



Established 1964



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The Presidio Children's Dance Theatre performing Šeykânî at *Narsai's Taste of the Mediterranean*, a fundraising event benefiting the construction of a university student complex in Arbil, North Iraq

Cultural - Educational - Social

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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 *NINEVEH* are those of the respective authors and not necessarily those of *NINEVEH* or the Assyrian Foundation of America.

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www.assyrianfoundation.org



From the Editor:

Since its establishment in 1964, the Assyrian Foundation of America (AFA) has considered its greatest mission the helping of Assyrians all over the world.

One of the goals has been the assistance of individuals and families in financial need.

Although there are people in need here in the United States and other western countries, the greatest need, especially since the wars, revolutions, and other man-made disasters of the past three decades in Mesopotamia and the Middle East in general, has been to help the thousands of Assyrian refugees and displaced individuals and families. Some of these refugees have left their homes and are stranded in foreign lands where they may not be welcome, don't know the language, are unable to find employment and receive no help from the government of that country. Others remain in their homes or are displaced within their homelands. For them, too, economic conditions are very difficult, as they are for their non-Assyrian neighbors. And, in order to make their lives more tolerable and to avert further exodus from the homeland, they need the support of those of us living in the west.

International relief organizations provide some assistance; however, for the most part, these individuals and families depend on their family and friends living in the west, as well as Assyrian organizations, for their survival.

For its part, the AFA has been helping in several ways. First, it has helped individuals and families, usually through an intermediary local church or civic organization. In 2002, this was about \$2,000.

But, the greater involvement has been by assisting organizations, either local or international, that are involved in helping those Assyrians, either individually or as communities. For example in Northern Iraq, we have given money to the *Atra Project* and the *Assyrian Aid Society*, both of which are involved in helping Assyrians in the region by providing medical care, building schools, day-care centers and dormitories, planting trees, building homes and irrigation canals, installing water collection and purification systems, etc. In 2002, this totaled \$12,500.

In 2002, we gave \$16,000 to the Assyrian refugees stranded in Jordan. This money was used to help the families with their daily needs, as well as to conduct classes where children as well as adults are taught Assyrian, English and basic computer knowledge.

And, about \$2,500 were sent to Greece to help the Assyrian refugees in that country.

Another goal of the AFA has been the preservation and promotion of Assyrian culture. *Nineveh* magazine has been a major part of this objective, thanks to the many years of hard work by Mr. Julius Shabbas and others.

The founding of an Assyrian Book Endowment at the University of California, Berkeley, has been another project of the AFA. In addition, we have sponsored lectures, either individually or in association with the university or with other Assyrian organizations.

The AFA has also purchased books and CD's from, or otherwise assisted Assyrian writers and artists, to help promote their work and our culture.

The assistance of Assyrian students has been another major goal of the AFA. In 2002, more than \$23,000 were provided as

grants to Assyrian students worldwide. As explained in an earlier issue of *Nineveh*, due to limited funds, the criteria for awarding educational assistance had to be modified. Although there may be students in financial need here in the US, there is also the possibility of getting financial loans and grants from various governmental and private sources. But, in some countries, especially in the Near East or states that were part of the former Soviet Union, there are no sources of financial assistance other than the students' family and friends. Besides, whereas a \$500 scholarship will not get more than a book or two in the US, in those countries, it will pay for a year's tuition and possibly room and board as well! Therefore, the small investment we make goes a long way in helping to educate and, therefore, improve the economic capability of our people in those countries which brings stability and disincentive to leave.

The other change was to give preference to students, especially at the graduate level, who are studying Assyriology or other related fields in which we don't have enough (or any!) representation, and which are important in promoting our culture and heritage.

There are many important projects that we must support and people in need that we have to help. However, we are forced to choose among them because of lack of funds.

For example, if the war in Iraq, we are told is inevitable, does indeed happen, the consequences may be disastrous. There will probably be thousands more displaced and turned into refugees, in addition to those who may be injured or killed.

We can not wait until disaster strikes, then scramble to collect money to help those in the middle. We must be prepared to step in immediately and help.

And, Mesopotamia is not the only place where there is great need. It isn't even the worst. The difficult economic conditions we see here are many times magnified in other, poorer countries. The Republic of Georgia is one example of severe economic hardship where our people can not even afford to pay for the burial of their loved ones.

It would, of course, be optimal if we had a national fund, where money could be collected for such catastrophes as well as other projects. But, as there is no such fund, yet, the AFA will continue to help as much as it can.

As a not-for-profit/tax-exempt organization, we depend on donations for all our funds. So, please, help as much as you can. And, you may specify which project or area you wish your donation to be used for.

Here is the list of officers elected to the Assyrian Foundation of America's board for 2003:

- Edward Mikhail: president
- Charles Yonan: vice-president
- Romana Jonas: treasurer
- Voltaire Warda: secretary
- Sargon Michael: education
- Martin Jacob: welfare
- Flora Kingsbury: social
- Belles Yelda: membership

We wish them a successful year.

LETTERS FROM YOU:

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed the latest issue, vol. 25, nos. 2-3, of *Nineveh*. I can't say much about the Assyrian articles, since I have a very difficult time reading them. However, the articles in English are very interesting, especially "Democracy vs. Division" (*Pūlāgā*) by Ms. Davis-Moradkhan.

I know that most of your readers are of the older generation, but the magazine should focus on the young as well as the old generation. I don't see anything in the magazine that would be of interest to the younger readers. They are, after all, our future and we must do everything we can to engage them. It would be refreshing to see articles promoting education as well as discussions about the social, economic, and cultural challenges that the younger generation is facing.

Looking forward to the next issue,
Ramina Yonan
Los Angeles, California

Dear Editor:

Thank you for sending me this informative magazine. This is the first issue that I have ever received, and I rather enjoyed the "Democracy Versus Division" article by Madeleine Davis-Moradkhan. In one article Madeleine has summed up all of the problems that I and others have encountered when dealing with our various "clubs" and organizations. Bravo! If only we could transform her advice into action...

Jeff Atto
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Editor:

Last week I received the latest issue of *Nineveh* with my article: *Grandmother's Memories*.

I would like to express many thanks on behalf of the Assyrian families who recognized their relatives among the members of the Assyrian Theater mentioned in the article and felt that the selfless labor of their forefathers in the name of preserving Assyrian language and culture for the future generations in those difficult times is not forgotten.

When I showed the magazine to my grandmother, she took it with care and looking at the photos pronounced with trembling voice: "Ala mazyidlokhun, Ala avi minokhun hamasha" and after those words I noticed the tears of happiness in her eyes.

I think that the memory of, and respect to our forefathers will inspire and teach us, young Assyrians, not to give up in our sometimes very thorny path.

I am very happy to inform you that I've successfully passed the German-language examination and received the *Sprachzeugnis für ausländische Bewerber* certificate. I've also sent my application for the position of postdoctoral fellow to the Heinrich Heine University's Medical Center (Frauenklinik) in Düsseldorf and received the invitation from Prof. Bender for two years. But to my deepest regret the financial situation doesn't allow me to pursue my specialization training in Germany.

Please, convey my gratitude to the members and donors of the Assyrian Foundation of America for the generous educational assistance I was given this year.

Thank you again for the magazine and the financial help,
Faithfully yours,
Victoria Aivazova, M
Tbilisi, The Republic of Georgia

Subscriptions and Donations:

-*Nineveh*: Subscriptions and donations to *Nineveh*.

-Education: To be used for financial assistance of Assyrian students and other educational and cultural projects.

-Needy: To be used for financial assistance of Assyrians in need. Assyrian Foundation membership dues are not included.

You may indicate how and/or for what project you wish your donations to be used.

Mr. Victor Kelaita; Needy: \$60, *Nineveh*: \$20
Mr. Daniel Jacobs; Needy (for Assyrians in Jordan): \$1000
Mr. Albert Mulhim; Needy (for Assyrians in Jordan): \$100
Mr. and Mrs. Kourosh Sayad; Needy: \$30, *Nineveh*: \$20
Mr. Avia Daryawish; Needy: \$30, *Nineveh*: \$20
Ms. Marganita Gergo; *Nineveh*: \$25
Mr. Zack Cherry; *Nineveh*: \$30
Mr. Sarkis Sargon Elia; Needy: \$30
Mr. Lazare Kianoun; Needy: \$30, *Nineveh*: \$20
Mr. David Narsai; Needy (for Assyrians in Jordan): \$50
B.G. Barson; Needy: \$70, *Nineveh*: \$30
Assyrian American Artists; Needy (for Assyrians in Jordan): \$60
Mr. Aziz Michael; Needy (for Assyrians in Jordan): \$270
Mr. Kasper Saffer; *Nineveh*: \$25
Ms. Anita Sibthorpe; Needy: \$500
Mr. Youeal Ibrahim; Needy (for Assyrians in Jordan): \$500
Ms. Linda Ibrahim; Needy (for Assyrians in Jordan): \$500
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Ms. Marsha Yonan; *Nineveh*: \$25
Ms. Frieda Badal; Needy: \$25, *Nineveh*: \$20
Chaldoatour Student Scholarship Foundation; Needy (for Assyrians in Jordan): \$5000
Mr. Emanuel Bakus; *Nineveh*: \$20
Mr. Y.K. Pius; Needy: \$30, *Nineveh*: \$20
Dr. William Ramsini; *Nineveh*: \$40 (one gift subscription)
Ms. Anita Baba; *Nineveh*: \$20
Mr. Daniel Tuman; *Nineveh*: \$40 (two-year subscription)
Mr. Youhana Khosrowabadi; Needy: \$30, *Nineveh*: \$20
Mr. Aprim Abraham; Needy: \$25, *Nineveh*: \$20
Mr. Sankhiro Khofri; *Nineveh*: \$20
Ms. Lily Abraham; *Nineveh*: \$100
Ms. Melina Oshana; Needy (for Assyrians in Jordan): \$100
Ms. Khanna Youkhana; Needy: \$50
Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Yonan; Needy: \$50
Ms. Lucy Abraham; Needy: \$20, *Nineveh*: \$20
Mr. and Mrs. William Suleiman; Needy: \$80, *Nineveh*: \$20
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Mr. William Julian; *Nineveh*: \$20
Dr. Arianne Ishaya; *Nineveh*: \$50 (one gift subscription)
Mr. Persi Mishel; *Nineveh*: \$20



*I ask you, Ladies and Gentlemen**

Youel A. Baaba

Most people of our world know about Saddam and the atrocities that he has committed against his own people. They also know about his weapons of mass destruction and President Bush's determination to attack Iraq to eliminate Saddam and topple his regime. I ask you ladies and gentlemen how many of these people know that Saddam willfully destroyed over 200 Assyrian villages, eradicated their farms and orchards, demolished their churches that were built centuries ago, forcibly relocated their population to undesirable areas, and imprisoned those who resisted? Sadly, not too many people are aware of the atrocities committed against the Assyrians, or their deplorable living conditions in Iraq.

