

Not ethnic cleansing, but population relocation is the key to peaceful co-existence both in Yugoslavia and the Middle East.

The SCRIBE

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A HAPPY NEW YEAR 5753 TO ALL OUR READERS AND FRIENDS

Israel's two legs

The rights of the Jewish people to its homeland rest on two legs, which can be generally termed Ashkenazi and Sephardi.

The Ashkenazi leg is based on historical association, biblical promises and the Balfour Declaration. The Sephardi leg is based on all that plus a continuous presence in the region since time immemorial.

The roots of the present Middle East impasse go back to the First World War. When Churchill failed to deliver a knock-out blow to the Ottoman Empire at Gallipoli in 1915 the British government turned its attention to the dissatisfied Arab element who wanted devolution from Turkey. The post-war peace treaties and the machinations of Foreign Office Arabists gave the Arabs full control of the liberated territories without regard to the rights of other elements - Jews, Kurds, Armenians and others.

Had the Arabs pursued a multi-national policy, all would have been well. But their plan was to arabise the whole region at the expense of its minorities. There followed the Assyrian massacre, denying the Kurds any form of autonomy, expulsion of all Iranian and pro-Iranian elements and persecution of the Jews, who were established there a thousand years before the Arab invasion. The present problems of the Middle East which keep bringing the region to the brink of war, are all inter-related.

As for the Jews, they became entitled to their own devolution. The million Jews expelled from Arab countries with such ignominy, brought with them to Israel territorial rights in their countries of origin. These territorial rights enhance other Jewish claims over Palestine and entitle the Jews to the whole of Eretz Israel as their least share of Middle Eastern territories. It was no longer necessary to look upon the Palestine problem as a conflict between "two rights" as Weizmann and others kindly conceded. The rights of the Arabs in Palestine had to be satisfied elsewhere. It is tragic that repeated attempts to negotiate an exchange of populations between Palestinian Arabs and Jews from Arab countries ended in failure. The policy of successive Labour administrations was to try and integrate the Arabs and make use of their cheap labour. Israel is now paying the price of this short-sighted thinking.

On 1 June 1976, Mr Mordechai Ben Porat took a number of the WOJAC's Executive to visit Prime Minister Rabin in Jerusalem and exchange views on the subject of Jews from Arab countries. I pointed out that the conflict in the Middle

East is not with the Palestinians but with the neighbouring Arab countries, that there must be an overall settlement including population exchange and that the Jews who came to Israel from Arab countries brought with them territorial rights in their countries of origin that Israel can make use of in the course of peace negotiations.

Rabin's angry reply was, "Are you suggesting that the rights of Ashkenazim are inferior to those of Sephardim?" I was taken aback by such a response, and thought that this attitude could do Israel no good.

A year later, a right wing government was swept to power on a wave of Sephardi votes. But Likud has not shown any better judgement in dealing with the rights and needs of Oriental Jews. A month before the recent elections, I had a meeting in London with Mr. Shamir's adviser and urged him to highlight in the election campaign the rights of Jews from Arab countries. I offered a substantial sum to cover publicity costs but nothing was done.

Election results

Opinion polls predicted that the right block would get 57 seats, the left block 57 seats, with the Arabs holding the balance with 6 seats. In the event the right block got 59 seats and the left 56 but the Arabs still held the crucial 5 seats to give Labour an overall majority of one. As a result, only Rabin could form a government. To camouflage his dependence on the Arabs, he brought in the Shas religious party. The defeat of the Likud was self-inflicted. The turnout was lower than in 1988 due to the fact that many Likud supporters stayed away from the poll. The outcome would have been different if Likud had paid more attention to the rights and needs of Sephardi Jews.

The same Yitzhak Rabin is now back as prime minister. Has he gained more wisdom in the intervening 16 years? Let us hope that the carrot of the loan guarantees will not induce the present government to trade Israel's survival in return for short term peace and benefits.

Two Iraqis in Cabinet

Rabin's administration includes two Iraqi-born ministers, both aged 56, both immigrated to Israel in 1950:

Moshe Shahal (Fattal) - Police and Communications; MK since 1971; minister of energy and infrastructure 1984-1990.

Binyamin Ben-Eliezer (Fuad Abdel Ezair) - Housing; served in the Israel Defence Force 1954-1984, retiring with the rank of brigadier-general.

Beware the abyss

From *The Daily Telegraph*

The June 23 Knesset result will long be remembered in history as a great disaster to hit the Jewish people everywhere. The election of the socialists in Israel under General Rabin is not merely an economic catastrophe, it is akin to Ken Livingstone being totally empowered to discuss peace with the IRA.

It is also a government in the mould of General Pétain in the France of 1940, who gave away most of France in exchange for "peace"; the rest of France soon fell into German hands.

It was the then Labour Zionist leaders who, in 1921, acquiesced in giving the Trans-Jordanian 80 per cent of the country to the Arabs in the hope of peace.

The same socialists who, in 1923, said nothing when Golan was taken from the Jews and given to the Syrian Arabs to placate territorial appetites. Now Rabin and the rest of the Labour leaders are competing to hand over parts of Judea, Samaria, Gaza District and Golan to the Arabs to appease them yet again.

Any but the wilfully blind can see that what PLO leader Khadumi recently reiterated, is still true: that the "West Bank" is only the first step. That still is the policy of the PLO; the rest of Israel is to follow at will.

Meanwhile, the bulk of the Jewish people in Israel are to be cooped up in the coastal plain (from nine to thirty miles wide), a perfect target for missiles from Iran, Iraq and Syria and with winding, indefensible frontiers, ideal for intruding murderers from the many Arab countries.

But, worst of all, as many hundreds and thousands of Jews return to their homeland, they will find that there is little room left for them and their great grandchildren. The proposed Jewish state is about the size of Devon and Cornwall.

Cockfosters, Herts

Mervyn Kersh

If an illusion of a peaceful settlement is based on the most infamous principle of "Land for Peace" which proved to be an utter and complete failure whenever it was adopted, then Rabin's policies will have to be resisted by all the means at the disposal of Jews everywhere.

It will be the irony of ironies if Jews, having been expelled from Arab countries and elsewhere, are made to endure yet another eviction, only this time from the land of Israel itself or, alternatively, again suffer living under Arab rule for no other reason than to expediently accommodate their oppressors of old.

Moshe Kahtan

In the footsteps of Adam by Naim Dangoor

The Jewish calendar, Anno Mundi, is supposed to begin from the creation of the world, but it is absurd to pretend any longer that the world was created merely 5753 years ago, and that it will come to a sudden end in the year 6000. New definite evidence of the Creation has just been discovered by astronomers. It shows that the Big Bang which created the Universe took place at least 15 billion years ago, and that the Universe will finally collapse into nothing in about 20 billion years' time (so much for eternal life!)

In the adjoining article, Rabbi Maller dates the Jewish year from when Adam left the Garden of Eden, which makes a lot of sense, as it marks the start of our civilisation and the beginning of history. The period before Adam's departure from the Garden can cover all the millennia of prehistory. It changes our time scale from the ridiculous to the sublime – Anno Mundi becomes Anno Adam.

Dating the Jewish Calendar

by Rabbi Allen S. Maller

Rabbi of Temple Akiba, Calver City, California
Condensed from an article in *Dor le Dor*,
Spring 1992

Published in Jerusalem by the
Jewish Bible Quarterly

The Christian calendar starts from the birth of Jesus. The Moslem calendar begins with the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina. By analogy, one might expect that the Jewish calendar would start either from the birth of Abraham (the first Hebrew) or from the Exodus out of Egypt (the birth of the Israelite nation). Yet the rabbis in the second century who made up the current Jewish calendar chose Adam as their starting point.

The first Adam represents the beginning of civilised mankind. The exit of Adam from the Garden of Eden symbolises the transition of mankind from a Stone Age state of hunters and gatherers, to the more advanced Bronze Age society of farmers and city dwellers.

When did this take place? The most famous attempt to calculate "the beginning" was that of Irish Bishop James Usher who sets the date for the departure from the Garden of Eden in the year 4004 BCE. The current Jewish calendar is based on the calculation of Rabbi Yosi ben-Halafta in his second-century book, *Seder Olam Rabba*, by adding the life-spans in Genesis and Exodus. According to him, Adam exited the Garden of Eden and became civilised 3760 BCE (5753 years ago).

There is another way to estimate when mankind became civilised. According to archaeologists, this fundamental development in human evolution first took place in the Tigris-Euphrates valley almost 6000 years ago. The earliest writing discovered so far comes from the Mesopotamian city of Uruk (Erech, Gen. 10:10) and dates to about 5500 years ago.

By beginning the Jewish calendar with Adam, the rabbis equated human history with urban civilisation and writing. Indeed, all written references to political events in the archaeological records can be dated by the Jewish calendar. The first dynasty in Egypt arose in the 7th century of the Jewish calendar. The first stone pyramid was built in the 10th century of the Jewish calendar and the great King Sargon of Akkad (2371-2316 BCE) lived in the 14th century of the Jewish calendar. Abraham was not born until the 20th century.

While *homo sapiens* has been evolving for tens of thousands of years, civilised mankind only begins about 58 centuries ago. The Jewish calendar is the oldest in the world. The closest to it is the Mayan calendar, only 26 years behind●

Naim Dangoor adds: Considering the Hebrew calendar to start, not from the creation of the Universe, but from the beginning of recorded history, changes our time scale from the ridiculous to the sublime.

