The Jewish communities in Kurdistan within the tribal Kurdish Society

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Introduction and Preliminary Remarks

The Jews of Kurdistan believe their ancestors had been exiled from northern Israel by the king of Assyria, between 733 and 722 BCE, and were settled in "Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (Kings II, 17:6; New King James Version). They favor the saying from the prophecy of Isaiah (27:13): "So it shall be in that day: the great trumpet will be blown; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria . . . and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." From that era we are in a complete darkness for 2,000 years, until the great medieval Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela (circa 1170) re-discovered the Aramaic speaking Jews.[1] Other travelers followed his footsteps in the following centuries and more testimonies were heard,[2] most noteworthy are Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel around 1824 and Rabbi Benjamin Joseph (Benjamin II) around 1844. The lack of written and archival records has challenged scholars dealing with Kurdistan so at an early stage of my research I realized that I had no choice but to interview Jewish informants (altogether more than 60) about their life in Kurdistan.[3]

The Jews of Kurdistan speak Eastern Neo-Aramaic, an offspring of the ancient East Aramaic and the Talmudic language.[4] Today, together with the Assyrian Christians, they are the sole native speakers of Aramaic in the whole world. They also spoke the tongues of their neighbors, Arabic, Turkish, Farsi and Kurdish, the later two belonging to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family.[5]

One could not comprehend their experience without grasping the following themes. The Jews were considered *ahl al-kitāb*, the People of the Holy Scriptures (i.e., the Bible and the New Testament) and were *dhimmī*, people entitled to protection by the *Qur'ān*.[6] Nevertheless, unlike the Christians, who have had three major clashes with the Turkish and Iraqi authorities and with tribal chieftains, within 90 years, between 1840 and 1933, the Jews were a very small non-Muslim community, and were generally submissive.[7] They were generally perceived as un-threatening and reliable, because not even once the thought of a communal disobedience crossed their mind. James Claudius Rich, a scholar who looked for old artifacts to bring home to

the British Museum said: "I must here remark, that the Jews are generally to be trusted for local antiquities.[8] The Jews, especially those in rural areas, were non-combative subjects who relied on the tribal chiefs for protection. Lastly, urban Jews and more particularly rural Jews generally worked in different occupations from those engaged in by their Kurdish neighbors, some of which were considered socially unacceptable to tribal Kurds. Therefore, in the rural area there was virtually no occupational or economic competition between Jews and Kurds. The Jewish subjects supported their tribal chieftains (aghas) in financial and other ways in times of need. This is one of the reasons why they were considered as assets, in the eyes of their chieftains.

In 1909, a traveler reported that the Jewish "clients" had been divided among the aghas; each agha had a certain number of families under his patronage.[9] Each Jewish patriarch "looked for a big tree to seek shelter in its shade." The Jews became protégés of the aghas and shaikhs in the region, and in this manner "they insured their life and existence and felt relatively comfortable," in exchange for payoffs such as offerings and the provision of service.[10]

A.J.Braver, a Jewish scholar who visited Kurdistan in 1932 gave a contemporary eyewitness testimony on the question of slavery in Kurdistan. In Rawanduz, he wrote:

The Turkish authority in these districts has been in theory and not in practice while the agha ruled [the Jews] badly as they wished. Many of them took the "falaḥim" [i.e. farmers, also a general name for the Christians] and the Jews as slaves, like the slavery of the farmers in Poland and Russia previously. A British officer told me innocently [without been asked] of an old custom among the Viernes [i.e., the aghas] to send each other as a gift for the feasts a Jewish craftsman. In our tabernacle there was a 35 year-old Jew who was bought at the time for 200 Qiran[11] (a Persian coin worth 11 Palestinian Mils.) In Rawanduz, the authority is strong and that master cannot force the previously enslaved to work for him, but in the remote locations the slavery exist in fact until these very days. They [the aghas] do not make the Jews work on Saturday and they give them enough free time to earn their living sparely. They also have benefits that they are not exposed to every brigand and murderer, because of their masters' patronage."[12]

The rural way of life was deeply rooted amongst the Jews of Kurdistan.[13] Already early Jewish travelers noted that Jews lived in hundreds of Kurdish villages, cultivating fields, vineyards and orchards, tending their animals and weaving traditional Kurdish costumes and carpets.[14] The existence of Jews in hundreds of villages for generations, maintaining an agricultural way of life, suggests that the Jews

lived in rural Kurdistan with relative ease and security and were able to provide for their families while observing their religious and spiritual practices. The status of rural Jews varied from one tribal jurisdiction to another and from one period to another. At any case, the social position of rural Jews was inferior to that of the tribesmen who occasionally took advantage of their lower status. Chieftains, tribesmen and rivals often exploited them economically and at times maltreated them.[15] A.J.Braver commented on the very low cultural standing of the mountain, rural Jews. "There are Jews in the villages that all their knowledge of Hebrew sums up in *Shema Yisrael*,[16] because from an early age they have the burden of livelihood, collecting woods or galls [cecidia] in the forests for their parents and masters."[17] This report relates to the fact that the Kurdish society was composed of two main classes, the *ʿashiret*, or the tribal caste, and the non-tribal civilians including the Jews.[18] Most tribesmen were combatants who did not work (work is despicable for them) and therefore exploited their subjects, who were considered an asset, no different than a herd of sheep. Indeed, one meaning of the term "*reyet*" was simply herd. (Kurd., from Arabic *raʿāyah*, relates generally to non-tribal subjects, and *riʿāyah* denotes defense or protection).[19]

In the rural region the chieftain (the agha) was the sole authority over the rural population. He was the government, the chief of staff, the head of the police, the minister of finance, the judge, all embodied in one person. His ability to influence the life of his Jews was therefore decisive. The agha granted his patronage to his non-tribal subjects and protégés. This was the first and the nominal layer of the patronage. The tribesmen knew the Jewish protégés of their aghas and it was clear that any misconduct of the Jews would result in severe tribal consequences.

The second layer was the physical shelter that was given to the Jews when traveling or staying overnight in villages under the tribal jurisdiction of their agha. The patronage enabled urban Jewish merchants, peddlers, and others, who traveled regularly through the tribal jurisdiction, to do so safely. In a way, the non-tribal status of rural Jews made them an easier target for *fırars* (Kurd., escapees, fugitives), or tribal enemies of their agha. Apparently, the retribution versus the abusers and offenders of the Jews was lacking because of the inequity within the Kurdish society and the inferior standing of Jews. The experience of the Jews in both the official judicial system and in the tribal justice system indicated leniency towards Muslim offenders of Jews.

Usually, the agha granted patronage to the Jews, who in return, paid dues and performed services, one of which was a communal, un-paid, forced labor (Kurd., *zebara*), generally agricultural work in their master's field. In Kurdish, the agha calls his Jewish subjects "Cihûyê min" (Kurd., "my Jews"), suggesting dominance, if not ownership. The Jews refer to their chieftain as "my agha," bestowing both obedience and respect. Many rural aghas treated their Jews almost as their personal property.

Reports from eyewitnesses and observers in Kurdistan from the 19th and early 20th centuries, describe rural Jews as slaves, subjugated to tribal chieftains in isolated places. These reports discuss mal-treatment, abuse and exploitation of rural Jews by their tribal aghas. This must be clarified, since they were not slaves in the familiar sense, but rather within the tribal Kurdish settings.[20] They had been in fact non-tribal protégés and subjects of the tribal agha; indeed not completely autonomous, and in reality, the agha had an immense power over their life, but they were not to be labeled as slaves as one may imagine from the western or eastern civilizations. They had rights, families and property, and much freedom to work for their living. The selling of any of them by one agha to another meant the selling of the privileges that came with them.[21] At any case, this kind of "slavery" was reduced by the British reign in their firm stance against tribal control.

It is worthwhile to discuss the image and perception of these Jews in the eyes of their neighbors. The Jewish traveler David D'Beth Hillel met in 1827 a governor south of Zakho, who questioned the authenticity of the Jews of Kurdistan and avoided eating the food they prepared (presumably *ḥallal*, or kosher) because they were "not [truly] from the children of Israel." On the other hand he regarded the Jews of Arabia, Egypt and Turkey, as truly from the children of Israel. David D'Beth Hillel visited Başkale in 1827, near the Turkish-Iranian border, where the Muslims forbade his entry (not clear if to enter their houses or the town) fearing that the Jewish traveler would contaminate them. [22] Only after begging and paying money was he allowed to enter. [23] This dangerous tribal region was undesirable for non-Muslims and foreigners. Two years later, in 1829, the German orientalist Friedrich Eduard Schulz was murdered there, in spite of the fact he was escorted by two Persian officers and four servants.

