

It is said that Israel cannot retain the Territories and remain a democracy. If so, why not modify democracy?

The SCRIBE

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In the next issue:
THE FUTURE OF
DEMOCRACY

LET US
PRIVATISE
MONEY

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WISHING ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY PASSOVER

Why these "Peace Talks" must fail

by Moshe Kahtan

In the interest of peace, real peace, the present fiasco under the heading of "Middle East Peace Talks" should come to the unsuccessful outcome to which it was condemned from day one, when it was started on a wrong footing with the predominant aim of achieving advantages to third parties outside the area which is bedevilled by the conflict. Any solution of this kind can be imposed, but cannot, as history taught us, prevail. The key and most important issue on which everything really depends continues to be dodged and ignored by everybody. Israel is not where it is either out of the charitable hand-out of the Arabs or merely by virtue of the Balfour Declaration. Israel is in the Middle East by its own right. Nothing has been more damaging and destructive in that region than the slogan promoted originally by the British to the effect that the lands of the Middle East are "Arab lands". With the passage of time, more and more people have come to accept this as a norm when, in fact, nothing can be more misleading or further from both the truth and the reality of the situation. But repetition, *ad nauseam*, yielded its results and the public at large became a fertile ground for abuse, even on the intellectual level, in order to satisfy expedient policies which have been proved, time and again, to be both mediocre and disastrous.

Real peace will not come as a by-product of appeasing the Arabs and providing reward for their aggressions; real peace will not come because certain Arab countries are collecting their IOUs from America for their "support" of the coalition in the Gulf War, as some so-called experts would have us believe, simply because those very same Arabs are the ones who owe; real peace will not come because Syria wants a piece of land or because the Palestinian Arabs decided now to accept an offer which they categorically rejected in unison with their Arab "brothers" nearly 44 years ago and, to reaffirm their rejection, waged several wars of aggression against the State of Israel and its inhabitants; real peace will not come by using blackmail tactics or by distorting historical facts; real peace will not come as long as outsiders continue to promote their own interests by deluding and encouraging the Arabs into thinking that they are entitled to and should have all; real peace will not come if the Arabs themselves do not control their ambition to have all. But real peace can and will come if the Middle East is recognised by all for what it really is: the

home of many nations who have their own traditions, language, culture and aspirations and are entitled to share in its development as well as its resources; real peace can and will come when it is recognised by all that gross injustices were committed in the Middle East against the Jews in Arab countries, not because they threw stones at Arabs or because they knifed them in the street or killed their children in schools, but simply because of their Jewishness; real peace can and will come when the Arab leaders admit to themselves that they have done wrong not only to the Jews but to their own kin whom they incited to commit evil, to wage wars, to achieve very little other than destruction and to visit upon their own people cruelty both in life and in death, be it in Kuwait, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi and all the rest of the 22 states that owe their independence and creation to mere strokes of pen by the ex-imperialist powers whilst they refuse to accept the sovereignty of others; real peace can and will come when Arabs will stop playing the farcical game at the expense of their refugees who were, to a large degree, of their own creation, and begin to exercise some human and humane behaviour towards all those who were made to suffer by utilising their enormous financial resources constructively instead of only destructively; real peace can and will come when the Arabs will admit that, all told, they do not really have all that much to claim on Israel compared to what Israel, through the Jewish refugees expelled from their home Arab countries, has to claim on them, and, when they will stop their double talk of preaching overtures of peace while at the same time practising terror in every conceivable manner; real peace can and will come when recognition is given where it is due, when it is recognised that Arabs, with 22 separate states of their own, constituted on 14,000,000 square kilometres, cannot nor should not hope to extend their rule on the 28,000 square kilometres to which Israel is confined; real peace can and will come when the genuine desire for it will manifest itself in the Arab midst in the same genuine way in which the Jews, inside and outside of Israel, have been yearning for decades gone.

Then, and only then, will it be a real and meaningful peace for all. And when that time comes, if indeed it is allowed to happen, the Middle East could become the envy of other nations and swords will indeed be turned into ploughshares●



Congratulations to Her Majesty the Queen on the 40th anniversary of her accession to the throne.

She is seen above leaving Parliament with the late Marquess of Cholmondeley (pronounced Chumley), Lord Great Chamberlain, walking in front. He was the son of Sybil Sassoon who was the daughter of Sir Edward Sassoon and Aline de Rothschild, and grand-daughter of Sir Albert Abdullah Sassoon who left Baghdad in 1829 at the age of 10. The present holder of the title is 31-year old David, the bachelor 7th Marquess.

The Lord Great Chamberlain, whose hereditary office was created in 1133, can be described as the non-executive chairman of the British monarchy. All administration and management of the business of monarchy comes under him.

The Cholmondeleys, who occupy this office in alternate reigns, date their aristocratic roots to the 17th century. They experienced rather hard times in the 19th century; then in 1913 the 5th Marquess married the legendary Sybil Sassoon, beneficiary to the affluent riches of Sassoon and Rothschild. The Cholmondeleys became gigantically rich as a result of this marriage.

Sybil died in 1989 and her son, the 6th Marquess, died four months later, leaving £118 million in his will, the largest ever proved in Britain.

We are glad to note that the Queen does not intend to resign. Public service for life, and even in heredity, was the practice within Babylonian Jewry before democracy came to pollute our environment●

The History of Prayer

adapted from *The Story of the Prayer Book* by Arian and Eisenberg,
Prayer Book Press – an affiliate of Media Judaica, Inc., Bridgeport, Conn., USA.

When Jews are described as “the People of the Book”, it is of course the Bible which is being referred to. However, it is the Siddur or Prayer Book that is “the Book of the People”.

Worship among ancient peoples consisted mainly of the sacrifice of animals. The aroma and smoke of the offering ascending heavenward was taken to mean that the gift was favourably received.

The Hebrews elevated the concept of sacrifice into something other than a divine meal. It became an expression of joy or of repentance. These sacrifices were frequently accompanied by words of prayer. The Hebrew word for prayer – *tefillah* – actually meant a plea for justice.

Another approach to God in Biblical times was through the *neder* or vow. Payment of the vow was to be made only after the request was granted.

Group prayer existed in the form of hymns. The Book of Psalms is a collection of such hymns. It is said that in the Torah God speaks to Man. In the Psalms man speaks to God. When the Christians broke away from Judaism they couldn't do without the Psalms, which they retained.

Hannah's prayer is one of the most touching examples of worship recorded in the Bible. As Dayan Toledano recently observed, Hannah's repeated prayers for a child were finally answered only when she made a vow to dedicate her son to God.

Prayer requires devotion; and, without raising one's voice, moving the lips is necessary to properly articulate the words of prayer.

King Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple does not mention its sacrificial function, but speaks of it as a place of prayer and supplication. The main function of the Temple was to free, to atone people of their sins – a function which modern societies have relegated to the psychiatrist.

The Daily Scene at the Temple

The service in the Temple was constructed around two daily sacrifices, one at the break of day and one just before sunset. The Priests draw lots for the various tasks. They bathe and put on their priestly garments. Then, each holding two torches, they walk in two patrols who ask each other when they meet, “Is it well?” – “All is well”, comes the answer.

Following the offering of the sacrifice, the Priests go to the Chamber of Hewn Stones where the people have gathered to receive the priestly blessing. First, the Priests recite the Ten Commandments, then the words of the *Shema*, and finally the Priestly Blessing: “May the Lord bless thee and keep thee; May the Lord make His countenance to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; May the Lord turn His countenance unto thee and give thee peace”.

Afterwards, sweet-smelling incense is offered, and wine is poured by the High Priest over the sacrifice, while cymbals clash and trumpeters sound. Then the Levites sing their hymns accompanied by the *magrefah* – an organ-like instrument, while those officiating prostrate themselves

before the altar.

The timing of the sacrifices, just after the rise and before the setting of the sun, reflects the obsession of ancient peoples with the sun as the visible source of all life. (*Shamash* is also derived from *shemesh* – sun).

Throughout Jewish history the prophet emphasised that worship had value only when accompanied by righteous living.

The prophet Ezekiel, who went with the exiles to Babylon, instructed them in the ways of prayer and supplication that would replace the Temple and its ceremonies. He spoke of the “little sanctuary” to indicate the miniature temples where prayers would be temporarily substituted for the Temple service. These gave rise to the synagogue.

Ezra reads the Torah

It was on Rosh Hashana of 444 BCE that Ezra the Scribe, who came from Babylon, stood in an open square in Jerusalem among the Priests and notables and read from the Torah scroll. Study of the Torah became a form of prayer in itself. To worship God, one had to get acquainted with his laws by studying the Torah. The Talmud (Peah 1:1) says – These are the things of which the fruits are enjoyed in this world while the capital remains for the World to Come: the honouring of parents, benevolence, restoring peace between a man and his fellow, and also the study of the Torah which is equal to them all.

Even while the Second Temple was still standing, the synagogue was flourishing. In the first century CE there were over 400 synagogues in Jerusalem alone.

After the Destruction, the synagogue became the place of prayer and study of the Torah as substitutes for the Temple services. Thus the morning (*shahrit*) and afternoon (*mincha*) prayers were instituted and an evening service (*arvit*) was later added.

At first most of the prayers were spontaneous and improvised by the individual. But Rabbi Gamliel II at the end of the first century fixed the *Amidah* prayer.

With the rise of Christianity, the centre of Jewish life shifted to Babylonia, where a thriving Jewish community existed since the time of the first Exile. There, great Jewish scholars emerged, great schools were established and great works such as the Babylonian Talmud were created. The Jewish community of Babylonia actually became larger and richer than the community in the land of Israel.

In Babylonia, study of the Torah came to be regarded as more important than prayer. (Rabbi Judah the Prince, compiler of the *Mishnah*, was known to pray once in 30 days). While prayer was concerned with the needs in this world, study exalted man and brought him close to eternal values and to God. It was in this spirit that the great Babylonian *yeshivoth* of Sura and Pumbeditha were established.

Inevitably, differences in prayer developed between the Jewish communities in Babylonia and in the land of Israel. But, in the main, the customs of Babylonia have come to be the dominant part of our

procedure today.