For the last ten years, the burden of helping the Assyrians in Iraq has fallen on the shoulders of their fellow countrymen in Diaspora. Thousands of Iraqi Assyrian families have been sending money regularly to their families, relatives and even friends. In addition to this individual assistance program, Assyrian Aid Society has embarked on a program of helping our people in Garbia (North Iraq). This organization has successfully completed many projects in the field of education, medical assistance, housing, and replanting of orchards and fields.

I ask you again ladies and gentlemen why are we here tonight? Did we respond to this invitation because our host, Narsai David, is such a gracious and creative person? Was it the delicious food prepared by the five renowned chefs from all over the world? May be it is the wine that Narsai selected to please our palates and bring a smile to our face? May be some of us were attracted to the opportunity to bid on some choice selections in tonight's auction.

I am confident that each one of us responded for one or more of these reasons. However, there is one significant reason that we all share in joining this special evening. That is we are here to ensure that the Assyrian Aid Society succeeds in raising the 100 thousand dollars needed to build the dormitory for our university students in Arbil, Iraq.

The success of this evening is not only a testimony to the dedication and hard work of the members of the society and its president. This is also a testimony that in our Assyrian communities in the San Francisco Bay Area there is a great reservoir of good will and talent that has not been fully tapped. When an organization such as the Assyrian Aid Society has clear objectives, committed leadership, and members willing to share the burden it will be supported by the majority of successful Assyrians who have remained outside our many organizations.

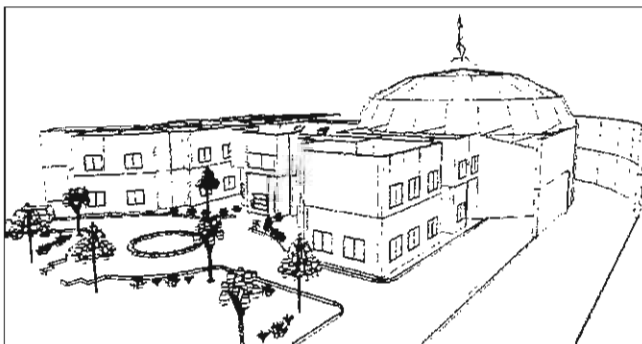
When Dr Lincoln Malik and I founded this organization, we had modest expectations. We were satisfied if every working Assyrian contributed \$20 per month and every Assyrian organization donated annually a couple thousand dollars. I am happy to see that Mr. David has raised the bar and even more happy that so many have responded.

Presently, the number of regular supporters is still very small

and the number of organizations is even more miniscule. We have one exception, the Assyrian Foundation of America, which has donated in tens of thousands to the Assyrian Aid Society. We hope and pray that other Assyrian organizations will soon follow the example of the Assyrian Foundation, which has been helping needy Assyrians and students long before the current crisis.

The common response of many individuals when asked to contribute is, "let me think about it." The common response of many organizations is, "we have other commitments and we just can't do it now."

When we go out for a lunch or have a drink with friends, I ask you ladies and gentlemen, how much thought do we put into it when we order our meal or drink? Somehow, Assyrians seem to have money for eating out, drinking, entertainment, gambling, etc. but we always are short of cash when it comes to helping a fellow Assyrian who is barely surviving in such deplorable conditions. I wonder what are these great projects that our organizations have committed to that they can not spare a couple of thousands a year to this great humanitarian cause? We must



remember, whatever our organizations build in Diaspora, it will not secure our national identity, preserve our language, and sustain our culture. We, like millions of other people before us will melt away in this beautiful pot called the United States of America. The Assyrians in Bet Nahrain (Mesopotamia, modern Iraq) and especially those in Garbia are the only remaining roots of this nation and they alone

can secure our national identity. Unless we look at this matter seriously and open our hearts and pockets to assist these people to regain their strength and national pride, it will be a matter of a few years, when they will be forced out of their homeland and then we will all become extinct as a nation.

I am encouraged to see so many Assyrians who came from different cities to join us in this great evening. I hope that after this great experience, you will go back not only as satisfied and pleased guests but also as ambassadors of the Assyrian Aid Society to invite and encourage others to come forward and participate in this humanitarian project. Now is the time to do our share to preserve our national roots in the homeland. It is our moral duty to continue supporting our people and to enlist the support of others who have kept themselves afar.

Please, send your tax-deductible donations to:
Assyrian Aid Society of America
350 Berkeley Park Boulevard
Berkeley, California 94707
www.assyrianaid.org

* This is the text of the speech delivered by Mr. Baaba at *Narsai's Taste of the Mediterranean*, a fundraising event benefiting the construction of a university student complex in Arbil, north Iraq, which took place on Friday, November 15, 2002, at The Ritz-Carlton in San Francisco, California.

A Question of Identity: Are We Really Assyrians? (or, What does it mean to be an Assyrian?)

Madeleine Davis-Moradkhan
Reading, England

How do modern Assyrians feel about themselves? What do they think about fellow Assyrians? What does it mean to them to be truly Assyrian? Does being Assyrian mean just attaching a label to ourselves or does it require certain qualities? Do we really qualify to be called Assyrians? Are we really Assyrians? (Here, we avoid this question in its historical implication).

Every living Assyrian today will have a different answer and response to the above questions, for every individual identifies himself differently with ancient or modern Assyrians. Some feel proud of being modern Assyrians, and some find their personal pride only in identifying themselves with ancient Assyrians and the mighty kings. There are also some extreme cases worth mentioning. I've heard some people say: "It is unjust to the ancient Assyrians, those clever and talented people, if such miserable and wretched people as we are today, called ourselves Assyrian!" I've also witnessed some Assyrians, who hate and despise fellow Assyrians and are ashamed to speak their own language in public, melt into tears and shiver in front of some ancient Assyrian bas relief placed in a museum!

All these negative thoughts and feelings against fellow Assyrians held by some Assyrians come from their lack of self-esteem, and it all boils down to the question of self-identity. People who cling to the past glories of mighty Assyria while they despise the modern Assyrians, and those who tell us that it's not cool to be called Assyrian anymore, admit that they are not happy with their own identity, and with those they think they have to identify with. Why is it that a person loses his self-esteem and does not want to identify with his own relatives? This is a topic reserved for specialists, i.e. psychologists and sociologists, and I will not venture to analyze it. However, I will just make a few remarks in order to encourage the experts to engage and analyze this problem, which in my opinion is a vital one at this moment in the history of our nation, because we find ourselves faced with modern cultures, new ways of thinking, and a completely different set of values.

Many Assyrians find it far easier to assimilate among other cultures that they consider superior to their own. Values held dear by our fathers for centuries don't seem to attract the younger generations anymore. Our precious heritage is not valued by most of our people anymore. And many Assyrians are ashamed to admit their identity. Why?

How can self-esteem as an Assyrian be cultivated among our people? With whom can modern Assyrians identify themselves so as to have a healthy sense of self?

In many articles we find authors enumerating the merits of the ancient Assyrians and describing the glory of the mighty kings of Assyria, in order to produce pride and self-esteem in the

minds of readers. In fact, many Assyrians do identify with the ancient Assyrians and as a result experience a sense of self-satisfaction, and achieve a certain degree of self-esteem. However, this method is not always efficient for many reasons.

For some individuals, like myself, it is difficult to stretch the mind back to 3-4 thousand years ago and imagine what the ancient Assyrians were like. All that we can see of them are some statues and bas reliefs placed in museums. Statues and bas reliefs don't speak and don't make mistakes, and one can attach to them any imaginary perfection one's mind desires, whereas human beings are imperfect. Identifying oneself with ancient Assyrians can indeed be dangerous, because no living Assyrian can rival those "perfect" beings. Therefore, it's not surprising if an Assyrian melts into tears in front of a cold Assyrian statue, but remains indifferent even hostile when in contact with living Assyrians.

Another problem is that, "scientifically" it's not yet "proven" that we are descendants of the ancient Assyrians. It can be very disappointing to self-identify with them and then be told that we have nothing to be proud of, anyway, and that those past glories have no connection whatsoever with us. Then, there is also the problem of the image of the ancient Assyrians as presented in many history books. It is really heart-breaking to be told that one's ancestors were the most cruel and blood-thirsty savages of all times!

There is also the problem of false pride and unjustified sense of glory. In such cases the reaction of other people may cause major disappointment. Do we need to claim descent from some old king such as Sargon or Aššurbanipal to gain respect and praise? Personally, I get more credit when I achieve something myself. Nobody cares if my ancestor was king Sargon if I'm a lazy good-for-nothing! Would anyone respect me if this were the case? Having good personal qualities is undoubtedly more important to our friends and neighbors than beating the drums all the time, boasting and bragging about the deeds of Sargon and Aššurbanipal. The fact is that listeners are not interested in kings anymore. The living ones don't arouse much respect anymore, let alone the dead ones!