In discussing the perception and image of the Jews in Kurdistan, "the tale of Suto and Tato," published in 1925, could serve as a mirror for tribal feuds and life in Kurdistan.[24] In this tale, Tato, his family and clan were under the control of the

powerful aghas of Oramar. The feud begins when Tato can no longer tolerate the humiliation of his brothers by their tribal foes, the aghas of Oramar. He says to his older brothers, “I cannot submit like you, I will not make a Jew of myself in Suto’s hands.” According to the editors’ note, Tato said the following: I cannot continue and “admit myself to be a coward, and resign myself to the status of a slave.”[25] As the editors explained the account to European readers, they noted that the sentence “we shall be forced to submit to Tato” means literally, we shall “become Tato’s Jews.”[26]

A common pattern of Jewish behavior reflecting their fragile position was the lack of response to violence and the reluctance to complain about wrong-doings in order not to fuel an atmosphere of hatred. A British traveler witnessed in 1840, in Arbil, an incident in which a young Shiʿite slapped a respectable Jewish store-owner, cursed him and spat at his face. A local companion explained: "he is only a Jew." The Jew was unable to respond. A Jewish emissary reported that seven Jews were murdered in Arbil within two years and it seemed that the governor did not care, "as if the blood of the Jews is free" and "the Jews are afraid to complain."[27]

The Jews were the weakest caste in the society and "gradually became the pariahs and outcast, despised and degraded." They were exploited, robbed[28] and murdered by outlaws. Murder of Jews may have been justified by a socio-religious concept of "*Kafir-Kuşt,*" (Kurd., killing of infidels). The lack of proper, or any, police response and the leniency of both the tribal and judicial system towards murderers of Jews, further show the insignificant value of a Jewish life.[29]

When a murder of a Jew occurred in the tribal region in remote villages, it would generally lead to the migration of the whole family, which had been in a state of shock and distress, since it became apparent that the agha and the tribal society had failed, in practice, to provide protection. Their trust was exhausted. They would need to seek permission from the agha, as it meant for him loss of future income (in dues and services), and they had to seek permission from the agha under whose jurisdiction they wish to settle. These de facto rules had been gathered from the experience of the frequent migration patterns of rural Jews.

The Jews’ non-tribal status and social inferiority facilitated acts of abduction either by force or through temptation of young Jewish women by Kurdish men for whom it was not as complicated and dangerous as the abduction of tribal women. Not only could Muslim Kurds marry in theory four wives, they also did not have to pay a dowry for the Jewish wife and her family.

In retrospect, these abductions were counted as converts into Islam of Jewish women. Therefore, the Jewish communities opposed these abductions. In general, the Jewish communities employed three mechanisms in an attempt to bring back kidnapped Jewish daughters to their families: the first method was the appeal to the local authority (local leaders, police officers and tribal chieftains) for the return of the kidnapped girls; the second method was the establishment of a communal panel of deliberation, through which the Jews would challenge the tribal Kurds involved in an attempt to have them bring the Jewish woman back to her family; and the third method was to allow a period of seclusion for the Jewish woman in question, during which she would contemplate her decision while separated from her Muslim associate and far from his influence, under the supervision and the pressure of a respected Jewish person or family. In Mosul and the surrounding area, Sasson Tzemah, a member of parliament (1932-1951) would press the police and the army to search for the abducted Jewish women. In Aqra, the Jewish family of Khawaja Khinno would act the same.

Interestingly, in 2011, I was introduced by a new source, through an email correspondence from Turkey which reads (with the necessary editing) as follows:

I am a journalist from Turkey who has just found out that you have written a significant book regarding Kurdish Jews…. I have realized that I actually have links with the Khawaja Khinno (or Gabbai) family (originally from Aqra). The story, which you are telling in the book, is absolutely the same as what I have been told by my grandmother. My grandmother is a nephew of Khawaja Khinno (Turkish pronunciation: Xace Xino). She has been telling us her personal history and her family's history for many years. She is still alive and is most probably up to 100 years. She was married to a Kurdish man (my grandfather) in her early teen age [years] and moved (from Aqra, Iraq) to Turkey. She therefore has never ever seen any member of her family since then. We too basically, until now, had no idea of finding her family and had no clear knowledge of the family's survival. However, now, through your book, we know a lot. When I told these all to my grandma, she got excited about a possibility of which we could somehow find her family. If I understood correctly, one of her cousins, daughter of Yitzhak Khinno, Salima, is one of your sources in the work, or at least some members of the family were your sources. I would therefore be glad if you could help me find some of the members of the Gabbai family. I will be looking forward to hearing from you Mr. Zaken. Many thanks in advance, Hamza Aktan (Turkey).

This was a recollection from the past. A young Jewish girl, named Nazê, was kidnapped from her home in Aqra, Iraqi Kurdistan, sometime between 1910 and 1920. In 2005, a grandchild of her made a film called Nazê in which we learn that she

was tempted or seduced to leave her family and join a Muslim youth, a total stranger. She speaks about the status of her Jewish family (Khawaja Khinno) and their relationships with both officials and with Barzani chieftains. Irfan Aktan, another grandson, wrote a book in 2005 entitled "Nazê, a story of migration" (in Turkish). Interestingly, the quotes of Nazê in the film were identical with the quotes of the members of Khawaja Khinno whom I interviewed during the 1980s and the 1990s (even though there was no contact between the parties since 1920s). Nazê's voice and experience is an important testimony for abduction (via temptation) of Jewish girls by Kurds. In the movie she speaks of her escape while Barzani tribesmen (the patriarchs of Khawaja Khinno have been in close contact with the chieftains of Barzan) are chasing them and trying to trace the abducted Jewish girls (there were two girls).

The Jews had been an important part of urban Kurdistan. In Sulaimaniya in 1800, sixteen years after the establishment of the city, a Jewish traveler, Edelman, reported that the Jews in Sulaimaniya "enjoy equal rights" from the authorities and live a "life of comfort and paradise, friendship and brotherhood."[30] David D'Beth Hillel reported in 1826-27, that the pasha's treasurer was the president of the Jewish community.[31] Most Jewish families in Kurdish urban centers earned their living as merchants. In Zakho alone, approximately half of the Jewish population earned their living by means of trade. In 1945, a Jewish emissary who visited Zakho reported that the Jews there worked in agriculture, crafts, smuggling, and the transfer of lumber on rafts.[32] Like the Jews of Zakho, many Jews in Dohuk, Aqra, Amadiya, Arbil, Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya dealt in commerce. Jewish merchants maintained regular commercial contacts with associates in Baghdad, Kirkuk, Arbil and Mosul. Several enterprising merchants traveled as far as Moscow, Tiflis, Tabriz, Esterkhan, Bombay and Calcutta.[33]

In Kurdish, the general term for merchant is *bazirgan*.[34] Most urban Jews lived in separate neighborhoods (NA, *maḥalıt hozaye*, Kurd., *majalah cûleke*), and they had representatives in the municipal administration based recently on the new municipal law of 1929.[35] The Jewish communities had been traditionally recognized as a millet or religious community.[36] In modern Iraq,[37] one of four parliament seats reserved for the Jews was for the northern Kurdish region. Many earned their living from trade and were merchants, peddlers, shop-keepers, loggers, raft-men and muleteers. Others worked as craftsmen, jewelers and farmers.

Most Jewish peddlers came from urban centers; only a small number of rural Jews worked occasionally as peddlers. In any case, most if not all their routes passed through rural and tribal regions. The city best known for its Jewish peddlers was Zakho, which was surrounded by hundreds of satellite villages. Peddlers would tour the villages, back and forth, usually in the spring and fall. The peddler would develop unique relationships with tribal Kurds who used to host him during his stopover in their village. These hosts were called *mare-bēsa (*NA, house-owner, host) for they hosted the Jewish peddlers in their home during their trips. The peddler would receive hospitality, some food, usually bread and tea, and shelter at the house of his host. He would cook his own *kosher* food and use his own pan and plate, according to Jewish dietary law. From time to time, he would give his host and his wife gifts or other desired goods.

In addition to material goods and merchandise, the peddlers circulated reports and folktales as entertainment in the isolated villages they visited. Becoming storytellers became almost second to being peddlers. Throughout the time, Jewish peddlers developed the requisite skills of storytelling and some became noted storytellers. This quality helped them in their relations with the Muslim villagers, and smoothed their trade routes into the villages. Bois stressed that among the Kurds, *çirokbêj* (Kur., storytelling) is "highly esteemed."[38] The Jewish storyteller would sit in the dîwanxane (Kurd., guest room/house) of the local agha and tell news of tribal feuds and folktales. According to Rand and Rush it seemed as if he "had saved his tales" from the entire year and "they burst forth like a fountain of water."[39]

Jews lived in hundreds of villages throughout Kurdistan. Layard, around the middle of the 19th century, came across a large camp of nomadic Jews and visited their tents. It was on the road between Bashqala and Van, but according to Layard, there were many flock-keepers like them, spread throughout the mountains.[40]

Hay concluded (1921) that the country between the two Zab Rivers was predominantly agricultural, and commerce was of secondary importance. Large numbers of Jewish villagers labored in agriculture, as farmers, owners of livestock, vine growers and the like, either on their own land, leased land or as day workers.[41] Van Bruinessen argues that until the beginning of the 20th century, Kurdish villages were self-sufficient in most products: and "most of the specialized crafts were practiced by the Christian and Jewish minorities in

