, in the Maryland or central New Jersey/Philadelphia areas. I feel somewhat separated from my culture due to living in a majority Ashkenazi Jewish culture. Any information you can provide will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

**Yvonne Violet Shashoua**  
email: [yvs@math.umd.edu](mailto:yvs@math.umd.edu)

There is a site on the internet of Iraqi Jews which might be helpful:  
<http://thesite2000.virtualave.net/iraqi-jews/index1.html> ♦

## Questions and Answers

### Question from Linda Dangoor-Khalastchi:

How can we reconcile the Jewish year 5762, said to be "to the Creation", with the claim of scientists that the universe came into being 15 billion years ago?

### Answer by Naim Dangoor:

The rabbinic belief is that our civilisation is destined to last 6,000 years when it will come to a cataclysmic end, and a new sequence will start all over again! The explanation is that there have been many such phases before. There is, however, no biblical foundation to this theory.

The Book of Genesis deals with two distinct events – one is God's creation of the universe out of nothing for which the Hebrew word "bara" is used, and the second event is the creation of mankind from dust of the earth for which the Hebrew word "yatzar" is used. It records what could be remembered of the story of Adam's generations, inventor of agriculture, and thus becoming Father of our civilisation. The Jewish year is arrived at by adding together all that was remembered of the generations of Adam. However, the invention of agriculture took place, not 5672 years ago, but a little earlier, 9000 years ago.

It is notable that the Jewish year is denoted by Jews "layetsera" by which is meant "to (the creation of) Adam" in contrast to the latin term "Anno Mundi" meaning "to (the creation of) the world".

That figure 4004 BCE was worked out by Bishop Ussher who was obviously reading a Greek translation of the Bible. He gave creation as 6 pm on Friday autumn equinox, being the end of the week of creation rather than its beginning at the time of the Big Bang. The Hebrew Bible gives the day as morning to morning and not as evening to evening.

### Further question by Linda:

Thanks for the information, but isn't it presumptuous of Jews to date our calendar to Adam as if he belongs to us exclusively, whereas he is supposed to be the Father of all Mankind?

### Further answer:

Adam is mentioned only in the Jewish Bible and in no other contemporary or earlier source. Our Bible clearly shows Adam as the Father of all mankind which confirms our beliefs in the brotherhood of all mankind

without distinction of race, colour, creed or language, an idea that many reactionary people are unwilling to accept even today. This clearly shows the greatness of our traditions.

See Article "In the Footsteps of Adam" elsewhere in this issue. ♦

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### Letter to the Editor Jewish Chronicle

Sir

### MORE THAN ONE MOSES?

by Stephen Rosenberg

(J.C. 8.12.2000)

Rameses II was not the Pharaoh of the Exodus, as is commonly and erroneously supposed. The Exodus took place in the reign of his son, Merneptah, in the first year of his reign, when a general amnesty was proclaimed as was customary, which allowed Moses to return to Egypt from his exile.

There is no difficulty in reconciling the biblical narrative with historical dates: "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Ex. Chapter I:8). That refers to Rameses I, the nationalist king who started the 19th Dynasty and who imposed the harsh labour regime on the Israelites. "And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of Egypt died" (Ex. Chapter II:23). That refers to the death of Rameses II after his extraordinarily long reign.

The Exodus took place in 1236 BCE and can be said to be 430 years from when the migrant labour of Canaanites and Israelites came to Egypt in 1666 BCE. In 1659 the Hyksos rulers invaded and in 1550 they were driven out. These events refer only to their rulers – the labourers stayed on.

The repeated encounters between Moses and Merneptah shows that the new pharaoh had a sympathetic ear to Moses' demands to "let my people go" but was overruled by the powerful priesthood. The young king told Moses on departing to bless him also, Ex. XII: 32. The Egyptian army chased the fleeing Israelites when it was realised the amount of looting that took place.

As far as Jericho is concerned that was another place and another time. ♦

Naim Dangoor

Going through my papers, I found a visa issued to my father in 1929 by the U.S. Consul in Baghdad. What intrigues me is how he managed to make the trip from Beirut to New York with no language skills other than Arabic. Once in the U.S. he had no difficulty as he was guided by his younger brother, Saul, whom he had sent to New York a few years earlier to manage the business office he had opened there.

As far as I can remember, he was a seasoned traveller. In his youth he covered the eastern coast of Arabia, with his father, on numerous trading voyages. They must have felt safe enough to make these trips. I recall his telling me that he once was asked by a local Sheikh to convert to Islam, as he, the Sheikh, wished to adopt him. He, of course, declined the offer and remained on excellent terms with them, particularly with Sheikh Mubarak Al Sabah, the founder of the present ruling clan of Kuwait, who had neutralised his brothers in order to retain the "Emirate" in his own line.

During the First World War, my father moved the family to Kuwait where he was, obviously, very much at ease. My mother became a close friend of the Sheikh's favourite wife, Um Saoud. Among the stories I remember is the one about Um Saoud telling my mother that she remembers being kidnapped, as a child, while she was playing in the street in a big city whose name she could not remember. She was brought up by her kidnappers and somehow ended up in Kuwait. Judging by the "European" features of her children, she was, probably from the Balkans. We remained friends with the Sabahs until the recent events made it difficult.

Such friendly relations between Moslems and Jews, was the norm until recent events soured them. I remember when I was returning from school in India in 1943, the ship I was on stopped in Bahrain to pick up the ruler, Sheikh al-Khalifa, who was on his way to Kuwait. Since I was the only Arabic speaking passenger on a British boat, I spent a lot of time talking to him. He showed what I can only call keen and all but fatherly interest in my studies and future plans. Once in Kuwait, Sheikh Fahad al Sabah, who was a close friend of my family, came on board to receive his visitor. I asked permission to take a picture of them, and they kindly posed for one. I find it very sad that such good relations had to end in the present bitterness. ♦

Montreal Naim S Mahlab

## The Uniqueness of the Holocaust

Dear Dr Levene

I have gone through your thesis which you kindly sent us. In reply for your quest on the uniqueness of the Holocaust as distinct from other eruptions of genocides that have taken place since the end of World War II, the Holocaust was unique because...

- 1) It was not the result of a sectarian war between two communities, but the determined act of a western power which claims high moral values
- 2) The six million died as hostages for the free world in accordance with Hitler's threat in 1939

The reason why it took a long time for World Jewry to shout about the Holocaust is the appearance of Holocaust denials. It is becoming as if Neo-Nazi's will get away with this greatest crime in human history. In my view those who deny the Holocaust should be treated as if they took part in it.

The trouble with the activity of Holocaust education establishments is that they do not bring out these points. Unless they stress these values, any attempt to remember the Holocaust becomes meaningless, a) because not enough Jews are left to say it must not happen again and b) it has been happening again in other countries.

**Naim Dangoor**

## National Holocaust Memorial Day

by Percy Gourgey MBE

I was very pleased to have attended the first National Holocaust Memorial Day event held at Central Hall, Westminster on 27 January 2001 – the day in 1945 when Russian troops entered Auschwitz to liberate the survivors of the largest Nazi extermination camp scene of the mass murder of 11/2 million people, mostly Jews.

It was addressed by Tony Blair, Prime Minister, and Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, amongst others. The Prince of Wales lit the first memorial candle on behalf of the nation. We heard speeches by Ben Helfgott and Roaman Halter, Holocaust survivors, and our Sam Freiman sat amongst other survivors. There were telling films of the poor victims of the Nazis, the war and survivor stories, readings by famous actors and actresses and other performances – all most moving.

I represent Sephardim on the Board of Deputies Yad Vashem Committee, and was hoping there would be reference to Sephardim, mainly from Salonika, who perished in Auschwitz. They were massacred there at the instigation of the notorious ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini who drew Hitler's attention to their existence in the Balkans, in November 1941. Over 60,000 were taken from Greece despite the appeal from the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Damaskinos and other prominent Greeks who praised the patriotism of the Sephardi Jews.

However Bulgaria refused to allow the Nazi occupiers to take her Jewish citizens, showing countries could have resisted the brutal Nazis if they chose to do so. The ex-Mufti recruited Bosnian Muslims to join Rommel's Nazi Army in case it invaded Palestine under British Mandate in the Second World War.

On 15 December 1942 the House of Commons held a special session at the suggestion of Sidney Silverman MP, Chairman of the British section of the World Jewish Congress when news was received of Hitler's "Final Solution" plans drawn up at the infamous Wannsee Conference earlier that year, Prime Minister Churchill stated that the "German war criminals would be pursued to the ends of the earth". Unfortunately this was not done efficiently and many escaped together with post-war mass murderers in Cambodia, Rwanda, Iraq under Saddam Hussein (against the Kurds in 1989) and elsewhere.

But the Holocaust against the Jews was unique in that for the first time in history a supposedly civilised nation resorted to scientific, modern industrial and technological methods to exterminate populations under its control. Hence the value of this Memorial Day to educate future generations, so very necessary.

The Imperial War Museum Exhibition is well worth visiting for this purpose.

**Scribe:**

The reason why commemorating the Holocaust has become necessary is that after so many years it has become possible to deny the Holocaust and to consign to the realm of fictions, that in turn became possible because the perpetrators of the Holocaust were not punished properly.

If, at the end of the war a number of atom bombs were thrown on Berlin, in punishment and retribution for what the Germans did during the war, then that would have been a sufficient reminder of the inhuman crimes that nation had committed. In other words, the punishment metered out to German leaders did not fit the crime.

Unfortunately Israel agreed to keep quiet in return for the billions that Germany paid in reparations. Likewise, Israel agreed to Britain's request at the end of the war not to touch the Mufti, Amin Husseini, for his direct role in stopping European Jews from seeking refuge elsewhere, in order to prevent them from ending up in Palestine. During the war the objective of the Mufti and his Palestinian entourage were identical with those of the British Foreign Office. They both wanted to prevent Jews from reaching the Middle East.

It is not too late to take the view at all those who deny the Holocaust should be regarded as if they had taken part in it and should thus be punished accordingly. ♦

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## Holocaust Remembrance

"Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it". The term "Holocaust" which originally referred to the genocide of European Jewry by the German beasts, has now been appropriated by the rest of the world to cover minor outbreaks of genocide. Remembering the Holocaust may be of some use but it can also remind the extreme right what crimes can be committed with impunity.

In so far as the Jews are concerned, remembering offers no remedy. Racial and religious anti-Semitism are merely on the back burner because no proper punishment was meted out to our enemies for their previous crimes. But where can we find our enemies now? All those who say the Holocaust did not take place, all those who say Hitler was right, all those who say "Kill the Jews" should be punished as if they had committed the Holocaust themselves. ♦

## Holocaust Remembrance Day, 27 January

On the occasion of the Holocaust Remembrance Day, 27 January, it should be recognised that the Holocaust was not merely a Jewish calamity, but that it had an international political dimension. I believe that the Six Million died not so much as racial victims, but as hostages for the Free World in the hands of Germany, for the following reasons:-

- 1) In 1939, on the 30 January, in a speech at the Reichstag, Hitler threatened that if World Jewry would again embroil Germany in another world war then all the Jews of Europe would be liquidated.
- 2) Before the war Hitler co-operated with the Zionists by allowing training camps in Germany for would-be olim to Palestine.
- 3) During the war, Nazi policy against the Jews did not follow racial lines. Karraite Jews were exempted from the provisions of anti-Jewish policy.
- 4) Arabs ranked below Jews in Hitler's racial catalogue, but Egyptians were granted the status of honorary Aryans.
- 5) Nazi policy followed religious lines after the Konkordat with Pope Pious XII in 1939.
- 6) At all times, Hitler kept attacking the Jews as capitalists and Communists.
- 7) The Holocaust also had a strong Palestinian dimension. Up to 1941, Hitler was interested in getting Jews out of Europe. In November 1941, Mufti Amin Husseini met Hitler and impressed on him the need of not allowing Jews to leave Europe and thus end up in Palestine, if he wanted to obtain Arab sympathy for his campaigns in Africa and the Middle East. This led to the Wannsee conference of January 1942 which sealed the fate of the Jews of Europe.
- 8) In 1944 the Jews of Hungary were openly held as pawns to be traded for transport lorries from the Allies.

Realising all the above facts would make it possible for the Holocaust to be remembered for what it is and for the Jews who perished in the Shoah to be honoured as having died for the Free World. ♦

## Was Britain Actively Involved in the Holocaust?

In 1917 Britain issued the Balfour Declaration in order to bring the United States to join the Allies in the war against Germany, after the collapse of the Russian front.

But soon after the end of the First World War it became clear that Britain was opposed to establishing the Jewish National Home. The Palestine Mandate covered the areas west and east of the River Jordan and a happy solution could have been to develop Palestine for the Jews and develop Transjordan as the national home of the Arabs. But in 1921 Transjordan was given over to Emir Abdullah without conditions, leaving the Jews and the Arabs to fight over the rocky strip of Palestine.

In the run-up to the Second World War British policy was embodied in the 1939 White Paper which closed the door to Jewish immigration at a time when European Jews were badly in need of a safe haven. British policy was meant to gain Arab sympathy, but in fact Arab sympathy was solidly pro-Hitler throughout the war - witness the Rashid Ali pro-Nazi revolt in Iraq in April 1941.

Historians attach little importance to that event but in fact if it had succeeded Russia would have been cut off from Allied aid and the war would have taken a different course. Britain defended Iraq on the island of Crete where after heavy losses the sole German airborne division was destroyed. Crete was surrendered only when Iraq was safely in British hands.

British policy after the war regarding the Jewish National Home was the same. Survivors of the death camps were turned back and were forcibly disembarked in Germany.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that British policy was the same during the war.

After the establishment of the State of Israel, British officers led the Arab forces that attacked the Jewish state and were paramount in delineating its frontiers.

As a student at London University in the early thirties, I was tormented by the ease with which Hitler was allowed to re-arm Germany. My own teenage guesses at the time were either that Britain wanted to achieve a decisive end to the earlier war with Germany or that a new European war was organised solely for the purpose of murdering the ten million Jews of Europe. In the event, my second guess proved correct and the Holocaust was the only lasting outcome of World War Two.

The nagging question remains, therefore - Is it possible that the British government was actively involved in the murder of the Six Million?

After the collapse of the Rashid Ali revolt, ex-mufti Amin Husseini who was in Baghdad, fled to Iran and thence to Italy and Germany where he met Hitler in November 1941. Throughout the war he influenced Nazi anti-Jewish policy and made certain that Jews were prevented from getting out of Europe. He persuaded Hitler that Jews leaving Europe would end up in Palestine and that would anger the Arabs.

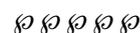
The mufti's objectives coincided with those of Britain - witness the sinking of the Struma in 1942 with the loss of 800 Jews.

The question arises; was there secret contacts between the Mufti and British agents? The mufti was afraid to leave Germany after the war, but was given safe conduct by Britain through France and thence to Egypt and Beirut. It is possible that Israel was advised not to interfere with him.

All along Britain was obviously afraid that the Zionists would take over the Middle East and displace Britain in its vital sphere of influence.

The indications are strong and the leads must be plentiful. The time has come to research this episode of the twentieth century to put the record straight.

Britain's sympathy with the Palestinians and hostility to Israeli governments continues unabated. Printing a monograph on the subject would be financed. ♦



### They knew about the Holocaust

In the BBC television programme "Young Elizabeth", it was said that King George VI, among others, became fully aware of the Holocaust early on but it was decided that "the news was too terrible to publicise". One is unable to make sense of that statement except to conclude that the British Foreign Office wanted to hush up the news as it suited their policy of preventing Jews from reaching Palestine.

It is well-known that allied planes overflew the death camps on several occasions but made no attempt to disrupt the proceedings. ♦

# The Struma Affair

by Edward Dangoor

I was amazed to read first in the Jewish Chronicle and then in The Scribe the abracadabra story of The Struma as related by Joel Ives. Is he that innocent or ignorant about the true story or is he acting in order to promote his book or articles.

The facts about the Struma is that it was torpedoed by a British submarine to avoid receiving in Palestine the 800 refugees it carried. Had it not been for the one witness who escaped by miracle and reached the Turkish shores, the boat would have been lost and forgotten.

The witness repeated, once and again, in his testimony that the sinking was consecutive to an explosion by bomb or torpedo.

Contrary to what is related in the article the witness was taken care off by the Turkish authorities who accepted his version of the story.

In another scene of this episode was the special session of the committee of the Jewish Underground Forces who had special entries to the High Commissioner's office in Cairo when they came across and copied or photocopied the message sent by the High Commissioner to a British submarine to torpedo the Struma. A special court was convened and Lord Moyne, the High Commissioner was sentenced to death.

All these facts came up in the Cairo court as you will notice later on.

The execution of the sentence was entrusted to two special agents of the underground movement (tireurs d'elite) good shots, with instructions not to ever hurt any Egyptian.

The High Commissioner's office was not so well-protected and the two fellows easily had access to his office, shot the Commissioner and left on the bicycles they trotted in with. The alarm was given when the two fellows were cycling hard for safety when a passing Egyptian

policeman heard the alarm, was intrigued and followed the two youngsters and arrested them. They proved later to the court that they could have shot the policeman easily but they had their instructions to abide with. The Egyptian press for weeks and before the trial was sympathetic to the boys as was the majority of the population.

The most important Egyptian lawyer was committed to defend them (without charge) and everybody thought that the two would get away with imprisonment but this thought irritated the British and they had to find a machiavellian way to have them hanged.

A day or two before the sentence the Egyptian Prime Minister was assassinated and many saw the machiavelian hand of the British.

Consequently a sentence was passed and the two boys of 20 and 18 were hanged.

I knew the boy of 18 as he was from a family of Syrian origin. The Pessah before these events I spent with this family in Haifa with others.

Israeli sources also confirms that it was the Russians who torpedoed the Struma for political reasons.

## Scribe:

Israel often found herself, because of her weak position, obliged to bite the bullet and accept a version of events which is different from the truth. At the end of the Second World War, Israel abstained from harming the ex-Mufti Amin Husseini because Britain gave him safe passage first to Egypt and then to Beirut. It is likely that Amin Husseini played a major role in preventing Jews from leaving Europe, a policy which was in line with British Foreign Office objectives. Another incident at which Israel had to keep quiet was the assassination of the

Israeli Olympic team. This was done by the German police, but the Israeli government had to subscribe to the version that it was committed by the Palestinian terrorist, in order not to sour relations with Germany which was paying massive compensations at the time. ♦

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## Letter to the Holocaust Centre

Mr Stephen D Smith  
The Holocaust Centre  
Beth Shalom  
Laxton  
Newark  
Nottinghamshire  
NG22 OPA

Dear Mr Smith

I often wonder what is the significance of the Holocaust to non-Jews, and why do we want to spread news of the Holocaust far and wide? What has the Imperial War Museum to do with the Holocaust?

It has been said that Holocaust education will prevent it from happening again, but there are no millions of Jews left in Europe for a Holocaust. Moreover, genocide activities have been going on in the post-war period in Africa and in Asia.

I believe that the real significance of the six million Jews who were killed by the Germans during the war is that these people died as hostages for the free world. In 1939 Hitler threatened that if World Jewry would embroil Germany in another world war then he would kill all the Jews of Europe. He thus held the Jews as hostages for the free world and they should be remembered and honoured as such, not just as victims of a genocide. ♦

Naim Dangoor

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In Issue No. 72, page 26, Ramzi Loya, born in the late 1930's, wrote a letter to the Editor of The Scribe criticising the action or inaction of Hakham Sasson Khadoury during the rule of Al-Bakr.

In fact that was a very difficult period in the life of the Jews of Iraq and my late father did all that he could do in those difficult circumstances. He was powerless to do any more. ♦

Shaoul H. Sasson  
London



The Struma

# BBC Prejudice

Letter sent by Naim Dangoor to Sir Christopher Bland, Chairman of the BBC, Broadcasting House, London with a copy to The Rt Hon Mr Jack Straw, MP-Foreign Secretary-Foreign Office

I understand that you have taken the trouble of screening a programme against Ariel Sharon and his indirect involvement in the murder of some 800 Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila. An Israeli court of enquiry had already criticised Mr Sharon for his involvement which was regarded as indirect, and your programme was not really necessary.

Why don't you research and prepare a programme about the British Foreign Office's direct and profound involvement in the murder of six million European Jews in what became known as the Holocaust, to prevent them from reaching Palestine, to comply with the terms of the 1939 White Paper? Contact was maintained with the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem who spent the war years in Berlin.

One further evidence is the sinking of the Struma by order of Lord Moyne, with the loss of 800 lives. This would really be a worthwhile programme and an eye opener.

Reply from BBC Information:

Thank you for your letter of 25 June addressed to the Chairman to which I reply as follows:

I recognise that you feel the screening of Panorama - The Accused was not necessary. I would like to explain that Panorama - The Accused examined the massacre of at least 800 civilians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila during the invasion of Lebanon in 1982. It analysed the role played by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, amongst others, who resigned as Israeli Minister of Defence following the Kahan Commission inquiry into the tragedy.

As Mr Sharon has now been elected Prime Minister of Israel, we therefore felt it to be appropriate to examine his political and military record, in particular as the Israeli Defence Minister who sent the Lebanese Phalange militiamen into the Palestinian refugee camps.

Panorama asked contemporary figures and international law experts whether, in the current climate of greater

international accountability for war crimes, they believed that Mr Sharon could be indicted for what happened. The programme also interviewed survivors of the massacre, Israeli officers who served in Beirut and members of the Christian Phalange which committed the atrocities, notably Elie Hobeika, the man accused of leading the militiamen in the camps. Mr Sharon was approached to be interviewed for the programme and his spokesman Dr Ranaan Gissen was interviewed on his behalf. A lawyer for Mr Sharon, Dov Weissglas, also appears in the programme.

The BBC has made numerous films about human rights abuses in the Middle East. Among them are a Correspondent film which was highly critical of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority and a disturbing Newsnight film on the use of children in the front line of the intifada. We believe Panorama - The Accused to be an entirely legitimate look at a human rights issue and that it is a fair and balanced analysis of the role played by Ariel Sharon. I hope this clarifies the BBC's position.

Please be assured your comments on this matter have been recorded for the benefit of senior management and the programme makers. The BBC welcomes all feedback, as it helps us to make decisions about future programmes or policies.

Our reply to BBC/Mori Questionnaire:

To help ensure the BBC Information Department is giving you the service you need, we would like to have your views on:

Being courteous – *very satisfied*

Responding in a full and serious manner to my comments and/or complaint – *very dissatisfied*.

*You did not reply to the second part of my letter, which I now request you to do, by referring it either to "Panorama" or to the proper department in order to investigate Britain's wartime role in the Holocaust."*

Reply to the same letter also received from:

Foreign & Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH

Dear Mr Dangoor

Thank you for your letter about the situation in the Middle East, which has been passed to this Department. Please find below a summary of the Government's position on recent events.

The Government is greatly concerned by the continuing violence in the region, and dismayed by the tragic deaths. In particular, it deplores the fact that the violence has led to loss of life among children and innocent bystanders. The UK supports the view of the UN High Commission for Human Rights that the protection of children must be an absolute priority for both parties.

The Government has consistently urged Israel and the Palestinian Authority to show restraint. Violent incidents in Israel and the Occupied Territories threaten to derail the fragile cease-fire. It is vital now for the parties to end the violence and to move ahead with full and early implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee report, which sets out a road back to the negotiating table.

The UK has played an important role in recent months. The Prime Minister met Israeli Prime Minister Sharon on 24 June and Foreign Minister Peres on 18 July and urged them to take urgent steps in parallel with the Palestinians to implement the Mitchell recommendations. Lord Levy has travelled to the region as the Prime Minister's envoy. Ben Bradshaw, the new Minister for the Middle East, visited the region in July. The Foreign Secretary has met Israeli, Palestinian, Syrian and Arab League leaders. He is in close touch with his EU and US counterparts and with the UN Secretary General.

The UK and the EU have serious concerns about the lack of respect for human rights in the Occupied Territories. Following its policy of constructive engagement with partners on human rights issues; the EU raised its concerns with Israel at the meeting on 21 May of the EU/Israel Association Committee. We will continue to raise our concerns, both publicly and in private at all levels, for as long as this remains necessary. ☛

...The Foreign Secretary has expressed deep concern over the demolition of Palestinian houses.

The Government deplores settlement activity in the Occupied Territories (including East Jerusalem). It is illegal under international law and a serious obstacle to peace. The recommendation of the Mitchell Committee is that Israel should freeze all settlement activity, including the "natural growth" of existing settlements. The EU raised the issue of Israeli settlements at a meeting with Prime Minister Sharon in Stockholm on 14 June.

The Government supports UN General Assembly Resolution 194, which calls for the right of return and compensation for Palestinian refugees. A permanent solution to their plight can only be achieved as part and parcel of the peace process and we continue to encourage and support the parties in their search for an agreement.

The Government is also deeply concerned about the humanitarian and economic impact of closures. Sustained closures continue to restrict the free movement of people and essential supplies between the Occupied Territories and Israel and other countries, as well as within the Occupied Territories. Economic hardship and unemployment can only fuel hatred and violence, and make a comprehensive settlement more difficult to achieve. We have expressed our serious concerns to the Israeli Government on political, legal and humanitarian grounds, and will continue to do so. The latest EU demarche to the Israeli government on humanitarian access was made on 29 June at the UN in New York.

The presence of international observers has been suggested as a means of contributing to stability in the region. The EU General Affairs Council on 16 July agreed that a third-party monitoring mechanism is needed in order to overcome any obstacles that might impede the implementation of the Mitchell recommendations. Foreign Ministers and subsequently G8 Heads of State took a similar view when they met in Italy (on 19 July and 21 July respectively). Our view is that to be successful any presence would require prior agreement by both Israelis and Palestinians.

The UK regards the status of Jerusalem as still to be determined in permanent status negotiations between the parties, and recognise no sovereignty over the city. Pending agreement, we recognise de facto Israeli control of West Jerusalem but consider East Jerusalem to

be occupied territory. Jerusalem has a unique religious and cultural importance for Christians, Jews and Muslims, and we attach great importance to ensuring access to Jerusalem and freedom of worship there for those of all faiths.

On the question of arms sales, the UK is guided by the consolidated EU and national criteria on Strategic Export Controls. We will not issue export licences where there is a clear risk that the equipment might be used for internal repression or adversely affect regional stability. We will not issue licences for equipment similar to that used in the Occupied Territories. We have no evidence that British-made equipment licensed for export since this Government came to office in 1997 has been used by the Israeli forces against civilians in the Occupied Territories during the recent violence. Since this Government came to office in 1997, no export licence has been approved for tear gas or rubber bullets.

The Government has called on Israel to use non-lethal force wherever possible. One of the Mitchell Report's recommendations was that Israel should ensure that the IDF adopts and enforces policies and procedures encouraging non-lethal responses to unarmed demonstrators. They should adopt tactics of crowd control that minimise the potential for deaths and casualties and should ensure that the stated values and standard operating procedures of the IDF instil the duty of caring for Palestinians as well as Israelis, consistent with the Ethical Code of the IDF. Israel has accepted the Committee's report.

UK involvement is practical as well as political. The UK's total assistance to the Palestinians, including contributions to UNRWA (the UN Relief and Works Agency) and via the EU, is generally around £25 million per year. In 1998 (the latest available OECD figure) it was £28.4 million. This year it will be substantially more.

Please be assured that the Government remains closely engaged in efforts to urge both parties to consolidate the cease-fire and build confidence, in the context of a renewed political re-engagement, aimed at an agreement based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the principle of 'land for peace', security for Israel within recognised borders and an end to occupation.

**Pat Phillips**  
**Near East and North Africa**  
**Department**

Mr Dangoor's reply:

Dear Ms Phillips

**T**hank you for your letter dated 2 August stating British policy regarding the Middle East, which I am unable to accept and totally reject.

1. Her Majesty's government policy regarding the Jewish National home soon after the Balfour Declaration has been to harass Jewish immigration into Palestine and to create ill-feeling between Jews and Arabs. The problem you are talking about is not between Israelis and Palestinians.
2. It is a regional problem which came into being with the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the granting of all its Middle East territories to the Arabs. The Jews of the region had a right to a share of that territory which can be symbolised by the total area of Palestine.
3. In 1921 the late Winston Churchill gave Trans-Jordan to Emir Abdullah without any conditions. That was the moment of the partitioning of Palestine when Trans-Jordan should have become the National home of the Palestinian Arabs.
4. You spoke of occupied territory but you don't mention who you think it belongs to. In view of the fact that the Arabs of Palestine as well as the neighbouring Arabs refuse to live at peace with Israel, I consider that Israel is justified in claiming the total area of geographical Palestine, west of the Jordan.
5. You have the cheek to speak of the right of Palestinians to return to Israel and thus destroy the Jewish state from within. You seem to forget that in 1950 there was an exchange of population when a million Jews from Arab countries went to Israel in exchange for the million Arabs who had left Israel. Such exchange took place between India and Pakistan, Germany and Poland and many other neighbouring countries after the war. You must be living in cuckoo land if you think otherwise.
6. You speak of resolutions 242 and 338; these and other resolutions were totally and repeatedly rejected by the Arabs. How come now you want to bring them to life again?
7. You speak of "land for peace". Surely the Arabs have all the land – 10 million square miles of it against the Israeli's 10,000. Do you seriously and honestly believe that Israel should give some land to the Arabs?
8. You seem to think that when Palestinian leaders murder

...innocent Israelis by training and sending suicide bombers to supermarkets and nightclubs, that that is alright and is not against international law, but when Israel targets the perpetrators of these murders you condemn her action and say that it is against international law. Such hypocrisy does not fit the traditional character of the British people.

9. Regarding Jerusalem; you seem to think that divided Berlin should have been united, but united Jerusalem should become divided. As for freedom of worship to all faiths; when East Jerusalem was in Arab hands, Jews were not allowed to worship in their holy places and were driven out of their homes. There is perfect freedom of worship to all concerned in Israeli hands.
  10. There is strong evidence that Her Majesty's government played an active and direct part in the Holocaust and this is now being researched to bring to the surface what really is going on in your Foreign Office.
- Peace in the Middle East must be global and all the Arab countries that went to war against Israel have to step in and contribute in land, wealth, and other resources to solve the endemic problem between Jew and Arab. ♦

~~~~~ § § § § § ~~~~~

**To Rt. Hon. Jack Straw MP  
Foreign Secretary**

Thank you for your recent letter. Isn't it a shame that Great Britain, who promised the Jews to restore their national home in Palestine, should now be in the vanguard of those seeking to destroy it? ♦  
**Naim Dangoor**

## The world in a village

If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look something like the following...

There would be:

57 Asians  
21 Europeans  
14 from the Western Hemisphere, both north and south  
8 Africans

52 would be female  
48 would be male

70 would be non-white  
30 would be white

70 would be non-Christian  
30 would be Christian

89 would be heterosexual  
11 would be homosexual

6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth and all 6 would be from the United States

80 would live in sub-standard housing  
70 would be unable to read  
50 would suffer from malnutrition

1 (yes, only 1) would have a college education  
1 would own a computer

When one considers our world from such a compressed perspective, the need for acceptance, understanding and education

becomes glaringly apparent. The following is also something to ponder...

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness...you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation...you are ahead of 500 million people in the world

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep...you are richer than 75% of this world

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace...you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy

If your parents are still alive and still married...you are very rare, even in the United States and Canada

If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing in that someone was thinking of you, and furthermore, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all

Someone once said: What goes around comes around

Work like you don't need the money  
Love like you've never been hurt  
Dance like nobody's watching  
Sing like nobody's listening  
Live like it's Heaven on Earth

**Sent by Robert Khalastchy ♦**

~~~~~ § § § § § ~~~~~

## Media Bias Against Israel

The world community must be made aware of how biased the international media, chiefly CNN, the BBC, the New York Times and almost all the French and the British media are towards Israel. It has been a longstanding fact of life, and we have almost become accustomed to it.

But on a recent visit to Europe, and the spate of serious anti-Semitic attacks, including the burning of synagogues (8 in France, with 26 more failed attempts, and attacks even in Britain!) have convinced me, and others I spoke with, that we are facing a much graver situation now. The media is not only waging a war on Israel, but on the Jewish people.

By presenting Israelis as wilful murderers of children it reawakens old atavistic anti-Jewish attitudes that in the past resulted in terrible tragedies. Urgent measures should be taken to counteract this media bias.

**Daniel Doron  
Director  
The Israel Center for Social &  
Economic Progress**

**email:** [ddoron@bezeqint.net](mailto:ddoron@bezeqint.net)

**Scribe:**

There is no doubt that Arab oil money plays an important part in swaying the sympathies of radio, television and the press. A massive budget is necessary to put matters right. This is not an easy task. ♦

I would like to know, according to the Shulhan Aruch, and what page, what are the requirements for women to have their heads covered by a hat.

**Ida Prizament**

[1a200@netvision.co.il](mailto:1a200@netvision.co.il)

Answer kindly supplied by Rabbi Abraham Gubbay:

The reference is in Shulchan, Orach Chayim, Chapter 75, sub-heading 2 ♦

*Quote...*

Our hours in love have wings,  
in absence, crutches

Colley Cibber

# Information Centre

## The Ammunition Hill National Memorial Site and Museum in Jerusalem

Extracts from the Report sent by Gad Ben Ari, Director General

**T**he Information Centre of the Struggle for Jerusalem, established two years ago thanks to a generous donation by the Dangoor family, contains a variety of material on the struggle for Jerusalem from the beginning of the 19th century to the present day.

The information is organised according to the following subjects:

Jerusalem from the beginning of the 19th Century until the British Mandate (1917)

The British Mandate (1917-1948)

The War of Independence (1947-1948)

The divided City (1948-1967)

The Six Day War

Jerusalem – the united City

Jerusalem – the centre for the Jewish people

Commemoration and memorial Values – in battle and in daily life

### ACTIVITIES

Every week, schoolchildren, youth, families of fallen soldiers and visitors to the Memorial Site make use of the resources at the Information Centre. Students, researchers, tour-guides and the members of the public-at-large who are interested in the period are also served by the Centre and the number of its visitors is constantly growing.

The Information Centre is composed of three complementary sections:

**THE STUDY LIBRARY** – containing thousands of books, periodicals, brochures and flyers, some bequeathed by such notable personalities as Uzi Narkis and Motta Gur.

**THE ARCHIVES** – contain a collection of documents, photographs, newspaper clippings, maps, audiotapes and video-

tapes. Archive materials include soldiers' eyewitness accounts, materials from study days and other activities held at the site and so forth.

**THE COMPUTERISED DATA BANK** – is part of the Information Centre, but stands as a project on its own. The material in the library's other two sections in the process of computerisation and multi-media productions are being developed.

From The Ammunition Hill National Memorial Site and Museum  
Dedicated to the Reunification of Jerusalem during the Six Day War, 1967

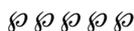
Thank you for the information you sent us about - The Scribe.

We made this information available to the visitors of our DANGOOR LIBRARY at Ammunition Hill.

We also sent the information to "Yad ben Zvi" - one of the important institutions in Jerusalem, which investigate the History of the Jewish communities around the world. ♦

**Jerusalem**

**Yoram Tamir  
Director**



**Y**ou carried a book review by Anna Dangoor on Jeffrey Pickering's Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez (Read review). I would like to read this but am unable to locate it in the listings (Amazon, etc.) I would be grateful if you could confirm the publisher and publication date or the ISBN.

**Barry Alexander United Kingdom**  
mailbox@barry-alexander.co.uk  
**Scribe:**

The publisher for Jeffrey Pickering's book is Macmillan, 231 pp, priced at £42.50, 0333 69526 7

There is another book which may be of interest to you, namely: Demise of the British Empire in the Middle East

Britain's response to nationalist movements, 1943-55

Michael J Cohen and Martin Kolinsky, editors

212 pp, Cass., £39.50, 0714 64804 3 ♦

From the pages of history:

## Moslem conquest of the Middle East

**I**n the Byzantine state there was constant hatred between Christians and Jews and this intensified Jewish hope for help from Iranian side. In 556 Justinian faced a Samaritan-Jewish uprising in Palestine as also did Justin II in 578.

In September 610 when the Iranian army of Khusro II drew near Antioch, the Jewish community rose in rebellion but was put down. At Tyre & Acre the Jews attempted to support the invading army and suffered in retaliation. The invaders' route from Damascus to Caesarea passed through the heart of the Jewish settlements. Jews from all parts of the country joined in the struggle and Jewish support greatly facilitated the invasion.

In April 614 Iranian units and Jewish detachments stood before the holy city. Zachariah, the Christian patriarch organised the defence. The siege lasted 20 days. The victorious army massacred "60,000" Christian inhabitants and burned many churches. The Iranian general selected 37,000 skilled workmen for deportation to Iran. According to the eyewitness account of strategies, the Jews offered to ransom Christian captives if they would accept Judaism.

After the Iranian army left with the Christian captives, the Jews destroyed the rest of the churches in the city as part of their effort to "sanctify" it once again. They apparently renewed the sacrificial offerings.

Shortly thereafter the Iranians declined to extend to the Jews the right of self-government and of rebuilding the Temple and became hostile to them possibly through the intervention of Christian court officials in Ctesiphon in 617 they punished the Jews who had participated in the slaughter of Christians and forbade Jewish settlement in Jerusalem. Iran thus sacrificed the Jews in an effort to seek reconciliation and friendship with the Byzantine court. They permitted the Christians to rebuild the ruined churches. The Iranians may have been willing to leave Palestine in Jewish hands if they were numerous enough to control it but being a minority of 10% to 15% the Jews could hardly do so. As they would not agree to co-operate with the Iranians to restore normal conditions for all the population, the Iranians had to turn to the Christians for support.

Heraclius re-occupied Jerusalem in 627. When in 637 the Moslem armies invaded Palestine, the Jews there generally sided with the Moslem cause.

**by Dr Jacob Neusner**  
**A History of the Jews in Babylonia**  
**Vol. V., Page 122 ♦**

# The Sassoon's Return Visit to Baghdad

A Diary by Mozelle Sassoon

In September 1910 Mrs Farha Sassoon and her children undertook a trip from Bombay to Baghdad via Basrah.

On the voyage to Basrah, they were joined by Sir William Willcocks in Karachi, who built the Asswan Dam in Egypt.

On the way to Baghdad, they stopped at Ezair to visit the Shrine of Ezra the Scribe (Ezra Ha-Sofer).

