



*Established 1964*

*Dedicated to the  
Advancement of Education  
of Assyrians*



# NINEVEH

First & Second Quarter 2001

Volume 24, Nos. 1 & 2



JULIUS N. SHABBAS

DR. JOEL ELIAS



*CULTURAL — EDUCATIONAL — SOCIAL*

# NINEVEH

FIRST & SECOND QUARTER 2001  
Volume 24, Numbers 1 & 2

Editor: Robert Karoukian

## POLICY

ARTICLES SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION WILL BE SELECTED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF ON THE BASIS OF THEIR RELATIVE MERIT TO ASSYRIAN LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CURRENT EVENTS.

OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS MAGAZINE ARE THOSE OF THE RESPECTIVE AUTHORES AND NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF NINEVEH.

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## Assyrian Periodicals

We urge our readers to read and support Assyrian publications. The active participation of all Assyrians is the only guarantee of the success of Assyrian periodicals.

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:**  
[www.assyrianfoundation.org](http://www.assyrianfoundation.org)

## **From the Editor**

After producing *Nineveh* magazine for more than 20 years, Julius Shabbas has decided to take a rest. I say produce because Julius was more than just the editor. He personally performed or was involved in every step of its production from collecting the material, editing, word-processing, layout, printing, labeling, and mailing the magazine. As many of you know, he also served on the board of the Foundation during this period and he is the person most people, especially those outside of the Bay Area, identify when they talk about *Nineveh* magazine or the Assyrian Foundation of America. Under Julius's care, *Nineveh* magazine has grown both in size and quality from a one- or two-page newsletter of local news and announcements to the beautiful and informative magazine enjoyed by Assyrians as well as non-Assyrians around the world. On behalf of the new editorial team, the members of the Assyrian Foundation, and everyone who has enjoyed and benefited from *Nineveh* magazine, I would like to thank Julius Shabbas.

As Julius's associate in producing *Nineveh* magazine, his colleague on the Foundation's board, and long-time friend, I asked Dr. Joel Elias to write a thank you note on behalf of us all. However, in that note Dr. Elias informed us that he, too, is taking a rest. So, I would like to thank Dr. Elias as well for the many years of hard work. I wish them both a pleasant time off, and hope that we can benefit from their knowledge and experience in the future.

I would also like to thank Mr. Tobia Giwargis who has taken care of the Assyrian section of *Nineveh* magazine, and hope that he will continue to work with us. I say us because, unlike Julius, I will need a lot of help in producing *Nineveh* magazine, and have asked a number of individuals, especially young Assyrian men and women, to work with me.

As the official publication of the Assyrian Foundation of America, *Nineveh* magazine will continue to serve as the voice of the Foundation's membership and the local Assyrian community. It will also continue to publish news and articles about and/or of interest to the Assyrian community at large. Although *Nineveh* is not an academic journal, it will, from time to time, include relevant scholarly articles, by Assyrians as well as non-Assyrians. We will also print abstracts of articles and book reviews from other journals, both Assyrian and non-Assyrian. This is not only to inform our readers of the contents of these articles or book reviews, but also to introduce them to journals that may be unknown to many people, but include important information and are invaluable research tools.

However, in addition to recording events of the past or present, and informing our readers, we would like *Nineveh* to be a medium for exchange of ideas and thoughts about our future; both in the near east and in Diaspora. The internet, with its seemingly unlimited space, access, and speed, has been a powerful tool in bringing our people from the four corners of the world together and allowing such dialogue. We would especially like to engage our young people who, after all, are our future and our only hope of maintaining our identity. That is why we like to introduce a section specifically for and by our youth, where they can discuss issues of interest to them.

Of course, we invite our readers to stay in touch with us; let us know your ideas, suggestions, and critiques.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have written to express their support and best wishes to the new editorial team.



## Thank You, Julius Shabbas

By Joel Elias

After nearly twenty years of being Editor of Nineveh magazine, Julius Shabbas is taking a well-deserved rest. The work of an editor of a magazine is not well understood by those who have not been involved in the job. Every article submitted to the magazine was reviewed by Julius with extreme care, and changes and improvements were often recommended. This involved explanations and discussions with the author, often extensive. Other articles could not be used for various reasons, and this also meant communication with the author. Creating the layout of the magazine is a laborious and time-consuming project, involving extensive work with the printer and typesetter. Photographs, drawings and maps have to be specially prepared. The details are endless. Finally, all the magazines have to be separated by zip code according to strict postal service regulations, and every magazine to a foreign country individually packaged. As soon as an issue is sent on its way, work for the next issue begins immediately without pause to meet the new deadline.

I mention all this so the reader will have some idea of the enormous effort, time and energy that Julius put into every issue, year in and year out. And it was all voluntary, no money was ever paid him for all this work. Why did he do it? Only if you know Julius personally can you understand the answer. His passion for the Assyrian people burns with an intense and unquenchable fire. Their tragedies, martyrdoms, contributions to civilization and Christianity are on such an epic scale and

yet seem to be so little known to the world and even to many Assyrians. He wanted to devote himself to bring the story of the Assyrians to as many people as possible. But what could one person do? Opportunity came when the Assyrian Foundation of America, of which Julius was one of the earlier members, supported the publication of a magazine. Through Nineveh magazine, Julius found the ideal medium for expressing his great knowledge and his deep feelings for his beloved Assyrians. It has truly been a work of love. The countless hours that went into every issue were his gift to his people. The magazine is now sent to many countries throughout the world and the response from readers has been very gratifying. Assyrians everywhere should be grateful to this man who gave so much of himself. Thank you Julius Shabbas for your unselfish labors on behalf of your people.

After almost twenty years of this demanding work, a person can become tired and need to take a respite, and Julius and I are taking one. We are fortunate in having Robert Karoukian willing and able to become the editor of Nineveh. We have known, and been friends with, Robert for many years and have the greatest admiration for his intelligence and knowledge of Assyrians, and his friendly and pleasant personality. He is totally devoted to the Assyrian people, which is why he has taken this job despite a very busy life as a medical doctor. We all wish him the very best and offer our prayers and encouragement for success in this important undertaking.



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601

GEORGE H. RYAN  
GOVERNOR

January 23, 2001

Mr. Julius Shabbas  
Editor  
Nineveh Magazine  
P.O. Box 2620  
Berkeley, CA 94702

Dear Mr. Shabbas:

As Governor of the State of Illinois, I would like to congratulate you on the 37th Anniversary of your publication, "Nineveh Magazine."

Illinois is comprised of many ethnic communities that join to form a great state while also maintaining their rich cultural individualities. Your publication serves as a vital link to the Assyrian American community. Not only are your readers educated by its contents, but they also benefit by affirming an invaluable connection to their heritage.

On behalf of the people of the State of Illinois, I commend your dedication to the Assyrian American community. The hard work that goes in to each and every publication is appreciated.

Sincerely,

GEORGE H. RYAN  
Governor



George H. Ryan  
Governor  
State of Illinois

## Linking Families in Diaspora to Families in the Homeland:

### The Ashur Project

In a historical move, Dr. Ashur Moradkhani went to live in Northern Iraq in May, 2001 for an indefinite period of time. While many are leaving the homeland, he swam against the current and returned in order to launch the "Ashur Project". Most Assyrians from Iran know Dr. Ashur well. He is the person who created the Assyrian Youth Cultural Society ('seeta sapreta d-'aleemi atourayi') in Tehran, Iran. He is the one who helped to establish the Assyrian Universal Alliance, and the one who first publicized in the annual Calendar of the Seeta sapreta the four principles of Assyrian nationalism: one goal for one nation, one name for one nation, one leadership for one nation, and one language for one nation. Dr. Ashur Moradkhani is also the person who for the first time, with the help of Assyrian American Association of San Jose, computerized the Assyrian alphabet, and wrote the Assyrian Manifesto, as a national agenda.

The purpose of the Ashur Project is to build a link between a family abroad and a family in the homeland. It is intended to establish a relationship that is economic, social, emotional, and national; in other words, one that encompasses all aspects of life. An emigrant family will send a monthly contribution to a family in the homeland. The latter may use that contribution in one of three ways: grain cultivation, fruit orchards, or animal husbandry (cattle, sheep, poultry). The contributing family will be in touch with the family in the homeland on a regular basis by various means such as written reports, pictures, videos, and telephone contacts. This will keep the contributors abroad informed about how their contributions are used. They will be assured that their contributions reach the intended family, and see the beneficial results. Dr. Ashur believes that personal family ties create a feeling of partnership, joined lives, and social and national bonds. To make his point clear he states that when one plants a flower in a garden, a connection is established between the person and the flower. As one cares for the flower and tends to its needs on a regular basis, the flower rewards one's toils with its blossoms. An emigrant Assyrian can plant this flower in a garden in Assyria (northern mesopotamia) and delegate its care to an Assyrian who lives there. The former pays for the expenses of its care. Undoubtedly this creates a mutual concern that arises out of a shared responsibility and effort. So, if the Assyrians outside Assyria plant gardens and orchards under the care of Assyrians living there, a personal link is established. According to him the consequences are fundamental:

1. This type of partnership will uplift the spirit of the Assyrians abroad because they will be directly contributing to the well-being of the Assyrians in the homeland as 'one family'. They will no longer be blamed for living in comfort while expecting those who have stayed behind to bear all the hardship and responsibility of maintaining the Assyrian identity and way of life. By their financial contributions they will be sharing this responsibility because their partnership will enable, energize, and build up the Assyrians at home. So, the Assyrians abroad become fellow workers of the families at home.

2. The Assyrians in the homeland, having the support of the fellow Assyrians abroad, will regain a new hope and, being financially enabled, they will double their efforts and will attain remarkable achievements. This will open new doors for

further progress. The main idea is to improve the living conditions of Assyrians in the homeland, so as to curb further exodus of Assyrians. Moreover, the increased viability of the villages will make them a haven for Assyrians elsewhere who are destitute and have no means of support. They can relocate and start a more secure existence.

Dr. Ashur is very critical of the fact that presently there is no link between the Assyrians living outside Assyria and those who have stayed home. According to him a deep separation exists between them and this separation weakens both groups and results in many missed opportunities for our people. As an example, he points out that it is the root that helps a sapling to grow and branch out. If the tree trunk does not receive nourishment from the roots, it will die. The link or the tie between the root and the trunk is essential for the life and rejuvenation of the tree. In our nation, because the link between the two groups of Assyrians is weak, there is no progress.