Kurdistan."[42] Rural Jews labored mostly as weavers or dyers, occupations that were essential for the Kurds. There was hardly a village without one or two Jewish families who had no contact with their fellow Jews. Hence we "understand the original, tragic meaning of exile and dispersion," noted W. J. Fischel.[43]

Jews were rarely harmed within their village or within the inhabited jurisdiction of their patron tribe. Within the tribe, the agha would usually protect the Jews from the local tribesmen and villagers. Around 1913, Sykes met three Jews from the Hakkārī region "traveling unarmed with various goods." Sykes argued that these Jews "are practically immune from robbery and can travel in their own districts without fear."[44] Many villages had one or two Jewish families, while at least one village recently, Sandur, not far from Dohuk, was entirely Jewish.[45] During the early part of the 20th century, three Muslim Kurdish families still lived in Sandur, but their work on Saturdays troubled the harmony of the Jewish *Sabbath*. The Jewish mukhtar of Sandur, who was well-connected, asked a powerful friend, a judge from Dohuk, to relocate the Muslim Kurds from Sandur. Based on the agreement, the Jews were obliged to buy the houses belonging to the Kurds who moved to the outskirts of Sandur, leaving the core of the village to the Jews.[46]

Indeed in recent centuries the Jews leaned on the rabbis in Baghdad, as can be seen in the responsa literature (שו"ת), but the Jewish learning shined in the 17th century, with a Jewish feminine precedent. Asenath Barzani (1590–1670) was a daughter of a noted scholar, Rabbi Samuel Barzani (b.1560) who taught in Mosul, Aqra and Amadiya. She married her father's favorite student, Yaacob Mizrahi, who pledged she would not be bothered with domestic work and would only focus on religious studies. Following his death, she became the head of the *yeshiva*[47] and the main rabbinic scholar in Kurdistan.[48]

Recently, the education in urban centers was basic, as most children attended classes of rabbis at the synagogue for a few years until they joined the workforce. Writing was not common among them, and only a few individuals knew to read and write. The girls knew only how to recite the "Shema Yisrael."[49] Their main requirement was the household duties such as cleaning and cooking.

Tradition was very important for the Jews of Kurdistan. They observed their traditions and no Jew ever worked on *Shabbat*. Education has changed somewhat when the "Alliance Israelite Universelle" began its activity in the early 20th century

among the Jews of Kurdistan. They opened schools in Mosul, Kirkuk and in Sena (also spelled Sinna, Senneh, Sanandaj),[50] the capital of Persian Kurdistan, one for boys and one for girls. Until the Iranian Revolution (1979), the city had a small Aramaic-speaking Jewish community of about 4,000 people.[51]

An old tradition among them has been pilgrimage to the grave, known as *ziyara* (NA., visit) of the Biblical and righteous rabbis, the most popular of which was the graveyard pf prophet Nahum which is supposedly in Alkosh near Mosul, "which seems to have the quality of a national sanctuary for the Kurdish Jews." While pilgrims would visit the shrine throughout the year, during *Shavuot*, known as *'ez-ziyara* (NA, "the holiday of pilgrimage"), several thousand people would come to stay at the compound of Nahum's grave. Rich noted in 1921 that Jews from all parts of Kurdistan, as far as Urmia and Julamerk (Hakkari) and Kotchannes come on pilgrimage to it.[52]

Every year, the Jews of Kurdistan used to go out to the countryside at the end of Passover to spend time with the family and celebrate. This was a secular, civil, communal tradition of recreation in nature, known as *"Seharane,"* a picnic in the countryside, for a few days on meadows alongside streams, with plenty of food. Beginning in 1975, the annual *Saharane* celebration was celebrated in major parks in Israel, but it took place during the holiday of *Sukkot* (Tabernacles).

Just before the time of their final mass migration to Israel during 1951-52, about 25,000 Jews had been scattered throughout 200 villages and several towns, the overwhelming majority of which were in Iraq, 150 in total, 24 in Turkey, 19 in Persia and one community, al-Qamishli, in Syria. In Iraq, they lived within the boundaries of the provinces of Mosul, in Zakho, Dohuk, Aqra, Amadiya and Zibar,[53] as well as within the provinces of Kirkuk, Arbil and Sulaimaniya.

The Previous Centuries

Kurdistan was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, but the Turks allowed local principalities to rule. During 500 years or so, no major political change occurred until the middle of the 19th century when Turkey crushed the Kurdish principalities in an attempt to restore its central authority. "The Jews were severely affected by the struggle and bloodshed," even more than they were affected by tyranny and caprices of some of the aghas. The collapse of the Kurdish principalities, notably Bohtan and Soran, shaped the fate of the population, as well as judicial and

administrative reforms such as the *Tabu* or land registration reform of 1858 that allowed the emergence of a new and smaller, local, tribal cast of chieftains. The political instability and the emergence of this new class of chieftains and shaikhs steered numerous feuds and infighting that had influenced the security in the tribal region.

The 19th century provides gloomy accounts on the treatment of the Jews. One must note that we do not have a complete and detailed portrait of this topic, but only occasional reports. Given the dearth of documentation, it is quite reasonable that extreme events would attract the attention of contemporary observers. The gloomy accounts include blood libels, presumably originated by Christians, Greeks, and Armenians, in Persian Kurdistan, in Maraga (whose population was completely dismantled) in 1820; and in Urmia and Salmas in 1820-1821.[54] The famous traveler Israel Joseph Benjamin, known as "Benjamin II," reported in 1848 of heavy taxes, forced labor and extortion of Jews by their aghas who treated them as their own property, at times selling them as slaves.[55]

In 1820, J. C. Rich reported that the tribesmen treated the villagers "as if they were created for their use." Rich noted that a tribesman once confessed to him "that the clans conceived the peasants to be merely created for their use; and wretched in deed is the condition of these Koordish cultivators." A chieftain explained to him: "I am taking from them dues…*zakat* (Ar. alms), or ten percent… and extort from them as much as I can, in all possible means."[56] Benjamin II was astonished that Muslim oppression "did not stop even at the doorstep of the house of God." Attacks on synagogues, religious processions and ceremonies, and against Jewish women in reservoirs used for ritual purification were reported, some of which ended with fatal results.[57]

In Arbil, Benjamin II reported of a brutal attack on a traditional Jewish procession with *Torah* scrolls to a new synagogue, with music and dances, by Muslims who killed several, injured others and razed the new synagogue to the ground. An ancient Torah scroll was transferred from Nisibin to Mardin and then to Diyarbakir, in order to protect it, due to repeated pillage and lack of a sense of security.[58] Benjamin II also reported of an assault on a synagogue in Rawanduz, on the Jewish New Year's Day, when the *shofar* (n ancient musical horn made of a ram's horn, used for Jewish religious purposes) sounded in the synagogue, and the Kurds rushed into the temple, attacked women and maltreated them, broke the symbolic

trumpet, and compelled the Jews to stop their ceremony.[59] Another bizarre practice that was widely reported had been the removal of corpses of Jews from their graves at night, cutting off the heads and throwing them into the river because of a belief that this would hasten the rain. Benjamin II was also astonished by the submissive manner in which the Jews accepted their fate: "My heart is burned from sorrow on [for] my people...Our poor brethren think that it is their destiny to suffer, and submit patiently to their fate; the slightest improvement of which they consider an unexpected happiness."[60]

Nevertheless, he also provided brighter pictures of "freedom from all oppression." Many were very wealthy, particularly those families engaged in agriculture that owned land and herds." Trying to explain the enduring Jewish presence despite their oppression, he explained that "they can trade throughout the country as much as they like." The fact the Jewish emigration had never stopped, indicates that his explanation was decent but partial. Nevertheless, the tribal dues they paid and the greedy aghas who wanted to keep the flow of a reliable source of income enabled their survival. The dues or commissions are known as *aghatusa* or *aghwusa* (Aramaic, the right of the agha for dues; Kurd., *aghatiy*).

A major occurrence in Kurdistan during the third and fourth decades of the 19th century involved the struggle between the major Kurdish principalities and the central Turkish administration. After so many years that partial control of Kurdistan was suitable for the Turkish government, the administration began changing its policy and seeking full control over the Kurdish and other peripheral principalities. Before the mid-nineteenth century, Amadiya underwent a change that affected the city and its Jewish community. In 1828, Mîr (Kurd., prince) Muhammad of Rawanduz also known as Mîrê Kor (Kurd., the Blind) laid siege to the town and conquered it. He plundered Amadiya and mistreated in particular its Jewish inhabitants, an important segment of the population who “were treated with merciless cruelty and oppression.”[61] Many Jews were forced to migrate and the less fortunate were subjected to his tyranny.[62] Around that time the Jewish community of Amadiya had lost its premiere status to the Jewish community of Zakho.