Early prayer was oral

Up to the ninth century there was a prohibition against writing down the text of prayers, which were recited from memory. The Torah alone was regarded as the written law. Those who didn't know, performed their prayer by merely listening to the leader. “The one who listens is like the one who recites”.

At that time the Gaon in Babylonia was a kind of Grand Rabbi of world Jewry. His pronouncements were generally regarded as binding law. In 870 Rab Amram ben Sheshna Gaon received a message from the Jewish community of Barcelona asking for the exact order and wording of prayers. After careful consideration Rab Amram set down the exact order and content of the prayers as recited in Babylonia. That became the first Hebrew prayer book or *Siddur*, the basis, with Saadia Gaon's later *Siddur*, of all prayer books of today.

It is to be noted that prayers are in the plural. Jews have traditionally prayed to God in the name of the entire people: the well-being of each Jew depends upon the well-being of all Israel. Prayers are generally of praise, petition and thanksgiving.

Prayer must be performed with *kavannah* which denotes correct intention, devotion and sustained concentration. The aim is to tune ourselves to the Divine will. (As Abraham Lincoln put it: We mustn't ask God to be on our side, but we should try to be on the side of God).

Reform or perish

During the Exile in Babylonia, Ezra the Scribe and others developed the Oral Law, which, traditionally, was given to Moses in Sinai; and, by a process of interpretations, continued to build new traditions and to adapt Judaism to the needs of the day. But from early days there were sects in Judaism who believed only in the Torah and in nothing else. Such were the Samaritans, the Sadducees and, later, the Karaites whose rigidity led to their decline. Prayers were added by mainstream Jews to meet the challenges from these sects.

The next challenge came from the Christian Jews. Early Christians actually regarded themselves as Jews but they considered only the Ten Commandments as divine and permanent; the rest of the Torah could be discarded with the advent of Jesus. To be different to Christians, the recital of the Ten Commandments was (unfortunately) removed from the synagogue prayers, while retaining the other aspects of Temple service – the Psalms, the *Shema* and the Priestly Blessing.

The *Amidah* contained a prayer against first *latzeddukim* (the Sadducees), then *lameshumadim* (the apostates) and at one time even against *lanotzrim* (the Christians) but nowadays the prayer is against *lamalshinim* (the slanderers).

The *Alenu* prayer was first recited by Rav of the third century who lived in Babylonia. It contained words “... they worship vain things...” which Christians found objectionable. In 1703 the verse was ordered stricken from the *Siddur* by the Prussian government: it has never been restored in the Ashkenazi prayer book.

Likewise, Roman rulers over Judah found the prayer following the *Shema* –

"Blessed be His glorious kingdom forever and ever" – treasonous; and thus the Jews whisper this verse to this day, except on Yom Kippur.

In 456 the Persian King decreed that the worship of one God was forbidden. The Persians believed in two gods, and Babylonian Jews were ordered to cease reciting the *Shema*.

The Reform prayer book

While traditional Judaism strove purposely to differ from the customs of other religions and thus to make a "fence" around our Faith – if they kneel, we stand; if they bare their heads, we cover them – some German Jews, influenced by the emancipation that came after the French Revolution and by the reaction that followed, wanted to show conformity and modernise the *minhag* by introducing reforms.

1000 years after Rav Amram of Babylon wrote his famous *Siddur*, the first Reform prayer book appeared. It used the Sephardi pronunciation of Hebrew with a translation into German. Two ancient ideas were dropped – the restoration of sacrifices in a rebuilt Temple (those who plan to restore animal sacrifice will only hinder the rebuilding of the Third Temple), and the return to the land of Israel of all Jews. (Repeating substantially the same prayer day after day was likened by some to the "prayer wheels" of oriental religions).

By its very nature, prayer was developmental; and while the books of the Bible had been declared fixed after the time of Ezra the Scribe by the men of the Great Assembly, it was never intended to canonise the prayer book.

It was in America, with freedom of expression and freedom from persecution, that Reform movements flourished. The *Siddur* of Rabbi Wise, *Minhag America* (1857) further rejected the idea that a descendant of King David would one day appear as the Messiah, and spoke of "redemption" coming to the world, rather than a "redeemer". Thus Reform was the product of persecution on the one hand and emancipation on the other.

American Jewry now consists of Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist. The latter regards Judaism as a civilisation with religion as only one of its elements. It views God as an impersonal "Power" outside ourselves that makes for righteousness in the world.

Water means life

One of the world's most pressing problems today is that of water shortage. Israel is certainly not exempt.

We have taken up a project to contribute towards the cost of erecting a new reservoir in Israel. I invite all concerned to associate with this important project in whichever way they feel possible.

Gesher Reservoir **George Elias**
Chairman

President: Sir Sidney Hamburger
Elitex House, Moss Lane,
Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 8AD

In each issue I find so much interesting information and so many names which remind me of my youth in Baghdad. I think you are doing a great job in preserving our Babylonian tradition.

Kibbutz Moaz Haim **Jacob Bekhor**

Circumcision

Circumcising the purposefully-existing extra flesh of the foreskin, apart from being hygienic in any period of time, as well as in this day and age, has a great moral significance. All living creatures are fruitful inherently. Whereas for Man, the understanding and thoughtful especial creature, the fruitfulness must first sanctify the benevolence of The Creator. This is why an unbounding importance has been attached to Circumcision by our patriarch Abraham and his descendants through both his sons Isaac and Ishmael.

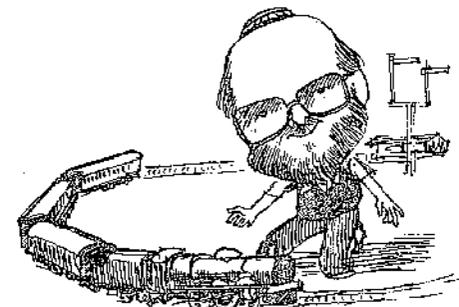
Tel Aviv **Shimon Murad Nissim**

As always, your magazine is interesting – but I was very concerned to see the little note on Circumcision. It appears to draw yet another line between Orthodox and Progressive Jews. As a Reform Rabbi may I assure you that we emphasise the vital importance of Circumcision, both for male children and for male converts to Judaism. We have our own Association of Reform and Liberal Mohalim, all qualified doctors, and they are frequently called upon to perform circumcisions for non-Jewish babies as well! Incidentally, they will also perform a *Milah* (but, of course, without the *brit* element) on a boy baby born to a Jewish father but non-Jewish mother, so that there would be fewer problems if the child were to wish to convert at a later date.

I can assure your readers that there is no way that the Jewish community could or should be split over such a fundamental matter.

On a completely different matter, my specific interest is well-known within the Reform Movement – it is the railways of the Middle East. I would always be interested to receive any memories of the railways in Iraq and the Middle East generally, in connection with research I am carrying out. Shalom.

Roman Avenue **Rabbi Walter Rothschild**
Leeds LS8 2AN **Sinai Synagogue**



Scribe: Both male and female circumcision were widely practised in the Near East, and Hebrew girls were lucky to be spared this ordeal.

At a recent discussion of the subject at the Spiro Institute in London, one of the advantages mentioned of circumcision was that it makes men more attractive to the women (and perhaps more exciting!)

The Bible tells us that Sarah conceived her first child only after Abraham was circumcised – at the age of 99. It appears that from the practical point of view, apart from better hygiene, removal of the foreskin results in better fertilisation, especially in the case of Jewish couples. (It is a

fertility aid for people with a small pom-pom).

The paramount importance of the *Brit Milah*, however, is that it is an honoured Jewish rite signifying God's Covenant in our flesh. But the way it is carried out is painful and can result in psychological damage that contributes to an inferiority and persecution complex that affects Jewish men all their lives.

Sof davar – finally, let us keep our ritual, but let us administer a light local anaesthetic to relieve the pain and to counter accusations of child abuse.

It is interesting to note that in Herodian times, Jewish Hellenists, wanting to assimilate to the Greek way of life, such as in sports events which were held in the nude, underwent an operation to obliterate the sign of circumcision by sewing a foreskin back!

I was very happy to receive a copy of *The Scribe* from a friend, who guessed correctly that I would find it of special interest.

It is gratifying to see that your foundation in the UK is publishing such a journal, which brings to its readers not only current events but also echoes from the past which strike a nostalgic chord.

I should be glad if you would send me regular copies of your journal.

Embassy of Israel **Shlomo Dayan**
Kathmandu, Nepal **Ambassador**

Israel key to world security

by Dr. Manfred Lehmann

In the aftermath of Soviet disintegration, only Israel constitutes an island of sanity, order and strength. The United States must turn to Israel to remain the staunch ally it always has been. In short: This is not the time to play around with Israel's security and strength.

It is in America's interest to let the whole ill-born peace process fade away, and enter into joint military arrangements to prevent the disintegration of a large part of the world.

I have noticed that in the recent issues a major part of the journal has been dedicated to Prof. Khabbaza's letters and comments, as well as all the criticism to those letters.

I think that it would be so unfair as regards other readers who wish to have their letters published in *The Scribe* and which might be more relevant and of more interest.

Tel Aviv **Moshe Levy**

Scribe: We endeavour to publish all the letters received and Prof. Khabbaza's correspondence doesn't squeeze out any other letter.

Rev. Monty Ezekiel

The late Rev. Monty Ezekiel who died recently in London was a popular and affable personality, and a well-known *mohel*. Born in Singapore to an Orthodox Baghdadian Jewish family, he lived at different times in Calcutta, Bombay, Australia and Israel before settling in London many years ago. Because of his learning he was well-known to Sephardi Chief Rabbis in Israel. He is survived by his wife, four children and grandchildren.

P.S.G.

Sephardi Haggadah

To: Rabbi Jonathan Cohen

Rabbi Abraham Gubbay was good enough to write a review of your Haggadah for *The Scribe* No. 47 and I take this opportunity to make a few comments.

1. On page 30, last paragraph, you refer to lighting candles at or near the dinner table. In Baghdad, lights were never at the table in case there is movement of the table. Shabbath lights usually hang from the ceiling.

