

Iraq must be brought to the Conference table. For, while Iraq may have no claim on Israel, we have plenty of claims on Iraq.

# The SCRIBE

## JOURNAL OF BABYLONIAN JEWRY

In the next issue:  
THE HISTORY  
OF  
JEWISH PRAYER

PUBLISHED BY THE EXILARCH'S FOUNDATION

No. 52

JANUARY 1992

Est. 1971

WISHING ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS 1992

## Peace is not enough

by Naim Dangoor

19 years ago I wrote in a *Scribe* editorial (No. 10 – March/April 1973) under the above heading, that in the search for a *modus vivendi* in the Middle East, peace must not be an end, but the beginning of a closer relationship among the various nationalities of the region.

"When peace comes, those Arabs who will be party to it will have realised that the destruction of Israel is impossible, that the dream of an Arab empire from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf and beyond is gone for ever, and that the Middle East must be built up as a multi-national society for the benefit of all concerned".

PEACE IS NOT ENOUGH! We seek a partnership in the Middle East. To this end we should pick up the thread in 1919 when Sherif Feisal, as head of the Arab Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference at the end of the First World War wrote to Felix Frankfurter, legal adviser to the Zionist Delegation:

"We feel that the Arabs and Jews are cousins in race... and by a happy coincidence have been able to take the first step towards the attainment of their national ideals together.

"We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement... we will wish the Jews a most hearty welcome home.

"We are working together for a reformed and revived Near East, and our two movements complete one another".

Moderate Arabs have recently learned from the Gulf War that their real enemy is

not Israel but greedy Arab tyrants, and now look on Israel as a permanent part of the region – a stabiliser and guardian of peace.

But in the proposed regional deliberations, should Israel be involved only in the problems of the region – arms limitation, pollution control and water rights? Israel should also participate, as of right, in the immense natural wealth of the Middle East. How can this be achieved? The answer is in one word – FEDERATION.

As Europe is moving slowly but surely towards federation, the peoples of the Middle East must do the same in self defence. For the past 5000 years the Middle East, the cradle of civilisation and crossroads of three continents, has also been the theatre of regional wars and numerous foreign invasions. Only a federal regime for the benefit of all the many nationalities of the region, not dominated by any one group, can lead the area towards prosperity and lasting peace.

As a matter of fact, I sponsored two Seminars on Middle East Federation at St. Antony's College, Oxford University – the one in 1976 was with Minority Rights Group and the other in 1985 with the Centre for Contemporary Studies.

The current Middle East peace process could be expanded into a federation discussion that will bring in the Kurds and the other minorities of the area. Israel would thus wrest the initiative from the hands of Bush and Baker. An Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian compact would be a practical start to such a move.

From previous issues

## Sunday Opening – Saturday Closing

The campaign to legalise trading, the live theatre and sports on Sunday demonstrates the shallowness of Sunday observance among the gentile community. If Sunday is to be profaned then we invite the Christian faithful to return and find refuge in the sanctity of the Jewish Sabbath.

For 200 years early Christians continued to observe Saturday as a day of rest and kept Sunday in memory of the Resurrection. When Rome adopted Christianity, Saturday was discarded. In 321, Constantine enacted the first Sunday law for resting "on the most honourable day of the Sun", but Sunday was never a substitute for the Jewish Sabbath.

In fact, the Romans ridiculed the idea of a weekly day of rest as a waste of time!

The modern trend for more leisure extended the weekend to include both Saturday and Sunday. For the observant Jew in a Christian society it is an ideal arrangement, denied to Jews in Israel – Saturday for spiritual needs, Sunday for weddings, barmitzvahs and recreation.

Likewise, the Moslems never intended Friday as a substitute for the Jewish Sabbath as it was not practical for the nomadic Arabs to have a weekly day of rest. Friday was for imitating the Eve of Sabbath preparations and prayers of the Jews living among them.

The Jewish Sabbath remains unique and may one day emerge as the universal day of spiritual recreation for the united human race.

N.E.D.

## OD YOSEF HAI YESHIVA BUILDING FUND

### An Appeal

The biggest threat to the Jews is not antisemitism; it is assimilation and intermarriage. If current trends continue, the Jews could eventually disappear. So we have to take constructive measures to deal with the problem before it is too late. We must endeavour to raise our children in Kosher homes and give them Jewish education in a Jewish institution which we call Yeshiva.

A Yeshiva does not teach religion only. Those who attend these yeshivot acquire also general knowledge and worldly wisdom and grow to become doctors, merchants and solicitors.

The Ashkenazim have many such centres; the Iraqis have none. That is why some of our men are dedicating a lot of effort to build and establish a learning centre and a synagogue.

Letters will be sent out to our people giving more details and we trust that our appeal for funds will receive a good response. And why not? We spend a lot of money on luxuries, but this is not a luxury but an urgent necessity.

Don't look at it as charity but an investment for the future of

our children and the good of our people, to hold us together now that we have been uprooted from our ancient homes and scattered in many lands.

The OD YOSEF HAI YESHIVA was founded eight years ago by a group of Eastern Jews in two adjacent houses. As the Centre outgrew its premises, the Council served on us an Enforcement Notice. An architect was commissioned to design a new building on the site. These plans have now been accepted by the Council, but substantial funds are needed to bring this stupendous project to fruition.

Time is running out, and if funds cannot be raised in time, the very existence of the Yeshiva may be under threat.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY.

Od Yosef Hai Yeshiva  
(Registered Charity No. 288429)  
230-232 Hendon Way, London NW4 3NE  
Telephone: 081-202 4172

# Jews from Arab Countries v. Palestinians

by Naim Dangoor

Last October I faxed the following letter to Mr. Harry Hurwitz, Adviser to Prime Minister Shamir:

"Since the Palestinians are going to be represented at the proposed peace conference, then Jews from Arab lands must also be represented.

Jews from Arab lands are the *quid pro quo* to the Arabs of Palestine. We have material as well as political rights that go beyond Israel's borders.

Just as the Palestinians are going to be part of the Jordanian delegation, Jews of Arab lands can be part of Israeli delegation. Even though most such Jews now live in Israel, they still have demands over and above what Israel can make. This does not at all put Ashkenazim in an inferior position.

In any case, think of the half million Jews from Arab lands who do not live in Israel.

I am ready to go to Madrid at short notice. But it is not important whether anyone actually goes. The important thing is to announce that a representative of Jews from Arab lands will be in the Israeli delegation.

Moreover, Iraq must not be allowed to escape the conference - in view of its active part in the wars against Israel and of its treatment of its ancient Jewish community. The conference must also deal with the Kurdish problem, which antedates the Palestinian problem.

History will not forgive us if we fail to make use of the facts stated above".

I have now received Mr. Hurwitz's reply as follows:

"As you know, we have denied the Palestinians the right to include in their delegation any of their people who live in what they call their "Diaspora". We say that our negotiations are only with the Palestinian Arabs who live in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District.

In the circumstances it would be wrong to include in our delegation a person specifically representing the Jews from Arab lands who live outside of Israel.

However, the subject will certainly be raised. It was included in the speech of Prime Minister Shamir and, when the time comes, will be discussed in bilateral and regional negotiating sessions".

At first glance, the above policy of not including in the peace process the Palestinian Diaspora and, reciprocally, the Jews from Arab lands, may appear reasonable; but looking intently, this exclusion only works against vital Jewish interests. For the claims of Palestinians living outside the "Territories" are concentric with those who live in the Territories, whereas Jews from Arab lands have political and territorial claims that go beyond Israel's borders.

There are, however, two areas which may be in the mind of the Israeli Government - namely: REPARATIONS and REPATRIATION. Jewish reparation claims exceed by far any Palestinian claims, and should not be excluded. Repatriation of Jews to Arab countries is out of the question and by this token the repatri-

ation of Diaspora Palestinians should also be rejected.

So Israel's policy should be to allow Palestinians and Jewish diasporas into the peace negotiations, but simply to oppose any demands for repatriation.