By 1838, the Blind Mîr succeeded in subjugating other urban centers with Jewish populations, such as Rania, Koi, Arbil, Aqra and Zakho, penetrating as far as Jezira and Mardin. It is unclear whether Jews were treated as badly in these centers as in Amadiya. In 1838, the Turkish army captured Mîr Muhammad and subsequently

executed him. This was one of the last semi-independent entities ruled by Kurdish tribal leaders. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the Turkish authorities administered this district more or less directly.[63]

Following the removal of the Blind Agha, the Pasha of Mosul ruled Amadiya with an iron fist. The condition of the Jews improved a little, but they were obliged to carry water and stones from the plain up to the citadel, and to do every form of degrading work, which impeded their industry. Within a short time, this once flourishing community was reduced to a community of one hundred families.[64] The economic conditions of the Jews deteriorated following the increasing political insecurity.[65] The situation in Amadiya continued to worsen. In 1871, during another war over the city, the Muslims attacked the Jewish community; they robbed the two synagogues and took the Torah scroll ornaments.[66] No wonder that in 1881, the number of Jewish families reported to be living in Amadiya had been reduced to only 50.[67] These events ended the supremacy of the Jewish community of Amadiya and led to the emergence of the Jewish community of Zakho as an important urban Jewish center.

In 1863 the chief Rabbi in Istanbul learned of forced conversions, forced labor, removal of bodies from their graves, prohibition to buy estates and to tend the herds, which were occurring mostly in the communities of southeastern Turkey. Nevertheless, the picture was not always gloomy. In some towns, the local governors maintained their duties to protect the Jews. In 1880, Mordechai Edelman reported from Diyarbakir that the "local governor is a human lover who behaves well with God and people," and "defends our miserable brothers from any trouble fallen upon them" because of the locals' "eternal hostility."[68]

Binder who visited Kurdistan in 1886 commented that the Kurds robbed the country in their way and the Turks in their way.[69] This double scissors activity has been the fate of the population for centuries. In 1892, the Jewish leadership of Zakho complained that the Kurds carried out a pogrom, burning houses and synagogues. Seven Jews were killed and many others imprisoned and tortured, and the taxes levied on the Jewish community increased drastically.[70] In 1895, an anti-Jewish incident occurred in Sulaimaniya when 21 Muslims attacked several Jews who were traveling out of town, and inflicted on them a “cruel pounding.” The perpetrators then entered the town and began attacking the Jews who closed their stores and locked themselves up inside their homes. Six Jews, who had been caught in the streets, were badly

tortured and their lives endangered. The aggressors broke into Jewish homes, plundered their property and raped their wives; they violated the synagogue and tore the Torah scrolls, taking gold and silver instruments. The governor of the town (*mutasarrif*) dispatched soldiers, but the rioters outnumbered them. On the following day, the army intervened and restored public order by arresting fifty insurgents.

The assailants explained that their shaikh had incited them, but the shaikh denied these allegations. He was eventually released. Apparently, several Muslims had joined a group of Jews who were sitting in an orchard near the synagogue, drinking alcohol. The shaikh, who saw them sitting together with a group of Jews drinking alcohol (probably *ʿarāq*)[71], became infuriated and ordered the attack on the Jews. Some Kurds followed his order and the Jews remained locked up in their homes for 7 days until the rioters were caught, to the relief of the Jews. For some time, soldiers patrolled the Jewish neighborhood in order to keep law and order. Shortly afterwards, 20 rioters were sentenced reportedly to between 15 and 18 years in prison. The remaining two rioters were expelled from Sulaimaniya.[72] The decisive response of the authority seems justified, but it had been much excessive in comparison to the lack of response, or even worse, the leniency, of the authorities to offenders of Jews in other times and places in Kurdistan. It is possible that the communal nature of the attack motivated the authorities to react, in this case. The authorities handed down long sentences against the insurgents, sending a clear message to the community that such acts of communal rioting against the Jews would not be tolerated. As suggested, it seemed to be an atypical incident and the authorities dealt with the perpetrators severely.

The Jews and Their Aghas

The interactions between the aghas and their Jews may instruct us with instances and patterns of action that prevailed in the tribal Kurdish society. Three patterns of patronage have been noted in urban centers. In the first pattern, the Jews enjoyed the patronage of a powerful agha, as in Zakho; in the second pattern, a wealthy Jewish family used its wealth to gain influence and secured the well-being of the community (the Khawaja Khinno household in Aqra); in the third pattern, the Jews had to be resourceful and pay out money to satisfy the greed and capriciousness of urban aghas, as in Dohuk and Amadiya. The relations between the tribal and the Jewish families from Zakho and Aqra go back two, three or four generations, as far back as within the

living memory of the Jewish informants. Not only in urban centers did the Jews have interactions with their aghas, but also in the rural regions, as may be seen in the following accounts.

Saʿid Agha was the main tribal ruler of the Doskis (in NA., Dostiknaye) whose jurisdiction stretched from around Dohuk up to the banks of the Khabor River. According to British military reports, Saʿid Beg (ca. 1890-1947) of Geramaweh near Dohuk was the only one in his tribe "of any influence."[73] The British described Saʿid Agha as someone who "is usually behind all troubles in Dohuk." In 1941, a feud between the Muslim Kurds of the village Yekmala (Kurd., one household) and the Jews of the village of Sandur ended with a lethal attack against Sandur, in which seven Jews were murdered, including the *mukhtar*.

Saʿid Agha, with both Sandur and Yekmala under his jurisdiction, apparently approved the attack. The murderers became *firars* (Kurd., escapees) and hid out in the mountains while Saʿid Agha arranged reconciliation with the families of the victims. He gathered all the villagers of Sandur and tried to appease them while blaming their dead *mukhtar,* for causing troubles for Yekmala. As strange as it may seem, some Jews from Sandur justified or at least understood the murder of their *mukhtar*. Sa'id Agha offered the victims' families thirty dinars as compensation for each person who was murdered. He managed to dismiss the charges, and the murderers were able to return to their village. It may be suggested that the very fact that only Jews populated the village facilitated this kind of massacre, because in mixed villages the Jews always enjoyed the protection and defense of the tribesmen. In a village such as Sandur they enjoyed Jewish hegemony, but lacked security.

The Sufi Shaikhs of the Naqshbandi *ṭarīqa* (sufi order) from the Barzani family were among the most influential in Kurdistan. They originated in the village of Barzan and became a powerful tribe that played a significant role in the Kurdish national movement up to these days.[74] Wigram noted the modesty of the Shaikh of Barzan: "even less powerful chiefs" live in large castles, but the shaikh of Barzan "dwells among his own people" and the shaikh was "a merciful over-lord," known for his fair treatment of his subjects: "When he was quarrelling with the government and became *firar* (Kurd., an escapee, an outlaw) in the mountains … he reaped the fruit of his good treatment of his villagers, for not a man, Christian or Moslem, ever dreamt of betraying him to his foes."[75]

Wigram also noted the compassion and benevolence of the Shaikhs of Barzan towards non-Muslims. At the beginning of the 20th century, Shaikh Abd al-Salam II refused to declare *jihād*, or holy war, against the local Assyrians of Tkhuma, as initiated by some of the Muslim Kurdish rivals of the Tkhuma.[76] This report stands in contrast with other reports of oppression against Christians by other Kurdish shaikhs and aghas, such as Shaikh Sadiq of Nehri, who was reportedly "a terrible oppressor of Christians."[77]

In 1944, during a visit in Aqra, Mulla Mustafa Barzani,[78] approached his long-time Jewish friends from the main household in Aqra, Khawaja Khinno. "Before his departure, at the courtyard in front of the police station, he distanced himself from the crowd and consulted with the two brothers. He told David Khawaja Khinno: 'Hajji Qadir Agha Zibari (with whom he had just struck a tribal deal) spoke with me about marrying his sister and Shaikh Mahmud Agha Zibari spoke with me about marrying his daughter.' David Khawaja Khinno told him: "in my opinion, Shaikh Ahmad should marry the sister of Hajji Qadir Agha and you should take the daughter of Mahmud Agha." Mulla Mustafa Barzani told him, "in that case, prepare gold jewelry for the bride."[79]

It may have been a genuine consultation, or a polite prelude for the request of gold and jewelry for the fiancées of the tribal Barzani leaders. In either case, it was rooted in a tradition between the families that lasted, at that point, at least two generations. Nevertheless, as the Jewish informants explained, "there was no time to prepare gold for the prospective brides." Mulla Mustafa wanted the gold immediately, so David Khawaja Khinno sent messengers to bring the personal gold and jewelry of his two daughters, Salima and Manira. Mulla Mustafa Barzani took their gold and jewelry, put it in a bag, and sent it to the prospective brides. Interestingly, when Barzani visited the Khawaja Khinno's household in Tiberius, Israel, thirty years later, in 1973, he brought with him a large golden jewelry piece for Salima (Manira has passed away) and handed it to her in an honorable manner.[80]

In 1943, when Eliyahu Khawaja Khinno died, Mulla Mustafa came in person to Aqra to pay condolences. He said to the entourage surrounding him pointing out to the Khawaja Khinno household: "we are regarded as one family, in spite of the fact that we are from different faiths. I do not want that any harm would occur to them." In one of these occasions Mulla Mustafa was granted with a pistol of which he refused (I have many, he reportedly said) and a golden dagger, which he chose to keep. Mulla

Mustafa (b.1903) and Dawud Khawaja Khinno (b. 1895) had been life time friends and their relationships facilitated the trust that was later created between Barzani and the Israeli government during the late 1960s and early 1970s.[81] Mulla Mustafa Barzani had asked his associates in the Mossad to try and locate for him his long-time friend David Khawaja Khinno. The Mossad in Israel managed to find David who then owned a vegetable store in the hills of Tiberius. They took a photograph of David Khawajah Khinno in his old, plain working clothes and it was handed in the Kurdish mountains to the Kurdish leader. Reportedly, the response of Mulla Mustafa clarified to his Israeli associates the importance of David Khawaja Khinno in the eyes of Barzani. He remembered David as a wealthy, well-dressed Jewish leader, and was surprised to see a poorly looking grocer. The Mossad acted once again and provided a lengthy voice recording message in which David Khawaja Khinno talked to Barzani and told him of the development he had experienced since they last met, around 1945, when Mulla Mustafa with his soldiers left for a refuge period in Russia. During three Barzani's visit to Israel, an important time was reserved for meetings with David Khawaja Khinno, once in the house of David Khawaja Khinno, surrounded by members of the family and neighbors of the Jewish Kurdish community.