2. On page 37, the Egg does not represent mourning but the rebirth of nature in this spring festival. Even when mourners eat a boiled egg it symbolises the hope for the continuity of life and not a sign of sadness.

3. On page 42, on the Seder Dish we usually have two kinds of Marror (bitter herb), one for the blessing of Marror and another kind for the sandwich – my grandfather used Cos lettuce and endive (*hend-ba*).

4. **Arammi obed Abi** means “a wandering Aramean was my father” and nothing else.

5. On page 77 you explain the play on the word *Waynasselu* without giving a translation of the sentence. **Messoula** means “pond”, **MESSOUDA** means “silo, storehouse” and not “net”. (Net is **MESSODA**). The proper translation is, **And they emptied out Egypt; they made it as a pond without fishes or as a silo without grain.**

The translation in the next paragraph is all wrong. It is a historical fact that the Egyptians had most of their imports by sea, and they had their storehouses at their seaports and thus away from urban areas for security reasons.

These storehouses had large quantities of goods, much more than would be found in a residential area. They were looted by the fleeing Israelites as they went out of Egypt. So the proper translation of this paragraph should read:

“Why, then, is the wealth acquired by the sea valued more highly than that acquired in Egypt itself? Because the wealth taken in Egypt came from private homes, but that taken at the sea was from their treasure houses”.

This translation makes more sense of the Hebrew passage.

On page 90: There is an attempt in some haggadoth to gloss over the meaning of **Motzi**. It is the blessing over bread. They write “motzi matza” together but in fact they are two blessings – one over Bread and one over Matza. After all, Matza is bread – it is unleavened bread.

N.E. Dangoor

Rabbi Cohen's reply:

I am grateful for your interest in *The Sephardi Haggadah* and honoured that it should have been reviewed in your newspaper.

I read with interest your comments and re-researched the questions raised, as well as discussing them with a number of *Talmidei Hachamim*. I list below my conclusions with reasoning and/or source material where applicable:

1) On page 30 I refer to the Halachic requirements that the place where dinner is eaten be lit. There does not seem to be any

objection in the Halachic sources – including Shulhan Aruch and Ben Ish Hai – to the lights being at the table. In fact Shulhan Aruch specifically calls them “the lights on the table”.

2) My source for the egg on the Seder dish being a symbol of mourning is *Kol Bo*, quoted by Kaf Hachayim. He also mentions two other reasons, but not the one you suggest. Keter Shem Tov also gives the reason of mourning, and though he adds that he remembers seeing somewhere in the writings of the Gaon of Vilna an objection to this, he offers no alternative.

Spring generally is a time of hope for continuity and rebirth, and hence Nissan is the month for freedom – as I wrote on page 60. (It is probably no accident that Easter, commemorating a supposed resurrection and also celebrated with eggs, falls around the same time). It may be that the idea of rebirth was also intended by the Sages when they initiated the custom of an egg, but the commentators only emphasise its relation to the Temple. If you look carefully at my commentary you will see that I suggested not only mourning for the Temple but also hope for its speedy rebuilding which is – as you say – the correct Jewish way in mourning.

3) The custom of having two types of Marror, one for the Mitzvah and one for Korech, is not mentioned in Ben Ish Hai (or in the Haggadah of his teacher R. Abdallah Somekh) or Kaf Hachayim, though it is referred to by a number of less well-known latter day authorities. Shulhan Aruch lists five types of Marror, all of which may be used in any combination, but concludes with the words “it is preferable to use only lettuce”. This preference originates from the Talmud and I explain its reason on page 35, para 3.

The second type listed in Shulhan Aruch is which the Gemara identifies as *Hendbi* and which would certainly seem to be philologically identical to the Arabic “hendbi” and our “endive” (or chicory). From the responsa I referred to, it would seem that lettuce and endive were combined in a variety of ways. In Egypt, endive was eaten for the mitzvah and lettuce for “korech”; in other places the reverse was done, or the two were eaten as a mixture, or endive only was eaten. However, even if these various customs do constitute one minhag, and there is a reason for it, the problem remains that it contradicts the halacha, that whenever it is available, lettuce – and only lettuce – should be used.

For this reason, and following the principle of giving preference to halacha over kabbalah when they seem to conflict, Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef rules that lettuce only should be used. Rabbi Shalom Cohen (of Yeshivat Porat Yosef) and Rabbi Yaakov Hillel place endive, if it can be obtained, in one of the two bowls and lettuce in the other, but agree that lettuce should be eaten, for both marror and korech.

4) In the commentary on page 64, I demonstrate clearly how I arrived at my translation of **Arammi Obed Abi**, following Onkelos and Rashi. It seems to me, from the context, that this is how the author of the Haggadah interpreted it. The more familiar “wandering Aramean” follows Ibn Ezra, and a more straightforward reading

of the biblical text, but does not fit the homiletic context of this section of the Haggadah.

5) On page 77, I translate **Messoula** as “the depths of the sea” echoing the song of Moses (Ex. 15:5). “Deep pond” would have been just as good.

You are right that the word **Messouda** can also mean “fortress”; in translating it as “nets for trapping birds” I followed the commentaries of Rashi, Rashbam and Tosafot on this very passage as it occurs in Berachot 9a and Pesachim 119a. The word for net can be spelt either **Messoda**, as in Eccl. 9:12, or **Messouda** as in Job 19:6, so there is no problem there.

7) The translation you object to in the next paragraph (on page 77) is based on the account given in Mechilta (Ex. 15:9). The Midrash states that the Egyptians brought the wealth from their storehouse along with them when chasing the Israelites (as a symbol of their certainty of victory); when the drowned Egyptians were thrown up onto the shore for the Israelites to see, their treasures were thrown up with them and taken. Hence “the wealth taken at the sea had been brought along by the Egyptians from their treasure houses” and that is why it was “valued more highly than that acquired in Egypt itself”. Perhaps an explanatory note in the commentary would have made the meaning clearer. (I find this too far-fetched – N.E.D.)

Convincing as historical speculation may sometimes be, one must hesitate to incorporate into the Haggadah a theory which seems to contradict this ancient and traditional source, unless another of similar stature could be found to support it.

8) I am not familiar with the Haggadot you refer to which attempt to gloss over the word **Motzi** – but I think that it is quite plain on page 90 of *The Sephardi Haggadah* that it is understood to refer – as you say – to the blessing for bread; so we are in agreement on this.



DICK STRIBLOCK

'Oh, God Bless You, Sirs — Thank . You,
Thank You, Thank You'

GRATITUDE TO TERRORISTS
FOR RELEASING HOSTAGES

Meer Basri's Memoirs

The Association for Jewish Academics from Iraq (P.O. Box 1147, Mevasseret Jerusalem 90805, Israel) has recently published Meer S. Basri's memoirs – **Life's Journey from the Banks of the Tigris to the Valley of the Thames**, in Arabic. It has already attracted the attention of Orientalists in Israel and abroad.

Other books of Mr. Basri's, all in Arabic, include:

Eminent Jewish Men in Modern Iraq

(Israel, 1983)

Political Personalities in Modern Iraq

(London, 1987)

An Anthology of Poetry (Israel, 1991)

Kurdish Personalities (London, 1991)

We hope to review some of these important and interesting books in future issues●

The Baghdad Connection



by Maurice M. Sawdayee, Ph.D.

This is a 1991 revision of Dr. Sawdayee's 1977 dissertation entitled: *The Impact of Western European Education on the Jewish Millet of Baghdad: 1860-1950.*

The book demonstrates the failure of the victors of WWI to build nation-states on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. The turmoil that we now see in the Middle East is a direct result of that policy. The efforts of the nation-state to impose one identity that would give birth to a unified culture was doomed to failure.

In the end, the Babylonian Jewish Millet paid the price of the policy to Arabise Iraq. It was a disaster for this ancient Jewish community, an educated, skilled, industrious and enterprising minority, that was denied recognition in modern Iraq, to be uprooted from its homeland of 2,500 years.

It was also a disaster for Iraq. Deprived of the moderating influence of its Jewish element, Iraq embarked on aggressive policies that led to the 8-year war with Iran, the Gulf war to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi annexation, and now the relentless persecution of the Kurds and Shia's.

However, all is not lost. The future of the Middle East lies in a confederation that recognises the rights of all the nationalities of the region, in which Israel can play a leading part.

(The author left Baghdad in 1951, and, after stays in Israel and Iran, now lives in New York, where he is a Consultant on Middle East affairs. We hope to include extracts from the book in future issues of *The Scribe*).

Dr. Sawdayee writes: "I could not have expressed any better the message of my book than you did in your review"●

Otzar Hassegullot (in Hebrew)
by Dr. Abraham Ben-Jacob – Jerusalem

A compendium of popular remedies, nostrums, quack medicines, charms and amulets, against various diseases, the evil eye and influencing people by magical formulas. It is a comprehensive collection of Babylonian superstitions and practices, and one more book in Dr. Ben-Jacob's endeavour to record Babylonian-Jewish culture.

The Poetry of Najeeb Kehela

(in Arabic) by Benjamin Kohelet

A collection of verses on various subjects including: The Ideal Woman, Speak to Me with Flowers; the Kubba.

The Golden Age

(in Arabic)
by Advocate Salim (Shlomo) Samuel
Shashoua of Israel

This definitive work is the first book which deals with the history of the co-operation between Jews and Arabs in Andalusia in the fields of Literature, Translation of classical works, Poetry, Philosophy, Etymology, Medicine, Politics and Astronomy.

The book was well received in Egypt and other Arab countries and Dr. Shashoua was awarded a prize for it by the Israel Ministry of Education●

I continue to marvel at the standard of professional excellence which is maintained by *The Scribe*. It has fascinating pieces on the contemporary Jewish scene, together with particular interesting insights into the great Iraqi Jewish community.

