

The SCRIBE

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WISHING ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY PURIM

They preach democracy – but practice hypocrisy

Any more advice for Israel?

by Moshe Kahtan

Gerald Kaufman is back from another meeting with Yasser Arafat in Tunisia. We remember how upon his return from his trip to Baghdad last year – round about the time the Iraqis were treating the Kurds and the Iranians to an orgy of chemical bonanza, of a medicinal nature of course, he was full of praise for the Iraqi authorities' flexibility, not forgetting the "happy" Jewish community of 100-odd souls whom he met in a synagogue. He brought word back of their extremely satisfactory life under the benevolent regime, but what this enlightened fact-finder appears to have missed out is the fact that in 1950, the 2,500 year-old Jewish community of Iraq numbered close to 200,000. Would it have been too much of a strain for him to find out why, and how, it shrank to virtually nothing? Can somebody please tell this illustrious Shadow Foreign Secretary that he is not paid to be acting Foreign Minister for Israel nor, indeed, is his help solicited in any way. He should best concentrate on doing his true job of being a shadow.

In the meantime, whilst Sir Geoffrey tours the Gulf States, no doubt promoting British exports, mainly arms, presumably to add stability to the region, it has become fashionable for the E.E.C. countries to advocate turning all "the other Israeli cheeks" in order to get the business. And why not? It costs them nothing, but Israel ultimately pays with blood.

To crown it all, that veteran and experienced old hand on Middle Eastern affairs, William Waldegrave, following closely in the footsteps of his no less qualified predecessor David Mellor, got it all in hand. By stating that the present Israeli leadership was itself engaged in terrorism at one time, he appears to have overlooked a few relevant points:

a) The fight then was only against the British army, which was administering the remaining 22% of the land earmarked for the Jewish homeland after the bulk of it was given away by Britain to Emir Abdullallah. At

that time the British were letting Arabs freely in from outside and turning back Jewish holocaust survivors to Germany.

b) The Israelis never attacked civilian targets in Europe, nor indeed elsewhere, such as children in schools, worshippers in churches or athletes in international events. They did not hijack or blow up innocent planes or kidnap people for ransom.

Furthermore, Mr. Waldegrave should not forget that whilst the Jewish Brigade was shedding its blood, fighting alongside the British, the Arabs were merrily forging their alliances with the axis.

After emerging from what he described as a historical meeting with the P.L.O., Mr. Waldegrave warned Israel that unless it "seized the opportunity" of talking to the P.L.O. it would be faced with an Iran-Iraq situation. Has he by any chance secured a special export order, or does he know something we don't?

Whilst it is understandable that the E.E.C. has commercial interests in the Arab world, the U.K. at least, who is also suffering from terrorism, need not go overboard by strictly and continuously observing double standards.

Would H.M. Government entertain the idea that half an hour after an I.R.A. declaration it will renounce terrorism, although continue its operations in Northern Ireland and not be responsible for the acts of its various factions. Would it open negotiation with the I.R.A. to set up an independent state in Northern Ireland with Belfast as its capital, or does it require the good offices of ministers from abroad to accomplish the task?

Finally, we are given to understand from the meeting with Arafat that Mr. Waldegrave will only be happy when he can buy a Palestinian cushion. In pursuing this paramount objective and when he takes the plans next time for another meeting with the founding father of International terrorism, he could perhaps pass the time in pluck-

ing a daisy: "He will blow me; he will blow me not. He will . . ." and then perhaps heed the advice he got in Tunis from his opposite number of the P.L.O.: "There is this little shop in London that sells . . ."

Diaspora Museum

Beth Hatefutsoth, the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv, is preparing an exhibition on the three millennia of Jewish life in Babylonia/Iraq.

The exhibition, like other exhibitions at our Museum, will be based on visual documentation (photographs, films, prints, documents and objects). After being displayed at Beth Hatefutsoth, it will become a travelling exhibition to be shown at Jewish museums throughout the world.

For this purpose, we are collecting all available material on Jewish life in Iraq: Pictures of the Jewish family, the cycle of Jewish life (from Birth-Mila to Mourning), the cycle of the Jewish year, the Ziarra, community organisations, religious life, cultural life, economic and political life, etc. In fact, we'll welcome every picture which throws light on life in Iraq in general before 1952.

We hope that the concentrated efforts made in collecting the material for the exhibition will enable us to achieve a comprehensive visual documentation of the life of the Jews in Iraq.

We cannot stress enough the urgency of reaching the older generation of Iraqi-born Jews, who spent their adult life in Iraq. Family albums often are a treasure of documentary material, featuring the historical, cultural and ethnographic values of Jewish life. In private hands, this material is in danger of being lost or overlooked, and the only way to ensure its preservation is to have it copied at a public institute.

The material will be kept at our archives where it will be available for historical research and educational purposes.

The originals will, of course, be returned to the owner after having been copied in our laboratory. Should difficulties arise in sending precious pictures, we will be grateful for photocopies, and we may be able to copy the pictures at a later date.

It is not often that one is requested to actually participate in the history-writing of one's own past. We trust that the Babylonian Jewry in Israel and abroad will realise their active role in preserving their history for the sake of future generations and in memory of their ancestors.

Sarah Gilboa-Karni, Diaspora Museum, Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv, Israel

LETTERS

We all enjoy *The Scribe*, especially the book reviews. Your journal is by Dad's bedside, and he is very cross if it ever vanishes when he seeks it out. It is good to see you lash out at the hypocrisy of the world versus Israel. The UN is tongue-tied when it comes to Russia, Iraq and the Kurds, or nearer home – the British, who have a lot to answer for. However, I do feel you lay it on a bit thick at times when tact is needed. Are you consciously seeking enemies?