The same sentiment is expressed in the letter from Prof. Heskell Haddad that appears on this page●

## Jews from Arab Countries

The media have ignored completely our side, that of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries. Our plight is still perpetual. There are still Jews languishing in Syria and Yemen.

Our rights are both political and financial. We were driven out of the Arab countries, one million of us, and we constitute over half of Israel's population plus another million scattered all over the world. After the treatment we received from the Arabs, we rule out any suggestion of *repatriation*. That should also apply to the Palestinian Arab refugees, for whose sake we were pushed out of our homes in the Arab countries, under the pretense of population exchange. We demand *reparations*. Most people do not realise that Israel has compensated every Palestinian Arab refugee and unfrozen all their assets in the various banks. Our money which was frozen in Iraq and in the other Arab countries and our property which was confiscated have never been accounted for. We had over 100,000 square kilometres of land taken away from us in the Arab countries. This is computed per capita in accordance with the total area of the Arab countries in 1948 when we were 2% of the Arab population - 1 million versus 50 million. Considering that Israel's size is only 28,000 square kilometres, we are entitled to over 70,000 sq. kms. more.

When the Foreign Minister of Syria talks about how well the Jews were treated in the Arab countries, I think he should be reminded that at best the Jews were treated as *Dhimmi*s and at worst they were expelled. The Jews were harassed, persecuted, incarcerated in camps, assassinated, hanged and pogromed (between 1940 and 1947 before the State of Israel, 27 pogroms occurred in the various cities of the Arab countries including Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, Alexandria, Bengazi, Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers and Morocco)●

**World Prof. Heskell M. Haddad, MD  
Organisation for Jews President  
from Arab Countries, Inc., New York  
(Not to be confused with WOJAC, Israel)**

## Circumcision

First it was Shechita, now it is circumcision. Attempts are being made to mount a campaign to ban circumcision, on the grounds of child abuse and mutilation of a baby's body.

They say that the claim that circumcision can be justified on the grounds of hygiene is no longer valid in this day and age.

Orthodox Jews and Moslems cannot abandon this ritual but will progressives find it possible to comply?●

## On Our Mailing List

David Hawa, Paris  
Mr. & Mrs. T. Rashti, Mill Hill, London  
Mrs. L. Zilkha, London  
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# Land for Peace or Jews for Oil??

by Moshe Kahtan

During World War II, the Nazis put a sign on the entrance to the concentration camp which read: "Arbeit Macht Frei" – work makes you free! And we all know how free the inmates were inside. Today the slogan is: Land for Peace! What is remarkable about this principle is that all those who preach the merits of applying it to Israel themselves rejected its application when they were involved. The Falkland War would have been averted if that principle was given a chance. And what was Kuwait all about? Did not Saddam Hussein offer the Land for Peace solution? Hitler would have given peace to all the world against the small matter of land of the whole world.

It is most revealing when one sees the very same politicians in the West – the Russians being out of action for the moment, focusing almost all their energy and attention on the question of Israel with a great area of 28,000 sq. kms. giving the Arabs sitting on a mere 14,000,000 sq. kms., a piece of land to create yet another Arab state which, incidentally, would be one of the most impractical and unviable states considering that there is no oil to sustain it in the style that Arabs have become accustomed to. Of course it can always serve as a base to "Lebanonise" Israel and there it can tap on extensive and limitless financial resources from black-mailed brother Arabs plus its veteran squads of terrorists who can boast spectacular achievements in Syrian-occupied Lebanon – in case anyone has forgotten, as well as countless atrocities in cities of the Western world which now gives them an unexplained and obscene degree of support.

So why, it would be legitimate to ask, is there this unending campaign to vilify Israel and, to crown it all, portray the Arabs as the injured party, when historical facts are there to tell those who want to know the exact opposite? The slippery answer lies in the oily argument, so very much supported by the British Foreign Office here and other European countries, that advocate the practice of unlimited Arab appeasement as long as Israel is made to foot the bill. When Saddam threatened the oil barrel, there was no appeasement offered him not even by way of Land for Peace, because, in this case it would have involved "Arab currency", or oil, by any other name. The most regrettable recent development is the American Administration apparently adopting a similar attitude in the region and its pursuance of a policy which unashamedly supports and rehabilitates dictatorial and terrorist regimes such as Syria and Iran, not forgetting the PLO, at the expense of Israel, the only democracy in the region. Perhaps Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein will not have long to wait before they join the ranks of the other "moderates" which the State Department in Washington is joyfully discovering with the Foreign Office in London.

George Bush, Vice-President of the USA as he then was, visited Israel and saw the geography and the terrain for himself. How can he, in all honesty, support Arab territorial demands which will put Israel in the most vulnerable of positions? Yes, we have heard the slogan that territory, all 15 kms. or so of it, could not provide security against the Iraqi scuds. But this is no argument to give an enemy the "mortar option" and in any case, we have yet to witness a rush by countries offering to cede territories to their neighbours in response to this crazy notion.



## General Jack Jacob

The Commonwealth Jewish Council recently honoured Lieutenant General Jack Jacob for "Services to the Commonwealth and its Jewish Communities" at a Dinner attended by over 150 distinguished guests.

Indian High Commissioner Dr. L.M. Singhvi said that General Jacob represented the confluence of two great traditions – the Indian and Jewish – "two civilisations of yesterday and all our tomorrows".

General Jacob, who is of Baghdadian Jewish origin, led the Indian army that wrested Bangladesh from Pakistan.

After retiring from the army, he has now entered politics and is one of the leaders of the Indian People's Party, India's main Opposition party. His ambition is to become President of India.

I always enjoy reading *The Scribe* and would appreciate receiving back issues dealing with the period I grew up in Baghdad between the 50's and 70's.

There is not much documentation on that period; the Babylonian Museum at Or Yehuda concentrates on the pre-1950's. I would like that when my children grow up, to know about their roots.

Recently, the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv have started selling computer diskettes with family tree programmes to people who are willing to put all the information of their tree on their personal computer at home, and send back the diskette to the Diaspora Museum. All the information will be loaded to their central computer for free.

Ramat Gan, Israel

Vilma Solnik

In *The Scribe* No. 49 I read with interest the letter of Hanina Z. Shasha who is my cousin and with whom I haven't met for over 60 years.

Ramat Gan

Abraham Yadid

I was born in Baghdad and left at the age of 3. I am 22 years old and living in Toronto with my parents and only recently have I been enjoying a newly-found interest in my roots. Your newsletter (*Scribe*) is both entertaining and informative. Keep up the good work! Please put my two grandmothers on the mailing list; Mrs. G. Loya (Gourgiyee Elwaya) – she lives with my uncle in Limerick, Ireland, and they are the only Jewish residents there, and Mrs. Violet Muallem in Israel.

Toronto, Canada

Carina Loya

I read with some interest Mr. Josh Horesh's letter in your No. 51 issue and am curious to ascertain whether he is related to me in any way.

Balaclava, Victoria  
Australia

Dan Horesh  
Barrister, Solicitor,  
Accountant

I was interested to read the obituary tribute in your last issue to my late father Jacob Shaoul Shashoua, by his cousin Mr. Percy Gourgey.

I would like to add that my late father also served on the Committee of the Bombay Jewish Association and represented it on the Board of Governors of the then newly established E.D. Sassoon School.

As a matter of interest, Poona is only a few hours train journey from Bombay.

Redbridge, Ilford

Ron Shashoua

I cannot describe the knowledge and the wonderful pleasure my family and I gain from reading *The Scribe*. Each issue is a new experience.

New York

Ellis E. Sion

I am very fond to read your *Scribe* journal and learn of every known Iraqi personality since I left Baghdad in 1926.

I shall send you in due course a report, with some pictures, on my journey to Baghdad on motorcycle through the desert route, for visiting the Iraqi exhibition of 1930, on behalf of Makabya Association.

Jerusalem

Naim Toeg

Sincere wishes and heartiest congratulations for the 20th anniversary of *The Scribe*, and I take this opportunity to tell you how much I enjoy reading your periodical, each issue of which I await with great anticipation.