The Scribe is a tribute to your endeavours on behalf of Iraqi Jews which you have served with distinction for so long●
Canadian Jewish Congress **Alan Rose**
Montreal **Executive Vice President**

I am the son of an Iraqi, and I am forever hearing how the Jews expelled from Arab countries should never be forgotten, but I am afraid they will, simply because of the reluctance of the last generation born in Iraq to share their past. I can understand that much suffering and traumas were endured, but it is essential that the past is shared or there can be no future●

Epsom

David Moshe Kahtan

It may interest your readers to know that I have completed a new film documentary *2000 Years of Freedom and Honour: The Cochin Jews of India*, which premièred to an enthusiastic crowd of 1200 people at the American Museum of Natural History in New York on 9 January 1992. A video tape is planned for release in the near future.

Cochin Jews trace their origins to the reign of King Solomon (1000 BCE) and some trace their ancestry to Babylonian Jewry (e.g. the Koders and the Cohens)●
400 W. 119th Street, Dr. Johanna Spector
Apt. 8-0, New York,
N.Y. 10027, USA



Preparing for the Mendhi Ceremony of Cochin before a wedding.

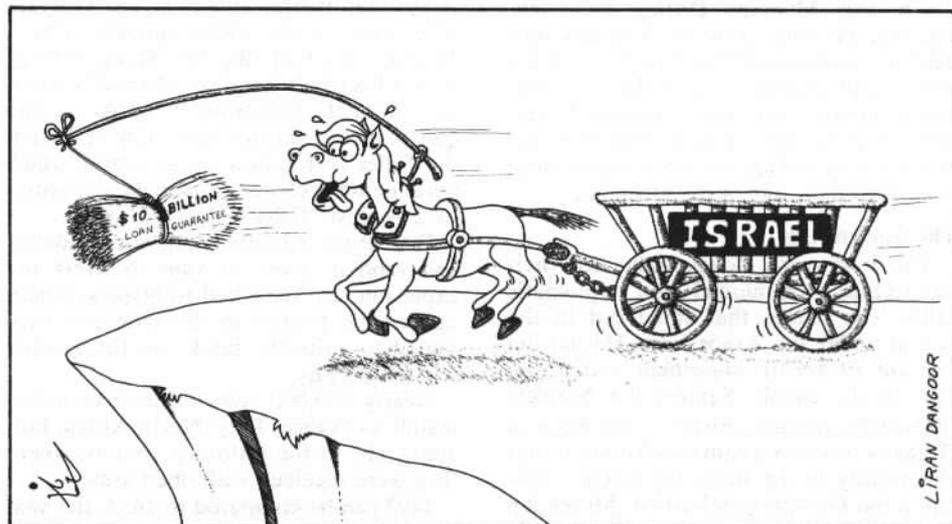
Ladino Songs

Mr. Martin Savitt, Vice-Chairman of the Jewish Music Festival, has sent us a tape cassette of Sephardi melodies from Bulgaria, sung by Clara Ormando, one of the most prominent Bulgarian actresses, an accomplished musician, a fine pianist and singer.

The songs were collected from older people and some have typical Bulgarian rhythms. They include:

Alta, Alta es la Luna (the Moon is shining high, high above), *Pajaro D'Hermosura* (Bird of Beauty), *Bar Minan* (What a stupid girl), *Oye, Jova* (Listen to my serenade, my darling).

The production was sponsored by the B'nai B'rith Jewish Music Festival Trust and is a useful addition to Sepharad 1992 Commemoration activities. The cassettes are obtainable from JMD, POB 2268, Hendon, London NW4 3UW●



IN PURSUIT OF THE LOAN GUARANTEES – BEWARE THE ABYSS

1492 and all that . . .

Jews lived in Spain from the beginning of the common era. Their numbers were enhanced after the fall of the Jewish state in the year 70, and they grew to become wealthy, numerous and well-established. In the seventh century the German Visigothic Kings tried to crush Judaism out of existence. As a result, as happened earlier in Iraq, Syria and Palestine in the face of Persian and Roman persecution, the Jews invited and helped the Arabs to invade.

In 711, Tariq ben Ziyad, who is reputed to be of Jewish descent, landed at Gibraltar (which is named after him) at the head of an army from North Africa. After burning his ships, he told his soldiers, "The sea is behind you and the enemy before you. You have no choice but to fight". They fought and conquered and thus started the nearly 800 years of Moslem occupation of Spain. As the Arab armies advanced, the Jews garrisoned the defences behind the lines and manned the administration of the newly conquered towns.

Baghdad gave the lead

At the beginning, the whole of this Moslem empire, from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, was under the same rule, with its political and cultural centre in Baghdad. This new capital city was in the heart of Jewish Babylonia which was still the seat of the splendid Rabbinical schools of learning presided over by the Geonim. Ancient learning entered Islam through four principal channels, the foremost being the Jews of Mesopotamia.

As a result of this very close political and cultural connection, large numbers of Babylonian Jews emigrated, together with their neighbours, to Spain, the new land of opportunity in the far west. The new Arabic-speaking Spanish communities looked to Babylonian Jewry for guidance, for leading and for spiritual sustenance.

The period of ancient Baghdad's greatest growth and prosperity corresponded to the 50 years from 763, when Mansur moved there, to 813, when the capital sustained its first siege. The period covers the reign of six caliphs: Mansur, his son Mahdi, his grandsons, Hadi and Harun-al-Rashid, and his great-grandsons, Amin and Mamun. During this half-century, the city grew from a new raw capital into the undisputed first city of the world with enormous material resources and a population of over 2 million. Thereafter, Baghdad started its slow decline, and Spain, which had asserted its independence from Baghdad, was in the ascendancy.

The Golden Age

The Jews were indispensable for their intellectual, commercial and diplomatic skills. The names that stand out in the period under the Arabs were Hasdai ibn Shaprut (915-970), statesman and physician to the caliph; Samuel ibn Nagdela (993-1063), prime minister of the King of Granada, who even commanded his armies victoriously in the field; the poets - Solomon ibn Gabirol (1021-1056), Moses ibn Ezra (1080-1139), and above all, Yehuda Halevi (1086-1141).

But the greatest glory of Spanish Jewry was Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (1135-1204), generally known as Rambam or Maimonides, who compiled some of the greatest classics of medieval Jewish literature. His most active years were spent in Cairo, for in 1146 a wave of Moslem fundamentalists crossed over from North Africa and gave the Jews the alternative of conversion or exile. Henceforth, for the next three and a half centuries, Jewish life in Spain was centred in the Christian states.

Religious intolerance

Everywhere in Europe, religious intolerance increased in the course of the Middle Ages, this resulting in the expulsion from England (1290) and France (1306). In Spain, the process was slower because the Jews were still needed there. But in 1391 a wave of massacre erupted. Very large numbers of Jews "hallowed the name of God" and met their deaths. Others saved their lives by nominally accepting Christianity, but secretly observed Jewish rites whenever they could. For pious Christians, the very existence of these insincere *Marvanos* was a horror, and demanded action.

Spain united - Inquisition

In 1469, partly through the work of one of their courtiers, Abraham Seneor, Isabella and Ferdinand were married and thus united Castile and Aragon into modern Spain. They ascended the Spanish throne as the Catholic Sovereigns in 1474. Isabella was a Christian fanatic determined to eradicate heresy from her realm. Pope Sixtus IV authorised her, a little reluctantly, to set up her own inquisition, responsible to her, not to the pope. The evil Spanish Inquisition was thus set up in 1479. The first Inquisitor was Thomas de Torquemada, himself reputed to be a converted Jew.

Within 25 years about 350,000 converted Jews, Moslems and heretics were persecuted and cruelly tortured; 28,000 were condemned to death and some 12,000 of these were burned at the stake.

Expulsion

In the meantime, Ferdinand and Isabella continued to battle against Granada, the last pocket of Arab rule in Spain. The year 1492 saw events move quickly. On 2 January, Boabdil, the last Moorish king, kissed Isabella's hand in token of surrender. After the expulsion of the Arabs, the queen turned on the Jews. On 31 March the Edict of Expulsion was signed which gave them the choice of baptism, departure by 2 August, Tisha B'Av, or death.

Don Isaac Abrabanel, a court adviser and scholar, tried in vain to avert the expulsion. He then fled to Naples, where he became banker to the king and continued to write the books on Bible study and philosophy.

Nearly 200,000 Jews decided to leave, mainly to France, Italy, North Africa, but, above all, to the Ottoman Empire where they were received with open arms.

1492 can be compared to 1453, the year in which the Ottomans captured Constantinople, which led to the emigration of men

of art and learning from that city to all parts of Europe and gave a boost to the Renaissance. Likewise, Sephardim fanned out to greener pastures around the Mediterranean and even to the New World, starting new Sephardi communities all over the globe.

In 1494, with the murderous Inquisition in full swing, the pope confirmed upon Isabella and Ferdinand the title of "The Catholic Sovereigns" in recognition of, among other things, "their zeal for the faith, and the purification of their dominion from the Jewish heresy".

It is odd that the Church of Rome, which apparently hasn't changed its convictions, has been considering the beatification of Isabella. Will Hitler be the next candidate for sainthood? After all, Isabella killed her thousands, but Hitler killed his millions.

Agreement with Columbus

It appears that Columbus had knowledge of people who had earlier crossed the Atlantic, but was unable to interest Isabella in his plan to go to the East by travelling to the West. Some were even afraid he might fall off the edge of the world!

Encouraged by the fall of Granada, Columbus was sent for. The queen still wanted a no-loss arrangement, and when her two *converso* financial ministers agreed to raise the necessary funds privately, she gave her approval.

Columbus sailed with three ships on 3 August and reached the West Indies on 12 October, which is still celebrated in many American states as Columbus Day.

When Columbus arrived in the island which he named Hispaniola, there were some three million Indians living there. They led a primitive but simple life: they were unclothed, they recognised no private property, they practised free love and lived on fish and fruit, mainly pineapple. The vast majority were killed by imported disease, such as smallpox, for which they had no immunity. Fifty years later, only 200 remained.

In return, the Spaniards are said to have brought syphilis back to Europe.

Five hundred years on, it is America that is ruling the world: the New World running the old, having destroyed the empires that were keeping the third world under control. If this process continues, Western civilisation could, in due course, be swallowed up in the quicksands of the rising populations of Asia and Africa.