However, I am going to take you to task for the smug statement exhorting Israel to "increase its population from within and not by more aliyah." By what authority do you denigrate aliyah? Your smugness is appalling. If more of the right youngsters gave up their comfortable lives in Britain and elsewhere, to help in the building up of this country, we would all the quicker achieve the purpose for which we are here – the realisation of the prophecies. You must have heard it is a *mitzva* to live here and to feel the hand of God in our return. It is not easy, admittedly, to make a new life here; there are several hurdles to overcome, but it is soul-building and may be the answer to a lot of shiftless, over-pampered young Jews in Britain who are finding solace in the drug world. We need young, well-educated leaders, boys and girls of vision, to give this country heart. Even the ultimate sacrifice is a small price to pay for a great dream come true. What a hollow ring the words "next year in Jerusalem" must have at your Seder service.

Enough said. A little criticism may be timely – you get enough enthusiastic (and well-deserved) letters from your readers●
Herzlia Pituach Mercia Grant (née Hilaly)

We already have too many enemies. By telling the truth, however unpleasant it may be, we hope to jog some of them to see reason, and also boost the morale of some of us. We cannot make friends by hiding our heads in the sand. Israel and her Jewish friends are in a state of paralysis, split right down the middle on most issues. What is needed is a revolution, as a reply to the *intifada*, to give Israel a sense of direction and to make up for lost ground. There is no doubt that aliyah is desirable and has to be encouraged, benefiting both Israel and the *Olim*. But aliyah is not enough for the purpose of vastly increasing Israel's Jewish population, and solving her demographic disparity. This has to come mainly from within; moreover, Israelis hold the key in their hands. The survival of a strong Diaspora is equally important. Thus, there is no case for a mass aliyah●

The Scribe

My husband and I were vacationing in Florida this past December and a friend shared with us a year-old issue of *The Scribe*. Needless to say how much we enjoyed reading all about our people. Please keep us on your mailing list and, if you can, send us your issues of 1988●

**Cary, Violet and Ezra Meir
North Carolina**

Dear Mr Dangoor,

Yehuda and I have been back some three months now and moved into our new home about six weeks ago. We are well settled amongst our family, almost as though we were never away!

I have been fortunate in being able to resume my Real Estate pursuits in Jerusalem and have recently become associated with a very solid and dynamic company – M. Caplan Realty.

I have known Malcolm and Lea Caplan over the years and it is most gratifying to be working with them as a team, specialising in the specific needs of clients from the Western World, not least the U.K.

If you are ever in need of this kind of assistance, please feel free to contact me●
**M. Caplan Realty Mimi Avner
16 King George Street, Jerusalem**

Besimantov



I am glad to inform you that my wife Yehudit gave birth at 02.30 on 7 February to a healthy boy whom we shall give the name of our martyr, the late Mr Charles Raphael Horesh, as you suggested.

This is a photo of the child whose mother was the first one to join Mr. Dangoor's blessed project of "Raise a Child in Israel" to increase Israel's population●
Rishon-Le-Zion Dov Sherf

In your report on the solemn memorial service on 25 January at Bevis Marks Synagogue to commemorate the nine Jews who were hanged in Baghdad 20 years ago, you omitted to mention my name as one of the participators●
**Senior Hazan Rev. Halfon Benarroch
of the Spanish & Portuguese Jews' Congregation**

Dr. Frederick Ezekiel of Lexington, Mass., has told me about your publication regarding Iraqi Jewry. I would appreciate it if you would put me on the mailing list of *The Scribe*●
**Prof. E. K. Dabora
University of Connecticut**

We are a Jewish Vocational School imparting free religious and cultural education to about 120 boys and girls who register with us for training in various trades. We, naturally, lay great emphasis on observing the Jewish Holidays and we will be conducting the communal Passover Seder this year at the Girls' School, 68 Worli Hill Road, Worli, Bombay. We would accordingly be very grateful if you could send us a large number of Passover Haggadas to enable us to use them at this year's Seder.

We take this opportunity to invite you or any of your friends who may be in Bombay at that time to celebrate the Seder with us●
ORT India R. Jhirad

I am, indeed, enjoying so much reading *The Scribe* which is reaching me regularly. Your writings, views and comments there are of great interest to me. The nice nostalgia added to news of current events on the scattered Jewish community of Iraq, refreshes the reader where he was●
**Ramat-Gan, Abraham Meir Yadid(ya)
Israel**

I was passed *The Scribe* by a Sephardi friend and, despite being Ashkenazi, enjoyed reading it!! Please put me on your mailing list●
Hampstead Michael Black

Jordan and Israel

A number of letters recently appearing in your columns have argued that Jordan is (or is not) Palestine. The matter is clear: Jordan is not (and never has been) "Palestine", for the simple reason that "Palestine" does not (and never did) exist.

The country is a Jewish land, called Israel or Judea, and it was only the Roman conquest which enabled the Emperor Hadrian to change its name to "Palestina" in the year 135.

The move was illegal and the Romans had no moral right to change the name.

Had Hadrian not done so, we might today be faced with "Judean" Arab terrorists, which in itself highlights the absurdity of the claims of the "Palestinians".

Israel, illegally renamed "Palestine" by an occupying force, was always an indivisible geographical unit on both sides of the River Jordan. Arabs currently residing in Israel – both the modern state and the Arab-occupied eastern Eretz Yisrael – are interlopers descended from the Arab invaders of 633-637, and those who came in the wake of Zionist pioneers.

The concept of an independent "Palestinian" entity did not exist in Arab consciousness before the 1920s, and "Palestinian" nationalism was a pan-Arab (though mainly Egyptian) invention following the Six-Day War.

While Israel would never start a war against the fictitious Kingdom of Jordan to press her rightful claims, we must never forget that this claim *does* exist and that we have as much right to Amman as we have to Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa and Beirut. In short: Jordan is not Palestine. Jordan is Israel, albeit Arab-occupied Israel●
**Jerusalem Daniel M. Pinner
(Jewish Chronicle)**

Islam the religion of peace? Who is Sheikh Zaharan trying to fool? Islam was imposed by the sword, which appears on the Saudi flag together with the Moslem Credo.