While applauding the generous donations that Assyrians abroad make to help the Assyrians in the Middle East, Dr. Ashur is critical of this type of help because it is in the form of aid to the needy for the purpose of feeding and clothing them. According to him, this has had two negative effects as far as national aspirations of Assyrians are concerned. First, each time the Assyrians abroad make a donation, they are reminded of the exile, killings, pillage, and the humiliation of our nation. This leads to broken spirit and a sense of hopelessness as far as the goals for national revival are concerned. So, this group satisfies itself with derivative charity activities. Such diversions sap its energy and divert its thought from higher goals such as dedication to the national cause and an aggressive pursuit of it. He maintains that charity creates a passive spirit, and quotes the saying "*do not give a man a fish; teach him how to catch fish.*"

Second, he believes that charity has negative effects on the receiver as well. The amount of charity that a person receives, by the same amount s/he becomes spiritually impoverished. One loses self-confidence in being capable of providing for oneself. That individual loses the conviction that he can take on the responsibility of rebelling against his condition and of breaking the state of dependency. Dr. Ashur believes it is important to use charity only to the point of enabling a person to become self-sufficient. It must be a temporary means of support. So, the purpose of the Ashur Project is to use the contributions of the Assyrians abroad to help the families back home to gradually become independent and self-sufficient while establishing a social and emotional bond between the two groups.

Dr. Ashur's first step is a pilot program in a single village. He selected a nucleus of twenty emigrant families consisting of his own family, relatives and close friends. The first installment was for 6 months, that is, \$120.00 from each family. He plans to select a model village in Assyria and attempt to improve its economic conditions. The pilot project is intended to identify possible problems and prepare for the next stage, which is to launch the program on a larger scale. The main goal is to prepare a comfortable life tailored to the needs of the particular families in the village. As mentioned above, the total effect is a joint endeavor between an emigrant family and



which strengthens both families spiritually as well as materially. This partnership enables the family in the homeland to stand on its own feet and to protect the products of its labor. He recognizes that a comfortable life requires clean water, heat, schools, churches, transportation, and other necessities. He is confident these will come slowly with the help of various national establishments and possibly foreign sources. He states emphatically that he is not establishing a new organization. His plan, he states, is an economic and not a political one. It has no connection with any political party or social or religious organization. But, if it strengthens the existing Assyrian organizations, all the better.

He also plans to open a dental clinic together with a dental laboratory where young men and women will receive training. Afterwards, they can visit villages in a 'mobile dental clinic', serving both Assyrians and non-Assyrians. This would generate an income and provide a valuable service to all the residents. In the field of dentistry, his plans are even greater. He hopes that *"God willing, and with the support of fellow Assyrians, it will be possible to establish a dentistry college where all the subjects will be taught in Assyrian. Students who study in this college will have to pass their examinations in Assyrian. This will further elevate the Assyrian language to the status of a language used for scientific discourse. He believes that it is in the Assyrian nature to achieve perfection in whatever is attempted. The excellence of this college, he hopes, will entice the non-Assyrian youth to learn Assyrian to be able to study there."*

In his view, any activity, from the most simple, like purchasing a button, to going to the moon, has to go through four phases to be successfully accomplished. These are: information, preparation, implementation, and consummation. He believes that our people are generally informed about our past history and present condition. They know that our villages have been ransacked, our houses destroyed, our establishments are becoming disintegrated, and our people are becoming spread out geographically and weakened. With separation and estrangement, assimilation has set in. But people are ignorant about how to prepare for, and confront these problems. This is because such matters are not addressed. He believes that this has been our condition from the time of the fall of Nineveh until today. He points to our magazines, television and radio programs, and our lecturers; none of which speak of the preparation phase. According to him, this is because the preparation phase leads directly to the next phase, which is implementation. He maintains that our people are afraid of the future. That is why they do not want to take action. *"We are a nation that runs away from its future. That is why our national agenda has gone astray and diverted from an effective action plan. We need a new direction. I am suggesting reaching out where our roots are. Let us move into the stage of preparation and stop living in the past."*

Those who would like to establish a connection with a family in the homeland may make their checks payable to Mr. Yoel Baaba, and write 'Ashur project' in the memo section. These funds will be set aside in the Assyrian welfare account for that project only.

Mr. Baaba's Address:

Yoel A. Baaba  
720 Evelyn Court  
Alamo, California 94507

## Assyrian Recipe

### DOLMA (Grape Leaves)

2 lbs. (boned) shoulder lamb or  
2lbs. chuck steak (diced)  
1 onion (chopped fine)  
1 green pepper  
½ bunch dill  
3 stalks leek  
½ cup rice or pirda (raw)  
1 clove garlic (optional)  
1 cup cilantro & parsley (chopped fine)  
salt and black pepper to taste  
2 stacks grape leaves  
If lamb meat is used, use ¼ lb. butter;  
if chuck steak is used, use ½ lb. butter  
2½ cups cold water

Bone and dice meat. Rinse with cold water; place in saucepan and cover. Bring to a boil. When water has evaporated, add diced onion and cook until brown.

Cut up green pepper, dill and leek fine; add rice, garlic and mix together with meat, salt and black pepper.

Wash grape leaves with cold water; take 1 teaspoonful of mixture and place in center of leaf. Fold in corners of leaf. Arrange in large saucepan in layers. Add butter (cut in small chunks). Pour in 2½ cups of cold water and cook over low flame until leaves are soft and tender. Add water as needed until leaves are cooked.

### DOLMA (Swisschard)

Use same recipe as for grape leaves dolma using swisschard in place of grape leaves.

The Assyrians were monotheists before Christ and Christians after him, and the past therefore led on to the present without a break. Thus the history of Karkha de-Bet Selokh begins with the Assyrian kings and ends with the Assyrian martyrs: Sargon founded it and the martyrs made it 'a blessed field for Christianity.' Likewise in the seventh century before Christ all the world stood in awe of Sardanana, and in the seventh century after Christ the saints took his place as the 'sun of Athor' and the 'glory of Nineve.'

Dr. Patricia Crone  
Oxford University  
England

ה"ל ה"ל, ה"ל ה"ל

میں نے اپنے  
میں سے اپنے

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## A Glance at Assyrian Calligraphy in the Twentieth Century\*

Madeleine Davis-Moradkhan  
Brunoy, France

*Introduction:* Calligraphy is writing as an art. The term derives from the Greek words for good or beautiful and for writing or drawing, and means what writing masters called the art of fair writing. It implies a sure knowledge of the correct forms of letters, i.e. the conventional signs by which language can be communicated, and the skill to inscribe them with such ordering of the various parts and harmony of proportions that the cultivated, knowing eye will recognize the composition as a work of art.

While in Western cultures the simple Latin-derived alphabets and the spread of literacy tend to make hand-writing theoretically "everybody's art", (though in few instances does it either aspire to or attain the status of calligraphy); in Eastern cultures, calligraphy, by long and exacting tradition, is considered an art, especially in China where it ranks above all other arts.

Remains from ancient Assyria betoken the calligrapher's presence throughout literary history, though most "manuscripts" came from the hands of copyists who produced books on clay primarily to be read. Assyrians wrote on anything they could lay their hand on: stone, clay, metal, pottery, skin, etc.

During Sargon's rule (2334-2279 B.C.), Akkadian became adopted to the script that previously had been used in the Sumerian language. The new spirit of calligraphy that is visible on the clay tablets of Sargon's dynasty is also clearly seen on contemporary cylinder seals, with their beautifully arranged and executed scenes of mythology and festive life. Even if this new artistic feeling is not necessarily to be attributed directly to the personal influence of Sargon, it shows that, in his new capital, military and economic values were not alone important; although Sargon was one of the earliest of the world's empire builders, conquering all of Southern Mesopotamia as well as parts of Syria, Anatolia, and Elam (Western Iran), establishing the region's first Semitic dynasty and founding the Mesopotamian military tradition.<sup>1</sup>

This point is very important and it shows that Sargon was not just a warrior deprived of all artistic feelings. The kings succeeding Sargon, too, promoted art, including the art of calligraphy. Thus the Assyrian contribution has been in the perfection of its epigraphic art as seen in the ancient monuments, on stone or some other intractable material, which set indestructible models of the noblest sort to inspire and guide calligraphers.

With the introduction of Aramaic alphabet, new possibilities emerged. The nice balance between the vertical shafts above and the open curves below the middle register induces a sense of harmony. The particularity that certain letters cannot

be joined to their neighbours provides articulation.

For writing, the Assyrian calligrapher uses a reed pen with the working point cut at an angle. This produces a thick up-stroke and a thin down stroke with an infinity of graduation between. Modern Assyrian alphabet can be constructed, drawn or built up as well as written straight off with a stroke or two of the pen. The Estrangelo form may be used for opulent effects. The calligrapher looks to them for textual emphasis and glorification, including ornamental verses and titles, which can be adorned with colours and metals.

*Patriarch Barsoum (1887-1957), who in 1933 was formally elected Patriarch of Antioch, in his book 'Kitab al-lu'lu' al-Manthur...' (The Unstrung Pearls of the History of Syriac Science and Literature) proposes to treat several subjects omitted by earlier writers, including calligraphy, versification, the rites of the church, geographical sketches of Syrian cities, historic documents, the history of literature from 1290 to the present, and works and manuscripts previously unknown. Barsoum, who devoted much of his time to writing on the religion, language and history of his people, aims in this book to present information which lies outside the scope of Western studies. For instance, in the second part of this book he presents biographies of 292 prominent Syrian writers; 56 of these have not previously been cited by western writers.*

*Structurally, the book may be divided into three distinct sections. In the third part are appendices giving the names of Syrian calligraphers and providing us with a thorough and illuminating exposition of the art of calligraphy.*<sup>2</sup>

Alas, few, if any of the masterpieces of Assyrian calligraphy from the Christian era have survived. Having been subject to repeated massacres, and forced mass exodus, this nation has not been able to preserve its marvels. Almost all libraries with precious books have been burnt, and the remaining books have been abandoned on the roads by worn-out refugees who could not carry them further. Moreover, what was lost was never reproduced, because a nation forced to seek refuge in dry mountains for centuries, merely existing in inhumane conditions, can not be expected to indulge in luxuries and to cultivate refined forms of art such as painting or calligraphy.