As one observer predicted, the 21st century may yet see a return to 19th century-style colonialism.●

The edict of expulsion of Sephardi Jews was dated 31 March 1492, according to the Julian calendar in use at the time.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII corrected the Julian year, which was 11 minutes and 10 seconds too long. As a result, 11 days were suppressed; thus, the 500th anniversary of 31 March 1492 would fall on 11 April 1992.

It is interesting to note that Gregory's correction brought the Western calendar back in line with the extremely accurate Jewish calendar which was officially introduced by Hillel II in 359 C.E.●

Happy Birthday, Columbia

**Columbus, the Jew, discovered the New World;
Columbus, the Catholic, massacred the Indians.**

Among many books on Columbus that appeared recently, are:

A. Christopher Columbus
The Voyage of Discovery 1492
by Samuel Eliot Morison
Bison Books Limited – £6.99.

B. Christopher Columbus – Master of the Atlantic
by David A. Thomas
Andre Deutsch, London.

C. In Search of Columbus
by Hunter Davies
Sinclair-Stevenson – £16.99.

A Jew and a Moslem were comparing their holy men. The Jew started with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "These are ours", countered the Moslem. "Islam follows the pure religion of Abraham". The Jew offered Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon. "These are all ours", replied the Moslem. "We exalt them as worthy prophets of God". "What about Job, Jonah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Ezra?" asked the Jew. "These, too, are ours, they are all mentioned in the Koran", insisted the Moslem. In desperation, the Jew asked, "What about Habaquq?" The Moslem thought for a while, then promised to go and find out. At midnight he came knocking at the door of his Jewish neighbour. "Khoja, Khoja", he shouted. "Habaquq, too, is ours!"

The above anecdote came to my mind when I read the above-mentioned three books, which all deny Columbus's Jewish origins.

... & 1942

Whichever way you juggle the figures, there is a Jewish tragedy in every year of the calendar. Last January marked the 50th anniversary of the Wannsee conference in a Berlin suburb which sealed the fate of European Jewry, and which led to the Holocaust of the 6¼ million.

Hitler wanted to use the Jews as hostages and as pawns but the Allies would not play.

The role of the Mufti

Any thoughts the Germans had of sending the Jews to Madagascar were ended with the arrival of the Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin Huseini, in Germany, and his meeting with Hitler in November 1941. The Mufti warned Hitler that letting the Jews leave Europe and most likely end up in Palestine, would incur the wrath of the Arabs, who wanted to support Hitler. Thereafter, the doors were closed, and further emigration of Jews from Europe was forbidden.

The role of the Mufti, and of the Palestinians that he represented, in the massacre of European Jewry, must never be forgotten●

Anti-Jewish hypocrisy

There has been a tendency through the ages to try and obliterate the Jewish connection. Many Christians do not know that Jesus was a Jew. Very few realise that January 1, the beginning of the civil calendar, was meant to mark his circumcision. For centuries, Catholics were obliged to eat fish on Friday. When a recent pope realised that this was an old Jewish custom, he abolished this requirement. (An enterprising fishmonger was quick to advertise – "Now you can eat fish every day"). A recent biography of the 500 most important people in history did not include Moses, the great lawgiver, and a cornerstone of modern civilisation.

As for Columbus, Book A lists a dozen countries claimed as his origin, but no mention of the possibility of his having Jewish origins. Book B dismisses Columbus's aquiline nose, the Jewishness of his mother's name (Susannah), and a tendency to be economical with his earnings, as "not amounting to a row of beans". Book C confidently asserts that "the view that Columbus was a Spanish Jew is now dismissed by all the leading scholars".

I place all three authors in the same category as those "revisionists" who try to deny the Holocaust.

Was he, or wasn't he?

In fact, Spanish scholars have tried to explain the fact that this great hero of Spanish history was born in Genoa, Italy, by saying that his parents were Jewish, or ex-Jewish refugees from Spain. In 1391 the Church unleashed the most ferocious pogroms and attacks on Jews throughout Spain in an effort to force mass conversion. Over 50,000 Jews were slaughtered. Columbus's family must have been among many who escaped to neighbouring countries. His family did not speak Italian; he spoke Castilian Spanish, the main component of Ladino – the language of Sephardim.

Columbus apparently had something in his background he wished to hide.

He boasted about his connection with King David, and had a penchant for Jewish and Marrano society. The name Colon, or Colombo, was not uncommon among Italian Jews.

Mysterious signature

His mysterious signature is susceptible to a Hebraic interpretation. Letters that he wrote to his son, Diego, have been preserved. In the corner appear the Hebrew letters *Bet Heh*, for "B'ezrat HaShem" (with the help of God). Columbus began his first account of his voyage with a reference to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. In one document he refers to the Second Temple by the Hebraic term "Second House" (*Bayit Sheni*). He dates its destruction as being in the year 68 in accordance with the Jewish tradition. He seems to have deliberately postponed the date of his sailing until 3 August, while all was ready for the purpose the previous

day, which was the unpropitious Jewish fast day of 9 Av, the deadline for Jews to leave Spain. He took no Christian priests with him.

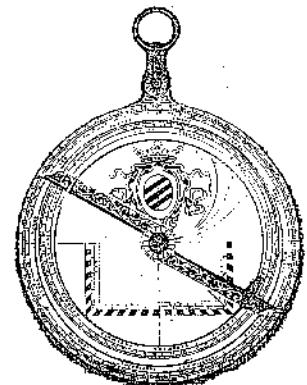
His surgeon, Marco, his doctor Maestro Bernal were among five or six Jews who shipped out with him, including his interpreter, Luis de Torres, who was given the honour to be the first to land in the New World, and who spoke Hebrew and some Arabic.

Salam Aleikum or Shalom Aleikhem?

This led some Arabs and Arabists to claim that the first words with which Torres greeted the natives were *Salam Aleikum*. In fact, it is more likely that the greeting was *Shalom Aleikhem*, as Columbus may have thought that he would encounter the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

Columbus's first letter home was addressed to Luis de Santangel, chancellor of the royal household of Aragon, who, with another *converso*, Gabriel Sanches, treasurer of the court, were the main financiers of the expedition, in which they may have seen a possible escape route for their former coreligionists.

Columbus took with him on his expedition the translated writings and charts of the great rabbi and astronomer, Abraham Zacuto, to whom he was introduced by one of his most influential patrons and supporters, Fray Diego de Deza, another *converso*. Zacuto had perfected the Astrolabe, a navigational tool which had been invented by one of the great Jewish scholars of the Middle Ages – Rabbi Levi ben Gershon. The Astrolabe gave sailors precise sun positions, helping them to ascertain latitudes with greater accuracy. →



THE ASTROLABE – invented by Rabbi Levi ben Gershon (RALBAG), and perfected by Rabbi Abraham Zacuto. At school in Baghdad, we were taught that the Astrolabe was an Arab invention.

Columbus's signature

I believe the three letters in Columbus's signature which look like XMY followed by "el Almirante" (the Admiral) are Hebrew characters and not Latin. From right to left they are Ein, Mem and Alef which stand for Izri Me'et Adonai (my help is from God)●

Forest Hills, N.Y.

Josh Horesh

cont'd from previous page

Biblical obsession

Columbus was inspired almost to the point of obsession with Biblical visions: he expressed his ambition that his success as Admiral of the Ocean Sea would ultimately allow him to capture Jerusalem! In later years, Columbus wrote the *Book of Prophecies* in which he invokes Ezra repeatedly; perhaps this is further proof of his ambition to be a saviour of the Jewish people, just as Ezra put Judaism on its right course and led 40,000 Babylonian exiles back to Jerusalem. He wrote, "Had not Isaiah foreseen the gathering of the faithful on Mount Zion for the culmination of history?"

It is a sign of anti-Jewish bias that the New World was not named Columbia. For the same reason, Columbus was unpopular when he died in 1506. A year later, an influential writer published a book in which he gave the new Continent the name of Amerigo Vespucci on the false claim that he was there before Columbus. His claim to have reached mainland America was never substantiated. In this way, all continents now begin with the letter A, the pre-eminent letter of all alphabets (Europe-Auropa).

Some feel that the search for Jewish ancestry for Columbus is untimely now. Columbus initiated the massacre and enslavement of native peoples while on the island of Hispaniola. Considering the disastrous impact of 1492 on both Native Americans and Jews, it would be far more appropriate, they say, for Jews to identify with the Indians than with Columbus.

But while Columbus may not be popular in America right now, for Jews it should be different. The momentous voyage of discovery had a dual purpose: for the Jews and ex-Jews who backed it, supported it and financed it, it was to find a new world where people can live in freedom, away from the bigotry and persecution of the Old World. For the Catholic Monarchs who sanctioned it, it was to convert the natives to the "one true faith", or have them exterminated in the spirit of the Inquisition, because they would not embrace Catholicism. Columbus, too, had a dual identity. Columbus, the Jew, discovered the New World; Columbus the Catholic, killed the natives.

As we rediscover the Jew in Columbus, we can all rightly admire and be proud of his achievements.

Men from Outer Space

When Columbus and his men landed from their impressive ships in the West Indies, all dressed up and carrying arms and flags, the simple naked natives thought the visitors had come from outer space. This reminds me of a puzzling episode in Genesis Ch. 6:1, 2, 4.

"And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair and they took them spouses, whomsoever they chose. There were giants in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old men of renown".

I believe that Genesis is the story of the

agricultural civilisation started by Adam, when he discovered the wild wheat some 9,000 years ago. There were a number of domesticated settlements in the Near East, while elsewhere people continued to live by hunting. What I think happened was that a group of warlike giant hunters came across one of these farming communities and were thought to be "sons of God" - in other words, men from outer space. And just like the Spaniards did on their first discovered island, they helped themselves to the tame and fair women of the area. Sex was not then the closed shop that it became afterwards. The giants of Genesis might even have pretended that they came from the sky. I believe this explains a puzzling mystery of the Bible.