In the 1970s, Mulla Mustafa Barzani returned the golden dagger to David Khawaja Khinno, who in turn gave it to Haim Levakov, an Israeli Mossad agent who was an envoy to Barzani during the late 1960's and the early 1970s.[82]

Generally, there were no synagogues in the villages. A unique character of Mulla Mustafa is discovered through his behavior in the village of Mergasor (Kurd., Red Meadow), in the early 1930s. He informed the Jews of the village: "soon, I will launch a war against my tribal enemies and the government, and the roads will be blocked. [Since you the Jews, cannot maintain your diet without a kosher meat] I will pay you to bring a slaughterer [a butcher] since without a slaughterer, how could you live [without kosher meat]?" Usually, a wandering Jewish rabbi, from a nearby town, would travel once or twice a year to remote villages and perform the main Jewish duties for the population, notably the slaughtering of animals. But if a war or tribal feud occurred this would obstruct the safety movement and arrival of passengers. The Jews invited an elderly slaughterer "whose hands were barely working." He not only slaughtered their animals but also taught their children the Hebrew alphabet at the same opportunity. "Thanks to Mulla Mustafa Barzani I learned Hebrew," told me an

informant who was lucky to receive education, unlike most children in the rural region.[83]

ʿAbd al-Karim Agha was the greatest benefactor of the Jews of Zakho. He became a myth in his life and remained a myth after his death when the Jews of Zakho, who immigrated to Israel, would always hail his deeds. Reportedly, he held no official title, although in practice he acted as the de-facto commissioner supervising the market place. He maintained everyday contact with the Jews, many of whom were merchants and shopkeepers. He played an important role in protecting the Jews, preventing Muslim Kurds from plotting against them. The Jews called him a "righteous gentile," a title reserved for a protector of Diaspora Jews during times of tribulation.

During the 1940s and up to 1951, the Jews were occasionally subjected to provocation. These events occurred mainly during the last years of the Jewish presence in Zakho. However, "if someone harassed one of the Jews in the market and ʿAbd al-Karim Agha learned about it, he would come to the market and hit this person, and no one could save him from his hands." During the final migration of the Jewish community in 1951-52, ʿAbd al-Karim Agha supervised in person the trips of the three convoys of Jews who left Zakho via Mosul to Baghdad. He went back and forth riding his own car with each group. The Jews, in retrospect, viewed this gesture of ʿAbd al-Karim Agha as a symbol of his commitment.

The British described Shaikh Muhammad Rabatke as "a character with a few wild followers over whom he has little control," but his Jewish protégés praised him. The following incident occurred during the late Ottoman period. It illustrates the rural conduct of justice and involved the theft of a sheep belonging to a Jew. He placed the sheep in the care of the village shepherd, but "one evening, the sheep did not return home. My father asked the shepherd, 'What happened?' He replied: nothing happened; there were no wolves, no thieves, why the sheep did not return home?' My father asked the neighbors, but they had not seen the sheep. Three days later, he went to Shaikh Muhammad and told him, 'my sheep was lost; from the two thousand sheep only my sheep was lost.' The shaikh told him, 'Go and ask around.' He replied, 'I have already asked around and I waited three days before coming to see you and bothering you.' The Shaikh told him, do not worry any more. Leave this matter to me. Go home and say nothing about it.' This occurred around the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, around October. Nothing happened until the Jewish Feast of Pentecost

(Heb., *Shavuot*) around May. Indeed Shaikh Muhammad had many informers, but he did not find out any information.

Eventually, because of an argument that erupted between the wives of the two thieves, the details about the theft and the identity of the thieves became clear. The thieves were two Kurdish neighbors, Slaiman and Hussain. They caught the sheep in the forest and slaughtered it. Between their houses lived a Kurdish woman named Ayshe who overheard them. The house of the Jews was on the way to the fountain. On her way to the fountain, Ayshe stopped by the door and said, 'oh door, these [so-and-so] persons stole your sheep.' The following day, the mother of the family met the Shaikh's wife, Ḥalime Khatun near the fountain and informed her of the news. Later, the shaikh sent his servants to summon Slaiman. He told his servant, 'Bring him in any condition, even if he is naked.' The servant went and told him: 'Sulaiman, the shaikh loves you and wants to speak to you.' It was in the evening. He arose and went to the shaikh, who invited him to sit down. Sulaiman asked the shaikh, 'What do you want from me?' He said, 'I have one question. If you wish to tell me the truth, say so.' He said, 'Yes, agha.' The shaikh asked him, 'Did you steal the Jew's sheep from the herd?' He admitted, 'Yes sir, I stole it.' The shaikh responded, 'You may go home.' The following day he summoned Hussain; he asked him the same question and received the same answer. Then he dismissed him too.

The shaikh had patience; he was clever. He waited eight days and then sent the two thieves the following message, 'Tomorrow morning, I want you to provide one sheep for each leg of the stolen sheep. Each one of you should bring four sheep, both of you together eight sheep. You should go and tie them near the house of the Jew. In addition, you have three days to leave my village with your wives and families. If you do not leave within three days, I will burn you inside your houses.' The punishment was severe, for the two villagers could not feed their families if they were forced to leave their estates. "Without cultivating their land their children were doomed to die from hunger."

The following morning, when the Jewish family woke up they found eight sheep tied up near their house on Slaiman and Hussain's plots of land. Slaiman and Hussain begged the shaikh for forgiveness. They tied a rope around their necks and climbed up to the house of the Shaikh. Near the room of the shaikh, they got down on all fours, as if they were dogs, they lay down on the floor and went into his room. The Shaikh told his guards: 'Take these dogs out,' as if they contaminated the room. The

mukhtar of the village asked the shaikh to have mercy on their children.' The shaikh said. 'If the residents from my village behave like this towards the Jew, how will other persons, from the outside, behave'? In the end, however, Shaikh Muhammad finally allowed them to remain in the village, but not before they suffered humiliation and condemnation. His stance in protecting the Jews of his village, however, made a strong statement.

Once, during the 1930s, a Turkish official visited Rabatke while Shaikh Muhammad was away. On his way the Turkish official saw a Jewish woman weaving carpets. "He told his guard, go and bring this carpet." Her son told me years later: "we had no choice. He gave my father a few pennies, to avoid the accusation that he took it without paying." The next morning, when Shaikh Muhammad came back home and learned what happened, he summoned his son, Sayyid al-Jaʿfar, and dictated a letter to the Turkish official: 'carry the carpet and return it to the Jews yourself. Nevertheless, if you are ashamed to bring it yourself, you should pay three times the price of a new carpet. The shaikh summoned my father and instructed him to give this letter to the official himself.' When my father arrived in Sware, his village, the official told his *gendarme*, 'hold the Jew here.' He read the letter and told my father, 'Take the carpet.' My father refused. He told him: 'If I take it, the shaikh will kill me.'" The official put in the envelope, three times the price of a new carpet. He was an important official; nevertheless, Shaikh Muhammad treated him, reportedly, just as he treated other thieves.[84]

In 1931, members of a Jewish family residing in Rabatke planned to immigrate to Palestine. They decided to sell their property in the neighboring villages and traveled to the village of Spindare. "We walked in the street of Spindare. There were no Jews residing there; only Kurds lived there. One person was sitting on a chair in front of his house. He asked us, 'You must be Jews?' We said, 'Yes.' He asked, 'What are you going to do here?' We said, 'To sell our goods.' He suggested, 'Come and stay in my house for the night. His name was Hajji Abd al-Qadir… . "The Jews of Rabatke and Hajji Abd al-Qadir had a long discussion during that evening. They told him of their intention to immigrate to Palestine, and told them that he had made a pilgrimage to both Mecca and Jerusalem. He described Jerusalem quite accurately, as "a poor town, with no work [for its inhabitants], no land and no agriculture." He suggested Haifa, as "a city with a harbor," where they could find jobs and earn their living.