For me, being Assyrian means to be honest, hard-working, loyal, trust-worthy and decent. In fact this was the reputation most Assyrians had at work and among neighbors in Iran. The Moslem employers respected the Assyrian employees far more than the other workers, even if Moslem. The most delicate tasks and responsibilities (like handling large sums of money) were entrusted to Assyrians and not Moslems! These qualities are not imaginary. They are universal and eternal and will never be outdated. They are concrete objectives that any one of us can achieve, and be really proud of. When others respect us, self-esteem comes automatically.

Do we need to claim descent from some old king such as Sargon or Aššurbanipal to gain respect and praise? Personally, I get more credit when I achieve something myself. Nobody cares if my ancestor was king Sargon if I'm a lazy good-for-nothing!

Moreover, the two-thousand-year Christian history of our nation is quite long and sufficiently overwhelming for my mind. Just to think how a nation without a ruler or government managed to remain united, to perform extraordinary deeds, to travel to the four corners of the world and preach the Good News, to prosper, and to survive repeated massacres and persecutions for more than two-thousand years, fills me with pride and self-esteem. I'm really proud that our Christian forefathers, even in the face of persecutions and mass murders, held courageously and resolutely to their convictions, to their history, identity and culture; they did not waiver and did not renounce their belief and heritage. Without armies or soldiers, they managed to win all kinds of spiritual battles and conquer the hearts of peoples of many nations. How many Assyrians (and non-Assyrians) can rival them today? Could these Assyrians, who are ashamed of their people and language, act in such a heroic manner? In fact, those who try to forget their true identity and assimilate into the foreign nations they live in, are the real cowards; they dare not identify themselves with the true heroes (i.e. the modern Assyrians), who, despite many wars, forced migrations, hardships, persecutions, and poverty, are still striving bravely to hold to their true identity and ancient culture. Those who choose assimilation, choose the easy way. They are afraid to assume their responsibility as a modern Assyrian who is indeed a living martyr.

I'm sure that if through our negligence, our culture, church and language were to become extinct with traces only to be found in various museums, then, these very people who are ashamed to call themselves Assyrians and to speak Assyrian in public, and never set foot in an Assyrian church, would undoubtedly rush to those museums to shed tears in front of old books and relics! Why is it that only what is in museums is considered valuable by some people? Isn't it true that everything that can be found in museums today was once living and outside museums? For me, hearing the sounds of Zoorna and Davoola and watching handsomely dressed young Assyrian men and women performing the ancient Assyrian dances is like walking into a living museum. It makes my blood rush into my veins and my heart beat faster. The sound of that music acts like a spring under my feet and I can't hold still. And, when I attend one of the Assyrian church services, again it feels like walking into a living museum. Hearing the chanting of poems that were written in the 4th century AD in the language that was actually spoken by Jesus Christ, fills my soul and entire being with holy and pure thoughts and feelings. It is soothing and relaxing for the mind. It's like walking through the pages of a history book. I consider the modern Assyrian culture a living monument that would have been placed in a museum were it not still a living entity!

Apart from the children of those Assyrians that are indifferent or openly hostile toward Assyrianism, it is surprising so see how often the children of "nationalists" turn out to be anti-Assyrian!

If we keep on speaking against Assyrians and Assyrian organizations at home, we can't expect our children to love Assyrians!

Those who choose assimilation, choose the easy way. They are afraid to assume their responsibility as a modern Assyrian

Nationalist parents should remember that 'the nation' is at home waiting impatiently for them. Their presence at home and the time they spend lovingly with their own children is the best service they can render their nation.

It seems that Assyrians are producing more and more non-Assyrian or anti-Assyrian children. Many "nationalist" parents are completely astonished and perplexed when they find out that their dear Atour or Atourina is spending most of his or her time with non-Assyrian friends and refuses to speak Assyrian, hates Assyrian activities, etc. Many Assyrian parents blame schools, teachers and peer groups for this. But, isn't it true that the personality of a human being is shaped during the first seven years of his life, and that during this period a person spends the majority of his time with his parents and relatives?

Personally, I think that "nationalist" parents are themselves unconsciously responsible for their children's dislike of all things Assyrian. Most of these parents sacrifice their own family and children for the benefit of the Assyrian community and organizations. When they are most expected by their children to be at home, they are not available because they are busy helping such and such association. And, when they finally come home, they are tired and start complaining about Assyrians and Assyrian organizations. They are not in a mood to spend time with and satisfy the needs of their children. This produces hostility against Assyrians in the hearts and minds of the children. Moreover, the children find out that their parents are sometimes very angry at those 'nasty' Assyrians because things at the club did not go as expected. If we keep on speaking against Assyrians and Assyrian organizations at home, we can't expect our children to love Assyrians! Unfortunately, it's a habit among many Assyrians to criticize and mock their fellow Assyrians at home, while their children are listening. Nationalist parents should remember that 'the nation' is at home waiting impatiently for them. Their presence at home and the time they spend lovingly with their own children is the best service they can render their nation.

Another point is that, as a result of repeated wars, forced migrations, and hardships, most Assyrians have been and still remain depressed and disheartened. Even those who are happily settled in western countries are depressed because it is difficult for them to adjust to a new culture and environment, and because they are constantly worried about the future and long for the old country. Of course, they are not to blame. But, then neither are their children, who have to put up with depressed parents. Parents could, at least, make an effort to be more cheerful in the presence of their children. It is not so much fun having to identify oneself with mourners who sigh 24 hours-a-day, and who can recall nothing but tragedies of the past and present.

In conclusion, it is important to reconsider the question of identity. We should redefine what being an Assyrian means, and why it is still cool to be called an Assyrian. Then, we can set an example for the future generations who still be proud to call themselves Assyrians. Thus, we will be able to preserve our identity, language, culture, ancient churches and customs in the face of invading foreign cultures.

Atra Project:

Planting hope; family by family

Dr. Arianne Ishaya
San Jose, California

It was only two years ago that Dr. Ashour Moradkhan set out to live in the homeland in order to turn a dream into reality. The dream was to establish an economic infrastructure based on agriculture, animal husbandry, and related pursuits to build a sustainable agricultural economy in the Assyrian villages and create an active link between the Assyrians in Diaspora and those in our Homeland.

Phase I:

The first visit, a fact-finding mission, lasted from May through August 2000. Dr. Moradkhan surveyed 52 Assyrian villages in North Iraq to obtain statistical data on the number and size of the households in each village, the size of their fields and orchards, and collected applications for the number of fruit trees requested by each household. The survey determined that:

-There is a good market for fruit especially apples in our Homeland.

-In some villages human power is scarce. One has to resort to hired labor. This is the situation in the village of Hiyis. This is a large village with plenty of water but not enough workforce. In addition, for large fields small tractors or manually operated machines are sometimes necessary.

-Besides agriculture, investing in livestock is a promising prospect in some areas. For instance, a young calf bought in spring-time can fetch a 100% profit by the end of autumn. Sections of our homeland have good pastureland and the cost of raising livestock is minimal. In many villages stockbreeding is an easy way to make money especially in the village of Dihi where sheep breeding is advantageous.

-The villages around the Nahla region are especially suited for beehive farming. There is a good market for honey and preparing honey and marketing it is rather simple.

Dr. Moradkhan chose the village of Bebedee for his pilot project. Using money raised through the fundraising efforts of Mr. Youel Baaba - the US Director of Atra Project at the time - he purchased an electric generator for the village (A plaque bearing the name of the Assyrian Foundation of America, the main contributor to this generator, has been placed on the wall next to the generator). The generator not only supplies electricity to the households in the village, but also is used to pump irrigation water. With the generator in place the planting of 3600 apple saplings that autumn could proceed. The land was plowed and the trees were planted. As the case in Bebedee illustrates, often it is necessary to prioritize infrastructure projects before planting can proceed. For example, pumps are necessary to water orchards in hilly areas. In other cases, irrigation canals, cisterns, and related facilities become necessary priorities.

The Atra Project also purchased and installed twenty water tanks on the rooftops of houses in Doori in upper Barwar to sup-

ply the villagers with much needed drinking and cooking water on a daily basis. This was an essential service to this village.

Phase II:

The second phase took place in January-April 2001. During this period 84,675 fruit trees (apples, almonds, and peach trees) were planted in 41 villages. Now there are 445 orchards that cover 22 square kilometers of our Homeland. Atra project donated trees to each family on the basis of the size of their farms and the available labor. To give them a sense of ownership, the family members were asked to plant the trees themselves, and were provided with enough funds for the care and the maintenance of the trees for the first year. Truly a huge undertaking, the success of this phase is due to the enthusiasm of the Assyrian villagers in embracing the opportunity to reclaim and replant their fields and orchards.

The procedure adopted for the distribution of the fruit saplings is as follows:

The first step is to determine the number of families, size of farms, availability of labor, agricultural prospects, and the needs of each village.

The head of each family in a designated village is provided with an application to specify the size of family, the plots of land owned, and the number of fruit trees requested.

The village council collects the applications. Applications are then discussed with the Assyrian Aid Society of Iraq and local experts to determine cost, feasibility, and the most efficient procedure for implementation.

Once an application is approved, the applicant farmer signs a contract with Atra Project, witnessed by the village Mokhtar and the Assyrian Aid Society of Iraq specifying mutual responsibilities and commitments.

When the local experts finalize a project, special care is taken to maintain parity among the families. For example, in the case of apple trees, the local experts limited the number of twigs to





400 maximum, and each farmer received a number on the basis of size of their farm and the available manpower in the family.

In addition to planting fruit trees, an experimental project to grow rice was begun in Nahla and Hezarjot this year. Fifty kilos of rice (shaltok) was distributed among the Assyrian farmers there to see how well it grows. Moreover, Atra Project has paid the expenses to drill a deep well in Dawoodia and has helped pay for the construction of two houses in Dihee.