"When men began to multiply" refers to the population explosion that took place after the last ice age came to an end. This demonstrates the great antiquity of the first chapters of the Book of Genesis.

A sense of proportion

When the Spanish Prime Minister visited Jerusalem in December, he spoke at the President's residence, and urged that both the glorious and tragic eras of the Jewish presence in Spain be kept in proportion, but he did not elaborate.

This is indeed a strange and an unwarranted remark. For nearly 800 years the Jews were the driving force, first behind Moslem Spain, and then behind Christian Spain. Their performance was most extraordinary "in proportion" to their numbers.

As regards the tragic era, Mr. Gonzalez may find the brutality of the Inquisition and the inhumanity of the Expulsion small only "in proportion" to Hitler's Holocaust.



Bush to Assad: (Meir Ronnen)
"Gosh, Hafez, 99.9% in favour of another term is fantastic!
Wanna tell me how ya do it?"

I was interested to read your article entitled "Jews from Arab Countries v. Palestinians".

So that I may further benefit from and enjoy your erudite bulletins, I would be grateful if you would put me on your mailing list for future issues.

London SW11

F. Khalastchi

Mixed Marriages

Passover and Crossover

This year, Passover and Easter happen to be on consecutive days. A little boy of a mixed marriage said, "On Saturday we visit my Jewish grandparents for Passover; on Sunday we visit my Christian grandparents for Crossover".

More than half Jewish marriages in America are with a non-Jewish partner. In Britain, it is one-third. It is usually a Jewish boy who marries or cohabits with a Christian girl. For, while the Jewish wife is more caring, she is also more demanding.

We have come to look on those who "marry out" as lost to our community. We mourn them, we feel sorry for them and we regret their loss. As a rule, however, the traditional roots of the Jewish partner are deeper and stronger than the non-Jewish partner. Likewise, many gentiles who marry Jews had already rejected Christian doctrine and are attracted to Judaism. A little girl from an intermarried family told a friend, "I am half Jewish and half cocker spaniel".

For many intermarried couples, Judaism looks like the best compromise. Seventy per cent of intermarrieds start out intending to give children a Jewish education. The practical side of Jewish life - especially the Sabbath and the Seder - presents good opportunities in shaping a Jewish identity.

We often hear at Jewish weddings the father of the bridegroom declare, "We haven't lost a son; we have gained a daughter". In mixed unions, given half a chance, the non-Jewish partner can be brought into the fold and thus enhance, rather than deplete our numbers.

The Orthodox establishment is reluctant to throw a lifeline to mixed partners: the terms are too hard to carry out. Thus, they will either drift away into the wilderness or, if they are lucky, they will join a Reform synagogue. The Chief Rabbi, who is paid to uphold the Orthodox constitution, can offer no comfort, although he admits that Reform offers a safety net.

At his recent visit to the Sephardi Synagogue, Chief Rabbi Sacks said that Genesis shows quarrels between brothers: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers. Why did God not create just one son? It demonstrates that we can worship God in our different ways - Sephardi and Ashkenazi.

Well, what about Orthodox and Liberal; Jewish, Moslem and Christian?

Orthodox Jews must show understanding and support for Reform Jewry. **Ecumenism, like charity, must start at home.**

"Born of a Jewish mother" cannot remain the basic touchstone of Jewishness, while we complain of our falling numbers. For one thing, it is arbitrary and has little biblical or historical foundation. And when it comes to observance, many Jews who are halachically defined as such, pay only lip service to Orthodox practice - their kashrut, Sabbath observance, synagogue attendance and Torah study are of Reform standards or less. An obvious improvement would be to define a Jew as one born of a Jewish mother or a Jewish father, and raised in the Jewish faith.

We must try to regain our relative strength now that Israel has come into being.

Sepharad 92

I am thoroughly disappointed by the air of celebration attaching to the programme of activities of Sepharad 92 both in Spain and elsewhere, which I find odd. What is all the excitement about?

If we are trying to remember the infamous Edict of Expulsion signed by Queen Isabella on 31 March 1492, then we should declare that date in this 500th anniversary year, a day of fasting, to honour the memory of the thousands of Jews who were tortured and burned alive at the stake, with the words of the *Shema* on their lips.

If we are celebrating the repeal of that evil edict, let us say so. But such repeal is now merely academic and cannot by itself whitewash what happened 500 years ago. Spain should join our fast, make adequate private and communal restitution to the victims of the Sephardi holocaust, and pay reparations to the State of Israel, similar to the German reparations after the war – if only in the form of loan guarantees.

If, on the other hand, we are trying to celebrate our escape to freedom in other lands from the Spanish Inquisition, this should be made clear and it can be done without Spanish participation.

It is reported to us that antisemitism is still widespread in Spain, and the influential Church of Rome has yet to reverse its hostile attitude to the Jewish people and to Israel. Do we have to proclaim what good boys we have been these past 500 years, and how loyal we have been to the language and customs of our oppressors?

This year happens to be the 50th anniversary of the Wannsee conference where the Final Solution was decreed. I wonder if someone would sponsor a reception at the German embassy to "commemorate" that edict of extermination of Ashkenazi Jewry that was decided at that Berlin suburb in 1942, and invite the German ambassador to a shul service to listen to some nostalgic Yiddish songs?

After all, the German government was quick to offer full restitution to all its Jewish victims, and give Israel vital support during its formative years. Five hundred years on, the Spanish government has hardly made any meaningful gesture.

Some writers have denied that there was a *cherem* on travel to Spain. While Iraqi Jews were not directly involved in the expulsion, we were always aware that a *cherem* existed on travel to that country. I for one never set foot there till the sixties, and still refuse to pass through Germany. (The edict of expulsion was formally repealed in December 1968).

Sepharad and Babylon

Two reflections can be made on the Sephardi saga from the Babylonian point of view. The term "Sephardim" is still applied to the descendants of Jews who lived in Spain so long ago. Similarly, we can use the term "Babylonian" to Jews who lived in Iraq as well as to their descendants indefinitely. As one *Scribe* reader has rightly pointed out, our Iraqi identity covered only 30 years of our 2500 year-long history in the land of the two rivers. We should thus keep calling ourselves Babylonians rather than Iraqis.

The other reflection that comes to mind is that the virtual expulsion of one million Jews from Arab countries this century is no less momentous than the expulsion of Jews from Spain and Portugal. Sephardi Jews have kept to their Spanish Ladino language for 500 years. Is it conceivable that the Jews of Iraq, who had a history more ancient and no less phenomenal than the Jews of Spain, as well as Jews from other Arab countries, will continue to speak Judeo-Arabic 500 years from now?

From Dayan Pinchas Toledano N.E.D.

I must say at the outset that I share your feelings, and as a matter of fact a unanimous resolution was taken in Venice by the Standing Committee of the Conference of European Rabbis, that it is forbidden to celebrate Sepharad 92, but rather we should commemorate this event in the history of our people by fasting and prayer.

As you know, I come from a very long line of rabbis and I am a direct descendant of Rabbi Daniel Toledano, who was the Chief Rabbi of Toledo in 1492 and was tortured together with his Community which resulted in their expulsion.

From Dr. Jose A. Nessim

I share your opinion on the subject. We must never forget the holocaust our ancestors went through in Spain. It is our obligation to commemorate the memory of all those who gave their lives simply because they believed in the G-d of Israel.

The Sephardic Educational Center organised and presented a most successful two-day Expulsion 1492 Conference in Los Angeles. Twelve international scholars presented historical facts about the persecutions, killings, forced conversion, expulsion, etc. We showed the movie "The Holy

Office" which depicted the horrors of the Inquisition in Mexico around the 16th century.

Our Center is taking 50 of its young adult leaders to Turkey for four days to thank the Turkish government and people for having received us in 1492 with open arms, and then we will travel to Israel to celebrate independence and freedom.

The SEC feels strongly that Spain must educate its citizens on the tragic events preceding the expulsion, and the expulsion, for it is part of Spanish history. They should be told that 90% of Spanish citizens have Jewish blood flowing in their veins. Secondly, we insist that the Spanish government should show good will, not just by having little commemorative events during 1992, but by returning to the Jewish people one of the two Sephardic synagogues in Toledo.

From the Communal Rabbi Dr. Abraham Levy

I fully appreciate your feelings about Sepharad 92 and as you have read in the *Jewish Chronicle* they are feelings which I partly share.

The point I am trying to make is that Sepharad 92 can be used for advantage by the Jewish Community and if this is the case then we should try to do so and benefit from it.

I will certainly discuss the matter of a half-day fast with other Rabbis.

Scribe: As the anniversary of the Edict of Expulsion falls in the month of Nisan, it is impossible to institute a fast then. The anniversary can best be remembered on Tisha B'Av, the day of other Jewish tragedies, which was the deadline for departure from Spain, and which is observed this year on Sunday 9 August.

India and Israel

by Percy Gourgey, MBE

The recent announcement that India has agreed to exchange ambassadors with Israel will be warmly welcomed by many people, including Indian Jews in Israel, India and elsewhere, as it will be of considerable benefit to both countries and all interested parties.

It was in 1949 that Prime Minister Jawarharlal Nehru on a visit to the United States said that "Israel is a continuing fact that must be recognised".

In 1950, India extended de jure and de facto recognition of Israel, withholding, however, the exchange of diplomatic representatives. India agreed to the setting up of an Israel Consulate in Bombay, the main commercial centre in India, where also the majority of India's Jewish community lived. However, the consulate was accredited subsequently to the State of

Maharashtra, and not to the Central Government, possibly to placate Arab and Moslem opinion.

One of the reasons for India's recent decision was to enable it to take part in the peace process begun by the historic Madrid Middle East Peace Conference last October. Another reason is to counter the increased hostility emanating from Pakistan over the Kashmir issue, and Pakistan's statement that she now has a nuclear capability which Indians regard as a threat to India's national and territorial integrity. India's announcement follows that of China which was also thus enabled to take part in the peace process.

It is to be hoped that India could, because of her good relations with them, persuade Arab leaders to visit Israel, as did President Sadat in 1977, to engage in direct negotiations resulting in the crucial Egypt/Israel Peace Treaty of 1979. This would be India's great contribution to the Madrid Peace Process.