The Jewish men stayed in his house overnight and the following morning they prepared to leave to sell their goods. They had tied up a mule and two donkeys near his house, but in the morning, they discovered that one of the donkeys was missing along with its load. Its rope had been cut. Their host, Hajji Abd al-Qadir, had already left and gone out to work in his field. Mizrahi recounted: "I told my uncles, 'Let us go to the mukhtar,' to the agha of the village. His name was Amin… We told him the whole story. We asked him to help us find our donkey that was lost.' The mukhtar told us, 'What can I do? I know nothing and I cannot help you. I am not the keeper of your donkey. There are travelers who come here from Syria, Lebanon and many other countries. This is a public domain. How can I find your donkey now'?

The Jews returned to Rabatke without their donkey and the goods. They went to Shaikh Muhammad Rabatke and told him the whole story. He asked them, "Why didn't you go to the mukhtar?" They told him what the mukhtar had said. Shaikh Muhammad called his son Sayyid Jaʿfar and told him, 'Write a letter to the mukhtar Amin; write to him: your name will be obliterated [If you would not act promptly]. The donkey belonging to our Jews was stolen. Even if it was stolen by travelers from Lebanon, from Egypt or Syria, I want it [back] from you, even if the donkey has risen to heaven…' The walking distance between Spindare and Rabatke was four hours. Shaikh Muhammad then summoned Mordechai, the son of Yoseph, the Jew whose donkey had been stolen. He told him, 'Take this letter and give it to the mukhtar [of Spindare].' The shaikh warned him, 'Do not drink and do not eat anything at his house' [in order not to allow him to receive anything from him and in order to teach him a lesson, explains Mizrahi].

Mordechai walked to Spindare, delivered Shaikh Muhammad's letter to the mukhtar Amin, and returned immediately to Rabatke without even resting, eating or drinking, after four hours on the road. He returned and told Shaikh Muhammad: 'I did what you told me.' The shaikh told him: 'I hope that the donkey will not be returned. Do not worry; I will give you four mules in its stead. "Well, we returned [from Spindare] on Thursday. He [Mordechai] took the letter to [the agha of] Spindare on Friday. On Saturday, we discovered the donkey walking alone to his home. Someone had brought it to the outskirts of the village and let it loose to return alone. The donkey was returned with the merchandise on it". Thus, Shaikh Muhammad was well aware of his power, and the mukhtar of Spindare recognized his ability as well, as

indicated both in the determination of Shaikh Muhammad and in the quick response of the villagers from Spindare.[85]

In 2014, a great grandchild of Shaikh Muhammad, who now lives in Dohuk, Wahid b. Shaikh Raqib, contacted me following the publication of my book in Kurdish through which he read the stories of the Jews and Shaikh Muhammad of Rabatke. He provided more details on the Shaikh. We were told of an old Jewish cemetery in the west of the village, on the road to the Nisira village, called *gilkana jiya* (Kurd., the graves of Jews), indicating that they have lived in Rabatke for a long time. According to the shaikhs and elderly of Rabatke, the shaikh regarded them as subjects of the village, or in fact as complete citizens. His family members used the Arabic word "aṣḥâb," allies, or friends. The choice of the word "friends" is interesting since the Qur'an clearly warns against taking the Jews and the Christians as friends or allies (Surat AL-Maʾidah (the table), verse 51).

The study of the tribal Kurdish society reveals many Kurdish aghas who were greedy, cruel, or tough, in their treatment of their Jewish subjects and protégés, but we also came across Kurdish chieftains who helped and protected their Jewish subjects in a remarkable manner, as shown above.

The Last Chapter of the Jews in Kurdistan

World War I, commonly known as "saferbalek", or general mobilization, shattered the urban Jewish communities. The Jews suffered from famine, arbitrary measures and forceful conscription campaigns. The Jews and Christians, who were *dhimmīs*, paid various taxes other than those paid by Muslim civilians, the most prominent of which was the *jizya*, or poll tax, that the Ottoman Empire abolished in 1855.[86] The new compulsory draft law excluded Christians and Jews, who could pay instead *badal-ʿaskariyya*, a tax exempting them from military service.[87] From 1885 onward, this law was enforced more strictly,[88] although it exempted clerics, cripples and the chronically ill from the payment. In 1909, the Ottomans introduced a new law of compulsory service for every Ottoman citizen from the age of 19. A short time before the beginning of war, the draft age was lowered to 18 although non-Muslim citizens still could be exempt from military service by paying a fee.[89] Most of the Jews preferred to pay the *badal* tax in order to redeem themselves. Only those incapable of paying the tax were drafted into the army.

The Jews, who had never been part of the military before and did not feel any commitment to the government attempted to evade the draft. They either escaped,

seeking shelter in remote villages, far from the hands of the authorities, or paid bribes to postpone recruitment. Many others had been nevertheless drafted, but defected, and the authorities arrested their family members, notably sisters, to put pressure on them to turn themselves in. Still, a considerable number of Jews had been drafted; many were killed or injured and even became prisoners of war. By the end of World War I, most Jewish communities in southeastern Turkey were devastated by the horrors of the war and the massacres of the Christians (Armenians, 1894-96; 1914-18 and Assyrians, 1914-18).

In times of war and uncertainty the Jews tended to immigrate to a safer place. This has been their behavioral pattern. The majority of the Jews of southeastern Turkey immigrated to Palestine either before or after the war. Across the border, in Iraqi Kurdistan, the situation improved after World War I with the British restoring peace and order and extending protection for the minorities. Nevertheless, a growing number of Jews from Iraq immigrated constantly to Palestine, but the effect of the British reign did not last long.

In 1941, the pro-Nazi Rashid ʿAli coup inflamed anti-Semitic riots against Jews in Baghdad, known as the *Farhud*.[90] These were echoed in Kurdish towns with intimidation from instigators who wished to take advantage of the state of emergency, especially on Fridays, following the public prayer. However, sensible local leaders and chieftains usually stopped the deterioration of the situation. The position of the Jews further worsened with the intensifying Arab-Jewish warfare in Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel. The presence of Palestinian refugees and exiles in Iraq, notably the mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini and the participation of Iraqi and Kurdish soldiers in the war in Palestine, increased the level of hatred towards local Jews.[91]

The majority of the Jews of Kurdistan lived in Iraq. Prior to their final mass immigration to Israel during 1951-52, about 25,000 Kurdish Jews had been scattered in Iraq. By then, approximately 8,000-10,000 had already been living in Israel. In Persian Kurdistan, out of 10,330 Jews in 1953, about 6,200 had immigrated to Israel. In southeastern Turkey, as noted above, the numbers of Jews dwindled drastically due to World War I and the massacres, which had a negative effect on the minorities. In 1927, only about 2,700 Jews of all ethnic backgrounds remained in this region.[92]

The Jews of Kurdistan immigrated to Palestine as early as the 16th century. Their last chapter in Kurdistan coincided with the establishment of the Jewish State

(1948). Their last few years were marked by demonstrations (in which "Death to the Jews!" was a popular slogan) against Israel. During the last eleven years of the Jewish presence in Kurdistan, Jews faced raids and instances of tribal intimidation as well as detention and jailing on various 'Zionist' charges. The establishment of the State of Israel was portrayed as a point in time when relations with their neighbors changed even more drastically. The position of the Jews in Iraqi Kurdistan further deteriorated following the war of 1948 between Arab countries and the Jews and after the establishment of the State of Israel. The tension between Muslims and Jews increased as Iraq and several other Arab countries joined in the fighting against the new Jewish State and were subsequently defeated. The hostility against the Jews in the parliament, in the press and in the streets was echoed in investigations and arrest of Jews on a variety of accusations.[93]

Before the emigration, the Jews of Kurdistan came under growing disturbing pressure from their Muslim neighbors and from government agencies. The Jews prepared to leave behind their houses and properties and to immigrate to a country that they hardly knew anything about. The volume of business shrank. Mutual trust, which was necessary for business transactions, evaporated as the Muslims realized that the Jews were going to immigrate. The imminent migration of Kurdish Jews intensified the attempts by Jewish merchants to redeem their debts from business associates. For obvious reasons, not many debtors of Kurdish or Arab origin were willing to pay their debts to Jewish creditors just a short while before the emigration of Jews (after which the debt would be invalid).

This method of selling on credit was rooted in the Kurdish tribal setting and was one component of the complex relationship between Jewish traders and Kurdish tribesmen. This approach was partly related to the need of Jewish peddlers to sell all their goods while roaming in the villages, and was partly based on the lack of money in the tribal society. This method was also part of the economic dominance and exploitation of Jewish subjects within the tribal Kurdish society. The Muslim population was well aware of the pending emigration of the Jews, and as a result, many Jews were not able to sell their assets at all, or sold them at a very low price. Kurdish buyers exploited the situation and bought estates at a considerable reduction. Yoseph Gamlieli sold his vineyards for 200 Iraqi dinars, instead of a reported value of one thousand dinars. In March 1951, before the start of the emigration, the Iraqi government decreed a '*tajmīd*,' (Arab., freezing) of the assets, estates, and property of

the Jews emigrating from Iraq. This decree made many wealthy Jews, who had been registered for emigration, penniless. Nevertheless, a small number of Jews were able to bypass the decree.