The invention of the Hebrew alphabet by Abraham or by his tribe has had a more far-reaching effect on civilization than the introduction of earlier, crude forms of writing●

Although the Bible begins with the fascinating account of the creation of the Universe and the creation of Time, I have always maintained that the Book of Genesis is essentially the story of our civilisation, with Adam as the hero of that story.

Who was this Adam, where did he come from, where did he go, what did he do and where was the Garden of Eden? Rabbi Maller focuses his attention mainly on what happened in Mesopotamia, but the story begins much earlier.

The retreat of the last Ice Age climate took place some 9000 years ago starting, obviously, in equatorial Africa, and that is where Adam lived. Up until then people subsisted mainly by hunting, but as this became less and less rewarding Adam was inspired to move with his tribe eastward to southern Arabia, which was then uninhabited and was lush with virgin forests and fruit gardens. The Red Sea was still a lake.

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed". (Gen. 2:8).

Because the weather was not warm enough, it hadn't started to rain yet – the gardens were watered by mist, as Genesis tells us.

Where was the Garden of Eden – *Gannat Adan*, in Arabic? In Aden, of course, in southern Arabia. Adam spoke a version of ancient Arabic, and is reputed to be buried in Hejaz.

Adam discovers the wild wheat

It was in the Garden of Aden that Adam discovered the wild wheat – an event which was, by definition, the start of our civilisation, as men began to lead a settled life in agricultural communities. In keeping with ancient tradition, the historical Adam was honoured by naming him as the First Man (Adam ha-Rishon). Adam left the Garden to look for watered land suitable for growing the nourishing grain, which takes only a few weeks to grow.

"Therefore the Lord God sent him from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread..." (Gen. 3:23, 19).

The circumstances that led to the "expulsion" of mankind from the Garden, from a life of ease as gatherers of food to a life of toil as tillers of the ground, made of Adam a *persona non grata* and of our new condition as the "Fall" from God's grace. This attitude is further confirmed by the

story of Cain and Abel in which God looks favourably on Abel, the hunter and gatherer, and disapprovingly on Cain, the farmer. Cain's murder of Abel represents the traumatic transition to a new life-style, and the triumph of agriculture over hunting.

"And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Aden". (Gen. 4:16).

It is interesting to note here that one of the opinions in the Talmud mentions wheat as being the forbidden fruit that Adam ate in the Garden. The aphrodisiac quality of wild wheat promoted Adam's eating of the Forbidden Fruit being associated with the dawn of sexual awareness.

As the earth's climate continued to warm up, the *wadis* of southern Arabia soon became dry and civilisation had to move northwards to Canaan and Mesopotamia, where the first settled communities were located at the foothills of Kurdistan. Adam's son Seth is reputedly buried in Mosul.

The Deluge

Then at the time of Noah, 1656 years from Adam, the rains came – forty days and forty nights – which also caused the melting of the ice on the Turkish mountains, which brought about the Deluge in Mesopotamia. Historians often argue whether the Bible borrowed the story of the Flood from Babylonian accounts or vice versa. It was neither. The Flood story was common to the peoples of the Near East.

After the Flood, God said to Noah, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things". (Gen. 9:3). Bible scholars are puzzled why the generation of Adam was only allowed to eat fruit and herbs, while after the Flood animal flesh was allowed. In the early days of agriculture all animals were still wild and meat was hard to come by. The place of Noah in the march of civilisation is that he domesticated animals. This is graphically illustrated by the story of the Ark and the zoo that went into it.

Noah, who distinguished between clean and unclean animals, is likewise honoured by naming him and his family as the sole survivors of the Flood.

Adam, the founder of Monotheism

Adam has an even greater claim to fame.

The present Jewish calendar is lunisolar – the months being reckoned according to the moon and the years according to the sun. According to tradition, quoted in the name of Hai Gaon of Babylon (d. 1038), the present extremely accurate Jewish calendar was introduced by Hillel II in 358/59 CE. In the Biblical period the reckoning was from the time of the Exodus; then from the erection of Solomon's Temple, or the beginning of the reign of Kings; then from the Babylonian captivity. In Talmudic and post-Talmudic times, calculation was from the start of the Sellucid era in 312 BCE. Only when the centre of Jewish life moved from Baghdad to Europe did the calculation become Anno Mundi.

Attempts at reforming the calendar and making it symmetrical have repeatedly failed because it would tamper with the 7-day sequence and result in a roving Sabbath●

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mid-east confederation needed

SIR—The only effective way to avoid breaking up Iraq into three parts once Saddam Hussein has been neutralised or defeated (report, Aug. 20) is to create a Middle East confederation which would include that country with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait and Israel.

This should be the ultimate aim of the peace talks which were to resume in Washington yesterday.

Such a confederation could use the region's immense oil wealth for its advancement. It would also be powerful enough to save its individual countries from large expenditure on arms while leaving it strong enough to repulse threats from all directions.

Since ancient times, the region has been cursed by having a collection of aggressive but largely equal peoples who could be united only by outside conquerors.

The roots of Iraq's modern dilemma go back to the Cairo Conference of 1921 when Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, decided to give the country

over to Arab rule without regard to its substantial minorities. After the death of King Feisal in 1933 the Arabisation of Iraq started in earnest: the massacre of the Assyrians, denying the Kurds any measure of autonomy and systematic persecution of the Jews, an educated, industrious and enterprising minority which had lived in Iraq 1,000 years before the Arab conquest of the country.

The virtual expulsion in 1950-51 of the Jews of Iraq, a third of Baghdad's population, was a disaster for the country because they had been an important moderating influence.

The rulers of Iraq then embarked on aggressive adventures that led to the eight-year war with Iran, the occupation of Kuwait and the subsequent intensified persecution of the Kurds and the Shias.

When will Saddam's perplexed opponents wake to this important possibility, which has long been ignored?

NAIM DANGOOR
London SW7

Beginnings of Bombay Habonim

— a few reminiscences, by Percy Gourgey MBE
who attended the 32nd World Zionist Congress held in Jerusalem in July.

He was a great leader and a prophet. He is honoured as such in Islam; but, alas, not in Judaism. The story of his encounter with God demonstrates his belief in the One Supreme Creator. We may infer that Adam started monotheism, and that movement became widespread by the time his grandson Enos was born. "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord". (Gen. 4:26).

The story of the tree of knowledge of good and evil likewise demonstrates that Adam believed in Free Will — man's freedom to choose, and that he was not an automaton in the hands of destiny. Adam believed too that man was created in God's image and having many of His attributes — holiness, wisdom, love, compassion.

The story of the Creation in seven days also demonstrates that Adam and his followers observed the Sabbath as a weekly day of rest, a "back to nature" interlude, when we did not have to work, to cook, to build houses, to weave clothes. A taste of the "good old days", of the bliss of the Garden of Aden of the past, and of the utopian Gan Eden of the future.

Technology points to a life of ease, free of toil and of disease, of simplified food intake and improved human waste, which now pollutes us and our environment!

The rise of idolatry

After the Flood, despots in the mould of Saddam arose, who drank of the violent waters of the Tigris and who promoted the worship of idols and of themselves. But Monotheism survived in pockets in Western Arabia and in Canaan. The Bible abounds with such references. "Noah walked with God". "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord". "Noah built an altar unto the Lord". (Gen. 6:9, 8; 8:20).

Abraham, a direct descendant of Noah, journeyed from Ur to Canaan where he met Melchizedek, king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of the Most High God; the Patriarchs' encounters with various missionaries of God; Moses's father-in-law was most probably a believer in God; at Jericho, Joshua met a stranger with a drawn sword who told him, "... as a captain of the host of the Lord am I now come". (Jos. 5:14).

It is wrong therefore to attribute the start of Monotheism to Abraham.

Rehabilitating Adam

It is time to rehabilitate Adam and honour him not only as the father of our agricultural civilisation but also as the founder of Monotheism. When I was eight years old I asked my late grandfather, Hakham Ezra Dangoor, if our Patriarch Abraham — *Abraham Abinu* — had observed the Sabbath. I was told that Abraham had kept the Commandments by "inspiration". In fact, Abraham kept many Commandments by traditions handed down from previous God-fearing ancestors.

Brothers in Adam

Judaism, Christianity and Islam each committed the mistake of trying to obliterate and supersede its predecessors, claiming to have a monopoly of the Truth. In fact, we are all brothers in Adam, who have to recognise and respect each other as equals●

"Now boys, you have become members of Habonim, which is the Hebrew word for 'the builders', and it is a kind of Jewish boy scouts movement". With these words of introduction Habonim began early one bright Sunday morning in February 1935 in the gardens of the David Sassoon Library in Fort, Bombay. The speaker was the late Mr Albert Manasseh, Manhig or leader of Habonim who, together with his colleague, Mr Solomon Ezra living happily with his wife Juliet (née Marshall) in Jerusalem, spoke to six of us young boys of pre-Barmitzvah age before the meeting.

It is fitting to recall this occasion as there is to be a grand reunion of all former members of Habonim in India and other Bombaywallas in November 1992 in a nine-day seminar to be held in Bombay, Matheran, a popular hill station and camp site, and Cochin in South India where the oldest synagogue in the East is situated amongst an ancient Jewish community where Habonim flourished at one time. The reunion, called **Back to your Roots**, is being organised mainly by Eze Bashi in New York and Joe Zilka in Sydney, and it is hoped that many participants will come from those places as well as Canada, Israel and Britain.

