

# The SCRIBE

## JOURNAL OF BABYLONIAN JEWRY

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WISHING ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY HANUCAH  
AND A PROSPEROUS 1988

### The Iraqi Synagogue

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

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

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

### The Holocaust in German History

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

This is wishful thinking.

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

This too is wishful thinking.

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

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

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

However, the school is going from strength to strength and this year accommodates no less than 90 youngsters taught to a high standard with no more than 15 per class. With large offers of financial assistance from wealthy members of the community new purpose-built premises are being sought for the school ●

The Holocaust therefore cannot be regarded as a unique experience. In similar circumstances it can happen again. Lovers of freedom and guardians of moral values must eradicate demagogues who preach genocide and racial hatred as soon as they rear their ugly heads and eliminate them before they carry out their fiendish plans.

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

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

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

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



# Sephardim and Ashkenazim

*From an article in the Masorti Journal*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

by Dr. Shaul Ben-Abraham

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

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

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

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

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

It is regrettable that out of 29 lecturers in this Congress only 5 were from Arab countries, among them Dr. Haskell Isaacs who was born in Iraq and is one of the world's experts in Medical Text in Arabic. Dr. Davide Sala was the Chairman of one of the sessions. His comments on the lectures given in this session were brilliant and steeped with Judaeo-Arabic flavour. Only two Professors of Iraqi origin participated in the Congress as listeners. These

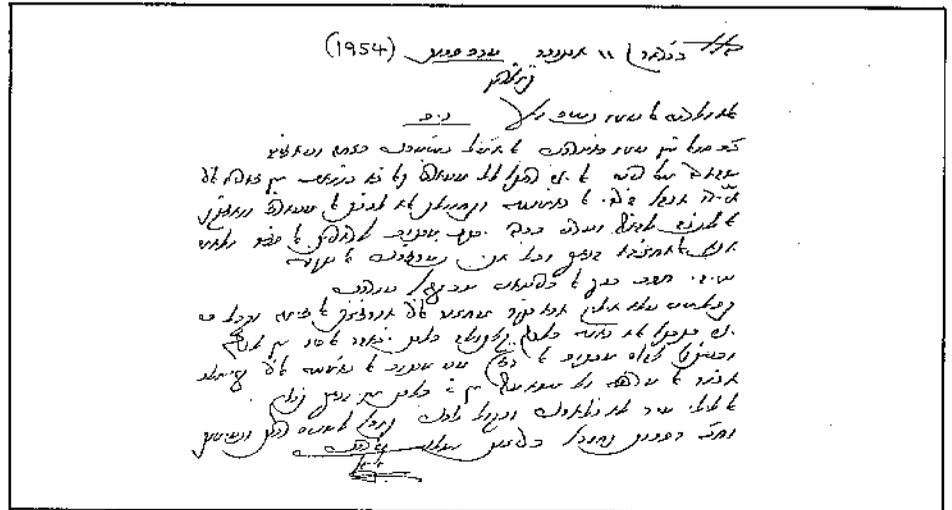
were Prof. S. Somekh of Tel Aviv University and Prof. Shmuel Moreh of the Hebrew University. Prof. Itzhak Avishur of Haifa University, also of Iraqi origin, was unable to come to Cambridge to deliver his lecture on "A New Approach to the Study of Saadya's *Tafsir*."

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

## Buss Baqa

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

N.E.D.



## Medical Texts in Judaeo-Arabic

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

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

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

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

uses.

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



# Spot an Ancestor

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Genealogical Research

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

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

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

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

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

Received for Review

*Economic Policy in Iraq*  
1932 - 1950

By Joseph Sassoon

Published by Frank Cass £28.

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

A full review of the book will appear in the next issue ●



## The Poetry of Emil Murad

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

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

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

### IN SEARCH OF LIGHT

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

To explore, near and far,  
With love, understanding, to abide  
All the way, I plead, brother,  
In search of eternal peace, eternal light;  
All the way, without fear,  
From darkness to darkness, then from darkness  
to light,  
Humbly, steadily, hand in hand to go,  
Till light we shall find, and cry out joyfully,  
Light, Light! Make Love and Light! ●

### IF I WERE.....

If I were given for once the right to choose  
From the wishes of life but one,  
I'd ask for that which none'd want to lose,  
But once lost, regaining it can never be done!  
If you are past it, only your offspring will catch  
up;  
And, O, 'tis a crown on the heads that possess it.  
No matter how you feel, act, smile or chin-up;  
If you are old, fellow, alas! You lack it!  
YOUTH! That's the word for it, the big thing!  
Summer, winter, spring, storm, sun or rain!  
I have but one wish, only one song to sing!  
O, God, if I were to be young again!! ●

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

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London SW7 5PF  
Some back numbers also available.



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

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

## RESPONSA – Questions and Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Foundation to Boost Birth Rate

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

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

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

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

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



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

From left to right:

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

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

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

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

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

## As Others See Us

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

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

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

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

P.S.G.

I was interested to read the article on the Holocaust and Sephardi Jews. This is a little known aspect of the terrible crime and it deserves greater publicity. London

A Greenberg

(That article was written by Mr. Percy Gourgey – Scribe) ●

## Arthritis

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

The topics for the Symposium will include:

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

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

### The Jews of Iraq between 1920 and 1970

Selections from the paper by Simha Horesh. Part 4 will appear in the next issue