Ramat Gan

Albert Bar-Lev

I have been receiving your esteemed copies of *The Scribe* for the past 2 years. In appreciation I enclose a contribution with best wishes.

Our family left Baghdad for Britain at the end of the 1914/18 war, when I was 7 years old. My dearest recollections of Baghdad are of my mother's brother, Dahood Yamen Lawee – a well-respected merchant and member of the Jewish community, and his family.

My daughters would be very interested to receive your journal. They are: Sharon Iny of Los Angeles, and Denise Maiselles of Haifa.

Manchester

J.J. Marshall



## Eternal life

When I had my first orgasm at the age of 11 I felt and thought that I had discovered the secret of eternal life – a secret so secret that I wanted to keep it all to myself and not share it with anyone. In a sense I was right, for sex is the vehicle for the propagation of the race and the perpetuation of the species.

Dangling the sex carrot before us made us the prisoners of our Creator. The story of the Garden of Eden is a veiled indication that sex awareness was in fact a curse and not a blessing.

What is Eternity? Is it a billion years, a trillion millennia?

At school we were first taught that parallel lines never meet. Then a year later the order came to change the definition: Parallel lines meet at infinity.

What is Infinity? Is it a billion miles, a trillion light years?

Eternity and Infinity are concepts impossible for mortals to comprehend, but are natural states for angels.

God created the Universe out of nothing. The components of Nothing are: Matter, Time and Space. Nothing is Death. Entropy leads to Death. My late grandmother used to chant, "Death is supreme and life is vain". Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

Our perception of life and death is upside down. Death is the rule and life is the exception. Death is Eternity and Infinity.

Death is King!

According to Jewish religious tradition, every death is a capital punishment – a death sentence. In fact, natural death should be looked upon as a release – a release from bondage.

Pity someone who aspires to eternal life.

There is no eternal life; there is only Eternal Death!●

## أهيا الموت ...

أهيا الموت الذي ينمي الحياة،  
لم يجد من مستقر، لا نجاة،  
لست إلا راحة العقل المريض،  
ضاق في منهج الدرب العريض.

قد مضى يبحث عن نجم بعيد،  
إنما الكون قديم، هل جديد  
نصب الأشرار يصطاد الزمان.  
في زوايا الأفق يبدو للعيان؟

رسف الفكر ضئيلاً في القيود،  
لغوى الغيب، حكم القدر،  
شائخاً في ذلّه، يأتي السجود

أي سرّ خلف ذياك الجدار  
يا لعجز الفكر، وهن البصر!  
يجيب الأصواء في زاد النهار

لندن ١٩٧٥/٨/١٩

## O Death

by Meer S. Basri

(translated from the Arabic)

O Death, the regenerator of Life,  
You are indeed the peace of the ailing Mind  
that did not find rest nor safety,  
In its course the broad path narrowed.  
It went to search for a distant star,  
Laid a trap to ensnare Time.  
However, the universe is old,  
Is there something new to the eye in the confines of the horizon?  
The Mind was bound in shackles, tiny and helpless,  
Colossal in its meekness. It refused to bow  
to the forces of the invisible, to the rule of Destiny.  
What secret lies behind the wall  
that veils the light in broad sunshine?  
O the impotence of the Mind, the infirmity of sight!

London 1975●



I read with interest your letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury and I concur with the views expressed therein. But it was in August 1941 (not 1944) on a British battleship off the Canadian east coast that Churchill and Roosevelt had the Four Freedoms enshrined in the Atlantic Charter. Carey's opposite number, some three centuries earlier, Archbishop James Ussher, Armagh and Dublin, arrived at the date of creation as 5995 years ago, so why complicate matters with a figure of 9000 years ago for the same event?●

Toronto

John Boxer

*Scribe*: The Book of Genesis is the story of Adam, father of our civilisation and first believer in God and in Man's free will. The time scale given in Genesis is not meant to be taken too literally●

I wish to express my appreciation and thanks for your colourful and very interesting publication.

I grew up in Iran and have been over 37 years in Montreal. I read every issue from cover to cover and share and discuss the contents with my children who regretfully do not speak our Arabic. Your publication is the subject of discussion between myself and many Iraqi friends●

Montreal, Canada

Haim Mathalon

I refer to DR. Masliyah's letter in your last issue in which he suggests that some readers might like to translate a selection of Sami Naqqash's short stories into English as a remarkable contribution to our new generation.

My husband and I have been doing translations for many years. I am very familiar with our Iraqi dialect and the whole terminology. We shall be glad to translate most of the stories and are endeavouring to contact Mr. Naqqash in this regard.

Congratulations for the 20th anniversary of *The Scribe*●

Ramat Gan

Esther Mercado

I have come across a few copies of *The Scribe* and have enjoyed reading the articles therein.

I reside in Bombay and belong to what is left of the Iraqi Jewish community and would be grateful if you will include me in your mailing list●

Bombay, India

Mrs. Violet Sopher

The bad and foolish way of ridiculing ourselves and one another is a survival of slavish habits contracted by us during centuries of oppression. A free man sees nothing to laugh at in himself, and allows no one to laugh at him●

1896

Theodor Herzl

Jackie Mason, please note!

Although Ashkenazi, I am enthralled by the Iraqi-Jewish culture and heritage. Keep it up – particularly your marvellous cookery corner●

Board of Deputies

London

Dr Leo Hepner

Defence Committee

When I was in Israel recently I read your fine magazine in my cousin's house.

I was born in China, my father was born in Bombay and my mother was born in Baghdad●

Granada Hills, California

Noel Ezekiel

## Roots

The roots of a tree go deep into the ground.  
Not only do they serve as an anchor,  
they help feed the plant.

People have roots as well  
but they do not keep us in one place.  
Ours are portable so we take  
them wherever we go.

Unlike a trees', ours are different  
but they do the same thing.  
They give us strength and  
a sense of belonging.

When a tree is cut off from  
its roots it withers and dies.  
We die a different kind of death  
when we are cut off●

Jerusalem

Steven Amsel





1917. A Baghdadi Family in Shanghai

Courtesy: Diaspora Museum, Tel Aviv

Left to right – sitting: **Mozelle (Maisie) Hayim** (wife of Ruby Abraham); **Aaron Moses**; **Flora Shellim** (wife of Aaron and mother of Lionel, Sybil, Aline, Winnie and Cyril) **David Ezekiel J. Abraham** – a learned rabbi, President of the Sephardi community in Shanghai, great grandson of David Sassoon; **Mozelle Moses** (wife of David, sister of Aaron); **Lionel Moses**.

Back row: **Aline Moses** (future Mrs. Hayim Hayim); **Reuben (Ruby) Abraham** (son of David); **Hanini Hayim** (mother of Maisie); **Winnie Moses** (Mrs. Ezekiel Toeg); **Sassoon S. Somekh** (brother of Mrs. Elia Shahmoon); **Sybil Moses** (future Mrs. Maurice Dangoor).

In front: ??; **Cyril Moses**●

Among other things, the three Jewish banks financed half of the Japanese navy which defeated Russia's Baltic fleet. The loans made a deep impression on Japan. Schiff was the first foreigner to receive the Order of the Rising Sun and is still remembered with affection by elderly Japanese.

In January 1940, Captain Inuzuka pointed out that one-third of Shanghai's Jewish refugees had relatives in America. He believed that grateful American Jews would intercede for Japan while "utilisation of the Jews who maintain the international press and advertising agencies" would secure "the betterment of the international feelings towards Japan". This would prove helpful in the "international ideological war", and provide a "prompt" delivery of the raw materials which America refused to supply and which Japan urgently needed. Even if that failed, Inuzuka confidently predicted that once his policy had engaged the sympathies of Jewish-financial groups, arms and construction dealers, they would find a way to supply Japan through Shanghai's Baghdadian Jews.

This was why the Japanese encouraged Jewish immigration to Hongkew and why they ignored requests from the foreign consuls to stop.

However, as happened in Britain, America and many other countries, circumstances obliged many Jewish communities to ask their governments not to let in more Jewish refugees.