On 9 March 1950, the Iraqi Parliament passed the law allowing the Jews to emigrate with the proviso that they renounce their Iraqi citizenship. Later, the Parliament also passed law no. 5/1951 freezing all of the assets of the Jews.[94] The giving up of the Iraqi citizenship was unparalleled and resulted in the mass registration for "Aliya" or immigration to Israel. Between 1949 and 1952, 123,371 Iraqi Jews, including all of the Jews of Kurdistan, were airlifted to Israel in what became to be known as "Operation Ezra and Nehemiah."[95] By 1952, practically all the Jews of Iraqi Kurdistan had immigrated to the State of Israel, thus ending the long historical chapter of Jews in the Kurdish lands. Dreams and prayers carried in their hearts for centuries were about to be fulfilled.[96]

In Israel, 67 years following the mass migration, most of the Jews who came originally from Kurdistan had passed away. Only handful of elderly Jews remain, most of whom have transmitted the Kurdish culture to their children and grandchildren. In Jerusalem and other communities throughout Israel there are hundreds of thousands of 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation offspring of Kurdish origin, who are well versed in the Kurdish heritage, music and cuisine and express keen sentiments regarding their Kurdish identity.[97]

Endnotes

[1] The text of Benjamin of Tudela is available on the internet, as are many classic writings. http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/mhl/mhl20.htm.

[2] Consult Elkan Nathan Adler, Jewish travelers in the middle Ages, Dover Publications, New York, 1930.

[3] Note that most of the subjects in this article have received a wider and lengthy treatment in the following books and articles of mine. Many topics that are treated henceforth are based on hundreds of interviews conducted with elderly Jewish Kurdish informants, within the framework of an oral history project designed to unveil the history of the Jews and the tribal Kurdish society. In the endnotes henceforth they are indicated with the full name and a number sign (#) such as "Moshe Yoseph Mizrahi (I#24)," i.e. informant no. 24. For more details on the subjects discussed in this article, see Mordechai Zaken respectively as follows, “Tribal Chieftains and their Jewish Subjects in Kurdistan: A Comparative Study in Survival,” PhD Thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2003); The Jews of Kurdistan and their Tribal Chieftains: A Study in Survival, Second, Revised Ebook Edition, Jerusalem, 2015; and Jewish Subjects and their Tribal Chieftains in Kurdistan A Study in Survival, in Jewish Identities in a Changing World, vol. 9, Brill, 2007. One may also consult the following translations into Arabic and Kurdish, *Yahud Kurdistan wa-ru'as'uhum al-qabaliyun: Dirasa fi fan al-baqa'*. Transl., Suʿad M. Khader; Reviewers: ʿAbd al-Fatah Ali Yihya and Farast Mirʿi; the Center for Academic Research, Beirut, 2013 (Arabic); D. Moredixai Zakin, *Culekekany Kurdistan*, Sulaimaniya and Erbil, 2015 (Sorani), as well as partial translations of the book, "Jews, Kurds and Arabs, between 1941 and 1952", translated by Dr. Amr Taher Ahmed into Kurmanji, Metîn no. 148, October 2006: 98-123; "Juifs, Kurdes et Arabs, entre 1941 et 1952," Etudes Kurdes, no. 7, May 2005: 7-45. See also Erich Brauer, The Jews of Kurdistan, Raphael Patai (ed.), Wayne State University Press, 1993; Yig'al Moshe Israel, Yig'al Baldgrin and Zion Suleiman, Across the river from where our ancestors came: the Jews in Urfa and southeastern Turkey, their immigration to Eretz Israel and their assimilation there, published by the Rishon Lezion Museum, 2013 (Heb.); Ora Shwartz-Be’eri, The Jews of Kurdistan: Daily Life, Customs, Arts and

Crafts, UPNE, 2000; Barukh, Yitzhak, Hessne, Jerusalem, 2012 (Heb.); David Salman, I followed you, Jerusalem. (Heb.); The Tells of Sabtuna [nickname for Grandma]: Simha Salha Levi, 1920-2001, Jerusalem, 2014 (Heb). The last three books in Hebrew represent a new genre of books written either by Kurdish Jews or family members and present the life story of individuals and families in both Kurdistan and Israel.

[4] Simon Hopkins, "The Jews of Kurdistan in Eretz Israel and their Language," *Peʿamim*, 56 (1993):50-74 (Heb.), available on line as well: https://www.ybz.org.il/_Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/Article_56.4(1).pdf.

[5] An excellent book entitled *the Jews of Kurdistan, Lifestyle, Tradition and Art*, Israel Museum, 1981-82 (Heb.) was printed following a special exhibition on the same subject by the Israel Museum. Hebrew readers may find a short article by Shimon Marcus, The Jews of Kurdistan, *Maḥanayim*, 1964 (93-94).

[6] Claude Cahen, "Dhimma," EI^2; G. Vajda, "Ahl al-Kitab." EI^2; Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (eds.), Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Function of the Plural Society, 2 vols, London and New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982.

[7] Consult Zaken's PhD thesis (2003), which compares the experience of the Jews and the Assyrians of Kurdistan.

[8] James Claudius Rich, Narrative of a residence in Koordistan, and on the site of ancient Nineveh; with journal of a voyage down the Tigris to Bagdad, and an account of a visit to Shirauz and Persepolis, ed. by his widow, London, 1836: 111. Rich (1787–1820) was a British business agent, traveler and antiquarian scholar. In 1820 he undertook an extensive tour of the Chaldean villages in the north and visited as well in the region of Sulaimaniya. The narrative of this journey, which contained the first scientific observation of the topography and geography of the region, was published by his widow Mary Mackintosh Rich.

[9] N. Albalah in *O.W.* vol. 9 (1909): 579, as quoted in Abraham Ben-Yaacob, The Jewish Communities of Kurdistan, 2nd and rev. ed., Jerusalem, 1981: 113. (Heb.)

[10] Reuben Bar-Amon, The City of Sulaimāniya, *Hitḥadshut*, vol. 5, 1985: 34 (Heb.); consult also Basile Nikitine, "La féodalité kurde," Revue du Monde Musulman, vol.50, 2nd trimester (1925): 1-26.

[11] Qiran (قران), also qerun or kran, was a currency of Iran between 1825 and 1932.

[12] Abraham Jacob Braver, Roads Dust: vol. I, Tel-Aviv, Am Oved, 1944 (Heb.): 217-218.

[13] Ben-Yaacob (1981) named more than 200 villages in which Jews lived.

[14] A good description of rural life in this region is Armenian village life before 1914. See Susie Hoogasian Villa and Mary Kilbourne Matossian, Armenian Village Life before 1914, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982.

[15] For this and other remarks related to Walter Joseph Fischel and Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel consult the following items by W.J. Fischel: The Jews of Kurdistan: A first hand report on a Near Eastern mountain community, 1949 (henceforth I used a web version); Unknown Jews in unknown lands: The travels of Rabi David D'beth Hillel (1824-1832), 1972: 71-82; "Journey to Kurdistan, Persia and Baghdad, from the book of travels of Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel," Sinai, 1939: 218-54 (Heb.); See also an English version, "The Jews of Kurdistan a Hundred Years ago: A Traveler's Record," Jewish Social Studies, vol. 6, no. 3 (1944): 195-226. On Walter Joseph Fischel, one of the noted scholars of oriental Jewry of his time, see http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/fischel/.

[16] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema_Yisrael.

[17] Braver: 218.

[18] For a good treatment of the social organization in Kurdistan see Fredrik Barth, Principles of Social Organization in Southern Kurdistan. Oslo: Brodene Jorgensen A/S Boktrykkeri, 1953.

[19] Consult Martin Van Bruinessen, Agha, Shaikh and State: On the Social and Political Organization in Kurdistan, Rijswijk, revised edition, 1992, for a variety of subjects related to the tribal life and codes and the social structure within the tribe. There is also a photocopied version in the list of publications of the author: http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/Bruinessen_ASS_Zed.pdf.
For a general reference on the tribe and tribesmen see M.D. Sahlins, Tribesmen, New Jersey, 1968.

[20] Benjamin II, I. J. (Benjamin the Second, henceforth Benjamin II), Eight Years in Asia and Africa, from 1846 to 1855, Hanover, 1859/1863: 92-93.

[21] On the economic benefits of the landlord, such as unpaid labor, in these regions see Cyrus Salmanzadeh, Agricultural change and rural society in Southern Iran, Wisbech [Cambridgeshire]: Middle East and North African Studies Press, 198: 114-115. For an excellent treatment of the landlord-peasant relations see Ann K. S. Lambton, Landlord and Peasant in Persia. London: Oxford University Press, 1953.

[22] According to the Shīʿite concept of *najis* or *najāsa* (ritual impurity), any contact with Jews or other infidels, animals or impure items, disqualifies a Shīʿī believer from performing his religious duties unless he undergoes an elaborate ritual of purification. The proximity to Persia may have influenced the practice that was dominant in the Shīʿite state, see W. J. Fischel, 1972: 76-77.