Peaceful co-existence with other religious communities? Where are the numerous Jewish communities of Arabia? They were *all* liquidated or forced to convert.

"Islam" does not derive from the Arabic word for peace (*Salam*) but from "submission". The Koran (Sura 37) refers to Abraham and Isaac having "submitted themselves to Allah's will" (*Aslama*). That is the origin of the name and philosophy of Islam●
(Jewish Chronicle) Naim E. Dangoor

Spot an Ancestor

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

Eliahu Nessim Rabee
 Yishaq Nessim Rabee
 Shaul Shlomo Rabee
 Menashe Shlomo Rabee
 Ezra Yisrael Rabee
 Shaul Yisrael Rabee
 Nessim Yisrael Rabee
 Menashe Yisrael Rabee
 Ezra Heskell Rabee
 Selman Abdulla Rabee
 Meir Abdulla Rabee
 Shaul Ezra Heskell Rabee
 Menashi Ezra Heskell Rabee
 Ezra Moshe Heskell Rabee
 Ezra Shlomo Rabee
 Dawid Rahamim Rabee & Sons
 Yacub Nessim Rabee
 Selman Sasson Rabee Sayegh
 Abdullah Heskell Rabee
 Mordechai Yacub Yosef Rahamim
 Heskell Yacub Yosef Rahamim
 Nessim Yacub Yosef Rahamim
 Shaul Yacub Yosef Rahamim
 Meir Yacub Yosef Rahamim
 Abraham Yacub Yosef Rahamim
 Yosef Heskell Rashti & Brothers
 Yosef Aharon Yehuda Rashti
 Aharon Meir Rhaima
 Heskell Moshe Rhaima
 Ezra Aharon Rhaima
 Yosef Heskell Rhaima
 Meir Aharon Rhaima
 Dawid Aharon Rhaima
 Reuben Aharon Rhaima
 Yishaq Meir Rhaima
 Shaul Heskell Rhaima
 Yacub Heskell Rhaima
 Yosef Rahamim Rhaima
 Moshe Rahamim Rhaima
 Moshe Yehuda Rejwan
 Hougui Yehuda Rejwan
 Rahamim Barukh Rejwan
 Shaul Yehuda Mikhael Rejwan
 Yacub Eliahu Rejwan
 Abraham Eliahu Rejwan
 Yacub Dawid Rejwan
 Aharon Saleh Reuben
 Ezra Reuben Shlomo Hayim Reuben
 Yacub Abdulla Rihana
 Yosef Sasson Benyamim Hakham Sasson
 Yishaq Aharon Shmuel Hakham Sasson
 Nahom Shaaya Kheyat
 Heskell Abraham Moshe Shaaya
 Moshe Abraham Moshe Shaaya
 Eliahu Moshe Shaaya
 Nessim Moshe Shaaya
 Menashe Yosef Moshe Shaaya
 Abraham Moshe Shaaya
 Sasson Yacub Moshe Shaaya
 Sabti Shabbuth
 Heskell Shabbuth & Sons
 Shabbath Yehoshua Shabbuth
 Shuwa Shabbuth
 Moshe Shabbuth
 Hayim Daniel Shabi
 Abraham Hayim Shabi Tehhan
 Moshe Sasson Shabi
 Heskell Sasson Shabi
 Yacub Sasson Shabi
 Efraym Sasson Shabi
 Ezra Sasson Shabi
 Shaul Sasson Shabi
 Yosef Sasson Shabi
 Yishaq Ezra Shabi
 Yacub Saleh Shabi
 Yishaq Saleh Shabi
 Khedhoury Moshe Sasson Shabi
 Saleh Yishaq Shakarchi

Yosef Yishaq Shakarchi
 Abdulla Yishaq Shakarchi & brother
 Abraham Yishaq Shakarchi
 Abudi Nessim Shakarchi
 Abraham Yacub Shakarchi
 Yacub Abraham Shakarchi
 Abraham Nessim Shakarchi
 Rfael Saleh Rfael Shalom
 Yosef Nahom Shalom
 Heskell Ezra Aharon Shalom
 Yamen Dawid Shalou
 Yacub Dawid Shalou
 Moshe Dawid Shalou
 Nessim Dawid Shalou
 Shlomo Moshe Shalou
 Nahom Saleh Shamma
 Selman Shaul Shamma
 Moshe Yosef Shamma
 Shammai Moshe Shammai
 Shaul Moshe Shammai
 Yosef Dawid Shammai
 Meir Dawid Shammai
 Selman Yishaq Shammai
 Abraham Heskell Shamoan
 Dawid Heskell Shamoan
 Yosef Heskell Shamoan
 Rahamim Heskell Shamoan
 Shamoan Moshe Shamoan
 Ezra Abraham Shamoan
 Rahamim Abdulla Shbern
 Heskell Abdulla Shbern
 Abraham Yacub Shbern
 Meir Menashe Sheshoua
 Yacub Shmuel Sheshoua
 Heskell Abraham Sheshoua
 Aharon Abdulla Sheshoua
 Abraham Menashe Sheshoua
 Elisha'a Menashe Sheshoua
 Yishaq Abdulla Sheshoua
 Yacub Menashe Sheshoua
 Moshe Menashe Sheshoua
 Shaul Menashe Sheshoua
 Ezra Menashe Sheshoua
 Menashe Rfael Sheshoua
 Yosef Hayim Yishaq Sheshoua
 Shaul Yacub Sheshoua
 Abraham Shalom Sasson Sheshoua
 Eliahu Yishaq Yosef Sheshoua
 Menashe Yishaq Hayim Sheshoua
 Rfael Abdulla Sheshoua
 Sasson Yacub Reuben Sheshoua
 Yacub Sasson Sheshoua
 Elisha'a Sasson Sheshoua
 Yacub Sasson Sheshoua
 Eliahu Shaaya Sheshoua
 Shlomo Abdulla Shlomo
 Selman Heskell Abdulla Shlomo
 Khedhoury Heskell Abdulla Shlomo
 Shlomo Hayim Ezra Shlomo & Sons
 Yishaq Eliahu Abdulla Yishaq Shlomo
 Barukh Abdulla Yishaq Shlomo
 Shmuel Abdulla Shmouli
 Aharon Abdulla Shmouli
 Yacub Yosef Shmouli
 Yishaq Yosef Shmouli
 Yosef Abdulla Shmouli
 Meir Menashe Shuker
 Shlomo Saleh Shuker
 Mordechai Moshe Shuker
 Shaul Moshe Shuker
 Yacub Moshe Shuker
 Reuben Menashe Meir Shuker
 Yacub Aharon Shuker
 Shaul Aharon Shuker
 Eliahu Aharon Shuker
 Selman Shaul Shuker
 Yishaq Shlomo Yishaq Shuker