The revival of Assyrian calligraphy at the end of the twentieth century was part of an artistic movement marking a new era in Assyrian cultural and artistic life. It reflects a will to survive and a determination to promote a universal recognition of the Assyrian national identity.

Modern Assyrian calligraphy can be generally divided into two fields: religious and nationalistic. Among the various calligraphers, two names shine above the others; those of Dn.Y. Bet Qashisha Matti, and Issa Benyamin. Works of Bet Matti are primarily religious, while Issa Benyamin has worked in both fields. Here, we will give a short biography and, then, look briefly at some of their works.

\*This article first appeared in Assyrian in the *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies*, vol. XIV, No. 2, 2000, pp. 38-48; and the English version is printed here with the permission of the editors.

<sup>1</sup>The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 10, 15<sup>th</sup> Edition, 10: 454: la, Contribution by Sargon of Akkad

<sup>2</sup>Studies in Syriac Literature (First installment)', Matti I. Moosa, The Muslim World. Hartford Seminary Foundation, LVIII, No. 2, 1968.



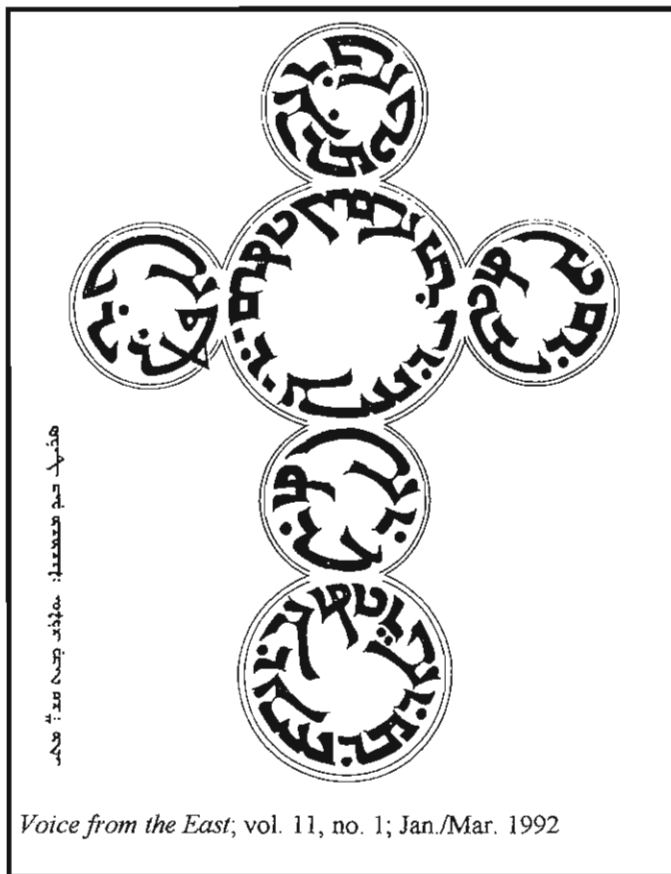
### Deacon Youarash Bet Qashisha Matti (1950- )

Born in Bet-Beyda, Iraq, he graduated from the university of Baghdad, specializing in Persian and Kurdish literature. He was a participant in the First Convention of Assyrian Language, which was organized by the Assyrian Academic Society and held in Chicago in 1973. He has written or translated many articles published in the Assyrian journal *Murdinma Ato- rayya* in Baghdad. He has also written articles under the pseudonym Ashourdan Nimveh in the Journal *Mhadyana*, published by the Assyrian Society in Chicago.<sup>3</sup>

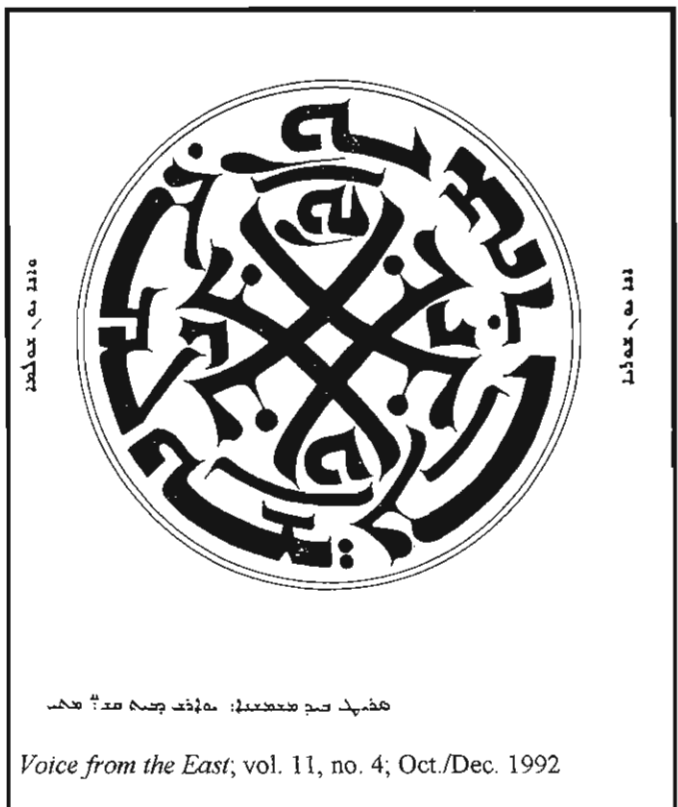
For several years he worked as secretary with the editorial staff of *Voice from the East*, a magazine of the Assyrian Church of the East. He has translated books such as *A short History of the Assyrian Church* (Chicago 1991). But, above all, he is known more for his works of calligraphy using the Estrangelo script. His works have adorned church calendars, and the front covers of the magazine of the Assyrian Church of the East: *Voice from the East*. Four of his works are shown here, which witness his skill in the art of calligraphy, as they appeared on the covers of the *Voice from the East*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1990; Vol. 10, No. 4, 1991; Vol. 11, No. 1, 1992; and, Vol. 11, No. 4, 1992.

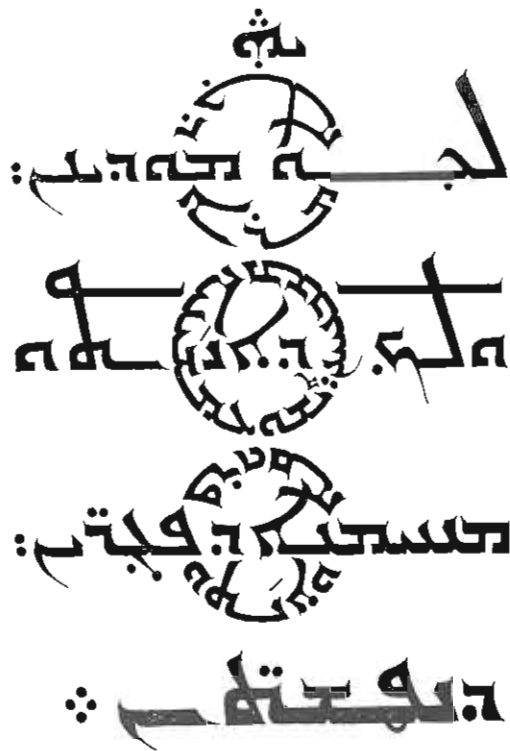
The line traced by Youarash's skilled hand is a marvel of fluidity and sensitive inflection, communicating the very action of his hand. He places the Estrangelo letters in a field of

orderly, well-shaped script, depending on balanced proportions, even- spacing, and expert rhythmical movement.



<sup>3</sup> Rev. Samuel Dinkha; 'A short History of the Modern Assyrian Literature, Who is Who in the Modern Assyrian Literature (1840-1990), vol. 2 ,pp. 132-133; Babylon publishers, Milpitas, California, 1991.





Voice from the East; vol. 10, no. 4; Oct./Dec. 1991

### Issa Benyamin (1924- )

Born in Tabriz, Iran, he has acquired his education in Assyrian primarily from his father, Mirza Benyamin Caldani. We can say that he is in fact the first Assyrian Calligrapher in the twentieth century, using the 22 letters of the Assyrian alphabet in artistic compositions. He learned calligraphy from the late Mar Zaya Havil, bishop of Urmi and Salamas.

He has published some of the works of his father and those of Rabi Nenyamin Arsanis. His other activities and accomplishments are as follows:

-The publication of the first Assyrian national calendar in Tehran in 1950.

-The publication of the weekly journal '*Da'tid Bahrana*', which he wrote by hand for lack of printing material, from 1951 to 1953.

-He edited and published the journal '*Elaime Atouraye*' from 1952 to 1953.

-He was the editor-in-chief of '*Umta*', the publication of the Assyrian club of Tehran, in 1980.

-He was editor-in-chief of '*Ishtar*', published in Tehran, from 1982 to 1983.

-He created Assyrian printing letters with the collaboration of the Assyrian Youth Association in Tehran.

-He has formulated and published the principles of Assyrian Writing in his '*Pangeeta*', in 1962.<sup>4</sup>

In 1999, the second and more comprehensive edition of the *Assyrian Alphabet Manual* was published in Chicago. In the

same year, he published the first book of Assyrian calligraphy, which comprises a comprehensive collection of more than 50 different fonts created by him.<sup>5</sup>

But, above all, his major contribution has been the creation of works of art (paintings) in calligraphy. He has devoted more than 55 years to this art, and has created more than 300 works using ink and acrylic on leather.

As mentioned above, Issa has both religious and nationalistic creations. Some of his works have been published in magazines, calendars, or as posters, and have been shown in exhibitions.

In most of his works, he has chosen words or phrases with deep meanings, and has tried to convey this meaning with an appropriate composition of letters. While Youarash has primarily worked on movements (mostly circular), Issa has tried to evoke an idea, or a philosophy in many of his creations, using letters as construction tools and building blocks.

The first four creations shown here appeared first in the pocket diary published by the Assyrian Cultural and Arts Fund, Tehran, 1982.