Flora's daughter, Mozelle Sassoon (1884-1921) kept a detailed diary of the whole journey, which continues:-

**Tuesday, 27 September –**

Before entering Baghdad we saw the bridge of boats which opens and closes to let river traffic through. As we were going in the balam, we passed Aunt Hannah's house and saw her on the veranda with several members of her family, and her daughter Rebecca Daniel was looking through her binoculars. Lynch's Baghdad agent took us through two narrow lanes to our house, rented from Mr Fatoohi for £55 for two months. It seems that Mr Fatoohi went to Bombay for a

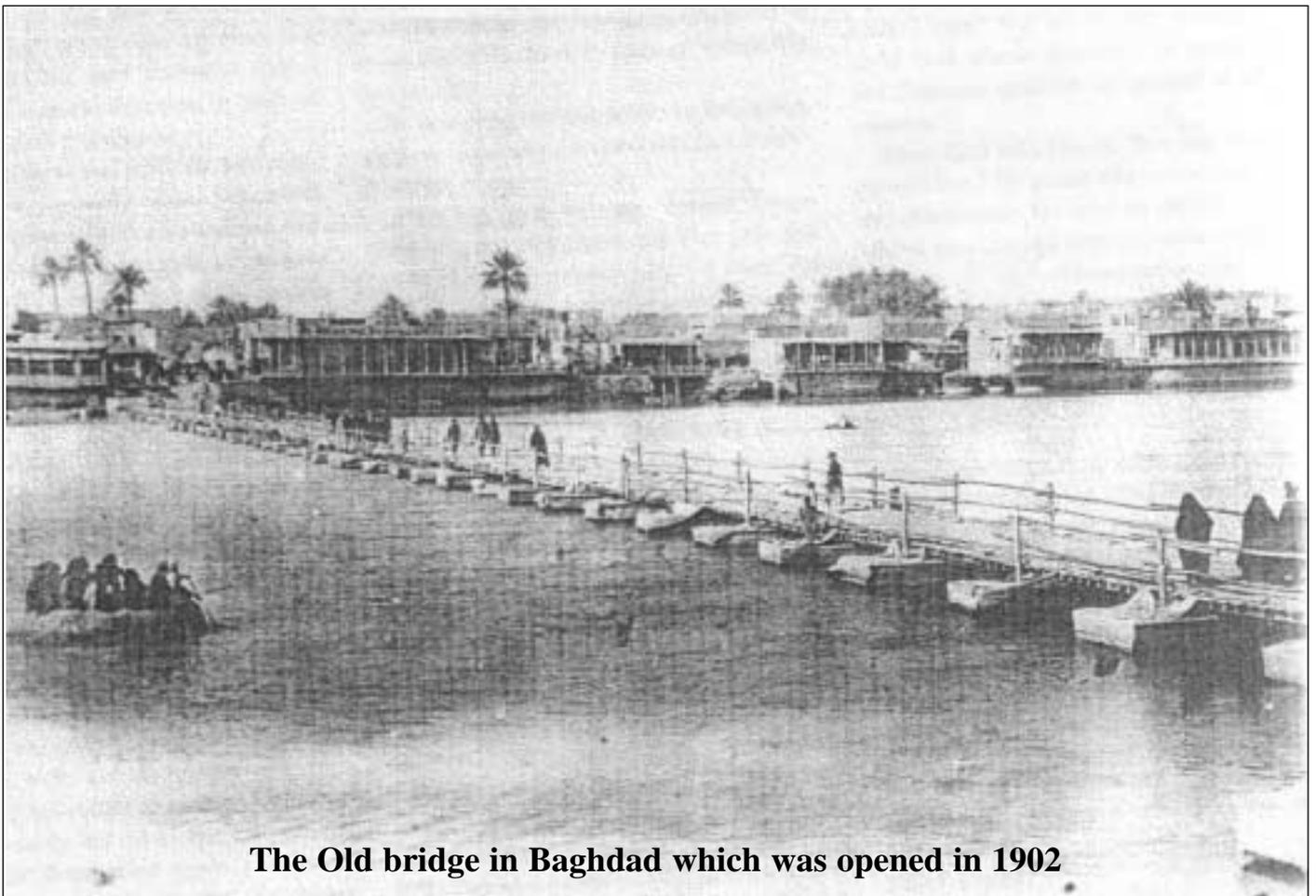


**Mozelle Sassoon  
Daughter of Solomon and Flora**

change, and in his absence his son spent all their money in building this huge palace in very grand style. The drawing-room ceiling and the bedroom walls and doorways were elaborately decorated and coloured glass decorations were used in the verandas. The house costs £5,000 that made the poor father lose his reason.

Soon after we arrived, Hakham Nessim Ben Abu-Reuben arrived and the latter brought a tray with 12 cones of sugar of which we are told it is the rule to take one or two only and return the rest with one or two plates of sweets or other dainties. Aunt Hannah came soon after and lots of other visitors kept on coming the whole morning; among them Abdel Kader Pasha al-Khetheiry. He sent us a big Mosul earthenware chatty (Hebb) for purifying and cooling the water.

In the afternoon visited us Chief Rabbi David Papu, Hakham Moshe Shamash, Hakham Abraham Hillel, Hakham Yitshaq Abraham Mjaled. It was a wonderful group; they are all so handsome and all have snowy white hair, as well as Hakham Ezra Dangoor Hayyu and Hakham Yaacob Yoseph Hayeem and others. David Basoos has sent Ezekiel Saltoun to be our buyer of provisions (meswaqchi) and shohet for us. Mr Langridge, Lynch's agent, says one watchman will be quite enough and he will act as a servant, as Baghdad is quite safe and he can sleep at night. ☞



**The Old bridge in Baghdad which was opened in 1902**

**Wednesday, 28 September –**

A few visitors came very early. Among them Hakham Sasson Smooha Hayyu, a previous Chief Rabbi and Saleh Elyshaa. Meir Somekh, only surviving brother of Moreno (Stayee) Hakham Abdullah Somekh also called.

**Thursday, 29 September –**

We went to Midrash Talmud Torah School to examine three classes in Hebrew dictation and grammar. Hakham Ezekiel of the Alliance School looks after it all. The Chief Rabbi who presided at the examination was there as well as Hakham Sasson Smouha. Then we went on the balcony (Tarma) and saw the boys assembled in the courtyard, and David took a snapshot of them. They sang Turkish and Arabic songs and Hakham Ezra Dangoor made a Meshabairakh and Mamma promised them Turkish £20 for a poultry dinner for the boys. The children were all in new khaki suits given by the Wali, costing T£50 and we saw some suits being made there.

Today Hakham Abraham Dangoor and Hakham Ezra Cohen called.

At 6.30 we ordered a landau and drove to Bab-el-Shargee. Mr Saul E. M. Hayeem came as a guide. It was a drive through narrow lanes and bazaars, across awful roads full of holes and ditches, and dust was like a fog around us. Bab-el-Shargee (South Gate) is a big plain with some trees in the distance – and forms the Hyde Park or Bois of Baghdad. On the return journey we drove through Menahem Salman Daniel's bazaar – he used to let it and the government arranged with him that if he died without leaving any children that they would take it. He was the husband of Rebecca, Aunt Hanna's daughter. After he died in 1891 the bazaar was taken over by the government. After that we passed the Serai by an asphalt road, and many cafés, which are brightly lit up. Nearly everyman in Baghdad spends the evenings at the cafés. We had innumerable visitors again today. Abdel-Kader Pasha invited David to go for a drive with him tonight, so he met him near the café and went for a drive in the same hired landau that we had, and ended off at his house, where there were singing and dancing in the drawing room, by Jewish actresses and Mohamedean actors.

**Friday, 30 September –**

We got up very early and were ready to go to Yehoshua Kohen Gadole (Joshua the High Priest). We had to cross the river by balam, as the bridge was open to let the Hamidiya, (the boat we came on) to get through on its return journey. On the other side (Hathak-el-Sob) two landaus were awaiting us. We drove to the Shrine accompanied by Saul Hayeem through a dusty barren desert – just a quarter hour's drive. This building is quite small. We took off our shoes and went inside and we hooked on the tomb the covering that we brought with us and put as well the bells on each corner. We lit candles and David and Saul Hayeem read the Kaddish and David read the Hashkaba for Papa. We could only read Shama'a-na Yehushua around the dome; the rest was all effaced and the whole place was spoilt when the Turks took possession of it in 1891; but now the new Wali is going to give it back to them. On our way back, we passed Zobeida, Haroun-el-Rashid's favourite wife's tomb, which is pineapple shaped.

When we got back we found that D. Bassouses had sent us jeradeq and Shabbath bread. ☞



**Ship to shore transfer by guffa-a craft which was already obsolete at the time of Noah.  
The river steamer is in the background.**

*Courtesy of Freddie Khalastchy*

Saturday, 1 October –

**W**e got up early. David went before us to the Great Synagogue, where the service began at 5.30 and we got there at 6.30 accompanied by Ezekiel Saltoun, our steward, who had already finished his prayers at an earlier Synagogue. We were conducted up to the ladies' gallery behind the Tebah, where we had seats arranged for us by Mrs David Basoos. All the ladies were covered with their Ezzegh and Khwili and it was impossible to make them up; they all sit on the floor, and it is such a tight fit. They all crowded around us, and in the afternoon a visitor told us that it was not only to see us, but to study the latest fashions also. The gentlemen prayed in the open courtyard, without any roof, which they generally use in the summer, and behind is the covered Synagogue, which is used during the winter or when the service is going to be late and it will be sunny. The service was conducted by Hakham Ezra Dangoor himself, his Hazzanouth is considered the best in the country. The Synagogue was simply packed. There were 26 Hekhaloth. David was called up to the Sefer, (Saleh Elishaa

Sassoon gave his turn to him, as he always read it) and made a Meshabairakh of T £2 and they did the Hashkaba for dear Papa Solomon David Sassoon. Prayers were over at 7.15. Here the Hazzan reads the whole Parasha – only the Maftir is read by the Olé and all the Congregation join in the Haftara so that the principal reader's voice is not heard.

On our way back Mrs Basoos insisted on our stopping at her house for a few minutes. They showed us their Sirdab, where people spend the day during the great heat. It is a cellar. Sirdab is a compound Persian word meaning "cold water", it being the practice in these parts to keep cold water stored in cellars. Then we went to Aunt Hannah's house where we saw the white Luzina tray and a pair of anklets which was sent to her granddaughter by her fiancé on the occasion of their engagement.

It was a tremendous tray. I am sure it must have measured a few yards round and the Luzina was about 1/2 foot thick. We tried to move it a little but could not; it was such a deadweight, composed of sugar and almonds with cardamom. They tell us such a tray costs from T£4 to

T£5 and if a bride does not receive it, she feels hurt. It is then distributed and the friends and relations are thereby informed of the engagement. We then came home to breakfast, and soon after the influx of visitors began. More came after lunch. Mrs Semha Sasson Somekh of Amarah stayed on for tea and Habdala. After prayers Hakham Nessim Ben Abu Reuben stayed to dinner.

We slept on the roof for the first time. It was delightful and the stars looked beautiful. So we tried the Sardab and the roof on the same day. I had always wondered what sleeping on the roof was like.

The young ladies here do a lot of embroidery (broderie anglaise and raised embroidery chiefly) and also embroider by machine,

Sunday 2nd October –

**A**fter breakfast at 8 we went in two landaus to Muadham by such a dusty, shaking, bone-breaking drive through an immense desert. On our return we passed Uweina, which is the place where the milk come from, where they farm the cows, and we drove through Abu Sifein where the



Seated, Senior Rabbis of Baghdad

Most of them past or future Chief Rabbis who were entertained to dinner by the Sassoons.

Left to right: Yitzhaq Abraham Mjalel; Sasson Elia Moshe Halewi (Smouha); Abraham Hillel; Moshe Shlomo Dawid Shamash; Ezra Cohen; Shmuel Abraham Mjalel  
Standing behind are their pupils

...poorest Jews live, and Henouni, the shopping area. We got back at noon very tired.

After lunch Hakham Yaacob and Hakham Yoshua did the Hettara for us.

At 6.15 Abdel Qader Pasha took us to the Wali Nazem Pasha, Turkish governor of Baghdad. We ushered ourselves into his presence on the Terrace. The Wali speaks only Turkish and French and the Arabic was translated by Abdel-Qader Pasha. The Wali is about 60 and has been only 5 months in Baghdad. He showed us the plans made by a French architect, Goddard, for a new gate for the Serai and other improvements thereabouts.

**Monday, 3rd October –  
Eve of Rosh Hashana**

**A**t 5.30 we all went to the Great Synagogue where we sat by ourselves in a Hekhal on a side. The prayers were read very quickly and not word by word as in Bombay.

At home we read Mishna before dinner. Mrs Basoos sent us holy-day bread and Saleh Elishaa Benjamin Sassoon sent us apple jam for Yehi Rasson and two bottles of old kiddush wine which we used tonight.

**Tuesday 4th October –  
Rosh Hashana 5671**

**W**e got up early and went to the Great Synagogue. Grandpapa, Sheikh Sassoon's Sefer was brought out as Sefer Rishon. It is contained in a beautiful chased silver case "Tiq", much tarnished with age. He dedicated it in the year 1793 and made a condition that it should be brought out first for Kol Nidre and every holy-day including the Festivals and Hol Hamoed and Shabbath Jethro, Beshallah and Weth'hannan and one of the direct descendants from the paternal side is to be called up to the Sefer and lights the Hanukkah in the Synagogue. Our family here have the original document in their keeping and it is signed by the Rabbis of those days. A few years ago, others, among them Sassoon Hayeem Moorad, wanted to do away with this time-honoured right and use their Sefarim, but this document was produced, and Hakham Yosef Hayeem also affixed his signature to it. (They say the scroll got worn out and has been changed). The descendants of Abu Reuben also have a right to sit in the middle Hekhal which is the principal one and where our ancestor



**The Shrine in Baghdad of Joshua, the High Priest (said to be deuterio Isaiah) with Chief Rabbi Hakham Ezra Dangoor.**



**Chief Rabbi of Baghdad Hakham Dawid Papou at the time of the visit**

...Sheikh Sassoon sat. As a rule Saleh E.B. Sassoon exercises these rights, and on this occasion he gave them all to David. When they started the school service, Sasson Moorad and others took his Sefer there. On our return we stopped at Mrs Basoos to give the crowd time to diminish and got home at about 10. David went to the Hathima to Saleh E. D. Sassoon's, quite near. They began at 11 and it lasted till 2. David came home for lunch and went back. During the afternoon many visitors called and stayed late. We read the Mishna.

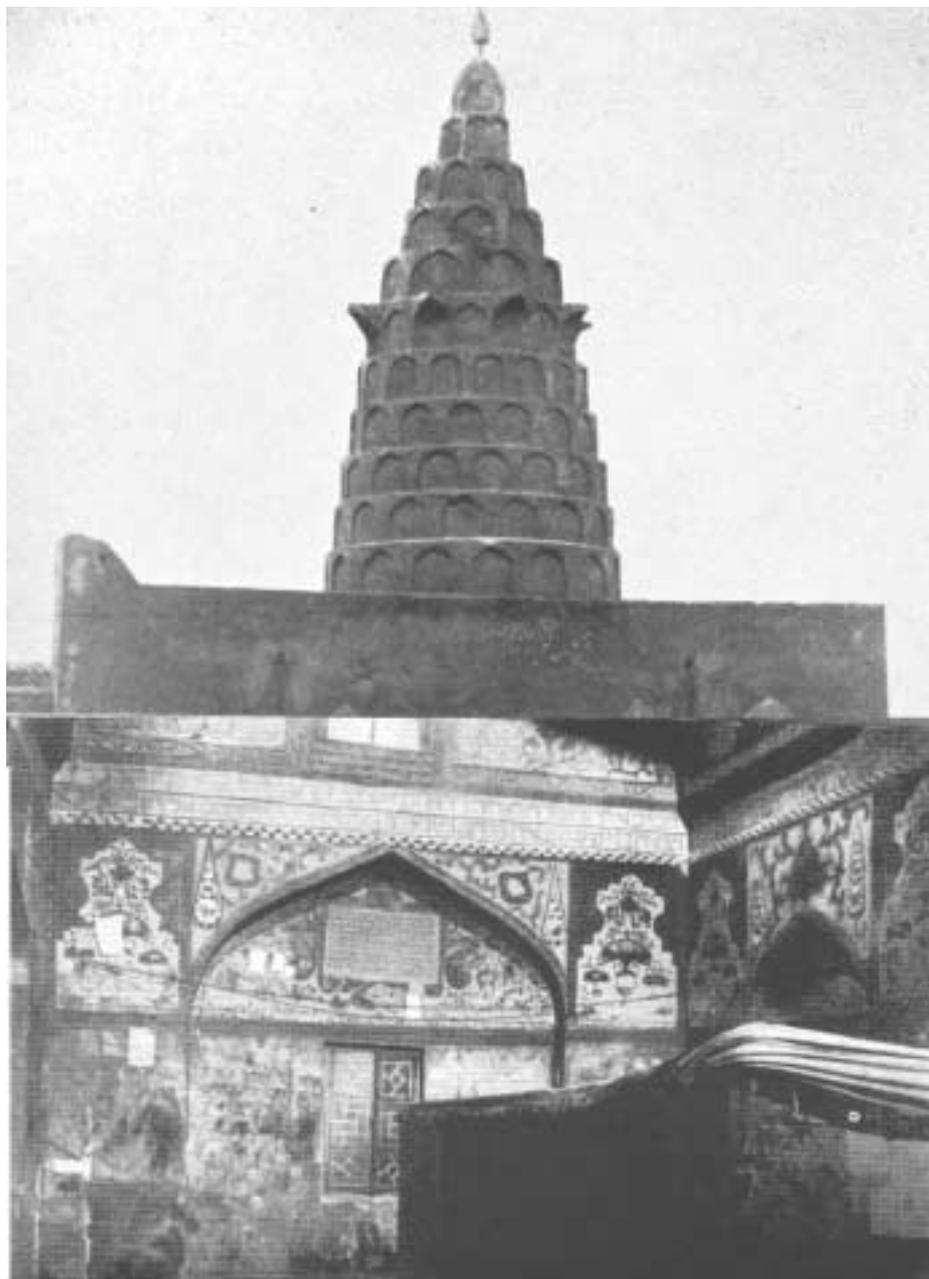
**Wednesday, 5th October –**

**W**e all went to the School Synagogue today, which building was given by Grandpapa Sir Albert and has a wing given by Menahem Saleh Daniel. The gentlemen prayed in the open courtyard, which the children use as a playground. We sat on the veranda near the Chief Rabbi's wife. We got home at about 9. It seems on Rosh Hashana people do not pay visits, but we had heaps of calls, as they find us so "irresistible, tempting and charming" as Farha's sister said.

The Wali's A.D.C. called with the Wali's card, but stayed only a few minutes as the influx of ladies was so overpowering that he fled!

**Thursday, 6th October –**

**T**his morning soon after 8 we all went in two landaus to the Bab-el-Wustani to see the Review of the troops in honour of the "Eed" at the end of Ramathan as the Wali's guests. We went and took our seats in a large tent, lined in red, yellow and blue. They brought sherbet and at about 9.30 we and the others (3 European men, some Arab Sheikhs and some Turks) went to a fenced-off enclosure, in front of which, the infantry, cavalry and the artillery marched past. There were 4000 soldiers among them there being 450 Jewish conscripts. These were all in khaki suits, with the Eguel on their heads, the kerchief arrangement hanging down, protecting their necks from the sun. They did not look well turned out and marched badly. Some of the Arab ponies were very fine, but did not look well-groomed. The band played some monotonous tunes the whole time. Rachel and the others remained outside walking about, and Mamma, David and I returned to the tent after the parade. After a little while the Wali Pasha came to the tent (he had been watching the review on horseback) and shook hands with Mamma and me



**The interior and exterior of the Shrine of the Prophet Ezekiel**



**The restored Shrine of Ezekiel, now in the hands of the local Moslems  
Picture supplied by Mr Shaul Sasson**

...and salaamed all the gentlemen and then sat down, and the gathering dispersed after a few minutes. After the serving of rose coloured drinks. The Chief Rabbi had also come while the Parade was going on, with his son and when the Wali came he came forward to shake hands, but he only salaamed all round. An Arab Sheikh had been sitting near Mamma and talking to her and he told her that she is "like a queen; she has so much information and knowledge". Sheikh Saadon, who has come to Baghdad after 30 years, was there and had a seat of honour in the centre of the Assembly. He has two hundred thousand followers under his control and Sheikh Amir el Najd has two lacs (20,000), and they are both very powerful chiefs.

On our way back we called on Hakham Jacob and his mother (widow of Hakham Yosef Hayeem) at the family mansion near the Henouni and we saw many members of the family there. We asked Hakham Jacob to enquire if the Chief Rabbi was in and from there we went to call on him. He said he had nothing good enough to present to Mamma, so he would give her his photo as a souvenir. He has had it taken in full dress, and then he brought the coat to show us and put it on with his two orders.

**Friday, 7th October –**

**T**oday we ate Za'arur which look something like cherries, but are very insipid. There is a saying – Ja el za'arur wa kassah el khairat (when za'arur comes it terminates the fruit season).

Today we were all asked for tea at the English Club.

Mrs Lorimer, the British Consul's wife, who was there, asked Mamma to her bi-monthly garden party tomorrow but we are not going. (I am writing this on the 9th of December, so after two months I cannot remember who dined with us).

**Saturday, 8th October –**

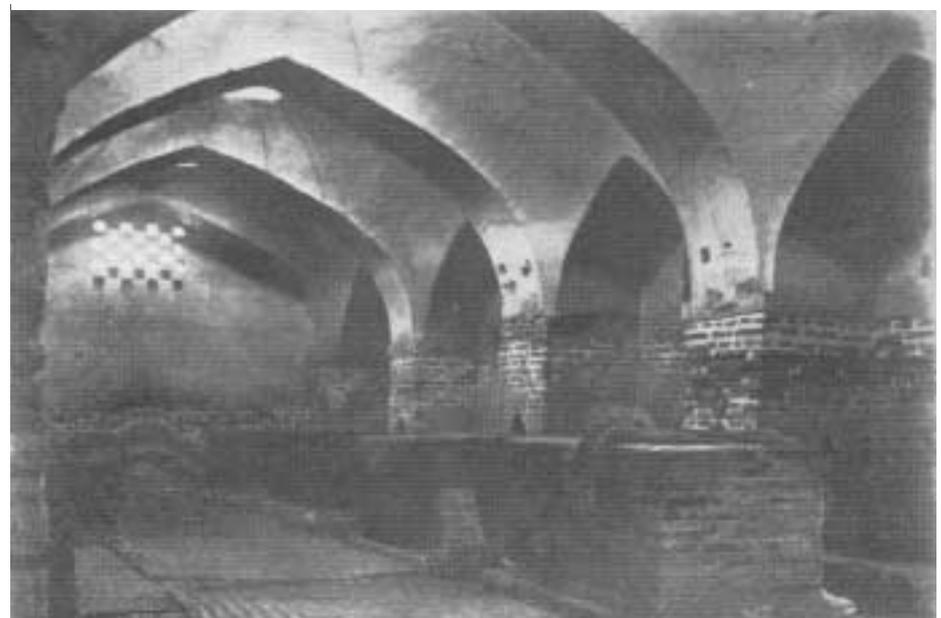
**W**e got up at 5 – and we all went to the Alliance School Synagogue. The service was over at 7.15. After breakfast Mamma, Rachel, David, Diana and I began by calling on Mr and Mrs Menahem Saleh Daniel and Mr and Mrs Sasson Saleh Daniel at their large double riverside mansion. Mr M D has two orders from the Sultan Abdel Hamid and both the brothers are known as Effendia. They have a pretty garden, in which we saw oleanders (defla), roses, carnation trees and violet plants. Mrs Rebecca Daniel is

related to us. Menahem Effendi had come to see us some days ago on his return from Hillah and Mamma had a telegram from his son Ezra on Rosh Hashana. He knew us in Bombay in 1900. Mrs Sasson Daniel and her daughter Regina, a schoolgirl are very quiet, as also Mr Sasson Daniel. Mrs Menahem and Mrs Sasson were both in Arabic dresses with caps and scarves round the chin (Fez and Lachag), but the former had an abaya over her head also; it is the first time that I have seen it worn thus. It is customary for ladies of good family to wear an abaya indoors and an izzagh out

of doors. She is very particular and when she travelled to Europe and Egypt she had her cook with her and would not even eat the Shehita of several places. Once she went for her son's health and once for her husband's. We then went to Beit Abu Reuben which has an enormous courtyard and used to be the finest and largest house in Baghdad, but now it is in a sad condition, and quite void of its splendours. Grandpapa, Sheikh Sassoon, the Nassi, lived there over 100 years ago. A few branches of the family are living there now. We had met Meir Somekh on the way and Mamma told him to lunch



**Entertained at Hilla. Left to right: Seated: Rachel Sassoon (Lady Ezra); Sasson Daniel Effendi; Farha Sassoon; Mrs Hayim; Jacob Hakham Saleh Somekh; near Farha Sassoon on the floor, her daughter. Mazeltov. Standing behind, fourth from left: Saleh Sasson Daniel with two policemen and servants.**



**The underground tombs of the Geonim**

...with us today and he agreed, so today suddenly we discovered lunchtime that he had left after calling, and Mamma was so sorry that she had not told him again (after a few days when we got to know him better he told us he saw the fire in the kitchen and he could not understand and did not like to ask, so would not eat here, so Mamma explained to him that the Goy did it).

Mr and Mrs Yehouda Zelouf and their little girl , Flora, Hakham Sasson Smouha, Mr Elias Elishaa and Mr Saul E. M. Hayeem stayed to lunch here. During the afternoon we had a great many callers. In the evening Diana went for a boat sail with Hougui's and Moshi's families. After sunset, Rebecca Menahem Silman called and asked Mamma to dine with her tomorrow evening. Mamma tried to tell her that we could not come, but she would not listen, so accepted.

**Sunday, 9th October –**

The ex-German Consul called. He was charmed with the house and said he had no idea there was one like it in Baghdad. The headmaster of the

Alliance School called and related to us about his Babylon trip. He and 20 or 30 of the school teachers went with, and Mrs Menahem and Mr and Mrs Sasson Daniel as their guests. They went to Babylon and Kifil, the site of Ezekiel's Shrine. They had a delightful fortnight.

After a boat outing we went to Rebecca at 8 o'clock for a large dinner party, We waited a long time, and we did not know that Rebecca was waiting for us to say that we had rested sufficiently and were ready for dinner. At last we sat down at the table. There were some hired waiters and also a "party cook".

The menu was as follows:- soup, stewed fish (Shebbout), lamb cutlets and green peas, tomato mahashas, home-fed roast geese, rice pillau with raisins and almonds, gombo (okra or bamia) stew and green beans stew and roly poly pudding. Everything except the roast was made of mutton. It was a very long menu. There were several kinds of sweets and preserves and the fruit was very good. The plates were continually changed, even between the fruits. We all walked home after 11. They sent a num-

ber of lantern bearers with us besides our own men. Mamma told Rebecca it was a beautiful party and she must have taken so much trouble over it. She said she does not do a thing, the servants do everything in her house. The flowers on the table were very pretty.

**Monday, 10th October –**

Today we made return visits to many relatives and friends. In the afternoon we had more callers at home.

**Tuesday, 11th October –**

At 8.30 David went to see the Great Synagogue with Saleh Elishaa. He has asked them to allow him to dig under the brickwork to find some old records, which they buried there. They have agreed and he is to build up the mounds again. At 9 Rebecca came over to say that Abdel Jabbar Effendi, the greatest lawyer here, was coming to call and he arrived at 9.30, accompanied by Shaoul Shashoua and Yosef Shemtob. He, Abdel Jabbar is an Armenian. He went to Bombay



**The British Residency in Baghdad with the gunboat "Comet" moored in front on the Tigris.**

Painting by Renée Dangoor

...with Fatoohi our landlord, and before he had been there a week, the Turkish Government wired to him to return at once, as he had no business to leave without orders, because he has a Turkish title!

We drove to the Mosque of Sheikh Abdel Qader al Gailani in Bab-el-Sheikh. We walked through the courtyard, but couldn't get in to see the tomb because of the crowd. Then we visited the Izzagh factory nearby and ordered some abayas and ezzagh, hand loomed of silk and gold thread with various designs. At 5 we all drove to the British Consulate to tea with Mrs Lorimer. There was a difference of 6 hours and 20 minutes between the English time and the Turkish as the Turkish is always 12 at sunset and the English have the sunset today at 5.40. The house is very nice and is only built on three sides of the courtyard, quite modern and on the river. We went upstairs to the drawing room, and to our surprise we found a real English drawing room, such as we had not seen since leaving Bombay. After tea we went onto the verandas, which are very large, then we went on to the roof and were shown the

roof room where they used to keep the beddings during the hot daytime sun. They always sleep on the roof and enjoy it. There was an Indian soldier there, who was watching for the sunset, as he dips the flag every day at sundown at the sound of the bugle. The Comet, an Indian marine boat is stationed opposite. Mrs Lorimer said that Sir W. Willcocks had been relating our Basrah experiences to them. In the evening Jacob did the Kapparot for us on the covered veranda near the kitchen. There is a scarcity of white cocks this year and they are very expensive. Poor Meir Eliahou is very ill and the operation does not seem to have done him any good. He is so charitable and has done so much good. During his illness, when they carried him upstairs he gave T£5 mitzvah for every step; there were about 20-24 steps.

### Wednesday, 12th October – Kippur's Eve

One piece of news is that Mr Strauss, the American Ambassador at Constantinople (whom Mamma met at Sir Samuel Montagu's dinner when

we were at the Grosvenor Hotel in June 1906) has abandoned his visit to Russia, having been refused a privilege passport, because he is a Jew, and receiving only the usual authorisation issued to Jewish merchants. They subsequently ordered a special permit, but Mr Strauss declined.

At the Great Synagogue they have a 110 years old Parokhet falling to pieces which has a complete plan of the future third Temple, which they bring out only on Yamim Noraim and Semhat Torah. Hakham Yosef Hayeem A.H. who died last year wanted it copied. I think David is going to buy it. On the eve of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur all the Jews visit the cemeteries after morning prayers and the poor people go to the different houses and beg. On the eve of Rosh Hashana though we distributed money they were so troublesome that today Jacob asked Abdel Qader Pasha to send a soldier to stand at the door.

At 9.30 Mamma, Diana, Rachel and I with Hakham Nessim Ben Abu Reuben (on the box) drove to see the Jewish Cemetery (David had another appointment). We felt very sad to see the



**Tallisim (Bab-el-Tellesim) or (Bab-el-Westani), the tower of the ancient Baghdad rampart which was built by Abu Jaffar el Mansour the first founder of Baghdad in the year 730 A.D.**

**This tower was blown down by the Turks on their evacuation of Baghdad 1917.**



**Parents of Farha (Flora) Sassoon – Ezekiel Abraham Gubbay 1824-1896. He left Baghdad to Bombay in 1842 and married in 1853. Aziza 1839-1897 daughter of Abdulla (Albert) David Sassoon. Pictures taken at their wedding.**

...shabbiness and struggling state of the whole place. The community go on working their way eastwards, although here is a vast plain westwards, which originally was the site of the old graves, for fear of exhuming any bones. The name is inscribed on the side where the head goes, and is kept covered with a brick, which can be pulled out when they wish to read the name. The graves are covered with bricks and mud; they are afraid to use stones or marbles, because the graves would be demolished and the materials stolen. The poor Jews – how different are the English and the Armenian cemeteries which have high boundary walls and cypress trees.

**End of Diary**

Ps...  
See Notes on next page ➡



**Solomon D Sassoon, 1875 late husband of Farha**



**Mrs Flora Sassoon in London 1910**

NOTES:

**O**n one occasion during the visits to Mrs Farha Sassoon, 6 Chief Rabbis, past, present and future sat under one roof. It is noteworthy that the visitors did not appear to having been offered the Masgouf Shabbout fish of which Baghdad is famous.

The Turkish pound was a gold Lira worth at the time 12 Indian Rupees or 18 Shillings. We greatly admire the scope and interesting details in the Diary of Mozelle (1884-1921). David Sassoon wrote his own diary which appeared in Hebrew in a book entitled (Massa'a Babel). ↵



**The family of Saleh Elishaa (Sassoon)**



**"Yimma Hannah" (daughter of Yehushoua Gubbay, and cousin of Farha's father) surrounded by family members.**

**From right to left:**

**Standing:** Naima Abraham; Muzli Yehuda; Saleh Yehuda; David Yehuda; Eliahou Yehuda; Khatoun Baroukh; Yehuda Shoua; Saleh Baroukh; Sion Baroukh; Yousef Yehezkel Sasson Zubaida; Farha Yehuda

**Sitting:** Aziza Baroukh; Yehuda Shoua; Seniora "Yima Hannah"; Yehuda Eliahou Yehuda; Habiba Eliahou Yehuda; Rahel Eliahou Yehuda; Muzli Baroukh; Yehuda Shoua; Abdullah son of Aziza; Naima daughter of Aziza; Muzli daughter of Aziza; Salman Abraham Eliahou Yehuda; Reuben son of Aziza; Semha daughter of Habiba; Menashe Abraham Eliahou Yehuda

**Scribe:**

In the short space of 40 years, the following momentous event happened in and around the region:-

- The First World War (1914-1918)
- The Russian Revolution (1917)
- The Balfour Declaration (1917)
- The Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire
- The Dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire
- Iraq given to Arab Rule (1921)
- The emergence of 21 Arab countries, under Mandate
- The Turkish Republic adopts the Latin alphabet (1923)
- The rise of Nazi Germany (1933)
- The Second World War (1939-1945)
- The Farhud in Iraq, hundreds of Jews killed (1941)
- The Holocaust (1942-1945)
- The Independence and Partition of India (1947)
- The creation of the State of Israel (1948)
- The discovery of vast oil reserves in Arab countries
- The forced emigration of about a million Jews from Iraq and other Arab countries (1950)

In 1910, the safest way to travel from London to Baghdad would have been by sea to Bombay and from there to Basrah by local steamer and from Basrah to Baghdad by riverboat, totalling 5 weeks. In 1950, regular airlines took only 5 hours from London to Baghdad. ♦

## Baghdad as a Jewish city

It has often been said that New York is a Jewish city. I think one can safely say the same about Baghdad of the first half of the twentieth century.

To have an idea of the city's demography and the position of the Jews in those five decades, it is enough to glance at these few facts of statistics:

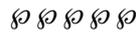
In 1904, the French vice-consul in Baghdad gave the number of Jews in the then Ottoman Baghdad vilayet as 40,000, out of a total population of 160,000.

In 1910, a British consular report estimated the number of Jews in Baghdad as ranging from 45,000 to 50,000.

In October 1921, a British publication quoted these population figures for the city as given in the last official year-

## The Expelling of Nazem Pasha - The Wali of Baghdad

In March 1911, Nazem Pasha received an order from Istanbul terminating his appointment as Governor of Baghdad. There was a public outcry against this order and, despite a wave of strikes and hunger strikes in support of the popular Wali, Istanbul refused to rescind the order and he was replaced by a new Governor Yousef Pasha. ♦



## The National Front

If members of the National Front want to demonstrate or parade they should be allowed to do so to their hearts content in one of the parks, but should not be allowed to demonstrate or parade in areas where people live or work.

N E Dangoor

\*\*

Thank you for your letter of 19 April to the Home Secretary, concerning National Front marches. It has been passed to me to reply.

Your comments have been noted. ♦

**Mr Stuart Moore**  
**Home Office**  
**Policing and Crime Reduction Group**  
**Action Against Crime & Disorder**

book of the Baghdad vilayet: total number of inhabitants, 202,200, of whom: 80,000 were Jews; 12,000 Christians; 8,000 Kurds, 800 Persians; and 101,400 Arabs, Turks and other Muslims.

A proclamation issued by the British military Governor in the early 1919's fixed the number of sheep to be slaughtered daily in Baghdad East (al-Risafa, the more populous half of the city) at 220 for Jewish butchers and 160 for Muslim and other butchers.

In the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce most of the members were Jews and the administrative council consisted of 8 Jews and 8 Moslems. ♦

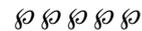
**Nessim Rejwan**  
**Israel**

## Elijah's Chair

The Brit Milah of the first grandson of Rabbi Dr Abraham and Estelle Levy, the son of Julian and Sian Isaac, was celebrated last February at the Lauderdale Synagogue to a gathering of over 200 guests. On that occasion the Chair of Elijah which was donated by the Smouha family was first used.

After the service and ceremony, a lavish breakfast was offered in the Montefiori Hall. Guests were presented with a copy of an English translation of a monograph on Benedictions by Rabbi Isaac Levy of Gibraltar which contains a genealogy of the Levy family going back to the year 1640.

We learn from the interesting chapters of this beautifully produced little book that Grace after Meals can be said in any language. ♦



## Historical society of Jews from Egypt

P O Box 230445, Brooklyn, NY 11223  
Fax: 718-998 2497

FROM OUR PREAMBLE

This organisation shall be known as HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF JEWS FROM EGYPT, and not of Egypt or of Egyptian Jews, but FROM EGYPT for the purpose will be to include all our co-religionists whose lineage have sojourned in the Jewish Communities of Egypt.

The aims of this society are to preserve, maintain, co-ordinate the implementation, and to convey our rich heritage to our children and grandchildren, using all educational means at our disposal to bring into being the necessary foundations.

Passover.....celebrating the birth of our people's Freedom from Egypt and so we learn; our fathers were slaves in Egypt, and if it wasn't for the Almighty's intervention we would have been slaves in Egypt until today.

**Scribe:**

The truth about Passover: Who made us slaves in Egypt? It was none other than Joseph as a result of cornering the grain market. The whole population of Egypt became slaves to Pharaoh. When a new Pharaoh arose (Rameses 1) he released the Egyptians but kept the Hebrews in their bondage. ♦

## Destroying Idols

The move by Afghanistan's religious leaders to destroy the idols of Buddhism is to be applauded. They offend the followers of monotheism, worshippers of the one true God, Creator and Sustainer of our universe, especially Jews and Moslems.