BRIDGE

by bridge builder

Bridge Economics

On every bridge hand there are three distinct valuations – the North-South par, the East-West par and absolute par.

♠ 6 2 ♥ 8 ♦ A 10 9 7 3 2 ♣ A K Q 5	♠ J 3 ♥ A K 10 9 6 5 3 ♦ J 8 6 ♣ 10	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 10 8 5 ♥ none ♦ K Q 5 4 ♣ 9 8 7 3 2
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ K Q 9 7 4 ♥ Q J 7 4 2 ♦ none ♣ J 6 4												

East-West vulnerable

In the above deal, the best contract for North-South is 5-hearts worth 450 points. This score may be called the North-South "par". East-West, on the other hand, can make 7-diamonds worth 2,140 points. This is the East-West par.

However, East-West need not be allowed to get away with such a high score, and North-South should make a sacrifice bid of 7 hearts, doubled, for a penalty of 300 points. In other words, the best that East-West can do on this deal, assuming best bidding by both sides, is to gain not 2,140 points but only 300 points. This is the "absolute par" of the deal. It is always instructive to compare the absolute par of every deal with your actual score.

The hand above came up in the 1963 Master Pairs with East as dealer. After two passes, West opened 1-diamond and North humorously overcalled with 1-no trump. East raised to 4-diamonds and South contested with 4-hearts. After 5-diamonds from West, North raised to 5-hearts. East decided to double and all passed. As a result, North-South scored +650, thus beating their absolute par of -300 by 950 points!

For many years, East-West kept arguing about what went wrong and East emigrated soon thereafter.

WOJAC

The Israel World Executive of WOJAC (World Organisation of Jews from Arab Countries), in its meeting in Tel-Aviv in January, elected Mr. Shlomo Toussia-Cohen as Chairman of the World Executive, and Mr. Oved Ben-Ozair as Deputy Chairman.

The election comes as a result of the resignation of Mr. Mordechai Ben-Porat, who was WOJAC's Chairman since its inception.

The Paper Millionaire

by Roger Shashoua
Duckworth, 232 pp. £12.95

AMBITION UNFULFILLED

Reviewed by David A. Dangoor

Middle Eastern Jews have already made a mark in many fields in this country, but they have produced few books. On this score Roger Shashoua is to be congratulated. He takes us through his life story from his birth in Alexandria into a rich family, through his businesses promoting inventions and international exhibitions, to his tribulations in trying to bring a Chinese Commercial and Cultural Centre to London's Docklands.

It contains four separate themes: a gossipy and candid personal diary; a platform to recite his achievements and his side of the story in various business struggles; a recipe for financial success, and a prediction of a world crash in 1992. These divergent themes do not sit easily together, and in trying to do so much in one book, Mr. Shashoua cannot always do justice to each theme.

The early part of his life belongs to a bygone era, and it would have been interesting to see a little more detail of these roots, which many young people of our community have only heard about, and which are rapidly receding into the forgotten past. There are some interesting insights into the attitudes and habits of well-to-do Jewish families in the Middle East 40 years ago, and their travails at the hands of emerging Arab nationalism. Mr. Shashoua reveals that for three years he was not told that his father had died, something intended as a kindness but which resulted in one or two bizarre situations.

Given that he is writing after a business set-back, this may not be the best time to advise "how to be a Paper Millionaire", especially as there have been so many books in that genre already. As regards his predictions of a crash in 1992, one short chapter does not allow enough scope to deal with such a matter and, likewise, his foreboding need not be taken seriously.

Mr. Shashoua certainly tries to be amusing, but one gets a feeling that accuracy has been sacrificed sometimes for the sake of a good story. True, this is not being held out as a work of scholarship, but it's best to make sure that the people mentioned were alive at the time. His parents cannot have travelled regularly with King Faisal of Iraq after their marriage

in 1936, since the King had already been dead 3 years. Nor could his sister have been a playmate of Crown Prince Ghazi, since he died aged 27 when she was only one year old.

Mr. Shashoua is proud of his Jewish background and always ready to proclaim it, whether to his advantage or not. He is also a man who is never afraid to make that extra effort or take that risky decision in pursuit of his dreams.

And like so many Jewish tales, mother is not far behind, spurring her son on to success. He is always conscious of a need to merit her approval. In fact, one is never quite sure whether his constant references to his mother's exhortation to become rich are meant as a mild rebuke or a form of public gratitude.