The six boys were Sam Mansoor, now a doctor in Acre, Maurice Raymond (Moshe Rahamim) of Kibbutz Yagur, near Haifa, Ben Hayeem, a chartered accountant in Toronto, Eddie Simon, a computerist of Los Angeles, my dear late twin brother Archie, an engineer in Long Island, and myself, a journalist and writer in London. While we have all gone our separate ways, fond memories of those early years are cherished.

The movement received a great boost with the participation in it of the Ani family, especially of Rachel, the eldest daughter who later married Albert Manasseh. Courses began in Jewish history, the Bible and Hebrew language, Palestineography and Zionism, the performance of Jewish plays, camp outings, picnics, cooking tests, etc. Copies of the Habonim manual were received from the movements in Britain and South Africa and pen pals were made in those countries. From Fort area, the movement spread to Byculla, an area where a large number of Jews lived, Poona, Calcutta and Cochin. The youth showed great initiative in organising a dance band and various functions to raise funds, and training in boxing, and also first aid with the Bombay branch of the St John Ambulance Brigade, the officials of which were pleased to teach us.

Helping in the raising of funds in those early years — there were no subventions from the Jewish Agency at the time — were my elder sisters, Juliet and Molly, and Hazel David who, after her marriage, settled in Israel. There were also Jack Japheth, an energetic organiser who also later settled in Israel after leaving the Navy. His elder brother Maurice was an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi, a fine writer and speaker who later became a President of the Bombay Zionist Associ-

ation. In 1938 the Habonim magazine *Kol Habonim* was launched which encouraged us youngsters to test our writing skills.

In the forties, the years of the Second World War, some of us received officers' commissions in the Navy, such as Ben Hayeem and myself, and Abie Nathan, the prominent Israeli peace pilot who was born in Bombay and played an active part in Byculla Habonim, joined the Air Force as a pilot. He later joined the Nachara camp at Alibag, as did Eddie and Ollie Simon, which was off Bombay near the coastal village of Nadgaon where, according to Bene-Israel history, their ancestors landed in India over 2000 years ago. In 1943 we helped to found the Maccabi Sports Club with a water polo team in which the Gahtan brothers, who later settled in Israel, were prominent, as was also Isaac Mansoor and David Sopher, medical students, who were in the Indian Olympic team in London in 1948. A young member of Habonim was Abraham Sofaer who later emigrated to New York, became a judge and Legal Adviser to the State Department under Presidents Reagan and Bush. Habonim members were also in the Maccabi team in 1950 which took part in the First World Maccabi Games held in Israel, of which Sas Moses was the organiser, and in which was also Maurice Cohen, a great sportsman, a major in the Indian Army in the war, also serving in Kashmir.



UN March Past, Bombay, 1943, Habonim in Jewish detachment●

In the fifties Habonim became more closely associated with the Bene Akiva religious youth movement. At the time Silas Corin and Nissim Aaron, active in Byculla Habonim, settled in Israel and were active in the Indian Immigrants Association. Also settling in Israel were Ed and Ollie Simon and his sisters and parents. In 1962 there was a Habonim Camp in Matheran which I attended on a visit and in which active were my nephews David and Brian Keidan and their sister Edwina, and Moshe and Elie Gubbay, sons of a former President of the Bombay Zionist Association, Judah Gubbay, an emigrant from Baghdad who founded the BZA in 1920 with Joseph Ezra and Yeheskel Somekh.

The full history of the movement remains to be written. Looking back it may be seen to have fostered a sense of community, of attachment to and pride in the Jewish people and at the same time in cultivating the values of loyal citizenship to the country of one's birth or residence. Although the community was widely dispersed in other countries, a certain sense of fellowship remains, originating in a common Baghdadian/Babylonian background●

Judaism and Democracy

by Lord Immanuel Jakobovits

condensed from an essay in his book *Journal of a Rabbi*, published by W.H. Allen, London, 1967

Of all the great ideals making up whatever is best in "Western Civilisation", it is only democracy which does not derive its entire inspiration from the creations of the Hebraic genius and heritage. Social justice, human equality and freedom, the education of the masses; all these first found expression in the literature and history of Israel. Democracy, however, is essentially the legacy of ancient Greece. This admission does not mean that there is no democratic element in the Jewish conception of government, but **the contemporary notion of democracy is largely foreign to Jewish teachings.** Perhaps it is, therefore, just in this field that Judaism, especially through its now anticipated return to the political and constitutional arena of world affairs, can make its most significant contribution to modern thought and the solution of present-day world problems.

Jewish History v. Democracy

Democracy, in its simplest and truest analysis, means the rule of the people as determined and enforced by the will of the majority. Judaism and Jewish history predominantly express the ultimate triumph of the minority. The Jewish people itself was chosen "not because of their number" but as "the fewest of all peoples" (Deut. 6:7). Indeed, Israel's perennial survival affords the best illustration for history's choice of a minority destined to vanquish superior numbers and power. We celebrate the deliverance of "the many into the hands of the few", and Jewish tenacity has consistently defied the principle whereby right is decided by the majority.

The Moral Problem

Judaism sees in the democratic order a certain challenge to fundamental moral principles. Basically, democracy represents a mere extension of the maxim "might is right". Only power, the result of superior numbers, gives the majority the prerogative for having its views and decisions turned into law and imposed by force upon the minority. Wisdom does not inevitably bear any relation to numerical strength; only might does.

Again, the absolute rule of the majority in an imperfect society must of necessity stifle moral progress. If the masses, who are to be raised ever higher towards the ideal level of the moral law, are themselves the ultimate masters and creators of that law, its administration and enforcement, how can any moral advance of the human society be achieved? The mass of mankind under the law ensures their gradual progress towards its standards; the law under the mass of mankind must result in its gradual retrogression towards their standards.

The Religious Problem

Closely related to the moral issue is the religious problem. Right and wrong cannot be determined by the consent of the masses, who will sometimes concur with the perversion of the truth. If we were to assume that we should go after what

corresponds to the will of the majority in matters of right and wrong we should have to reject the teachings of Prophets and saints alike.

The International Problem of Today

In the international arena, democracy concedes to every nation the right to determine its own code of conduct as decided by popular vote. The popular vote – resting, as it does, on the will of the average individual – is therefore likely to be based on self-interest. And the interests of one national group of people must obviously often be opposed by those of another. Conflicting interests, which must exist, must, therefore, lead to wars, which need not exist, if factors other than self-interest were to determine national behaviour. That, in a democracy, is impossible.

Judaism, to solve these problems, provides a unique system of government. The dispensation of justice, according to the Jewish constitution, is a part of the duties of "judges", who themselves are merely the administrators, not the creators, of a supreme code of laws which is sovereign because it is Divine. **Judaism surrenders power to the law, and not the law to power as does democracy.** If universally applied, this system would also render wars impossible, or at least less likely, by replacing politicians – pandering to public opinion governed by self-interest – by saints and scholars who, whatever their nationality, will owe allegiance to the same, or at least similar, supreme moral standards of conduct the world over.

The Democratic Element of the Jewish Constitution

While Judaism cannot admit the infallibility of the majority implicit in democracy, it recognises that unrestrained autocracy is bound to lead to tyranny. These difficulties are resolved by the setting up of what we might call a limited democracy. On the one hand, eligibility to ruling offices is restricted to morally and religiously qualified persons; on the other hand, the people have the right to select these from a list of candidates thus qualified. Communal appointments are likewise subject to the popular consent of the governed. Furthermore, the people have the right to introduce legislation, especially in the economic field, as long as there is no rabbinic objection. Such legislation then has the same validity as decrees of the Sanhedrin or rabbinic ordinances, and any dissenting minority is forced to submit to it.

The Ideal Democracy

Rousseau has called democracy "a government for gods, too perfect for men". Judaism is inclined to agree with this view, as long as men are imperfect and thus incapable of using their votes with the discretion necessary to prevent the infraction of right. Moral leadership cannot assert itself or its authority through the ballot box until the elector, no less than the elected, is guided by the dictates of righteousness, not expediency. The education

of the masses is a prerequisite for the operation of democracy. Moses could never submit to popular clamour challenging his claim to power. Meanwhile, just as the British system today agrees to the appointment of judges without popular elections, so does Judaism – which regards its statesmen as executors of justice, not expediency – bestow authority on saintly philosophers, on men who know the law, rather than on the masses who would make it to suit their convenience. **And woe to the generation that would impose the popular will on its leaders! That curse is being visited upon our world today, and it is left to Israel's teachings once more to save mankind from its fury!**

Scribe: Let not the majority think that the minority is at their mercy. A determined minority can wreak havoc on an oppressive majority!

I read with interest Mr. Naim Dangoor's article (*Scribe* July 1992) about the Future of Democracy.

It occurs to me that if the people are not politically mature and sufficiently enlightened, the application of democracy may actually be harmful and even dangerous. This is specially true as far as the Arab and Moslem peoples of the Middle East are concerned.