Phase III:

For the remainder of this year and the next year, Atra project will complete the distribution of fruit trees to the remaining families. 40,000 more apple saplings have been requested by other villages. New programs for this year are:

The Protein Program: Food rations donated by the United Nations agencies to Assyrian families lack fresh meat and fresh dairy product. As a result, babies and children suffer because they are raised on dry milk. For this reason Atra Project has made Protein Project its main objective for the year 2003. Initially, applications will be collected for distributing chickens to families. Each family will be also supplied with a portion of the feed required for each bird. The villagers can use the eggs produced by these chickens in their daily diet, and breed them to produce poultry to supplement their diets with fresh meat. At the end of the year, each recipient is obliged by contract to return to the Atra Project an equivalent number of the chickens they received at the beginning of the year. These will be sold

and the funds will be used to provide for other needs of the village.

The Buy-back Program: A preliminary study was done to determine the lands and orchards that some Assyrians have sold secretly to the Kurds prior to moving out of the area. This has created numerous problems to the residents. The locals do not have the funds to buy these lands back. If sufficient funds are made available, these lands can be bought back and put to good use. There is a large parcel of land in Bagari; three vineyards in the village of Kani-Balavi, and a large tract of land in Bebedee all of which are alienated from the Assyrians. It is important to set up a buy-back program for the alienated property; otherwise this situation will have dire consequences in the future.

Future Projects:

-Short-term:

Livestock Program: Raising cattle and sheep to supply milk and meat to families with small children is a more expensive and labor consuming project. This program is in the study and planning phase.

Honey Program: This program is well-suited for the villages in the Nahla District. The estimated cost of honeycomb chests is about \$800.00. Honey will be marketed and the revenues will be used for the needs of the villages. This project is in the planning stage.

Other Needs:

- The village of Chilik needs a water pump plus piping. Estimated cost \$1200.00
- The village of Chagala needs a water pump and water canal repairs. Estimated cost \$1200.00
- A canal needs to be built for the village of Komani. Estimated cost \$1000.00

Future Projects:

-Long Term:

In three to five years the trees will start bearing fruit. Atra Project will need to move into processing and marketing of the fruit. From now the appropriate infrastructure needs to be planned and put into place. A refrigerated warehouse needs to be built. Small cottage industries for juicing, canning, making preserves, vinegar, etc. need to be created. The marketing potential of Assyrian products abroad needs to be researched (already, a number of Assyrian merchants in the United States are importing canned fruits and vegetables from Turkey). All this will contribute to the economic development of the region and the creation of jobs for the Assyrian villagers.

Revenue estimates for these fruit trees are promising. Each tree has the potential of producing 300 dinars worth of fruit. 10% of the revenue from the fruit of each tree is to be returned to the Atra project for reinvestment in the same village. The fruit produced by these orchards has the potential to generate unprecedented revenue for the Assyrian farmers and help our villages achieve sustainable economic development.

Another long term project is Dr. Moradkhan plan to establish a dental clinic together complete with a dental lab where young Assyrians will receive training to work as dental practitioners.

The success of the Atra Project since its establishment a short

Dr. Moradkhan is scheduled to return to Bet-Nahrain on December 7, 2002. He has designated San Jose as the headquarters of the Atra Project in the US. The project is managed by a committee in cooperation with the Assyrian Aid Society of America. The new US director of the Atra Project is Mr. David Sarkis.



We appeal to every Assyrian irrespective of his/her church affiliation, political inclination, and organizational membership to come forward and join us in this nation-building effort. Remember that our Assyrian brothers and sisters living in our Homeland are the only remaining guardians of our national identity and cultural heritage. It is our duty to support them and invest in their future. Our support will enable the Assyrian villagers to rebuild their homes, replant their fields, and raise livestock. The economic benefits of the Atra project will solidify their ties to the land of our ancestors and will insure the survival of our culture and heritage. We ask every Assyrian for a donation of \$20 per month (\$240 a year). You can send your donations to:

The Assyrian Aid Society of America
-Santa Clara Valley Chapter
P.O. Box 23759
San Jose, California 95153

**The Assyrian Book Endowment
Fund at the University of
California, Berkeley**

The fund can be expanded at any time. Anyone can make a (tax deductible) to add to the original \$10,000 principal. The increase in the fund, of course, increases the annual earnings of the investment and allows more books to be purchased. This is a unique gift—one that goes on giving forever. Checks made out to "Assyrian Collection" should be sent to:

Another way of expanding the library's Assyrian Collection is by direct contribution of books. Anyone wishing to make a gift of books about Assyrians can do so by sending them to:

The books should be accompanied by a note saying: "This is a gift to the University of California, Berkeley, Library for the Assyrian Collection."



4 אפריל, 25 תשס"א

Mr. Younatan Afarin:

Fifty years of contribution to Assyrian communities

Janet Sargon
Sydney Australia

Almost two years ago the Assyrian Charity & Educational Community (ACEC) in Sydney Australia organised a special program to honour and thank Mr. Younatan Afarin for fifty years of dedication to Assyrian communities both in Iran and in Australia.

The special event took place during November 2000 in the presence of many distinguished guests and more than 200 people. The speakers were from all the Assyrian organisations that Mr. Afarin has been involved with in the past.

Mr Younatan Afarin was born on 24th August 1931 in Kermanshah Iran. He completed his high school education in Kermanshah, and then in 1948 he joined the workforce in Abadan Refinery of National Iranian Oil Company.

In 1955 he graduated as a Chemical Petroleum Engineer from the Abadan Institute of Technology (AIT). At the same time he worked in different capacities in the Abadan Oil Refinery.

In 1956 he married Alice and they have two sons, Dr. James (currently resides in USA) and Raymond (resides in Sydney/Australia) and one daughter, Monika (resides in Sydney/Australia) and five grandchildren.

In 1963 he was awarded a scholarship to go to Netherlands and study in the field of "instrumentation and Process Control". In 1964 he graduated successfully in the said field, and resumed his duties in Abadan Oil Refinery as a "Process Control Adviser" for the Refinery.

He was always after greater challenges and wanted to take on extra responsibilities. Therefore in 1968 when he was offered to take responsibility as the head of the Engineering Department at the Abadan Petrochemical Complex, which was under construction, he accepted the new job. In this position he proved to be capable of taking higher managerial responsibilities, and within six years he was promoted to Production Manager, to Deputy General Manager and by 1974 became the General Manager of the "Abadan Petrochemical Complex". Not long after, in 1978 he was promoted to Deputy Managing Director of "Abadan Petrochemical Company" and moved to the headquarters in Tehran. Later he took the position of the Managing Director of the same company. In 1980 he took an early retirement.

From an early age he started working for the Assyrian community; at night dreaming of what he can do for the community and during the day trying to bring these dreams to reality. In 1950, while he was still at university he took his first challenge by organising a New Year's Eve party for the Assyrians in Abadan.

Being a pro-active member of the community who was always willing to take on extra responsibility, people were able to put their trust in him knowing he would do the best for the commu-



nity. He was involved in the purchase and building of a community hall and school (Shoushan) in 1952-1955. And he was elected as the president of the School/Parents committee, head of the entertainment group, director of church committee and for four year as president of the Assyrian Charity & Educational Community of Abadan and Khoramshaher.

From 1968-1973 he was an active member of the Assyrian Universal Alliance.

After immigrating to Australia in 1980, he worked as a Petroleum Engineer in NSW Energy Department for ten years, till 1991. While trying to adjust his personal life in Australia he never stopped from his voluntary work; he had a great part in establishing the Assyrian Charity & Educational Community in Sydney. In 1983 Mr. Afarin, with other prominent members of the community, wrote the first ACEC's constitution.

Furthermore, he was aware of the power and importance of women in the Assyrian communities and encouraged the introduction of the first Ladies' Committee within the ACEC.

Since 1985 he worked closely with the other Assyrian organisation to bring unity amongst the communities and he took a great part in establishing the Assyrian Australian National Federation (AANF) in Sydney in 1992. He was elected twice as a vice president and from 1998-2000 was the president of the AANF.

He was always aware of Assyrians' needs and was ready to help. Mr. Afarin, with a team of volunteers, organised a sub-committee (The Immigration & Refugee Sub Committee) under (AANF) in Sydney. This was set up to oversee the needs of the new immigrants, helping them with their paperwork for immigration.

From 1996-1997 he was involved in the committee to establish the Assyrian School in Sydney Australia (Mar Hurmozd Assyrian School)

Mr Afarin was also aware of the different needs of both the young and old members of the community, and helped establish a Seniors Group for the elderly, and encouraging young people to be involved in the community through soccer, scouting and many other activities.

With over 50 years of dedicated service he surely came across many obstacles, but with his true love for Assyrians he never stopped from contributing to build a better community. Even today, after deciding to retire, members of the community look up to him and respect his judgements, seeking to use his wide knowledge of Assyrian affairs.

We thank Mr. Younatan Afarin for his great contribution above and beyond the call.

The Calling of the New Assyrian -A Poetry Collection by Ninos Aho and Yosip Bet Yosip

A Review by Abdulmesih BarAbraham, M.Sc.*
Munich, Germany

The calling of the New Assyrian is the second jointly published collection of poems by Ninos Aho and Yosip Bet Yosip; the first collection, ܠܝܬܝܢ ܠܝܬܝܢ ܠܝܬܝܢ (Ātūrāyā Ĥātā = The New Assyrian), was produced in the early 1970's. The new collection includes mostly new poems, with a few classic ones, on two CD's, one by Ninos and the other by Yosip. While Ninos Aho reads his works in both eastern and western dialects of modern Assyrian (ܠܝܬܝܢ ܠܝܬܝܢ, Swādāyā w-Ṭūrōyō), refined by Classical Assyrian, Yosip Bet Yosip reads in East Assyrian only.¹

At first impression, the listener is overwhelmed by the richness of the collection, consisting of one powerful poem after another. Indeed, just the compilation of such a size on modern media² marks a great accomplishment; while its content is a milestone in contemporary Assyrian nationalistic poetry.