From his nationalistic works, we have chosen two:

1. Kha B-Neesan, (The Assyrian New Year)
2. Long live the Assyrian Nation

And, from his religious works, we have chosen two:

1. Yahwe and the Assyrian Art
2. Kheeroota, (Freedom)

'Kha B-Neesan', with its flowery letters and shapes evokes the freshness of spring. If we draw the contours of the writing,

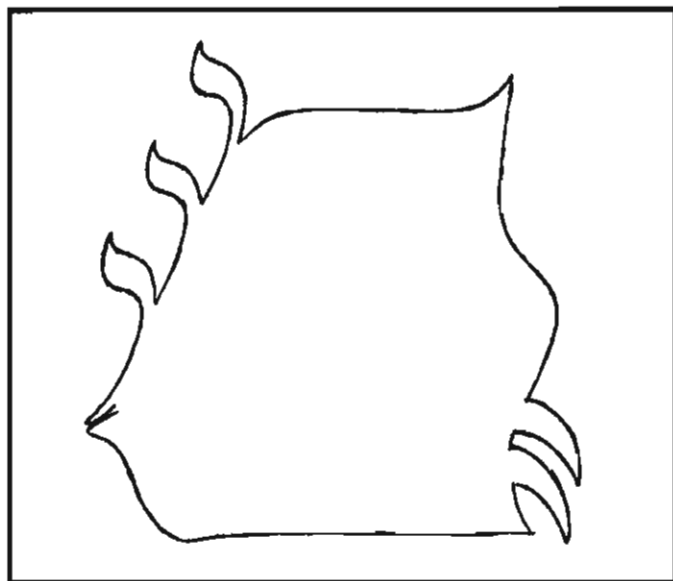


'Kha b-Neesan, Sheeta Khadta Atoureta'  
(First of Neesan, Assyrian New Year)

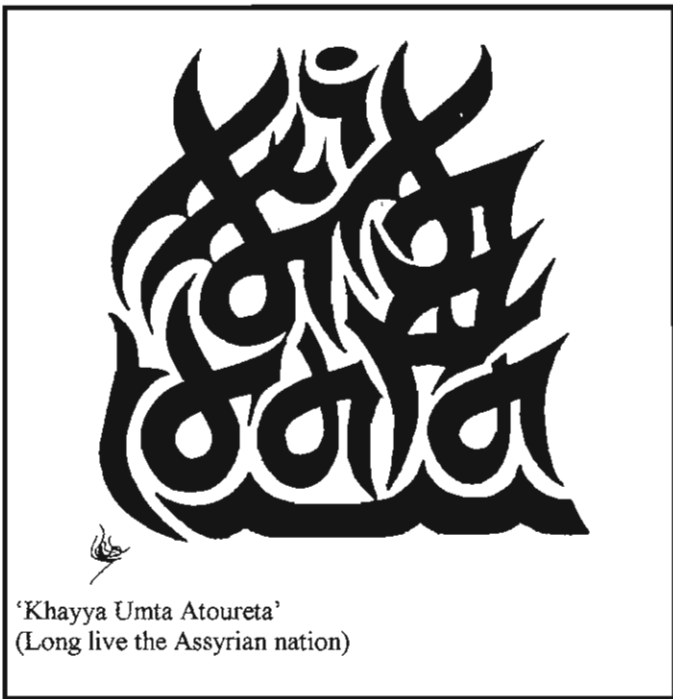
<sup>4</sup>Rev. Samuel Dinkha, 'A Short History of the Modern Assyrian Literature, Who is Who in the Modern Assyrian Literature, (1840-1990)', vol. 1, pp. 171-172. Babylon publishers, Milpitas, California, 1991; *Nineveh*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1989, pp. 61-70.

<sup>5</sup>Issa Benyamin, '*Assyrian Calligraphy*', CalligRam, Inc., Illinois, 1999

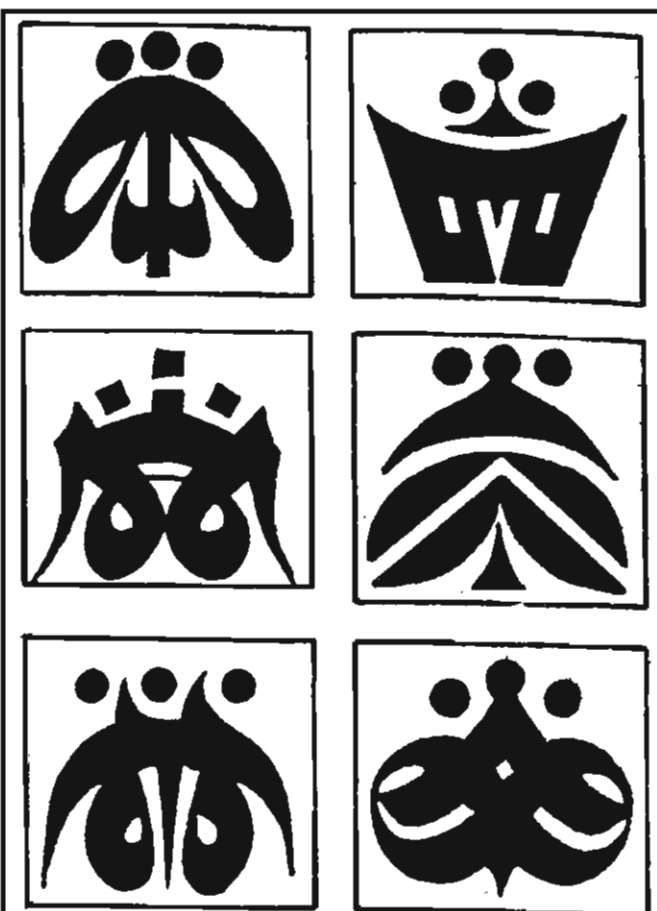
we find a round, flat fish with a small pointed mouth, a spilt tail, three frontal flippers, and a dorsal flipper. In some eastern traditions, small live fish in water jars are used to adorn tables during the new year festivities. The main meal for such occasions is fish. Such is the tradition in Iran, where for 'NowRooz', Iranians eat rice with fish on dining tables decorated with small glass jars containing small red fish. These traditions may be traced back to the ancient Assyrian era.



'Khayya Umta Atureta' (=long live the Assyrian nation), has a deeper meaning. We see a fire burning and flames rising. It's as if the Assyrian nation is burning in fire. But, while it is burning it lives by that very fire which gives it warmth and light of life. Like Jesus who died to give life, we, too, burn in order to live. The existence of fire depends on its burning. If fire doesn't burn, it is dead. Issa is saying in this work that if the Assyrian nation does not burn (suffer), then it will lose its identity and will die.

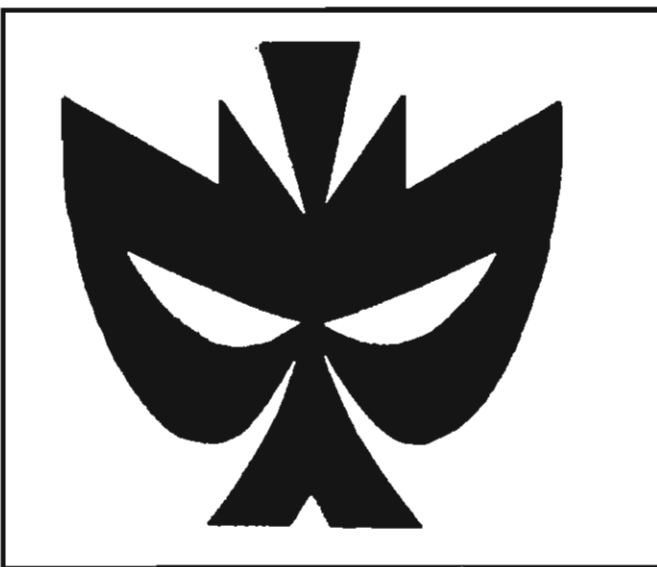


'Yahwa', is an extensive study of the various forms that the name of God may have, using the two letters *H* and *Y*, both reflected in a mirror; and, the three dots symbolizing the trinity.



A sample of the many styles used to write 'YH', which is the contracted form of 'Yahwa'.

Some of the forms are very peculiar, such as the enlarged one that resembles a mask, and can be subject to various interpretations; while others have achieved pure and ultimate abstraction.



'Kheeroota' (=freedom, spirit), on the other hand, suggests philosophical reflection, and reminds us of the verse:

*'The Lord is spirit; and, where the spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom.'* 2 Corinthians 3: 17

This work can be read in two ways: from below upward we read *Spirit, Alap, Taw*. We can also read the word Freedom. Here, *Spirit, Alap, Taw* means the spirit of the Lord.

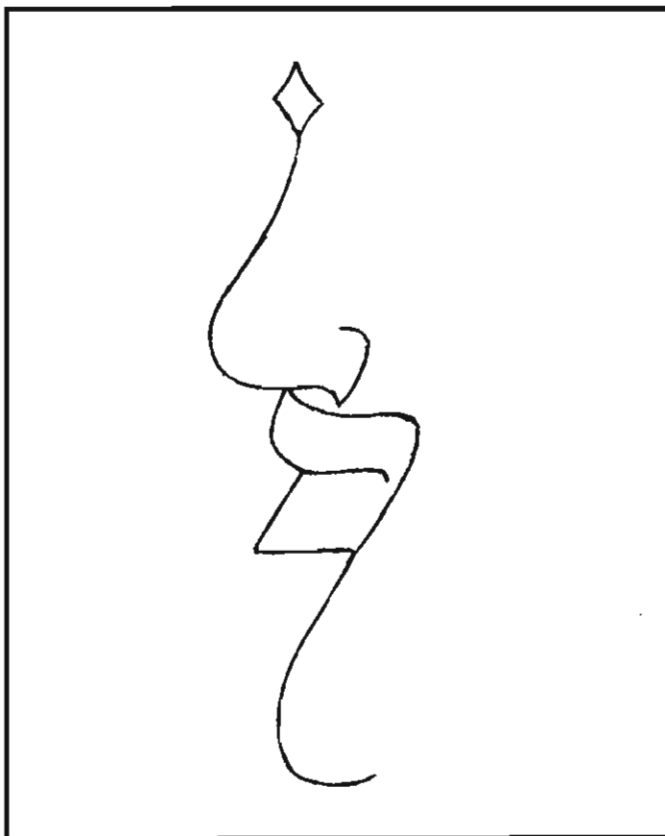
*'I am the first (alap) and the last (taw), says the Lord God Almighty, who is, who was, and who is to come.'* Revelations, 1:8



'Kheeroota' (Freedom, spirit)

Moreover, if we draw the contours of this work, we see the face of a man with one eye in the middle of his forehead. This eye is known as the eye of wisdom and knowledge, the spiritual eye, the eye of God; -who is the human being with such an eye if not Jesus Christ? He who gave up his life for our sake, so that we may be free from the hands of the devil. And, this is the highest and ultimate freedom in this world that cannot be achieved without the help of the Holy Spirit, i.e. the spirit of 'alap-taw'. God, who is the Alap and Taw (=the first and the last letters of the Assyrian alphabet), the beginning and the end, takes the shape of the man-Christ, whose face can be seen here bearing the one eye. So, it is by means of the man-Christ that God (the alap and taw), through His spirit gives us freedom. The Spirit builds us up from below towards the ultimate objective, just like the word spirit that is written upwards, until we reach and attain the eye of wisdom, and of ultimate spiritual insight. Thus, we achieve freedom and become children of God. Simple words, few letters, yet the whole is a masterly work of highest perfection.