At the end, after all the scheming and running around, chasing after the elusive extra millions, Mr. Shashoua has found riches of a different kind: his family; his academic interests and philanthropic pursuits●

The Satanic Verses

by Salman Rushdie
Viking – 546pp. £12.95

I have always admired the achievements of the Prophet Mohammed. In a short space of time he united and galvanized his people and put them on the road of world conquest. Single-handed, he created a universal religion that today has more than a billion followers. He was spurred by his attraction to monotheism and to the Jewish religion and the belief that the Jews were not fulfilling their duty of spreading the knowledge of God. Sura 3 (The Imrans) of the Koran sums it up: "When God made a covenant with those to whom the Scriptures were given, He said 'Proclaim these to mankind and do not suppress them.' " Mohammed came to fill the gap. He was a prophet par excellence with the aim of spreading the word of God. Despite his shortcomings and his harsh treatment of the Jews – by his personal impact on history, Mohammed is one of the greatest men of all time.

Satanic Verses is a thinly-veiled parody, covering the rise of Islam. The book is named after verses regarding three female pagan deities: Manat, Uzza and Al-Lat as daughters of Al-Lah. The novel represents that Mohammed deleted these verses, claiming that they were inspired by Satan, masquerading as the Angel Gabriel (Gibreel), "Is Allah to have daughters and you sons?" Rushdie casts doubt on the divine source of other

verses. Sura 25 (Al-Furqan) deals with this point: "The unbelievers say: 'The Koran is but a forgery of his own invention, in which others have helped him.' Unjust is what they say and false." The Prophet is made to explain to Salman the Persian the process of revelation: "I have learned how to wait and *listen*. This *listening* is not of the ordinary kind; it is also a kind of *asking*. Often when Gibreel comes, it is as if he knows what is in my heart. It feels to me as if he comes from within my heart: from within my deepest places, from my soul."

Rushdie describes the pagan life in Jahilia prior to Islam.

"The fortunes of Jahilia were built on the supremacy of sand over water, the safety of land travel against the risks of the sea, at the intersection-point of the routes of the great caravans. For this reason the caravanserais prospered. The produce of the world came up from Zafar to Sheba, and thence to Jahilia and the oasis of Yathrib, and on to Midian where Moses lived, thence to Aqabah and Egypt. From Jahilia other trails began: to the east and northeast, towards Mesopotamia and the great Persian empire. To Petra and to Palmyra, where once Solomon loved the Queen of Sheba.

"Jahilia celebrates the feast of Ibrahim, who came into this valley with Hagar and Ismail. Jahilia today is all perfume. The scents of balsam, cassia, cinnamon, frankincense and myrrh hang in the air. O the splendour of the fairgrounds of Jahilia. Merchants – Jewish, Monophysite, Nabataean, buy and sell silver and gold. There is linen from Egypt and silk from China; from Basra, arms and grain. There is gambling and drinking and dance. There are slaves for sale, Nubian, Anatolian, Aethiopian.

"But the camel trains are slowly losing business to the improved sea-going boats. Jahilia's rulers fret, and suspect that only pilgrimage stands between the city and its ruin. They search the world for statues of alien gods, to attract new pilgrims to the city of silicon. They add to their religious practices the tempting spices of profanity. The city has become famous for its licentiousness, as a gambling den, a whorehouse, a place of bawdy songs and wild, loud music, and the smoking of hashish and afeem."

There is an interesting episode when Gibreel carried Mahound up to the Throne itself and Allah laid upon the faithful the burden of forty prayers a day! On the return journey he met Moses who told him the burden is too heavy, go back and plead for less. Four times he went back, four times

Moses said, still too many, go back again. By then Allah had reduced the duty to five prayers. Mohammed was a great admirer of Moses, as evident in Sura 32 (Adoration) in which Allah promises "never doubt that you will meet him."

In a civilised society there must be a balance between freedom and discipline. Blasphemy, genocide, racial hatred and other obnoxious doctrines cannot be propagated under the cloak of freedom of expression. Democracy often serves best the interests of its enemies. If you give freedom of speech to the Nazis, they will give you no freedom if and when they come to power● N.E.D.

The Moslem Calendar

The abolition of intercalary months in the Moslem calendar has given a definite stamp to Islamic civilization. The pre-Islamic Arabs observed the lunar months, but kept their calendar in line with the solar year by introducing an extra month where necessary – called *nasi* – evidence of the Jewish connection.

To avoid confusion about when to add the extra month, it was abolished. This shows the non-agrarian character of the Arabs; but someone may simply have worked out that in 21,000 years the Moslem year would overtake the Christian●

The Mayor of Hammersmith & Chelsea (Councillor Joseph Mirwitch) and the Mayoress attended a Shabbat Morning Service especially dedicated to AJEX, held in the Holland Park Synagogue, London. They were accompanied by Captain S. A. Shemtob-Reading, MBE, of Babylonian Jewry – past-Chairman of Hammersmith AJEX●

New Readers

Spanish Embassy, London
 Belgian Embassy, London
The American
 Kim Poulden, IGA Publishing
 Geographical Magazine
 S. Kuznetsov, USSR Consulate
 Joseph Rassouly, Wembley
 Victor Shaun, Canada
 Judge Oded Gershon, Afula
 Judge Halima Abraham, Givatayim
 O. Tezisler, Anatolian News Agency
 Israeli Ambassador Shamir, Cairo
 Minister Yitzhak Navon, Jerusalem
 Mayor Uri Amit, Ramat Gan
 Azaria Alon, *Kol Yisrael*
 Gabbi Gazit, *Kol Yisrael*
 General Aharon Yariv, Zahal
 General Yizhak Mordechai, Zahal
 Dr. Fouad Nissim, Tel Aviv
 Vincent Gerard, *Le Figaro*
 Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio
 Dr. I. M. Sourani, Santa Monica, California
 Dr. & Mrs. D. Sowby, Masorti Synagogue, Edgware●



The Iraqi Izagh modelled by two young Baghdadi ladies.

Sheva' Berakhot

The *Sheva' Berakhot* – the seven wedding benedictions recited under the canopy in the wedding ceremony – are a sublime expression of mankind's place in the Cosmos, a charter for the newly-married, appropriately stated at the time when a new generation is planned.