When President Carter pressured the late Shah of Iran to allow more freedom of expression in that country, the result, as we all know, was a theocratic dictatorship which pushed Iran several centuries backward; when democratic elections were allowed in Jordan, the fanatic Islamic fundamentalists had the upper hand in the Jordanian Parliament; Algeria was about to suffer the same fate as Iran, had it not been for the timely putsch of the military.

It is clear, therefore, that apart from Israel, the peoples of the Middle East are not ready for democracy, and the introduction of democracy in Moslem and Arab countries is premature and dangerous!

New York

Salim Khabbaza

I found Mr. Dangoor's two articles in the last issue ('Let us privatise money', and 'The future of Democracy') full of very good ideas!

Bromsgrove, Worcs.

Albert Shasha

Mr. Dangoor's article on Democracy in the last issue was both interesting and disturbing.

The democratic system allows free speech and an independent judiciary and gives sovereign rights to the people.

Winston Churchill once called democracy "a very bad form of government but", he added, "the others are so much worse!"

Chesham, Bucks

Brenda Ralph Lewis

Naim Dangoor replies: Liberty, freedom of speech and the rule of law are not in question. I am only criticising the method for electing the government, and the "majority" concept, which is the cornerstone of democracy. I find the system whereby 51% can dictate to 49% of the people most "undemocratic"!

Ottoman Jews

While Sephardim all over the world are commemorating, in one form or another, the Expulsion from Spain in 1492, the Jews of Turkey have every reason to celebrate their welcome arrival in the Ottoman Empire 500 years ago.

However, these celebrations must not be limited to the Jews of modern Turkey, since for most of the past 500 years the Ottoman Empire covered a vast area including Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and the Balkans. The Jews of all these countries benefited from the tolerance of Ottoman rule; their descendants now number over 1 million worldwide. It is for this reason that for most Sephardim today the sad memory of the expulsion is tempered by their happy resettlement in their country of refuge.

Naim Gülerüz (laughing eyes), vice-president of Turkey's lay Jewish Council, recently came to London and spoke at a Ta'ali meeting in connection with this quinquennial event. This is a resumé of his lecture:

On the midnight of 2 August 1492, when Columbus embarked on his famous expedition to the New World, his fleet departed from the relatively unknown seaport of Palos because the shipping lanes of Cadiz and Seville were clogged with the expelled Jews. In the faraway Ottoman Empire, Sultan Bayazid II extended an immediate welcome to the persecuted Jews. He said, "The Catholic monarch was wrongly considered as wise, since he impoverished Spain by the expulsion of the Jews, and enriched Turkey".

Earlier, Jews expelled from European countries, including Karaites, had migrated to Turkey. When Mehmed II "the Conqueror", father of Bayazid, took Constantinople in 1453, he issued a proclamation to the oppressed Jewish community urging them to dwell in the best of the land in freedom and in wealth.

For 300 years following the expulsion, the prosperity and creativity of the Ottoman Jews rivalled that of the Golden Age of Spain. Four Turkish cities: Istanbul, Izmir, Safed and Salonika, became the centres of Sephardi Jewry. Most of the court physicians were Jews, and one of the most significant innovations the Jews brought was the printing press. In 1493, only one year after their arrival, the first Hebrew printing press was established in Istanbul.

Ottoman diplomacy was often carried out by Jews. Jewish literature flourished, and Joseph Caro compiled the *Shulhan Aroukh*. In 1840 Sultan Abdul Mejid issued his famous firman denouncing the blood libel accusation against the Jews. Under Ottoman tradition, each non-Moslem religious community was responsible for its own administration and institutions, including schools.

There are only 26,000 Jews in modern Turkey in a population of 57 million. Jews are integrated but not assimilated. There are only (!) 10% of mixed marriages. Although not strictly Orthodox, the Jews of Turkey are considered Orthodox because the Chief Rabbi is Orthodox!●



Sultan Bayazid II
(1447-1512)



"THE WELCOME" Painting by Mevlut Akyildiz
The Ottoman Sultan welcoming Jewish refugees●

Scribe: The Quinquennial Foundation held an International Conference on **The Jews in The Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey** in Istanbul, May 31-June 4 1992.

A large variety of subjects were covered by distinguished speakers and writers, including: **Rabbinic Literature in the Early Ottoman Period, 1350-1450**, Prof. Israel Ta-Shma, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

The Archives of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, Prof. Paul Dumont, Université des Sciences Humaines, Strasbourg.

Jews in the Service of the Ottoman Financial Administration, Prof. Nejat Goyunch, Selchuk University.

Rabbinic Scholarship: The Development of Halakhah, 1750-1900, Prof. Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, Bar Ilan University.

Jewish Contributions to Ottoman Medicine, Science and Technology, Prof. Rhoads Murphy, Columbia University.

The Evolution of the Chief Rabbinate, Prof. Avigdor Levy, Brandeis University.

Inter-Community Relations: Baghdad and Istanbul, Prof. Elie Kedourie, University of London.

The Transformation of Ottoman Jewry in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Prof. Esther Benbassa, Université de Paris, Sorbonne.

Ottoman Jewry and Political Modernisation, Prof. Ilber Ortayli, Ankara University.

Jewish Emigration and Immigration to the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, Prof. Stanford J. Shaw, University of California, Los Angeles.

Jews in Government Service, Prof. Ehud R. Toledano, Tel Aviv University.

Ottoman Jewry and the Evolution of Nationalist Ideologies in the Ottoman Empire (1876-1918), Prof. Hasan Kayali, University of California, San Diego.

The Special Relationship: The Committee of Union and Progress and the Ottoman Jewish Elite, Prof. Feroz Ahmad, University of Massachusetts.

The Relationship between Talat Bey, Rabbi Haim Nahum and Ambassador Morgenthau, 1914-1915, Dr. Heath W. Lowry, Institute of Turkish Studies, Washington, D.C.

Turkish Jewry: From Millet to Community, Dr. Riva Kastoryano, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris.

Turkish Jews during the War of Independence, Mr. Naim Gülerüz, Quinquennial Foundation.

We hope to revert to some of these papers in future issues●

The Turkish government has recently demonstrated neo-Ottoman imperial pretensions, with a potential sphere of influence extending far and wide.

Turkey controls the water sources of Iraq and Syria and can also supply water to areas further south. In the Turkomen republics of the former Soviet Union, Turkey's language and its Latin alphabet outweigh Iran's Islamic and financial advantages. Most, like Turkey, are Sunnis

Its geographical position, its massive population and its strong ties with the West make Turkey the natural arbiter of the Middle East.

Israel would do well to cultivate strong relations with Turkey based on the Ottoman-Jewish traditions of friendship of 500 years, in contrast to Arab perfidy, and to urge Turkey to play its role in the peace-making and peace-keeping processes of the region for the mutual benefit of both countries●

Your journal is most interesting. I find the articles fascinating and educational, and the letters enlightening.

You may like to know that the man who led for many years the campaign for the repeal of the "Zionism is Racism" resolution (*Scribe* 54) was Dr. Harris Schoenberg. He is Director of B'nai B'rith International for United Nations Affairs which holds non-governmental status at the UN in partnership with the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the South African Board.

Dr. Schoenberg is the only full-time representative at the UN of any Jewish organisation. He came to England in May and lectured in Leeds, Manchester and London●

Leeds

Esme Cohen

I recently had the pleasure of visiting my cousins Stella and Sasson Dangoor in London where I read, with much interest, your recent publication of *The Scribe*. They are avid fans of your journal and I would deeply appreciate your placing me on your mailing list as well●

Lincoln, MA

Velda Adams

I found among my research papers a copy of the *Iraqi Official Gazette* of 25 October 1923. What I found striking about it is that the date of the issue is given in accordance with six different calendars: Christian, Moslem, Jewish, Roman, Persian and Coptic - in that order.

The first item is a Royal Decree 152, which says:

"His Excellency Sasson effendi Heskell, Minister of Finance, has returned to Iraq from his leave of absence and has resumed his duties from 15 October 1923"●

Locust Valley, NY

Maurice Sawdayee



Left to right, top: At Athens with the Acropolis in the background; Our group with the Captain: Salim Shashou, Dorette Shina, Alice Shashou, Captain John Bottom: Enjoying a game of bridge; Cruising down the Bosphorus at Istanbul, passing under one of the bridges connecting Europe and Asia; Our line

Black Sea Cruise

Last May, our group of eight friends flew to Athens to embark on a memorable 14-day cruise that proved to be a continuous super party with stops at some Greek islands, Turkey, Bulgaria and Russia, returning to end the voyage in Venice, from where we flew back to London. We missed a stop in Yugoslavia because of the civil war there.

Our liner was the Cunard *Princess*, newly decorated and refurbished after seeing service in the Gulf War. There were 700 passengers, mostly British and American, and although there were only 33 Germans on board, all notices and announcements were in English and German, which demonstrates the rising influence of post-war Germany in Europe and the world as Germans come out of the woodwork in the fields of sport, finance, politics and diplomacy.

Of the 300-odd crew, the officers were British and the rest were a mixed bag of many nationalities. Our routine was to cruise at night at a comfortable speed of 15 knots and arrive the next morning at one of the 12 ports of call. There were optional tours at all the stops. Some friends were afraid to join our group for fear of seasickness, but throughout the cruise the sea was very calm and we were lucky in having good weather – not cold and not too hot.