On May 25, 1939 Sir Victor Sassoon and Sir Ellis Hayim, in their capacity as leaders of the Sephardi community, explained to Colonel Yasue and Captain Inuzuka that they lacked the funds to care for more Jews. They had already applied to the consuls for help, they said, but only the

Japanese with their control of Hongkew could halt immigration. No adverse publicity, they promised the wavering Japanese, would attend the announcements, since the Jews themselves wanted it. They added, "The committee will be satisfied if the influx of refugees be restrained somehow or other". Only then did the Japanese agree.

**The Japanese halted immigration on August 21, 1939.** For the first time in its history Shanghai restricted its visitors. The unwelcome **died in Germany**●

## Flowers in the Blood

by **Gay Courter** – Signet-Penguin USA  
August 1991, 630 pp. \$5.99

In October 1858, Leah Judah, a member of Calcutta's tightly-knit, Arabic-speaking, Baghdadi Jewish community, was murdered by a jealous suitor. Heskell Shurbani and Nissim Gubbay were arrested for the murder. This best-selling novel is based on the memoir of Leah's daughter that came to light after her death.

The book is interspersed with Judeo-Arabic words and expressions such as: *infaqsit ayn elraa* (may the evil eye be destroyed)

*Khull el Kaskeen yeksegh qerrabetu* (strong vinegar breaks its jar)

*Kililileesh* (ululation)

*deqqqa* (drummer)

*Taghqa* (fright)

*abdalak* ("beloved")

*Khadhba* (application of henna)

*mashti* (inspector of virginity on wedding night)

*byadh-el-wetch* (the honourable proof of it).

The book also abounds in familiar names: Musa Chachag, Nissim Sadqa,

Hakham Shlomo Twena, Isaac Shuker, Shmuel Mussliyah.

Shalom Aaron Cohen, who came from Aleppo in 1798, is considered the founder of Calcutta's Jewish community. Soon afterwards, the Sassoons and other Jewish settlers began to flood into India, mainly from Baghdad, fleeing from the harsh rule of Daud Pasha in the early 1800's. David Sassoon managed to escape after he was arrested by Daud Pasha who supported his rival Ezra (Rahamim).

India, a land of many religions, welcomed the Jews. Here they could live in perfect freedom. To correct a trade imbalance with China, opium began to be exported in large quantities to the Chinese who used it as a cure for many ills. This "flower trade" brought about a boom and created immense riches as prices remained lucrative because Chinese rulers refused to legalise opium – the same situation that prevails nowadays in the West.

This well-researched novel depicts in rich detail the culture and customs of Baghdadi Jews living in Calcutta. It tells the sweeping tale of Dinah Sassoon's extraordinary quest for love and justice.

Gay Courter is the author of three other best-selling novels: *The Midwife*, *River of Dreams*, and *Code Ezra*●

## In search of History

As the murderous 20th century draws to a close, historians are trying to put on record the tragic events of the past 80 years. For a mysterious reason Fate decreed that Jews should be the prime victims. Ezra Yehskel, director/producer of Israeli Television, is researching the role of Baghdadian Jews in saving the lives of 25,000 of their co-religionists in Shanghai and another 2000 in India●

# Impressions of the Madrid Conference

– A real change of heart?

by Percy Gourgey MBE

All of us, journalists and delegates alike, assembled at the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference, felt this was a watershed in the 43-year-old seemingly intractable Arab-Israeli conflict. "It's going to be a whole new ball game", as an American journalist told me. But it seemed to me, having observed the course of the conflict since the beginnings of the State of Israel, with the historic UN Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 which recommended the partition of Palestine, that this was "1947 – Mark II". The major difference this time being that the Arabs were not going to exclude themselves from the crucial deliberations as they did at that time.

The conference was envisaged by the US Secretary of State James Baker as having three stages: 1) the opening sessions, 2) the bilateral talks, and 3) the multi-lateral talks on regional issues. While the heads of delegations made their set speeches at the Royal Palace during the 3 days of stage 1, either they or their principal spokesmen later gave press briefings at the Press Centre about two miles away. This is where the action occurred both in questions to the spokesmen or in contact with the many journalists of the respective countries.

When I asked the Egyptian spokesman, Mr. Latifi, about the possibility of influencing Arab heads of state to visit Israel, following the example of the late President Sadat in 1977, he replied that there was a different framework this time, and that President Sadat was in a hurry to end the conflict with Israel, cut arms expenditure and devote "the peace dividend" to developing Egypt's economy which was "in a disastrous state". But a number of Egyptian journalists later thanked me for my question as this was really what Egypt had in mind to resolve the conflict. I was even approached by an Indonesian reporter who told me all moderate Moslems would like to see an early peace now, made more possible through the collapse of Communism, the decline of the Soviet Union as a super-power, and the UN, especially the US, victory in the Gulf War in February.

The Palestinian press briefings were given not by any of the official delegates in the Jordan/Palestine teams, but by the PLO "advisers", Faisal Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi. She did stress that the Palestinian Arabs were agreeable to autonomy in the interim and realised that they could not achieve full self-determination "at one go". But when the correspondent of the American paper *Christian Science Monitor* asked if they would agree to the settlements remaining in "Judea and Samaria", she bridled and said she took strong exception to that "biblical term". The questioner looked crestfallen after her reply and I rose on a point of information to observe that the term was used in the historic UN Partition Resolution of 1947 and indeed before that by the Peel Royal Commission in 1937. An Arab-American journalist based in Washington said to me later "we

Arabs and Jews are cousins". I agreed, and remarked that even in the best of families there are radical differences of opinion which are alright as long as violence is not resorted to. He said he strongly disagreed, at which I said that "if the Arabs want a fight, the Israelis will give it to them even if most reluctantly". Dr. Ashrawi persisted in interpreting Resolutions 242 and 338 as signifying that "Israel must withdraw from all the territories", and would not accept an Israeli journalist interpretation that they did not include "the" or "all" despite the French translation. In fact, it is the English version that is authoritative.

We interviewed King Hussein on live satellite television and I asked him if discussions with Israel could start on the vitally important issues of the provision and distribution of water. He replied that this had to be left to the third state. I got the feeling that the moderate Arabs were constantly looking over their shoulders at what the extremists might think, and I remembered that King Hussein's grandfather Abdullah, the first king of Jordan, was assassinated by the predecessors of the PLO in 1951 who thought he was going to do a separate deal with Israel.

The Syrian Foreign Minister remained silent when an Israeli journalist asked if the settlements could continue in the Golan Heights under Syrian sovereignty; also when Syria was accused of violating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

At Mr. Netanyahu's press briefing I asked if Mr. Shamir had invited Arab heads of state to visit Jerusalem. He replied in the affirmative, and Mr. Shamir repeated this in his speech the next day. I further asked Mr. Netanyahu to explain the circumstances under which Israel came to be in the territories in 1967, and he recounted how the Arab attacks on Israel were launched from those territories and how he, at the age of 18, experienced his "first shelling in Jerusalem when King Hussein rejected Prime Minister Eshkol's plea to keep out of the war with Nasser". But Mr. Netanyahu did announce at the conclusion of his first press briefing that he was going "to an unprecedented press conference with Arab journalists at their request". This I understand was conducted in a cordial atmosphere.

A clear example of media bias (the world's press was present at Madrid with over 3000 of its representatives there) was the use of the term "trading insults" to describe the total differences between Mr. Shamir and the Syrian Foreign Minister. Mr. Shamir's opening statement on the second day of the conference was a model of restraint and scholarship about Israel's case. The Syrian Foreign Minister attacked Israel viciously in his opening statement, to which Mr. Shamir replied in the "rebuttals" session – as it was called – the next day.

Secretary Baker at his subsequent press conference explained that even before it started Mr. Shamir had told him of his wish to leave early on the Friday to be in Israel

before Shabbath, as Arab delegates accused Shamir of not waiting to hear the Syrian chief's reply when he held up dramatically a photo of Shamir "wanted as a terrorist by the British Mandatory authorities before Israel's establishment". Baker also expressed the view that "the United States with the Soviet Union were only catalysts in the peace process, no peace could be imposed and what was started at Madrid should not end there".