The text is probably a post-Exilic composition developed in the relaxed and prosperous environment of Babylonian Jewry nearly 2,000 years ago.

It offers a blessing to God as the Creator of mankind. Thus we bless God not only for bread and wine but even for creating us.

It explains the purpose of Creation – namely for the glory of God.

It asserts that we were created in the image of God and thus endowed with holiness and other Godly attributes.

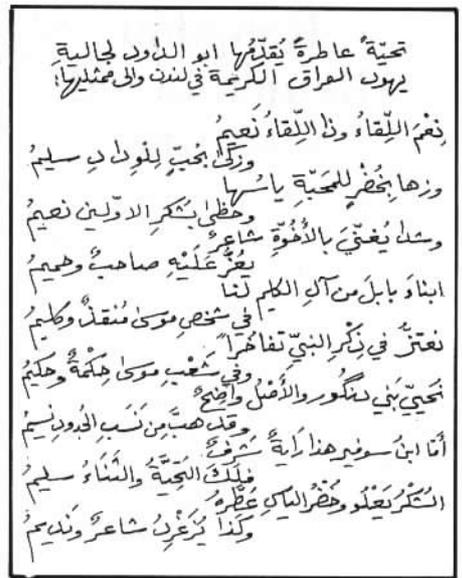
The reference to man's creation in the image of God comes in the Bible before the reference to male and female. In other words, it is neither Man nor Woman that is in the image of God but mankind as a whole. Only when man and woman get together in Holy Matrimony, and become one flesh, do they achieve that status. What an appropriate time to refer to and stress this fact.

The proper translation then is "And God created Mankind in His own image."

Also, when man and woman join together and become an image of God, they acquire another Divine attribute – namely, that of creation or procreation● N.E.D.

Percy writes:

The Talmud says that there are three factors in the birth of a child – Father, Mother and the Will of the Almighty●



Avihou Ben David
 Poet Laureate of Babylonian Jewry●

१४० वाँ वार्षिक दिन
 डेविड ससून लाइब्रेरी और रीडिंग रूम
 १८४७-१९८७
 140th Anniversary of
 DAVID SASSOON LIBRARY
 AND READING ROOM
 1847-1987

१६-५-१९८८ / 16-5-1988
 विशेष आवरण SPECIAL COVER
 डेविड ससून १७९२-१८६४
 DAVID SASSOON 1792-1864

David Sassoon Library in Bombay

The above envelope was issued in connection with the 140th anniversary of the David Sassoon Library and Reading Room in Fort, Bombay, which was maintained by a magnificent contribution from David Sassoon, the founder of the House of Sassoon in India, after he fled from Baghdad in 1828.

The celebrations included publication of a souvenir volume which contained printed messages from the President of India, the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Mayor and Sheriff of Bombay.●

P.S.G.

Rangoon Remembered

by Ellis Sofaer

My father was born in Baghdad, and when the family emigrated and settled in Rangoon in 1877, at that time a British colony, he was still a child. With the passage of years, he grew up and prospered. By the time I was born in the first decade of this century, he had acquired British nationality and attained eminence as a citizen of Rangoon. Yet, the ways of the family were very little different from what they would have been had he remained in Baghdad. He never adopted Western dress and wore throughout his life the garments customary in Baghdad. The cotton trousers were wide and came down to the ankles, and were held at the waist with a pyjama tape. Over this he wore a caftan that reached well below his knees, and over this again a waistcoat fastened together with buttons of gold. For dress wear on special occasions and on festival days, he wore a rich outer garment, a gaberdine of satin or brocade. His cap was of black velvet, gay with brightly coloured flowers which my mother had embroidered on it.

We were a fairly large family – six children in all – and although there was never any trace of severity in our father's attitude towards us, we were all very conscious of his paramount position and demure in his presence. His pre-eminence in the family was formally in evidence at dinner on Friday nights and festival nights, when he led the proceedings with chanting the prayers and distributing the *hamosi*. A number of festival days in the Jewish calendar were observed in our house. The most spectacular were Passover and Succoth, and these were quite grand affairs. At Passover, each of us was given a new set of party clothes. At Succoth, a tabernacle of bamboo and palm leaves was built on the terraced roof of our house, and we helped our mother decorate it with baubles and tinsel, and with bunches of fruit. Yom Kippur was a day full of solemnity. The younger members of the family, those under twelve years of age, were allowed to break their fast at midday.

The grown-ups in the family conversed among themselves in Arabic, but none of us seemed to have attained any proficiency in it. English was the basic language of the colony. It was used in transactions between the different ethnic groups that had settled there, and it was used by us within the family. We were visited by a tutor to be given lessons in Hebrew, but the method of instruction was sadly inept, although one might suppose it was the method used in Baghdad.

There was a remarkable diversity of races in Rangoon, all lured by the trading opportunities opened up by the British presence. Hindus and Moslems from India's northern provinces, Madrasis and others from the south, Tamils and Singhalese and many more. They were to be seen in all walks of life, as wealthy businessmen or small shopkeepers, as domestic servants or



1895 – Hakham Ezra Dangoor and family, in traditional dress, when he was Rabbi of Rangoon.

as casual labourers. There was one class of Indian we knew as Chetties who specialised in money-lending. They were all of portly build (or so it seemed), with bloated paunches overhanging their hip-line, and it was a joke amongst us children that they tied a thread around their waists before they sat down to a meal, and continued eating until the thread snapped. The Jews were a small community thinly spread in a polygot population. They were mainly merchants, importing and exporting, sometimes running a retail business as well. There were Parsees and Armenians carrying on business in much the same way. There were wealthy Chinese, and there were Chinese carpenters of exceptional skill. I remember the Chinese of Rangoon for a practice that used to terrify me. They would, on their New Year, send up hot air balloons in celebration. These were made of paper stretched over a bamboo frame. The under-carriage of bamboo was loaded with oil-soaked rags which were set alight to provide the lift. These balls of fire sailed menacingly over our roofs, and when one fell in an unattended place, a conflagration followed. The fire engines would then be heard speeding down the street with an alarming clatter as they sounded their bells. Another unpleasant memory is of strife between Hindus and Moslems. They would live for long periods in amity. Then one day the ritual sacrifice of a calf would outrage a Hindu, and there would be a stabbing.