Clearly, this work can justly be considered the masterpiece of Assyrian modern calligraphy.



### Scholarships

As many of our readers know, the Assyrian Foundation of America has been giving scholarships to Assyrian students for a number of years. Last year, more than \$20,000 were awarded to Assyrian students in the United States and abroad. This year, in addition to the amount designated by the Assyrian Foundation, another \$10,000 has been made available by Mr. Raymond George, founder of **Chaldoatour Student Scholarship Foundation**. This is to be given to high school graduates entering college and those already in college, in \$500 amounts. Applications may be requested through the Assyrian Foundation.

We would like to thank Mr. George for his generous offer.

Assyrian Foundation of America  
P.O. Box 2620  
Berkeley, California 94702

Chaldoatour Student Scholarship Foundation  
P.O. Box 3563  
Modesto, California 95352

# The Genesis of the Modern Assyrian Community of Baghdad

Solomon (Sawa) Solomon  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

It is said that when the Baquba Refugee Camp folded in 1920, the Assyrian population of that camp was moved to northern Iraq to be settled there. The refugees train would arrive at Baghdad-East Railway Station, close to the mosque of Sheikh Abdul-Kadir Al Gailani and then be transported straight to Baghdad-West train to Sharqat and thereafter to Mosul and Mandan. However, a small group of Assyrians, mainly Jeelus and Urmians, stayed behind in the place now called Gailani Camp. It was an uninhabited land full of date palms about 20 minutes walking distance from the railway station in Bab-Al-Sheikh. In 1920 this place was considered way out of the city. These Assyrians lived in make-shift tents amid date palm trees. The so-called streets were dark at night and unsafe to walk through. Later on, oil lamps were posted at a distance of 100 feet apart. An old Assyrian from Urmia, who was present at the camp those days told me the following: There was a water tank for local use; two mud brick churches served the Chaldean Catholic and Church of the East members. There were two priests named Rev. Moshe Degala and Rev. Shlemon Ardeshai. Although there were no shops in the camp, Arabs would bring food stuffs and milk for sale. In 1923 a great flood took place in this area. Also, there was a big disturbance between the Assyrians and the Arabs of Bab-Al-Sheikh. Police had to be brought in to quell the disturbance and establish order. In 1922, Rābi Andrious Odisho and his wife, Almas, opened a school that lasted four years. Rābi Andrious became the first Mukhtar of the Assyrians in Gailani Camp. As time passed, life started improving. Mud-brick houses replaced the tents. Schools and churches were established and, by the late thirties, electricity was brought in, and the camp had become a major Assyrian center in Iraq.

For some of the Assyrians who found employment with the British Occupation authorities in Baghdad, a small temporary camp was established in 1920 across the British army barracks near Baghdad's North gate. This camp was under the supervision of Nimrod Tower of the village of Mar Zaya. The inhabitants of this camp then moved to the newly established Railway camp at Baghdad-West, called by the Assyrians "Jeelu Camp", and by the Arabs, "Camp al-Sikak". Much credit for the establishment of this camp goes to Rev. Marcus Gilliana of Jeelu. This highly educated and capable Assyrian was able to induce British authorities to accept Assyrians who could read and write as employees in the various railway departments, and, in the summer of 1920, the Jeelu Camp was opened with 50 tents, plus an extra tent to be used for church services. Next came the men who were taken in groups to railway departments and gradually employed. Those who could not read and write were given suitable jobs. Later on, the tents were replaced by mud-brick houses and, at one time, 200 families lived in Jeelu Camp. By 1930, a large mud-brick church, Mar Zaya, was constricted under the supervision of Bishop Mar Zaya Sarkis and Rev. Yousip De-Jeelu, and so a second Assyrian center had emerged in Baghdad.

In early 1950, the newly built church of Mar Qardagh was consecrated, thanks to a group of dedicated and capable Assyrians,

among them were: Deacon Sawa Shallita, Deacon Goliad Antar, Richard DeKalleta, and Mikhail Kachow. In October of the same year, Rev. Goriel Soleiman was ordained as priest for the new church and among his first actions was to establish committee to purchase the Assyrian cemetery in Baghdad. The members of the committee were: Rev. Goriel, Leera Esho, Rābi Koorish Shlemon, Rābi Yacu of the Orthodox Church and Daniel Paris. They eventually purchased 5000 square meters from an Arab by the name of Hamza, who sold it at cost. The property was located in New Baghdad.

During the fifties, it became apparent to the Assyrians of Gailani Camp that their landlord, a certain Ismael al-Chorbachi, was not going to give them the deeds to the land that their houses stood on for decades; so, they decided to look for property in a suburb of Baghdad to relocate them. Again, a committee was established by Rev. Goriel and it consisted of Rev. Goriel, Leera Esho, Rābi Mishael Aghakhan, Shawil Mikhail, Baba Israel Sarkis, Mishael Cannon, Deacon Ishak Shimonaya, Mikhael Warranso, Dinkha Sliwoo, Pilatus Rābi Bahram, and Mikhail Kachow. Rev. Goriel made 13 trips to the may suburbs of Baghdad before he was satisfied with the present location in Nuairiah and Gayara. 140,000 square meters of land which were parceled out among the Assyrians of Baghdad. However, the first group of houses did not go up until 1962. At this time the original owners approached the committee with and offer to sell a parcel of land in Gayara adjacent to the Assyrian property for the same price, but, they needed a swift answer. Rev. Goriel rushed to Habbaniya and informed the Levy Commander, Rab-Khela Zaya Giwargis, about the offer. The Rab-Khela promised to convene the officers of the Levy to discuss the matter but nothing came out of this. The Habbaniya Assyrians were later settled in the Baghdad suburb of Dora. In 1963, the first of three committees was established to build a church in Gayara. Finally, in 1971, the church of Mart Mariam was dedicated amid great pomp and ceremony. Much labor of love and sacrifice was poured into that project by the Assyrians.

In 1928, the Assyrian Levies, now much reduced in strength, were moved to the R.A.F. Base in Hanaidi in South Baghdad from northern Iraq and there followed thousands of Assyrians, some Levy dependents and other civilian employees of the R. A.F. In Hanaidi, the prominent educator, Rābi Yacu D'Yacu opened his famous Union School, but Hanaidi was a temporary arrangement and the Assyrians were to be relocated in the course of eight years to the new R.A.F. Base in Habbaniya.

During the fifties, a dedicated and wealthy Assyrian by the name of Leera Esho of Jeelu, donated a valuable parcel of land in west Baghdad for the express purpose of building and Assyrian cathedral. Later on, he personally led and effort that culminated in the building of the beautiful cathedral of Mar Zaya, which was dedicated on June 24, 1959. Leera later died and was buried in the same Assyrian cemetery that he helped establish.

During the sixties, the Assyrian population of Baghdad grew rapidly while the city of Baghdad was expanding on all sides



of Tigris. Assyrians were pouring in from Habbaniya, northern Iraq, and other places. Today not less than six churches serve the members of the Church of the East alone. Bishop Mar Sarkis heads the church in Baghdad from his seat in the cathedral of Mar Zaya in the mechanic area near Dora. Besides Dora, Gailani Camp, Nuairiah and Gayara, Assyrians

live in Garage Amana area (Hay-al-Wahda), Ameen al-Thaniya and others. However, due to the effects of the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War and the extreme hardships caused by the sanctions, many Assyrians have left the country and relocated mainly to Europe, Australia, and the United States.



The Church of Mart Mariam in the new Baghdad suburb of Nuairiah and Gayara, dedicated in 1971.

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## ASSYRIAN COMMUNITY OF KUWAIT

For many years and since the independence of Kuwait in 1961 from the British rule, Assyrians from all around the Middle East, i.e. Iraq, Iran, Syria and Lebanon started moving to the Persian Gulf states, mostly to the State of Kuwait, for better opportunities. Many Assyrians lived in Kuwait for many decades and it was considered as their second home. Most of the Assyrians, being good in both languages English and Arabic, good administrators, hard workers and honest, were offered employment in Kuwait National Petro-Chemical and Kuwait Oil Company, that were the largest Government enterprises. Other Assyrians, held high positions in commercial, financial and local establishments, a few others owned their own businesses, but of course under the sponsorship of a Kuwaiti citizen. Assyrians in general had a good reputation and were a respectful people.

Few families lived in the city of Kuwait, others close to their work site, such as in Ahmadi, Fahaheel and the rest in Salemlah, Maidan Hawally, etc. The living standard in Kuwait was very high. Everything was in abundant at reasonable price, i.e. the food, clothing, household equipment, cars, gas, etc. The only expensive item in Kuwait was rent, but the utilities were exceptionally cheap.

There was no exact figure of the number of Assyrian families used to live in Kuwait. However, it was believed to be approximately 500 families.

The Assyrian Community in Kuwait, for many years, lacked social activities, Holy Mass in their own language, classes in Assyrian for their kids; parties, picnics, plays, etc. In early 1980's some leading members of the community, namely, George (Gaga) Marcus, Daniel D. Benjamin, Jacob Khishto, John Paul, George deKelaita, George S. Khoshaba, Wilson Shaul Benjamin, Odisho Odisho and his wife Evelyn, Emmanuel Michael, Awisha Z. Lazar, came to feel that it was their responsibility as Assyrians far from their homeland, decided to do some thing good for their Community. They established a committee among themselves under the chairmanship of George (Gaga) Marcus. The first important item in their agenda was to contact an Assyrian priest, Raban Tudors Isaac of Anhar, who was already serving the Syrian Orthodox Church in Kuwait. In the beginning this Priest started his Assyrian Mass Services at a small Syrian Orthodox Church in Salemlah on Fridays which was a rest day in Kuwait. As the attendance for the Mass was increasing gradually, the committee thought in moving to a bigger church, the Evangelical Church in Kuwait City on the Gulf Road. Thus, the Assyrian community did not only attend Mass, but had a better chance to hold other activities in the church compound, such as Assyrian language classes, plays and other social gatherings on Christmas and Easter and occasional lunch offerings in

honor of a deceased. These premises were used towards payment of a nominal amount to the mentioned church.