The Egyptian Foreign Minister in his constructive speech referred to "Andalusia and Sepharad" evoking memories of the Moslem and Jewish presence in Spain in the Middle Ages when understanding and harmony prevailed between them with the hint that this could serve as a model for the future.

One of the Jordanian spokesmen tried to stress that historically there were "differences between Jordan and Palestine, two thousand years ago" demonstrating his vulnerability to the charge that "Jordan is Palestine!"

The PLO spokesman, Albert Aghazarian, in reply to my remark that the intifada was totally unnecessary as differences could always be negotiated, said impatiently that they could "not control the frustration of the Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza under Israeli occupation". When I asked them how could they claim to represent them, he hurried away!

The Syrian press officers, of all the Arab delegations, proved the most difficult to approach when information was sought by other journalists.

However, Madrid certainly ushers in a new era – no-one walked out – and in the long process ahead of negotiations, Diaspora Jews could best help Israel's cause by learning and propagating all the facts relating to Israel's case since 1947, at least, in order to counter effectively the increasing pro-Arab media attacks engendered by this crucially important conference ●

## *The Scribe* commended

Seventy-five editors of communal magazines attended a seminar held in June by the Public Relations Committee and the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The publications ranged from simple typesheets to sophisticated colour magazines.

As reported in the Spanish and Portuguese Bulletin, Joe Grizzard, a former Fleet Street managing editor and vice-president of the Guild of Jewish Journalists, gave a masterly critique of all the journals, singling out *The Scribe* (Journal of Babylonian Jewry edited by Naim Dangoor), for its well informed coverage of international affairs.

"*The Scribe*", he said, "is a fascinating read – everything from international affairs to cooking recipes. Its comments on the Iraqi situation and the Middle East generally are particularly well-informed. So much so that the *Evening Standard* newspaper has quoted it at the height of the Gulf crisis. I bring it to your attention because its circulation area extends from Britain to communities all over the world. Over 2000 subscribers means a readership of around 6000" ●

# Killings and Rescue in Baghdad 1972-73

by Meer S. Basri

On Yom Kippur 1973, Yacub Abdul-Aziz, a pious and well-known advocate, failed to appear in the synagogue. He lived by himself in the Masbah quarter of Baghdad, his family having previously left for Israel.

As President of the Community (honorary) I immediately started enquiries as to his whereabouts. He was seen for the last time on the eve of the Fast and then disappeared without trace.

A hard task fell upon my shoulders. The Authorities told me that Yacub may have left Iraq illegally. I answered that I knew the man and he definitely wanted to stay in the country.

Subsequently, other Jews, men and women, disappeared in a mysterious way. I saw the Minister of Interior, Saadoun Ghaidan and other high dignitaries. I wrote letters to Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr, President of the Republic, to his deputy at that time and already the strongman behind the scenes – Saddam Hussain, to the Ministers of Justice, Interior and Information, and the Directors-General of Public Security and Police, etc. But all to no avail.

Then after some weeks, three Jews, Tawfiq Soffer, Salim Dellal and Aziz Arabuk, were arrested one evening when leaving the synagogue. I thought of seeing the Governor of Baghdad, Khairallah Talfah and seeking his help. Talfah was a most powerful man, maternal uncle and father-in-law of Saddam. But, I may say, he was an evil man – fanatical, greedy and pernicious. Nevertheless, his assistant Muhammad Faiq Mahmud, was an old friend. He arranged an interview for me and I went, accompanied by the late Naji Chachak, the Community's secretary. I entered the Governor's office in the Sarai and he greeted me and asked what he could do for me. I told him about the recurrent abductions of our people. He said, "I do not accept this, but it is not confined to Jews. Many Moslems have also disappeared and were killed. Have you not heard of Shaikh Abdul Aziz al-Badri who was kidnapped and his body thrown outside the Adhamiyah Mosque? Why do they oppose us and want to overthrow this legitimate government?"

I said, "Our people do not oppose the government nor do they meddle in politics. We only ask to be left to live in peace".

Then he said, "And why do you ask me to help?" I answered, "You are the Muhafidh of Baghdad (governor, literally protector). We are Baghdadis and you must protect us".

His face brightened and he said, "This is good logic and I like logic. So what do you want me to do?"

I told him about the three men abducted recently. He took the telephone and spoke to Saddam Hussain, to Major-General Nadhim Kzar, Director-General of Public Security, and to the head of the Party Special Security Saadun Shakir. They all denied having knowledge of these men and their fate. On my insistence, Talfah promised to pursue the search.

After seeing Saddam he told me that the men have been found in Qasr al-Nihayah (the sinister and deadly prison) and are being released immediately. He said, "You will find them in their homes on your return".

Truly I found they had returned to their homes. One of them, Aziz, was brought to our house by his wife. He was shattered and shaking from the effects of torture. Terror was visible in his eyes. I told his wife to take him home and keep him there until he fully recovered. He and the two others survived their ordeal. Two of them subsequently went to Israel, but the third is still living in Baghdad.

The abductions ceased for a few weeks and then started again. I saw Talfah once more, but he excused himself saying, "I antagonised my friends to save your three men. But I can do nothing more to help".

The final infamous act was the massacre of the whole Qashqush family in their house early one morning. Even their bodies disappeared. Only one teenage daughter was saved, for she left the house early to go to her college. She returned in the afternoon to find her home deserted, ransacked and the floor covered in blood. She became hysterical and out of her senses. I had her taken to the custody of an old good Jewish midwife called Jeddah Rahmah, a private nurse and health worker, who took care of her until we obtained a passport for her and sent her to Israel.

In June 1973, Nadhem Kzar attempted a coup to overthrow President Al-Bakr and Saddam. He failed and was executed with

36 of his henchmen. All the Security staff was overhauled. The abductions and killings finally stopped. The Authorities told me verbally that they had been engineered by Kzar and his men. They refused to confirm this in writing in answer to my letters.

In August I wrote the following letter to the authorities asking for information on the missing persons, but to no avail

الرقم ط/٥٧/١٠٧٣  
التاريخ ٨/٤/١٩٧٣

رئاسة الطائفة الموسوية

في بنسداد

رقم التلنن ٨٥٥٣١ الرئيس

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

السيد القائد المناضل المهيب أحمد حسن البكر المحترم  
رئيس مجلس قيادة الثورة  
رئيس الجمهورية - بغداد

تعبية واحتراماً وبعد  
فأزفغ الى سيادتكم ايات الشكر والاحلاص واحيي فيكم الرئيس القائد المناضل الذي اناد به الدستور بحماية حقوق المواطنين وحرياتهم عملاً بالحديث الشريف (كلكم راع وكلكم مسؤول عن رعيته) واسأل الله ان يوفقكم ومجلس قيادة الثورة المبجل لخير الشعب والوطن انه السميع الجيب .