So who is ranged against the courageous Afghan move? It is the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the fundamentalist regime of Iran, the puritan kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the supreme authority of Al Azhar Imam of Cairo. President Hosni Mubarak tells the Afghans that Egypt has not destroyed the pharaonic idols. But the followers of these idols no longer exist, whereas Buddhism is thriving. The tradition of destroying idols goes back to Abraham, ancestor of both Jews and Arabs.

What makes Afghanistan head and shoulders above the rest of Islam? It is the Jewish connection of the Afghan people. "The Afghans have a tradition that they descend from the lost Ten Tribes. They were carried away by Buktunaser. In the book (Taaqati-Nasiri) a native book, it is stated that at the time of the Shansabi Dynasty there were a people called Bani Israel who settled in Ghor, S.E. of Herat, and about the year 622 CE (the Hegra took place that year) converted the Islam by a person called Qais or Kish, who led some

Afghan nobles to Arabia to embrace Islam. Mohammed greeted him as "malik" (king) as he claimed descent through 47 generations from Saul. Qais died in 662 aged 87. All the modern chiefs of Afghanistan claim descent from him. The Afghans still call themselves Beni-Israel. Their claim to Israeli-tish descent is allowed by most Mohammedan writers. King Amanullah Khan once stated they were of the tribe of Benjamin." (Jewish Encyclopaedia).

Additional references: Afghanistan (Khorasan in medieval Muslim and Hebrew sources). Early Karaite and Rabbinite biblical commentators regarded Khorasan as a location of the Ten Tribes of Israel. Afghanistan annals also trace the Hebrew origin of some of the Afghan tribes, in particular the Durrani, the Yussafzai and the Afridi to King Saul (Talut). This belief appears in the 17th century Afghan Chronicle, Makhzan-i-Afghan." (Enc. Jud.)

### Naim Dangoor writes:

Years ago I went to the Afghan Embassy in London to enquire if it was known that the Afghan Royal Family was of Jewish origin. I was told they will find out. Six months later the Royal Family was toppled and the exiled Afghan king still lives in Italy. ♦

## Interfaith Conference Held in Moscow

Taken from:

Academic Response To Antisemitism & Racism in Europe (Arare)

Chairman: Professor Eric Moonman

An interfaith conference was held in Moscow last October and was attended by representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Congress of Jewish Religious Communities of Russia and the Council of Muftis of Russia, as well as from other religious communities functioning in Russia. Scholars from the United States and Europe also participated. Organised by a Russian group which promotes inter-religious dialogue and supported by the government and by the Federation of Jewish Organisations, the Conference was entitled "Search for Paths of Peace and Harmony: Common Responsibility of Christians, Moslems and Jews" and was held in the official residence of the

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. The conference represents the first time that Jewish-Islamic and Jewish-Russian Orthodox dialogue was conducted within Russia on such a high level.

### UNPRECEDENTED PUTIN GESTURE

In an unprecedented gesture to Russian Jewry, President Putin spent 90 minutes at the dedication of a Lubavitch synagogue which had been repeatedly bombed by neo-Nazis. The former KGB officer used the occasion to decry anti-semitism and to laud the revival of Judaism in Russia.

The hate crimes in Russia extend beyond the Jews. African diplomats in Moscow reportedly fear for their safety after being targeted by neo-Nazi skin-heads believed to be working in co-operation with the KKK (Klu Klux Klan) and German extremists. ♦

## Jewish Genealogical Conference

The 21st International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, the largest event of its kind staged outside the United States, has styled itself "London 2001". Some 1,000 delegates attended, including many of non-Jewish background, reflecting the ethnic mix of the speakers, and testifies to the recent explosion of interest in genealogy. The opening up of the archives of the former Soviet Union countries, advances in genetic technology, law suits over restitution of artworks and other property looted during the Holocaust have all contributed to the expanded nature and boundaries of genealogy.

More than 170 leading academics, historians and scientists from across the world addressed Europe's largest ever conference on Jewish Genealogy, which was held in London last July. Among the speakers were –

David Dangoor – Babylonian Jewry  
(Read excerpts of this talk later in this issue)

Rita Bogdanova and colleagues –  
Overview of the Holdings of the  
Latvian State Archives

Lydia Collins – Sephardi Manchester

Professor Yitzhak Kerem – The Jews  
of Salonika and Greek Jewish  
Sources

Ilana Tahan – Jewish Genealogical  
Resources in the British Library

as well as Stephen D Smith MBE,  
founder and director of the Beth Shalom  
Holocaust Centre

The Bible includes much genealogical material, attempting to trace the human family tree from Adam Harishon. Subsequent lists of who begat whom had to do with the need to trace land titles in Israel in accordance with the way the country was divided and allotted to the various tribes by Moses.

Visit the web page: <http://www.jewishgen.org/london2001>

Email: [info.london2001@talk21.com](mailto:info.london2001@talk21.com)

Write: London2001, PO Box  
27061, London N2 0GT, England ♦

# Babylonian Jewry

by David Dangoor

Excerpt of the talk he gave at the 21st Jewish Genealogical Conference, held in London last July

**B**abylonia was one of the main birthplaces of the Jewish people from its earliest times, as well as the place where the foundations of Judaism as we know it today were constructed. The area between the River Tigris and Euphrates, approximating to modern day Iraq, can lay claim to a greater part of our history as a nation and as a religion, than any other place. Not only was it from there that Abraham emerged as the founder of our people on his journey to Israel, but it was here that the Jews had autonomy for most time as a people for over 1,000 years, here that the Babylonian Talmud was created from where it formed the framework for rabbinic Judaism. It was in Babylon that the synagogue and the love of learning grew.

Our story starts in Ur, in southern Mesopotamia, where Abram's father Terah, the head of an Aramean Nomadic family escaped from there in the face of an annihilating attack by Elamite hords attacking Sumaria in about 1960 BCE. An attack in which Ur was destroyed. Terah made his way north with his family to Harran where he died. The succession fell to Abram, his eldest son. Unlike his father, a polytheist worshipping idols, Abram was a monotheist. He broke with idolatry, and turned to the service of the one and only God whom he recognised and by whom he was re-named Abraham. This was not a God restricted to one locality, but the Creator of Heaven and Earth, independent of nature and geographical limitation, and essentially an ethical God to whom justice and righteousness was of supreme concern.

Proceeding south along the eastern bank of the Jordan, he crossed into the land of Canaan to Shechem near Jerusalem. According to Josephus, Abraham was called "The Hebrew" in reference to his ancestor Heber mentioned in the Bible. The Hebrews appear again on the Mesopotamian scene over a thousand years later, when Nebuchadnezzar, the powerful Babylonian King conquered the Kingdom of Judah and captured Jerusalem in 597 BCE, and deported leading Jews to Babylon. After a rebellion by Judah, Jerusalem and the Temple

were destroyed in 586 BCE, and most of the inhabitants were deported.

When the last group of Jews arrived in Babylonia, they found two other groups of Hebrews already there. One group, there for only eleven years, were recent newcomers still learning to cope with a new life.

The other group were the descendants of those deported by the Assyrians in 721 BCE from the northern kingdom of Israel. However, unlike their predecessors, the later exiles of Judah did not assimilate, because they were more attached to their religious traditions. The prophet Jeremiah's advice to the exiles was: build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters, multiply there and do not decrease. And seek the welfare of the City where God has sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord for its peace, for in its peace you will find your peace.

This became the charter for all the diasporas.

Within 48 years of the destruction of Jerusalem, Babylon was conquered by the Persian King Koresh, Cyrus the Great. He allowed the Jews to return home and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Forty thousand did, but the majority stayed in Babylon.

It was the policy of the Achaemenian rulers, from Cyrus down, to tolerate the cults of the subjugated nationalities throughout their empire. Jews in Babylonia worked mainly as farmers as they had in the Holy Land but they also worked as bakers and brewers, weavers, dyers and tailors, shipbuilders and woodcutters. There are records of Jewish blacksmiths, tanners, fishermen, sailors and porters. Street vendors eked out a modest living while men of commerce exported grain, wine, wool and flax, and imported silk, iron and precious stones.

It was at this time that the foundations of the synagogue were laid. The synagogue met the needs of the exiles in more than one sense. It was natural for those living near one another to meet on the days they did not work, the Sabbath, Festivals and Fast days. Without a Temple, they could not sacrifice, but they could sing songs which accompanied the sacrifices and which the scribes had preserved.

In the meantime, the Jewish commu-

nity in Babylon contributed much towards the rebuilding of the structures in Israel. The High Priest Joshua, thought to be Deutero Isaiah and the Prophet Ezekiel are buried in Babylon.

The Babylonian, Ezra the scribe gave Judaism the decisive impulse that eventually produced the Pharisee movement and the rabbinical system. He changed the Hebrew alphabet, and set himself to make the Torah the governing force in Jewish life. It is said of him that if the Torah had not been given to Moses, Ezra would have been worthy to receive it. His shrine (shown on the cover of this issue) stands in Southern Iraq.

In the year 331 BCE, the Achaemenians lost control of Babylonia when their armies were defeated by Alexander the Great in the Battle of Gaugamela near Arbil (Arbela). The Persian troops stationed in the capital Babylon surrendered without fighting and the Macedonian conqueror made a triumphal entry into the old Semitic metropolis. Alexander went on with his swift conquest all the way to India. Two years later he was back in Babylon where he was struck by fever and died there at the age of thirty-two.

Seleucus, one of Alexander's Generals, made himself master of Babylon, and the large Seleucid empire ruled Babylonia for just over two centuries to 126 BCE.

In 126 BCE, forty years after the Maccabian revolt in Israel, the Seleucid empire was driven out from Babylon by the Parthians, another Persian group, whose Arsacid dynasty provided 350 years of reasonably stable Persian rule, which though it had its ups and downs for the Jews, was generally a benign period. The Arsacids were concerned with fostering local support among indigenous populations and so made little effort to impose their culture and religion over them. Palestinian Jewry under the Hasmoneans, and Arsacid Parthia had a common interest in the destruction of the Seleucid Greek power.

At the beginning of the present era there were many conversions to Judaism all over the Middle East. In about 40 CE, in northern Iraq, the Royal Family and many of the people of Adiabene became Jews. It is estimated that there may have been as many as one million Jews around Babylonia at that time. ☛

...However, when in the year 363 the Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate offered Babylonian Jewry to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem if they turned against their Persian rulers, they refused.

Parthian reinforcement saw the establishment of a position called the Resh Galuta which is Aramaic for Head of the Exiles, or Exilarch. The holder of this position exercised government over all Babylonian Jewry and Jewry within the Parthian empire. The holders of the office traced their lineage back through the male line to King David and they passed the position within the family, mostly from father to son for 900 years.

During the Parthian rule the Exilarch had his own courts and prisons and collected taxes on behalf of his administration and the central government. There are even records of capital punishment being meted out. This autonomy continued during Sassanian rule, though the powers of the Exilarch were initially severely restricted until the Jewish government accepted State Law on certain matters such as land tenure and payment of taxes, summarised by the principle of *dina de malchuta dina* (secular law is law) which remains a basic Jewish principle even today.

Most of the fourth century saw Jewish persecution in Babylonia, with many killed, and children given to Mazdean Priests. Jews were even forbidden to light Shabbath candles. When the Sasanians embraced briefly the teachings of Mazdak which included the sharing of property and women, the Exilarch Mar Zutra II expelled the Mazdakites in the year 513, and declared an independent state which lasted seven years, until he was captured and killed in 520.

The idea grew among the Jews of Babylonia that knowledge was an important acquisition. The ignoramus was to be despised, and a man's standing in the community began to depend not so much on family and wealth as on intellectual endeavour and achievement. Young and old became interested in acquiring knowledge. A young man was counselled to sell if necessary all he possessed to marry the daughter of a learned man. Gradually Jews experienced a kind of cultural democracy. The synagogue had eliminated the priestly intermediary, and education made the Torah available to all. The Torah was read and explained on Shabbat, but since farmers lived some distance from synagogues, and could not travel on Shabbat, portions of the Torah were also read on market days, Mondays and Thursdays. In the Holy Land they

read the whole Torah over a three year cycle instead of the Babylonian one year cycle which has prevailed.

Great academies also grew in Nehardea, Sura, and Pumbedita, and while people such as the great Hillel the Babylonian used to go to Jerusalem to study, the centre of gravity of Jewish learning gradually shifted to Babylon. In 219 CE Rav returned to Babylonia and formed the Sura Academy. It was here that the Amoraim over many generations (about three centuries) did their work to explain or complete the Mishna. The word Gemara is from the Aramaic word completion.

The Gemara exists in two versions: the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud, but it is the Babylonian Talmud that has had the greatest influence on Judaism, as we know it. This is partly because it was focused more on issues important in the Diaspora, partly because the Babylonian community governed itself and so the rules had a direct relevance, and also because this resulted in more polishing of the work by repeatedly revisiting and explaining difficult passages. Also the tyranny of Rome in Judea had prevented the completion of the Jerusalem Talmud.

In 641 CE the Muslims conquered Mesopotamia with the help of Babylonian Jewry who had been suffering from Masdakite religious fanaticism. Such great help was given to the Muslims by the Jews that when the Muslims conquered Persia the two daughters of the Shah were taken by the Caliph Omar, who married one and gave the other in marriage to the Exilarch Bustanai. Muslims divided the world into two main domains; Dar Al-Islam (the domain of Islam), and Dar Al-Harb (the domain of war) but in between they introduced the concept of Dar Al-Sulh (the domain of conciliation) which belong to such peoples as Jews and Christians (the people of the Book) called *Dhimmi*s to whom toleration and protection was extended by treaty, in return for protection money called *Jezia*. The life of the Jews of Babylonia under Islam took a turn for the better, partly because of the affinity between the two religions.

What is more, the very expansion of the Muslim empire and the establishment in 762 CE of Baghdad as the capital of the Moslem world, and the seat of the Caliphate, opened up extraordinary opportunities for commerce as well as for the extension of the influence of the Babylonian academies.

As a result, one of the main activities

of the academies of Sura and Pumbeditha and one of the most significant functions of their heads, the Geonim, was answering queries coming from Jewish communities near and far. These answers were given in *Teshuboth*, *responsa*. The questions touched on the whole range of law and the plain meaning of a talmudic phrase or the order of prayers, or points of dogma or history. The answers were often read in public, in synagogues and schools, with copies made and carried to other communities. Subsequently a whole body of collected *responsa* literature evolved. Many of the remote communities of the diaspora survived on the intellectual guidance coming from Babylonia. Many Geonim in the four centuries after the Muslim conquest had a great reputation throughout the Jewish world. One notable among them was Sa'adia Gaon of Sura in the 10th Century who composed a Book of Seasons about the Jewish calendar, an Arabic translation of the Bible for the common people, and a philosophical justification of Judaism. Another notable Gaon was Samuel Ibn Al-Dastur who also had a daughter who was so learned that she taught the students, but had to do so from inside a building through a window, so the students below her could not see her.

During the period of Geonim, and perhaps in part as a reaction to rabbinic talmudic Judaism, a sect of Judaism called the Karaites based on a literal interpretation of the Bible (*Karaim* means scripturalists) was started in the 8th century by Anan Ben-David, a wayward elder brother who was passed over in the position of Exilarch in favour of his younger brother. On challenging this he was sentenced to death, but in prison was advised to offer a bribe and claim a new religion that accepted a place for Jesus and Mohammed and which had a different calendar. It gained many disciples over the following centuries and was the greatest threat that rabbinic Judaism had encountered for many centuries.

During the early years of Islam, the Exilarch as the temporal head of the Jewish community was shown great honour and respect by the Muslims. He would visit the Caliph every Thursday with a grand processional escort of Jews and non-Jews, and a herald in front of him would cry out; Make way before our Lord, the son of David. He would kiss the Caliph's hand and the Caliph would rise and place him on a throne beside him.

Though the Jews' experience of Islam was generally a very positive one they, like all non-Muslims, did suffer ☞

...when their rulers were of a more fanatical disposition. Distinctive and unusual clothing to humiliate them was occasionally the order of the day, as well as restrictions of freedom for non-Muslims. Also the Caliph Haroun el Rashid fought against the Khazars who had converted to Judaism and when he met military setbacks against them he took it out on the Jews of Iraq.

Afghanistan today probably gives an insight into the occasional lurches to fundamentalism that occurred from time to time.

Babylonian influence over other Jewish communities began to wane largely as a result of quarrels among Moslem people themselves and the weakening of the Caliphate.

Baghdad ceased to be the centre of the Muslim world between the 10th and 12th Centuries, but disaster was to strike with the conquest of the Mongols. In 1258 Hulagu, the grandson of Genghis Khan stormed the city. The majority of Baghdad's inhabitants of over 800,000 people (some say as high as two million) including the Caliph and his family was slaughtered and the city given over to plunder and flames, as was the Mongol way

Some accounts suggest that many Jews and other Dhimmis were spared, and thirty years later a Jew called Sa'ad Al-Dawla was made Governor of Iraq. Three years later he was assassinated and the mob turned the Jewish Quarter of Baghdad into a scene of murder and plunder. However two years later an economic crisis compelled the regime to turn to another Jewish physician financier for help. Rashid Al-Dawla's position as minister lasted for two decades but when his master died he was accused by his enemies of having poisoned him, and was executed in 1316.

In 1401 Tamerlane, the last and greatest of the Mongols, conquered Baghdad again with great loss of life including Jewish lives. The Mongol occupation of Iraq brought about the downfall of Babylonian Jewry as a force in the Jewish world.

After turbulent times and a succession of rulers, the Ottoman Sultan, Salim the Savage, took much of Mesopotamia in 1516, and in 1534 the greatest Ottoman, Sulaiman the Magnificent, entered Baghdad accompanied by a number of Jewish scholars and physicians. He is the one who encouraged Sephardi Jews, recently expelled from Spain to settle in his empire. He would ask how the King of Spain could call himself wise and

allow such an important and useful part of his population to leave. He was warmly welcomed by Baghdad's small Jewish community. The Ottomans were on the whole very favourable to minorities including the Jews, as they perceived the main threat to their rule would come from the majority populations.

The Persians re-conquered Baghdad in 1623. Fifteen years later, Sultan Murad IV laid siege to it. On the night before attack he went in as a beggar to survey. In the evening, he knocked at a Jewish door. Decided that a full loaf would be a good omen, he got full loaf and accommodation. The next day Murad captured Baghdad and later enquired what Mrs Parizat, who had given him lodging, would want as a present. At her request, the growing Jewish community were given a large piece of land to be used as a cemetery. After the Revolution of 1958 President Qassem appropriated the cemetery to build the highest tower in the world. He paid no compensation as the community had forgotten to register its ownership in 1930.

However later Sultans let power slip back to the local Pashas under whom the lot of the Jews deteriorated. Emigration took its toll, and during the 18th and 19th centuries plagues of fearful dimensions left the yeshivot half empty, the rabbinate crippled and the community much reduced. The result was the population of Baghdad is not likely to have grown much in the past five centuries. Indeed the Jewish population of the area of Babylonia in 1950 was about the same as it was 2,500 years earlier at the time when Koresh conquered Babylon. This is despite having been many times larger at certain intervening periods.

In 1917 the British entered Baghdad where the Jews of the district now numbered 80,000, among a population of 200,000). The Jews were soon concerned because the British intended to give the Arabs independence. They feared discrimination. Despite assurances from the British who appointed the Emir Faisal as the first King of Iraq, their minority position gradually resulted in handicaps which got worse when Faisal's son, Ghazi, took over. He was more stridently nationalist, and less of a statesman. Under the influence of Nazi propaganda, Jews began to find access to government jobs and institutes of higher learning restricted to them. Zionist activity abroad was creating a growing nationalist backlash at home, and Jews found themselves having to make numerous declarations of loyalty to deal with mounting hostilities.

A pro-axis government took power in the spring of 1941 with army support, and denied British troops access to military bases in Iraq. When British forces came in, this government fled, but the British stayed outside the capital for a few days while the mob set upon the Jews. About 180 were killed and many more injured in the days before a curfew was imposed.

A lull of a few years occurred, but with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the poor showing of Iraqi troops against it, the Jews found themselves facing government victimisation and extortion with confiscation and fines following trumped-up charges. The few who left the country were required to pay huge deposits, and many started to leave illegally across the mountains. Eventually the government introduced a law allowing Jews to leave on the surrender of their nationality, and loss of their assets. It was declared that there was to be an exchange of populations with Palestinian refugees who were to occupy vacated Jewish houses. Two bombs went off, one among Jewish people and another in a synagogue. As a result when the massive airlift to Israel, known as Operation Ezra and Nehemia, took place in 1951, most of the Jews in Iraq got out with little more than the clothes they were wearing. By 1952 over 130,000 had left and only 6,000 remained. Since then most of those have also left by one means or another so that today, apart from about thirty very old Jews, no-one remains from the community that had flourished for thousands of years.

Today the Babylonian Jewish community is roughly estimated at about 300,000 worldwide, out of which about 280,000 are living in Israel. Outside Israel there are about 25,000, mainly in the US and UK.

Babylonian Jewish children were taught at an early age to memorise as much of their family tree as possible – at least to a well-known ancestor, who would remain a landmark for several generations that followed him.

The Bible's emphasis on genealogy was to do with protecting land titles.

Community positions, which once attained, were often held for life, featured in names. The President of a congregation was called Hazzan from Hazzanu (Governor), and that title became a surname for the person and for following generations of the family. The Treasurer was known as the Gubbay, and the Secretary was known as the Shamash. A number of Iraqi Jewish families bear the names Hazzan, Gubbay and Shamash. ☛

...Other surnames referred to places of origin e.g. Shirazi, Karkukli, Hillawi, Mandelawi, Basri, etc. or the profession e.g. Haddad (Blacksmith), Shoheit (Slaughterer), Kateb (Writer=Sofer), Baqqal (Grocer) and Saatchi (Watch repairer), or pedigree e.g. Cohen, Lawi, Nasi, Hakham or Siddiq.

However surnames were not used for much of the time until recently. Instead we used a pattern of first names with one or two distinguishing names threading the line.

Families confined themselves to only a few names which were then repeated in different patterns. Secondary branches established new patterns.

Unfortunately most of the ancient records of our community disappeared in the constant warfare that plagued that region. Perhaps genetic analysis in the coming years will reveal again some knowledge of general genealogical patterns.

In the last three centuries, extensive records were made and are still available. Useful sources of information have been for example the military tax that was levied by the Ottomans from the Jews and which was fully recorded. Some families can date their family tree back to the 17th Century. My own family records go back to around 1700. At that time there was a massive death toll in Baghdad from one of the plagues that decimated the population in that period. New rabbis were brought in, often from Aleppo. My father once came across a person in London who looked identical to a close relative of ours. He asked him his surname which turned out to be Danker, very close to Dangoor. The name apparently is carried by a number of Jewish people from a town in Latvia which was called Dankera, now called Gostini. So perhaps our family came to Baghdad from Spain via Latvia and Aleppo.

Efforts are made to preserve the history and traditions of Babylonian Jewry today. My father created a Foundation called The Exilarch's Foundation to keep alive many traditions of the community.

He has been publishing a magazine of Babylonian Jewry for thirty years with over 4000 copies distributed free all over the world. It covers a vast range of the culture of our community from history and family trees to poetry and literature, politics and current affairs, cookery and familiar proverbs.

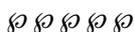
The Scribe is now available on the internet at scribe1.com.

The Exilarch's Foundation has also published a number of editions of the

Baghdadi Haggada which includes the translation in Arabic which used to be sung in full as part of the Seder, with the Arabic written only in Hebrew characters.

The Babylonian Jewry Museum in the town of Or Yehuda near Tel Aviv features a reproduction of an alleyway in the Jewish Quarter of Baghdad around 100 years ago. It also houses temporary and permanent exhibits and hosts educational activities, symposia for artists, etc.

There are associations in Israel of groups of Iraqi origin, for example the Association of Jewish Academics from Iraq which have published many books including a dictionary of the distinctive Judeo-Arabic dialect of Iraq. Apart from distinctive traditions and a distinctive dialect, Iraqi Jews used their own characteristic Hebrew script. ♦



## The Hilda Sofaer Centre

**E**dinburgh House, our own Spanish and Portuguese Residential Care Home for the elderly, is a registered charity which was established in 1747 and is one of the oldest Jewish charities in the UK. It provides accommodation and care for Jewish men and women, with facilities for religious observance. The current building, situated in Wembley, was opened in November 1977. After many years of heavy use it required upgrading and refurbishment, to enable continuing the provision of the best possible levels of comfort and service, which the residents, families, carers, volunteers and staff alike so richly deserve.

The construction work commenced in January 2000, at a cost of £1,100,000. It could not be funded by the government or the local authorities and therefore an appeal to provide the funds was made to Trusts, Foundations and members of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews community, who gave significant support, and the balance was pledged by Elias Sofaer and his family in memory of his late wife Hilda, whose untimely death shocked the Community.

The whole complex therefore is being named The Hilda Sofaer Centre and comprises the refurbished Edinburgh House plus additional bedrooms and facilities as well as a conservatory and a new physiotherapy room. ♦

## Regarding Hakham Shim'on Aghassi

(Issue 73)

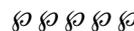
by Edward Yamen - Milan



Hakham Shim'on Aghassi Z'L

**I**take pleasure in sending you herewith a valuable picture which I treasured for scores of years now, of the late Rabbi and which I find as a necessary complement to the article.

Pictures of those who are not anymore with us are fundamental for the sake of recognition, appreciation and identification. It goes without saying that the picture of the Rabbi illustrates in a very clear way a man of significance and genuineness. ♦



## The Mary Nathaniel Golden Hall of Friendship

**T**he Mary Nathaniel Golden Hall of Friendship, The Jerusalem Foundation and the YMCA have inaugurated last July the restored auditorium at the YMCA, Jerusalem, in the presence of the representatives of the major donors and Mr Teddy Kolleck.

A concert was performed in the Mary Nathaniel Golden Hall of Friendship in her memory. ♦

# Two outstanding cousins

by Saeed Bershan

BA Commerce & Economics



Saeed Bershan

I feel very blessed and humble to be able to claim two outstanding individuals among my close relatives. Let me share with you some insight into their lives. Both combine exemplary morals, with a high degree of intelligence.

I will first mention my Uncle Meer Basri, the author, editor, poet and historian. For nigh 75 years now his reputation as a scholar with a superb mastery of the Arabic language has brought him esteem in the foremost literary circles in Iraq. Indeed he has such an astute memory for events, dates and personalities, well-known authors continue to defer to him in writing their books. His prolific powers are legendary as he continues to pen down articles, poems and books – both in English and Arabic – he hasn't stopped since 1933 (he is 90 now). He is regarded by the Iraqi poets and men of culture as one of them. Here in London he still attends scholarly circles where he is feted by his friends the Arabs –indeed they refer to him in a reverential manner (Istath), while his repertoire of books are still being sold all over the world.

He has served the Community with honesty and benefited them in many aspects without any personal remuneration. He has made many speeches and written many articles in newspapers both in Iraq and London, and appeared on radio in both countries.

My other worthy relative is my second cousin on my mother's side. Although a highly successful businessman, Naim Dangoor has remained very

approachable. I can cite many instances of his kindness, to me and to others. His excellent education is reflected in his expert writing on many topics: politics (he has first-class and intimate knowledge of our history and has often argued them with high and mighty), religious tractates, philosophy and science. That is not surprising when you realise the breadth of his travels and experiences, his great family tree and the extent of his philanthropy, both here and abroad. He has been one of the unique Iraqi Jews who have made it his business to meet top everywhere, as well as the Royal family and, along with his wife, been photographed with every 'who's who' you can imagine.

He was instrumental in founding in 1969 The Iraqi Community Centre which has proved crucial in bringing together successive generations of our dispersed community. One of his greatest contributions to the Iraqi Jews all over the world was to publish, since 1971, "The Scribe", filling it with interesting articles and nostalgic pictures, available to everyone, without charge, never mind the effort and the expense. His far-sightedness and generosity led him to establish The Exilarch's Charitable Foundation in order to continue a paramount Babylonian tradition and dignity.

Because of him we acquired an organ to testify to our common heritage. Because of him we resuscitated our Baghdadi and childhood memories, in the process discovering a distinctive culture. Thanks to The Scribe various people have begun to contribute even more. For one man to have achieved all of this, he must deserve a righteous status evermore.

As it happens, those two affable gentlemen are first cousins in their own right as well as good friends, and I conclude my letter by wishing them both continued health and happiness. Would our community ever produce such geniuses again? I wish.... ♦

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Quote...

Forty is the old age of youth,  
Fifty is the youth of old age.

Victor Hugo

# Israel, the Vatican and Anti-Semitism

From Clemens N Nathan

Israel asked the Vatican's "immediate intervention" in stopping the rising incidents of anti-semitism around the world.

Last October, Israeli Secretary Yitzhak Herzog asked the Holy See, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to Israel, to confront the recent wave of anti-Semitic attacks.

A statement from Herzog's office said the conversation followed a special Israeli Cabinet meeting held a day earlier on the subject of the attacks. Herzog, who also is the Secretary of the Committee Against Anti-Semitism and Chairman of the government's Inter-Faith Dialogue Forum, stressed the importance of taking a "clear and unequivocal stand against anti-Semitism".

Herzog referred to the 1994 agreement signed by Israel and the Vatican regarding the curbing of anti-Semitism. Full Vatican-Israeli diplomatic relations were established in 1994.

"The Holy See should take a leading role in challenging the spread of anti-Semitism around the world", Herzog said. "The Israeli government sees its role as ensuring that Jews are not threatened or harmed because of their religion and calls on the enlightened nations to meet this challenge."

Archbishop Sambi declined to comment on the conversation.

After the recent flare-up of Israeli-Palestinian violence, tensions ran high in some European countries, especially France, where there is a significant Arab immigrant population. Jewish worshippers leaving their synagogues in France were the target of stone-throwing, and attackers set fire to several synagogues. ♦

⌘ ⌘ ⌘ ⌘ ⌘

I realise that we must move with the times and that the internet is now the best form of communication, but The Scribe on the internet cannot replace the pleasure of handling the magazine and turning the pages and reminiscing about one's childhood and youth.

Would it be possible to publish it at an economic price like other publications?

Ray Sopher

London

Scribe: A computer colour print-out can be sent to all interested readers by sending a cheque for £10.00 (within the UK) or US\$20 (overseas) to The Exilarch's Foundation, 4 Carlos Place, Mayfair, London W1K 3AW, England ♦

# The Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations

Dear Mr Dangoor

I thought the enclosed article which the Centre for Jewish Christian Relations has sent out might be interesting for your magazine. I am Chairman of the Board of Trustees and we have done a great deal of work for improving Christian Jewish understanding at an academic level in Cambridge. The Centre is very successful. We have today over 100 students studying Jewish Christian text and working together in a most harmonious manner.

**Clemens N Nathan** London

Recent developments in the Roman Catholic Church are sending out the wrong signals, and friends of the Church are concerned.

Of particular worry is the doctrine of the Faith's declaration, *Dominus Iesus*: On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus and the Church. The outward purpose of this declaration is to offer a firm riposte to theologians who relativize the Christian faith and the Roman Catholic Church. However, it has been criticised by many involved in intra-faith as well as inter-faith dialogue, because the tone of the document is so grudging and because it represents a step in a concerted attempt to overturn the dialogue of recent decades.

The tone of *Dominus Iesus* fails to reflect the deeper understanding that has been achieved through dialogue over the last 30 years.

No wonder an alliance of Protestant churches criticised it as ecumenically insensitive. It required the personal intervention of Pope John Paul who emphasised the Catholic Church's commitment to improving ecumenical relations at a meeting with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (which claim a total membership of 75 million Christians in 106 countries). The commitments of the Catholic Church to ecumenical dialogue is irrevocable, he said in a welcome clarification.

This declaration has appeared immediately after a series of events which have depressed friends of the Roman Catholic Church. Attempts to canonise Pius XII and the linking of beautification of Pius IX with John XXIII have caused grave concern about what is going on in the Vatican. The pairing of these two Popes is clearly a balancing act between liberals and conservatives. For many of us, Pius IX is remembered primarily for holding out against modernity as well as acquiescing in the kidnapping and forcible conver-

sion of a Jewish child. Another worrying development is the recent outburst by the Cardinal Biffi, Archbishop of Bologna, about a Muslim "invasion" of Europe.

I fear that these events, whilst separate, represent a concerted attempt to reverse the advances that emerged from Vatican II. If such attitudes prevail, they will cause untold harm not just to relations between the Roman Catholic Church and other churches but also with Judaism and, more worryingly, to relations with other major religions, sharpening the anti-Christian fervour of some of their fundamentalists.

For example, there has always been a tension between Christianity and Islam because of the latter's missionary emphasis and Muslims are now more likely to take up a position of conflict. Anti-Christian violence has in recent years broken out in parts of Africa and Asia. This is not limited to Muslim countries: even India (a country with history of tolerance towards Jews and Christians) has seen outbreaks of anti-Christian feeling. This was previously almost unheard of, and the call for active missionary activity and evangelising the religions of the world will surely increase the risk of a recurrence of such explosions of feeling.

Although *Dominus Iesus* does not discuss the Catholic-Jewish relations, it clearly has important implications. Judaism is obviously non-Christian, yet it is not a subset of "non-Christian religions" either. It is in its own category but I wonder how followers of other religions view this document? How can Catholics involved in dialogue assert with integrity that their dialogue partners are in a gravely deficient situation?

This declaration is not, as some have suggested, a helpful line drawn in the sand. It may be that we are just witnessing conservative figures in the Church battling for the Pope's ear during the twilight of this papacy; but some liberal Catholic theologians fear that something far more sinister is afoot: nothing less than a conspiracy to overturn Vatican II.

Over the last 40 years we have watched and welcomed the more ecumenical approach adopted by the Church: the current Pope, though a conservative, has taken massive strides to heal the historic rift between Catholicism and Judaism. We have grown used to a Catholic Church which spoke of its "deep and mutual respect" for its brothers and sisters in other Christian churches, let alone its

Jewish "elder brothers".

From the liberal end of the Catholic spectrum there is a deafening silence. It would be interesting to know what Cardinal Cassidy thinks about all this. The Pope's recent journey to Israel and the Palestinian Territories has demonstrated his personal commitment to religious tolerance and understanding. Can the same be said about the Curia?

The dialogue between Catholics and Jews has deepened in recent years and the relationship has matured. The desire to create a sustained, positive relationship between us, the willingness to engage in authentic dialogue from our long and complex history, and the ability to give (and receive) criticism is part of an ongoing process (and should not simply be dismissed because it is a view which one partner does not like).

Dear Clemens

Thank you for your letter and enclosure which will be considered for the next issue of *The Scribe*.

The Vatican's declaration is a retrograde step. As a matter of fact I believe the trend should be in the opposite direction. Judaism has been regarded as the mother religion of Christianity and Islam, but I now believe that it is more correct to call all three religions as sister religions. There are elements both in Christianity and Islam that go far beyond the beginnings of our rabbinical religion and are all together on equal basis regarding our relationship. ♦

**Naim**



## Map of Baghdad and Basra

I am writing my memoirs of my life in Iraq, and I need street maps of Basrah and Baghdad. I would very much appreciate it if you could tell me how I can get these maps. I have not been able to get these maps in the USA. My email address is... [saubl1@msn.com](mailto:saubl1@msn.com) and my mailing address is...

500 Manhattan Drive, B4, Boulder, CO 80303. My phone number is... 303-499-6193.

**Shaul Basri**

**Reply:**

The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Centre  
83 M Ben-Porat Avenue  
Or Yehuda 60261  
Israel  
email: [babylon@babylonjewry.org.il](mailto:babylon@babylonjewry.org.il)

## Consultative Council of Jewish Organisations

From: Chairman Clemens N Nathan

The Consultative Council of Jewish Organisations (CCJO) was established as an NGO (non-governmental organisation) at the United Nations in 1946 by Jewish organisations from both sides of the Atlantic to encourage the recognition of human rights for all people and to ensure the input of the Jewish ethical tradition in the development of international human rights law. The CCJO's first President was Rene Cassin, a principal drafter of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968 in recognition of his work for human rights as a jurist, academic and statesman. The CCJO has been an active supporter of efforts to increase the effectiveness of the UN's human rights treaties and institutional mechanisms in the intervening decades. From the 1940s to the 1970s it was involved in the creation of the United Nations human rights instruments, which form the basis of the UN's human rights activities today. The CCJO's constituent organisations at present are the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Alliance Israelite Universelle, the American Friends of the Alliance, and the Canadian Friends of the Alliance.

As an NGO with special consultative status at the United Nations (as well as at UNESCO) the CCJO participates in Human Rights meetings, including the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. It closely follows international human rights problems and developments, and has taken a particular interest in the establishment of an international criminal court. Recent CCJO briefings have been presented to various international bodies on subjects ranging from the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia to problems relating to laws dealing with the migration of workers.

### Criteria for Papers

The CCJO is currently developing a new series of projects in furtherance of its fundamental aims. One of these is in connection with the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance to be held in South Africa in August 2001. Contemporary issues of racism and discrimination are arising that may not have

been adequately treated in existing instruments, and the effectiveness of current international machinery needs to be re-examined.

The CCJO wishes to encourage an innovative and dynamic approach to these issues, and for this purpose invites the submission of scholarly papers, 30 to 40 pages (double-spaced), on different aspects of racism and racial discrimination. The intention is not to promote any particular agenda, but rather to stimulate debate by presenting varied viewpoints.

The following topics are likely to be among those to be addressed at the World Congress:

- Religious freedom
- The scope and limits of restitution and compensation for victims of discrimination
- The treatment of racism and discrimination by the UN system
- Developments in the field of racism and discrimination in European law (EU and Council of Europe)
- Racism and the internet
- Refugees, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers
- Racism and the media
- Racism and the criminal justice system.