Thanks to the hard efforts of the Assyrian Community Committee who made the living atmosphere in Kuwait very comfortable, pleasant and enjoyable. On Fridays a large group of Assyrians from different denominations, as brothers and sisters used to attend Church Mass of father Tudors assisted by a small quire of male and female. Assyrian language classes were held for children and adults by Raabi Daniel D. Benyamin, Raabi Evelyn Odisho and others. The committee, used to arrange occasionally dance parties, picnics and a drama. The only drama, played by Assyrians in Kuwait was under the title of "Baboosha" produced by the late Raabi William Sarmas and directed by Awisha Z. Lazar. It was played by a nice group of boys and girls (see picture with names) on March 14, 1985 at the Evangelical Church compound. The play was attended by a large number of Assyrians. Snacks and refreshments were served on that occasion.



Dramatic Section

(L-R) Seated on Couch: Awisha Lazar, Ramlen Edmond, Doris Wilson, Vivian Khishto, Alfred Nickola, Sargon Baba.

Seated on the Floor: Rommel Edmond, Linda Oshana, Mona D. Benjamin & Tony Oshana.



from Play Baboosha

(L-R) Standing: George Khoshaba, Awisha Z. Lazar, Alfred Nickola, Sargon Baba, Linda Oshana.

On Couch: Dolly G. Khoshaba, Vivian Y. Khishto, Ramlen Edmond, Doris Wilson & Mona D. Benjamin.

Seated on Floor: Little Girl ?, Doly G. Khoshaba.



The Cast & Director in Play "BABOOSHA" March 14, 1985

(L-R) Seated: Doris Wilson (as Shamiram), Linda Oshana (as Mother Mariam), Awisha Z. Lazar (Director), Ramlen Edmond (as Daughter Nahrain), Mona D. Benjamin (as G/mother)  
 Standing: Alfred Nickola (as Father Gewargis), Rommel Edmond (Son Ninos), Dolly G. Khoshaba (as Friend Atourina), Tony Oshana (as Baboosha), Vivian Y. Khishto (as Bulbul) & Sargon Baba (Friend Ashour).



Assyrian Community Picnic, 3-22-85



Assyrian Community Picnic 3-22-85

(L-R) Standing: David D. Benjamin, Haikanoosh Lazar, Hanna..., Odisho Odisho, .....?  
 Seated: Mrs. Hanna..?, George Khoshaba, Awisha Lazar, Daniel Benjamin, Baba, Alfred Nickola, Yacoub Khishto & ? .....?



## Periodicals Received

### Assyrian Star

P. O. Box 2880  
Worcester, MA 01613; USA  
E-mail: TheAssyrianStar@aol.com

### Assyrian American Society of Las Vegas Newsletter

2725 Tidewater Court,  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89117; USA  
E-mail: AASLV@aol.com

### Eamama Newspaper

1111-236 Albion Road, Etobicoke  
Toronto, Ont. M9W 6A6; Canada  
www.atour.com/eamama

### Hammurabi

9, boulevard Henri Poincaré  
952000 Sarcelles, France  
E-mail: hammurabi@wanadoo.fr

### Hujada

P.O. Box 6019  
151 06 Södertälje, Sweden  
http://www.algonet.se/~hujada  
E-mail: hujada@algonet.se

### Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies

P.O. Box 4102  
Des Plaines, Ill. 60016-4102; USA  
www.JAAS.org  
E-mail: EnglishEditor@JAAS.org

### Melta

P.O. Box 18  
Moscow, 129642; Russia  
E-mail: 21centuryhosp@imail.ru

### Nisibin

P.O. Box 6042  
151 06 Södertälje; Sweden

### The Assyrian Observer

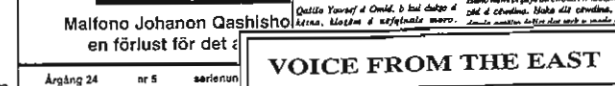
108 Alderney Road  
Slade Green, Kent DA8 2JD; United Kingdom

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P.O. Box 269079  
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Voice of the East

Vol. 19 No. 3-4 July - December 2000

## Literature Search

**Title:** The *Ilkum* Institution in the Provincial Administration of Larsa During the Reign of Hammurapi (1792-1750 B.C.)

**Author:** Miki Yokoyama Ishikida

**Source:** ORIENT; vol. XXXIV 1999

**Excerpts:** "The term *ilkum* seems to have been specifically recognized by the Old Babylonians as public service, the responsible labor service performed by individuals or groups directly assigned or contracted by the central government, and frequently refers to the land which *ilkum* was encumbered upon in the Old Babylonian period. *Ilkum* has often been discussed, however, few have endeavored to provide a synthesis of the *ilkum* institution through the structural and functional analyses. The purpose of this paper is to articulate a model of the *ilkum* system and the administrative and economic structure of the *ilkum* institution in the provincial administration of Larsa under the reign of Hammurapi after he conquered the Kingdom of Larsa in his 30th year."

**Title:** Two Aramaic Legal Documents

**Author:** T. Kwasman

**Source:** Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies; vol. 63, part 2, 2000

**Excerpts:** "The Aramaic clay tablets presented here are legal documents with Neo-Assyrian formularies. These texts are important as they attest to an Akkadian legal tradition and its adaptation to an Aramaic context. The fact that the writing material is clay is exceptional since one would expect an Aramaic document to be written on parchment or papyrus. Published examples of Aramaic documents on clay are relatively uncommon although more are surfacing.

"It is striking how closely the texts follow the Neo-Assyrian legal formulary. This is reflected in the paraphrasing of some clauses and the literal translation of others and the preserving of Akkadian syntactical features such as the verb occurring at the end of the sentence. One feature of these documents, however, is definitely Aramaic. Both tablets turn sideways like a page in a book rather than end over end as is usual with cuneiform documents, indicating that Aramaic as an alphabetic script was naturally written on another material.

"Thus these documents are additional evidence for what has been called the 'Aramaic-Assyrian symbiosis'. The Neo-Assyrian Empire and its administration played a major role in the transformation of cuneiform legal formulary into Aramaic. Thus Neo-Assyrian legal procedure was the model adapted in Aramaic regions under Assyrian hegemony."

**Title:** The Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Maha Khtaya D-Baz; Phonology, Morphology and Texts

**Author:** Hezy Mutzafi

**Source:** Journal of Semitic Studies; XLV/2 Autumn 2000

**Excerpts:** "Since the beginning of scholarly activity in the field of Neo-Aramaic in the first half of the nineteenth century, the type of Aramaic spoken by the Assyrian tribe of Baz (*bāz*) has remained all but ignored. Not only are the published data on *bāziyāna*, the language of Baz, extremely scanty and spo-

radic, but even this meager amount of data is partly marred by non-linguistic transcription and inaccurate details. In the early years of the twentieth century the Bazi Assyrians (calling themselves *baznāyē*, *baznāy* or *bazné* according to dialect) resided in six villages along the narrow valley of Baz in the Ottoman vilayet of Hakkâri, about fifteen kilometers south-east of the town of Julamerk (called Jural by the Assyrians; present-day Hakkâri, Turkey). The principal village of Baz was Maha Khtaya (I.e. 'the lower village'), situated at 37°27' N, 43°53' E; and the other Bazi villages were Shwawwa, Irgab, Be-Selim, Aruntus and Qojij. The people of Baz were mostly farmers, shepherds, builders and blacksmiths. Many Bazi tribesmen used to earn their livelihood during winter time as hired laborers in the vilayet of Mosul.

"During World War I the Bazis, numbering several thousand, shared the tragic fate of the entire Assyrian people, whose leaders sided with the allied powers. In September 1915 overwhelming Kurdish forces loyal to the Ottoman regime poured into Baz; and the surviving Bazis, defended by their retreating combatants, had to flee their ravaged homeland. Three years later, after a lengthy ordeal, they were resettled in Iraq by the British authorities, first in a refugee camp, later in the vicinities of Dohuk and Amadiyua, in villages where often the entire population was not only Bazi, but originated from a certain Bazi village.

"Oppression, wars and political upheavals prompted almost all rural Assyrians of northern Iraq to leave their villages, some families crossing to Syria already in 1934, others moving to the large urban centers of Iraq and later emigrating in great numbers to North America, Europe and Australia. In the urban Assyrian communities Baziyana, like the other Neo-Aramaic varieties of Hakkâri, is being rapidly effaced by the Urmi-based Koine.

"Although the data at my disposal on Bazi varieties other than that of Maha Khtaya d-Baz are very limited, it is safe to determine that the Neo-Aramaic of Baz is a cluster of highly interrelated and completely interintelligible dialects, and that many if not most of the salient features of M-Baz described here apply to the Baziyana language as a whole."

**Title:** Domestic Concerns and the Water Conflict over the Euphrates-Tigris River Basin

**Author:** Ali Çarkoğlu and Mine Eder

**Source:** Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 37, no. 1, Jan. 2001

**Excerpts:** "Resolution of conflicts over the sharing of water resources in the Middle East has emerged over the past decade as one of the fundamental issues for peace and stability in the region. The disputes over the Euphrates-Tigris Rivers among Turkey, Syria and Iraq are no exception. With the initiation of dam building and various water development projects during the 1950s, water sharing has gradually become a major concern particularly of the downstream states. The Southeast Anatolia Development Project, or simply GAP (Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi) in its Turkish acronym, which combines a number of giant irrigation and energy projects with a total of 22 dams, has exacerbated these concern both for Syria and Iraq.