سيدي الرئيس

لقد مرت طائفتنا التي عاشت في هذه البلاد آلاف السنين وكانت جزءاً من هذا الشعب الذي شاركته السراء والضراء ظروف عصيبة ولا سيما في الأشهر الماضية إذ قُتد أو قتل عدد من افرادها حسب العرائض المتعددة التي رفعتها الى سيادتكم في حينه . والان وقد انجلت الغمة وقضى الله على الزمرة الخائفة ومن بالسلامة على الأمة وقادتها وعادت الأمور الى نصابها استمحيكم عذراً لأشكر سيادتكم على اهتمامكم بأمورنا وابعازكم بتأليف لجنة للتحقيق في قضية مقتل العائلة بتاريخ ١٢/٤/١٩٧٣ تلك الجريمة الشنعاء التي اوردت بحياة خمسة أشخاص وسرقت أموالهم في وضع النهار مع عدم العثور على جثث الجنبى عليهم . وانني التمس لابعاز ببيان نتيجة التحقيق واظهار مصير الأشخاص التالية اسمائهم الذين قُتدوا أو القبض عليهم أو قتلوا خلال تلك الفترة وهم :

١. أكرم صبيون بحر القبيض عليه بتاريخ ١٩٦٩/٩/٢٧ ولم يظهر له اثر منذ ذلك التاريخ
٢. المحامي يعقوب عبد المزيق فقد أو القبيض عليه في ١٤/٩/١٩٧٢ .
٣. يعقوب ياسين رجوان القبيض عليه في ٢٧/٩/١٩٧٢ .
٤. شاول ياسين رجوان القبيض عليه في داره في ٢٨/٩/١٩٧٢ .
٥. الدكتور عزرا خزام القبيض عليه في ٢/١٠/١٩٧٢ .
٦. ابراهيم الصائغ قتل في داره وسرقت أمواله في ١٠/١٠/١٩٧٢ .
٧. شاول باروخ شماش القبيض عليه في داره في ١١/١٠/١٩٧٢ .
٨. حستيل ابو داود (المعروف باسم فكتور ابو داود) القبيض عليه في ١١/١٠/١٩٧٢ .
٩. عزوري منشي شماش فقد أو القبيض عليه في ١٤/١٠/١٩٧٢ .
١٠. سليم صدقة فقد أو القبيض عليه في ٢٩/١٠/١٩٧٢ .
١١. ناجي جيتايات القبيض عليه في ١/١١/١٩٧٢ .
- ١٢-١٣. ناجي مزارا تشقوش وزوجته سعاد فقدوا أو القبيض عليهما في ٨/١١/١٩٧٢ .
١٤. عزرا منشي قحطان واخوه سليم قحطان فقدوا أو القبيض عليهما في ٢٠/١١/١٩٧٢ .
١٥. نعيم سلمان قحطان القبيض عليه في داره في ٢٩/١١/١٩٧٢ .
١٦. شمعون عزيز البقال فقد أو القبيض عليه في ٤/١٢/١٩٧٢ .
- ١٧-١٨. يهودا خضوري طويق فقد أو القبيض عليه في ٩/١٢/١٩٧٢ وفي نفس اليوم القبيض على اخيه الشابتين رحمة والبزبة طويق .
- ١٩-٢٠. روبين تشقوش وزوجته وأولاده الثلاثة (ولدان وبنت) قتلوا في دارهم وسرقت أموالهم في ١٢/١٢/١٩٧٢ ولم يعثر على جثثهم بعد .

سيدي الرئيس

التمس من سيادتكم الأمر بالتحقيق عن مصير هؤلاء المواطنين واطلاق سراح الموجودين منهم على قيد الحياة وبيان موت المقتولين منهم لتكون أسرهم على بينة من أمرهم لاسيما ان لبعضهم زوجات معلقات لا يعرفن هل هن ارامل ام لا زنن في عصمة ازواجهن، وتمكك الله وحفظكم وراعكم بعنايته الصمدانية .

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام .

صورة منه الى :  
سيادة نائب رئيس مجلس قيادة الثورة المحترم (ص.م.ح.ح.)  
مجلس قيادة الثورة المبجل - امانة السر  
السيد وزير العدل المحترم  
السيد وزير الاعلام المحترم  
السيد محافظ بغداد المحترم  
السيد مدير الشرطة العام المحترم  
السيد مدير الأمن العام المحترم  
السيد مدير الجنسية العام المحترم الحافق بكتابتنا الرقم ط/٥٤/١٠٧٣ والمؤرخ ١٥/١٠/١٩٧٣

## The Jews of Kaifeng

The Diaspora Museum organised an exhibition on "The Jews of Kaifeng" at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St. John's Wood Road, London at which Mrs. Phyllis Horal, lecturer and frequent traveller to China, gave an introduction to the Exhibition.

It is a shame that some Orthodox schools boycotted the exhibition because it was held at a Liberal establishment. So much for the different approaches to worship God that the new Chief Rabbi has been commending

# Discord in Zion

by Gideon N. Giladi,  
360 pp., Scorpion Publishing, London. £16.95

## إسرائيل نحو الانفجار الداخلي التقارب بين المستوطنين الأوربيين وأبناء دار الإسلام

The English book is a revised and updated translation of the Arabic original, printed in Egypt.

The author is an Iraqi Jew who emigrated to Israel, grew there and now lives in London. He bears the Israeli establishment a grudge for its treatment both of Palestinians and Sephardim. His conclusion – let Palestinians and the “Jews of Islam” unite in a common struggle against the foreign Zionist occupiers, overthrow the State of Israel and establish in its place a secular Palestinian state in which Jews can live under Moslem protection!

While Giladi may be justified in complaining over discriminatory practices against Sephardi and Oriental Jews, his conclusion is quite faulty. He cites the golden age of Arab-Jewish cooperation in Spain and the fact that many Jews rose to prominence in various Arab and Moslem regimes.

The Arab conquest of Spain, as well as of Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Egypt were only made possible with Jewish help. According to Giladi, even Tariq bin Ziad, of Jabal Tariq (Gibraltar) fame, was of Jewish descent. But characteristically, the Arab bites the hand that feeds him. The age of Arab-Jewish cooperation in Spain lasted only 200 years and came to an abrupt end when in 1086 Moslem fundamentalists burst into Spain and forced the Jews to convert or depart. The majority moved north to Christian territory and the process started of the eventual expulsion of both Arabs and Jews 500 years ago.

As to the Jews who rose to prominence in foreign lands, this is more a reflection on the ability, loyalty and devotion of these Jews than on the tolerance of their hosts. They are usually *plus royalistes que le roi* and perform their services in complete disregard of the possible repercussions on their fellow Jews. To them applies King Solomon's adage, **They made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.**

Let us start with Joseph. His 14-year plan of cornering all the corn of Egypt was so successful that in the end all the people in Egypt became slaves to Pharaoh. When a nationalist ruler rose in Egypt who “knew not Joseph” the Egyptian slaves were freed and the Hebrews remained in bondage to suffer for many long years. The rest, as they say, is history.

The Jews who helped the Prophet Muhammed in his holy Mission were later persecuted and killed. The Jews who helped the Moslem conquest of the Middle East were branded by Arab historians as traitors. When Saad al Dawla, the Jewish Vezier of Iraq, fell from favour he was killed, and a massive pogrom followed in Baghdad in 1291 in which synagogues were destroyed and Jews forced to convert or were killed.

In our time, when Sir Sasson Heskell was Iraqi minister of finance, the late Eliahou Khalastchi requested him to forego certain taxes because of the bad crop. Sasson refused, saying, “Do you want me to take from the treasury and give to you?” A Moslem subordinate had no difficulty in granting the request.

Sir Sasson was decorated for his services to Britain and was decorated for his services to Iraq, but what did he do for his co-religionists? He was duped by Gertrude Bell and Lawrence of Arabia into approving their designs to convert Iraq into an Arab country. As a result, 30 years after the Cairo Conference the entire Jewish community had to leave.

Giladi defeats his arguments by admitting that although the Arab Jews were against Zionism they were treated by the Arab people and countries as enemies. He quotes Nuri Said as saying that the Jews of Islam were being held as hostages of the Islamic states in the fight against Israel. He correctly states that what brought Arab Jews to Israel was a combination of Arab persecution, Zionist pressure and imperial interests.

The importance of Giladi's book is that it represents the views held by many “Arab” Jews. **No wonder, then, that Ashkenazim view us with suspicion.** A recent illustration of this was in Mr. Shamir's exclusion of Moroccan-born Foreign Minister David Levy from Madrid.

The myth that the Jews lived in peace and harmony among the Moslems is not new. In 1975 Elie Eliachar wrote a book with the same theme. My criticism of that concept appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* of 9.10.1975, summarised as follows:

“I and other Iraqi Jews had similar experiences to those of Mr. Eliachar regarding friendly relations with Moslems and Arabs. However, these were limited. On the official government level, on the army level, on the mob level, on the level of nationalist parties and of religious fanatics, the picture was completely different. Anti-Jewish excesses were common even before Zionism became an issue. The highest compliment a Moslem could pay a Jew was, “You are a nice fellow; what a pity you are a Jew!”