If one takes the time necessary for thorough listening and reflection in order to absorb the contents of the poems, it becomes evident that the lyrics can only come from individuals who have been involved with the organizations that have helped shape the modern Assyrian nationalism since their inception. Ninos was a second generation ܠܝܬܝܢ (Mṭākāstā, Assyrian Democratic Organization-ADO) activist while Yosip was a founding member of ܠܝܬܝܢ (Hūyādā, Assyrian Universal Alliance-AUA).

In addition, with their messages they seem to follow in the footsteps of the great teachers, nationalists and revolutionaries of the past like Freyduṇ Ātūrāyā, Adday Ālḳās, Yūhānōn Qāšišō, and William Daniel.

Therefore, the words spoken by the poets are timeless and stir in the listener the special *Assyrian Spirit* we all share –or, I should say, should not forget.

About the poets.

Ninos Aho was born on April 24, 1945 (Nisan, 6695) in the small village of Girkeh-Shamo in the Syrian part of Mesopotamia.

From his early youth Ninos has been interested in and moved by the teachings of the Assyrian national leaders like Naum Faiq and Farid Nuzha. He believes in national activism with dedication and ethics and continues to work towards the revival of Assyrian culture and national unity. He has written numerous articles and poems which have been published in Assyrian magazines.

Rābī Aho's mastery of modern east Assyrian is no surprise, considering the fact that in 1972 he studied with the late and great Rābī William Daniel, while living in Chicago.

Ninos's poems are eloquent and expressive. His lyrics are the basis for dozens of romantic and nationalistic songs, many of which were compiled and published in 2000⁴ as an *Anthology*. The statement "*continuing to deliver his nationalistic ideology through his poems*" in his biography convinces me that he uses as his guide and role model the nationalism of the late Malphono Naum Faiq, about whom David Perley wrote in a biographical study⁵: "...he [Faiq] transformed the innermost truth of his nation into verse".

Yosip Bet Yosip was born on April 15, 1942 (Nisan 6692) in the village of Zumallan, near Urmia, Persian part of Mesopotamia.

Rābī Bet Yosip has been interested in Assyrian culture and heritage from a very early age. As a child he listened to traditional songs, poems, and stories sung and told by the elders in the village.

He joined ܠܝܬܝܢ ܠܝܬܝܢ (Šūšāṭā 'umtānāyā), a well-known Assyrian youth organization, and became increasingly involved in Assyrian organizations. He was involved in the establishment of the first Assyrian library project in Iran.

In 1968, Yosip witnessed the founding of ܠܝܬܝܢ ܠܝܬܝܢ ܠܝܬܝܢ (Hūyādā Tivīlāyā Ātūrāyā = Assyrian Universal Alliance -AUA). His lyrics, put to

Maestro Nebu Isabey's music, became the first Assyrian National Anthem (ܠܝܬܝܢ = Rumrāmā).

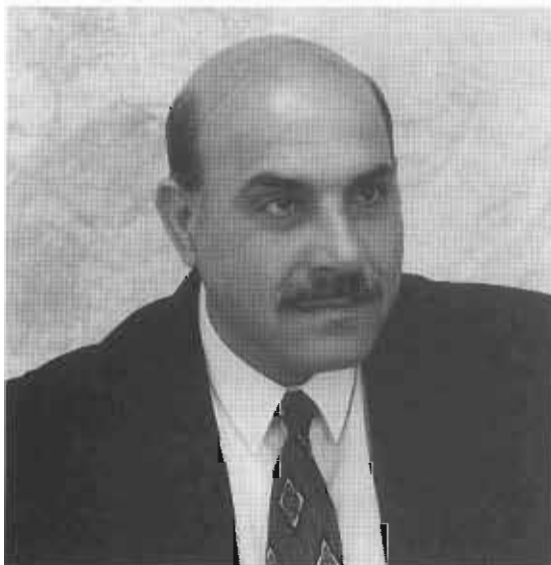
He has written numerous poems, articles and coral lyrics, and is an active member of the Assyrian Choir in San Jose, California.

In October 2002, he attended the World Congress of Poets in Iasi, Romania, where he read his poem, *The Garden of Gods – My Homeland Bet-Nahrain*.

As Rābī Aho is from the West Assyrian tradition and Rābī Bet Yosip from the East Assyrian tradition, together their work covers the full range of Assyrian heritage and national experience. Theirs is a deep friendship that spans several decades. Knowing them both⁶, I'm convinced that their friendship serves as a great source of mutual inspiration.

Images and Concepts

For me, the great discovery of this collection is in the way the two poets masterfully deal with themes of nation, ancient history



and its modern interpretations by applying vivid and compelling images and concepts. They succeed in associating and integrating the powerful symbols of the pre-Christian era, such as Aššur, Tamuz, Ištar, Gilgameš, Nineveh and Akkad, with modern themes of nation, unity, and **ܐܡܬܢܝܘܬܐ** ('umtānāyūtā = nationalism), without failing to include elements of Christianity and the Christian era.

By creating vivid images in his poems, Ninos is able to draw the listener deep into the distant past and back to the present Assyrian reality. Indeed, it is difficult to resist traveling to the distant lands and times, both in the past as well as the future, that Ninos describes.

Yosip's poems contain powerful messages as well. Many of his poems are about events from our past, and although each episode is described in the body of the poem, some knowledge of the event is helpful. He presents his messages in a chronological fashion, forcing the listener to focus and follow along as the story is told.

To me, Ninos' poems are an important and powerful force in the ongoing refinement and reinforcement of the homogeneous yet multi-denominational Assyrian national identity. The poetic interpretation of history as a narrative of the past and applied to the present and projected on the historic homeland, Beth-Nahrain, as presented by Yosip has the same reinforcing effect.

Ninos has a strong voice where as Yosip is much more soft-spoken and sounds like a distant messenger, but both convey powerful and touching messages. The series of poems takes the listener on a journey, riding a rainbow that spans thousands of years, while its colors symbolize the different cultural, religious and national facets along the timeline of Assyrian history.

Below, I would like to give some examples from among the poems in the collection.

The poem **ܝܗܢܢܐܢ ܩܐܫܝܫܐ** (Yūhānōn Qāšīšō), is more than a wonderful obituary for the great teacher and former editor of **ܐܡܬܢܝܘܬܐ** (Ĥūyōdō) magazine.

Although the listener is saddened at the loss of a great Assyrian, Ninos also gives hope by presenting Malphono Yūhānōn Qāšīšō as a pupil of and following in the footsteps of figures like Naum Faiq, Yūhānōn Dolabani, Āšūr Yūsuf, and Freyduṇ Ātūrāyā, calling upon them to be prepared to welcome him.

In different poems, Ninos recalls memories of the early years in the Assyrian national movement in Chicago. He touches on events and encounters of that period, and formulates a poetic reply to Professor Oppenheim, who claimed that Assyrians had all died with the end of the empire. He dedicates a beautiful poem to the reunion of friends in **ܩܡܝܫܝܐ** (Qāmišly), where he also pays homage to Girke Šamo, his birthplace. The latter has been rendered beautifully in a song by Ninib Laḥdo, also born in Girke Šamo.

ܐܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܫܝܬܐ (Īpā Šinni m-qam Mšīhā = One thousand years before Christ), is a lamentation for the loss of homeland. Most striking is its beautiful style –through references to key concepts in each verse, its messages are

engraved in the listeners' consciousness.

My favorite among Yosip's poems is **ܫܠܘܬܐ ܕ-ܐܬܘܪܝܐ ܕ-ܝܕܝܡ** (Šlūtā d-Ātūrāyā d-īdyum = The prayer of the present-day Assyrian). It is a powerful mythical and spiritual poem. It is a bridge to the strong traditions of ancient Assyrian religious conviction, with one significant difference with the traditional view of the ancient religion: The *New Assyrian* does not accept the pre-Christian period as *pagan* anymore! On the contrary, it is the source and rationale for his 2000 years of dedication to Christian beliefs, which are rooted in ancient Assyria.

Just as outstanding is his **ܪܘܕܐ ܕܩܝܬܝܐ** (Wardi w-Kitvi = Flowers and Thorns). Here, the poet compares history as told in the Old Testament with that found on clay tablets from Mesopotamia. He complains about and objects to the cutting of ties with our ancestors while adopting foreign traditions, namely replacing Utnapištim with Noah, Hammurabi with Moses, Gilgameš with Samson, etc.

I believe that this subject, namely the replacement of native beliefs, traditions, and heros by foreign (Jewish) ones, deserves much attention by Assyrians. It has been shown that the Jews adopted and adapted much of Assyrian/Mesopotamian religion and mythology while living in Mesopotamia, and many of those

ancient traditions and religious concepts made a significant contribution to the modern Judeo-Christian and its offshoot, Muslim, traditions. Furthermore, the Greeks and Romans adopted Christianity without denying their pre-Christian identity, traditions, and history. Why should Assyrians of today be less proud of the history and religious traditions of their pre-Christian forefathers?

ܩܢܬܐ ܕ-ܐܠܐܝܐ (Gantā d-Ālāhi = The Garden of Gods) is a political poem about Mesopotamia, which served as the cradle of civilization, but, is now under seige and threat of attack; it is poisoned, its inhabitants driven out of their homes, its rivers dried, and

its land unable to provide cradle even for its own children.

Yosip presents a number of other political poems. In one, he speaks to the *flowers of Mesopotamia*, which represent Assyrian martyrs, and listens to their critical messages about the state of our nation. They offer to die again to save us from our present state.

Final Remarks

The collection is cohesive and sounds like a story, yet highlighting very different facets. It is the story of a nation filled with hopes and sorrows through its long history – reflecting on its passions and aspirations. It is a philosophical approach for a scattered nation. For me, the poets manage to create a sense of urgency. Their messages are courageous and bold and unlike the hesitant approach common in today's "nationalistic reality", struggling to overcome the nation's fragmentation and help reunite it. Therefore, the poems provide a source of inspiration and guidance to those who seek new direction.



(Continued from page 13)

Overall, I regard the lyrics as a homage to the Assyrian nation, its history, its identity, and its strong desire for unity.