Our first stop was at **Kushadasi** – “Island of Birds” – on the Turkish coast, where 10 miles inland stands the famous ruins of Ephesus, which at its height had 200,000 inhabitants. St. Paul stayed here for three years and preached against idol worship in the great theatre which still stands and which can seat 25,000, and in the synagogues. Mary, mother of Jesus, lived and died here. In those days this area was Greek territory and was known as Asia.

Our next stop was at **Dikili**, a Turkish fishing village which leads to Pergamum, one of the greatest cities in Roman Asia. Its library was second only to that of Alexandria, and when the latter stopped supplying papyrus, Pergamum switched to animal skin – hence the word “parchment” taken from its name. The Arab invasion of Anatolia in 716 brought pillage and fire to the city in the wake of their retreat.

Our third stop was at **Istanbul**, a key point in world geography, focal point of international rivalries, capital of empires, the only city in the world that straddles two continents. We approached the breathtaking scene of Istanbul’s panorama at sunrise, with the domes and minarets gleaming in the morning light. We docked right in the city centre next to the famous Galata bridge which had just been burnt down. A new bridge alongside is nearing completion.

When I lived in Istanbul during the Second World War, its population was 700,000; now it is 7 million, a true invasion. The Turkish lira then was 5 to the pound, now it is 12,000.

We could walk in and out of the ship as we wanted. In the morning we joined a city tour and in the afternoon I walked towards the famous Covered Market but I couldn’t cross the street safely for the heavy traffic, and had to turn back. In the evening, Dorette discovered a nearby shop selling real *Quaimagh* (clotted cream) and bought some which we all enjoyed for breakfast. Years ago I used to get *Quaimagh* by air from Istanbul but as summer approached the supply stopped. I was told the buffaloes were taken on vacation.

Varna is the summer capital of the Bulgarian Riviera but there was very little to see or buy. After 40 years of communism, the low standard of living was noticeable; there were hardly any cars on the roads. However, Bulgarian attar of roses is world famous.

Next, we stopped at **Odessa** and took a

city tour which ended at the war memorial. This is guarded by a bevy of young students that changes every half-hour. In the afternoon a special ballet performance was given at the famous opera house for the passengers of the *Princess*. I found the people civilised and gentle but could not make out the real price of anything as there were so many different rates of exchange for the rouble.

At **Yalta**, the next day, we were taken to the magnificent Livadia palace, site of the Yalta conference of 1945, where the shape of postwar Europe was forged by Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin and De Gaulle. We stopped at a restaurant that seats 3000 and were entertained by a lavish floor show.

From Yalta we started our return journey with a whole week still ahead of us. Saturday 30 May was a full day cruising at sea. One of the most moving moments was when we entered the Bosphorus and glided through this famous waterway under the two bridges connecting Europe and Asia. The Captain announced that one of the bridges was built by Trafalgar House, owners of our motor vessel. It was nostalgic to see my old haunts of nearly 50 years ago in the resorts all along the Bosphorus.

At night we passed in silence through the narrow waters of the Dardanelles past the lit-up memorial to the British fallen of that World War I campaign. Churchill’s Dardanelles adventure in March 1915 was a tragedy of errors; after heavy losses, the Allies gave up just when the Turkish defenders of Chanak Kale were going to flee. By failing to capture Constantinople and thus bring the Ottoman empire to its knees, the British government had to turn its attention to plot with the dissatisfied Arab elements in order to capture the Levant and Mesopotamia.

The rest of our voyage took us to **Mykonos**, **Santorini**, **Nauplia**, **Ancient Olympia** and finally to **Venice** where we stayed overnight and visited its famous Ghetto.



Burton-Hall, Renée and Naim Dangoor, Khatun Sehayek, Anwar Shina and Aida Hakim. Our dinner table on board; Midnight buffet. Arriving in Venice; Anwar Shina feeding the birds in St Mark's Square, Venice ●

On the final evening, one of the entertainers, who flew in from the London Palladium, composed and read an impromptu parody of the cruise of which we managed to catch the following lines:

Now we've got to Venice...	and you're on your way home,
I'd like you to remember	wherever your room;
When you're tired and weary	and feeling a mess,
Remember your cruise	on the Cunard Princess,
Remember the welcome	inside your cabin door,
Papers and leaflets	all over the floor.
Remember the queue	for the breakfast eggs,
And the shower curtain	that sticks to your legs,
The toilet that has	a mind of its own
Pressing down repeatedly	to make it gurgle and groan
The drawers with those corners	that gave you a bruise,
A wardrobe just big enough	for four dresses and some shoes.
The hundreds of stairs	that murder your feet,
You wait ten minutes	but can't get the lift.
Your wife's gone ashore,	she's bought a new dress,
Another woman bought one	and paid ten dollars less!
The Captain's cocktail	will be great, so you think,
You wait for an hour	and get one free drink.
The trips ashore	the buses ideal,
Such fun fixing the engine	and changing the wheel.
The pirates in taxis,	the crooks on the street,
You're glad to get back	and escape from the heat,
The deck golf, handicraft,	the quiz and the prizes,
People on deck	of all shapes and all sizes.
Fast asleep by the pool,	that's really the worst,
How do the Germans always	get there first?
Our navigator,	so handsome and clean
Not a clue where he's going,	but knows where he's been.
Some of the passengers	gave me a fright
There was an old fellow	walks through here every night
(It's half-past nine, and Salim's ten minutes late)	
We started in Athens,	Kushadasi was neat;
Then off to Dikili,	we walked down its street.
Next into Istanbul	we all went together,
And came back to the ship	loaded down with leather.
Varna in Bulgaria	was one of the stops,
There was nothing worth buying	in any of the shops.
Odessa was hot	and the streets weren't bare,
There seemed to be soldiers	and militia everywhere.
So we sailed on to Yalta	as cool as cats,
We met some soldiers,	and bought their hats!
Beautiful Mykonos,	a place I adore
Santorini's donkeys	made our butts sore,
Nauplia, then Olympia,	both stops in Greece,
Then a full day at sea;	at last some peace.
And at last to Venice,	this beautiful rose,
On to the Grand Canal,	so hold your nose.
A wonderful cruise,	a marvellous trip
Thanks to the officers	and crew of this ship,
The musicians and entertainers,	whom you see every day.
We tried our best to please you;	and wish you could stay.
So when ever you're down	and feeling the stress,
Please come back and see us,	on the Cunard Princess●

Returning to Faith

My parents introduced me to *The Scribe* and I have truly enjoyed every publication I have read.

In America today there is a growing and strong *Baal Tshuva* or "returning to faith" movement. This is posing some very interesting conflicts. The younger, more religious adult children of Iraqis are becoming stricter than their parents. The parents are saying that their children are following Ashkenazi rules, and are not following the religious beliefs as they were taught. The *Baal Tshuv*as are saying that their parents are not recollecting the proper traditions, i.e. they grew up in homes where religious practices were more relaxed than they should have been. I am wondering if there are religious observant qualified Iraqis who can shed light on this general issue. I also have some specific questions. For example, my parents mention that in their Iraqi observant homes, they learned that it was (a) permissible to light a fire on the Jewish festivals that fall on weekdays. In America we are taught that we can only light fire from a pre-existing flame during those festivals. (b) The Iraqis learned that it was permissible to ask a non-Jew to light a fire for them on Shabbat. In America we are taught that you cannot directly derive benefit from the work of a non-Jew on Shabbat. Further, kosher cooking requires that only a Jew can light the oven or stove. Hence, if a gentile lights a stove for a Jew, the food is considered not kosher. I would be most interested to learn whether these types of differences reflect Ashkenazi versus Sephardi differences in religious observance, or whether the differences are reflective of a culture that had relaxed the laws without the permission of the Rabbis (as is common among Conservative Jewry in this country). Thank you for any help that you can supply●

New Jersey Tamara Sofair-Fisch PhD

Dayan Dr. Pinchas Toledano writes:

There is no doubt that our halachic customs differ from those of the Ashkenazim. It is not true to say that our religious practices were more relaxed than they should have been. In fact, we should congratulate our rabbis of the past for, due to their tolerance and understanding, they have avoided creating among us reform, liberal and conservative movements.

As to the rabbinic query whether it is permissible to light a fire on festivals that fall on weekdays, it is true that there are no arguments between us and the Ashkenazim rabbis that one should light a fire only from a pre-existing flame. However, Rabbi Avraham Unkawa in his book *Kerem Hemer, Vol. II* page 95, is of the opinion that one is allowed to strike match on festivals as by striking it he is not creating a fire for the fire is already there. Many communities in Morocco as well as in Iraq and the Middle East follow this leniency. However, it is true, that Haham Yosef Hayim of Baghdad (in his book *Rav-Pealim, Vol. II*, ch. 58) forbids the striking of a match. This is also the opinion of Rabbi Obadiah Yossef.

As to the second query, whether it is possible to ask a non-Jew to light a fire on Shabbat, the answer is No, and the only time it is permitted is in a very cold country where it is permitted to ask a non-Jew to put on the fire "as we are all sick when it is cold".

When it comes to baking or cooking, it is important that a Jew should light the oven or stove as this is a rabbinic injunction in order to prevent assimilation. Thus by a Jew lighting the fire or helping in the cooking, one can see that there is a demarcation line.