“Mr. Eliachar deludes himself by stating that the Arabs now conceive of the Middle East as a checkerboard, with a number of different nations, each having a different square. This is wishful thinking as to what **should** be the right pattern for the region. The core of the problem in the Middle East is not Zionism but Arab imperialism”.

### The real meaning of *Dhimmi*.

The dictionary defines *dhimmi* as “enjoying Moslem protection”. But the word comes from *dhimma* – meaning obligation, debt. So the real meaning of *dhimmi* is: people who are tolerated on payment of a poll tax. The tax comes first and the toleration of protection afterwards. In short, it is a protection racket.

Giladi's book is well researched and well documented, and contains a wealth of

historical statistics, facts and information that are presented in an unbiased and honest way. While the author is anti-Zionist, he is also strongly critical of the expulsion of Jews of Islam, which he regards as a greater tragedy for the Arabs than the tragedy of Palestine.

He goes on to explain, however, that the prevailing belief in the Middle East is that the Western nations advised Arab governments to ease **Jewish emigration in exchange for resettling Palestinian refugees in Arab countries.** That exchange never took place, and is food for thought for the Madrid peace negotiators.

It is also believed that the expropriation by Arab governments of Jewish property was part of a Western conspiracy aimed at justifying the expropriation of Arab property in Israel.

It is often stated that Islam treated the Jews with tolerance, even benevolence. But it takes only one bad ruler, occasionally, to reverse the whole process as happened several times to Jewish communities under Islam.

## غراض ابو جاسم

### Abu Jassim's luggage

The Jews of Islam, heartened by the knowledge that a superior culture cannot be submerged by an inferior culture, accepted their second class status philosophically. They often told stories to illustrate their inferior fortunes: A Jew, a Christian and a Moslem went to heaven and knocked on the door of Paradise. The gatekeeper asked their names. The first replied, “Hesqail” and was told he would not be admitted. The second, “Jajjou”, was likewise turned away. The Moslem said, “I am Abu-Jassim”. The gatekeeper told him, “You are welcome to Paradise, do feel at home”. Whereupon the Jew slung his luggage on his shoulders and followed the Moslem. “What is this?” exclaimed the gatekeeper. Hesqail replied, “I am carrying Abu-Jassim's luggage”, and went in!●

We are glad to note that the *Sephardi Bulletin* of New South Wales, Australia, has copied two articles from *The Scribe* issue No. 50, albeit without giving us the usual credit.

They were: *The Jews of Egypt* by Felix Benzaken, and *Israel and the Arabs* by Moshe Kahtan●

## Roughage

Are you getting enough fibre in your diet?

Here is a simple and reliable test: When you get up from the toilet, have a look. If “it” floats, then you are. If it sinks then you need to add more fibre to your diet●

## Cookery Corner

In future, the Cookery Corner will not appear as a separate sheet but will occupy a whole page of the journal.

Readers who wish to collect the recipes without spoiling the issue are invited to photocopy the page●

# COOKERY CORNER

by Alice Shashou

## Iraqi Rezoumash or Mung Soup

### Ingredients:

1 cup dried mung beans  
½ cup rice  
Salt, black pepper  
3-4 tablespoons oil  
2 onions finely chopped or  
2 cloves garlic crushed  
(I use 1 onion and 2 cloves garlic)  
1 teaspoon cumin powder

### Method:

Wash the rice and soak it overnight.  
Wash the mung beans, discard the skins and soak.

Next day, boil about 9 cups water in a large pan.

Drain the rice and add to the boiling water.

Wash the mung beans again, discard skins and add to the half-cooked rice. Leave the pan uncovered and cook on slow heat, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. Cook for about 30 minutes. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper. Add more water if needed.

Meanwhile, heat the oil and fry the onions or garlic or both until golden.

Remove from heat, add cumin powder.

Pour into the soup and stir to mix.

Cover the pan and simmer for another 5 minutes, to make a thick soup.

**Note:** Cooking time depends on the quality of the mung beans●

## Shalgham Maye'e or cooked turnips

(now in season)

(especially good in cold weather)

### Ingredients:

3lbs white turnips  
About 4 cups water  
1 tablespoon of date syrup, or a few dates, as necessary.

### Method:

Wash and cut off the top of the turnips, but do not peel. Place in a pan and put a plate on top. Add water and date syrup.

Place a towel under the cover and simmer approximately 1½-2 hours or until the water has evaporated and the turnips are cooked and nicely coloured. Serve hot.

You may like to sprinkle with some salt before eating●

## Baked Quinces

(now in season)

### Ingredients:

4lbs quinces  
1 cup and 1 tablespoon sugar  
2 cups water  
2 tablespoons currants

### Method:

Wash quinces. Core and fill the opening with the sugar and currants. Place in one layer in a deep ovenproof dish. Add the water and the rest of the sugar and cover the dish with foil.

Place in preheated oven 180° (350F) for about 1½ hours or until the fruit is cooked and the syrup is thick. Uncover and let it toast for a further 30 minutes●

## Chicken Paprika (for 4 persons)

### Ingredients:

4 chicken portions  
2 onions, sliced  
1 green pepper, seeded and thinly sliced  
14oz tin tomatoes  
¼ pint of chicken stock (from a chicken cube)  
1 dessertspoon plain flour  
1 clove garlic, skinned and crushed (optional)  
4oz button mushrooms sliced  
A heaped tablespoon paprika  
Salt, pepper  
Oil  
½ teaspoon oregano  
1 tablespoon parsley  
5oz parev cream (optional)

### Method:

Season the chicken joints and sauté in a little oil in a frying pan until golden brown. Transfer into an oven-proof dish large enough to take a single layer.

Now fry the onions and add the garlic (if using). Fry.

Add the mushrooms. When dry, add the tomatoes and let dry, then add the flour and stir. Add salt, pepper and paprika. Still stirring, add the stock and the whole lot to simmering point; then pour over the chicken joints. Cover the oven-proof dish with foil paper and place in a pre-heated oven 325F (160°) for 45 minutes. Uncover, stir it a bit and add the green pepper, parsley and oregano. (Add water if needed). Put the cover back on and let it cook for a further 30 minutes or until the chicken is tender and the liquid is dry.

Just before serving, spoon parev cream all over (if using) and mix.

Sprinkle on a little more paprika.

Serve hot with white rice●

## Iraqi Quince Luzina

### Ingredients:

10lbs quinces  
1 cup water  
5½ lbs sugar  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
(depending on the quality of quinces)  
1-1½lbs blanched and ground almonds.  
They should be dry  
1½ teaspoons ground cardamom

### Method:

Quarter quinces without peeling. Slice and remove core and pips, then wash. Put in a heavy-bottom stainless steel pan with the water. Cover and simmer until quinces are tender, adding more water if necessary. The quince should be soft and no water left.

Let it stand covered overnight so that quinces turn dark in colour.

The next day, add the sugar and cook over a low heat for about 3 hours, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon to prevent sticking and burning until the paste thickens. Add lemon juice and stir for 2 minutes.

**Note:** *Luzina* is ready when it does not stick to your hands. Take a spoon of the mixture on a plate and wait until cold and see that it is the right consistency.

Now, mix the ground almonds and the cardamom together and spread on a large tray. Pour the quince paste on top of the almonds and spread remaining almonds

over it. Press by hand until about ½" thick or cover with greaseproof paper and even up with a rolling pin.

The second day, using a sharp kitchen knife, cut the *Luzina* into diamond shapes. When dry, store in an airtight container.

You can also cook quinces in a pressure cooker. It is quicker; but the colour of the *Luzina* is not as attractive as when cooking in an ordinary pan●

## Tips

Watermelon tastes so sugary that many dieters feel guilty eating it. It is very nutritious and has few calories.

Refrigeration of garlic, fresh or dry, is not recommended.

Some say tomato is a fruit, not a vegetable. Green tomatoes will ripen more quickly in a brown paper bag with an apple in it.