"The transformation of GAP from a largely hydroelectric project to an integrated, regional development programme starting in the mid-1980s has further increased the anxiety of both mid-stream and downstream countries. The increasing consump-



tive use of water by Turkey magnified concerns for not only the quantity but also the quality of water flowing into Syria and Iraq. The water issue was also a significant part of the serious row between Turkey and Syria in August 1998. Even though the conflict appeared to emerge from the ongoing Kurdish confrontation in southeast Turkey, the underlying issue was still the water dispute. It was in fact the linkages between the ethnic conflict and the water issue that have become contentious between Turkey and Syria. Syria has increasingly complained that it is not receiving its due share of water in the Euphrates-Tigris basin. Turkey claims that Syria has made use of the 'ethnic card', namely the logistic support for Kurdish separatists known by their acronym PKK (Partia Karkaren Kürdistan or Kurdistan Workers Party), in order to induce Turkey to make concessions of the water issue. Turkey's response came in the shape of military pressure to force an end to Syria's active use of the ethnic card, which brought the two sides to the brink of war.

"What this August 1998 confrontation also showed is that the analysis of the water dispute between Turkey and its southern neighbours involves dynamics that include a complex web of interactions between domestic and international policy concerns.

"Below we will first briefly summarize GAP and elaborate of the political rationale behind it. A discussion on how the domestic concerns affect the international water dispute over Euphrates-Tigris will then follow where Putnam's two-level game metaphor will be used."

**Title:** Les Débuts de la Recherche Française en Assyriologie. Milieu et Atmosphère du Déchiffrement

**Author:** Béatrice André-Salvini

**Source:** Journal Asiatique; Tome 287, numéro 1, 1999

**Excerpts:** "Dans une «note sur les inscriptions trouvées a Khorsabad» lue le 8 février 1850 a l'Académie des inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Félix de Saulcy s'exprime ainsi: «Le moment approche ou le déchiffrement de l'écriture assyrienne sera un fait accompli, et il importe que dans cette œuvre a laquelle auront concouru pour des parts inégales et avec des ressources inégales aussi, des philologues de tous les pays... il soit fait a chacun la part qui lui revient ».

Les publications laissées par les pionniers du déchiffrement, mais aussi l'abondante correspondance, privée ou officielle, qu'ils échangeaient, révèle de façon détaillée non seulement les étapes de leur démarche, mais aussi la personnalité scientifique et humaine de chacun. Elles permettent d'évoquer le milieu parisien –compréhensif des savants de formations différentes et d'horizons divers–, qui y jouèrent un rôle, soit direct comme Paul-Émile botta, Isidore Löwenstern, Félix de Saulcy, Adrien de Londerperier et Jules Oppert; soit indirect comme Eugène Burnouf et Jules Mohl. L'on peut tenter de reconstituer l'atmosphère de ces premières recherches– menées a bien par des hommes ayant en commun une très bonne connaissance des langues orientales –, avec l'inévitable jeu des stimulations mutuelles, des influences et des rivalités entraînant progrès et régressions, des découvertes parallèles effectuées simultanément, parfois selon des méthodes différentes."

**Title:** The Early History of the Syriac Script; A Reassessment

**Author:** John Healey

**Source:** Journal of Semitic Studies

**Excerpts:** "This short note arises from research on the early Syriac inscriptions published jointly with Han J.W. Drijvers in 1999. The publication contains a detailed account of the script of the Syriac inscriptions of the first three centuries AD. Included as an appendix, and therefore included also in the account of the script, were the three early Syriac parchments dated AD 240-43 from Dura Europos and the Middle Euphrates, two of which were published relatively recently. The present note reassess the early history of the Syriac script-forms and relates this reassessment to the controverted question of the origins of the Arabic Script."

Phoenician script	Early Inscriptions A.D. 6-c.200	Early Mosaics c.220-40	Legal Parchments 240-43	Earliest dated script MS - 411	Colophon of script MS dated 509	Syriac MS of 790	Cursive Nabataean	Early Arabic Papyri
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**Title:** The Verbal System of the Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Arbel

**Author:** Geoffrey Khan

**Source:** Journal of the American Oriental Society; vol. 120, no. 3, July-Sept. 2000

**Excerpt:** "This article examines the syntax of the verb in the neo-Aramaic dialect of the Jews of Arbel (Iraqi Kurdistan). This dialect belongs to the group known as Northeastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA). It exhibits a number of features in its verbal system that distinguish it from other dialects in this group. As in other NENA dialects, past and present tense verbs are formed from bases that correspond, respectively, to the passive and active participles of earlier Aramaic. A distinctive feature of the Arbel Dialect is the use of the pre-verbal particle *lā* to express aspectual nuances. This particle also has a discourse function."

## In Memoriam

Uncle Alfred  
By Gilbert Adam



Alfred Badal was born in Iraq in 1931 to Maria and Eramia, into a family of 3 brothers and 2 sisters. After completing high school and working for a while, he came to the United States in 1955. He faced many difficulties, which he was able to overcome and get his masters degree, and advance professionally.

He was a loving man who enjoyed helping others; whether family, friends, or colleagues. This was evident from the large number in attendance at his burial service who described how he had helped them financially or otherwise.

When he came to California for his sister's 40th service in February of 2000, he seemed to be in perfect health. However, by June of that year he was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor which took his life by December of the same year.

I believe the following quote from Khalil Gibran's "The Beauty of Death" describes what Uncle Al would tell all of us who loved him and are saddened by his departure: 'Disturb not the air's tranquility with chanting and requiems, but let your hearts sing with me the song of eternal life; mourn me not with apparel of black, but dress in colour and rejoice with me; talk not of my departure with sighs in your hearts; close your eyes and you will see me with you for ever.'

Rab-Imma Nadirsha Gorgo D'Qudchanis  
By Edward Nadirsha

Rab-Imma Nadirsha was born in April 1906 in the village of Qudchanis in Hakkari to Marganita Darmo and Gorgo Pokho, the sole survivor of seven courageous brothers. In 1923 he enlisted in the Assyrian Levies where he served for 25 years. Part of that service was in Cyprus at the time when the family of His Holiness, the late Mar Eshai Shimmun XXIII was there in exile. In this same time period, he became involved in a research project concerning Assyrian history, conducted by a group of western scholars.



In 1948, he retired from the Levies and went to work for the Iraq Petroleum Company in Baiji, then Ain Zalah, and, finally, Qayara.

Nadirsha and his wife, Batishwa, came to the United States in 1979 to be close to their children. Batishwa passed away in

1997, after 72 years of marriage. In 1995, he and several other surviving members of the Royal Air Force Levies were honored by the Habbaniya School Reunion Founding Committee, where he was presented an award bearing the Levies' insignia. He passed away on March 11, 2001. Funeral service was held at Mar Gewargis Assyrian Church of the East in Chicago and he was laid to rest in Montrose cemetery. At the memorial luncheon that followed, he was eulogized by Dr. Esho Marcus, who said that Nadirsha was one of the few remaining people that carried the legacy of Hakkari, the home of the Assyrian Mountaineers.

Nadirsha is survived by three sons, four daughters, and their families; they wish to thank the many friends and relatives who attended the services and shared in their loss.

Nariman Khanishan  
By Mikhael Pius

Nariman Khanishan, 73, passed away February 9, 2001, following a short illness, and was laid to rest at Turlock Memorial Park in Turlock, California. Funeral services, attended by many relatives and friends, were conducted by Qasha Ouchana Kanon, at Mar Gewargis Church of the East in Ceres. At the Memorial lunch, Ramin Odisho delivered a brief sketch of the deceased's life.

Nariman, popularly known as Norman, was born to Shoushan and Rovel Bejan of Khanishan, Urmia, Iran, on August



23, 1927. Two years later his father died and his mother moved to Baghdad with Norman and his younger brother, William. Soon after, his mother placed Norman in the French Catholic orphanage school known as Padre Pierre school while she worked, doing hard menial jobs for many years. Norman remained there for 16

years, studying and serving as altar boy. He also attended two years of high school at Baghdad's American School for Boys.

Norman married Panna Aziz in Habbaniya, Iraq, on June 11, 1949. They lived in Baghdad for nine years and then moved to Teheran, Iran, where they lived for 20 years before immigrating to the United States in 1978. They lived in Los Angeles for eight years before moving to Modesto.

Norman worked hard during most of his adult life. In Iraq, he worked for many years in Baghdad, Mosul, and Kirkuk in various clerical jobs. In Teheran, he was the chief caterer in an American company, where he was responsible for the food and nutrition of 2000 employees. In Los Angeles he worked for Charles Coburn; and, in Modesto he had a used-car business with son, Robert, who is a well-known singer.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, a son, two daughters, two brothers, eight grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Norman was a cheerful and fun-loving man with many friends who loved and respected him. May God grant his soul joy in His Kingdom, and his family solace.



## In Memoriam

Simon John Benjamin  
By Mikhael K. Pius



Offered by his uncle and family, a 40th-day was celebrated for Simon John Benjamin at Mar Toma Catholic Church in Turlock on Sunday April 1, 2001. Mass was followed by a memorial at the church hall, where the deceased was eulogized by his cousin, Raman Albert Benjamin, by his uncle Shamasha Albert Benjamin, by Shamasha Joseph Lellhame, and by Fr. Kamal Warda Bidawid.

Simon passed away of a self-inflicted wound on February 18 –though no one could fathom the reason why– at the very young age of 29 in Lafayette, California, where he was laid to rest following funeral services at St. Perpetua Catholic Church.

Simon was born on February 29, 1972, in Walnut Creek, California, to Mary and the late Joseph Eramia Benjamin, a long-time member of the Assyrian Foundation of America, who passed away of cancer in 1997. Simon received his elementary education at St. Perpetua Catholic School in Lafayette and attended Del Oro High School in Concord, graduating in 1991. After obtaining his associate degree from Concord's Diablo Valley College, he worked in construction.

His hobbies were music, hunting, fishing, water-skiing, and working on cars and motorcycles. He had a passion for football, and was a loyal Oakland Raiders fan.

Raman, who grew up with Simon in their early years, described him as an outgoing and gentle person who "was never afraid to give of himself to his friends, and family", and was ever ready "to share his candy with others". Raman asked everyone to pray for his cousin that he might be granted peace as he pursued his eternal life in heaven.

Shamasha Albert Benjamin thanked those in attendance. He reminisced that when Simon's younger brother, James, was getting married last year, he told Simon that it was his turn to get married. Simon replied: "I'm not getting married; besides, I have my brother Joe and cousin Raman who are my senior." So, as he stood over his open coffin at the vigil, Albert said he thought of the Assyrian ironic saying: "His wedding apple fell into mud." And again when he watched painfully how Simon's many friends, each wearing a shirt with Simon's face printed on it, knelt by his coffin and placed a rose upon his chest, Albert said in a choking voice: "I thought this is the rose he should have had on his lapel on his wedding day!"