Finally, the Sephardi Rabbis have not relaxed any law except to say that there are differences of halachic interpretations between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Thus customs and traditions vary●

The Great Confession of Yom Kippur

a catalogue of sins

from the Baghdad Siddur compiled by Hakham Ezra Dangoor, who notes:

It is our custom to say here, in Shahrith, the Great Confession, for which there are many versions.

Each one lengthens different points. In truth, however, ... the "Confession" is sufficient the way that our Rabbis of blessed memory laid it down in alphabetical order. That is why I have abridged it to include the most common items.

Translation by Rabbi Ya'aqob Manasseh

We beseech You, O L-rd our G-d and G-d of our fathers, may our prayer come before You. Do not ignore our supplications, for we are not brazen-faced and stiff-necked, that we would say to You O L-rd our G-d and G-d of our fathers, "We are righteous and have not sinned". But we have sinned, transgressed and trespassed, we, our forefathers and members of our household.

My sin will I make known to You and my transgression I did not hide. I said, "I will confess my trespasses to G-d", and You bore the sin of my transgression, Selah.

We have been guilty; we have eaten forbidden foods, we ate without the ritual washing of hands, we ate without reciting a benediction before and after, we ate before the morning prayer, we ate and drank items requiring to be checked for insects.

We have acted rebelliously; negated the study of the Torah; recited blessings in vain and blessings that were not required; we recited blessings without concentration of thought, and with omission of words and letters; neglected the Shema, the prayers, Sissith and Tephillin; were disrespectful to our fathers and mothers and elder brothers; were contemptuous of Hakhamim and those who fear Heaven; we recited the Grace after meals with light-headedness, and did not respond *Barukh Hu Ubarukh Shemo* (Blessed is He and Blessed is His name) to benedictions.

We have robbed; we have stolen from Jews and non-Jews; we have cheated the Omnipresent and His creatures; disclosed secrets, interpreted the Torah incorrectly; we have been haughty in thought, speech and deed, and hindered the redemption; for the son of David (Messiah) will not come till all the haughty have ceased from amongst Israel; we caused the King Messiah to be profaned through our transgressions and oppressed by our sins.

We have slandered; spoken calumny; mocked, gossiped and spoken falsehood and impiety and obscenities; we have talked in the synagogue and while wearing Tephillin; we have talked during the repetition of the Amidah and while reading the Shema and the Scroll of the Law (Sefer Torah). On Shabbath we have spoken secular matters; we have judged our friends without benefit of doubt; we have said one thing with our mouths and felt another in our hearts.

We have committed iniquity; treated lightly; been insolent; had bad thoughts by day which led to nocturnal pollution; shamed our friends in public; encroached on our neighbour's territory; walked arrogantly, and did not remember that all the earth is filled with His glory. We have assisted in controversy; prayed and made confession without devotion of the heart. We prayed without a Minyan. We have spoken excessively with women, given a bad name to the living and the deceased, and brought honour upon ourselves through shaming our neighbour.

We have done evil. We have increased sin and iniquity disregarding the law. We assembled together for controversy and transgression. We were careless with the money of others and miserly with our own. We were careless with the honour of Heaven and the honour of the Torah, while being particular about our own.

We have acted wantonly; lusted after our hearts and eyes; mentioned the name of Heaven (G-d) in vain; slighted the Torah, Miswoth, and the Hakhamim; made light of the ritual washing of hands. The remembrance of the day of death we have not placed upon our hearts. The memory of the destruction of Your House and the desolation of Your Temple we did not place

at the head of our rejoicings. The memory of our judgement day, when, in the future, we will give an accounting before Your Holy Throne, we did not place upon our hearts. Behold, that day is a day of wrath and rebuke; a day of sorrow and sighs; a day whose accounting is prepared; the book is open and the scales of justice are in the hand of G-d. Indeed a most awesome and terrible day; a day which cannot be redeemed; a day of trembling and wailing; a day of destruction and groaning. To whom shall we flee for help and who will be a shelter for us? Let us go and repent to G-d before the stars of our night darken.

We have extorted; coveted all that belongs to our neighbours; flattered the doers of evil; suspected the upright of impropriety; desecrated Your Holy Sabbaths and Festivals; profaned Your Holy Name secretly and overtly.

We have imputed slander and deceit; defiled ourselves and our thoughts; defiled our souls, which are a portion of the L-rd above. Woe to us over our disasters. We erred in our dictums, and carried Muqseh (that which must be put aside) on Shabbath.

We have given evil advice. We have sat in the seat of the scornful and in the gathering of the mockers. We have slept without reciting the *Shema*; sat in the synagogue with pride and contempt, and did not place the fear of the Shekhina (Divine Presence) before our eyes. The Shekhina cries, "If I am a father, then where is My honour, and if I am a master, then where is the fear of Me? Who required of your hand to trample My courts?"

We have lied; disavowed; denied the entire Torah; we have been angry on week days and on Shabbath, and have troubled our soul through our anger; we have completed our years with the vanities of the world, and did not remember that You will bring us into judgement over all that is hidden; we have given our neighbours a scornful nickname; we have denied Your favours and those of our neighbours.

We have mocked; we have scoffed; we have studied the Torah, but not for its own sake, and not in holiness and purity; we have not answered "Amen" to blessings; we have not kept the commandment to rise before a hoary head and honour the face of an elderly man; we did not recite the blessings of the prayer with devotion; we have not observed from where we came or to where we will ultimately be going, and before whom we will, in the future, give an accounting and reckoning; **we have borrowed with interest;** we have borrowed and not paid back, we have not set aside a fixed time for the Torah, we have taught our tongues to speak falsehood.

We have rebelled; we have disobeyed Your words; we have revolted against the Kingdom of Heaven; we have rebelled against the Kingdom of the House of David, and have despised the Temple, and we are required, for these three things, to beg. We have delivered our friends and their money into the hands of (other) peoples. We have misappropriated sacred property, and committed trespasses in the community's ordinances. We have filled our mouths with disdainful mockery in this world.

We have despised; we have committed adultery; we have sworn in Your Great Name in vain and falsely; we have taken oaths and have not fulfilled them; we have taken vows and not discharged them; **we have enjoyed this world and its pleasures;** we have used the Crown of the Torah and the Holy Names; we have revenged and borne grudges and hatred in our hearts; we have enjoyed this world without reciting a benediction.

We have been defiant; we have been stubborn and rebellious; we have turned away from You, Your Torah and Miswoth (precepts); we have turned our ears away from hearing Torah; we have turned aside from Your righteous laws.

We have sinned; we have transgressed the two hundred and forty eight positive Miswoth and the three hundred and sixty-five negative Miswoth; we have violated laws whose punishment is to die young and capital punishment. We have sinned, causing desecration of G-d's Holy Name. Woe to us on the judgement day! Woe to us on the day of reproof! We have afflicted orphans, widows and the impoverished of your people, we have done servile work on the Sabbath day and on holy days (Yom Tob), we said a hasty *Amen*, an abbreviated *Amen* and an "orphaned" *Amen* (without clearly hearing the Benediction), we transgressed the twenty-four things that require ostracism and banishment; we violated the rules of the community; we breached the words of the Sages.

We have intentionally sinned; we have cast off the yoke of the Torah, the yoke of the Miswoth and the yoke of the fear of Heaven. We have caused a blemish in the celestial worlds and in Your Holy Names. We have turned our hearts to idleness; we have opened our mouths for evil purposes, we have separated ourselves from the congregation, and we have defiled the covenant of our circumcision.

We have been hostile; we have caused distress to our Father in Heaven, to our parents and teachers, we have caused sorrow to the Sages of Israel, **we have caused grief to our debtors.**

We have stiffened our necks; we have intentionally defiled our bodies with impure thought. **We have ruined the sources of abundance** and turned them into broken cisterns that can hold no water, and we caused a slave to rule and a maid-servant to inherit from her mistress. We shall lie down in shame and shall be covered by our disgrace; for our sins have caused this and our transgressions prolonged our exile. Our trespasses have prevented us from receiving good; woe unto the sons who were banished from their father's table. They have been many long days and many harsh years, **we have been miserly in the giving of charity,** we have accepted slanderous tales; we have cursed our fathers and mothers; we have cursed our neighbours and wives.

We have been wicked; we have been evil to Heaven and to mankind; **we have fought with others for no reason;** we have chased after position and honour; we have deceived our neighbours; we have run after controversy and sin.

We have corrupted; we have forgotten Your Torah; we have forgotten Your Divinity; we have lied with all forms of lies and cunning; we have deceitfully broken Your Holy Covenant; **we have rejoiced in the downfall of our enemies.** We have returned to repentance and then reverted to our evil ways. We have wasted the holy seed in vain, and through this created a destroyer to ravage. Even under our wings are found the blood of the guiltless souls of the needy; and behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they have no one to comfort them. My heart, my heart goes out to their slain, my insides yearn for their ideal. Woe unto the wicked, for the work of his hands shall be done to him.

We have committed abominations; we have **abhorred every man who has reproached us;** we have made agreements and not kept them; we regretted our prior good deeds which were performed in the proper manner; we have gone astray like cattle and got lost; we have turned away and we have led astray; and we have turned aside from Your Miswoth and Your good laws, but it has not profited us, and You are righteous in all that comes upon us, for You have acted truthfully and we have been wicked.

Scribe: Now you know the magnitude of the problem. The process of Yom Kippur is: Confession – Repentance – Forgiveness.