If anyone can bridge the existing gap in the Assyrian national movement by passing the heritage of its great teachers like Yūhānōn Qāšišō and William Daniel to the younger generation, whose minds are hungry for such lessons, then it is Ninos and Yosip.

I highly recommend "*The Modern Assyrian*". It is a beautiful collection of poems. Needless to say that I expect and look forward to more of these poets work in the near future. Also, I think that both poets have a national task still to accomplish: the translation of the poems that are in east Assyrian into Tūrōyō. Otherwise, the messages contained in these poems will not reach the hearts of all Assyrians.

*Abdulmesih BarAbraham was born in Midyat/Tūr 'abdin, in Turkish part of Mesopotamia and emigrated with his parents to Germany in Mid 1960's, where he completed his secondary education and received his M.Sc. From the University of Erlangen/Nürnberg in computer science. In 1972, he initiated and organized the first Assyrian Evening in West Germany. This marked by beginning of organized Assyrian activity in Europe. Since then, he has published numerous articles on Assyrian topics. From 1993 to 1999 he lived in California. Among his most recent activities in 2002, are presentation of a paper on Assyrians at the 1st World Congress on Near Eastern Studies held in Mainz, Germany, and another paper at an International Symposium of Syriac experts. He is currently the President of the Kuratorium of the Yoken Bar Yoken Foundation.

¹ For the first time, Yosip Bet Yosip presented a few of his poems, *Bō'ūtō Ōtūraytō* and *Šlūtō d'Ōtūrōyō dYawmōnō*, in west Assyrian at the Mesopotamia Association in the city of Augsburg, Germany in October 2002.

² Produced by the Assyrian American Association of San Jose, California. Background music by various artists and studios, and a beautiful cover design by Homer Yonan.

³ For more biographical information, see also the leaflet provided in the cover of the CD.

⁴ *Anthology of Poems* by Ninos Aho, published by the Assyrian Voice Production 2000. The 18 poems in west and east Assyrian dialects are also sung by Ninib Lahdo, Aziz Saliba, Kamil Hanna and Wadi Al-Safi.

⁵ Naum Palak, the "*Sainted Apostle of Nationalism*", Extracts from and comments on "*A Brief Study in the Palak Nationalism*", by Dr. David Barsoum Perley, LL.B. -Review by Sanharib Shukri, Australia, 2002

⁶ I have known Ninos since 1986, when we met at a Kha b-Nisan celebration in Hackensack, New Jersey. I was on a research project in Princeton, New Jersey, and guest of the late Orthodox Bishop Samuel for the day. Ninos gave the welcoming speech for the evening in Tūrōyō. I made the acquaintance of Yosip at the Assyrian American Association in San Jose, California, in 1994.

Assyrians Returning Home, One Village At a Time...



Up until the 1980's over 200,000 Syriac-Assyrians lived in Turkey. Today, a mere 5000 remain in Istanbul and another 3000 in Tur-Abdin. The dramatic decline of this native population is caused by the mass migration rooted in the instability caused by the clashes between the Turkish government and the Kurdish Fighters of the PKK. One of the many Assyrian villages that dotted south eastern Turkey is the village of Kafro.

In addition to the 17 vineyards surrounding this beautiful village, common harvests included figs, grapefruit, watermelon, as well as wheat, barley, and almonds. In 1970, Kafro was inhabited by 46 families. By 1992, only 5 families remained, and in 1995, the village was empty.

Currently there are 170 families living in Europe (126 in Germany, 29 in Switzerland, and 15 in Sweden) who are Kafro natives. Of these, 19 families have signed with the newly established 'Kafro Development Association' to permanently return to the abandoned village and rebuild it. In total, 74 individuals, 30 of which are minors.

The Kafro Development Association is currently working on a proposal with the Turkish government for the first 19 families' secure return and ongoing support beginning in 2004.

For more information, Contact :

Kafro Development Association
Hofacker 14, CH - 8466 Trüllikon
Tel.: +41/(0)52/319.42.63 - Fax: +41/(0)52/319.31.41
E-Mail: kafro@bluewin.ch . **Contact Person:** Yahko Demir

To send a donation to help rebuild Kafro:

Bank: UBS AG, Postfach,
CH - 8152 Glattbrugg, Switzerland
Konto: 283-813014.40



The vineyards of the Village of Kafro

Literature Search

Title: L'apport scientifique des chrétiens syriaques à l'Iran sassanide.

Author: Philippe Gignoux

Source: Journal Asiatique, Tome 289, Numéro 2, 2001

Abstract: "Thanks to the works of H. W. Bailey it is nowadays common view that Greek science and philosophy were transmitted to the Iranians through the translations made by the Syriac Christians, during the Sassanian period, probably not before the 5th century A.D.

"In the process of transmission, in particular in the field of medicine, the Mazdean theologians were adjusting the Greek ideas to the principles of their own faith. However, in the case of the theory of the four cosmic elements, the micro-macrocosmos, the four humours and the three principal body organs, as well as the theory of blood flow and reproduction, it is shown quite clearly that the Iranian sources are depending on Syriac materials. In return, their influence in the field of pharmacopoeia is less easy to ascertain.

"To end with, the author shows that the Mazdeans might have known some elements of the Christian faith, thanks to the existence of translations of Christian prayers and rituals into various Iranian languages."

Title: Sur les éléments chrétiens de la religion Nuṣayrite-^cAlawite.

Author: Meir M. Bar-Asher

Source: Journal Asiatique, Tome 289, Numéro 2, 2001

Abstract: "One of the prevalent features of the Nuṣayrī-^cAlawī religion is its syncretism. It combines and fuses elements of cults and creeds of very disparate, and remote, origins. Among these are various pagan beliefs (residues of ancient Mesopotamian and Syrian cults) as well as Persian, Christian, Gnostic, and Muslim—both Sunnī and Shī'ī—religious precepts and practices.

"This syncretistic complex has led to various hypotheses regarding the origins of the Nuṣayrī faith. René Dussaud, one of its pioneering scholars, saw its roots in the pagan circles of Late Antiquity. Henri Lammens, on the other hand, regarded it as a unique offshoot of ancient Christianity.

"The aim of this study is to systematically survey and analyze the Christian elements of the Nuṣayrī religion, relying on writings of the Nuṣayrīs themselves, both doctrinal and liturgical, trying to offer an interpretation as to the background and circumstances against which these elements seeped into Nuṣayrī religion."

Title: Syriac Nominal Sentences

Author: Ada Wertheimer

Source: Journal of Semitic Studies, XLVII/1, Spring 2002

Abstract: "Most Syriac nominal sentences are not simple sentences; rather, they are complex sentences involving extrapositions. This article examines two Syriac nominal sentence patterns—with the copula and without it—and their two respective past forms. There is no clear-cut regularity which determines the distribution of the two nominal patterns, either in the present or in the past tense, but there are marked tendencies—partly structural, mostly stylistic. The past forms of nominal sentences

are verbal sentences because of the verb of existence which, used in them as an auxiliary, expresses the past tense. These past tense sentences may include a copula as well. In such cases they fulfill the basic requirement of Syriac sentence structure (namely, that the predicate must be conjugated for person) twice: once within the copula, and once within the verb of existence."

Title: Two Syriac Terms Relating to Ophthalmology and their Cognates.

Author: J. N. Ford

Source: Journal of Semitic Studies XLVII/1, Spring 2002

Abstract: "This study treats two Syriac ophthalmological terms, *kwīhā* ܩܘܝܗܐ, and 'agānā ܐܓܢܐ. The adjective *kwīhā* refers to an eye disease (*kwīhūtā*, ܩܘܝܗܘܬܐ) which is identified by the native lexicographers with Arabic *ṣatra* and corresponds to modern ectropion. Cognates occur in Mandaic (*kauīhta*) and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (*kwīt*) in magical contexts relating to the evil eye. Although *kwīhā* itself is not attested with reference to the evil eye, the native lexicographers associate the Syriac term with other terms, cognates of which are attested with reference to the evil eye in various Aramaic dialects. The second term, 'agānā, occurs in the Syriac Book of Medicines. It is equivalent to Arabic 'igḡāna, which occurs in similar contexts in the writings of mediaeval Arabic ophthalmologists and refers to the tarsus of the eyelid."

Title: On the Origin of the Word *barīd* in Arabic

Author: Avihai Shviti

Source: British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 29(1), '02

Excerpt: "In the *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* of May 2001 Adam Silverstein traces briefly the origin of the Arabic word *barīd* (postal service) and ...argues that the word is probably derived from Assyrian *beru* (over 10 miles, 2 hours, distance) abbreviated in Arabic to *barīd* from Aramaic *berid-malkha* (the royal berus).

"Since Silverstein does not explain to us how the consonant 'd' comes into the word *barīd* in Arabic, it seems to me that from the Aramaic combination *bari-de-malkha* (the beru of the king) ('de' being the possessive particle in Aramaic), Arabic speakers amalgamated the possessive particle in *beru*, while omitting the word *malkha*, thus coining the word *barīd*.

"Incidentally, the omission of the second word of an annexation (*idāfa*), while retaining the meaning of the whole expression is not uncommon in Arabic, e.g. *ṭālib* for *ṭālib al-ilm* (student); *qaṭī'a* for *qaṭī'at al-raḥīm* (enmity among relatives) and in modern Arabic *jawāz* for *jawāz al safar* (passport)."

Title: Legends and Tales in the Monuments of Syriac Hagiographic Literature. (In Russian)

Author: A.V. Paykova

Source: Folia Orientalia; vol. 37, 2001

Reviewer: Adam Bieniek

Excerpt: "The monograph by A.V. Paykova (1932-1984), published posthumously in *Палестинский сборник*, -*The Palestinian Anthology* 30, (1990) deserves close attention for the mere fact that the author shows that several hagiographies

popular in the Middle Ages were originally written in Syriac and not in Greek. Although their writers were educated in Greek and knew that language perfectly, they were able to work out their own quality characterised by minute descriptions of facts and detailed documentary precision.