China

India

Shamir

Bush

International Red Cross

The recent Habash fiasco when, at the request of the PLO, the Red Cross sent a private jet to transport arch-terrorist Habash for medical treatment in Paris, demonstrates that, contrary to its pretensions, the International Red Cross is a Nazi and an antisemitic body that is ready to embarrass Israel and hurt the Jewish people.

It cannot be forgotten that during WWII the IRC had full knowledge of what was going on in the Nazi death camps, but decided to keep quiet.

Moreover, the IRC still does not recognise the Red Star of David of Israel.

No Jewish money should be donated to these enemies of humanity.

At the end of WWII the International Committee of the Red Cross supplied Nazi war criminals with passports on the recommendation of the Vatican. The files recently opened at the orders of Argentina's President Carlos Menem and a CIA report of 1947, confirm the role of the Vatican in making Argentina a safe haven for the architects of the Holocaust. The Vatican refuses to open its files.

Throughout the centuries, Jew-baiting has been the Vatican's stock in trade. It is a pity that such a terrorist organisation can still survive in our midst.

For many years I and other women volunteers have run an organisation called "Yad Letinok", which gives material and emotional assistance to any pregnant Jewish woman that asks for our help. Most of the families we work with are from an Oriental background, and in these days of unemployment, it is often the women who are holding down the job in the family, and this precious job is often one like house-cleaning, which she can't and mustn't do in the last months of her pregnancy.

We are desperately short of very tiny baby clothes and would be grateful for any baby equipment. Secondly, I would welcome ideas. I would like to set up some kind of work place. Medium labour-intensive, so that we could provide gainful occupation for the many women who come to us for help. Please get in touch with me with any ideas that you have. We are overwhelmed by requests for help from women seeking an alternative to terminating their pregnancy.

19 Cabirim Street
Haifa 34384, Israel

Mrs. Helen Porath

Many thanks for *The Scribe* issue No. 52. I enjoyed every word of it; it has deep meaning.

The article of Mr. Naim Dangoor Peace is not enough was great. In fact all his articles are great. As they say, "The apple does not fall far from the tree". I was very sad about *Killings and Rescue in Baghdad 1972-73* by Mr. Meer Basri. I think every Iraqi Jew must appreciate what Mr. Basri went through to save our brothers.

I believe very much there is Debit and Credit in the world. The fact that Iraq was eight years at war with Iran, and then Kuwait, which cost Iraq over one million men, may be that was the price of the blood of our innocent brothers.

Manila, Philippines

David Shamoon

Page 10

Shanghai

I write with regard to the excerpt from *Shanghai* by Harriet Sergeant, *Scribe* 52.

I object to the implication that Sir Victor Sassoon and Ellis Hayim singlehandedly brought about the end of German Jewish refugee immigration to Shanghai, and this is not so.

To give a little background - Sir Victor Sassoon left Shanghai in time, but Ellis Hayim and an ad hoc committee, composed of representatives of the three Jewish communities, were arrested and thrown into the infamous Bridge House jail in August 1942, after it was learned that a meeting had been held to discuss how to thwart an alleged plan by the Japanese to liquidate the refugees by placing them on a ship and sinking it at sea. Ellis Hayim was held in Bridge House for several weeks, under intense interrogation by the Japanese gendarmic, he was then hospitalised and remained under guard, without visitors, until he was freed to be repatriated to Britain. The rest of the committee remained in Bridge House to the end of the war. I mention this as a reminder that each one's life was on the line those years.

Anyone wishing to know about the German Jewish refugees in Shanghai should find *Japanese Nazis and Jews* by David Kranzler interesting.

I know that your publication is and will be a research source; there is only one *Scribe* awaited by 2,000 eager readers, and it should be as accurate as possible.

I am enjoying your journal - you are amazing. A friend who was interested in Spain was most interested in the Columbus, etc., articles.

A.M.

Scribe: The excerpt from the book *Shanghai* was dealing with an event that took place in 1939. The letter suggests that refugees continued to arrive during the war.

In the welcome January 1992 issue No. 52, interesting and informative as usual, reference was made to Mr. D.E.J. Abraham. As a member of the then Jewish Sephardic Community of Shanghai, I wish to add a tribute to our most revered and beloved leader, Mr. David Ezekiel Joshua Abraham z.l.

We were proud and honoured to have had this saintly prince of a man as our leader. He was very much like a father to us all - kind, concerned, compassionate, caring and ever helpful, and was held in deep veneration by all who were lucky enough to have known him - truly, a paragon of virtue.

These noble and admirable traits were ably and capably inherited by his illustrious son, Reuben, who in addition, was an outspoken champion of the down-trodden.

I read Harriet Sergeant's book, *Shanghai*, and was not impressed. I think it was most unfair and unkind to Ellis Hayim and Sir Victor Sassoon, horribly insinuating that their actions contributed to the slaughter of the ones who were refused entry into Shanghai.

As far as I remember they were both actively engaged in saving as many refugees as possible. What was written was libellous. This book should have been written by an old China hand who lived through these events.

Palm Beach, Florida

George Saul

From Harriet Sergeant,
author of *Shanghai*.

I am delighted to be given the right to reply to your reader in Florida. He is upset that I described the meeting in May 1939 of Sir Victor Sassoon and Ellis Hayim in their capacity as leaders of the Sephardi community with two Japanese officers. At the meeting they asked the Japanese to halt Jewish immigration into Hongkew as the community, they explained, lacked the funds to care for more Jews. This the Japanese did.

I derived my information from David Kranzler's excellent book, *Japanese Nazis and Jews*. His reference is to a summary of the interview from a Foreign Office file, FO KP No. 5 May 1939. I interviewed many "old China hands". It is always pernicious to generalise, but the majority expressed antisemitic views. Your reader, I fear, would have liked their version even less than he does mine.

I think you are mistaken when you criticise me for highlighting anti-Jewish remarks. As my married name is Cohen, one can accuse me, if one is so inclined, of many things but not that.

Thank you very much for pointing out my other deplorable errors for which I am deeply sorry.

Minatu-ku,
Tokyo

Harriet Sergeant Cohen

Why did the Japanese continue to encourage Jewish immigration to Hongkew (*Shanghai*, by Harriet Sergeant)?; because in July 1934, the Japanese Foreign Ministry announced a plan to invite 50,000 German Jews to Manchukuo (*The Fugu Plan*, by M. Tokayer and M. Swartz, New York: Paddington Press, 1979). The Jewish capital and financial skills were exactly what the Japanese needed for their growing Empire. The Japanese presented their proposal to Rabbi Stephen Wise in New York in December 1939; their proposal did not interest Rabbi Wise.

Toronto

Norman Track

Scribe: Had the Fugu Plan been implemented, Japan would have opened its doors to Jewish refugees just as the Ottoman empire did 500 years ago to Sephardi Jews.

Japan has a soft spot for Jews and Judaism. Some historians believe that the Japanese royal family is of Jewish origin. They identify the Shindai or holy class of Japan as descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.

They maintain that OSEE who became the first King of Japan in 730 BCE is none other than HOSEA, the last King of Israel who was exiled to an eastern destination and died in 722 BCE.

Immediately after WWII, many disillusioned Japanese wanted to discard their militant religion, but did not want to adopt the religion of their conquerors. They seriously toyed with the idea of converting to Judaism, the religion of the victims of their Nazi allies. But the Jews, smarting from the Holocaust, were not in the mood to take up that golden opportunity.

Harriet Sergeant, who now lives in Japan, may wish to investigate the roots of Japanese/Jewish relations and possible future cooperation.



1917 – A Baghdadi family in Shanghai

(Three readers have pointed out that the picture published in the last issue was incomplete and two of the persons were wrongly identified. We print above the full picture, which was kindly supplied to us by Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Moses of New York).

This is the correct caption, with additional information.

Left to right— sitting: **Aaron Moses**; **Mozelle (Maisie) Abraham**, née Hayim (wife of Ruby Abraham); **David E.J. Abraham** – Founder and President of the Sephardi Community in Shanghai, great grandson of David Sassoon; **Flora Moses**, née Shellim (grand-daughter of David Sassoon – wife of Aaron and mother of Lionel, Sybil, Aline, Winnie and Cyril); **Sassoon “Fat Boy” Nissim** (brother of Aaron Moses and Mozelle Abraham); **Mozelle Abraham**, née 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** (future Mrs. Ezekiel Toeg); **Sassoon S. Somekh** (half-brother of Mrs. Elia Shahmoon, married to Rebecca Abraham, sister of David); **Sybil Moses** (future Mrs. Maurice Dangoor).

Seated in front: **Grace Ezra**; **Cyril Moses**.

Historical Notes: Sassoon Moses was born in Bombay in 1879. He married Mozelle, daughter of Sir Manasseh Meyer and lived in Singapore. They had no children. He changed his name to Sassoon Nissim, his full name being: Sassoon Ezra Meir Moses Ezra Nissim.

When Sassoon’s uncle Moses Moses changed his name to Mac Nissim, the *Times of India* quipped: You can change Moses, but you can’t change noses! (That was before the advent of plastic surgery). His cousin’s son, Ellis Moses, later became an editor of the *Times of India*.

Sassoon Nissim’s visit to the family in Shanghai was the occasion for this photo. He sponsored the party after he won the Irish Sweepstake. He is dressed in the garb of a Chinese businessman, known as compradore.

Grace Ezra lived in Hong Kong, where she was court stenographer. She came to Shanghai on visits. Related to Mrs. David Abraham.

Sir Manasseh Meyer (1846-1930) was born in Baghdad and settled in Singapore in the early period of its development. He prospered greatly and owned half the property of the Colony. He was the Jewish leader of the settlement and in the first world war he donated a whole squadron of aeroplanes to Britain●

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Regarding your article **Jews and Communism** in issue No. 48, I wish to point out that the late Elie Eliachar did not advocate the liquidation of the Jewish State. He was in favour of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza in accordance with the 1947 UN partition resolution which granted Israel its legitimacy.