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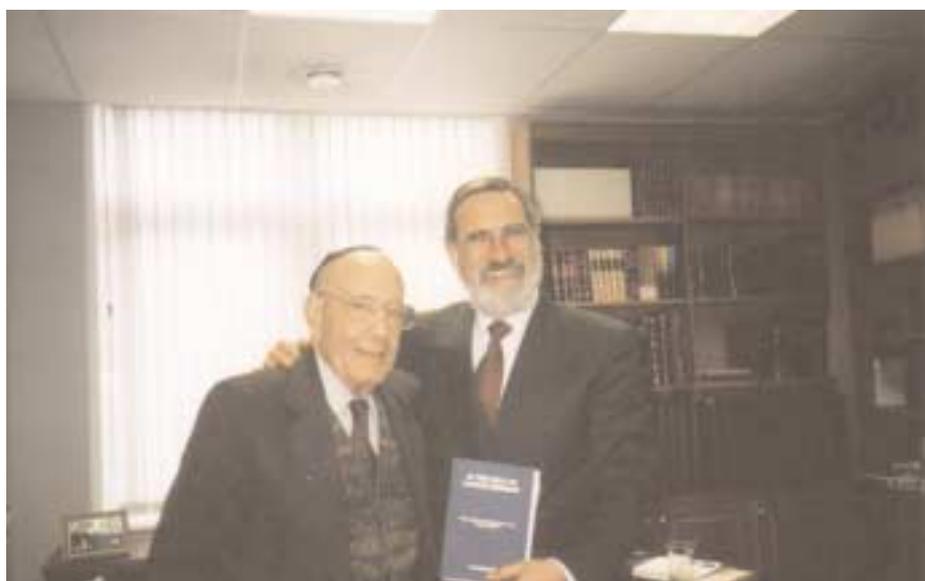
*The Scribe*

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**Paul Bunn**  
**Director, ISSN UK Centre**  
**British Library - London**



Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks invited Mr Shaoul Sasson to his home to congratulate him on his book in which Mr Sasson described his ordeals for one year in the hands of the Iraqi authorities.

The Chief Rabbi presented Mr Sasson with his latest book "Faith in the Future" inscribed:  
To Shaoul Sasson

In admiration of your courage – which is a source of inspiration to me and to the Jewish people!

The above photograph shows them together at the Chief Rabbi's home. ♦

# The Jews of Iraq

by Naim Dangoor

**Congress Bulletin Montreal  
May-June 1971**

Hebrew Associations with Iraq go back to the time of Abraham who left Ur for Canaan by divine command around 1800 BCE because of religious intolerance. Both Isaac and Jacob took wives from the old country and eleven of Jacob's twelve children were born in Iraq.

The Jews appear again on the scene when, twelve centuries later, in 597 BCE, King Yehoyachin and 18,000 of the leading citizens of Judah were brought captive to Babylon. The people of Judah had been in two minds regarding foreign policy. The Hawks wanted to defend their country's independence. The Doves, led by the prophet Jeremiah, wanted to come to terms with the moderate King Nebuchadnezzar.

Eleven years afterwards Nebuchadnezzar came and razed Jerusalem to the ground, killed or dispersed the 4million inhabitants and took back with him 100,000 able-bodied men to dredge the silting irrigation canals of Babylonia, which is Southern Iraq, Northern Iraq, which depends on rainwater, is usually referred to as Mesopotamia. (The Jewish people have not recovered from that disaster).

Jeremiah had really very little interest in politics but he had a grand vision of establishing God's Kingdom on Earth. Nebuchadnezzar offered him safe passage to Babylon but he was not willing to face the bitter exiles. However, he sent them the following message which became in a way the charter of the Jewish Diaspora: "these are the words of the Lord of Host, the God of Israel: to all the exiles whom I have carried off from Jerusalem to Babylon: build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce; marry wives and beget sons and daughters... and seek the welfare of the City to which I have carried you off and pray to the Lord for it, for in its peace you will have peace". In Babylon the Diaspora became a way of life.

(In time the Babylonians came to treat their exiles well and the latter gradually took the position rather of colonists than of captives. Lands were allotted to them and they grew to love and own the soil they cultivated, some of which has remained in Jewish ownership until modern times).

In exile, the formula was – let us preserve the Torah so that the Torah will preserve us, a nation without a State of its own; and to hope that in time a Mashiyah will appear who will lead us back to the Promised Land. In 539 BCE the Persian King Koresh, Cyrus the Great, who is named in the Bible as Mashiyah, defeated Babylon and offered to repatriate the liberated Jews. But only 40,000 returned – the rest, about 80,000, encouraged by the Persians, stayed on to prosper in the rich land of the rivers, astride the main trade routes between East and West.

"By the Rivers of Babylon, there we decided to stay; we also wept when we remembered Zion."

The aim of the Persians was to create a buffer State. In Babylon, this Jewish buffer State retained its importance on and off for over 1,000 years. For example, in the year 363 CE the Roman Emperor Julian, who renounced Christianity, vainly tried to win over to his side the Babylonian and Mesopotamian Jewries in preparation of his contemplated invasion of Persia. He wrote to them, "When I have successfully concluded the War with Persia I will rebuild with my own efforts the sacred city of Jerusalem that you may glorify the most high God therein." But the community remained loyal to Persia. This loyalty had been a major factor in the disastrous Jewish war with Rome which ended with the destruction of the Second Temple.

It is interesting to observe here that in 1971 Iran celebrated the 2500th anniversary, a Jubilee of Jubilees, of Cyrus's Empire. As Israel was not going to be represented I offered to the Iranian Embassy to lead a delegation of Iraqi Jews to Persepolis to pay homage to the memory of Cyrus and his enlightened and tolerant rule. Teheran found it difficult to arrange this at short notice and we were invited instead to the reception at the Savoy Hotel which was attended by the Diplomatic Corps and other distinguished guests including members of the government, when I and twenty members of the community delivered to the Ambassador an illuminated scroll to commemorate the occasion. The Shah later expressed his appreciation and thanks.

The Babylonian Ezra gave Judaism the decisive impulse that eventually produced the Pharisaic Movement and the rabbinical system. He changed the Hebrew alphabet, started the synagogue

and set himself to make the Torah the governing force in Jewish Life. Seeing what happened to the Lost Ten Tribes, Ezra fixed Jewish priorities. Top priority is the preservation of the Torah. Second priority – the survival of the Jewish people and third priority – the establishment of a Jewish State. He was in a real sense the true founder of traditional Judaism from which also emerged Christianity and Islam. It is said of Ezra that if the Torah was not given to Moses, he would have been worthy to receive it. Centuries later, Hillel too went up from Babylon to Jerusalem. He was the first of the Tannaim who established the Oral Torah (Mishnah). His youngest and most famous disciple was Yohanan Ben Zakkai, the founder of the Yavneh Academy. This became the centre of Jewish life and thought after the national disaster and destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

At the beginning of the present common era there were many conversions to Judaism all over the Middle East. In Northern Iraq, the Royal Family and many of the people of Adiabene became Jews. It is said that Jews at that time constituted 20% both of the Persian as well as the Roman Empires. But after the fall of Jerusalem it was the Christians who made converts in the frontier territories of Mesopotamia. The earliest converts were Jews.. But wherever Rabbinical influence was strong among the local community as in Babylonia, there Christianity (and later, Islam) made little progress among Jews. Iraq remained within the Persian Empire for 1,000 years. Babylonia, covering Central Iraq, became practically an autonomous Jewish State headed by a hereditary Exilarch (Resh Galutha) descended from King Yehoyachin. The Exilarch had his courts and prisons and collected taxes, half of which went to Central Government.

At one time Babylonian Jewry numbered over one million and may have constituted the majority of the population. When the Temple was in existence they sent every year, about the time of Succoth, rich presents to Jerusalem in convoys, sometimes consisting of 30,000 armed pilgrims. It was ruled at that time that the prayer for rain should not be recited until 15 days after the conclusion of Succoth to allow the pilgrims to return. The Babylonian Diaspora retained

...its paramount importance from the 6th Century BCE to the 13th Century CE – a period of nearly 2,000 years. Its communal constitution, which served as a model to the whole Jewish people, was largely maintained until recent times.

"During our stay in Babylon we made ourselves thoroughly at home. As the Talmud records."

Indeed Babylonia became practically the Jewish Fatherland. Here were established the famous vast academies of Nehardea, Sura and Pumbeditha which later served as prototypes for the first European Universities of the 12th century. The Babylonian Talmud took 300 years to develop in complete freedom and was completed in 499. In its 2.5 million words the Talmud touches on every aspect of life. For instance, it discusses whether a person who is walking on a moving platform that is going in the opposite direction would be breaking the Sabbath if his position relative to the ground remained the same. Einstein admits that this gave him the idea for his theory of relativity.

Towards the end of Persian rule Mazdakite fanatics made life unbearable for the Jews who, in time, invited and gave decisive help to the Moslem conquest of Iraq and indeed of other parts of the Middle East.

Under the Caliphs of Baghdad the Jews paid a head tax and enjoyed religious and communal freedom. The authority of the Exilarch extended, as in Persian times, to all parts of the Empire and this office lasted until the 14th Century. Thereafter the community was headed by a local Nasi who, until recent times, was also always of the Davidic line. He was assisted by a Hakham. In 1849 both positions were united in a Hakham Bashi (Chief Rabbi).

To establish a Jewish Middle class in Europe Charlemagne had asked Harun al-Rashid to send Jewish teachers. These came with Rabbi Machir who was given by Charlemagne a Princedom in Narbonne and was known as King of the Jews. With the fall of Sa'ad Addawla, the Jewish Chancellor of the Mogul Empire, the Jews suffered terribly at the hands of the populace in the pogrom of 1291 and many were forced to embrace Islam, a process which was repeated on several occasions in Iraq and Persia.

Jewish fortunes started to improve after the Ottoman re-conquest of 1638, whose army included many Jewish officers and men. (Some sources say 10,000 Jewish officers and men out of a total army of 100,000).

After the Great War the Jews of Iraq were betrayed first by the Allies who handed over the country to Arab rule and then by the Arabs who, in a short time, proceeded to discriminate against the other national groups – the Kurds, Jews, Assyrians, etc.

For centuries the Treasury of Iraq was in Jewish hands. Under Ottoman rule the head of the community was ex-officio Treasurer (Sarraf Bashi) of the country. This tradition was continued in the early years of modern Iraq when Sir Sasson Hessel held the Finance Ministry in several governments. In the 1920's and 30's over 50% of the trade and finance was in Jewish hands but by the 50's this had dropped to less than 10%. From 1820 Iraqi Jews spread out to India, Australia, the Far East and Europe. The Rashid Ali pogrom of 1941 decided the community that there was no future in Iraq. In the mass emigration of 1950/51 Aliya Ezra and Nehemia and thereafter the majority left for Israel but the better-off went to Europe and America where there now are about 40,000, of whom about 7,000 are in the UK, including our brethren from India who have faithfully kept to the Baghdadian tradition.

The fact that our community was divided in this way does not relieve us of our responsibilities towards the needy who ended up mainly in Israel.

It is a pity that Israel does not make full use of the fact that thirty years ago there was an exchange of populations - the 800,000 Palestinian Arabs who left Israel and the 800,000 Jews from Arab countries who came to Israel. While Israel absorbed its refugees, Arab countries deliberately kept theirs in camps to be used as a lever against Israel.

Although the Jews arrive in Israel as Olim, they leave the Arab countries mostly under duress. ♦



### The Late David Bershanpour

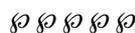
Remembered by a friend

David Bershanpour was born in Baghdad in 1918. He was a man of immense charm, charisma and a sense of humour. In England I got to know him well and found him, in the words of Rabbis, a man who loved peace and pursued it. He always provided me with advice in many different aspects of my work and his advice was sought after, since it was always sound.

He came to be highly respected in our community, and he always showed respect for others.

When an individual honours another it ennobles the giver more than the receiver. But above all else, his family meant a tremendous amount to him and he was the much loved husband of Louise and a loving father, and grandfather to Rhonda, Lydia, David and Daniel.

We mourn a good friend who went through life helping many people. ♦



### Pharaoh and Kings

David Rohl has personally seen to it that we have 6 of his colleagues and co-authors with us – including major contributors to his 2 books, "Pharaohs & Kings", and "Legend". In addition to Egypt, we are also looking at Mesopotamia, Assyria and of course interesting subjects such as Santorini and Petroglyphs!

David Rohl is an Egyptologist, but as he works on the Timeline for ancient Egypt, the Old Testament cities and characters in the Bible really come to life more than ever before! (His first book, "Pharaohs & Kings" covers the time period of King David and King Solomon and works back through time, with Moses & Joseph. David's second book, "Legend: Genesis of Civilisation", covers the flood, and works back to the Garden of Eden).

I hope you will consider joining us – at least I want you to know that you are invited ♦.

**Cannie McCraw**                      **Texas**

<http://www.egroups.com/ground/NewChronology>

# Jewish Rights in the Middle East and the Peace Process

Israel is accused of occupying Arab lands and oppressing the Palestinians. What is the truth?

When the Ottoman Empire was broken up in 1917 all the Middle East was given over to the Arabs without regard to the rights of self-determination of the other nationalities, mainly the Jews and the Kurds.

Look at the statistics: the population figures of the vilayet of Baghdad as given by the last official yearbook of 1916 – Jews numbered 80,000 out of a total population of 202,200. In the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce up to 1946, most of the members were Jews and half the Administrative Council were Jews.

Disregard the Balfour Declaration which became a dead letter, and Zionism which has succeeded in bringing Jews to Israel but has failed to come to terms with the Arabs. At the break-up of the Ottoman Empire Jews should have been entitled to at least 20,000 square miles, more than the total area of Palestine, west of the Jordan River. As such, Israel is entitled to the whole of that area and the Palestinians should regard trans-Jordan as their national home. That should be the basis of any just and lasting settlement between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East. ♦



## A Show-er, A Blower

In Victorian and Edwardian times, a gentleman had to carry two clean handkerchiefs every day - a show-er in the breast pocket which was in fact designed to accommodate it, and a blower in the trousers pocket.

As its name implies, a show-er is for show only, but was available to a lady companion, who would pull it out and use it in an emergency. She would keep it and return it next day, washed and ironed. A blower once used, should not be folded but crumpled and returned to the pocket.

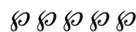
Both handkerchiefs had to be changed each day but, after the shock of the Great War, the rule was relaxed a little in that yesterday's show-er, if unused, could become today's blower.

In Baghdad, before the advent of paper and plastic bags, a show-er was used as a shopping bag by some men, by tying or holding the corners together, enabling a businessman to take home fresh fruit for lunch.

Nowadays, the new generations find it more convenient just to carry paper tissues than cloth handkerchiefs.

**Etiquette...** When a towel is used in a guest toilet, it should be left in a crumpled state to show that it had been used. At the dinner table a guest must leave his napkin not folded, otherwise it may suggest that he wants to come again.

**Etiquette...** Never give a handkerchief as a present as it may be taken to mean for wiping off the tears. ♦



I was passing your premises today and noticed your brass plate. Being very interested in London's buildings and their occupants, I should be very grateful if you could tell me something about your organisation, its history and how long you have occupied the premises.

I do not think I have ever heard of the Exilarch's Foundation. Your help would be very much appreciated.

**Garth Andrews**

**London**

**Reply:**

With reference to your letter dated 29 January, we are a Charitable Foundation. The Exilarch was the Head of the Jewish community of Iraq, going back to King Yehoyakhin, who was the first Exilarch. This office lasted until 1270 when it lapsed after the Mongol invasion of the Middle East. The office was revived by Mr Naim Dangoor in 1970 after a gap of 700 years.

We enclose a copy of our publication which you may find of interest. ♦

Hi. My father, Moshe (Morris Mizrahi) paid for a lifetime subscription of The Scribe to be sent to him in Los Angeles several years ago, but has not received a new issue for over 2 years now. He so looked forward to receiving his subscription twice a year. Is this due to some lack of funds on your part or an oversight? Please let me know. If you are still sending out the Scribe in magazine form, please do so to his address in Los Angeles:

**Barry Mizrahi**

**Los Angeles**

[barrymiz@earthlink.net](mailto:barrymiz@earthlink.net)

**Scribe:**

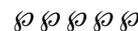
The last printed issue in a magazine form of The Scribe was published and sent out in September 1999, which we assume your father has received. Since then it has been on the internet at... [www.scribe1.com](http://www.scribe1.com) or [www.thescribe.uk.com](http://www.thescribe.uk.com)

and is no longer issued as a printed magazine. The current issue is on the internet now. If you or your father wish to receive future issues by email, please let me know.

Alternatively a computer colour print-out can be obtained by sending a cheque for US \$20 to:

The Exilarch's Foundation  
4 Carlos Place  
Mayfair  
London  
W1K 3AW  
England

With regard to subscriptions: we never accepted subscriptions, whether annual or lifetime, or advertising for that matter. Please give particulars of your claim. ♦



## The Scribe belongs to the ages

All the issues of The Scribe, since it started in 1971, will soon be on our website and will be found in the "archive"

# Barak's View of the Future: Die or Separate

## Israelis and the Palestinians just can't live together, says Camp David's peacemaker

by Lally Weymouth

In his first interview since he was defeated last February, former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak sat down and discussed Camp David, Yasir Arafat and the bleak legacy of his peacemaking efforts with Newsweek's Lally Weymouth. Excerpts:

### **WEYMOUTH: Is there any chance for Israel to arrive at a negotiated agreement with the Palestinians while Arafat is still in power?**

**BARAK:** My feeling is that we won't have a peace agreement with Arafat. He's not a Palestinian Sadat or a Palestinian King Hussein. Arafat turned to violence after Camp David. Camp David was a moment of truth... It was an end to what Arafat had done for years - namely, talk in English about his readiness to make peace and in Arabic about eliminating Israel in stages. He decided that only by turning to violence could he once again create world sympathy. Arafat believed that pictures of young Palestinians facing Israeli tanks would compensate for his failure. His indifference to Palestinian casualties and loss of life... is a kind of a Palestinian tragedy. If they were a democratic society they would replace him.

### **There are reports that the Israeli cabinet is considering authorising the Army to enter Palestinian territories to eliminate the Palestinian Authority and get rid of Arafat. Do you favour this?**

It should be a last resort, an option we are willing to contemplate only if all other options have not worked and we have gathered international support. It could easily boomerang and prompt international intervention in ways that might hurt Israel's interest. If there is a major clash and the world does not understand why Israel is acting, we might end up with an imposed solution which would be against our interest

### **Do you approve of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's policy of restraint?**

Sharon is doing the right thing by combining an active campaign against terrorists, with restraint against wider operations that could harm the civilian population.

### **Looking back, do you think you made too many concessions at Camp David?**

I am confident that we did the right thing for the future of Israel. When I took power, there was only one path that I found reasonable - either to unmask Arafat or to take calculated risks if we found him a Palestinian Sadat, ready to put an end to the conflict.

### **Are you saying you went to Camp David to expose Arafat?**

No. Arafat is a highly sophisticated and cunning rival. He is not easy to penetrate, and it's not easy to understand his real intentions. Oslo was based on a set of assumptions that if he was recalled from Tunisia to Gaza and the West Bank, if a kind of political authority was established for him and he was exposed to meeting the daily needs of his own people, if he was treated as a future leader of a state, this would transform him from a leader of a terrorist organization into a responsible leader of a future state. So it was not a conspiracy or a trick to push Arafat into a trap. You cannot know the other side's intentions without being willing to take certain risks.

### **What did you think the chances were?**

At the beginning I thought it was maybe 50-50. Maybe it was just his way to delay the moment of truth and reach it with the maximum political capital. But during and after Camp David, it became clear that we didn't have the kind of leader we hoped for, that could make the decisions, a Sadat-like leader. Then it became important to expose him. That was the pre-condition for the Israeli unity which Sharon enjoys.

### **What exactly did you offer at Camp David?**

It was not these details that led to its failure. Formally, they were not our suggestions but ideas raised by the American president. Ninety to ninety one per cent [of the West Bank] would be transferred to the Palestinians in exchange for a one per cent territorial swap.

### **How was Jerusalem going to be divided?**

The [Clinton] administration's idea was that we would take the Jewish neighborhood, and Arafat would take most of the Arab neighborhoods. Certain neighborhoods would be under a special regime or a kind of joint management.

### **What about the Temple Mount?**

The president suggested an arrangement under which they would have a custodian sovereignty while we had overall

sovereignty. The real objective of Camp David was to know if we had a serious partner who was ready to accept such far-reaching ideas as a basis for an agreement.

### **You were ready to give up the Jordan Valley, which Rabin said was strategically crucial.**

In exchange for an end to the Israeli-Arab conflict, we were ready to contemplate far-reaching risks. But Arafat refused. He said, "I cannot take these ideas as a basis for negotiation. And I demand the right of return and full sovereignty over the Temple Mount". This is a euphemism for the elimination of Israel, and no Israeli government will accept it. There is a thin line between a calculated risk and yielding to terror. I never intended to cross this line.

### **People criticise you for not having built a personal rapport with Arafat before and at Camp David.**

It's ridiculous. Can you remember what kind of rapport existed between Begin and Sadat? They hardly talked to each other, but they were leaders.

### **Some say you made a mistake to start negotiating with Syria and that by the time you turned to Arafat it was too late.**

No, it was clear [Syrian President Hafez] Assad was ageing, and after he died we would enter along period of uncertainty.

### **But you pulled out of Lebanon and did not get an agreement with Syria. Was that a mistake?**

No, it was not a mistake. It takes two to make an agreement. Toward the end Assad was gradually becoming more and more focused on the succession process.

### **Do you believe the separation from the Palestinians is the only way out?**

I believe, in the long term, the strategic need of Israel is disengagement from the Palestinians.

### **...Sharon says separation is impossible.**

I think he's wrong and it's imperative.

### **So how will it work? Will you have a poor Palestinian state living side by side with a wealthy Israel?**

Every attempt to leave us with one political unit, west of the Jordan River will end up with either a bi-national state or an apartheid system-but clearly not a Jewish democratic state. The only answer is to establish a border for Israel in which we will have a solid Jewish majority for generations to come. It might take ☛

## Chammelha - Give me more....

(says Yasser Arafat)

...three or four years to delineate the lines around settlement blocks. At the beginning, I would not dismantle settlements. But in due time, I would take isolated settlements into the settlement blocks or into Israel proper. I would announce formally that we leave the door open for the Palestinians to resume negotiations based on Camp David without any precondition, except for the absence of violence.

### Is Oslo dead?

Once Oslo's assumptions collapsed, it cast a disturbing shadow in retrospect on what has happened since 1996. Maybe Arafat cheated all of us. I put an end to the process of giving him more and more land just to find out in the end that we gave him everything [and got nothing in return].

### Are you going to come back to politics soon?

It's not on the table right now.

### Why did you meet such rejection in the last election, considering you had taken incredible risks for peace?

It was clear to me, especially in the last few months, that by pursuing this policy I was taking a big political risk. Sharon was telling people, "Rely on me. I will solve it easily.." I knew if he won, he would end up doing basically what I had done. It was clear to me that by sticking to these policies I risked a kind of personal and political defeat. But I have done it all my life.

### Was It worth it?

I did the right thing for my country, and I never look backward. When the time comes for the Palestinians to have a Sadat-like leader, we will end up with a favourable agreement and then with permanent peace along the same lines shaped by us at Camp David.

### Do you think that time will come?

It will take years. ♦

## Sharon's Option

Prime Minister Sharon cannot proceed from where Ehud Barak left off. He can only succeed by following a complete change of strategy.

Israel alone cannot solve the Palestinian problem, which must be regarded as a regional problem. All the Arab countries that waged successive wars on Israel and emboldened Arafat in his latest stance must contribute to a lasting settlement.

Fortunately, the new Bush administration has accepted this reality. ♦

The high point in Israel's short history was the Six Day War of 1967, when the whole world applauded Israel's miraculous achievement of defeating the combined Arab armies. It is said that every Jew in the Diaspora walked three inches taller. That euphoria was gradually frittered away by the mistakes of the Politicians. Firstly, Moshe Dayan and others were hoping to achieve peace with the Arabs from a position of strength, but the Arabs who were shell-shocked by their massive defeat were not in a position nor in a mood to make peace. Secondly, the Israelis wanted to use cheap Arab labours to enhance her economy which was a big mistake. Thirdly, leaders like David Ben Gurion and Shimon Peres kept wanting to make peace with the Arabs, oblivious of the fact that the region consisted of many other nationalities who could strengthen Israel's hand in creating a Middle Eastern Union, not predominantly Arab.

Thus, thirty four years after the Six Day War, Israel has reached the low point of her history when Ehud Barak offered the Palestinians 98% of the administered territories, half of Jerusalem and Estate of their own, but they kept asking more concessions, emboldened by Arab states and even by the British Foreign Minister. Israel cannot now afford to give anything more that would not lead to the eventual dismantling of the Jewish State.

Whilst President Clinton was apparently trying to help Israel achieve peace with the Palestinians, he was in fact only interested in obtaining the Nobel Peace Prize. In the last months of his term he asked Prime Minister Ehud Barak for the best terms that Israel could offer the Palestinians. Naively, but in confidence, Barak offered most favourable terms to the Palestinians. When Arafat saw the list he could not believe his eyes, but in Arab fashion he decided to ask for more.

"Chammelha": In the Middle East haggling is normal in any purchase. When a Bedouin comes to the market he cannot judge for himself the correct price of what he wants to buy. So he tells the grocer Chammelha (put some more). Arafat acted in the same fashion and he who wants all will end up loosing all. This is where the Palestinians stand now.

Where do we go from here? Israel must modify her approach by regarding the problem as a regional matter which can only be solved by the active participation and contribution of all the countries of the region. There is no room for a Palestinian state. Jordan should have been regarded as the Palestinian State, but since this opportunity was missed, the administered territories should be divided into two or three autonomous areas. Palestinian labour should be completely eliminated from Israel's economy. ♦

§ § § § §

## Micha" Society for Deaf Children

I am the mother of Liran who has drawn a number of caricatures for "The Scribe". I am a volunteer of "Micha" association, which is a society for deaf children, founded by my late uncle, Dr Ezra Korine (of Baghdad). Dr Ezra Korine dedicated his life to research and worked for the Deaf. For his life's enterprise he received the very prestigious "Israel Prize" for 1976.

For its existence, "Micha" relies almost entirely on private donations. I am proud to note that among Micha's supporters are several of my family members, and of the Iraqi community, who have donated towards study rooms, expensive equipment used by the children for the lessons, and other purposes.

I am writing to you to support this very worthwhile cause.

Mrs Marsha Segal, a lovely lady and Chairwoman of "Micha", visits England several times a year, and would be glad to provide you with further details.

Dalia Dangoor

Tel-Aviv

Later, from "Micha" Association:

On behalf of our Directors, staff and children, we wish to express our heartfelt appreciation for your generous gift of £250 which will help to ensure the continuity of our special educational and rehabilitation programmes for the benefit of Micha's children. ♦

# The Arabs will Never make Peace with Reality

by Exilarch

In November 1947, the United Nations passed the Partition Resolution of Palestine, which was flatly rejected by the Arabs. Since then an important event happened in the region - namely, the emigration in the fifties of one million Jews from Arab countries, the great majority of whom went to Israel. Two important considerations arise from this event: 1) that the Jews who came to Israel from Arab countries and the Arabs who left Israel for Arab countries represent an exchange of populations similar to those that took place after the war in many parts of the world. 2) The Jews who emigrated from Arab countries brought with them ancient territorial rights in their countries of origin that must be satisfied in any final settlement of the regional conflict between Jews and Arabs. Both points have been overlooked or ignored by successive Israeli governments.

The only way such claims can be satisfied would be from what is termed Arab lands now occupied by Israel. In other words, this would make the whole of "Palestine" West of the River Jordan belonging to Israel.

The fact that most Arab countries took up arms against Israel and have been taking part in various forms against Israel puts on them the responsibility of assuming their role in a final settlement of the regional conflict between Jews and Arabs.

Immediately after the Six Day War many observers believed that the shock of defeat would bring the Arabs to their senses and force them to the conference table where a just and lasting peace might be negotiated for the benefit of the whole region.

But in September 1967 at the Khartoum Summit conference Arab leaders unanimously resolved that there can be "No peace, No recognition, No negotiations" with Israel. Instead, the Arabs have tried, through military, diplomatic and economic measures, to force Israel to withdraw to the pre-1967 armistice lines. Those who support the Arab case ignore the fact that when Israel was confined to those lines, Arab attitude was exactly the same: they talked war and not peace.

## THE ARABS WILL NEVER MAKE PEACE WITH ISRAEL...

...any pretence to the contrary is only meant to put pressure on Israel to evacuate occupied territories without achieving secure frontiers and a lasting peace - for a genuine peace would mean take and give, and Arab thinking, politics and strategy have always been based on the wonderful formula: all to take and nothing to give.

When Arab propaganda vaguely speaks of Israel having to withdraw from occupied Arab lands, they want people to believe that they mean land occupied in the Six-Day War. In fact however, the Arabs mean Israel's withdrawal from the whole of "Palestine" and the total elimination of the Jewish State.

Recognising the natural desire of many Jews to re-establish their Middle Eastern home and realising the benefits that would accrue to the region which could be transformed in peace and prosperity into some of the leading countries of the world, Iraqi Premier, Nuri al-Saeed proposed in 1946 to admit two million Jews from Europe if the Jews would give up their plan of an independent State. His proposal was rejected by the Arabs and came too late to be accepted by the Jews. Later when the federal plan for Palestine was published some Arabs opted for Nuri's proposal. After the UN decided on partition the Arabs came to favour the federal plan. And when the State of Israel emerged in 1948 and the Arabs failed to wipe it out of existence by war, they announced their acceptance of the U.N. partition plan. After the events of June 1967, they have been clamouring for the boundaries of 1948. They are always one step behind, for they cannot make peace with reality.

On the first day of the June war, Arthur Goldberg who was then United States representative at the U.N. proposed a ceasefire but this was rejected by the Russians and the Arabs. In his memoirs, President Lyndon Johnson continues the story: "June 7, the third day of the war, began with the Israelis announcing that they were willing to accept a ceasefire [before Jordan entered the war and lost the West Bank] provided the Arabs agreed. But the Arabs did not respond.

They apparently could not accept the reality of the situation in the field. The Israelis kept moving forward.

This refusal to accept reality results from a defect in the Arab character - they cannot live at peace with their neighbours. And while the Arabs on many occasions in history gained from calculated perfidy, the Jews often suffered as a result of their loyalties - to their faith, their neighbours and their allies.

*NB: Earlier this year Ehud Barak, surprisingly, offered Arafat everything; more than anyone expected but the Arabs still did not accept the offer. ♦*

§ § § § §

Wow! what a fantastically historical site you have!! My name is Joseph ElHadeF, and I live in NY. I am Greek, Hungarian, Egyptian, and Iraqi. In the article from Montefiore Hall the lecturer mentions that Mr.Dangoor spoke to a crypto Jew in Saudia Arabia, tell me more about this incident? I had two Kuwaiti friends at Hofstra University in NY and they both told me that there are STILL Jews in Kuwait? As well as Bahrain? Tell me more about the Saudi Jews!

**Joseph ElHadeF**

[judaesus@amexol.net](mailto:judaesus@amexol.net)

**Scribe:**

A crypto Jewish couple from Saudi Arabia with their twelve children came to London a few years ago and visited the offices of the Exilarch's Foundation, asking for help to obtain a visa to enable them to emigrate to Israel. However, the Israel Embassy in London turned down their application and they decided to travel to Jordan and move over to Israel clandestinely.

According to their evidence there are thousands of crypto Jews in Saudi Arabia who lead a separate existence from the main population. To our knowledge, there are no Jews living in Kuwait, but a number of Jewish families still live in Bahrain, mainly of Iraqi origin. ♦

# Giscard Stresses Palestinians' 'Right to a home'

**P**ARIS – French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing said here on Tuesday night that France believes in the necessity of a global agreement in the Middle East which would preserve the legitimate rights of "all concerned and especially the right of the Palestinian people to a homeland of their own".

The French President, who was addressing a banquet in honour of the ruler of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifa, praised the recently concluded Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement as "having safeguarded the chances for a peaceful solution in the Middle East", but stressed: "it is only a step towards a global agreement which is indispensable and urgent".

## M.E. solution must be global

*To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post*  
Sir,

In his address at the recent banquet for Sheikh Khalifa of Qatar, French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing expressed the belief that the Middle East must have a global agreement. Allow me to applaud this verdict of vision, these words of wisdom, which point to the right path for peace in the Middle East.

I am an Iraqi Jew who managed to escape from the country in 1964 just before the official wave of terror descended on our community and culminated in the public hanging in Baghdad's main square of nine innocent Jews. My 90 year old parents left in 1973 after their property was sequestered. Our family had lived in Iraq for over 2500 years. We belong to more than one million displaced Jews from Arab countries who did not take to the gun but, dispersed all over the world, are trying to pick up the threads quietly and with dignity.

The solution must be global for there can be no peace in one corner of the Middle East while the Lebanese Christians are faced with a life-and-death struggle; while 6 million Kurds cannot attain autonomy; while the Armenians and Assyrians remember their massacres and their stolen lands; while the Shia majority in Iraq are oppressed; while the Arabs control 5 million square miles of territory. These are not isolated problems and must be solved together.

The solution must be global for there can be no peace in the Middle East while a few Arab leaders pocket most of the oil wealth and Jews have to keep tightening their belts; while the Arabs clamour for a return to Palestine (although the bridges are open) but have barred Jews

from entering some Arab countries on pain of death.

The solution must be global, for peace, law and order in the Middle East are indivisible. To the PLO who say they want to establish a free, multi-racial, democratic, secular and progressive Palestine, we say we want to establish a free, multi-racial, democratic, secular and progressive Middle East. To those who say that Zionism is responsible for all the trouble in Palestine, we say that Arab imperialism is responsible for all the trouble in the Middle East.

N E Dangoor

*Appeared in the Jerusalem Post, 2 December 1975*

*Following is the full text of the letter to President Giscard d'Estaing.*

**H.E. President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, Paris**

November 5 1975

Your Excellency

In your address at the banquet for Sheikh Khalifa of Qatar last week you expressed the belief that the Middle East must have a global agreement.

Allow me to applaud you, Mr President, for this verdict of vision, these words of wisdom, which point to the right path for peace in the Middle East.

I am an Iraqi Jew who managed to escape from that country in 1964 just before the official wave of terror descended on our community and culminated in the public hanging in Baghdad's main square of nine innocent Jews while President Bakr went there with a brass-band to celebrate the occasion and the populace were invited to have a picnic

around the dangling corpses marked "JEW". My 90-year old parents left in 1973 after their property was sequestered. Our family had lived in Iraq for over 2500 years. We belong to more than one million displaced Jews from Arab countries who did not take to the gun but dispersed all over the world, are trying to pick up the threads quietly and with dignity.

The solution must be global for there can be no peace for the Palestinian refugees while the rights, material and political of the Jewish refugees are ignored.

The solution must be global for there can be no peace in one corner of the Middle East while the Lebanese Christians are faced with a life-and-death struggle; while 6 million Kurds cannot attain autonomy; while the Armenians and Assyrians remember their massacres and their stolen lands; while the Shia majority in Iraq are oppressed; while the Arabs control 5 million square miles of territory and non-Arabs are denied any territory. These are not isolated problems and must be solved together.

The solution must be global for there can be no peace in the Middle East while a few Arab leaders pocket most of the oil wealth and Jews have to keep tightening their belts; while the Arabs clamour for a return to Palestine (although the bridges are open) but have barred Jews from entering some Arab countries on pain of death.

The solution must be global, for peace, law and order in the Middle East are indivisible. Moreover, the conflict between the Arabs and Israel is not equal: for while the Arabs are striving to gain control of Palestine, we Jews are struggling for a more basic and elementary claim; the right to exist in the Middle East, a right not denied to the Arabs.

To the PLO who say they want to establish a free multi-racial, democratic, secular and progressive Palestine, we say we want to establish, a free, multi-racial, democratic, secular and progressive Middle East. To those who say that Zionism is responsible for all the trouble in Palestine, we say that Arab imperialism is responsible for all the trouble in the Middle East.

Being the cradle of civilisation and the crossroads of three continents, the Middle East contains many ancient nationalities and thus it is fragmented into small vulnerable units. As such it always attracted aggression from within or without. Yesterday Ottoman power dominated the scene; ☛

...today Arab nationalism Is trying to assert itself; tomorrow It can be Persia that will dominate the Middle East as: of years In the past. The fact is that the various communities of the Middle East were never united in freedom and thls Is the only way to ensure lasting peace In the area – a federatlon or confederation covering Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait (and Cyprus) ...comprising 6 million Shia, 6 million Sunna, 6 million Kurds, 3 Million Christians (Greek, Maronites, Armenians, Assyrians), 3 million Jews as well as a score of other groups (Yezidls, Druse, Alawis, Turkomen, Bahais, etc.).

The upheavals of the Middle East over the years were responsible for driving the better section of the population out of the region and this process is still continuing. With the establishment of a stable and peaceful regime In the Middle East, most of these diasporas would tend to return and thus transform the picture of that part of the world. It is unfortunate that today in matters concerning the Arabs expediency often takes priority over principles. But anyone who sacrifices principles for material benefits in the end loses the principles and the material benefits.

La France, depositary of the human conscience, can under your wise guidance, lead world opinion to demand and implement a global agreement for the Middle East which will earn the gratitude of this and future generations.

Yours respectfully

N E Dangoor

\*\*

## PRÉSIDENCE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE

### Paris

Monsieur, N E Dangoor – London

Monsieur

Votre lettre est bien parvenue à Monsieur le Président de la République. C'est avec toute l'attention nécessaire qu'il en a été pris connaissance.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur, l'assurance de mes sentiments distingués.

**Philippe SAUZAY**  
Le Chef de Cabinet

8 December 1975 ♦

# The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

**T**wo weeks ago, I met Zvi Gabay at the opening of an exhibition in Jerusalem. He told me about the journal on Babylonian Jewry The Scribe published by The Exilarch's Foundation. I was truly happy and moved to get the latest issue of this journal which evoked fond memories of my childhood in Iraq which I left in 1942 and never went back. I remembered the name Dangoor in school and later I met another Dangoor in Stockholm, I knew about your being in London but never had the chance to meet you. The last ten years I have been active at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem as director of the European division.

A few years ago, Fred Worms helped us to install the Synagogue from Cochin (India) from the 17th century which carries his name. On that occasion the Israel Museum organised a wonderful exhibition on the three Jewish communities in India before the establishment of the State of Israel. I enclose for you a catalogue of that exhibition and I hope that you will enjoy reading it.

**Vicky Meroz**                      **Jerusalem**  
**Head of the European Department**

## The Jews of India

The story of three communities  
Edited by Ospa Slapak  
Published by The Israel Museum. Jerusalem  
215 pp

This is an illustrated catalogue of the exhibition on the Jews of India organised by The Israel Museum, which was made possible by the generous contributions of...