Although the Burmese were the original inhabitants of the country, I remember them as a people apart from the general population. True, they were to be seen in numbers in the street, and no doubt they had their own wealthy businessmen, but I have no recollection of any transactions with them, whether as traders or shopkeepers or household servants. They were

more an environmental presence, their tall pagodas and yellow-garbed monks providing the backcloth to our day-to-day activities. There was also an air of mystery about them, and it was said they had the power to cast spells.

I remember Rangoon as a place of constant sunshine and blue skies, of rich foliage and abundant flowers. Its present decline cannot but make one sad●

(Ellis Sofaer is the brother of Abraham Sofaer, the stage and film actor, who died last year).

Rangoon's Burmese Jewry

Pagoda Jews

by Percy Gourgey

In Burma's capital, Rangoon, the city of a thousand pagodas and scene of the recent overthrow of General Ne Win, our thoughts go to that city's tiny Jewish community.

The Burmese capital's beautiful Synagogue, Musmeah Yeshua, maintained by Moses and Jacob Samuels, rarely has a minyan on Shabbat. But the congregation on High Holydays is filled with members of the Israeli Embassy and Jewish visitors to the city.

At its height just before World War II, the Jewish community numbered over 2500 and had an active Zionist society. Other communal organisations included social and cultural clubs, a school and a welfare organisation.

Mainly consisting of Jews of Baghdadian origin, the community's first members arrived in the 1880s during the reign of the last King of Burma, Thibaw. They were merchants, shopowners and import and export traders●

Human Rights Seminar

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1988, a special conference on the position of Jews of Arab lands was held. It was organised jointly by Ta'ali and the British Zionist Federation. Speakers included Mr. Leon Tamman, Mr. Roger Pinto, who came from Paris, Dr. T. Parfitt, Mr. Sidney Shipton, Mr. Percy Gourgey, Dr. S. Roth and Mr. Raffaelli Fellah from Rome.

It was observed that in many Arab states, Jewish citizens were denied equal rights and often harassed, showing the vicious nature of Israel's Arab neighbours and the difficulty of coming to terms with them. It was also observed that some sections of the community were more concerned with the position of Arabs than that of Jews of Arab lands. Further positive action was called for on behalf of the latter●

Peace Now means war later P.S.G.

COOKERY CORNER

Budget Special

by the Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson

Cheese Soufflé

The only kind of inflation that the Chancellor will tolerate.

"The recipe for Cheese Soufflé was for the Winter Ball Programme only. It is not to be printed elsewhere."

Mrs Julia Thorpe,
Private Secretary to Mr Nigel Lawson

Dfeena

North African equivalent of the Iraqi Tbeet.

From *Middle Eastern Food*, by Claudia Roden.

A very rich and filling Egyptian speciality. It was particularly popular as a Sabbath meal in Jewish circles, since it could be left cooking gently from early on Friday.

2lbs lean or fat stewing beef
1 calf's foot (optional)
6 small potatoes
6 eggs in their shells
2 large onions, finely chopped
Oil
½-1lb chick peas or haricot beans, soaked overnight
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon ground allspice
Salt and black pepper

Cut the meat into cubes. Blanch the calf's foot in boiling water. Peel the potatoes and scrub the eggshells thoroughly. Fry the chopped onions in oil until soft and golden.

Put all these ingredients together with the drained chick peas or haricot beans (less commonly used for this dish than chick peas) in a large oven-proof pot or casserole with a tight-fitting lid. Cover with water and add the garlic and seasonings. If using haricot beans, it is preferable to add salt only after they have become tender as it seems to prevent them softening. Cover the pot and bake in a moderate oven (375°F Mark 4) for 1 hour, then lower the temperature to the lowest setting and continue to simmer for several hours longer, or overnight. Alternatively, you can leave the stew *barely* simmering over extremely low heat for several hours.

The meat will be extremely tender and practically falling apart, and the chick peas or haricot beans will be very soft and impregnated with the rich calf's foot stock. The eggs will have become creamy, like *hamine* eggs.

A variation is to boil about ¾lb long-grain rice, washed first, until just tender, then lower it into the casserole tied up in a muslin bag. This will allow it to absorb the rich sauce without being lost among the other ingredients. Serve with the *dfeena*.

Knafi

by Alice Shashou

The knafi dough can be bought ready from Greek shops or some supermarkets and it looks like white vermicelli.

Ingredients:

1 packet knafi
1 packet (8oz) unsalted butter, taken out of the fridge until soft.

Filling:

1. Walnut or pistachio filling:

About 1lb pistachio or walnuts coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons caster sugar
A little rose water

The filling should be moist, otherwise it dries when baked in the oven.

2. Another variation of filling:

5 small tins Nestlé cream (6oz each)
1 tablespoon cornflour
3 cups milk

Mix cold milk and cornflour and let it cook on a low fire. Take it out of the fire and add the cream (without the liquid in the tin) and about 2 tablespoons of caster sugar and let it thicken just a little on the fire.

This cream should not be too thick because it will thicken when the knafi is baked. Serve hot.

3. Another variation: Ricotta filling:

2lbs ricotta cheese
1 cup sugar

Combine cheese and sugar and you have this filling. Serve hot.

4. Another variation:

Mozarella cheese filling:

About 2lbs mozzarella cheese cut into slices. This filling has a very fine taste. Serve hot.

Syrup:

Prepare in advance and use it cold.