(Our article was not intended to give that impression – Israel’s legitimacy does not derive from the 1947 UN recommendation, which was rejected by the Arabs, but by our historical rights in the region. – Ed).

A recent study at the Haifa University has discovered that the academic level of Oriental Jews has dropped to fourth place behind Ashkenazi Jews, Christian Arabs and Moslem Arabs. The State helps the Ashkenazim, the Churches help the Christians and Arab countries help the Moslems. Sephardi Jews are channelled to technical schools which do not help them to acquire a profession and do not qualify them to enter a university●

Enfield, Middlesex Dr. Gideon Giladi

Many people in Israel of Iraqi origin have changed their names to new Hebrew ones. It would help if they could also give their original names so that people like me could place them and perhaps recognise them as old school friends or acquaintances●

Barnes, SW13

Ezra M. Hakkak

I read with interest in your January 1992 issue your review of Mr. Giladi’s book **Discord in Zion**. Mr. Giladi apparently overlooks the fact that the Palestinians are against both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews, and any alliance between the Palestinian Arabs and Oriental Jews is not practical.

Israel is a melting pot and, after a few more generations, the differences between Ashkenazim and Sephardim will disappear through intermarriage, military service, schools, etc.

Mr. Giladi should remember that the only safe haven for Jews anywhere in the world is in Israel●

New York

Salim Khabbaza

We read *The Scribe* with interest and would like to be on your mailing list.

We publish a monthly newsletter, *Sephardic Highlights*, and we are taking the liberty of adding your Foundation to our list●

**American Sephardi Federation
New York**

**Suri Kasirer
Executive Director**

It is my pleasure to acknowledge, with many thanks, receipt of *The Scribe*. We deeply appreciate your kindness in sending this material to the Library of Congress●

**The Library
of Congress**

Washington D.C.

Judy C. McDermott

I wish to correct an insertion in *Scribe* No. 51. My mother’s father was Haron Nathan and not Heskell ibn Dawood. That was my father’s father●

Lausanne-Ouchy

Mrs. K.M. Reuben

Sephardic Cooking

by Copeland Marks
 Donald I. Fine Inc., New York
 Publication Date 24 March 1992
 \$24.95

600 recipes created in exotic Sephardi kitchens from Morocco to India.

On the 500th anniversary of the dispersal of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, *Sephardic Cooking* presents a unique collection of the varied and distinctive cuisines of the Sephardim, with interesting historical notes. The selection includes dishes from Iraq, Kurdistan, Turkey, Persia, India, Asiatic Russia, Afghanistan, Egypt, Yemen, Ethiopia, Greece, North Africa. The author explains how he includes all these countries under the Sephardi title. Like Spain, they all relate back to their Baghdad origins and the traditions and ritual of the Babylonian Talmud●

Jewish Eggs

No culture prepares eggs this way, other than Jewish communities of the Middle East. They are also known as Sabbath eggs. The longer one cooks them at very low heat, the softer they become.

- 6 raw eggs in the shell, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon tea leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon coffee grounds
- 3 or 4 onion skins for colour
- 1 teaspoon corn oil
- 1 teaspoon vinegar

Put everything into a pan and cover the eggs well with water. Bring to a boil, cover the pan, reduce the heat to low, and cook for at least 5 hours, preferably 6. Add water now and then as it evaporates. Remove the shells and serve when wanted●

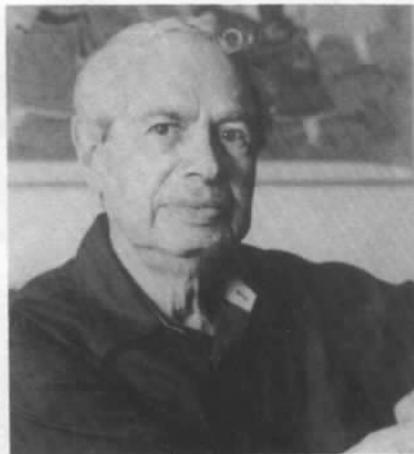
Mahmoosa

- Scrambled eggs and potato fry
- 1/2 cup corn or peanut oil
- 1 large onion, chopped (3/4 cup)
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 lb potatoes (about 4), peeled, cut into 1/4 inch cubes
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper, or more to taste
- 10 fresh coriander leaves for garnish

Heat the oil in a large skillet, add the onion, and stir-fry over moderate heat until golden. Add the turmeric, stir in for 1 minute, then add the potato cubes and stir continuously for 5 minutes to brown them. Cover the pan for 1 minute to ensure the potatoes are softened, and uncover.

Push the potatoes to one edge of the pan. Pour the eggs into the open space and let them set for 1/2 minute. Then incorporate the potatoes into the eggs, add salt and pepper, and scramble the mixture over low heat for another 5 minutes so that both potatoes and eggs are light brown.

Serve warm, garnished with the coriander leaves. Serves 6●



The Author

Chelo - Persian Rice

- 2 cups raw Basmati rice
- 4 cups water, salt
- 4 tablespoons corn oil
- 1/8 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 medium potato, peeled, cut into 1/4 inch thick slices

Rinse the rice well, then cover with lightly salted water and let soak for 6 hours. Pour off nearly all the water, leaving about 1/2 cup.

Bring the 4 cups water to a boil over moderate heat; add the rice and remaining liquid. Cook for 8 minutes, drain, and rinse under cold water. Set aside.

Put 3 tablespoons of the oil in a large enough pan, add the turmeric and 2 tablespoons water, and shake the pan briskly to mix. Put the potato slices in a single layer in the pan.

Pour the rice over the potato and heap it into a pyramid shape. Cover and cook over low heat for 10 minutes. Sprinkle the remaining tablespoon of oil over it, and cover the pan with paper kitchen towels or a cloth towel. Cover that with the pan cover. Cook over low heat for 20 minutes to allow the bottom crust to become crisp and brown.

Serve the rice and *tadiq* (bottom crust) warm. Serves 6 with other dishes.

Variation: The *tadiq* is often made with only rice rather than potato or onion. Simply omit the potato and pour the half-cooked rice over the oil and turmeric in the bottom of the pan and continue the usual steps. The rice itself will develop into a crust●

English-Arabic Cookery Terms

Aniseed	Yansoun	Nutmeg	Lebb Joz'l Tayyeb
Bay leaf	Waraq al-ghar	Orange-blossom water	My Qeddah
Capers	Kebar		Fefel Ahmar Helou
Caraway	Karawya	Paprika	Baadanos
Cardamom	Hayl	Parsley	Fefel Aswad
Cayenne	Fefel Ahmar Harr	Black pepper	Fefel Ahmar
Celery	Krafs	Red pepper	Fefel Daraz
Cinnamon	Darjeen	Long pepper	Fefel Helou
Cloves	Qrunful	Sweet pepper	Fefel Asmar
Coriander	Kazbara	White pepper	Barbeen
Cubebs	Kababat	Purslane	My Warid
Cumin	Kammoun	Rosewater	Sdab
Curry	Kari	Rue	Zafran
Dill	Shbint	Saffron	Semsem Barri
Fennel	Habbet Helwa or Razmayij	Sage	Melh
Fenugreek	Helba	Salt	Semsem
Garlic	Thoum	Sesame	Bharat
Ginger	Zanjafael	Spices	Shukar
Gum Tragacanth	Kthira	Sugar	Summaq
Mace	Guesher Joz'l Tayyeb	Sumac	Tamur Hend
Marjoram	Baraghoush	Tamarind	Kurkum
Mastic	Mastaki	Turmeric	Zaatar
Mint	Naanaa	Thyme	
Mustard	Khardal		

Dolme Kadoo Halvoee

Stuffed Pumpkin for Sabbath

- 2 cups Basmati rice, well rinsed, soaked in 4 cups water with 1 teaspoon salt for 4 hours, drained
- 1/2 cup yellow split peas, soaked in 1 cup water for 4 hours, drained
- 1 pumpkin (3 to 4 lbs)
- 2 tablespoons corn oil
- 2 medium onions, chopped (1 cup)
- 1 teaspoon ground cuminseed
- 3/4 cup raisins
- 1 tablespoon ground dried lime (*Numi Basrah*)
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 lb lamb or beef; 3 cups water

Drain rice and peas and mix them together.

Cut a 3 inch circle in the top of the pumpkin to make a lid. Scoop out and discard the seeds and loose strings. The pulp of the pumpkin remains intact. Set aside.

Heat the oil in a skillet and stir-fry the onions over low heat until golden. Add this to the rice and split peas. Add the cuminseed, raisins, dried lime (*limoo*), pepper and meat; mix well and fill the pumpkin. Cover with the lid.

Place the pumpkin in a metal colander and set this in a large pan, larger than necessary, to ease the removal of the cooked pumpkin. Add the water to the pan, cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce to the lowest heat and cook overnight for serving on the Sabbath.

Serve warm. Serves 8 or more●

I wish to congratulate you on your 20 years of the mission you took on yourself of publishing *The Scribe* for the community and the Diaspora.

The importance of this journal is in the letters it receives from all over the world.

You preserve everything we have forgotten and had happened before.

I came to Israel from Baghdad when I was a little girl. My memories of my life there are very vague and *The Scribe* puts it into perspective with the names of families and photographs you publish and the stories, phrases and legends you tell in a historical and political manner. This excites me and enriches me and gives me special happiness, like a person who has lost something and by accident found it.

I enjoy the recipes by cooking them and making better dishes for my father●

Tel Aviv

Dr. Lilian Joury

Bombay Reunion

A "Back to your roots" reunion is planned for all former Habonim members in India and former residents in Bombay for 17 to 26 November 1992. It is being organised by Eze Bashi in New York whose address is 252-31 Leith Road, Little Neck, New York 11362. Telephone: (718) 631 2322. Fax No: (212) 944 8621, together with Joe Zilka in New South Wales, Australia. All interested in attending are asked to contact Eze for further details, for hotels and flights, etc. It is hoped to visit Matheran and Cochin as well. There is, already, as Eze says, a "tremendous response" from people in New York, California, Canada, England and Australia

- P.G.●