Audrey and Martin Gruss, New York  
Les Amis du Musée d'Israël à Jerusalem en Suisse Romande  
Doreen and Albert Jacob, Jerusalem  
Elias Charitable Foundation  
The Rembaum family, in memory of their father, Bolek Rembaum

The following is a selected bibliography on the subject:

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On the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of The Scribe,  
we reprint selected articles from previous issues

FROM ISSUE NO. 1

## Toward a Middle East Federation

by Exilarch

The repeated attempts of Arab leaders to unite various countries of the Middle East in a pan-arab Federation shows clearly their imperialist intentions and their ultimate aim of having an empire extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf and beyond. This movement has been fuelled sometimes by pan-Arabism, sometimes

by pan-Islamism but the aim is domination. The combinations have been varied: Iraq, Syria and Jordan; Egypt and Syria; Iraq and Jordan; Egypt, Syria and Yemen; Egypt, Libya and Sudan; Egypt, Syria and Libya with Sudan to follow.

Since the end of the First World War, the long term plan to Arabise the Middle-East has been put in motion.

Arab leaders can afford to play this game of power politics because they keep their own people under their heels as most Arab regimes are military dictatorships. Thus Arab leaders gain absolute control of vast oil revenues which they squander on arms and power adventures with complete disregard for the welfare of their people who are kept impoverished and so rendered harmless. ♦

## The Israeli Birthrate



At a recent visit to the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, former Israeli President Yitzhak Navon explained the demographic problems facing Israel. The average birthrate per couple was only 1.6 children, not even enough to replace the previous generation.

Luckily, religious Jews are trying to make up the deficiency by having large families. Likewise, some Sephardic families are also having a large number of children such as Ezra Shohet and his wife Caroline (née Khazma) shown below with their children and grandchildren. May more Jewish couples follow their example. ♦

# The Cellar Club

In 1970 the younger members of the Iraqi Community in London established their own club – The Cellar Club.

Samir Samra relates how it came about: Sitting with my wife Ingrid at a party, I heard somebody mumbling about a club. Positioning my ear a bit better, I find it is about the same old club that I had been hearing about since I arrived to this country but never seen. I then decided to move my whole head nearer to Ketty Shohet and Jimmy Shamash. We contacted Emile Cohen

who was thinking about it as well. However, we did not understand what each one meant. A meeting was next arranged with Naim Dangoor (who had just established the Gardenia Club) and off we went, four of us; Emile Cohen, Edward Ezer, Jimmy Shamash and myself. Naim Dangoor gave us his blessings and we drove back happily.

At a plenary meeting twenty of us were sitting round a table with Emile as Chairman and six committee members and their "Mishpaha". Then it dawned on me that each one of us had a different

idea as to what the Club meant. Emile wanted a House of Parliament, Jimmy a restaurant, Charlie a discotheque; Soad and Samira a place to go to; Yvonne an educational institute. To me a club would mean nothing but a Qahwa (coffee house). The funny thing is that none of these tied up with the Seniors idea who wanted an undercover marriage bureau.

The Cellar Club, in the basement of the Gardenia Club, was declared open on the 25th January 1970 to a meeting of 40 or so people.

## Historical note:

The Gardenia Club building was acquired in 1969 at the price of £19,000; the premises are now worth one million pounds.

The 1973 committee members of the club are introduced by the Editor of the Club journal, Emile Cohen, as follows...

- Chairman: Jack Attraghji, known as the one-eyed Jack
- Secretary: Vivi Shina, Queen of Sheba and Duchess of the Island of Waq Waq
- Treasurer: Sami Dellal, Financial Advisor to the Bank of England and several firms in the City
- Committee Member: Dora Tawfiq, Miss World 1900
- Committee Member: Danny Dellal, one of the original members of the Ali Baba group
- Committee Member: Sabah Rashti, Paul Newman in disguise
- Committee Member: Nadia Shina, Cilla Black of the Cellar Club

The Club runs activities of various natures, basically serving to entertain and cultivate our members. Guests are welcomed and treated with respect and friendship until they pay their £2 membership!

On the cultural side, talks, discussions and debates occupy a major part. General knowledge quizzes always manage to hold an attentive audience. Dancing parties with disco and flashing lights etc. are always popular, with food and booze amply provided.

The Cellar Band or the Doub-a-Doub is a musical group playing a variety of musical compositions from Victor Sylvester to the Beatles and in several languages. They established themselves in the late months of 1972 and in the months ahead they should gather momentum and score their successes.

We have also got a drama group which has produced several plays and shows with tremendous success. The Cellar Drama Group has captivated audiences of about 200 people a show.

The plays that were performed were: "Lock up your sons" – by David Gabbay. A year later, David Gabbay wrote another play "The Bible" and by then we were well established and had money to spend on production. Edward Ezer made some beautiful recordings of "God" and had various technical effect to exhibit. We had some new actors notably Freddy Zelouf who took the part of Samson and got so carried away in his acting that when he had a fight on stage (part of the play) with Jack Attraghji he broke three of Jack's ribs. Good job he was not asked to kill Jack. The Bible was the best production we made and lasted for 2 1/2 hours.

The style of the two plays were comedies and this really is the basis of success. Iraqis, I think, would be very susceptible to serious dramatic plays. The success earned from these plays spurred others to write.

Emile Cohen wrote and directed a play in Arabic called "Yallah ya Shabab". This was a serious comedy with a lot of political motives and views and was one of the best acted plays. This was coupled with "The Marriage Broker", directed by Ezra Sopher starring Isaac Amber as a woman marriage broker. This was undoubtedly the funniest play of them all and the most successful.

1971 was a very good year for plays and in Christmas we made a show called "After Ramadhan.....Christmas" which was composed of funny sketches and songs and nearly all the people who took part were newcomers. ♦

- براخيل : يغب أساغ بيها لسه ما جت ؟  
بس ليكون أنسحقت عزت  
انا ما منطرفه بلقبوغ بس ليكون لدلالة فكست  
وقوم يا عصي شيلني  
غفقاني كلم ساغو تجار  
وأنا مشلوع قلبي بهذا الكار  
نبعة : أنا...افتحوا الباب  
براخيل: هاي اشو بطيتي ، ظل بالي  
بكل شغلة ترجعين بالليالي  
نبعة : وي أش التعب بحالي  
أنسيتونو بيت لبنيتي  
والكوچه ما ظلّت أبالي  
وأظل أمشي وأسابل وين بيت حنگالي...وين بيت حنگالي  
أثاغي طلع بالكوچه مال صلوات دالي  
براخيل: أشكون هم ما قبلو بيت لبنيتي ؟  
نبعة : قلتولا جبتولك صبي بعد بيتي  
جبولو فوق العشغين بنيتي  
وعلى كلم ما غضا حتي على وحدي من بيت سيني  
براخيل: لكن ما قلتيلا الولد بيدو قلم ويعفف لسن ؟  
وبيدو صنعة مليحة ولايق ومحسن ؟  
أش ما اقيتو بمحك ما تعلمتي دقة  
نبعة : وغبي قلتولا مثل ما كتبتي بالوق  
براخيل: أنتي بطل فندك الاول  
لكن أشو قبل ميت دلالة كنا نكمل  
نبعة : وغبي دقلك كل هاي لقنشوفه  
كيف من ألة ما عنأ خوفه.  
انسيت كم وحدي فضحنا أحوالة  
وكم وحدي صبغنانو المزالة  
كلّة من جدوا لدلالة  
براخيل: ولك لو أعفف هل دينارات قيطلعون  
كان ضلّيتو مامزوّج وداعت هرون  
نبعة : ويمكن ببلاش أخذتني ؟ ممحي لعيون!  
ما عدا جهاز وبخشيش وصحونة  
نبعة : وغبي لو ما أخذك ما كان طاح بيدك بزونة .

ما عدا جهاز وبخشيش وصحونة  
نبعة : رغبي لو ما أخذك ما كان طاح بيدك بزونة .

يندق الباب ويدخل حوكي  
حوكي : مساء الخير براخيل ، أشلون كيفك ؟  
براخيل : كلش عال أبوس ايدك  
حوكي : الشغل كلو خصاغة ياحيف  
نبعة : ما ينغاد تتحيف بدالك ، أزوجك ويتحسن حالك  
حوكي : واللة من جيتي هوني عفتيني  
نبعة : ليش ويحد ما يسيغ بلّي ؟  
وأنا ليش ما أعغف قينغاد ثقلي ؟  
براخيل : نحكي الصدق ! هذا وقت زويجك  
عندي حسبة كلش اتفيدك  
هيج لا تفوتة من ايدك  
حوكي : يعني أشقد فلوس قيطلعولة ؟  
وجهاز وخشل أش غايح يسولة ؟  
نبعة : سمعت ألفين وخمسميت دينار  
وجهاز وخشل تنخصم بالبزار  
حوكي : أخاف ما يطعوليانو إذا سمعوا بطال  
مادوغي حيلي حتى يقولون علي عال ؟  
براخيل : فوح اقعد عند ويحد تاجر ولو ببلاش  
وسيقولون عليك سبع سوقي وچنكاش  
حوكي : زين إذا أخذنا...يطعونني بيدي فد شين ؟  
نبعة : عاين ، هاي لتقولا قبل القدوس  
يعني إذا عغفوا ، لا لبنيتي ولا لفلوس  
براخيل : حق ويأها لمغاتي نبعة  
هاي يسيغ منا لغوة  
هاي عقب القدوس انكلمة وناخذ عليها كغوة  
حوكي : حقك زيد ما ناقص يا براخيل .  
نبعة : أنا كثيغ غايح أجاهدلك  
وأحسن أخذة سأخذلك

والخدود حمغة وسبيجات  
الأنف لوزاي والثم هيلاي والسن للواي  
شقلا منعمة ومعجونة ابدمة  
أفة تطلع من الحق وديوا  
عليها شغقت وچ مال محتشمين  
وانشاللة تسيغ انصيبك أمين .

## تذهب نبعة وحوكي مع براخيل

- حوكي : هاي من بيت مني تسيغ ؟  
واللة خلّيتني كلّش أحيغ  
براخيل : ونأبي فد وحدي فلة  
أتسيغ بنت بنتو النحوم قررة كلة  
أمة من بيت شمّيل  
أوادم مقابل بيت روشيل  
أخوها يشتغل بالريل  
وعمّا شغيكو الصالح بيحة بالاوتيل  
حوكي : كلّش عال مادام بيها ريل وغقصات واوتيل  
زين أشلون أستبدي بالگراميات  
حتّي بيناتنا تمشي لأمورات  
براخيل : أش غراميات المصبوغة  
هاي وحدي كلّش مستوغة  
حوكي : هسة أقلّة أوف أبدالة لهايي الصوغة  
على الحايط مال قلبي محفوغة

## ترجع نبعة مع أم العروس والعروس

- براخيل : هلا هلا ألف هلا  
تفضلي أم برهم ، وانشالله امكانك هيچ لاخلا  
أم برهم : ساغ عليكم زحمة ، نتشرّف  
أش سوّيتم قلّولي حتي دنوافق  
نبعة : هايي لحكيّي خلصانة  
الولد قنعناتو ، بس أنتم طبقوا ويأنا  
أم برهم : اي ما نغيد نعغف أسم أهلوا  
نبعة : أمو تسيغ من أهلم البيت كمة  
أبونو من بيت شمة  
خالتو ميخذا غحمين أبو الطرشي  
وعمتو ميخذا ويحد من بيت بشا  
وي أش أقلّك دايج مدايغو كلّش مليحين  
وسيدو بسفر برّ كان كلّش زنگين  
براخيل : هذا ولد ولدة  
يعني قتاخذون ولد ابن نصر بغداد  
لا تسايلون واتعبون أبداً ما ينغاد  
أم برهم : الولد صوغتو لايقني

نبعة : كلش حلو ومحسن  
طولو شغاع ، غقبتو ضغاع  
وچو بعبع وصدغو خمس تضفع  
قوتو مثل شمشون ، وانشاللة ايسيج نصيبة الرحمة وتفغحون  
نبعة إلى العروس:

عاني بنتي.....من يعاينك فتحبها العينك زيد حتى اتبين كباغ  
وكوزينو الثمك حيل حتى شفتك تطلع اصغاع  
أم برهم : صدقني أنا حيغي

بنتي حلوة واصغيغي  
نبعة : أنا أخصمة واقبلي بيبي ، لا تتصعبين  
قصيها لهل حكبي

أم برهم : يعني أش فكرك.....قولي؟  
نبعة : أ لمهر ينكتب بأسم لبنيتي ألفين

كنتور أبو جامتين  
وچرپاية أم نفرين  
گدر وطبشيين ، لمية أم عننتين  
بالدي مال ماي وخشوقتين

والدلالة على الطرفين  
براخيل : والللة أم برهم من يمك  
أنت هاي لتهمك

ياللة حوكي قوم نيشنة.....وانشاللة بالميلة قبل السنة

حوكي يضع النقود في ايدها.....صوت هلاهل!!!!

امبارك ، امبارك أم برهم ، امبارك رحمة  
انشاللة بفراح اخواتك الباقيين على ايدي  
بحيات أمك وأبوكي .

براخيل ونبعة يغنون عفاكي عفاكي.....إلخ.....

**A recipe for a happy home, intended for men, women and children.**

Take 2 cups full of Patience

1 heart full of Love

2 full hands of Generosity

1 pinch of Gaiety mixed with...

1 cup of Understanding.

Now add 2 cups of Loyalty;

Mix all the ingredients with Tenderness.

Spread this irresistible mixture on a Life and serve it to all you meet.

# Regarding “The Elias Family”

by Edward Yamen, Milan

(issue 73)

I am writing to report a story which I heard from my late grandfather of Baghdad, Yossef Nissim, in relation to an invitation made by his father-in-law Yahya Dahood Nissan, for a party in his house honouring Abdalla Eliyadoo on the occasion of his visit to Baghdad. Notables and friends from the community were present celebrating the event.

At the end of the party, the main guest Abdalla Eliyadoo in person stood up and addressed the people asking them in a convincing and friendly manner to give up their old-fashioned headgears for new ‘modern’ fez. The name derives from the town Fez in Morocco from where that headgear was imported. In later years the fez was imported from Vienna and the name was changed to Feena – a reference to Vienna which he brought with him to the party in sufficient numbers in a “chinbeela” (an Arabic slang to denote a very big bag, much bigger than a ‘zinbeel’ – a basket made of palm leaves).



*Yossef Nissim wearing a fez '1915'*

Surprisingly enough the reaction was favourable and the idea pleased everyone of the guests whereas the host excused himself nicely asserting that his attachment to the old way was too powerful on him.

So the guests left the party happily wearing their new fez, leaving their old-fashioned things behind, and supposedly making a big surprise to their wives and families upon their return home and creating spontaneous joy and natural content for the “New Look” to their environment.

In fact, Abdalla Eliyadoo, unveiled in this story a mix of grace as well as guts,

and if you like, he must have used as well the conventional wisdom in feeling that the time of the “Right Moment” was quite ready for that change. More than all that, the story showed that he had capabilities of wordpower, good brains and motivation toward emancipation in fashion.

I seize this opportunity to send you herewith a photo of my grandfather wearing a fez taken in 1915. Tradition has it that repeating something in the name of the one who said it is a great source of merit for that person – even after his passing, thus displaying indebtedness to the source; and that is what I am now properly doing.

Read article “The Elias Family” from Issue 73 ♦



*Yamen Yousef Nissim wearing a Sidara, 1930's.*

## Regarding the marriage of the parents of General Khaled AL-ZAHAWI

by Edward Yamen Milan

(Issue 73)

The letter of Ms Z. Zahawi showed a sincere and serious interest in searching for facts, in contrast to the typical attitudes of other persons in similar cases who disregard the past, ignore it and against all logic do consider even yesterday a day of an era already passed.

I would like to seize this opportunity to appreciate and applaud her noble sense of belonging and strong will for fact-finding, as she proved to be validated as a person who matters.

In relation to the marriage itself, I should say that it was a very rare event and strictly an isolated case in our community for many years right across the spectrum.

I find it not enough from my side to stop here while I can say a word about two sons from that marriage, namely, Khaled and Najji whom I had the chance to meet and remember very well.

Just four or five days before the end of the pro-Nazi revolt in Iraq while I was walking with my father in a torrid afternoon in the main street of Baghdad, he bumped into Khaled Al-Zahawi by mere chance just across the street from the shop of the latter’s relatives from his mother’s side. I was at that time a 13 year old kid and am glad that I can still remember that casual encounter with clarity and brightness.

They shook hands very warmly and had a cordial talk while I remained a silent observer looking at that charismatic person with his enthusiastic and jovial gestures wearing a very new ‘SIDARA’ and a wide smile.

Meantime, I could not forget for a moment the tense, crucial and upsetting period we were passing by, whereat the shops which belonged to the non-Jews over the street were already marked and painted with the words “MUSLIM” OR “CHRISTIAN”. (It was by itself an easier job than to write “JEWS” on the shops of the Jews, as they were more numerous!” – without a shadow of doubt, that scenery gave the broadest hint that an act of violence was in the offing against us at the zero hour.

Spontaneously enough, Khaled Al Zahawi pointed up with disapproval and disgust to all those things, saying to my father something like “we are not going to stand by and let them do what they want... NEVER!”

Those assurances were surely very helpful especially to me as a kid, frightened to death from all those upsetting surroundings!

It was really an incredible gift; I felt so refreshed and rejoiced at that news beyond description but at the end when the time did come all the good intentions

## 98 And Still Working

...and expectations of Al Zahawi were transformed into a 'pious hope' when the attacks of the mobs started to take place and the Kafka-esque nightmare came true as Jewish people were falling dead and shops and homes were being attacked, robbed, plundered and looted. Degradation and death showed their ugly face in no time. Oddly enough, the unrestrained ruthlessness of the British so-called 'liberators' exploited that terrible situation as a vested interest for themselves and as a scapegoat weaponry leaving Baghdad for more than 36 hours in full disorder, disarray and lawlessness.

Al Zahawi informed the Dangoors privately as I could see from the last paragraph of the Scribe's article under reference, that he wasn't given the permission to disperse the rioters neither by the British nor by Noori al-Sa'eed, not even by firing into the air only.

Seventeen years later just by a history's twist of fate, Noori al Sa'eed himself was killed in the streets of Baghdad and had not a better end than those innocent civilian Jews, killed in that event and who could have been saved if he wanted to. Though I would like to declare that I wasn't happy to what has happened to him just as I wasn't happy for what happened to the Jews in June 1941. Nevertheless, I should say that I had given a thorough and well meditated philosophical thought to how things happen in life of which to take note of; just at the manner of the 'Ecclisiasticus' in the Bible.

Now speaking about Naji Mahmood Al Zahawi, the younger brother of Khaled; his that full name was enlisted among the customers' of my father's banking bureau. He was honest, reliable and punctual. Surely these high marks couldn't be given to every customer; I can add that he was extraordinarily meticulous in his those virtues and qualities. Whereas Khaled was so extrovert, Naji was so introvert though very quick in talking and walking, modest and mild – he was shorter and thinner. As he was a 'Judge', I daresay he was a 'lenient' Judge because looking at his characters he couldn't be otherwise.

N.B. Enclosed: a photograph of my father with a Sidara. Date: easily 1930's.

Read article on the marriage of the parents of General Khaled AL-ZAHAWI from issue 73 ♦

**E**zra Belboul (Lev) continues working at the Ministry of Defence at the age of 98. He was born in Baghdad in 1903. In 1917 with the British entry to Baghdad, he was employed by the British authorities at the young age of 14 for his knowledge of Arabic, French, Turkish and English. They found him trustworthy and reliable. He rose in his position to become personal secretary to the British Governor. He also worked with King Feisal I and was in his entourage when he met King Ibn Saud in 1930 on board a British battleship. He occupied important positions in the Iraqi Ministry of Interior until his emigration to Israel in 1950.

In Israel he was appointed as translator in the Ministry of Defence and remained in this position until he was pensioned in 1968, but continued to work with a salary until the year 2001. He still continues to work without pay as he finds his work to be his life. He has 2 sons and 2 daughters and 26 grandchildren. ♦



*Ezra Belboul (Lev)*

*Letter of Appreciation from The Attorney General, Jerusalem – 25 January 2001*

Dear Mr Ezra Lev

**I** have learned with pleasure that you have attained the age of ninety-eight years, in well-being and good living, and that the Ministry of Defence will distinguish this day during which you will conclude your period of formal work in this office and will commence your work as a volunteer. This makes me want to tell you: may you continue to stand on your post, as you have done over one generation's time from the usual age of retirement. Yours is an outstanding phenomenon, few, if any, of which can be found in public service. The beauty of this is that, firstly, that the administration appreciates the importance of your service, and secondly, in that your service is that of the Defence of Israel, a country still struggling for peace and security. May you know happiness and live for many years to come, in good health. ♦

# De Gaulle's opinion of Israel

Press conference held at the Elysée Palace on...27 November 1967

Sent by Edward Dangoor

## Question:

**General, war broke out in the Middle East six months ago. It ended quickly, as we know. What do you think of the evolution of the situation in that area since last June?**

## Answer:

**T**he establishment of a Zionist homeland in Palestine and then, after the Second World War, the establishment of the State of Israel raised at the time a certain amount of fears. The question could be asked, and was indeed asked even among many Jews, whether the settlement of this community on a land acquired under more or less justifiable conditions, in the midst of Arab populations who were basically hostile, would not lead to continued, incessant frictions and conflicts. Some people even feared that the Jews, until then scattered about, but who were still what they had always been, that is an elite people, sure of themselves and domineering, would, once assembled again on the land of their ancient greatness, turn into a burning and conquering ambition.

Nevertheless, in spite of the ebbing and flowing stream of malevolences they aroused in certain countries and certain times, a considerable capital of interest, and even sympathy, had accrued in their favour, especially it must be said in Christian countries: a capital issued from the immense memory of the Bible, fed by the sources of a magnificent liturgy, kept alive by the commiseration inspired by their ancient misfortune, poeticised here by the myth of the Wandering Jew, heightened by the abominable persecutions perpetuated during the Second World War and magnified, after they had again found a homeland, by their constructive works and the courage of their soldiers. That is why many countries – France amongst them – had seen with satisfaction the establishment of their State on the territory acknowledged as theirs by the Major Powers, while wishing for them to reach, by using some modesty, a peaceful "modus vivendi" with their neighbours.

It must be said that these psychological factors had somewhat changed since 1956. The Franco-British Suez expedition had seen the emergence of a warrior State of Israel determined to increase its land area and boundaries. Later, the actions it had taken to

double its population by encouraging the immigration of new elements had led us to believe that the territory it had acquired would soon prove insufficient and that, in order to enlarge it, it would seize on any opportunity that would present itself. This is the reason why the Fifth Republic had disengaged itself from the very special and close ties with Israel, established by the previous regime, and instead had applied itself to favouring detente in the Middle East. Obviously we had maintained cordial relations with the Government of Israel, and even continued to supply for its defence the weapons it asked to buy, while at the same time we were advising moderation. Finally, we had refused to give our official backing to its settling in a conquered district of Jerusalem, and had maintained our Embassy in Tel Aviv.

Unfortunately a drama occurred. It was brought on by the very great and constant tension resulting from the scandalous fate of the refugees in Jordan, and also by the threat of destruction against Israel. On 22 May the Akaba affair unfortunately created by Egypt\* would offer a pretext to those who wanted war. To avoid hostilities, on 24 May France had proposed to the other three Major Powers to jointly forbid both parties from initiating the fight. On 2 June, the French Government had officially declared that it would condemn whoever would take up arms first. I myself, on 24 May, had stated to Mr Eban, Israel's Foreign Minister, whom I saw in Paris: "If Israel is attacked we shall not let it be destroyed, but if you attack we shall condemn your action.

Israel attacked, and reached its objectives in six days of fighting. Now it organises itself on conquered territories, the occupation of which cannot go without oppression, repression, expulsions, while at the same time a resistance grows, which it regards as terrorism. Jerusalem should receive international status.

\*After asking the UN forces to leave, which for ten years had controlled the outlet of the Gulf of Akaba at the Strait of Tiran, Egypt announced that it would block navigation to and from the port of Eilat, by which Israel receives its oil imports from Iran and which is its only outlet to the Red Sea, especially since the Suez Canal is closed to ships flying the Israel flag.

Israel rightly regarded the closure of navigation as the start of hostilities by Egypt. ♦

# A Protestant Clergyman Answers General de Gaulle

**I**t is considered decent to be ecstatic over the brilliant style of your press conference. I did read your recent and original interpretation of Jewish history and you will allow me to be ecstatic not over your style, but over the surprising ignorance it reveals of the actual facts, the deliberate determination to misrepresent History and the remarkable subtlety employed in order to insult and to hurt.

Obviously, in spite of some Israeli and Jewish exegetes, you are not anti-Semitic. It certainly would appear most ungentlemanly to be anti-Semitic as far as you are concerned, for many reasons:

When you make of so many centuries of sufferings a simple poetic ballad of the "Wandering Jew", you insult eighteen centuries of Jewish sufferings in Christian lands.

When you assert that in Christendom a "capital interest and sympathy" has always been offered to Israel, you insult the people to whom were inflicted the "rouelle" (round cloth headpiece Jews had to wear during the Middle Ages) and official contempt (councilar decisions of 1215).

When you speak of the Jewish Jerusalem as of a "conquered district" you have us smile: everybody knows in the West that this town Jerusalem covers several hills and has been built by Jewish hands. But one will have, one of these days, to realise somehow the Ambassador of France will have his place in Jerusalem, that the Holy Land is not protected anymore by anyone: Israel is in charge and takes care of it with more efficiency, courage and honour than any previous "protector".

Really, it was not necessary, indeed to spit in the face of the people who gave the world Moses, Isaiah, Jesus, accusing Israel of provoking "the stream of malevolences: (admirable euphemisms) which Jews had to suffer unceasingly.

Mr President, you should not have taken men of France, Western countries and Israel, for a bunch of fools since it is plain for all to see that in your mind, the important questions are about oil, money and the prestige not of France which your unworthy words have injured, but by the miserable ephemeral glory of a politician in the evening of his life. ♦

Claude Duvemoy

Minister

*The Scribe No.74*

# The Israeli Source of the Pathan Tribes

From the book, *Lost Tribes from Assyria*, by A Avihail and A Brin, 1978, in Hebrew

by Issachar Katzir

As children, we heard from our parents, who come from Afghanistan, stories about the Ten Tribes who were lost during the destruction of the Temple, about meetings with the country people with whom they had contact in trade matters, about Jewish customs and names – and it all sounded inconceivable and fascinating. Like all children, we enjoyed hearing about tribes of Israel preserving their forefathers' tradition, bearing arms and awaiting the day of redemption.

From Mr Yisrael Mishal, who lived in Afulah and was formerly President of the Afghanistan Jewish community, I often heard unusually fascinating quotations and stories uttered repeatedly and Mr Mishal gave live examples of his meetings with Pathans who dwell on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

Who are the Pathans? They are also called Afghans or Pishtus after their language. They identify themselves with their former name 'sons of Israel', even though nowadays they live as Muslims. In Afghanistan they are said to number six to seven million, and in Pakistan seven to eight million. Two million of them live as beduins. Outwardly, the Pathans are similar to the Jews.

From their ancient customs, one can point to a connection between the Pathans and the Jewish people. They make up about half of the population of Afghanistan, in the region called Pushtunistan, on the eastern border of Afghanistan. Over ninety per cent of the inhabitants are Sunni Muslims. Later modernisation has penetrated into this State, and even less in the hilly areas near the border. In these places, the Pathans continue to live in the tribal framework as their fathers and forefathers did. The legal system operates according to the Pashtunwali," the Pashtun Laws, parts of which are similar to the laws of the Torah.

The Pathans are known for their physical strength. They are tall, light-coloured and handsome, good soldiers and for the most part bear arms from a young age. They are diligent and intelligent, faithful to an exemplary degree and are known in the world as outstanding hosts.

## What is the Ethnic Origin of the Panthim?

The Panthim are not similar in their outward appearance or in their character to any of the ethnic groups which populate this environment: the Indian group-Iranians, Mongolians, Turks or Persians. Most of the researchers are of the opinion that the origin of the Pathans is indeed Israeli. The aliyah to Israel of Afghanistan Jews and the volume of evidence heard from them on this subject about the customs of the Pathans corroborate this idea.

## Relationship to the Tribes of Israel

There is interesting evidence about the preservation among the tribes of family trees on their origin, and on their relationship to the fathers of the Israeli people. These family trees are well preserved. Some of them are penned in golden lettering on deerskin. The names of the tribes speak for themselves: the tribe of Harabni (in the Afghan tongue) is the tribe of Reuben, the shinwari is Shimeon, the Levani – Levi, Daftani – Naftali, Jaji – Gad, Ashuri – Asher, Yusuf Su, sons of Josef, Afridi – Ephraim, and so on.

The former monarchy in Afghanistan has a widely-spread tradition according to which their origin was from the tribe of Benjamin and the family of King Saul. According to this tradition, Saul had a son called Jeremia and he in turn had a son called Afghana. Jeremia died at about the same time as Saul and the son Afghana was raised by King David and remained in the royal palace during the reign of Solomon too. About 400 years later, in the days of Nebuchadnezer, the Afghana family fled to the Gur region (Jat in our times). This is in central Afghanistan and here the family settled down and traded with the people of the area. In the year 622, with the appearance of Islam, Muhammed sent Khaled ibn Waleed to the 'sons of Ishrail' to spread the word of Islam among the Afghanistan tribes. He succeeded in his mission, returned to Muhammed with seven representatives of the residents of Afghanistan and with 76 supporters. The leader of these people was 'Kish' (the name of the father of Solomon). According to the tradition, the

emissaries succeeded in their assignment and Muhammed praised them for this.

## The Place of the Assyrian Exile

According to the Bible (the second Book of Kings, Chronicles 1 and 2), the ten tribes were exiled to Halah and Havor and the river Gozan and to the cities of Maday. According to the tradition of the Jews of Afghanistan, the river gozan is 'rod jichan' (river in Persian is rod), one of the tributaries of the Emo-daria, which descends in the vicinity of the town of Maimane. The city of Havor is, they say, peh-Shauor (Pash-Havor') which means 'Over Havor' in Afghanistan, and today serves as the centre of the Pathans on the Pakistan that the whole area populated the ancient Assyrian Exile. There are researchers who claim that all the Jews living in southern U.S.S.R. along the Emor-daria' are the descendants of the ten tribes - the Bucharins, Georgians, etc. As we know, a group of "B'nei Yisrael' some of whom settled in Israel, is also found in India and Afghanistan. The existence of the Pathan tribes is therefore in the heart of the area in which the ten tribes are found.

## The Similarity of the Pathans to the Jews

The British, who ruled Afghanistan for a long time, found it difficult to distinguish between the Pathans and the Jews, and called the Pathans 'Juz' - Jews. The Jews, too found it hard to distinguish between themselves and the Pathans when the latter are not wearing traditional dress. Afghanistan has about 21 peoples and languages and only the Pathans, apart from the Jews, look clearly Semitic; their countenance is lighter than that of other peoples and their nose is long. Some of them also have blue eyes. Since most of them grow beards and sidelocks like Jews, this also adds difficulty to an attempt to distinguish between them and the Jews.

## Jewish Customs

Even though the Pathans accepted Islam voluntarily and forcibly, they maintain Jewish customs preserved from the recesses of their past. The book contains considerable evidence taken from Jews of Afghanistan who lived in the neighbourhoods of the Pathans and had contact with them. ☛

## Articles of interest from previous issues

...The evidence doesn't relate to all the Pathans or to all the tribes and places. However, it does prove the existence of Jewish customs among the Pathans. The research on this subject still requires completion, both quantitative and qualitative. Let us note the customs in headline form only: sidelock, circumcision within eight days, a Talith (prayer shawl) and four fringes (Tsitsit), a Jewish wedding (Hupah and ring), women's customs (immersion in a river or spring), levirate marriage (Yibum), honouring the father, forbidden foods (horse and camel food), refraining from cooking meat and milk, a tradition of clean and unclean poultry, the Shabbat (preparation of 12 Hallah loaves, refraining from work), lighting a candle in honour of the Shabbat, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) prayer (some of them pray turned in the direction of Jerusalem), blood on the threshold and on the two Mezzuzot (in times of plague or trouble), a scapegoat, curing the ill with the help of the Book of Psalms (placing the Book under the patient's head), a Hebrew amulet (Kamia), Hebrew names (also for neighbourhoods and villages), Holy Books (they especially honour 'the Law of Sharif' which is the Law of Moses), and rising when the name of Moshe is mentioned.

As for the Pathan law, they have laws similar to the Jewish law. The Magen David symbol is found in almost every Pathan house on an island in the Peshawar district. The rich make it of expensive metals, the poor from simple wood. The Magen David can be seen on the towers of schools and on tools and ornaments.

### Archaeological and Other Evidence

Apart from synagogues, Sifrei Torah, Hebrew placenames and tribal family trees, there also exists evidence on important archeological finds: near the town of Herat in Tacharan, old graves were found on which the writing was in Persian and in the Hebrew language. The graves date from the 11th to the 13th centuries. In an opposite fashion, so it seems, there are a number of inscriptions engraved on rocks in ancient Hebrew script near the town of Netchaset.

In the 'Dar el amman' museum in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, there is a black stone found in Kandahar, on which is written in Hebrew.

It would be appropriate to end this article with one of the pieces of evidence. Mr Chiya Zorov of Tel Aviv notes: When the Bolsheviks rose to power in Russia, they

divided the large area of the southern part of central Russia into smaller districts such as Tanjekistan, Turkemanistan, Kazchastan, etc. In Tanjekistan, which is in northern Afghanistan, there was a village by the name of Dushme. When Stalin gained power, he called the village in his name, Stalinabad. It started to develop and grow and many Jews then began to stream into Tangekistan. They found that the Tanyakis light candles on Friday evening. When the Jews went to visit them, they revealed that they eat a dish made of meat stuffed with rice called Pacha, which is characteristic of the Bucharian Jews and is eaten on Friday night. When they asked them what it was, the Tajiks replied that this is an ancient traditional food of theirs and its name is Pacha. They also said that they have a tradition that they were once Jews.

Rabbi Saadia Gaon discussed at length with the Hacham Hivay Habalchi and in the opinion of the speaker, in that period (10th century) the Jews were inclined to assimilate into Islam and it was about this that they were arguing.

The scholar Ibn Sina, born in Buchara, also lived at the time. The teacher Tajiki said that he, too, belongs to the Jews who were forced to convert, assimilated into Islam and are called Tchale. As recounted, the meaning of his name is Even Sina – son of sinal (and up to this day in many languages, and also in Hebrew, the words are similarly pronounced – Sinai, Sin Sina) and perhaps this is why he called himself Ben Sinai, in other words, son of the Torah which came forth from Sinai.

The Maharaja of Mardan was a scholar who completed his studies at the University of London and would often visit the converts of Mishhad who lived in Peshawar. He also visited a Jew called Carmeli, who told Mr Hiya Zorov that the Maharaja always said the day would come when they would learn to distinguish the origins of all people and then they would know that all the peoples in the vicinity of Afghanistan were once Jews. The Maharaja published a book in English and wrote of this in the introduction to the book. But the book was lost. There was a time when the author Hiya Zorov, with late President Ben-Tsvi, who considered it of great importance, tried to find the book, but in vain.

Some of the Bucharian Jews have a tradition that they are among the people of the First Temple possibly from the Ten Tribes, but he doesn't know about this and afterwards they were joined by Jews from the Second Temple Exile.

### Scribe:

Pakistani Cricketer Imran Khan who married Jemima Goldsmith is a Pathan. ♦

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*Dear Naim*

*With thanks for your great service to the Jewish Community all over the world, I present to you my booklet.*

# A Tribute to Elie Kedourie

by Professor Shmuel Moreh

**ELIE KEDOURIE, CBE., FBA 1926-1992**

**Edited by Sylvia Kedourie**

**History, Philosophy, Politics. London, Portland-Oregon:**

**Frank Cass Publishers 1998, [8], 132 pp., ISBN 07146 4862 0, £25.00**

The above title, by Sylvia Kedourie, is a collection of essays published as a memorial for the fifth anniversary of the untimely death in 1992 of the celebrated Orientalist and scholar Prof. Elie Kedourie. He was Professor of Politics, specialist in the History of the Middle East at the London school of Economics and Political Science (LSE), the Founder and Editor of the well-known journal *Middle Eastern Studies* (1964), and the author and editor of many outstanding books on the Middle East.

As an old friend of Prof. Kedourie I feel an obligation to write in memory of this great scholar and friend who was proud of being a descendant of the glorious Jewry of Babylon. It was after the Farhud (pogrom) of 1941, when I first met Elie Kedourie. I used to accompany my elder brother Jacob to Elie's home in the old Jewish quarter in Baghdad. The Oriental classical architecture of Elie's huge two storey-house with its square courtyard in its centre, the cellar with its well and its conventional system of ventilation was in sharp contrast to the new architecture of our house in the Battawiyin (a new mixed quarter outside old Baghdad). These differences were striking and unforgettable. The conventional Jewish family ties and religious values were more observed in the old Jewish quarter than in the new ones. This fact might illustrate why Prof. Elie Kedourie was identified by some of his "Eurocentric colleagues" as being "conservative, or reactionary, or 'right-wing'."

The reason for my accompanying my brother was that danger awaited any Jewish child or young man who would dare to walk alone in the streets, not only of Baghdad, but in the whole of Iraq, especially through Muslim quarters. Already, before the Farhud and the rise of Zionism, we were then indeed, "victims of ideological tyranny" The persecution of minorities in Iraq with the establishment of the national regime,

confirms Prof. Kedourie's conclusion that "nationalism is anti-individualist, despotic, racist, and violent."

My brother was then a classmate of Elie Kedourie during their primary and secondary studies at the Alliance Française school and later on at the Shammash High School in Baghdad in the late 1930's and 1940's. In these two schools the French and then the English languages were, respectively, the languages of instruction. This fact can shed light upon Elie's writing on the Farhud and his attitude towards British policy in the Middle East after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of national Arabic governments in the Middle East.