Simon is survived by his mother Mary, sister Bridgette, brothers Joseph and James, and many relatives and friends.

May God grant for Simon a place in His Kingdom and for the whole family comfort and peace in their poignant sorrow.

## Yossarian the Assyrian\*

By: Joel Elias

One of the most famous novels of the second half of the 20th century was "Catch-22" by Joseph Heller, which takes place in world War II. I have often wondered why the hero of the 1961 book was an Assyrian and why he was named Yossarian. Now I understand. On March 27, 2001, the New York Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, and other newspapers, carried the obituary, distributed by the Associated Press, of one Francis Yohannan. It turns out that Joseph Heller and Francis Yohannan became friends when both were Air Force bombardiers in Corsica in 1944, and Yohannan became the inspiration for the protagonist of "Catch-22". In a 1998 interview, Heller said it was from Mr. Yohannan that he "derived the unconventional name for the heretical Yossarian." Unfortunately, the obituary did not say that Yohannan was an Assyrian; he was the son of Joshua and Lydia Yohannan, both Assyrians, of Philadelphia. His brother Frankie was killed in France during World War II - in April, 1945. Thus, one of the most famous fictional characters of the 20th century, Yossarian, an Assyrian, was based on a real life Assyrian - Yohannan. Yossarian's name is obviously a combination of "Yohannan" and "Assyrian".

The book has sold millions of copies throughout the world and was made into a movie. The term "catch-22" has become a part of our vocabulary to mean a regulation that makes you a victim of its provisions no matter what you do.

Lt. Colonel Yohannan was quite an Assyrian warrior. He retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1974 after more than 9,000 hours in B-25's, B-36 bombers during the 1950s, B-52s during the 1950s and 1960s, and Phantom fighters during the Vietnam War. He earned a Distinguished Flying Cross and a Bronze Star.

\*This article is a revision of one that was first published in *Zinda Magazine* ([www.zindamagazine.com](http://www.zindamagazine.com)); the on-line weekly Assyrian journal



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- Nineveh*: Subscription to *Nineveh*.
- Education: To be used for scholarships and other educational projects.
- Needy: To be used by the welfare committee for financial assistance of Assyrians in need.
- Assyrian Foundation dues are not included.

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Mr. Benyamin Menashi; *Nineveh*: \$50  
Ms. Mary Philip Sarkes; *Nineveh*: \$20  
Mr. Joel Babilla; *Nineveh*: \$50

## **UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS:**

### **68<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE ASSYRIAN AMERICAN NATIONAL FEDERATION**

August 29-September 3, 2001  
San Jose, California

**Registration and Program Information:**  
[www.AssyrianConvention.org](http://www.AssyrianConvention.org)

**Telephone Contacts:**  
Convention hotline...408-268-1200  
Convention fax line...408-268-1271

**Room Reservations:**  
DoubleTree Hotel, 2050 Gateway Place  
San Jose, California 95110  
408-453-4000  
Group name: Assyrian National Convention  
[Http://www.dtsj.com](http://www.dtsj.com)

### **Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting**

November 17-20  
Hyatt Regency  
San Francisco, California

**Registration:**  
**University of Arizona**  
1643 E. Helen St., Tucson, Arizona 85721  
Telephone: 520-621-5850  
Fax: 520-626-9095  
E-mail: [mesana@u.arizona.edu](mailto:mesana@u.arizona.edu)  
[Http://w3fp.arizona.edu/mesassoc/regform.htm](http://w3fp.arizona.edu/mesassoc/regform.htm)

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تَقْتَبِرُ.

- 17 - مَسْئَلَةُ دُخَانِ قَتْلِكَ لَعْنَتُهُ ، بِدَمِ قَتْلِكَ مَسْئَلَةُ دُخَانِ قَتْلِكَ .  
 18 - مَسْئَلَةُ دُخَانِ قَتْلِكَ ، قَتْلِكَ مَسْئَلَةُ دُخَانِ قَتْلِكَ .  
 19 - مَسْئَلَةُ دُخَانِ قَتْلِكَ ، قَتْلِكَ مَسْئَلَةُ دُخَانِ قَتْلِكَ .

## محدثہ دفینہ

- 1 - 1. (جَعَلُوا) بِمَنْ جَعَلُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ.
- 2 - 2. إِذْ دَعَا دَعَا، حَقَّقُوا (حَقَّقُوا) مَعَهُمْ دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ.
- 3 - 3. (حَقَّقُوا) حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ.
- 4 - 4. حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ.
- 5 - 5. حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ.
- 6 - 6. حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ.
- 7 - 7. حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ: حَقَّقُوا دَعَاؤَهُمْ.

مَدَنِي دَهْمَنِي

- [illegible]







بَدَحَمَّ حَيَّو دَاوَمَهَّ حَكَّو دَاوَمَهَّ مَلَبَّتْ لَهَّو.  
 حَالَقْ دَلَقْ حِيَلَهَّو. حَيَّو دَلَّتْ دُزْبْ لَهَّو.  
 بَحَقِيبْ مَحِيْ هَكَّدْ حَسَوْتْ دَاوَمَهَّ حِيَلْ لَهَّو.  
 حَبْدَهَّو حِيَلَهَّو. حَسَوْتْ حِيَلَهَّو. سَوْدَحِلَهَّو.  
 حَلْ بَدْ دَسَمَوِيْ حَوَّو خِيَسْ دَاوَكْ اَنَهْ تَلْ خَنَوِي.

بَدَحَمَّ يَتْتْ حَلِيْبْ حِدَهَّتْ بَدَحَمَّ مَلَبَّتْ.  
 لْ مَحِيْبَهْ اَهَّتْ حَوَّو حَكَّدْ حَجَفْ دَبْ حَلْ دَهَّتْ.  
 حَوَّو حَقِيْ حَوَّو مِيَقْ دَلِيْسْ حَمَلَبَّتْ.  
 لْ اَقِيْمْ حَسَقْ حِيَلْ حَوَّو حَبْبَتِيْ بْ مَقَهَّو.  
 حَلْ بَدْ دَسَمَوِيْ حَوَّو خِيَسْ دَاوَكْ اَنَهْ تَلْ خَنَوِي.

بَدَحَمَّ حَيَّو دَحَمَهَّتْ حِيَلَهَّو. دَلَقْ حَلَبَّتْ.  
 بَدَحَمَّ اَمِيْ دِلَقْ حَقِيْبْ اَحَلَهَّو. لَهَّتِيْ دَحَبَّتْ دَاوَمَهَّتْ.  
 بَدَحَمَّ مَانِيْ مَحَبَّتْ حَلَبَّتْ مَوْدَحِلَهَّو. لَكَّتَهَّتْ.  
 بَدَحَمَّ مَانِيْ دِلَقْ اَهْ حَقْبْ حِيَلَهَّو. لِيَقْبَهَّتْ.  
 حَلْ بَدْ دَسَمَوِيْ حَوَّو خِيَسْ دَاوَكْ اَنَهْ تَلْ خَنَوِي.

دَلْ يَتْتْ حَوَّو حَبْدَهَّو حَوَّو حَلْ اَهَّتْ دَاوَمَهَّتِيْ.  
 هَدَلْ يَتْتْ حَوَّو حَبْدَهَّو حَوَّو اَهَّتْ دَحَبَّتْ مَحَبَّتِيْ.  
 هَدَلْ يَتْتْ مَحَبَّتْ لَحَبَّتْ. دَاوَمَهَّتِيْ مَحَبَّتِيْ.  
 اَهَّتْ حَبَبْ سَوْدَحِلَهَّو لَسْ اَهَّتْ مَانِيْ مَوْدَحِلَهَّو.  
 حَلْ بَدْ دَسَمَوِيْ حَوَّو خِيَسْ دَاوَكْ اَنَهْ تَلْ خَنَوِي.

اَهَّتْ اَنَهْ تَلْ حَقْ هَبْ دَسَمَوِيْ مَانِيْ مَانْ هَدَسْتْ.  
 اَهْ مَوْدَحِلَهَّو اَهَّتْ يَهَّتْ اَهْ اَهَّتْ تَلْ حَقْ هَبْ.  
 اَهَّتْ حَجَفْ حَوَّو حَلَبَّتْ بَدْ مَحَبَّتْ اَهْ اَهَّتْ هَبْ.  
 اَهَّتْ دَحِيْبْ اَهْ مَحَبَّتْ اَهْ اَهَّتْ حَبَبْ مَحَبَّتْ.  
 حَبْدَهَّو حَلْ بَدْ تَلْ خِيَسْ دَاوَكْ اَنَهْ تَلْ خَنَوِي.

و ا ب

\* \* \* \* \*













[illegible]

فَمِنْهُمْ مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَأْسِهَا وَمِنْهُمْ مَن دَخَلَ وَخِصْبًا فَاتَّبَعَ فَرَسًا مِنْ أَمْثِلِهَا فَتَرَىٰ فِيهَا مِثْلَ بَيْتِكَ مُخَوَّضًا فِيهَا وَنَحْوَ ذَلِكَ









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תָּהָה דָּחָה  
 חֲבֵלָה מִבְּדָה  
 מִלֵּל מִלֵּל  
 חֲבֵלָה מִבְּדָה  
 חֲבֵלָה מִבְּדָה  
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 חֲבֵלָה מִבְּדָה  
 חֲבֵלָה מִבְּדָה



דָּחָה דָּחָה  
 חֲבֵלָה מִבְּדָה  
 חֲבֵלָה מִבְּדָה  
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 חֲבֵלָה מִבְּדָה





**هذيم قيتا، لاه ذبعتا، بيب Board of Supervisers**

**توتو توتا، تاير ه قتا مومتا، ام انا داتميدا موم حستا Santa Clara Center .**

**حسوما، خدوجا موس ذى عنتا، زومتاتا، د6751 دكلمتا، اتواتيا، دبجلا.**



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مِنْ خَلْقِهِ ذِكْرًا  
مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

[illegible][illegible]

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توفیقاً لکھی گئی ہے۔ 2001ء

[illegible]

مِلّت مِلّت، قەدەمە، دەرگە، بىيە،  
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ܡܠܟܐ



View of Der es Zapharan from the Tur 'Abdin (Turkey)

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