"The work consists of two basic parts: the first representing the introduction, the evolution of the hagiographic genre in Syriac literature, the outline of the culture and everyday life in the monuments of Syriac literature and the Syriac sources of traditional hagiographic literature. The second part is mainly composed of the Russian translations of the four hagiographic texts chosen by A.V. Paykova. The author justifies her choice by four main reasons:

1. They are examples of the best hagiographic literature in Syriac,
2. They prove that Syriac was their original language,
3. They influenced Old Russian literature of the genre,
4. They show the evolution of the genre.

"The first chapters give a valuable analysis of the principal hagiographic texts in Syriac along with the scholars occupied with their translation and elaboration. The special value comes from the whole range of the Russian scientists, often accessible mainly in their native language.

"There are also interesting examples of archetypes of the lives of saints and martyrs of eastern churches at the time of Roman and Persian (Sassanian) Rule.

"The monograph seems to be a remarkable contribution to the research in the field of the history of eastern Christianity and its influence on mediaeval Russia, at the same time describing a lot of picturesque scenes of everyday life in the Middle East on the eve of the ascension of Islam, all the more because the author draws the line until the Muslim period."

Title: Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History

Author: Marc Van de Mieroop

Source: Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research; No. 327, 2002

Reviewer: J.S. Cooper

Excerpt: "The author provides a much needed introduction to the use of cuneiform texts to reconstruct the history of ancient Mesopotamia. This introduction is both descriptive and prescriptive, explaining how cuneiform sources have been used to write history, as well as advocating new ways to use them and warning against misinterpretations of the sources caused by our mostly subconscious biases and presuppositions.

"Chapter 1 presents, briefly but relatively comprehensively, the various categories of cuneiform documents...and their scope and limits as sources for Mesopotamian history.

"Chapter 2, 'History from Above', has three parts. The first is an excellent introduction to the problems posed by Assyrian royal inscriptions, especially the various editions of royal annals with their differing versions of the same campaigns.

"The second part treats the traditions of Sargon and Naramsin of Akkade....and encourages us to see these traditions rather as sources for the periods in which they arose and were propagated.

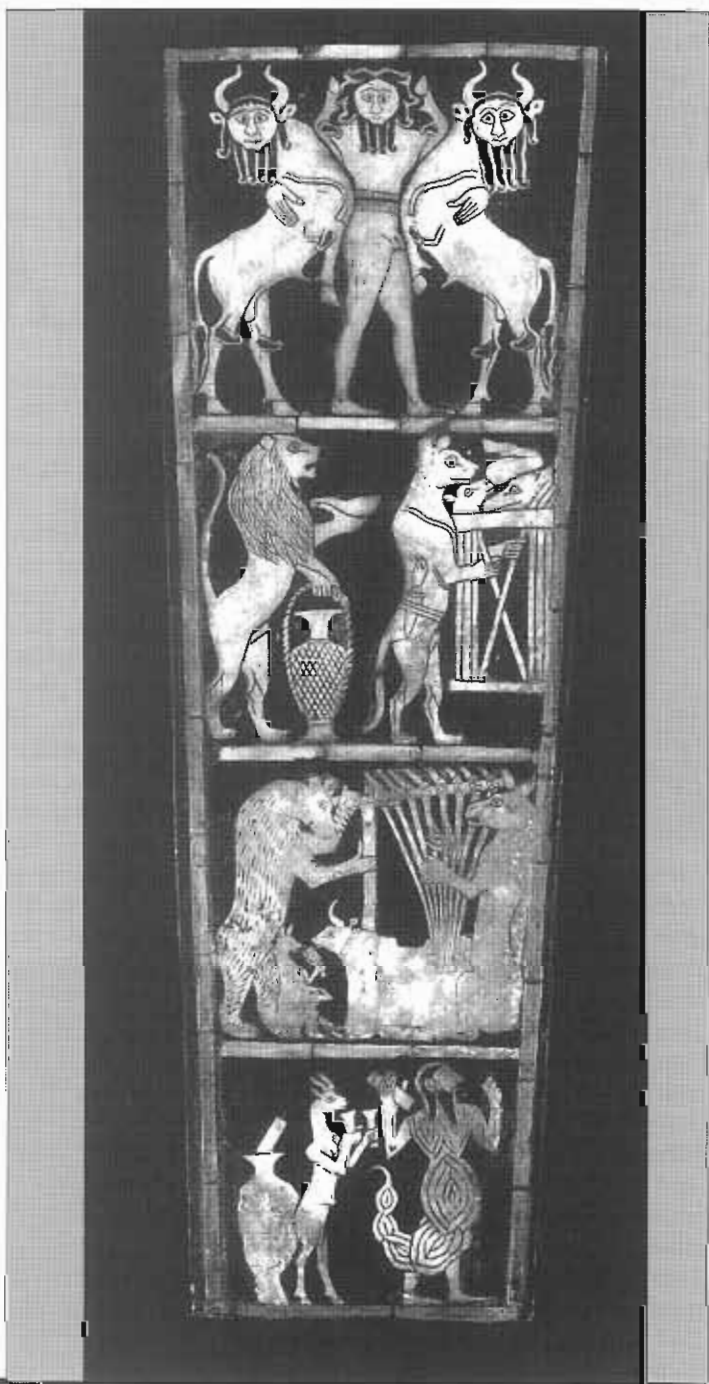
"Part three, 'Mesopotamian History and Narrative,' suggests that the reason scholars have been so eager to give credence to legends of Sargon compiled many centuries after his demise has to do with their narrative form...

"Chapter 3 treats 'History from Below', showing how topography and the careful study of legal documents can illuminate aspects of the lives of ordinary people.

"I found chapter 4, 'Economic History', very useful. The author underlines the importance of agricultural land as the prime economic resource in ancient Mesopotamia, so that an understanding of landownership and land tenure is crucial to conceptualizing the ancient economy.

"'Gender and Mesopotamian History', chapter 5, attempts to confront Assyriology with the "three waves" of academic feminism. In many ways, I find this to be the least successful chapter in the book. Assyriology has never neglected the study of women, not because of any particular disciplinary virtue, but due to the nature of our sources.

"The short concluding chapter rehearses the dangers of our preconceptions and biases, especially those we are not conscious of, and the limits of our sources."

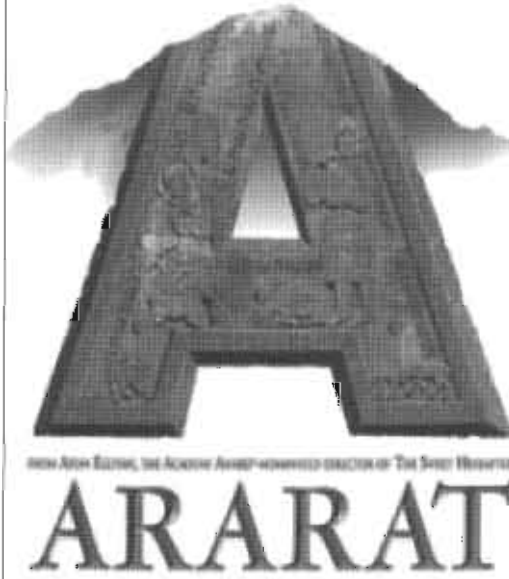


Ararat

A Movie about the Armenian Genocide

A Review by Dr. Joel Elias
Berkeley, California

Acclaimed film director Atom Egoyan has made a number of movies and is best known for the popular *The Sweet Hereafter*. A Canadian of Armenian descent he grew up with constant reminders of the Armenian genocide of 1915, and eventually felt compelled to use his talents to make a movie about it. In an interview with the press, Egoyan makes it clear that he was driven to make *Ararat* as much by the continued Turkish denial of the organized massacre as by the event itself. Turkish groups tried to prevent the release of the movie, but all they succeeded in doing was adding to its advertisement line *Uncover the shocking secret of the movie they don't want you to see*. The movie is not a straight historical re-counting of the events of the genocide, nor a documentary. Rather it is an intensely personal exposure of the lives of Armenians several generations later, now living in North America, haunted and obsessed by what happened to their parents, grandparents or great-grandparents in 1915. By involving us in the emotional lives of the descendents, we



interweaves the strands of his plots and themes so tightly as he explores the complexity of redemption." The Washington Post: "An emotionally penetrating movie!" The movie opened in San Francisco in late November.

For us Assyrians, our own genocide at the hands of the Turks in World War I is probably less well known than that of the Armenians. When looking at the movie, simply substitute "Assyrian" for "Armenian" and you will have exactly our story. So it becomes a reference point for us in discussions with others to say that it exactly describes the Assyrian genocide and our own emotional struggles to deal with the horrors of what happened just a few generations ago and the Turkish strategy of denial. We

cannot allow denial to succeed. In 1939, just a few days before he started World War II and had developed his plans for the extermination of the Jews, Hitler said to his inner circle, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" And this was only twenty four years after 1915.

One minor complaint—if you sit through all the credits at the end of the movie, eventually a statement comes on that says the events shown were historically accurate and based on the eyewitness accounts of an American medical missionary,



are drawn into their lives in a very intense and personal way. Personalizing the story is extremely important in capturing the interest of those who know very little if anything about the events of 1915. For many this is the first exposure to the story of the Armenian genocide. Egoyan said that many people have come up to him and said "I had no idea that happened". His success in portraying the personal lives of the descendents and the intensity of their struggles to deal with the ghosts of the past, and his artistic skills as a director have won the movie rave reviews from the critics. The New York Times said "Hands down the year's most thought-provoking film!" The Los Angeles Times: "A triumph! Richly rewarding! Director Atom Egoyan



Dr. Ussher (whose character in in the movie). I wish this important statement had been make as soon as the movie ended because I think many people will miss it. One word of caution—there are scenes of murder and rape and torture by the Turkish army. But it is not gratuitous violence, as is so often done by Hollywood. It is absolutely essential for portraying the horrors and brutality and savagery of what actually happened, for putting a personal face on the statistics.