This decisive and traumatic pogrom against the Jews of Baghdad, (June 1941), initiated by pro-Nazi Iraqi and Palestinian elements (cf. Peter Roberts's remark) who received refuge in Iraq, was haunting Prof. Elie Kedourie's memory, and his generation. The Farhud became rooted in the collective memory of the Jews of Iraq, yet he was the first scholar to write about its scholarly researches on the background of the Farhud and its repercussions. Nowadays it is a well-known fact that the Farhud was the main reason for the mass exodus of the Jews of Iraq during the 1950's. His writings on this tragedy, together with Mr. Naim Kattan, his colleague at the Alliance school in Baghdad, made European and American scholars aware of this massacre which Arab historians and writers deliberately ignored and about which they kept conspiracy of silence.

Elie and Jacob were the best pupils in their classes. They read English, French and Arabic books extensively, and their discussions and conversations spared nobody from their critical and sarcastic comments and comic remarks. They criticised various subjects including their teachers, their manners and habitual remarks, their teaching methods and their friends. Their history lessons, especially on

Arab history and literature, were the object of their parody. Their jokes were concentrated upon police behavior towards the Jews, the Iraqi Government, the Iraqi Parliament and the behaviour of its members; the way in which laws were passed by its MPs while asleep, etc. Later on, Elie's articles, before and after their publication in Baghdad newspapers, were discussed. Their discussions were full of humour, sometimes with ironic, absurd and sharp remarks mingled with high bursts of laughter or sardonic smile, which even after some decades were observed by Oliver Letwin in Prof. Kedourie's conversations and writings. One notable example that they would repeat was that of a tribal chief M.P. who repudiated the censure of the traffic police with the boast of 'thousands of tribal gunmen at his disposal.

Only after the massive immigration to Israel, during what was termed in Iraq as "the exchange of population", i.e. the Jews of Iraq with the Palestinian refugees, did we hear of Elie Kedourie's renown. This exchange took place after the 1948 War and the 1950-1951 Jewish mass immigration of the Jews of Iraq to Israel. Although we lived in tents in temporary camps we managed to study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and obtained our M.A. degrees. I was sent by the Hebrew University to continue my studies in Arabic literature at SOAS-University of London while my brother Jacob decided to continue his studies at LSE. By then, the defiance of Elie Kedourie's Ph.D. degree at Oxford supervised by Prof. Gibb had become a "venerated legend of academic heroism" in Israel, especially among his friends and admirers comprising mainly Iraqi Jews. Thus, the first person to whom we would turn for advice on deciding to study at the University of London was our good friend Prof. Elie Kedourie. Our letter from Jerusalem to Elie was, to our surprise, promptly answered with a positive reply. Elie proved to be, as always, "a friend in deed". Afterwards, our meetings with him and his wife Sylvia became frequent. ☛

... Our conversations were always in our Baghdadi Jewish dialect in which we all enjoyed its folkloric humour and special idioms.

I am recounting all these reminiscences because what one feels missing in this condensed and well-presented book, is the testimony of one of his personal friends who studied with him during his schooldays. This task others could do better than I, such as his friends Dr. Jacob Moreh and Mr. Nissim Dawood, both living in the U.K. However, this book covers all aspects of Professor Elie Kedourie's personal and university life, i.e. as a student, a scholar, an academic researcher, a teacher and his devotion to his mentor and colleague Prof. Michael Oakeshott. His achievement as a supervisor to his Ph.D. students, a commentator in journals and radio and T.V., political advisor, colleague, and other roles he played, are also covered here by some friends and admirers. The essays are written in an excellent English style worthy of one of the greatest Orientalists and scholars of our time, who was considered one of the outstanding masters of English style. All these aspects of Elie's life were discussed in full detail by authoritative personalities. In fact one can understand Elie's unique personality, achievements, greatness and the special traits of his books only after reading thoroughly the nineteen essays written by his publisher, his wife and devoted friends (the three other essays were written by Prof. Kedourie; this book was edited by his devoted wife, Dr. Sylvia Haim-Kedourie, who is bearing alone, with dignity and capability, the burden of the great legacy of her late husband).

In his essay, Kenneth Minogue commented with great accuracy: "Indeed, so far as Britain and France were concerned, Elie was culturally ambidextrous, and I have always thought we were lucky to get him ... He could easily have become an adornment of the Seine rather than the Thames." In fact, we, i.e. his friends in Israel, used to say that: "if Elie would have immigrated to Israel he would not have achieved what he had achieved in England. He has escaped many years of torture to master the Hebrew language to the level of writing his research." This is beside the fact that since 1947 onwards, the nascent State of Israel was engaged in a series of wars with its neighbours, which would have rendered concentration on his research very problematic. Moreover, Israel at that time was already inclined towards the study of the Holocaust and Nazi Germany, and not in the

philosophical history or Britain's policy towards the Arab countries. This fact explains why my brother and I started our Ph.D. studies long after Elie's submission of his thesis in 1953.

To read in this book eulogies in homage to Elie written by first rate scholar fills the heart with pain and sorrow at the untimely passing away of a devoted friend and great scholar. Such homage includes: "What one admired in the act of a young Elie Kedourie-defying the Oxford establishment, willing to pay a price for his truth-is a quality that remained throughout' (Itamar Rabinovich, [Israel former Ambassador to the USA], p. 42); "Elie Kedourie leaves a rich and diverse legacy many of us have benefited in a variety of ways from both his great learning and personal kindness". "Kedourie was the scholar par

excellence" O'Sullivan's second remark: "the sustained philosophical rigour, range of imaginative sympathy, and depth of historical insight, displayed in his reflections on Hegel's proposed synthesis and Marx's critique of it ensure that this volume will confirm his status as one of the greatest political thinkers to have emerged during the second half of the twentieth century"; "One of the obituaries... pointed out that Elie was an observant Jew,... In any event, I consider Elie Kedourie to have been a great man, and... have played... an important role in the formulation of United States foreign policy at a key juncture in our post-Cold War history." "He was a sage dedicated to wisdom. He lives on, not just in the memory of his friends and students, but in his contribution to the store of wisdom which should regulate the conduct of human affairs". Such praise, couched in the usual idiom of English understatement, only serves to emphasize the deep feeling of loss sustained not only by Orientalists and historians in general, but by the entire Jewish people. He was indeed a great scholar, and humanist, who could enrich Oriental studies with his devoted research and intellectual integrity and deep insight, joined through the personal experience of having lived under Arab national governments in Iraq.

Prof. Elie Kedourie's Oriental heritage, personality and academic integrity can be better understood and deeply appreciated after reading this book. He proved himself a worthy descendant of those Jews who came to Babylon with Yehoyachin" and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour," who later on compiled the Talmud Babli. ♦

## “The Disputation”

Play at New End Theatre, Hampstead  
Reviewed by Percy Gourney, MBE

The play is based on a book of the same name by Prof Hyam Maccoby, a distinguished scholar and author on Jewish Christian relations (who was a fellow congregant in Richmond Synagogue until his move to Leeds) and it has received wide acclaim in the United States and here.

It concerns a disputation between a renowned Rabbi, Moses ben Nachman, with a Jewish convert to Christianity, Pablo Christiani, in Aragon, Spain in 1263 Barcelona on Jewish and Christian beliefs, held under the authority of King James. The rabbi agreed to take part on condition that he had full freedom of expression which the King accepted.

I found the whole play, and especially the actual debate, of riveting interest, and I asked the organisers of the production for a copy of the script which covers the whole gamut of emotions aroused in a dialogue of this nature. Robert Rietty put in a performance of intense sensitivity to the arguments involved as a Christian monk, Raymond de Penaforte, or 'Brother Raymond' as he is called in the play. He asks Nachmanides to be conciliatory and not press his case too forcefully lest he arouse Christian anger, but the former insisted on his right to put his case as he thought fit. One point he made was that if the founder of Christianity was described as the "Prince of Peace" – a phrase used in Isaiah's prophecies – what peace had the world known, especially with the ongoing crusades at the time, since the start of Christianity. Hence the Jewish belief that the Messiah was still to come.

This put me in mind of the Talmudic view that by the Jewish Year 6000 (in the Tractate Sanhedrin 95a) the Messiah would have come and the Third Temple built in Jerusalem. Perhaps we should start an organisation now to study and act upon the far-reaching implication of this view! For instance, who would have thought that when Herzl convened the First World Zionist Congress in 1897 in Basle, Switzerland, after writing his famous book, "Der Juden Staat", that the State in Israel would come into being just fifty years later to justify his vision!

This play has striking relevance in this age with the Church's Mission to the Jews, current attempts in Israel to convert Jews made by monks and nuns and, in this country, the "Jews for Jesus" organisation in universities and elsewhere, appealing to vulnerable and ignorant Jews. In a fitting comment on Maccoby's work, Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks has stated that "God has given us many faiths but only one world in which to live together. On our response to that challenge, much of our future will depend." ♦

# Zimbabwe-Jews (Feature)

RUSAPE, Zimbabwe, April 23 Sapa-AFP

In the hilly rural Makoni district, some 200 kilometres (120 miles) southeast of the capital Harare, lies a small synagogue whose entrance is graced by a star of David painted in brown against a white wall.

Inside the church are some 500 Zimbabwean worshippers, colourfully dressed in blue and brown neat uniforms with sashes, the men wearing black yamulkas, or skull caps, the women wearing maroon and purple crowns. All the worshippers bear rosettes in seven colours.

They have been celebrating the eight-day period of Passover - the flight of the Jews from Egypt as recounted in the Bible.

They consider themselves to be authentic Jews. Drawing striking parallels between the historical conditions of biblical Israel and common African cultures, the elders of the Church of God Saints of Christ are convinced that they are lineal descendants of Moses.

"We are typical of a house of Israel, our culture is typical Israel - our marriages, inheritance customs, even our childbirth customs. We have never been gentiles, we are the lost tribe of Israel," Rabbi Ambrose Makuwaza told AFP. "We are authentic Israelites... We crossed the Suez canal to come to Africa. We are Hebrews, descendants of Abraham."

While the church has been in existence in Zimbabwe since 1938 and claims a following of more than 5,000, it is little known nationally. The Orthodox Jewish community here is aware of their existence but say that since it has not been established whether or not the Zimbabwean worshippers are Jews, they cannot claim to be Jews, though they may have a Jewish inclination.

Stanley Harris, president of the Central African Jewish Board of Deputies in Zimbabwe, says it would be difficult to trace Judaic origin of these people. "They are of possible Judaic knowledge, but not of Judaic origin," said Harris.

But Rabbi Makuwaza is adamant that Zimbabweans, like all black southern Africans of Bantu origin, are of Judaic parentage. "In times to come the world will come to realise that there are (black) Jews in Zimbabwe," he said, adding: "We are Israelites, we have no doubts. ... If we are not Israelites, as other people want to believe, how come we follow the Israelites way of living?"

There are even languages resemblances between the Zimbabwean native languages and Hebrew, they say.

They point to American scholars who in a book compiled in 1970s said the similarities between African culture and pre-exile Hebrews are too many and too close to be accidental.

\*\*\*\*\* Scholarly studies, they claim, show evidence that in virtually any African country, remnants of an earlier Hebrew civilisation can be found with traces of their ancestry to the ancient kingdom of biblical Abraham.

Western historians say Bantus, Africans of southern Africa, came from the north, but where exactly, they do pinpoint, argued another elder, "We believe we came from Israel in the Middle East".

They also argue that there is biblical evidence that Abraham, the original Isrealite, was of cushite or black African descent, and that Moses, the founder of Judaism was born in Africa.

Some of the Judaic practises followed by the Zimbabwean black Jews include the strict observance of the Sabbath, observance of the ten commandments, male circumcision and baptism by immersion in flowing water as well as following the lunar month.

The Rusape Jews believe Jesus was the Messiah of the time, and that Jesus was like any other human being who is currently buried in Jerusalem, not that he went to heaven as Christians believe.

"The birth or death of Jesus has no religious value, only his teachings," said elder Hosea Risinamhodzi. ♦

**M Basner**

<http://www.anc.org.za/anc/newsbrief/1995/news0423>

## Letter to the Editor

I am researching the origin of my family name, Magasis. My paternal lineage is from a Jewish village in or near Kobrin, Belerus. However family legend maintained that we originally came from a town which bore our family name (or from which our name was derived).

I have seen references to a town near the Tigris river (possibly between Al' Amara and Al Kut) with the name, "Magasis".

For example, the following is from a British historical reference:

"On the night of 24/25 April 1916 in Mesopotamia, an attempt was made to provision the force besieged at Kut-el-Amara. Lieutenant-Commander Cowley, with a lieutenant (FIRMAN, K.O.P.) (commanding SS Julnar), a sub-lieutenant and 12 ratings, started off with 210 tons of stores up the River Tigris. Unfortunately Julnar was attacked almost at once by Turkish machine-guns and artillery. At Magasis, steel hawsers stretched across the river halted the expedition, the enemy opened fire at point-blank range and Julnar's bridge was smashed. Julnar's commander was killed, also several of his crew; Lieutenant-Coommader Cowley was taken prisoner with the other survivors and almost certainly executed by the Turks."

I had also read of shelling between Iran and Iraq in December 1984 which targeted a town called Magasis.

Any information on the town and/or family name "Magasis" would be greatly appreciated. (Known alternate family name spellings include Magezis, Magzis, and Magesis)

Many thanks! ♦

**Steve Magasis**

Please write to me at:

magasis@foxinternet.net  
Seattle, WA, USA

24Hr Phone/Fax: (206) 784-9980

*Quote...*

Plan for this world as if you expect to live forever,  
but plan for the hereafter as if you expect to die tomorrow.

Ibn Gabirol.

*Quote...*

A wise man learns more from his enemies,  
than a fool from his friends.

Barbara Gracian.

**From World Jewry:  
The Review of the World Jewish Congress  
November 1971**

## **Iranian Jewry Celebrates Cyrus**

**Moussa Kermanian**

**T**he Jewish Community in Iran is one of the oldest in the Diaspora, dating back to the destruction of the First Temple at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. It has now been the witness of unique and unprecedented celebrations, of fourfold significance to Iranian Jews.

First of all, Iran is their home and they have shared its joys and sorrows. It is the resting place of their ancestors, and their holy shrines such as tomb of Daniel, Esther and Ezra are located here. Aside from that, parts of the Old Testament have either been written in this land or relate to it.

Secondly, these celebrations did honour a king who occupies the highest spiritual position in the religious literature of the Jews.

Cyrus the Great, as it is written in Ezra, c. I and Isaiah, c. 44-45, as well as in the last Chapter of Kings, has been given the titles of Shibban and Messiah by God, which even the prophets do not have.

Thirdly, from the national and political points of view, the celebrations commemorated the declaration of Human Rights and Liberties by Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Iranian Monarchy.

It was through this declaration and other decrees that the prisoners of Babylon were not only freed but were encouraged to lay the foundations of the Second Temple.

Cyrus did not confine his benevolence to this act alone but also ordered that all the gold and silver utensils looted from the First Temple be restored to the Jews and that the people of the Achaemenian lands should not spare any moral and material support to assist the exodus of the Jews, which was carried out in an orderly manner.

Fourthly, with the arrival of the Jews from Babylon as free men and citizens of the Achaemenian Empire, the Iranian Jews became a community. In fact they are as old as the Persian Empire and as such the celebrations also commemorated the beginning of the Jewish community in Iran.

In the reign of His Imperial Majesty, the Shahanshah Aryamehr, the present

sovereign of Iran, such great magnanimity and humanitarian love has been shown them that the Iranian Jews, like all their compatriots have made considerable progress. In contrast to their neighbouring countries they have been shown extraordinary kindness and generosity and it is the sacred duty of the Iranian Jewish society to express its gratitude in the best possible manner.

Iranian Jewry shared the celebrations without reservations and tried to express its feeling of gratitude and thankfulness in every possible way.

Among the measures adopted by the Iranian Jewish society through the decisions of a special committee, were the organising of meetings, the decorating and illuminating of all Jewish establishments, such as synagogues and schools, and the holding of prayer and thanksgiving ceremonies.

For many years ago, the Jewish community had planned to set up establishments such as a hospital and a girl's secondary school, both of which have now been set up and named after Cyrus the Great, to commemorate the occasion. The Central Committee of Iranian Jewry, or individual members of the community, have set up more than 30 schools throughout the country.

Perhaps, the most outstanding action for the occasion was the extensive repairs to the Shrine of Esther and Mordchai in the city of Hamadan (Ekbatan), the summer capital of Xerxes, which has attracted Jewish and Christian pilgrims from time immemorial and constitutes one of the most valuable archaeological treasures of Iran. Adjacent to the shrine, a huge garden with new commemorative buildings, chapel and library have been created and the site is today a major tourist attraction. The new facilities are expected to be inaugurated soon in the presence of the dignitaries of the country.

In the educational field, arrangements have been under way for several years for the publication of a Hebrew-Persian and Persian-Hebrew dictionary by the late Suleiman Haim, the noted Iranian Jewish

scholar. The Hebrew-Persian dictionary has already been printed in Jerusalem and the other works were made ready during the last days of his life.

Cyrus the Great loved the Jews and took a number of positive measures in the cause of justice and righteousness, and that too in the hard and cruel world of his times. The present Monarch of Iran also has spared no effort to show kindness and generosity to the Jews and to bring about international peace and understanding. The traditions of humanitarianism established by Cyrus the Great and the equality of men were one of the first ideas expressed and outlined by the Shahanshah.

If circumstances had permitted, the joy of the Iranian Jewish community would have reached its peak. In the great gathering of world rulers and leaders on the occasion of the 25th centenary of the Iranian monarchy, the absence of the representatives of the Jewish nation is to be regretted.

It would appear that if political and other considerations had allowed, the representatives of the nation that was so favoured by Cyrus the Great might have participated in this illustrious gathering as proof of human justice and vivid witness to the glory of that magnificent monarch. ♦

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**Dr Nahum Goldmann,  
President of the World Jewish  
Congress sent the following  
message to the Shah of Iran:**

“On behalf of the World Jewish Congress and its member communities and organisations throughout the world, I wish to convey to your Imperial Majesty and to the Iranian people our joyous participation in the celebrations commemorating the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great. The Jewish people will always remember his historic act, sanctioning their first return from exile to their homeland. We wish you and your people happiness and prosperity.” ♦

I am interested in the genealogy of the medieval Jewish Exilarchs and their descendants. Do any of the issues of the Journal of Babylonian Jewry published by the Exilarch's Foundation contain this information, and, if so, how may I obtain the same?

**David Hughes**

**North Carolina**

**Scribe:** The Exilarch's Tree of the middle ages appears in the Babylonian Haggadah published by the Exilarch's Foundation and is as follows:

## BABYLONIAN EXILARCHS



The ancient line of Exilarchs stopped in 1270 following the Mongol invasion of the Middle East. The line was restarted in 1970 by Naim Dangoor, exactly 700 years afterwards. ☛

...Question.

Can the ancestry of Mr Dangoor be traced from the medieval Jewish exilarchs without breaks? I read that Mr Dangoor revived the exilarchate. Does that mean that he is the recognised Royal Davidic heir? I do not know the traditions of the Dangoor family, but perhaps they are of royal Davidic descent but have lost their pedigree. I am writing a book on the subject - that is why I wanted to know more about the Dangoor family.

**David Hughes**

[RDAVID218@aol.com](mailto:RDAVID218@aol.com)

**Scribe:**

The fact is that at various times in Jewish history after attempted revolts and endeavours to reform our Nation all known descendants of King David were rounded up and massacred, both by the Persians as well as by the Romans.

However, as Time Magazine pointed out recently, after ten generations every ancestor would have some 1000 descendants. Thus after 100 generations every Jew must carry some of King David's genes. This would even be more pronounced among Babylonian Jewry. Modern claims to a direct descent from King David cannot be proved without a shadow of doubt.

In the meantime, any person who finds himself better qualified for the title is invited to come forward." ♦

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I received your postcard giving the internet details of The Scribe but found it very difficult to download issue no. 73. Please mail to me a print-out for which I enclose payment.

My best to Renée Dangoor – she and I went through school together in Shanghai, even played piano duets at community concerts – a long time ago! ♦

**Rose Jacob Horowitz**

**Los Angeles**

*Quote...*

If you want to make peace,  
you don't talk to your friends.  
You talk to your enemies.

Moshe Dayan

## Book Review

# From Baghdad to Boardrooms – My Family's Odyssey

by **Ezra K Zilkha with Ken Emerson**

Self Published in 1999 by **Ezra K Zilkha**

No ISDN Number 253 pp

Reviewed by Anna Dangoor

**F**rom Baghdad to Boardrooms - is an excellent book on many levels. It took me almost no time to read, entertaining me with countless anecdotes, some amusing, some insightful, and some possessing both qualities at once.

Written as a testament to the life of Khedouri Zilkha, Ezra's father, the book is also a memoir of Ezra's own life, charting his achievements in the business world, and also on a more personal level.

The book begins by describing how Khedouri set up the first and largest private branch banking system in the Middle East, KA Zilkha Maison de Banque. Its first branch in Baghdad, Ezra's birthplace, was opened by Khedouri when he was only fifteen, and he went on to open other banks in Beirut, Cairo, and Alexandria. Khedouri ran his banks by a strict code of traditional business ethics, always reliable, and always true to his word. Ezra notes how when his father was starting out, much of his business was conducted simply on the strength of a person's good reputation. This kind of practice would regrettably today be considered incredibly risky.

It is evident that the values that Khedouri stood by were passed down to Ezra. He explains how important it was to him within all his business, to preserve the excellent reputation his father had created for the Zilkha name. He also talks of his extreme fear of the shame of bankruptcy which is an admirable concern in today's world where all too many businesses take the loss of other people's money far too lightly.

'From Baghdad to Boardrooms' gives an insight into the world of business, detailing numerous deals and ventures that Ezra was involved in. He also describes vividly the huge spectrum of people and characters that he had the pleasure (or sometimes displeasure) of coming into contact with, amongst whom familiar names such as Margaret Thatcher, Henry Kissinger, and Jimmy Goldsmith crop up.

The book also sheds light on Ezra's own character. He is an extremely self-disciplined, and principled man who bestows a great deal of respect upon those who deserve it. His Iraqi background has left its mould on his character, and its influence often appears when he quotes old Arab sayings such as, 'show them death, and they'll settle for sickness'. Ezra is also a very warm and loving man, and he shows great admiration and affection for his wife Cecile, and for his beloved father Khedouri in memory of whom the book is dedicated.

This book is a journey through highs, and lows, through good times, and bad times. The journey of a child, who watched his father with awe and admiration, and who is now a man himself with children of his own. By writing this book Ezra has offered you a chance to travel this journey with him, and I strongly recommend you take it. ♦

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**Y**ou carried a book review by Anna Dangoor on Jeffrey Pickering's Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez (Read review). I would like to read this but am unable to locate it in the listings (Amazon, etc.) I would be grateful if you could confirm the publisher and publication date or the ISBN.

**Barry Alexander United Kingdom**  
[mailbox@barry-alexander.co.uk](mailto:mailbox@barry-alexander.co.uk)

**Scribe:**

The publisher for Jeffrey Pickering's book is Macmillan, 231 pp, priced at £42.50, 0333 69526 7

There is another book which may be of interest to you, namely:

**Demise of the British Empire in the Middle East**

Britain's response to nationalist movements, 1943-55

Michael J Cohen and Martin Kolinsky, editors

212 pp, Cass., £39.50, 0714 64804 3

*The Scribe No.74*

# How the Jews Survived

Abridged from *The Daily Telegraph*

Graham Turner has spent four months talking to Jews in Britain, the United States and Israel about their beliefs, their fears and their sense of what the future holds.

How on earth, I wondered, had the Jews, scattered across the face of the globe and subject to persecution such as has been visited on no other people, managed to survive, while great empires – The Assyrian, the Egyptian, the Greek, the Roman, the British – had all withered and died?

Over the course of the past 2,000 years, the Jews have been expelled from virtually every European country. They were kicked out of the German states six times; out of parts of Italy five times; out of France four times. They were massacred by the Babylonians, the Romans, the Crusaders, the Poles, the Russians and, most recently, the Germans. They have to keep thinking of moving from the countries where they live.

For many centuries, Jews could not own land, belong to guilds or go to university. In Germany and Russia, they were not allowed to travel without special permission. They were routinely blamed for everything, from the death of Jesus to the Black Death. There is surely the most astonishing story of survival against all the odds in the whole of human history. Yet they have not merely survived, they have flourished. "There are only about 13 million of us", says Ed Koch, three times Mayor of New York. "That is less than a third of one per cent of the world's population, and yet, coming from the loins of the Jewish people, you have Moses, Jesus, Marx, Freud and Einstein, the seminal thinkers of the modern world. Not to mention 116 Jewish Nobel Prize winners".

In the United States, 5.7 million Jews account for only two per cent of the population, but have roughly 10 per cent of the members of Congress. A few years ago, seven out of eight Ivy League colleges, which, even in the Sixties were still applying quotas to Jewish students, had Jewish Presidents.

Nor have Jews merely achieved positions of temporal power. Their spiritual influence has been enormous. They have given the other monotheistic religions a catalogue of priceless gifts. They gave Christians and Muslims the notion of one God who is not only the Creator of the Universe but also the God

who speaks through "the still, small voice" of Conscience. They gave Christians the basis of their moral law in the shape of the Ten Commandments.

Each year, during the Seder meal with which they celebrate Passover – the story is told of their release from bondage in Egypt. That happened more than 3,200 years ago. They are commanded to tell the story as if it were yesterday, and are expected to learn the lesson of that story. The Holocaust may cast an immensely dark shadow, but it is only the latest shadow among many. The German Jews were the most assimilated of all Jewish communities – and look what happened to them.

Political anti-semitism could only come again anywhere, even in the United States.

"Non-Jews have an endemic disease called anti-semitism", said a New Jersey Professor. "But Jews tend to blow up any inconsequential incident, as if the entire Gentile population is about to rise up and wipe them out forever. If someone throws a handkerchief in a synagogue, they think a pogrom is in progress, said Jackie Mason, the comedian".

But how did the Jews, this tiny people with no homeland, manage to survive the multiple traumas of two millennia?

One explanation, said Esther Rantzen, is that "the slow often got wiped out. You always had to be a jump ahead of the pogrom. I am casting no aspersions on those who died but, if you are persecuted for thousands of years, it is a very tough form of the survival of the fittest". The crucial factor, however, was the genius of the rabbis of old. In the long centuries after the Babylonian exile 2,500 years ago, they succeeded in creating a marvellously shockproof survival capsule for a religion whose followers had no firm land base; and who, from the moment the Roman Emperor Constantine became Christian, were forbidden to swell their ranks by making converts.

"The Jews in Babylon", said the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, "reflected long and hard about what it would take to survive in exile. "After all, they had already lost 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel, who'd chosen to assimilate when they were conquered by the Assyrians. So the rabbis who came after them knew what was at stake, because so many of their brothers and sisters had simply abandoned their people and their

faith. They came to the conclusion that: "We have got to create a survival mechanism that will enable our people to keep their faith and identity in a diaspora".

Jews were told, through the dietary laws of kashrut, what was kosher (fit to eat) and what was not. That, in itself, put an immense social barrier between themselves and non-Jews. They were told that every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. Not satisfied with the Ten Commandments of Moses, they were given no fewer than 613 mitzvot to observe.

Religious Jews were – and are – expected to say as many as 100 different blessings every day. Jews everywhere were encouraged to live within walking distance of a synagogue. And the family was to be the primary unit of survival, and celebrating in the home the Sabbath and the festivals.

As the Jews moved out of their ghettos and into mainstream society over the past two centuries, they have been faced with different problems.

In an open society, mixed marriages are shrinking Jewish communities.

Can Judaism survive tolerance and kindness as successfully as it survived persecution? ♦

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I am Jeffrey Gabbay, the son of Abraham Gabbay and Daisy Somekh, both from Baghdad. My parents moved to the USA in 1946 where I was born (in 1948). I moved to Jerusalem in 1973 where I reside with my wife and four wonderful children.

I want to take this opportunity to tell you how much I enjoy the publication. I find the articles interesting and, in many cases, touching. It is nice to see such an important part of Jewish heritage being remembered and preserved. I find it exceptionally nice to see the names of people who were part of my childhood in many of your articles. I know a lot of work goes into each publication and I want you to know that it is appreciated.

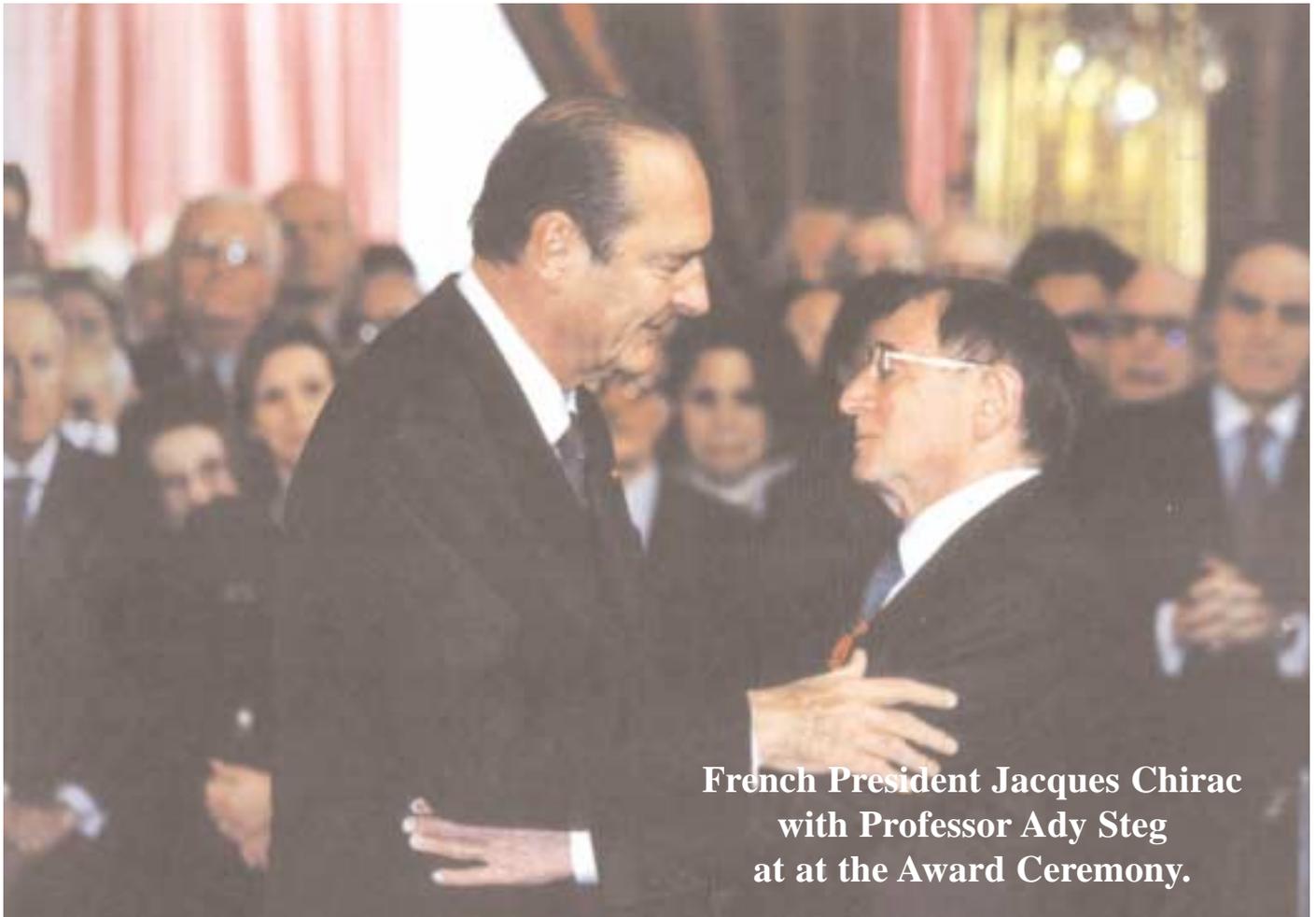
Kindly send me *The Scribe* as it comes out on the net. My e-mail address is...

[jgabbay@netvision.net.il](mailto:jgabbay@netvision.net.il)

**Jeff Spencer Seliem Gabbay**

**Israel**

# Chirac honours Professor Ady Steg



French President Jacques Chirac  
with Professor Ady Steg  
at the Award Ceremony.

I am enclosing a translation from the French of the speech of the President of France, Monsieur Jacques Chirac and the reply by Professor Ady Steg to this remarkable speech which I think should be considered for your journal.

Professor Steg and myself are joint Chairmen of The Consultative Council of Jewish Organisations which is one of the oldest non - Governmental organisations at the UN. It is in this capacity that I have forwarded the speeches to you, although of course he is also the President of the Alliance Israelite Universelle.

The occasion of which a photograph is enclosed was the Award of the Insignia of Grand Officer of the Legion d'Honneur to Professor Ady Steg at the Palais de l'Elysee in France.

**Clemens N Nathan**  
London

## EXCERPT FROM THE PRESENTATION SPEECH BY PRESIDENT JACQUES CHIRAC

I shall simply state this morning that as a teaching professor you held the chair of Urology at the Cochin Hospital, that through your work, your publications and books you are recognised as an authority throughout the world, and that you have won numerous awards and distinctions in France and elsewhere in Europe. The Hebrew University in Jerusalem awarded you an honorary doctorate, as did the University of Athens last year, and this may well be followed by one from Rome, in recognition of your outstanding achievements. As a "senior administrator" you have acquired authority and fame. As a doctor of medicine you have a down-to-earth simplicity.

It is just as much for the distance you have travelled as for the point that you have reached that I should like to congratulate you, first and foremost. Your whole life has been lived beneath the sign of commitment.

You committed yourself to the community. You were Vice-Chairman of

the World Union of Jewish Students and President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. This last responsibility is probably the one that matches your personality the best, given your desire to pass on your knowledge and to study, as well as a sense of dialogue, openness to others, and respect for others.

It is the commitment of the grown man, a Frenchman and a Jew, a Jew and a Frenchman, who wanted to reconstruct, revive and rebuild that which the Shoah tried to destroy. The message is there. You carry with you the aspirations of a multi-cultural citizenry for whom love of France and love of Israel, concern for Israel are inseparable.

Respect signifies the recognition by all of the legitimacy of the State of Israel, of its inalienable right to safe and recognised borders, whilst naturally respecting the other peoples in the region. Everyone knows there can be no solution other than peace. Dear Ady Steg, it is for the whole of your life's journey, in your professional, personal, moral and spiritual capacity, travelled in the greatest harmony with your lady wife, who has had the same goals

...and share everything with you, and to whom I present my affectionate homage, that today France offers you its highest accolade. I shall be awarding it to a teacher, a chairman and a public figure, but just as much to the little seven year old boy who came to France with a wide-open heart.

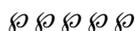
**REPLY BY PROFESSOR ADY STEG TO THE SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC:**

It is with a heart full of gratitude that I come, Mr President, to express to you my deepest thanks for the eminent distinction of the accolade that you have awarded me at this wonderful ceremony to which you had the finesse to invite such a huge crowd of my friends.

Thanks to you and through your voice, France recognised its responsibility for the role played by the Vichy Government in the anti-semitic persecution under the Occupation. You considered that you had a moral duty in this regard. "Recognising the wrongs of the past", you declared. "and the wrongs committed by the State, concealing nothing of the blackest hours of our history".

If I dared, I would abrogate to myself the power of the Chief Rabbi of France, who has the right to bless the country, something which, in fact, all our rabbis do every Saturday morning in synagogue, reciting the prayer that begins with:

- May France live happily and prosperously, may it be strong and great among the nations". ♦



### The Unfaithful Wife

There was a middle-aged couple who had two stunningly beautiful teenaged daughters. They decided to try one last time for the son they always wanted. After months of trying, the wife became pregnant and sure enough, nine months later delivered a healthy baby boy. The joyful father rushed to the nursery to see his new son. He took one look and was horrified to see the UGLIEST child he'd ever seen! He went to his wife and said that there was no way that he could be the father of that child. "Look at the two beautiful daughters I fathered." Then he gave her a stern look and asked, "Have you been fooling around on me?" The wife just smiled sweetly and said, "Not this time, dear". ♦

**From: Mary Ann Shakarchi**

[taramas@juno.com](mailto:taramas@juno.com)

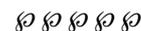
## Why were the Jews permitted to live – and be persecuted - another day

from Time Magazine

The answer, provided in James Carroll's fascinating book, is St Augustine. In the year 425, shortly after Christians slaughtered the Jews of Alexandria in the first recorded pogrom, that influential Church further cautioned, "Do not slay them." He preferred that the Jews be preserved, close at hand, as unwilling witnesses to Old Testament prophecies regarding Jesus. Augustine's followers elaborated on the idea, writes Carroll: Jews "must be allowed to survive, but never to thrive", so their misery would be "proper punishments for their refusal to recognise the truth of the Church's claims". The 18th Century Jewish philosopher, Moses Mendelsohn, noted that were it not for Augustine's

"lovely brainwave, we would have been exterminated long ago". But it was a warped, creepy kind of sufferance, a little like keeping someone chained to the radiator instead of doing him in. And it set the stage for countless persecutions as the Christian-Jewish saga rolled on.

Carroll says his book was inspired by the large cross erected by Poles outside Auschwitz. But his real target appears to be the Vatican's 1998 apology, "We Remember". That long awaited document expressed regret at Christian mistreatment of Jews over the centuries but pinned the fault on some of the Church's sinful "members" while holding blameless "the Church as such". ♦



## Jews for Allah

I liked your site, especially your quote, "The Arab is our brother, there is no other". Would you like to exchange links?

Mine is...

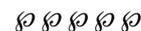
<http://www.Jews-for-Allah.org>

**Scribe:**

For 2,000 years we have been dodging the call of Jews for Jesus. Now a new fad has appeared – namely, Jews for Allah, wanting to convert Jews to Islam. When Rabbi "Zembartout" was asked how come we see many Jews converting to Islam but hardly any Moslem ever converts to Judaism, his cynical reply was, "Yes, a sighted man can become blind, but a blind man cannot become sighted"!

The fact of the matter is that Jews already believe in Allah. We can tell the Moslem, "You got your ideas from us, and now you want to sell them back to us?" Jews, Christians and Moslems all believe, in different ways, in the One True God of Israel. It is futile to claim monopoly, and there is no reason for attempting conversion from one to another. In the words of the Prophet Mohammed, "We have our religion and you have yours".