Edward Saleh Dangoor, my brother-in-law, who sadly passed away earlier this year in Israel, was born in Baghdad in 1924.

He was educated at the Alliance School for Boys, and worked with his father at the Singer Sewing Machine agency. He afterwards left for Teheran to set up his own import-export business, where he successfully represented leading foreign companies.

After the Khomeini revolution he emigrated to London, and in November 1991 he left for Israel where he was taken ill.

Edward was a helpful and charitable person, willing to extend all possible assistance to everyone he met. His numerous friends in Israel, UK and USA will miss his kindness. ●
London N3 **Keddy Sofair**



Edward Dangoor (on the left) among his relatives and friends in Israel ●

BOOKS

Judas Iscariot

and the Myth of Jewish Evil

by Hyam Maccoby, Peter Habban, £17.95

Jesus the Man

by Dr Barbara Thiering, Doubleday & Co,
Publication in Britain 17 September

Reviewed by Naim Dangoor

Of all Jesus's twelve disciples, the one whom the Gospel stories single out as traitor bears the name of the Jewish people. In Western imagination Judas Iscariot has been regarded as the archetypal traitor and has gradually come to represent the Jews as a nation.

The author goes to great lengths in attempting to demonstrate that Judas was not a Judean but a Galilean, like all the other eleven disciples of Jesus, perhaps even a brother of Jesus. But what is the point of the exercise?

I believe that Judas was in fact the most trusted and most devoted and loyal of all the disciples. The "betrayal" to the Romans was a pre-arranged affair between him and his master. A point was reached in the movement when concrete proof was needed of the Messianic claims of Jesus, which were believed by many of his followers, including Judas. Jesus agreed to put his pretensions to the test and chose Judas to inform on him. They believed he would be saved from death by Divine intervention that would herald the Messianic Age.

Moreover, Judas was the treasurer of the group and was not short of cash. His acceptance of the thirty pieces of silver was to make the betrayal look genuine. When Jesus was condemned for treason and ill-treated, Judas was disillusioned, overcome by remorse and hanged himself. Such is not the logical ending of those who betray for gain.

Confused utterings and signs of terminal
Page 10

insanity characterise the last days of Jesus's ministry and contrast with his earlier lofty teachings. His own family dismissed him as a madman (Mark 3:21). Perhaps, that is why he didn't, or couldn't, marry. His last words on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" remind me of a similar incident in Baghdad in the thirties. A poor artisan who studied the Torah and the Kabbalah was driven to near insanity by his attempts to fathom the mysteries of the universe. One dark night he threw himself in the river to see if God would save him. His repeated cries, *Ribbano shel Olam* (Master of the Universe) woke us up in our riverside house but no one could reach him, and he was swept away by the rapid waters of the Tigris.

Whether Jesus actually died on the cross or not is another matter. The balance of evidence related in the Gospels indicates that he did not. The fact that he was taken down too soon; the empty burial cave with the discarded shroud; his subsequent meeting and eating with his disciples, all indicate that Jesus survived the crucifixion and went into exile beyond the reach of the authorities. Paul may well have come across Jesus on the way to Damascus. (See THE CRUCI-FICTION - Scribe 22).

Maccoby offers convincing evidence that Jesus was arrested, tried and sentenced on a political charge, and that he was not tried by the Sanhedrin, nor faced a religious charge. But there is no mention of the inscription on the cross - INRI - (Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews) which proves the point beyond any doubt.

I invite Hyam Maccoby to write a definitive life of Jesus for enlightened readers - both Jewish and Christians. He is important to us if only because of his immense following. We would do well to rehabilitate him as a person who lived and died as a practising Jew in the service of his people.

Modern antisemitism in a nutshell

In passing, the author gives us an insight into modern antisemitism. The Christian

Church conceived that the Jews, with all their "evil", were somehow necessary for the continuance of Christian life. For the Christians the millennium was in the future. The post-Christian movements of Nazism and Communism inherited the belief in the evil of the Jews, but for them the millennium had already arrived, and that spelt death for the Jews as they were no longer necessary for salvation.

In **Jesus the Man**, the author, who teaches in Sydney University's Divinity Department, denies the Gospel story of Jesus. Her exposition of his life is based on a 20-year study of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

According to her interpretation of the scrolls, Jesus was a sort of holy man conceived by an anonymous father, born of an unmarried woman called Mary, who might have been a nun, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified and passed out, was taken away by his friends and survived. According to Dr Thiering he was married to Mary Magdalen and had three children. The Virgin Birth and Resurrection thus go out of the window.

Church leaders, from Paul up to the present time, are all agreed that without Resurrection there is no Christianity. The Vatican are hiding some scrolls, and possibly also the original Roman records of the events of the New Testament, that would turn that story on its head.

But Christianity would not have been all in vain. It brought its 1600 million followers to believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

In the end it is not the sacrifice of Jesus, but the sacrifice of the Jewish people through the ages that will bring redemption to mankind ●

Indian-Jewish Cooking

by Mavis Hyman

Hyman Publishers, 10 Holyoake Walk,
London N2 0JX, £7.95 + 95p, p&p



The author

The Jews who came to trade in India from Iraq and Syria from the early eighteenth century documented their experience, and eventually it was their traditions and customs which came to dominate the Indian-Jewish scene for two hundred years. In this time the Jewish communities maintained their own identities while living peaceably with Hindus, Muslims, Christians and people of other faiths. Characteristically, they retained a style of cooking

from their countries of origin but inevitably Indian influences gradually crept in. What emerged is a hybrid style of cooking which is distinctive and too little known.

The post-war period has seen an almost complete disintegration of Jewish communities in Iraq and Syria and also of their offshoots in India, which means that the very sources of the style of cooking documented here have all but disappeared. These dishes, which have been tested, can fit in comfortably with eating patterns in the Western world●

Herbal Medicine in Jewish Babylonia

by Dr Abraham Ben-Jacob, Jerusalem
(in Hebrew, in 2 volumes)

This is the 31st book published by Dr Ben-Jacob on the history and culture of Babylonian Jewry.

It deals with curing illnesses: restoring damaged limbs to health; folk medicine; together with an Arabic-Hebrew dictionary of diseases, cures and healing herbs.

Did you know that *inzool* means acute bronchitis?●

In your April issue, which was given to me by a friend for the first time, Salim Khabbaza of New York considers Israel the only safe haven for Jews anywhere in the world.

I am one of the bereaved parents who has lost both a son in the Lebanon war and a brother-in-law in the Yom Kippur war. Acts of Arab terrorism have made life here a terrible nightmare.

To that reader, who never shared our pain, anguish and suffering, I say, "Our eyes are still wet and our hearts are still broken; what is the use of such unnecessary provocation?"

Ramat Gan Arieh Mordechai

Scribe: Without provocation, we say, those who are privileged to have their own State should realise that group survival is more important than individual survival●

I enjoy reading *The Scribe* very much and I hope to continue doing so for many years to come●

Llandudno, N. Wales Mrs. S. Gubay

I was indeed fascinated by your journal and would appreciate if you would kindly put me on your mailing list●

White Plains, NY Salim S. Sassoon

The eventful Black Sea cruise was most enjoyable and exceeded my expectations. The daily tours and activities guaranteed a most successful holiday of a lifetime●

London Aida Hakim

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

Mr. Salim Belboul, Forest Hills, NY
Mr. Harry Nathaniel, Montreal
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Mr. M. Ephraim, Watford, Herts.
Mrs. S. Gubbay, Llandudno, Wales
Mrs. Tamara Sofair-Fisch, New Jersey
Mrs. Flower Elias, London NW6
Mrs. Suzette Mahlab, Forest Hills, NY
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1492

On 8 July 1992, David and Sarina Dwek, members of the Sephardi Young Couples Group linked to the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, Lauderdale Road, organised an evening with Mr Jacques Attali, entitled "1492".



The picture shows from right to left: Mr Attali, David Dwek, Abdulla Dangoor, Percy Gourgey, David Dangoor and Edwin Birnbaum●

Mr Dwek writes:

Mr Attali is currently President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a supranational organisation which was set up in 1991 in order to assist in financing the reconstruction of Eastern Europe, with particular emphasis on the private sector. The Bank is leading the current gigantic programme of privatisation in Russia. Prior to his appointment, Mr Attali was senior adviser to President Mitterand of France. Mr Attali, a Sephardi of Algerian origin, is also an accomplished writer, particularly on political economy and history. In 1991 his latest book in French entitled *1492* was published, and the purpose of his speech was to give some further insights into the reason why he believes the year 1492 was of critical importance to the history of the world.

We Jews tend to believe that the expulsion of our ancestors from Spain in 1492 was the only event which took place at that time. However, that year can be seen in many respects as a turning point of civilisation, especially in Europe. Prior to this period, Europe could be viewed as a large enchained animal. However, Europe broke free with the rise in sea power and the conquests which began with Columbus discovering the Americas. European Culture was thus transplanted to other parts of the world.

This period also saw the beginnings of nationalism and the commencement of the national identity in many of the European countries which is an important part of the culture today.

The Catholic Church saw its power beginning to erode at this time, fuelled by the spread of printed material. New ideas often against the beliefs of the Church were beginning to feed their way through society. Many new thinkers, especially from the Marranos, started to develop their ideas removed from the constraints of any one religion.