بَعْدَ دَيْتِ دَمْتَمَا عَمَّ قَتَا دَنْجِي



حیثاً ۱۹۸۱ء، عجمی تحریک سے وابستہ
 لکھنے والے ذہنی و معاشی کے لئے سفارش شدہ
 ۸۵ ہیں۔ حیثاً ۱۹۸۳ء، عجمی اہلکار
 لکھنے والے ہیں، حیثاً ۱۹۸۶ء لکھ
 وہ کہتے ہیں کہ وہ۔

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۱۹۵۷ء میں، حکومت نے شریعتی دھرم کے
 خلاف اس وقت سے لے کر اب تک کے
 ۱۹۷۱ء میں، حکومت نے لکھنؤ میں
 اس کے لیے ایک مخصوص جگہ کی تلاش
 کی۔ اس کے لیے، حکومت نے لکھنؤ میں
 ایک مخصوص جگہ کی تلاش کی۔ اس کے لیے،

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כמה מן המלאכה הנתונה להם, ומה שיש להם לעשות.

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كَلِمَةً مِّنْهُ لَوْ كَانَ حَقًّا وَنُصَحِيحًا
 مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ فَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُ

١٥٠: حَتَّىٰ يَكُونَ يَدُوكُم مِّمَّا يَدَاهُمَا مُغْتَسِقَتَانِ فِي الْوَقْدِ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ
 ١٥١: حَتَّىٰ يَكُونَ يَدُوكُم مِّمَّا يَدَاهُمَا مُغْتَسِقَتَانِ فِي الْوَقْدِ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

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دکتبر بھارت تھیں دوہڑے تہہ ہے لیس ۲۰۰۵ء

دسہجہ ۱۰۱ دسہجہ ۱۰۲ دسہجہ ۱۰۳ دسہجہ ۱۰۴
 دسہجہ ۱۰۵ دسہجہ ۱۰۶ دسہجہ ۱۰۷ دسہجہ ۱۰۸
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لَا يَخْشَى الْفِتْنَةَ، وَهُوَ كَذَّابٌ مُفْتَرٍ
لَا يَخْشَى الْفِتْنَةَ، وَهُوَ كَذَّابٌ مُفْتَرٍ .

تَسْمَعُونَ مَخْرُوجًا مِنْكُمْ قَدِّيسًا
 مَوْصِيًّا: أَلَيْسَ (مُؤْتَى) لَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِنْ
 أَنْبِيَاءِكُمْ أَنْ يُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ قُدْرَةَ دِينِكُمْ
 سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ دُخَمَالِكُمْ دِينُكُمْ مِنْ
 قُدْرَتِهِ تَعْلَمُونَ مَوْصِيًّا لَكُمْ، تَعْلَمُونَ أَلَيْسَ دِينُكُمْ
 مِنْكُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ لَكُمْ لِسُونِ سَمْعِكُمْ
 تَعْلَمُونَ، هَلْ لِحَمَلِكُمْ هَوَافِكُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ؟

॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥

مولانا عقیب * ۱۹۵۱ء * بمبئی

[illegible][illegible]

میں نے اپنے آپ کو دیکھا کہ وہ ایک بڑی بڑی شخصیت ہے۔

[illegible]

تَدْنِي مَوْتِي: يَكُنْ دَقِيقَةً
 دَلَسْتُ دَلَسًا، مَبْدُؤُا دَلَسًا دَلَسًا دَلَسًا
 مَذْبَحُ يَحْمَدُ، كَمْ مَلَأَهُ مَلَأَةً
 حَوْتِي "فَكُنْ حَبْلًا مَدِينًا" دَقِيقَةً
 فَذِهِ كَمْ مَبْدُؤُا (1) هـ (2) مَجْمُوعًا د
 (24) مَجْمُوعًا "نَبِيًّا" مَجْمُوعًا مَلَأَ
 يَمْلَأُ جَلَسًا يَلْسُ دَلَسًا، كَمْ يَجْدُ
 دَسْقًا دَلَسًا سَيِّئًا دَلَسًا يَبِي. مَدَدُ
 يَامَدُ مَلَسَ: "مَدَحًا مَسْقًا، لَتِي
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حققت نجاحا

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

جاءه ما لم يخطر على قلب بشر
فما كان له الا ان يصرخ في صراخه

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

தமிழக மொழிநூல் * மொழிநூல்

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﴿مُذْنِبُونَ دَارَ عَذَابٍ﴾ فِي حَقِّ ذُنُوبِهِمْ ﴿فَلَا يَدْرَأُ عَنْهُمْ إِلَهُهُمْ﴾

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دې دمه پوهه ده، مگر دې هم د دیکو وخت ته تعلق نه لري، بلکې
مستحب، بلکه د مستحب معنی ده، چې د شریعت د احکامو د دمه
شعیه په نوم.

هَكَذَا مَقْصُودُ قَوْلِهِ جَدُّ هُوَ كَمَا مَقْصُودُهُ جَدُّ
مُكَافَأَتُهُ بِمَا جَدُّ جَدُّ مَقْصُودُهُ .

- 1 - كَلِمَاتُ
2 - جُذُوه
3 - مَبْنُوتُ

نکھوتہ :

- 1 - **حکمت جنت مدد.**
- 2 - **مہذب ملکوتی بہ یشتادہ بابک لکھ.**
- 3 - **مہذب لکھتہ جہ شہدویہ بہ شصت مدد.**
- 4 - **مہذب مدد شہدویہ بہ تہہ لکھ دیکتہ.**
- 5 - **مہذب قومہ بہ لکھ شہ لکھ دیکتہ.**
- 6 - **مہذب لکھتہ جہ شہدویہ بہ تہہ.**

: அப்ப

مَدَنِيَّةٌ دُرِّيَّةٌ حَمِيَّةٌ مَكَّةُ مَج :

- 1 - قَدْ عَلِمَ الْمَدِينَةَ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ الْحَبَرُ مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ
- 2 - لَمَّا جَاءَهُ الْحَبَرُ مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ
- 3 - لَمَّا جَاءَهُ الْحَبَرُ مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ
- 4 - لَمَّا جَاءَهُ الْحَبَرُ مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ
- 5 - لَمَّا جَاءَهُ الْحَبَرُ مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ

مَلِكُكُمْ بَلَسَ هَاهُ كَذِبُهُ كَذِبُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا تَلْعَنُكُمْ دِيْمُ
 مُنْذِرُكُمْ وَبُذِيْبُكُمْ لِحَاكِهِ هَكَذَا هِيَ دُؤْمُ دِيْلَاكُكُمْ لِكُلِّ
 نَفْسٍ نَكْبَةٍ ۚ ۚ مُنْعَمٌ بِكُمْ دُؤْمُ كُتْلُكُمْ ۚ ۚ مَسْجِدُكُمْ
 يَدُكُمْ ۚ ۚ حَبْرُكُمْ حَبْرُكُمْ بَلَدُكُمْ حَبْرُكُمْ دُؤْمُكُمْ
 قَبْلَكُمْ ۚ ۚ مَحْمُودُكُمْ

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* **وَجَعَلْنَا دِينَكَ دِينًا مُبِيدًا** وَجَعَلْنَا دِينَكَ دِينًا مُبِيدًا
مُتَعَدِّيًا مُتَعَدِّيًا .

* جَلَدَن دَیْ شِجَرَهٗ کِه مَوْتِ اِنَسَانِ بَعْدُ نَبُو مُرَدِّدِ اَمَرْ اَتَا
بَدِيْن دَیْ شِجَرَهٗ کِه اِنْسَانِ دَیْ شِجَرَهٗ دَیْ شِجَرَهٗ دَیْ شِجَرَهٗ
جَلَدَن دَیْ شِجَرَهٗ دَیْ شِجَرَهٗ دَیْ شِجَرَهٗ دَیْ شِجَرَهٗ .

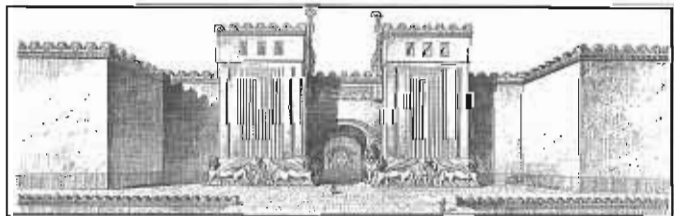
* **جَلَدُ دِلْدَدِ هَلِ (جَلَد) سَوِ مِمَّ دَلِ صَدَدِ**
دَلِ هَلِ .

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* **اِنَّ رَحْمَةً لِّرَبِّكَ لَكُنَّ** **اِنَّ رَحْمَةً لِّرَبِّكَ لَكُنَّ** **اِنَّ رَحْمَةً لِّرَبِّكَ لَكُنَّ**
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مكتبة
البلاد

مغزل

مجلد ششم - شماره 4 - خرداد 1385

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حاصل همکاری با بنیاد ملی ترجمان
A two-CD collection of poems
by Yosip Bet Yosip and Ninos Aho
I M P U L S E

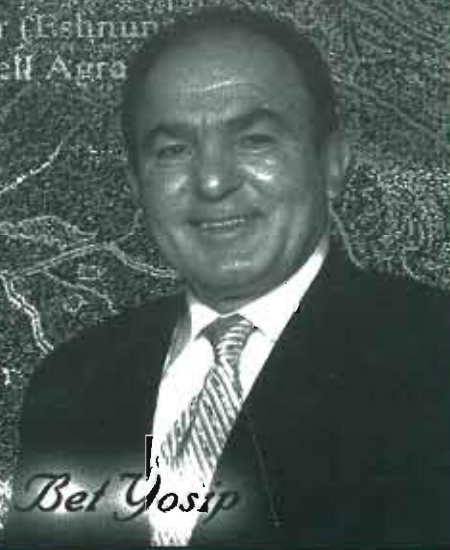
Assur KIRKUK
The Calling of the New Assyrian

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A Poetry Collection



Ninos Aho



Yosip Bet Yosip

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