For years, the Catholic Church claimed that Catholicism is the only way to God. Now, with the rising Moslem threat, the Pope has to admit that there are various ways to approach God and are all valid. ♦



My name is Ruth Sofaer and I am a daughter of Abraham Sofaer the actor. I was enormously interested in Sassoon Meyer Sofaer's letter in The Scribe - I found Sassoon on the family tree that I have been developing for the last ten years. My great grandfather Hakham Abraham Sofaer married Aziza Aghasi - who was a cousin I believe. They were all of Bagdad. It was Hakham Abraham Sofaer who took his family to Rangoon to escape the unfriendly attentions of Sheik Daoud. My grandfather, Isaac Haim Sofaer, was born either in Bagdad or en route to Rangoon. Sassoon's grandfather, Meyer Abraham Sofaer, and all subsequent children were born in Rangoon. I would be happy to exchange information with Sassoon Meyer Sofaer via email. ♦

**Ruth Sofaer**

[sofair@earthlink.net](mailto:sofair@earthlink.net)

# In Search of Roots

I read your web site and was wanting to initiate dialogue with you. I work with Dr Sidney Davis in a ministry where we are researching our Hebrew roots in Africa. We just attended a seminar in California where he made the presentation for which I post for you this synopsis:

This e-mail is being sent to introduce you in order to set up in hopes of beginning an ongoing dialogue with Dr Sidney Davis who is a resident of the USA, President of the Bible Sabbath Association, of Ethiopian descent, a Knight of the Imperial House of Sellase, and a champion of the Sabbath Day:

<http://hometown.aol.com/sabbathmorefully/myhomepage/photo.html>

This is the synopsis of a presentation at the Sabbath Roots Conference, University of Southern California at Los Angeles, November 8 and 9 2000 by Sidney L Davis, Jr., President of The Bible Sabbath Association and Editor of "Proclaiming The Sabbath More Fully" research journal and newsletter.

## INTRODUCTION

Recognition of the tremendous work of Dr Bradford represented in Sabbath Roots – The African connection and other scholars who have contributed substantially in the field; W R Robinson, Bekele Heye, Kofi Mensa and others. I especially honoured the legacy my maternal grandfather Arminius Reginald Leslie Ramsay whose constant rehearsal of my Ethiopian ancestry and heritage in my ears has since ever been the voice motivating me to the truth of my Sabbath heritage. My thesis consisted of six modules.

### I. The Changing Face of Christianity

The early icons of the Christian church (The Ethiopian Black Madonna) show a face of Christianity that betrays the dominant and universal presence of Christianity today. Christianity is returning back to its roots and its roots are very African as they are Hebraic. The African presence in Christianity as represented by the ancient icons of the Christian church are being reflected in an increasing dominating presence of the African in Christianity today. It's as if Christianity is coming full circle. The origin of these iconastic images originate from churches who observed the Sabbath.

### II. Evidences of a pre-Sinaitic Observance of the Sabbath In Africa

This is from the Biblical perspective. The Sabbath was given to man (mankind) in Eden (Gen.2:2). The location of the Garden of Eden is shown to be in Africa. The Biblical boundaries of Eden presented in Scripture (Gen. 2:10-14), the tradition of the Hebrew sages, (as documented in the Talmud), and the consensus of recent scientific research on the origins of man put Eden in Africa where the Sabbath began. The Sabbath was reiterated in a covenant to African Hebrews while still in Africa in Mizr (or Egypt)(Ex.5:5; Ex.16:25;20:8; Ps.81:1-5). Africa is the home of the Sabbath and a Sabbathkeeping tradition that has been exported to the world.

### III. The Sabbath In Africa as seen through the Hebraic Dispersion

There are four major elements contributing to the Hebraic Dispersion throughout Africa and hence the spread of the Sabbath throughout the land of Cush. These elements of dispersion were initially through, (1) Trade. Multiple trade routes, on land and sea (they were intimately connected with the seafaring Phoenicians from the 8th century BCE, who were known for their large-scale maritime trade routes), which were eventually colonized by the Hebrew Israelites (1Ki.9:27), who according to Jesus (Matt.23:15) were also involved in (2) Aggressive missionary activity. These trade and missionary activities resulted in conversions of whole people groups i.e., the Moors and Berbers of N. Africa, and subsequently intermarriage with the local population. (3) Conquest. In his quest to find the Garden of Eden, Alexander was directed by "the elders of the South (i.e. Africa) to where he might find it. He employed Jewish warriors in his conquest of North Africa and his expanding conquest of lands toward the Indian subcontinent. At the destruction of both temples in 586 BCE and 70 CE, many Hebrew Israelites attempted to escape enslavement and death when they migrated with Jeremiah (Jer.43:1-7) into Africa and thereafter to many African cities where other Hebrews were already living in prosperity. ( 4) Persecution. It has been discovered that when Christian and

Moslems attempted to force conversions to their respective faiths, many Hebrews resisted and fled into the mountains and interior desert regions of Africa, for which there is much documentation today, howbeit the majority of which is in foreign languages. Additionally, the only site other than Jerusalem, where a temple of the Most High YHVH existed with the very same rites and ceremonies was in Africa, at the Egyptian colony of Elephantine. Each of these elements when examined show powerful evidences of how through the Hebraic dispersion the Sabbath roots were affirmed in Africa.

### IV. The African roots of Biblical Judaism and Christianity.

The earliest Biblical evidence of a Hebraic presence in Africa began with Abraham's sojourn into Egypt (Gen 26:2), and later the sons of Israel (Gen.41:41;Ex.1:5). The interaction between the Hebrews and the sons of Cush on the African continent is evident in the Hebraisms of many African cultures. This is been a matter of much documentation and research for which much has been uncovered and more still remains to be discovered. Christianity was firmly planted in Africa, just after the day of Pentecost. We see devout men "out of every nation under heaven"(Acts 2:5) attending, with special notation made of men attending from African cities and regions of Egypt, Libya, Cyrene(Act 2:10). These areas were vast expanses of territory much greater than what we see on today's maps, in fact anciently the whole continent of Africa before it was known by that name was called "Libya" by the Romans. These men returned to Africa, and shared their faith with those in their homelands. Most certainly, however, Christianity was brought into Africa with the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:27), some 50 years before the gospel was proclaimed among "the Gentiles" by Paul. The New Testament also mentions African Hebrew prophets in the Christian church (Acts 13:1). The Christian church in Africa is 2000 years old, as old as Christianity itself.

Before the Islamic invasion of Africa, Biblical Judaism and Biblical Christianity stood side by side and both were more dominant on the continent of Africa than anywhere else in the world including the land of Israel. ☛

...Both groups enjoyed a common Sabbathkeeping tradition which is attested to by the early Church documents. The Roman persecution of the Jews in the first three centuries also included the early Christians or Nazarenes (Acts 24:5) whose leaders were not only ethnically Hebrew but whose universal practice where ever the gospel was preached was that of Sabbath observance (Acts 15:27; Heb.4:9). Whether ethnically a Jew or religiously a Sabbath observer these were links that marked one for persecution. These led to the separation of non Jewish believers not only from ethnic association with Jewish believers but eventually from the Sabbath itself. However throughout Northern Africa and especially Ethiopia because of the relative isolation and other factors, the Hebraic and Sabbath keeping roots of the Christian faith were maintained.

## V. The Indigency of the Sabbath In Africa

The Sabbath in Africa can clearly be traced and established from it's Edenic roots, through the Hebraic dispersion and its native Hebraic and Christian origins. It is also evident in the Sabbath legacy of the Ethiopians and many other African tribes whose link to the Sabbath are established Biblically, historically, archeologically, (i.e., inscriptions on ancient tombstones) ethnically and ethnographically, anthropologically, geographically, scientifically and not least of all genetically with the phenomenal discoveries that have confirmed the Hebraic origins of African tribes, a fact always known and acknowledged by Africans themselves- especially in many of their oral histories. These all testify to the primacy of the Sabbath in Africa. This part of the presentation briefly address those areas in Africa where such discoveries have been made in the past, recently and other indications that show promise of an ever expanding revelation that declare the Sabbath in Africa.

## VI. Conclusion

The Sabbath in Africa, so what? What does this mean in the context of the changing face of Christianity? What does this have to do with our Christian faith and our Judaic orientation? This part of the presentation attempts to address the meaning of what the Sabbath In Africa is all about and how these revelations as Dr. Keith Burton of Oakwood College has said "could revolutionize the meaning of the Sabbath for the universal black nation in

particular, and the world at large." That the descendants of slaves in the Americas are the progeny of an already dispersed Hebrew as well as Sabbathkeeping Christian presence in Africa is the content of module VII of this thesis. This will give the truth against the lie that Christianity is a "slave religion" or the white man's religion, the lie that the Sabbath was made for the "Jews" only and that the dilemma of the African is chronicled in the prophetic word of Scriptures (Deut.28:68). Indeed the face of Christianity is not only changing, but the legacy and destiny of an African people is coming full circle bringing the true faith and practice of the Christian faith to light.

Dr. Sidney L. Davis, Jr. - President

[www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org)

"Proclaiming The Sabbath More Fully"

[www.sabbathmorefully.org](http://www.sabbathmorefully.org)

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### Scribe:

While the origin of Adam of the Bible was in Africa, the Garden of Eden to which he moved was in Aden, where Adam discovered the wild wheat and started agriculture which was the beginning of our present civilisation.

At that time, 11,000 years ago, Arabia and Africa were still joint together, and the red sea was merely a lake. ♦

§ § § § §

Quote...

Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety nine percent perspiration.

Thomas A. Edison

Quote...

Intellectuals solve problems, Geniuses prevent them

Albert Einstein

Quote...

If youth knew, if age could

Henri Estienne

Letter to The Editor  
Jewish Chronicle

## Let Us Move to Mauritania

If Jerusalem is expendable, then what is left to keep us there, a troublesome corner of the world for the past 3,000 years? In an overall peace deal with all the Arabs, we might be able to swap Israel for Mauritania, a more strategic and more convenient location, forty times the size of Israel and very sparsely populated, next to a friendly Morocco. Soon the Jews would make the desert bloom, and I for one will hasten to go there. Would the Palestinians have second thoughts and beg us to stay? ♦

Naim Dangoor

§ § § § §



## A Time to Be Born

Customs & Folklore of Jewish Birth

by Michele Klein

The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia

[www.jewishpub.org](http://www.jewishpub.org)

405 pp

During the gaonic period, Jews in Babylon used magic bowls to protect against a child-killing demon. Such bowls, excavated at Nippur, Mesopotamia, and dating approximately from the sixth to the eighth centuries, were buried under the threshold of houses for protective purposes.

This impressive volume is a comprehensive account of all aspects of pregnancies and childbirth, circumcision and childcare. The author, Michele Klein, a psychologist, is also the author of New Life: A Diary for Jewish Parents. She lives with her family in Israel. ♦

# Abraham, Father of the Middle East

From Issue No. 1

by N E Dangoor

In many ways Abraham is the common denominator of the Middle East especially that part of the region known as the Fertile Crescent. He was an Aramaean born in Iraq who had to migrate to Canaan for the sake of religious freedom. His compliance with the divine command which bade him to leave 'thy country, thy kindred and thy father's house', demonstrates both his obedience to God and his attachment to his native land which he did not leave out of choice: both Isaac and Jacob had to choose their wives from the old country.

Abraham spoke Aramaic (Syriac) which at the end of the eighth century B.C.E. became the lingua franca of the Middle East. From that time and for 1,200 years Aramaic was the spoken language of Jews in Palestine and Babylonia right up to the Moslem conquest of the Middle East. The Hebrew that was used in writing the Bible and was the language of the prophets and the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah was in fact the language of Canaan. Abraham's ancestors originally came to Iraq from the north-eastern part of the Arabian peninsula which was the cradle of the Semitic family which emigrated into the Fertile Crescent, the people who subsequently became the Hebrews, Phoenicians, Babylonians and Assyrians of history.

Abraham's travels took him first to Haran in northern Iraq and then to

Damascus where he resided for some time. He later proceeded to Canaan, which at that time was sparsely populated and consisted of a number of small city states. One of these was Salem (Jerusalem) whose king, Melchisedek, priest of the Most High God, was particularly friendly with Abraham.

Abraham had eight sons: Ishmael by Hagar, Isaac by Sarah and six sons by Keturah. Ishmael's offspring became the Nabataeans who populated northern Arabia from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. Africa is named after Ofren, one of Abraham's grandchildren, who conquered Libya.

Abraham was shrewd, loyal to his kin, brave in war, desirous of numerous offspring, extremely hospitable, just, a hard bargainer, and an unquestioning believer in God. His religion, according to the Bible, was the first monotheistic faith. He was the first to venture the notion that there was but one God, the Creator of the Universe. In that field of course his influence became felt throughout the civilised world, first through Judaism and then through Christianity and Islam so that today the greater part of mankind acknowledges the God of Abraham.

Mohammed regarded Abraham as the spiritual ancestor of Islam. The submission of Abraham and his son to the will of God in the supreme test when Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son,

expressed in the verb 'aslama' (submitted themselves), was evidently the act that provided Mohammed with the name Islam for his faith.

It is interesting to dwell further on Abraham's personality: a visionary and a prophet – he is referred to as the 'friend of God' in the Old Testament and the Koran; a tribal chief, a merchant prince and a traveller; a warrior and a brilliant tactician. On his return from one trip to Egypt he adopted some hieroglyphic symbols and, by making each symbol represent a particular sound, developed the first alphabet, suitable for the Hebrew nomads and which was used to record the fascinating story of the Chosen People which was beginning to unfold as well as the old sagas that go back to Noah and beyond.

The tradition and personality of Abraham can be used as a basis to forge a democratic federation of the Fertile Crescent comprising Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan - all Abraham's country in which still live a score of different nationalities. Of these only the Arabs would oppose and frustrate such a union, in order that they may achieve complete Arabisation.

The ideal capital for such a federation would be at Abu-Kemal, half-way on the Euphrates and near Mari of old in which Abraham once lived. What better name can such a capital have than that of Abraham? ♦



## Letter to the Editor

I was browsing the web in search of information on the office of the Exilarch.

Most modern references do not include reference to them by name.

I am pursuing my genealogy, and for anyone who has used "Royalty for Commoners" the link between the Exilarchs and European Royalty is through Theodoric of Septimania, aka Machir ben Habibai, who was Judiarch of Narbonne, etc;.

In your reply to Annessa Main or Lander, Wyoming, you offered to send "by post a copy of the Babylonian Haggadah where you will find on page 91 the earlier

generations of Exilarchs and on page 90 all the previous kings to King David."

How could I trouble you for the same?

The lineage is a fascinating one. There is a connection of Rab Abba Arika of the academy in Sura, and of course it's connection to David, and interestingly to the Sassanid house.

From what I have put together Theodoric Machir was the son of Habibai, son of Mar Natronai, son of Mar Nechemiah, son of Haninai bar 'Adol, and ultimately to King David. Habibai's mother was the daughter of Hisdai Shahrijar, who was the daughter of Exilarch Bustenai ben Hanina and

Izdundad Sassanid, daughter of Yazdegerd III, the last of his dynasty.

I would like to learn more about the Exilarchs, their link to David and European Royalty, and I imagine you would be an authoritative source for this.

If this is possible, I'd be delighted to hear back from you. ♦

Robert Stewart

Belgium

stewart@compuserve.com

Scribe: The Exilarch's Tree as found in the Babylonian Haggadah is reproduced on page... 59

# In the Footsteps of Adam

by Naim Dangoor

Issue 55.

**T**he Jewish calendar, Anno Mundi, is supposed to begin from the creation of the world, but it is absurd to pretend any longer that the world was created merely 5753 years ago, and that it will come to a sudden end in the year 6000. New definite evidence of the Creation has just been discovered by astronomers. It shows that the Big Bang which created the Universe took place at least 15 billion years ago, and that the Universe will finally collapse into nothing in about 20 billion years' time (so much for eternal life!)

In the adjoining article, Rabbi Maller dates the Jewish year from when Adam left the Garden of Eden which makes a lot of sense, as it marks the start of our civilisation and the beginning of history. The period before Adam's departure from the Garden can cover all the millennia of prehistory. It changes our time scale from the ridiculous to the sublime - Anno Mundi becomes Anno Adam.

Although the Bible begins with the fascinating account of the creation of the Universe and the creation of Time, I have always maintained that the Book of Genesis is essentially the story of our civilisation, with Adam as the hero of that story.

Who was this Adam, where did he come from, where did he go, what did he do and where was the Garden of Eden? Rabbi Maller focuses his attention mainly on what happened in Mesopotamia, but the story begins much earlier.

The retreat of the last Ice Age climate took place some 9000 years ago starting, obviously, in equatorial Africa, and that is where Adam lived. Up until then people subsisted mainly by hunting, but as this became less and less rewarding Adam was inspired to move with his tribe eastward to southern Arabia, which was then uninhabited and was lush with virgin forests and fruit gardens. The Red Sea was still a lake.

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed". (Gen. 2.8)

Because the weather was not warm enough, it hadn't started to rain yet - the gardens were watered by mist as Genesis tells us.

Where was the Garden of Eden - Gannat Adam, in Arabic? In Aden, of

course, in southern Arabia. Adam spoke a version of ancient Arabic, and is reputed to be buried in Hejaz.

## Adam discovers the wild wheat

It was in the Garden of Aden that Adam discovered the wild wheat - an event which was, by definition, the start of our civilisation, as men began to lead a settled life in agricultural communities. In keeping with ancient tradition, the historical Adam was honoured by naming him as the First Man (Adam ha-Rishon). Adam left the Garden to look for watered land suitable for growing the nourishing grain, which takes only a few weeks to grow.

"Therefore the Lord God sent him from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread..." (Gen. 3:23, 19).

The circumstances that led to the "expulsion" of mankind from the Garden, from a life of ease as gatherers of food to a life of toil as tillers of the ground, made of Adam a persona non grata and of our new condition as the "Fall" from God's grace. This attitude is further confirmed by the story of Cain and Abel in which God looks favourably on Abel, the hunter and gatherer, and disapprovingly on Cain, the farmer. Cain's murder of Abel represents the traumatic transition to a new life-style, and the triumph of agriculture over hunting. "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Aden". (Gene, 4:16).

It is interesting to note here that one of the opinions in the Talmud mentions wheat as being the forbidden fruit that Adam ate in the Garden. The aphrodisiac quality of wild wheat promoted Adam's eating of the Forbidden Fruit being associated with the dawn of sexual awareness.

As the earth's climate continued to warm up, the wades of southern Arabia soon became dry and civilisation had to move northwards to Canaan and Mesopotamia, where the first settled communities were located at the foothills of Kurdistan. Adam's son Seth is reputedly buried in Mosul.

## The Deluge

Then at the time of Noah, 1656 years from Adam, the rains came - forty days and forty nights - which also caused the melting of the ice on the Turkish mountains, which brought about the Deluge in Mesopotamia. Historians often argue whether the Bible borrowed the story of the Flood from Babylonian accounts or vice versa. It was neither. The Flood story was common to the peoples of the Near East.

After the Flood, God said to Noah, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things". (Gen. 9:3). Bible scholars are puzzled why the generation of Adam was only allowed to eat fruit and herbs, while after the Flood animal flesh was allowed. In the early days of agriculture all animals were still wild and meat was hard to come by. The place of Noah in the march of civilisation is that he domesticated animals. This is graphically illustrated by the story of the Ark and the zoo that went into it. Noah, who distinguished between clean and unclean animals, is likewise honoured by naming him and his family as the sole survivors of the Flood.

## Adam, the founder of Monotheism

Adam has an even greater claim to fame. He was a great leader and a prophet. He is honoured as such in Islam; but, alas, not in Judaism. The story of his encounter with God demonstrates his belief in the One Supreme Creator. We may infer that Adam started monotheism, and that movement became widespread by the time his grandson Enos was born. "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord". (Gen. 4:26).

The story of the tree of knowledge of good and evil likewise demonstrates that Adam believed in Free Will - man's freedom to choose, and that he was not an automaton in the hands of destiny. Adam believed too that man was created in God's image and having many of His attributes - holiness, wisdom, love, compassion.

The story of the Creation in seven days also demonstrates that Adam and his followers observed the Sabbath ☞

...as a weekly day of rest, a "back to nature" interlude, when we did not have to work, to cook, to build houses, to weave clothes. A taste of the "good old days", of the bliss of the Garden of Eden of the past, and of the utopian Gan Eden of the future.

Technology points to a life of ease, free of toil and of disease, of simplified food intake and improved human waste, which now pollutes us and our environment!

## The rise of idolatry

After the Flood, despots in the mould of Saddam arose, who drank of the violent waters of the Tigris and who promoted the worship of idols and of themselves. But Monotheism survived in pockets in Western Arabia and in Canaan. The Bible abounds with such references. "Noah walked with God. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord". "Noah built an altar unto the Lord". (Gen. 6:9, 8; 8:20).

Abraham, a direct descendant of Noah, journeyed from Ur to Canaan where he met Melchizedek, king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of the Most High God; the Patriarchs' encounters with various missionaries of God; Moses's father-in-law was most probably a believer in God; at Jericho, Joshua met a stranger with a drawn sword who told him, "... as a captain of the host of the Lord am I now come". (Jos. 5:14).

It is wrong therefore to attribute the start of Monotheism to Abraham.

## Rehabilitating Adam

It is time to rehabilitate Adam and honour him not only as the father of our agricultural civilisation but also as the founder of Monotheism. When I was eight years old I asked my late grandfather Hakham Ezra Dangoor, if our Patriarch Abraham - Abraham Abinu - had observed the Sabbath. I was told that Abraham had kept the Commandments by "inspiration". In fact, Abraham kept many Commandments by traditions handed down from previous God-fearing ancestors.

## Brothers in Adam

Judaism, Christianity and Islam each committed the mistake of trying to obliterate and supersede its predecessors, claiming to have a monopoly of the Truth. In fact, we are all brothers in Adam, who have to recognise and respect each other as equals. ♦

# Dating the Jewish Calendar

by **Rabbi Alien S. Maller**  
Rabbi of Temple Akiba, Calver City,  
California

Condensed from an article in **Dor le Dor**, Spring 1992

Published in Jerusalem by the Jewish Bible Quarterly

The Christian calendar starts from the birth of Jesus. The Moslem calendar begins with the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina. By analogy, one might expect that the Jewish calendar would start either from the birth of Abraham (the first Hebrew) or from the Exodus out of Egypt (the birth of the Israelite nation). Yet the rabbis in the second century who made up the current Jewish calendar chose Adam as their starting point.

The first Adam represents the beginning of civilised mankind. The exit of Adam from the Garden of Eden symbolises the transition of mankind from a Stone Age state of hunters and gatherers, to the more advanced Bronze Age society of farmers and city dwellers.

When did this take place? The most famous attempt to calculate "the beginning" was that of Irish Bishop James Usher who sets the date for the departure from the Garden of Eden in the year 4004 BCE. The current Jewish calendar is based on the calculation of Rabbi Yosi-ben-Halafta in his second century book, Seder Olam Rabba, by adding the lifespans in Genesis and Exodus. According to him, Adam exited the Garden of Eden and became civilised 3760 BCE (5753 years ago).

There is another way to estimate when mankind became civilised. According to archaeologists, this fundamental development in human evolution first took place in the Tigris-Euphrates valley almost 6000 years ago. The earliest writing discovered so far comes from the Mesopotamian city of Uruk (Erech, Gen. 10: 10) and dates to about 5500 years ago.

By beginning the Jewish calendar with Adam, the rabbis equated human history with urban civilisation and writing. Indeed, all written references to political events in the archaeological records can be dated by the Jewish calendar. The first dynasty in Egypt arose in the 7th century of the Jewish calendar. The first stone pyramid was built in the 10th century of the Jewish calendar and the great King Sargon of

Akkad (2371-2316 BCE) lived in the 14th century of the Jewish calendar. Abraham was not born until the 20th century.

...While homo sapiens has been evolving for tens of thousands of years, civilised mankind only begins about 58 centuries ago. The Jewish calendar is the oldest in the world. The closest to it is the Mayan calendar, only 26 years behind.\*\*

## Naim Dangoor adds:

Considering the Hebrew calendar to start, not from the creation of the Universe, but from the beginning of recorded history, changes our time scale from the ridiculous to the sublime.

The invention of the Hebrew alphabet by Abraham or by his tribe has had a more far-reaching effect on civilisation than the introduction of earlier, crude forms of writing.

The present Jewish calendar is lunisolar ~ the months being reckoned according to the moon and the years according to the sun. According to tradition, quoted in the name of Hai Gaon of Babylon (d. 1038), the present extremely accurate Jewish calendar was introduced by Hillel II in 358-59 CE. In the Biblical period the reckoning was from the time of the Exodus; then from the erection of Solomon's Temple, or the beginning of the reign of Kings; then from the Babylonian captivity. In Talmudic and post-Talmudic times, calculation was from the start of the Sellucid era in 312 BCE. Only when the centre of Jewish life moved from Baghdad to Europe did the calculation become Anno Mundi.

Attempts at reforming the calendar and making it symmetrical have repeatedly failed because it would tamper with the 7-day sequence and result in a roving Sabbath. ♦

§ § § § §

Quote...

Yesterday is history  
Tomorrow is mystery  
Today is a gift  
That's why it is called the present.

Source unknown



## Rehabilitation Centre in Beersheva

**O**n Monday, 22 October 2001, in the presence of a delegation from Keren Hayesod Sweden, the Sweden Rehabilitation Centre was formally dedicated. Among the honoured guests attending this ceremony were former Keren Hayesod World Chairman, Mr Shlomo Hillel, Mayor Yaakov Turner, Mr Gad Ben-Ari, Director General of Keren Hayesod and Mr Shimon Tourgeman, Director General of Ilan. In addition, numerous residents and individuals of Beersheva were present that will benefit from the services provided by the Rehabilitation Centre.

The Dangoor family has adopted the rehabilitation apartment and kitchen. These special rooms were designed to teach the disabled how to live and function in a home environment. ♦

**Dennis Allon**

**Acting Director  
Projects Division**

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## Hakham Shimon Agassi zt'l

**I**n your SCRIBE issue no. 73, from July 2000, page 16, you have published an article about my grandfather, HAKHAM SHIMON AGASSI zt'l. In the article you write: "Rabbenu did not accept comfort for his oldest son until his last son Ezra Tzion grew up and married his brother's intended wife."

Putting facts correctly, HAKHAM SHIMON AGASSI's last son was Eliyahu Chayim Agassi, who was born in 1909, 13 years after Ezra Tzion. Eliyahu came to Israel in 1928, and later was the Head of the Arabic Department in the 'Histadrut Haklalit', and the publisher of the 'Hakikat Al Amar' newspaper. Eliyahu wrote four books for children, which told many Baghdadi folklore stories, among them 'Husham from Baghdad' and 'Hayafa Bat Haruach'.

I am Eliyahu's son, and am called after my Grandfather.

I will be glad to share additional information about the family of my Grandfather with whoever is interested. ♦

**Shimon Agassi.** **e-mail address:**  
[sagassi@attglobal.net](mailto:sagassi@attglobal.net)

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## The Jewish Musicians of Iraq

**M**y name is Shosh Gabay and I'm an Israeli journalist, daughter of Jewish immigrants from Iraq. I read in your web the interesting article by Yeheskel Kojaman, about the Iraqi music and the role of the Jews of Iraq in the Arabic music. I'm making a documentary movie about the subject and I would like to get in touch with Mr Kojaman. Would you be kind and pass this email to him? ♦

Thank you.

**Shosh Gabay**

[gabay59@barak-online.net](mailto:gabay59@barak-online.net)

**Scribe:** Mr Kojaman has been informed.

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## The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq

by Y Kojaman

257 pp with many rare photographs

**M**r Y Kojaman has just published his new book on Iraqi Maqam Music, a subject in which the author is a leading authority. Some of the contents: The Chalghi bands; the effect of the emigration of Iraqi Jews; Iraqi music and Maqam tradition in Israel after the emigration; A typical Chalghi night; occasions at which Chalghi nights are performed; classification and features of the Maqam; development of Pastas; the traditional Maqam instruments. ♦

The book is obtainable from the author and publisher at...

116 Hanover Road, London NW10 3DP, UK

*Proverbs...*

Weave in faith and God  
will find the thread.

Talking without thinking  
is like shooting without taking aim.

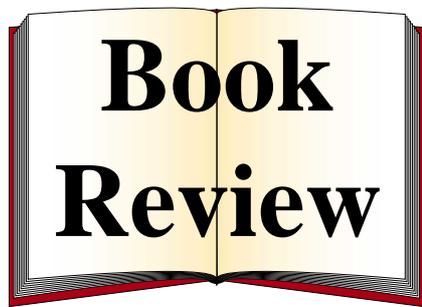
Courage is not the absense of fear,  
but the conquest of it.

Goodness speaks in a whisper,  
evil shouts.

The best mirror is an old friend.

Out of debt, out of danger.

What the eye does not admire,  
the heart does not desire.



## When the Grey Beetles Took Over Baghdad

by **Mona Yahia**

**Peter Halban Publishers Ltd**

**£15.99 406pp**

**Reviewed by Anna Dangoor**

**M**ona Yahia was born in Baghdad in 1954, and escaped with her family to Israel in 1970. She studied Psychology at Tel Aviv University and worked as a trainer in the school for Army Commanders. In 1985 she moved to Germany to study Fine Arts. She has published short stories in London Magazine and The Jewish Quarterly, as well as in German anthologies. This is her first novel.

Mona Yahia's novel 'When the Grey Beetles Took Over Baghdad' is the story of the life of Lina, a young Jewish girl growing up during the 60's in Baghdad, at a time of great instability for the Jewish community. Lina is the book's narrator, and Yahia captures the mind of a young teenager perfectly, drawing the reader in, so that Lina's hopes and fears become one's own.

Fear is a strong theme throughout the novel, and ultimately the book is a story of Lina's longing for freedom; freedom from Iraq, but ultimately freedom from fear. Having such a young narrator allows Yahia to write simply, making the book a very easy read. The confusion and complexity of an adolescent mind however, especially one surrounded by such turmoil, are also conveyed with impressive understanding.

Life for Lina is by no means simple, and through her Yahia allows us to feel both the unbearable horror of Jewish persecution, such as the hangings at Tahrir square, and contrastingly, the innocence and frivolity of events such as the Purim casino which Lina attends. That is what is so fantastic about the book. It tells two stories in one.

The first is the story of Baghdadi life for a young girl who is fast becoming a woman. The second, the story of a state

fraught with revolution, in which a once numerous community, learn to fear for their lives, as 'Grey Beetles', the cars of the secret police trawl the streets, and pounce on innocent Jews. Along the first theme, Yahia describes vividly the sights, sounds and tastes of Baghdad. Traditional dishes such as Sambousak are mentioned, and Yahia includes the occasional Arabic word, which contribute to the vivid sense of place she creates. Yahia also paints a convincing picture of life for a young teenage girl. Lina has to deal with everything that any other girl approaching adolescence experiences: The start of her menstruation, the interest boys around her begin to take in her, and the corresponding and unfamiliar feelings which she develops for her English friend Lawrence.

Along the second theme, the struggles of the Jewish community are depicted strikingly. Yahia creates an intense mood of fear, as one after the other, innocent Jewish men are arrested and accused of false crimes. These arrests culminate in the executions in Tahrir square, mentioned earlier, where thirteen men, nine of them Jews including Lina's swimming teacher, and a boy of only 17 from her school, are hung for being traitors to Iraq. Yahia's description of these events, coupled with their reality is sickening, and this part of the book is deeply saddening. The trouble's also come even closer to home for Lina's family. Her elder brother Shuli is also arrested when he makes the mistake of responding to a fellow student's request to be shown a Star of David. The very same student subsequently reports him as a Zionist.

Acts of cruelty such as this appear throughout the novel. However these are tempered by Yahia's description of the partial normality which the Jewish community cling to. This makes Lina's life a fine balance between the usual and the unusual, and is fundamentally what makes her such a real character. So real in fact that reading this book is like taking a journey to Baghdad and back. ♦



**I**would like to obtain a copy of this volume (69)... can anyone help? I'm more than happy to pay for it!

**Dennis A. Somech**  
**dsomech@tighepatton.com**

**Reply:**

If you would like to email your postal address we shall send issue No. 69 to you.

**His reply:**

Thank you ever so much for graciously

## Jacob Benjamin Elias Synagogue

**Stanford Hill, London N16 6QT  
England**

18 December 2000

Dear Mr Dangoor

**I** must thank you very much for the books that have been sent to me and which were written by your grandfather, Hakham Ezra Dangoor. I found this to be a most wonderful book, very interesting, very digesting, so simple to understand.

Your grandfather, Hakham, had great wisdom to be able to write a book such as this, to be able to learn to understand our Bible. In his book he gives the translation in detail, which even a child can understand and learn.

I have given it to my Synagogue and my rabbi reads from it to the people, who enjoy hearing the passages and learn from it. I think you did a great job and a mitzvah having this book published. I wish it could have been printed in English, so that people unable to read Hebrew would have an understanding.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could let me have a few more copies of this book to distribute to my other synagogues.

May the Almighty give you strength, health and happiness to you and your family. May you see the weddings of your children and grandchildren. May the Almighty shower upon you all His choicest blessings which you so richly deserve. ♦

Yours sincerely

**David Elias BEM, MWI, FIWO**

**Scribe:** Glad to note that Mr Elias is making steady progress after his recent illness.



sending me a copy of Vol. 69 of the Scribe. As I had hoped, the Somekh Family Tree that appeared in the issue indeed tracks my own ancestors, and I found my grandfather and my two great-aunts towards the more recent generations. My grandfather will be thrilled when he sees this, as I am sending a copy today. Thank you very much, and best wishes to you. My grandfather's name is Godfrey Somech, who appears at the bottom centre of the second page. ♦

*The Scribe No.74*

# Lionel Blue's Non-Conversion

From Alex Ritter

I've just visited your web page <http://www.dangoor.com/72page33.html> and read Lionel Blue's account of why he did not become a Christian.

As I am an atheist (albeit married to a Christian wife), I see the matter from a more detached point of view than most of your readers would, I imagine. At least I don't suffer from any religious bias! The article was interesting in that it confirmed some of my thoughts about religion.

First, the Rabbi's reaction was emotional, and religion is an affair of the emotions, as Pascal pointed out.

Secondly, the Rabbi saw the situation through the tunnel vision that religion seems to produce. He is right, of course, to point to the hatred of some Christians towards Jews. Maybe Doris Lessing was right when she called Christianity the most intolerant religion the world has ever seen. But doesn't he see that too many adherents of the three connected religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam are guilty of the same attitudes? As I said to my Christian wife when she showed me photos of Jerusalem after a visit, "You can tell how holy it is by the number of armed police and soldiers on the streets!"

Then there's the treatment of Palestinian Arabs by the Israelis - perhaps caused primarily by politicians, but intensified by religion. And, nearer to my home, consider the relations between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. People say that these conflicts are not religious but ethnic or political. That is true of their origins, but religion is what makes them so savage and difficult for men of goodwill to influence. Indeed, the Protestants were first put into Ireland in the knowledge that relations between them and the Catholic population would be vicious.

My own rejection of Christianity is mostly a matter of temperament - I think one either is or is not inclined to religion, and if one is, one normally takes what's on offer locally, Christianity, Judaism or whatever. But there also seems to me to be something objectionable at the heart of Christian belief. Would any Creator worthy of respect, let alone adoration, demand a human sacrifice, and provide his own victim, as the price of forgiving

His creatures for being as He made them?

At least the Jewish God, in the story of Abraham and Isaac, didn't let the sacrifice of Isaac actually happen. But God's motivation is open to criticism. I think I would respect both Abraham and the Deity here if Abraham had refused to kill Isaac and God had congratulated him on that response. God's satisfaction at seeing that Abraham would have murdered Isaac makes the Deity as imagined in Judaism seem a monster, like the Christian one.

As Lucretius said of the sacrifice of Iphigenia by her father, such are the evils to which religion leads.

Why should adherents of different religions hate one another so readily? I think maybe it's because they are in fact insecure in their beliefs, but so dependent on them emotionally that they have to pretend to themselves that those beliefs are incontrovertible. And such certainty, as Michel de Montaigne said, is the surest mark of unreason.

I must say, by the way, that from hearing Rabbi Blue on the radio, and seeing his writings occasionally, I have the impression of an admirable person. What a pity he needs to saddle himself with religion, of whatever kind!

I'd be interested to know what other visitors to your website think about these things, but would ask that if anyone wants to comment on this message, they do it through your website, or via yourself, and you do not divulge my e-mail address.

## Scribe:

The truth about the sacrifice of Isaac is this:

Human sacrifice was practiced by the Canaanites as the ultimate proof of their devotion and obedience to their God. They challenged Abraham to prove his own devotion and obedience to his God by sacrificing Isaac. The story that was enacted was to demonstrate to the Canaanites that human sacrifice was repugnant not only to Abraham but also to the God of Abraham. ♦

If you would like to make any comments or contribute to The Scribe please contact us.

# Hazon Yeshaya Soup Kitchens

## Jerusalem

I am a businessman from New York who moved to Jerusalem and started a small Humanitarian Project that has grown enormously. I presently have four locations that distribute daily hot meals to over 600 people - that adds up to over 15,000 meals per month. And this number increases daily.

I volunteer all my time and efforts to run this project.

The cost of this project is covered entirely from my own resources, but I invite like-minded people to join and share with me in this worthy cause. ♦

## Abraham ISRAEL

61 Rashi Street

POB 57570

Jerusalem

ISRAEL 91571

Tel/Fax: 02-500 2627

## E-mail:

[hazon-yeshaya@harak-online.net](mailto:hazon-yeshaya@harak-online.net)

## Soup Kitchens:

65 Rashi Street (Mekor Baruch)

15 HaKinamon Street (Gilo)

7 Dov Hoz St (Kattamon)

§ § § § §

The last issue of The Scribe I received was on 9/99. I was wondering what happened to the next two issues. I have been receiving this valuable journal for several years. If you've had a change of policy regarding subscription, please let me know and I'll be glad to oblige. This journal is a resource and, a very good one at that, to all of the Babylonian Jews such as myself. I would like to continue receiving this excellent journal.