Mr Attali through his book argued that one can only view a year like 1492 in contrast to the period both before and after this time and this he successfully accomplishes in his book.

Over 35 people attended this fascinating talk at the Iraqi Community Centre in Kensington, London●

Babylonian Jewry Gala Evening

On 10 May 1992, the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center of Or Yehuda, Israel, put on at the Mayfair Hotel, London, an exhibition and a gala evening attended by over 300 members of our community paying £100 per person.

The programme, presented by Mr. Mordechai Ben-Porat, former Israeli cabinet minister and chairman of the Center, included a film profile of the center at Or Yehuda, theatrical sketches on Jewish life in Iraq by the Israeli actress Shosha Goren (Susan Smouha) and a musical programme by Aziz Jalal and Iman (Susan Sharabany) accompanied by a specially selected oriental band.

The film showed a reconstructed alleyway (*Kucha*) at the center, of the Baghdadi Jewish quarter. A moving moment was the sudden appearance of the Baghdad-born actor Arie Elias as a *shamash* in traditional dress, carrying a lantern and going from door to door waking up the rabbis to early morning prayers.

The clip from the film *Marriage Broker* was most embarrassing. It is a caricature of Baghdadi life, not in keeping with the high image of Babylonian Jewry that the Center and exhibition wanted to project.

The most popular and successful part of the show was Shosha's delightful, professional and unique sketches of the Baghdad community, such as:

My Grandma and the jenni's
My Great-grandmother's cross-Baghdad journey
(based on a story written by Sami Mikhael)
My Aunt Sabiha's legendary t'beet
The Summer Nights of Baghdad.

Although she left Baghdad at a tender age, Shosha showed a remarkable grasp of Baghdadi Jewish humour. She founded with her husband, ten years ago, the Kedem Stage in Tel-Aviv. She is a direct descendant of Yacub Muallem Nessim, a well-known headmaster.

The comprehensive repertoire of Iman, the leading Baghdadi singer, was also greatly appreciated.

Mr. Ben-Porat has written to say that the evening was useful in bringing the community together, and produced a net profit of £6000 for the Center.



Shosha in one of her acts. She writes, "I had the delightful opportunity to meet many members of the community in London. I read *The Scribe* with interest. I am happy that it connects Jewish communities from all over the world●

We have been privileged to read your July 1992 issue. Could we please be put on to your mailing list?●

Crawley, Dr & Mrs Sasson Gubbay
W. Australia

LETTERS

I write to correct a statement made by Mr Naim Dangoor in his article "The Future of Democracy" in your July issue. He wrote "... no Iraqi was included in the Board of Elders..." and "hardly an Elder from the main Lauderdale Synagogue".

There are currently 36 Elders and if by "Iraqi" is meant a person whose antecedents came from Iraq, then there are five such Elders of which I am one, as is the Parnas Presidente. Furthermore, eighteen of the thirty-six are from the main Lauderdale Synagogue.

If Mr Dangoor meant to refer to the twelve newly elected Elders, then one was of Iraqi descent and another was from Lauderdale Synagogue.

Apart from the factual correction I wish to express the opinion that whilst we are proud of our Iraqi heritage we should not now seek to divide our congregation into ethnic groups requiring representation but to unite as English Sephardi Jews. Election should be by ability and willingness to serve the community and not by reference to one's past origin.

**Spanish & Portuguese
Jews' Congregation,
London**

**J.S. Horesh
President,
Board of Elders**

Naim Dangoor comments:

The reference was to the ten (it wasn't twelve) newly elected Elders, and by Iraqi was meant one who came more recently from Iraq. None was included in the Ten.

The Jewish community is made up of a mosaic of various traditions. If we can divide into Ashkenazi and Sephardi, we can also sub-divide into Syrian, Persian, Iraqi, and remain loyal to our identity and traditions for many years to come. No group should try and monopolise the representation, so why not call ours the Sephardi Congregation? Indeed, the election results are currently the subject of official scrutiny.

I remember reading in an old issue of *The Scribe* that about 1300 years ago a million Jews used to live in Babylonia near the city of *Falluja*, then called *Fallughata*, who went to meet the caliph Ali bin Abi-Talib.

In a symposium at our club at Ramat Gan on the subject of the aliyah of the Iraqi Jewish community in 1950-51, I mentioned the above piece of history to the audience. This was disputed by some Ashkenazi members.

Would you kindly mention the source of your information?

Ramat Gan **Abraham Yadid**

Scribe: An indication of the Jewish population in Babylonia at the time is given in the famous *iggereth* (letter) of Rab Sherira Gaon, who became head of the Academy of Baghdad in 968.

A History of the Jews in Baghdad by the late David Solomon Sassoon states:

Rab Isaac Gaon in the year 655, headed a procession into the presence of the fourth Caliph, Ali, he was followed by 90,000 Babylonian Jews. The number of Jews who gathered before Peroz-Shabur allows some suggestion as to the total of Babylonian Jewry, namely that it may have amounted to about a million Jews.

In regard to Sandra Khadhouri's poem about marriage, I would like you to print another point of view:

Ode to Sandra

If you find London so meagre
It's because no gangly Iraqi Jew is eager
To deal with a girl so arrogant and vain
Whose chances seem to be on the wane
So dearie swallow your sour grapes
And limit your poetry to your tapes

London

N.M.

I read with great interest the article "Liquidation of the Jewish State - A Nightmare" published in the latest *Scribe*. Indeed, I found it extremely relevant and enlightening as a warning.

I have mailed two photocopies of it: one to Mr Shamir and the other to Mr Rabin. Now I shall be expecting their reply before any peace treaty is signed and before it becomes too late.

You deserve gratitude for drawing the world's attention to such terrible possibility.

Ramat-Gan, Israel

Esther Mercado

I enclose a contribution for the Board of Deputies. You may be interested to know that my late husband was a member of that Board for many years. He used to take a car-full of people in the early hours of Sunday to be in time for the meeting in London.

Didsbury, Manchester

Mrs. D. Akerib

By chance I came across your issue of May 1991 where my name was mentioned in an article on the May 1941 *Farhud*.

This revived in me the memory of that terrifying day when the Meir Eliyahu Hospital was attacked by a crazy mob who blindly was going to destroy everything and murder everybody in its way - had it not been for the grace of the Almighty that saved us that day.

Ramat-Aviv

Yousif Cohen

The Baghdad Connection

by Maurice M. Sawdayee Ph.D

Explores the struggle of the Baghdad Jewish population from the days of the Ottoman Empire to the State of Israel.

192 Pages. 6 x 9. Documented with notes and bibliography - now \$5.95

M. SAWDAYEE PUB.
2 COCKS LANE
LOCUST VALLEY, NY 11560

I am offended by the party political line shown in your July issue which called on the reader to "Vote Likud". Please remove my name from your circulation list.

Wembley **Lawrie Nerva**
(Member of the Board of Deputies)

Scribe: We take the view that Israel has to be protected from the Loony Left at home and in the Diaspora.

I wish to correct an error in *The Scribe* No. 54. The photograph on page 11 shows Haguli as proprietor of the girls' Atelier. Haguli was put in charge of the Atelier by my father Ezra Sassoon (Sehayek). It was my mother, Messouda, née Shemtob, who conceived the project and who dearly cared for the Atelier till we finally emigrated in 1923.

I also had to correct an error in the Encyclopaedia Judaica both English and Hebrew and point out that Kfar Yehezkel was named after my uncle Hezkel and not Sir Ezcikel Sassoon. The following letter from KKL in Jerusalem acknowledges the error:

"Dear Mr. Sassoon,

Your visit to the KKL head office closed an historic circle, which started on 19 November 1921, by your respected father Mr. Ezra S.E. Sassoon.

As a result of intensive research we were able to find the historic file of Kfar Yehezkel in our archives.

The unique documentation and detailed correspondence between your father and the Keren Kayemeth, are the best testimony of your noble request, and approve the historic fact that Kfar Yehezkel is named after your beloved uncle.

We are now investigating the most effective ways of correcting the historic facts in the various encyclopaedias and history books."

Incidentally, when are we going to call ourselves only Babylonian or Mesopotamian Jews and not, for heaven's sake, Iraqi?

Johannesburg

Sydney E. Sassoon

Scribe: We call ourselves Iraqi from time to time for political reasons, to stress our historic and material connection with that country, and to reserve our rights in any future peace settlement.

COOKERY CORNER

by Alice Shashou

Lemon Chicken

Ingredients:

- 1.5 kilo (3½lbs) roasting chicken
- 2 slices lemon peel
- ½ cup fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 1 chicken cube
- 2 tablespoons water or 2 tablespoons cognac
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, sliced thinly
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon dry minced onion
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- A pinch cayenne pepper (optional)
- Salt and pepper
- 900g (2lbs) boiled potatoes, skin off

Method:

Salt and pepper the chicken inside and out.

Insert lemon peel inside and place in ovenproof dish.

Add the onion, dry minced onion and cloves of garlic.

Dissolve the chicken cube in the water or cognac (if using) and pour over the chicken. Allow to marinate for 1-2 hours.

Sprinkle paprika and cayenne pepper (if using) over the chicken. Place in preheated oven 350°F (180°C) for about 1½ hours, basting occasionally and turning the chicken over.

Halfway through cooking, place the boiled potatoes on the tray around the chicken to roast. Both chicken and potatoes will be golden brown. Serve hot.