4 cups sugar
2 cups water
About 2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons rose water

Dissolve sugar in water over low fire. Add lemon juice and let it simmer till the syrup thickens and coats the back of the spoon.

Add the rose water and stir for another minute.

Preparing Knafi:

Put the knafi in a big bowl. Pull out and separate the strands as much as possible with your fingers so that they do not stick together.

Mix melted butter (not in the fire) and mix very well with hands, pulling the shreds and mixing so that it is coated with the butter.

Put half this pastry in a buttered oven tray about 13" x 9", gently pressing dough over bottom of tray.

Spread filling mixture of your choice on top of dough. Place remaining dough on top. Brush generously with butter, use all the rest of the packet.

You can freeze it.

Bake in a preheated oven 375°F/200°C for 45 minutes. Then increase temperature to 450°F/230°C for another 10-15 minutes or until golden brown. If it gets too dark in colour, cover with silver foil.

Remove from oven. Get rid of excess butter on tray. Pour cold syrup on knafi. Cut into squares and transfer to a serving plate.

Tips

by Alice Shashou

(Also the tips in the last issue)

- When eggs curdle sprinkle flour and stir gently with a spoon, not wooden.
- To peel hard-boiled eggs, plunge into cold water immediately after boiling.
- To stop eggs cracking when you boil them, add one teaspoon vinegar to the water and ensure eggs are at room temperature, not out of the fridge.
- Dry herbs have a much stronger flavour than fresh ones. Use less herbs when using dry ones.
- Parsley contains a lot of calcium and vitamin C. Use plenty. It stimulates the appetite, helps digestion and helps to freshen the breath.
- When you caramelize sugar, do not stir it; it becomes brittle. You can rotate the pan to make it even.
- To prevent apples, avocados and mushrooms from turning brown, sprinkle them with lemon juice.
- Coat all the fruit lightly in a little flour before adding it to the rest of the cake mixture to stop the fruit sinking to the bottom of the cake.
- Never refrigerate bananas as the texture is ruined and the flesh may go black. Refrigerate melons only when fully ripe, as they are ruined if over-chilled.
- To save a stew which is burning, dip the pan quickly in cold water. It makes the stew leave the bottom of the pan. Take it to another pan and continue cooking, adding more water if needed.

It is said that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. Iraqi cuisine has figured prominently in attracting young men to Iraqi girls, through their mother's cooking. Quite often we hear the groom extolling the virtues of his young bride alongside the *kubbas* and *muhasha* and *tbeet* of his mother-in-law.

To stress the importance of diet, Napoleon Bonaparte used to say that his army marched on its stomach!



Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir is to present his peace plan soon. Here he is seen, on a recent visit to London, with l. to r. Homa (now Lady) Alliance, Renée Dangoor, Valentine Baroukh, Angela Shamoon.

From the New York Times

A Wine Giant

Ab Simon is the chairman of the Seagram Château and Estates Wine Company and, arguably, the most influential figure in the world of fine wines. Last year, Seagram reported wine sales of \$80 million on shipments of 900,000 cases, mainly from France.

Abdullah Simon was born in Baghdad in 1922, during the days of the British Mandate. Iraq was a net exporter of cotton in the 1920's, all of it going to the British Cotton Growing Association and, eventually, to the mills of the English Midlands. His father was a textile merchant who went to Britain, so the son spent much of his childhood in a private school near Blackpool. Later, he studied at the American University in Beirut. He served briefly in the Iraqi army while waiting for a visa to the United States. "A pro-Nazi régime took power in 1941 and Baghdad had its first serious anti-semitic incidents," he said. "I decided it was time to leave."

In New York Mr. Simon and an older brother, David, shipped textiles to their father in Baghdad. Drafted in 1944, Mr. Simon became a citizen during his two years in the United States army. In New York he also met and married Francine Iny, at a dance for the city's Iraqi Jewish community.

Soon the brothers' textile business ran into some tough times. "The British and Japanese were beating us on prices, and there wasn't room enough in the company for us both," Mr. Simon said. "In 1952 I left."

The same year he began his long love affair with wine. "I was travelling to Europe on the Queen Elizabeth and they sat me at a table with four other businessmen. It was suggested we each buy the wine for one of the five nights we'd be at sea. I didn't know one from the other and someone suggested Latour '29. One taste of that wine and I was smitten."



Abdullah Simon,
(son of Heyyawi,
Hougi [Abul
Timman], Shimeon,
Sheikh Sassoon Saleh
David Jacob Saleh
David Gubbay).

Soon after, an advertisement landed him a job with Delapenha, a food and wine importer. By 1962, he was president of Delapenha and a skilled wine buyer. In 1974 he joined Bronfman's Seagram and created Château & Estates. As his reputation grew, Ab Simon became more than a buyer; he has become a "négociant".

For more than 100 years, négociants dominated the Bordeaux wine trade.

They were the shippers – descendants of the Irish, German, British, Dutch and Danish merchants who came to Bordeaux to buy wine. They bought from the châteaux, often before the wine was made. They were châteaux' bankers, advancing funds for planting and cultivation against receipt of the wine later.

It was the négociants who aged the new wines and stocked the old ones in their vast cellars along the Quai des Chartrons on the Bordeaux waterfront. It was the négociants who set the prices and who reaped the rewards when vintages turned out well. In poor years, négociants would foreclose on bankrupt châteaux, becoming themselves the owners of famous wine-producing properties.

Many Bordelais still believe the collapse of the overheated Bordeaux market was precipitated by imprudent buying by Mr. Simon and others who bid the poor 1972 vintage up to exceptionally high prices.

In his role as his own négociant, Mr. Simon agrees on a price long before the wine is delivered. He generally needs the co-operation of the producers to hold down prices. When the growers do not co-operate he often decides to absorb price increases and currency fluctuations. That is why fine French wines are sometimes much cheaper in Madison Avenue than in Paris●