## Shamoon Salih

## New York

## Scribe reply:

The reason for your not receiving our current issue, No. 73, is because The Scribe is now appearing only on the internet ([www.thescribe.uk.com](http://www.thescribe.uk.com)), one issue per year, and the last printed edition was No. 72. However, if you wish, we can send you a print-out in colour of the current issue at a cost of US \$20, including postage. ♦

# American Friends of the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Centre, Inc.

From Robert Shasha

The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center intends to preserve the memory, the cultural heritage, and the history of the Iraqi Jewish community.

The centre is in need of expanding its facilities and we have volunteered for the job of soliciting monies for this effort.

This is a gift for our children and grandchildren. **This is also a great way to honour one's parents and family.**

The following **unassigned halls** in the museum remain:

|    |                     | Size Square Metres | Cost      |
|----|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Culture and Art*    | 50                 | \$175,000 |
| 2. | Education*          | 50                 | \$175,000 |
| 3. | Theatre*            | 50                 | \$175,000 |
| 4. | Temporary Exhibits* | 50                 | \$245,000 |
| 5. | The Jewish Home*    | 100                | \$350,000 |

**\*These donations can be given by up to two people**

The scholarly projects which need to be funded are:

|   |   |            |
|---|---|------------|
| 1 | The project on history of the ancient Babylonian Jewish Community                                     | \$210,000* |
| 2 | Translation to English on the pogrom in Baghdad in 1941   | \$ 50,000  |
| 3 | Discovery of documents in governmental institutions in the Ottoman Empire during Ottoman rule in Iraq | \$ 45,000  |
| 4 | Completion of the genealogies of the 305,000 Iraqi Jews in the world                                  | \$100,000* |
| 5 | Research on Babylonian Jewish Leadership (Personal, rabbinical, and diaspora leaders)                 | \$246,000* |
| 6 | Supporting the newsletter "Nehardea" in English   | \$ 30,000  |
| 7 | Grant Funds for Research  | \$ 30,000  |
| 8 | Gilded Sign for Museum Entrance   | \$ 6,000   |

Cheques should be made payable to the... **American Friends of the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, Inc** and sent directly to the office for the attention of Mr Halahmy.

## IRAQI JEWS – PRESERVING A RICH HERITAGE

by Sharon Kanon

It is hard to imagine what it must have been like to take a stroll down a street in Baghdad, or sit on the shores of the Tigris or Euphrates. It is also hard to imagine that Iraq, formerly Babylon, was once home to a flourishing and fiercely Zionist Jewish community – the largest Jewish community in the world – with a highly developed network of educational, religious and cultural institutions.

The best way to experience the drama of the first Diaspora and recapture the vitality and charm of the large Jewish Quarter in Baghdad 50 years ago, is to visit the Babylonian Jewish Heritage Centre, located in Or Yehuda near the site of Israel's first transit camp.

A replica of a street in the Jewish Quarter includes a typical coffeehouse and shops belonging to a silversmith, a goldsmith, a cloth merchant, an embroiderer, a shoemaker and a spice dealer. At the end of the street is a reconstruction of the Great Synagogue of Baghdad (one of 60 synagogues in Baghdad in the mid-20th century contained over one thousand gold and silver encased Torah scrolls.

The Heritage Centre recently organised its first event to attract the children of Iraqi Jewish immigrants in Israel and increase awareness of their cultural and historical roots.

The en-masse return of the oldest Jewish Diaspora brought with it traditions from centuries of flourishing culture that had evolved over a period of 2,000 years. Rich in history, song, folklore, customs and dress, and infused with a strong Zionist spirit, the Iraqi-Jewish legacy pulsates with life.

After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Babylonian Jewry became the spiritual centre for far-flung Jewish communities. Great academies of learning were established at Nechardea, Sura and Pumpedita, headed by outstanding gaonim (excellencies). (The museum houses a diorama of an academy). The Babylonian Talmud (the Oral law), the basis of Jewish law, philosophy and the Jewish way of life, was produced by Babylonian Jews.

The golden age of gaonim paralleled the days of splendour of the Arab caliphate (mid-7th century to mid-11th century). For over a thousand years, the Jews had their own administrative head, the Exilarch or Rosh Galuta, who at one point governed over two million Jews.

Tolerance and tyranny were the lot of Iraqi Jews after the Middle Ages. During the Mongol period (13th to 15th centuries), the larger yeshivas were closed down. But by the end of the 18th century, Baghdad had once again become a centre of learning.

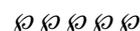
By the 19th century, Jews controlled Iraq's commerce and exerted influence in government circles, and as early as 1919, got on the Zionist bandwagon. Besides Zionist organisations, the community had very active sports clubs, teams and parades. A topographical replica of the Jewish Quarter of Baghdad in 1948 reveals more than 60 institutions – yeshivas, schools, synagogues, medical institutions and administrative bodies.

For more information email...

**[Bagylon@BabylonJewry.org.il](mailto:Bagylon@BabylonJewry.org.il)**

### Reply:

Thank you for your appeal on behalf of Or-Yehuda, totalling some US\$5 million. I have often heard in the past five years of plans to build the first floor. What is the position now? Are there any brochures or plans of this unique establishment? Please send me full information to study the matter. ♦



### *Proverbs...*

An ounce of practice is worth a pound of preaching.

A good wife and health is a man's best wealth.

The written word can be erased-- not so with the spoken word

# Book Review

## 'Look Up and Dream'

by Robert Rietti

Published by Valentine Mitchell

An appreciation of the book by the  
Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

"...That is the recurring theme of Robert Rietti's engaging reminiscences "Look Up and Dream". Time and again he tells us of occasions in which the hand of God seems to have been directing the affairs of man. He calls them 'small miracles'. Coincidence? Happenstance? Luck? So they might seem to one for whom that is all there is, for whom the universe circles endlessly in the void, blind to our hopes, deaf to our prayers. But Rietti speaks to us with the voice of faith, real faith, not the hectoring variety convinced of its own righteousness, all too ready to use the perfection of God as a rod to chastise the imperfections of mankind. His, rather, is the faith of one who stands always open to surprise, his ear carefully attuned to the music of God beneath the noise and clamour of daily events. Rietti knows what we too often forget, that God speaks to us in the 'still, small voice', meaning the voice that we only hear if we are listening. To one without faith, life all too often confirms his or her lack of expectations. But to one for whom the presence of God is a perpetual possibility, Heaven discloses itself, often when we are least expecting it. This is a lovely and a moving book, inviting us to look at our lives again and recognise the moments at which we were touched by the sheltering winds of Divine providence and for a moment felt the whisper of eternity, signalling a purpose beyond the winds of chance and a Presence behind the rush of every day events." ♦

**Sir Robert Rietti O.M.R.I.**  
40 Old Church Lane  
London WN9 8TA

**Tel: 020 8205 3024**

**Fax: 020 8200 4688**

**Email address...**

**[robert.rietti@ispc002.demon.co.uk](mailto:robert.rietti@ispc002.demon.co.uk)**

**Website... [www.ispc002.demon.co.uk](http://www.ispc002.demon.co.uk)**

## Natalie starting her life in England.

**D**r. Amira Nassim left Baghdad ten years ago and started a long process of getting established in the UK, getting her GP appointment two years ago and got married last year to Frankie Sweiry.

Their daughter Natalie looks a healthy and bright six old ready to start life in a new diaspora.



## New Shanghai

by Pamela Yatsko

**The rocky rebirth of China's legendary city**

**298 pp Wiley Paperback £14.50**

**S**hanghai, perched on the southern coast of China, is known as one of the world's largest cities. But until recently, it was also known as one of the sleepest, a far cry from the laissez-faire energy of its colonial past. Then, in the early 1990's, the Chinese government decided that Shanghai would be developed into a world-class financial and commercial centre, a city capable of leading China into the new millennium. The recipe seemed simple enough. Take plenty of money and 20 million people, and mix until skyscrapers form. Add generous amounts of hyperbole, a lot of mobile phones and a stock market. And – there you have it.

In certain respects, Shanghai looks like a financial centre. There are certainly plenty of skyscrapers; at one time the city contained one-fifth of the world's construction cranes. The planners looked at Hong Kong, London and New York, and concluded that glass towers were the defining trait of a successful market economy. They simply failed to understand the difference between the outward symbols of capitalism and the social underpinnings of it. In essence, this is the difference between hardware and software. The government focused on

new buildings and new roads, even while the software of prosperity – a reliable legal regime, openness to new ideas, freedom to innovate – languished. A key problem was that, during the Communist era in Shanghai, any trace of capitalist ability had been obliterated. If anything, the city administrators retained a traditional Maoist leaning well into the 1990's, with a strong emphasis on government control. They made the mistake of believing that innovation could be planned. The result was mainly confusion. At the factory level, most managers interpreted the new direction as permission for them personally to make as much money as possible, causing an epidemic of corruption that shows no sign of abating.

In some ways, too, the city's vast size is also a problem. One can make a great deal of money without having to look beyond the city borders. The executives of foreign companies who poured into the city ten years ago have also become deeply dissatisfied, and now tend to focus on the local market. Those who are looking for a national base have moved to Beijing.

But Shanghai's substantial industrial base and strategic position as a gateway to the interior of southern China make it a logical centre for manufacturing and trade. It may one day even become the regional financial centre it is supposed to be. ♦

**From the Times Literary Supplement**

*The Scribe No.74*



## Real Wealth Creation

by Stella Shamoon

Orion Business Books

ISBN No. 0-75282-111-3

Published in 1999 210 pp

Reviewed by Anna Dangoor

**S**tella Shamoon's book 'Real Wealth Creation' is a simple and clear introduction to making the most of one's money.

For someone who until recently thought that 'derivatives' were things you only came across in Physics, the explanatory style of this book was perfect.

Stella spends a great deal of time convincing her reader that everyone and anyone is able to manipulate their finances to better advantage. I have to say that at first I was sceptical, but Stella's firm words of encouragement eventually did their magic, and urges to subscribe to the Financial Times and start investing my student loan immediately, were difficult to quell.

This book is straightforward, easy to follow, and not just aimed at those of us who are still mere babes in the world of finance. Stella's plan can be adapted for any age, and any means. If you have an income you have investment power, it may just need coaxing out of you.

One thing Stella does not pretend is that achieving financial 'fitness' will be easy. 'It's like a diet' she writes, requiring a great deal of discipline, and only worthwhile if one has a reasonable long-term goal. So throw out your Slimfast, stop losing the pounds, and start gaining them! ♦



## The Double Exodus

**A study of Arab and Jewish Refugees in the Middle East.**

**From a foreword by Philip Goodhart, MP**

**T**he most reliable estimate of the number of Arab men, women and children who left their homes in Palestine during 1948 was not more than 600,000. It was only the twelfth largest movement of refugees to take place since the end of World War II.

From 1947 to 1950 at least four million Moslems moved from India to Pakistan and more than four million Hindus fled from Pakistan to India. The estimates of the number of permanent refugees driven from their homes by the first partition of India range between eight and eleven million.

By September 1950, three million Sudeten Germans had been expelled from Czechoslovakia. Between 1949 and the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 a further 2,739,000 refugees moved from east to west Germany. An additional six and three quarter million Germans left their homes in the Provinces annexed by Poland after the war.

In Africa about one and a half million Ibos refugees returned to Eastern Nigeria. The number of Frenchmen and pro-French Arabs who fled from North Africa before and after Algerian Independence has also been put at rather more than one million.

When Vietnam was partitioned in 1956, 800,000 North Vietnamese, many of whom were Roman Catholic, moved to South Vietnam to escape from Ho Chi Minh's regime. During the major Communist offensives in the mid-1960's more than one million South Vietnamese also moved out of their homes into temporary refugee camps. More than one million refugees from North Korea settled in South Korea after the fighting that moved up and down the Korean peninsula in the two years that followed the North Korean attack in June 1950. Over one million refugees from mainland China lived in camps in Hong Kong.

In the Middle East itself the exodus of Jews from Arab lands has been even larger than the flight of Arabs from Israel. In 1948 there were almost 850,000 Jews in Arab lands ranging from Iraq to Morocco. By 1973 there were less than 50,000.

There is, however, one factor which distinguishes the bulk of the Arab refugees from the millions of people who have left their homes and countries in the last 50 years because of political, ethnic, or religious pressures. Everyone of the non-Arab countries that received a flood of refugees did their best to re-settle the new arrivals. All countries except the Arabs, launched successful programmes of absorption. In most of the Arab countries however, strenuous efforts were made to prevent or to limit the re-settlement of their Palestinian refugees. Arab leaders have denounced and thwarted all international attempts to re-settle the refugees in empty lands away from Israel's borders for political reasons.

A lasting solution to the whole sad problem can only be found when all concerned recognise that there has been a double exodus, involving a lasting exchange of people. The Arab departure from Israeli territory must be balanced against the flight of an even larger number of Jewish refugees from Arab lands.

The solution of the Middle-East refugee question has to be based on a recognition that an exchange of population has taken place. Though the circumstances varied, the exchange was irrevocable. Return to unfriendly Arab countries by the Oriental Jews is obviously unthinkable. Likewise, Palestinian refugees cannot expect to return under any circumstances. ♦

**All unsigned articles are written by the editor**



# A Rabbi Talks with Jesus

by Rabbi Professor Jacob Neusner

McGill - Queen's University Press

Montreal & Kingston - London - Ithaca

161 pp paperback

This learned author had written a detailed "history of the Jews in Babylonia" in six volumes, as well as many other books, including The Theology of the Oral Torah. He is now a distinguished research professor of religious studies at the University of South Florida and professor of religion, Bard College, New York.

Neusner explains why the Sermon on the Mount would not have convinced him to follow Jesus and why he would have continued to follow the teaching of Moses. He explores the reasons Christians believe in Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of Heaven, while Jews continue to believe in the Torah of Moses and a kingdom of priests and holy people on earth.

This imaginary dialogue is conducted in a spirit of friendliness and respect for the others' belief, free of intolerance and intentional misunderstanding. ♦



# Constantine's Sword

by James Carroll

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Company (MA, USA)

From: Naim S Mahlab

Montreal

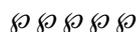
I am attaching a copy of a book review that appeared in a recent issue of Time, and which you may find of interest.

I am gratified that the author, a former Catholic priest, proposes the thought that anti-semitism was conceived, spawned and nurtured by the Christian Church, something that I have always maintained but never expected to hear from a practicing Catholic.

It is a sad commentary that, what he calls "one of the West's epic plagues" is still with us, albeit in a more discreet way. The propagation of this pernicious virus starts in Sunday school where the Jew is portrayed as a deicide, and is confirmed in a more sophisticated way from the Christian pulpit.

Perhaps we should dare hope that with more people like James Carroll, the Church will accept responsibility for the crimes it has committed against the people of Jesus.

I think it was Mark Twain who said the man is the only member of the animal kingdom who has the ability to blush, and we certainly have a lot to blush about. ♦



We would like to inform The Scribe readers of a new website, dedicated to the Jews of Iraq who left Baghdad during the 1960's and 1970's. The genealogy section should interest all Iraqi Jews. ♦

URL: <http://come.to/iraqijews>

email: [iraqijews@usa.net](mailto:iraqijews@usa.net)

The Webmaster

I would be obliged if you could help me to find the address or telephone number or email address of Mr Albert Khabbaza. Mr Khabbaza is the brother of the late Esther Mercado, who was a very dear friend of my father the poet, Abraham Ovadiah. My father wants to get in touch with Mr Khabbaza, because he plans to publish poems translated by the late Esther.

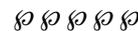
We know both Esther and Albert used to write to your journal.

**Mazal Deshe**  
**Administrator – Computing Division**  
**University of Haifa**

email: [mdeshe@research.haifa.ac.il](mailto:mdeshe@research.haifa.ac.il)

**Reply:**

As a result of having the operation, Esther sent us a farewell letter and a poem for her friends and the readers of The Scribe which we published on page 47 of No. 73, which has since been appearing only on the internet. If you wish to send any further material of Esther's work we would be glad to consider it for future issues. Enclosed requested address. ♦

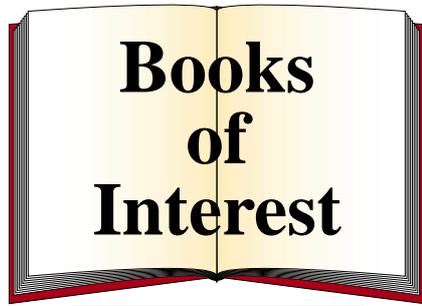


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## Search for the Lost Tribes in Israel

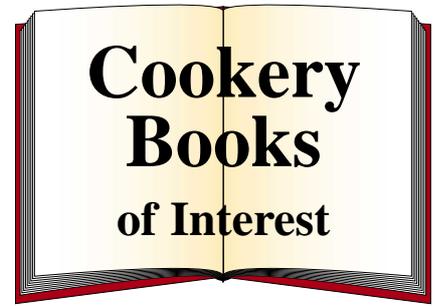
I really enjoyed your piece about the  
Lemba people. I am really interested  
in their story as it unfolds.

However, at the end of the article you  
stated that several people all over claim to  
be descended from biblical tribes but  
don't have proof. Well I think instead of  
assuming that these people lying, how  
about starting an International Search for  
the Lost Tribes in Israel in which those  
who claim to be blood descendants can be  
DNA tested. I think that would be more  
productive, historical, controversial, and  
interesting. Don't you think????

Great job guys, keep up the good work!

Khaeem Yisrael

Khaeem@msn.com



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## "Adi Zahav"

I am writing to thank you for the copy of  
"Adi Zahav", a commentary on Chumash  
by Rabbi Hakham Ezra Dangoor, who is  
in fact my great great grandfather.

It gave me great pleasure to read the pages  
of the Sefer, and I look forward with  
anticipation to any future publications.

Ramat Bet-Shemesh

Michael Reuben

ISRAEL

# ELKEBIR FAMILY TREE

**Descendants of Heskel Elkebir (1740-1816)  
son of Abraham Nissim Shellim Saleh David Gubbay\***

(\*see note at end of tree)

**Heskel ELKEBIR (1740-1816)** married 1st, the daughter of Jacob Aaron Gubbay of the SHEIKH ELIEZER family, and had issue; wife and children died in Basrah.

He married 2ndly, wife from the ADES family of Aleppo and had issue (A.1-A.7)

**A.1 Aslan Heskel ELKEBIR** (1780-1800), m. and had issue

**B.1 Meir** (1800-1887) m. 1824 Habiba dau of Rahmim ABDULEZER, and had issue

C.1 Aslan

C.2 Saleh

C.3 Heskel

C.4 Jacob

C.5 Shaul

**A.2 Isaac** m. and had issue

**B.2 Jacob** m. and had issue

C.6 Abdullah m. and had issue

D.1 Ezra

C.7 daughter m. 1859 son of Eliahu ben Heskel Menahem

**A.3 Shoua Heskel ELKEBIR** m. Mazaltov (Muzli Toba) SOMEKH, sister of H. Abdullah Somekh, and had issue (B.3-B.8)

**B.3 Heskel Shoua Heskel ELKEBIR known as Ezekiel ABRAHAM**

(1824-1896) m. 1853 Aziza (1839-1897) dau of Sir Albert (Abdullah) SASSOON, Bt. and had issue (C.8-C.19)

C.8 Flora (Farha) (1856-1936) m. 1876 her half-great-uncle and 2nd cousin, Solomon David SASSOON (C.50), and had issue

D.2 Rachel (1877-1952) m. 1912 Sir David EZRA (BAHER) (1871-1947) (no issue)

D.3 David SASSOON (1880-1942) m. 1912 Selina (1883-1969) dau of Maurits PRINS of Amsterdam and had issue

E.1 Flora (b.1914) m. Oscar FEUCHTWANGER (issue)

E.2 Rabbi Solomon SASSOON (1915-1985) m. Alice BENJAMIN (issue)

D.4 Mozelle (1884-1921) unmarried; writer of diary of visit to Baghdad in 1910 with her mother, sister and brother published in this issue

C.9 Ronnie (Aaron) GUBBAY (1960-1931) m. Elizabeth (d.1944) dau of Emanuel EMANUEL (no issue)

- C.10 Kate (Khatoun) (1861-1929) m. 1880 her 1st cousin,  
Jacob Elias JUDAH (MATUQ) (C.29) and had issue
- D.5 David (1881- ) m. Miriam (Mary) and had issue
- E.3 Jacob
- E.4 Rachel
- E.5 Naomi
- D.6 Solomon (1882 - ) m. his 1st cousin once removed, Rebecca  
(C.22) dau of Nahoum Shoua Heskell ELKEBIR (no issue)
- D.7 (Eliahu) Ellis (1891-1939) m. Sophie (no issue)
- C.11 Rachel (1862-1904) m. Charles (Saleh) NISSIM (1845-1918),  
2nd son of Meir MOSES, and had issue
- D.8 Meyer NISSIM (1882-1959), Mayor of Bombay, m. Flo HOWARD  
(no issue)
- C.12 David ABRAHAM (1863-1945) m. 1885 Mozelle (1869-1954) dau of Ezra MOSES,  
eldest son of Meir MOSES (and sister of Aaron MOSES see D.56); see photograph  
of family group in The Scribe 53 (April 1992), 11; and had issue
- D.9 Reuben (Ruby) ABRAHAM (1888-1968) m. 1910 Mozelle (Maisie) dau of  
Joseph HAYIM and Hanini Sassoon Benjamin Sassoon, and had issue
- E.6 Ezekiel unmarried
- E.7 Aziza m. Selim MOALLEM (issue)
- E.8 Jo Hayim m. (issue)
- E.9 Isaac (Jack)
- C.13 Abraham (1866-1936) m. 1894 his 1st cousin, Rachel (C.23) dau of  
Nahum Shoua Heskell ELKEBIR and had issue
- D.10 Ezekiel unmarried
- D.11 Aline unmarried
- C.14 Rebecca (1870-1929) m. her 2nd cousin, Sasson Silman SOMEKH (1872-1944)  
(no issue)
- C.15 Dina (1871-1940) m. 1895 Ezekiel Hayim MOSHE and had issue
- D.12 Hayim HAYIM (b.1897) m. Aline (E.37) (b.1901) dau of  
Aaron Ezra MOSES and had issue
- E.10 Basil
- E.11 Derek
- E.12 Roy
- D.13 Rachel (d.1995) unmarried

- D.14 Lydia (Aziza) (1909-1989) m. Ezra Eliahu Rahmim SHAHMOON and had issue
  - E.13 Sassoon (Dick)
  - E.14 Rebecca
  - E.15 Dinah
- C.16 Simha (1873-1910) unmarried
- C.17 Sarah (1874-1909) m. Manasseh Saleh MANASSEH and had issue
  - D.15 Aziza (1903-1923) unmarried
  - D.16 Heskel died in infancy
  - D.17 Abdullah Albert MANASSEH (1907-1991) m. Rachel dau of Reuben Eliahu ANI and had issue
    - E.16 Jacob Eliahu (Jack)
    - E.17 Sarah
- C.18 Joseph GUBBAY (1876-1962) unmarried
- C.19 Ezra ABRAHAM (1880-1963) m. 1909 Hannah (1883-1965) dau of Joseph NISSIM (MOSES) and had issue
  - D.18 Ezekiel m. (no issue)
  - D.19 Aziza m. and had issue
    - E.18 Rachel Leah m. Fred HEMI
  - D.20 Meyer unmarried
  - D.21 Rachel m.
  - D.22 David unmarried
  - D.23 Sarah (1911-1990) m. and had issue
  - D.24 Sophie died in infancy
  - D.25 Emma died in infancy
  - D.26 son died in infancy
  - D.27 Ellis, newspaper editor, unmarried
- B.4 Yehuda Shoua Heskel ELKEBIR** (b.1830) m. Leah dau of Abdullah SHLOMO and had issue (C.20-C.21)
  - C.20 Barukh (1855-1920) m. his 1st cousin once removed, Habiba (C.35) dau of Elias JUDAH (MATUQ) and had issue
    - D.28 Sion unmarried
    - D.29 Eliahu Haim (1885-1932) m. Lulu Ezra Isaac Silas Sh. SASSOON
    - D.30 Saleh Yehuda m. his cousin, Katie SHAHMOUN (E.25)
    - D.31 Khedouri (b.1895)

- D.32 Aziza (b.1880) m. Abraham-Haim Reuben SOMEKH (1850-1930) and had issue
- E.19 Gourgi SOMEKH m. Naima dau of David Aaron SOMEKH
- E.20 Abdullah SOMEKH
- E.21 Naim SOMEKH
- E.22 Khatoun m. Shaul MASRIE
- E.23 Mazli m. Jacob Abraham ABOUDI
- E.24 Naima (d.1991) m. Ghali Saleh SHAMASH (d.1986)
- D.33 Khatoun (b.1892) unmarried
- D.34 Blanche (Simha) (b.1898) m. Khedouri Ezra ASHER
- C.21 Shaul (1857-1920) m. and had issue
- D.35 Ezra (b.1890)
- D.36 Mazli (b.1894) unmarried
- D.37 Rachel (b.1895) unmarried
- B.5 Nahoum Shoua Heskell ELKEBIR** (d.1906) m. dau of Heskell ben Joseph Ezra BAHER, and had issue (C.22-C.24)
- C.22 Rebecca m. her 1st cousin once removed, Solomon Jacob Elias JUDAH (MATUQ) (D.6) (no issue)
- C.23 Rachel m. 1894 her 1st cousin, Abraham Ezekiel ABRAHAM (C.13) and had issue (see husband)
- C.24 Sophie m. DAVID
- B.6 Shlomo** m. Simha (d.1897) dau of Isaac HAYIM
- B.7 Rima** (1826-1886) m. Shlomo Reuben ABOUDI and had issue (C.25-C.28)
- C.25 Sion ABOUDI
- C.26 Reuben ABOUDI
- C.27 Aziza (Messouda) (d.1951) m. her 2nd cousin, Saleh Heskell-Ezra ELKEBIR (C.37) and had issue (see husband)
- C.28 Farha m. Heskell Ezra Elisha SASSOON known as “3 Es Sassoon” and had issue
- D.38 Jacob SASSOON
- B.8 Hannah** (1828-1921) m. Elias JUDAH (MATUQ) and had issue (C.29-C.36)
- C.29 Jacob Elias JUDAH (MATUQ) m. 1880 his 1st cousin, Kate (Khatoun) (C.10) dau of Ezekiel ABRAHAM and had issue (see wife)
- C.30 Yehuda m. dau of Shamaoun Silman

- C.31 Abraham m. Habiba dau of R. Moshe HAIM, brother of H. Joseph HAIM, and had issue
- D.39 Menashe
  - D.40 Naima
  - D.41 Salman
  - D.42 Farha
  - D.43 Naim JAVID m. Marcelle dau of Reuben SOMEKH (issue)
- C.32 Shoua m. Rebecca dau of Heskell Shoua
- C.33 Khatoun m. as his 1st wife, Silman David SOMEKH and had issue
- D.44 David SOMEKH
  - D.45 Serah (1872-1967) m. Elia Rahmim SHAHMOUN and had issue
    - E.25 Katie m. her cousin, Saleh Yehuda (D.30)
- C.34 Simha
- C.35 Habiba m. her 1st cousin once removed, Barukh Shoua Heskell ELKEBIR (C.20) and had issue (see husband)
- C.36 Rebecca

**A.4 Abraham Heskell ELKEBIR** (1790-1873) m. Mazaltov dau of Sh. Saleh Sh. ELIEZER and had issue, an only child

**B.9 Heskell-Ezra** (1828-1891) m. Aziza Matuk SHAHRBANI (1844-1908) and had issue (C.37-C.45)

- C.37 Saleh (c.1860-1932); see photograph of family group in The Scribe 71 (April 1999), 21; m. his 2nd cousin, Aziza (Messouda) (C.27) dau of Shlomo Reuben ABOUDI and Rima ELKEBIR, and had issue (D.46-D.53)
- D.46 Muzli (1882-1929) m. Zeghair Heskell SHABI and had issue
    - E.26 Farha
    - E.27 Renee
  - D.47 Farha m. Naji Jacob SHAUL
  - D.48 Habiba m. Shaul H. Sasson SMOUHA (LEVY) and had issue
    - E.28 Sasson LEVY
  - D.49 Abraham ELKABIR, OBE (1885-1973); Director-General of Finance at Baghdad for over 20 years: m. Renee ELIAS and had issue
    - E.29 Jemil
    - E.30 Aida m. HOUGIE

- D.50 Matuk (b.1887) died ?
- D.51 Heskell (1891-1969)
- D.52 Salman (b.1895) m. Simha dau of Abraham Meir SOMEKH and had issue (3 daus)

D.53 Joseph (b.1897)

C.38 Meir (b.1860) m. Naima RABIE

C.39 Isaac (b.1863) m.

C.40 Jacob (b.1866) m. Habiba

C.41 Joseph (b.1869)

C.42 Hannah m. David Jacob NAHOM

C.43 Simha m. Heskell SHABI

C.44 Farha m. ABDULEZER

C.45 Khatoun m. Joseph RASHI

**A.5 Rahma** m. David BENJAMIN

**A.6 Khatoun** m. SHELLIM and had issue (B.10-B.11)

**B.10 Heskell SHELLIM** m. and had issue (C.46)

C.46 Shellim E. SHELLIM (1845-1912) m. 1866 his 2nd cousin, Rebecca (C.53) dau of David SASSOON and had issue

D.54 Kate (1868-1912) m. Aubrey J. DAVID and had issue

E.31 Evelyn (1886-1946)

E.32 Meyer Archibald (b.1887)

E.33 Villiers (b.1890)

E.34 Vere Mozelle (b.1892) m. as his 1st wife, Sir Percival DAVID, 2nd Bart (1892-1964) (brother of Louise DAVID see D.57) (issue - one daughter Katherine Viola Monica b.1914, m. William Frederick TAYLOR)

D.55 Eddie SHELLIM (1869-1928) m. .... GROSSMAN

D.56 Flora (1876-1965) m. Aaron MOSES (1873-1946) son of Ezra MOSES (and brother of Mozelle wife of David ABRAHAM C.12); see photograph of family group in The Scribe 53 (April 1992), 11; and had issue

E.35 Lionel MOSES (b.1898)

E.36 Sybil (b.1900) m. Maurice DANGOOR (issue Renée Rebecca, Joyce Esther, Edward Ezra Sasson)

E.37 Aline (b.1901) m. Hayim HAYIM (D.12) and had issue (see husband)

E.38 Winnie m. Ezekiel TOEG (no issue)

E.39 Cyril MOSES (b.1907) m. Jennie TOEG (issue)

D.57 David SHELLIM (1877-1941) m. Louise (b.1882) dau of Sir Sassoon Jacob Hai DAVID, 1st Bart (and sister of Sir Percival DAVID see E.34) and had issue

E.40 Stella Diana (1905-1939) m.1927 Eric BENJAMIN (no issue)

**B.11 Salha** m. SHAHRBANI

**A.7 Rifka m. Faraj** HAYIM and had issue

**B.12 Flora (Farha)** (1814-1886) m. as his 2nd wife, David SASSOON (1792- 864) son of Sh. Sasson ben Saleh and had issue (C.47-C.56) - (for details see... Sassoon family tree in The Scribe 66 (Sept 1996), 48-49)

C.47 Sassoon David SASSOON (1832-1967) m. Flora REUBEN (issue)

C.48 Reuben SASSOON (1835-1905) m. Kate EZEKIEL (issue)

C.49 Arthur SASSOON (1840-1912) m. Louise PERUGIA (no issue)

C.50 Solomon SASSOON (twin) (1841-1894) m. 1876 his half-great-niece and 2nd cousin, Flora (C.8) dau of Ezekiel ABRAHAM and had issue (see wife)

C.51 Aaron SASSOON (twin) (1841-1907)

C.52 Kate (1844- ) m. Solomon EZEKIEL (issue)

C.53 Rebecca (1847-1918) m. her 2nd cousin, Shellim E. SHELLIM (C.46) and had issue (see husband)

C.54 Simha (1850-1857)

C.55 Frederick SASSOON (1853-1917) m. Jeanette RAPHAEL (issue)

C.56 Mozelle (1855-1952) m. Jacob Meyer HYEEM (issue)

\*Note. Heskell Elkebir was descended from Saleh David Gubbay who seems to be the same Saleh David Gubbay ancestor of the Sassoon family

*The above Family Tree was compiled by Miss Lydia Collins from the following sources:  
The archives of Mr Naim Dangoor and information supplied by the late Abraham Elkabir OBE,  
the late Albert Manasseh, and Mrs Rachel Hemi*



## CHICK-PEA SAVOURY/SAMBUSAK BEL TAWA

### THE DOUGH :

1 1/2 lb. (675 g.) self-raising flour  
1 tablespoon oil  
Salt to taste  
The liquid from the boiled chick-peas

### THE FILLING :

4 onions, finely chopped  
2 breasts of chicken  
1 1/2 lb. (675 g.) chick-peas, soaked overnight and cooked  
until tender  
1 teaspoon cumin or to taste  
Hot paprika to taste  
1 teaspoon curry powder or to taste

Mix the flour, salt, oil and the liquid from the boiled chick-peas  
and make a nice dough.

### PREPARE THE FILLING :

Cook the chicken until tender. Shred very fine. Cook the  
chick-peas and skin them (optional) and grind coarsely.  
Fry the minced onions until golden.  
Now mix the shredded chicken, chick-peas, onions and  
seasonings. Cool.

Cut the dough into balls and roll them with your hands, then  
roll out into small circles with a rolling pin.

Fill with 1 tablespoon of the filling, bring the edges together  
and close tightly.

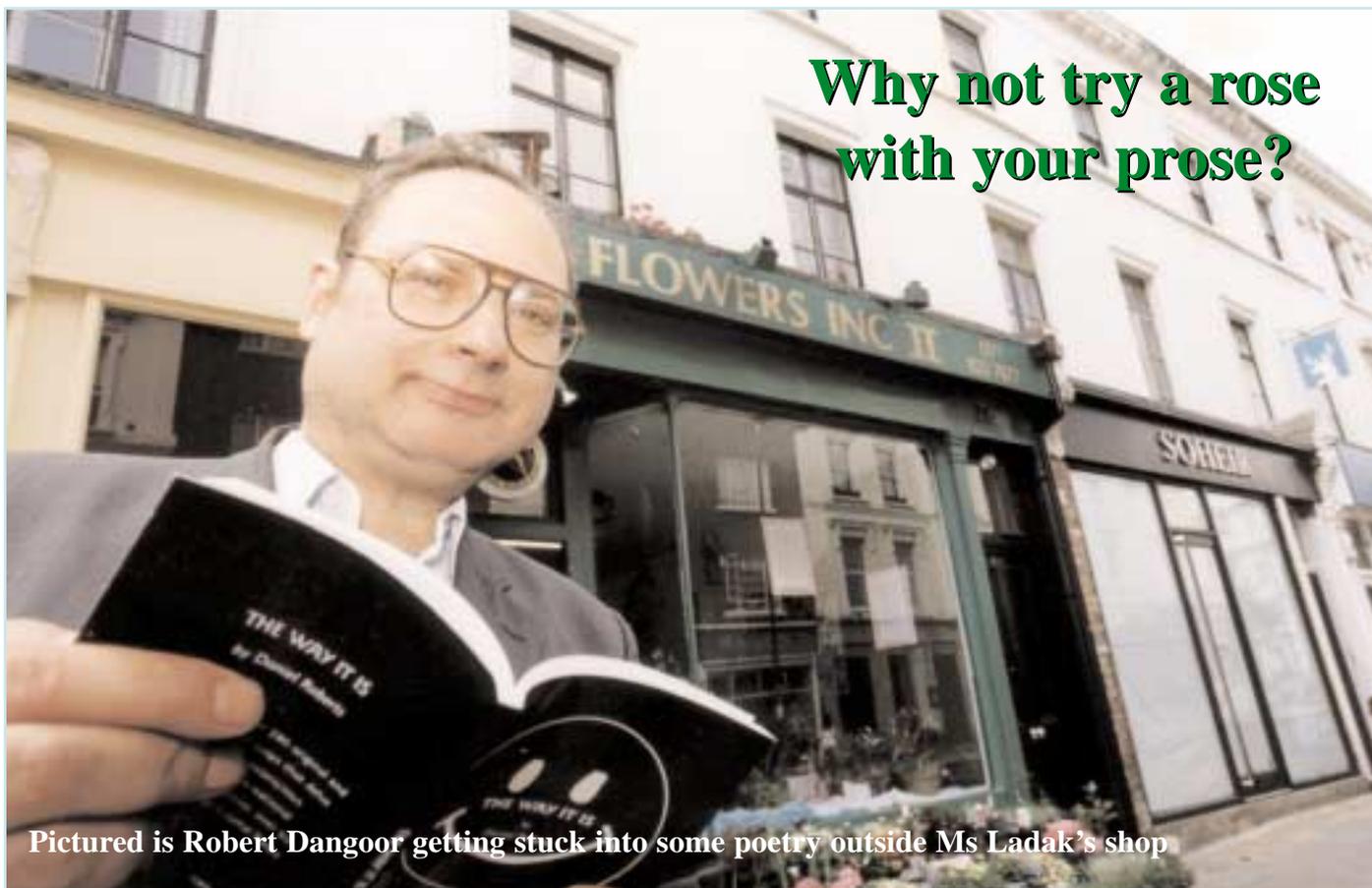
Heat oil in a frying pan and fry the Sambusak on both sides  
until golden.

Drain on kitchen paper and serve hot. You can fry and freeze.  
Reheat in the oven when needed.

You can substitute chick-peas for the chicken.



**Why not try a rose  
with your prose?**



Pictured is Robert Dangoor getting stuck into some poetry outside Ms Ladak's shop

## **Say it with poetry and flowers seems to be the idea behind a fresh display in a South Kensington shop.**

**T**he whole of August will see an exhibition of poetry by the writers Daniel Roberts (pen name of Robert Dangoor), Rupert Brooke and John Clare combined with a floral display at Flowers Inc II in Gloucester Road. Store owner Rosnina Ladak had the idea to link her floral arrangements with the writing. Poet Robert said: "I told Rosnina I would give her my book and she could take out of it whatever works she thought would be right."

The display has used poetry from his book *The Way It Is*, and there is poster work throughout the shop with words written in calligraphy. The shop has been blending poetry with flowers since it opened five years ago.

Roberts added: "The shop promotes poetry in a commercial vein which enhances community spirit."

## **The Baghdadi Haggadah**

**in three languages; Hebrew, Arabic (in Hebrew characters) and English  
is available from**

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*The Scribe No.74*