Avocados do not ripen on the tree. They must be picked and held at room temperature. To speed up the ripening, put the avocados in a paper bag and check until they are ready. Then place in fridge until needed.

In summer when fresh garlic is available, use it, because it is healthier and tastier than the dry ones.

In the first few weeks of your baby's life, the temperature in the nursery should be kept at around 65-73F (19-22C).

Do not put sliced beef to warm in the oven. It will dry out.

For perfect salad-making, salad greens must be well washed and thoroughly dried before being mixed with the dressing.

For fan-assisted ovens, cooking time should be reduced.

If you heat a frying pan before adding fat, nothing will stick when cooking.

Cut a thin slice from each end before baking potatoes. They'll be ready much sooner.

Don't pass the salt. Too much salt can lead to raised blood pressure.

Chill candles in the fridge for a few hours before using. That way they burn for much longer.

To save buttons from falling off clothes, place a drop of clear nail varnish on the buttons centre. It will stop the yarn from snapping.

Brussels sprouts are an excellent source of vitamins A and C. To reduce the odour, cook the sprouts without a lid, or leave the lid on during cooking and add a slice of bread to the water to soak up the acids.

Pregnant women were warned recently not to eat liver or liver paté, because it could cause birth defects. They should also avoid fish-liver oil.

Removing a piece of eggshell. Use a spoon or a piece of kitchen towel to remove any shell which may have fallen into the whites.

White fish is very low in fats and very high in protein.

To clean a stained iron. Make sure it is unplugged and cool, then rub the stain with a cloth dipped in methylated spirits and vinegar.

The French believe that if you eat old vegetables you yourself become old.

To keep your pan for pancakes in good condition, wipe it out with oil, never with water, after every use and your crepes will never stick●

# Shlomo Hillel

Baghdad-born Mr. Shlomo Hillel, World Chairman of Keren Hayesod, United Israel Appeal (UIA) and former Speaker of the Knesset, is one of Israel's roving ambassadors.

In the unending quest for funds he recently went to Canada, flying to London and Australia before returning to Israel.

Mr. Maurice S. Peress of Montreal writes: "I would like to emphasise the courtesy of Mr. Edmond J. Safra, well-known philanthropist and one of the world's leading bankers who, when he learned of Mr. Hillel's visit to Montreal, ordered his Branch President there, Mr. Allan Schouela, to give a Reception in honour of Mr. Hillel. This was held at the Republic National Bank of New York, Canada. Mr. Safra gave Mr. Hillel five million dollars this year, and I understand that he contributes close to twenty millions annually".

The Reception was followed by Dinner at the home of Simha and Maurice Peress in honour of Shlomo Hillel, where the adjoining photograph was taken.

In Australia Mr. Hillel addressed the UIA Federal Conference in Melbourne. In Sydney he attended a function to say "thank you" to the UIA Young Leadership which had raised an unprecedented \$1 million in the 1991 UIA Campaign.

On the issue of the Golan Heights Mr. Hillel said, "Israel just cannot afford to, and will not let go of the Golan. That would be tantamount to surrendering our firearms to the enemy".

## Introductory address given by Emile Fattal at the meeting of Combined Jewish Appeal:

Tonight, I have the most singular pleasure of introducing to you our keynote speaker, who is not only an illustrious individual, but is also a fellow Iraqi.

In 1934, the Jewish population of Iraq



Seated, l to r: Saida Hillel, Fahima Dellal, Shlomo Hillel, Maurice Peress, Nina Schemtob. Standing: Abraham Hillel, Farid Sleeman, Rachel Sleeman, Simha Peress, David Schemtob, Emile Fattal.

was probably at the pinnacle of its history, Yet, "Salim" Hillel's family foresaw where the future of the Jewish people lay - in Israel, a state in the making. Later on, as a broadcaster, on *Kol Yisrael*, he made inspiring Arabic broadcasts all over the Arab world.

Reading Shlomo Hillel's book, *Operation Babylon*, one cannot help but be gripped by the drama, courage and suspense behind the masterminding of the largest air migration in history.

Arab governments and the masses began to view their Jewish co-citizens as a fifth column and even an appetizing target against which they could vent the frustration of having suffered defeat at the hands of Israel in the 1948 War of Independence. In Iraq, they persecuted, harassed, imprisoned and used other forms of physical and psychological terror on the Jewish population. The situation was desperate.

In his endeavour, Shlomo Hillel had to persuade the new Israeli leadership to put some of the state's meagre resources at his disposal; an enormous task. As Israel was busy absorbing Europe's death camp survivors, it could hardly focus on the problem of Iraq's Jews.

Upon returning to Israel, Shlomo Hillel made a remarkable career in Israel's diplomatic service, pioneering Israeli ties in Africa. He later served as Minister in successive Israeli governments and crowned his political career by his election in 1984, to the post of Speaker of the Knesset, the second highest ranking position in Israel.

It is no wonder that in 1989, the leadership of Keren Hayesod unanimously elected Shlomo Hillel as World Chairman of the organisation. He has friends and family all over the world. Shlomo, we welcome you... and... are proud of you!●

## The Moses Lara Trust

The Moses Lara Trust, originally set up in 1827 to benefit "students" and "those in need" by way of grants and loans, has now been updated by the Charity Commission.

Applications may be submitted for the following categories of aid -

- 1) Assistance in time of need by interest-free loan
- 2) Grants for the needy
- 3) Grants for the advancement of education
- 4) Grants for the promotion of study of Jewish Law in institutes of higher rabbinic learning or at post-graduate courses.

The Trustees welcome applications by or on behalf of prospective beneficiaries who, under the terms of the new Scheme "shall be persons born in wedlock usually resident in the United Kingdom, who or whose parents are or were members of or have or had as their principal place of worship a Sephardi Synagogue".

Applications should be addressed "In confidence" to the Hon. Secretary, The Lara Trust, 2 Ashworth Road, London W9 1JY●

Beginning with this issue, *The Scribe* will appear 4 times a year with 12 pages, instead of six times with 8 pages●

As soon as I arrive home in the evenings from tiring business work and *The Scribe* arrives, I start reading it while I am having my supper.

I would like to mention some well-known words commonly used by Iraqi Jews and which are taken from many languages:

Chair: Skamli	Fence: Tarabzoon
Window: Panjra	Oil: Seeghaj
Basement: Seghdab	Slope: Dehedwana
Conservatory: Jamkhana	Tap: Trumba
Ice Cream: Booz	Drawer: Darag
Tie: Bayembagh	Toilet: Adab
Loft room: Kabishkan	Warehouse: Unbar
Office: Hijgha	Binocular: Darbeen
Lane: Daghboona	Cuppl: Arakcheen

Keep up the good work●  
London N3 Menashe Chitayat

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

Mr. George Saul, Palm Beach, Florida  
Mr. & Mrs. Ezra Meir, Cary, N.Y.  
Mr. David Korine, Zurich  
Mr. J.J. Marshall, Manchester  
Mr. & Mrs. Moshe Shohet, Great Neck  
Rashel V. S. Meer, New York  
Mr. Ellis Sion, Oceanside, N.Y.  
Mr. & Mrs. Sass Sopher, Geneva●

Hearty congratulations and best wishes of the Sephardi Community of Sydney and myself go to *The Scribe* on its completing its 20th year.

To the majority of us who come from Iraqi origins, the journal is a source of rich and valuable information and help, most decidedly, to realign our community focus towards the wealth of our heritage and traditions.

We do have an inherent stake in the success of this fascinating periodical●

Reuben Aaron, President  
N.S.W. Association of Sephardim  
Alfred S. Gubbay, Vice President  
Ellis Jacobs, Hon. Treasurer  
Mozelle Tassie, Ho. Secretary

I read about *The Scribe* in the English magazine ESRA (English Speaking Residents Association of Israel) of Nov/Dec 1991 and was very delighted to know that it is the late Rabbi Dangoor's grandson who publishes it.

I am from Bombay, India, and knew some Dangoors there before 1938. I wish you G-d's blessing●  
Kfar Saba, Israel Fred J. Hami