[23] Fischel 1939: 239-240; Bernard Lewis, The Jews of Islam. Princeton University Press, 1984: 33; see also ṭahāra, EI^1.

[24] Nikitine Basil and E. B. Soane, "The tale of Suto and Tato," BSOAS, vol. 3 (1923-25): 69-106.

[25] Ibid., 71.

[26] Ibid., 75.

[27] The concept of "Kafir-Kuşt" was related to the Presbyterian missionary Reverend Roger C. Cumberland who was murdered in Dohuk, in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, in June 1938. The informant called him "Mr. Cumber" (cutting the surname into two syllables instead of three) saying he was hospitable and gracious, and used this concept of "Kafir-Kuşt," explaining that killing of infidels, or of Jews and Christians, may fall under this category. See for instance: https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-433010713/a-death-in-dohuk-roger-c-cumberland-mission-and; http://www.reformiert-online.net/aktuell/details.php?id=1233&lg=span.

[28]The word denoting rob or robbery in Neo-Aramaic is "shlakha," i.e., to take off (clothes, shoes), since the raiders would often rob the clothes of the victims as well.
[29] The concept of "*Kafir-Kuşt*" was related by one informant in reference to the murder of the Christian missionary Roger C. Cumberland in Dohuk, in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, in June 1938. The informant who used this concept explained that killing of infidels, or of Jews and Christians, may fall under this category.
[30] Mordechai Edelman was a Lithuanian scholar and writer who became fascinated with the world of ancient religious books and the study of Theology. He visited both Iraq and Kurdistan in the pursuit of this task and notified of the state of the Jews of Kurdistan. http://www.tidhar.tourolib.org/tidhar/view/1/152 (Heb.); Mordechai Edelman, Journeys in Assyria and Babylon, *Hatzfira*, year 16, 1888 (Heb.).
[31] Consult W.J. Fischel in all versions on the subject (1939, 1944, 1949, and 1972).
[32] Mordechai Bibi, Zionist pioneering underground in Iraq, 1998, part 1: 449 (Heb.) quotes a report by Yitzhak Shvaiki dated 30 January 1945.
[33] Reuben Bar-Amon, 1985: 32-34 (Heb.).
[34] *Bazirgan* (Kur.), *bazaar*=market; *gan* is a suffix forming nouns and adjectives. *Bazirgan* means a merchant or a prosperous person. See also E. R. Leach, Social and Economic Organisation of the Rowanduz Kurds, London: The London School of Economics and Political Science, 1940: 42-44. A detailed version of this topic is available in M. Zaken, "Central institutions and commerce in the Jewish community of Zakho," *Hitḥadshut*, vol. 5 (1985): 11-22 (Heb.).
[35] Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, Four Centuries of Modern Iraq. Oxford, 1953, Reprint 1968: 203.
[36] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millet_(Ottoman_Empire); Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System," In Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, vol.1:69–90; "Millet", Bruce Masters, Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire, Ed. Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Alan Masters (InfoBase Publishing, 2009): 383.
[37] On Modern Iraq see Phebe Marr, The Modern History of Iraq. Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1985.
[38] Thomas Bois, The Kurds, translated by M. W. M. Welland, Beirut: 1966: 63.
[39] Baruch Rand and Barbara Rush, Around the World with Jewish Folktales: Jews of Kurdistan. Toledo (Ohio): Toledo Board of Jewish Education, 1978: 9.
[40] A.H. Layard, Nineveh and Babylon, 2 vols., London: John Murray, 1853, 2nd ed. 1867: 383-384.
[41] W.R. Hay, Two Years in Kurdistan: Experiences of a Political Officer 1918-1920. London: Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd, 1921: 86-87.
[42] Martin van Bruinessen:18-19.
[43] Fischel, The Jews of Kurdistan: A first hand report, 1949.
[44] M. Sykes, The Caliph's Last Heritage: A short History of the Turkish Empire. London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1915: 431-32.
[45] *Dīr* (pl., *adyār*) in Arabic means a monastery or convent; in names of places, *dīr* indicates that Christians dwelled in that place.
[46] Henry Field, "Jews of Sandur, Iraq," Asia 37 (1937): 709-10. One of the informants from Sandur who was particularly valuable was Salih Rahamim (I#37).
[47] *Yeshiva* is a Jewish high-learning institution focusing on the study of traditional religious texts, primarily the Talmud and Torah.
[48] Meir Benayahu, "Rabbi Samuel Barzani, the exile arch of Kurdistan," *Sefunot*, 9 (1965): 23-125 (Heb.). On the internal position of the Jews in previous centuries see Jacob Mann, "Documents concerning the Jews in Mosul and Kurdistan," in his Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature, vol. I: 477-549. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1931; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication of America, 1935. Reprinted, New York: 1972.
[49] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema_Yisrael.
[50] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanandaj.
[51] Geoffrey Khan, The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Sanandaj, Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, p. 1.
[52] W.J. Fischel, 1972: 78; Rich, Narrative of a residence in Koordistan, 1836: 111-112; Paul, J. Magnarella, "A note on the aspects of social life among the Jewish Kurds of Sanandaj, Iran," The Jewish Journal of Sociology, vol. 11, no.1. June 1969.
[53] George Harris, Iraq: Its People, Its Society, It Culture. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1958: 28.
[54] Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, "Epistles from the communities of Hamadan, Urmia and Barfarush," in *Sefunot*, the annual book of research of the Jewish communities in the East, Ben-Zvi Institute, 1964: 43-85. (Heb.)
[55] Benjamin II 1859: 92-93, Fischel, First-Hand Report, 1949; During the 1930s Mir Muhammad (known also as Mir-i Kor, or the 'Blind King,' *kor*=blind in Kurdish), the leader of the principality of Soran, conquered most urban centers in (today's) northern Iraq and even minted his own coins, a sign of an official rule in the Islamic domain. His cruelty towards the Jews and Jewish communities had been reported. In 1837, he was killed by the Turkish authorities in the midst of a Turkish campaign to regain central control over the Kurdish principalities. For more on Mir Kor, see David McDowall, A Modern History of the Kurds, London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1997, Van Bruinessen, 1992, and consult the following blog as well:https://lepzerin.wordpress.com/2012/03/19/the-revolt-of-mir-muhammad/.
[56] Rich, Narrative of a residence in Koordistan, 1836: 89-90, 95-96.
[57] Benjamin II 1859: 65, 70; 77, 89-92; also consult Fischel 1939: 227, 229, 222-223; and Ben-Yaacob 1981: 142-143. The chaos that was resulted from the new Turkish policy of re-centralization attracted petty chieftains who were eager to fill up the political vacuum, causing more tribal feuds and disorder.

Van Bruinessen 1978: 220-221, 288; and Tom Nieuwenhuis, Politics and Society in Early Modern Iraq: Mamluk Pashas, Tribal Shaykhs and Local Rule Between 1802 and 1831 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981): 106.

[58] One of the proofs for these transfers is the conflict between the Jewish communities in the years to come, as the community of this Nisibin demanded the Torah Scroll back from the Jewish community of Diyarbakir.

[59] Benjamin II, 1859: 91-92.

[60] Benjamin II 1859: 90.

[61] On the Blind Agha, see Van Bruinessen, Agha Shaikh and State: 74, 176, and 230.

[62] A. H. Stern, Dawnings of Light in the East. London: Charles H. Purday, 1854: 225.

[63] Hay 1921:191.

[64] Stern 1854: 225.

[65] Eli Binyamin, "The Formation of the Jewish Community in Amadiya," Hitḥadshut, 5 (1985): 25 (Heb.).

[66] See the introduction above and Zaken (2003, 2007, 2015), which narrates instances of robbing the Torah Scrolls of Arbil Jewish community. Ben-Yaacob 1981: 79; Ben-Zvi 1951: 9; Benjamin II 1859: 59, 65, 70, 89-90, 91-92.

[67] Jewish Encyclopedia: 586.

[68] Mordechai Edelman

[69] Henry Binder, Au Kurdistan, en Mésopotamie et en Perse (Mission scientifique du Ministerè de l'Instruction Publique), Paris, Maison Quantin, 1887:197.

[70] This letter is quoted in Ben-Yaacob 1981: 209-211. Originally, it appeared in an Indian (Calcutta) Jewish weekly, *Magid Yesharim*, 6th year, no. 9, 1895. In 1895, pogroms occurred against the Jews of Sulaimaniya. Jews were killed and tortured; Jewish women were violated, and stores were looted. Ben-Yaacob 1981: 111-113.

[71] *ʿAraq* (Arabic, i.e., perspiration) is an alcoholic spirit based on anise. It is a clear, colorless, unsweetened anise-flavored alcoholic drink. This is the traditional and popular alcoholic beverage in the Arab world, especially in the Levant or the Mashriq and also in the Maghreb, as well in Iran and Turkey.

[72] Ben-Yaacob 1981: 111-12, based on three letters from the Jewish community of Baghdad to the Jewish community in India, printed in the weekly *Magid Yesharim*, Calcutta, sixth year, vol. 34 (1895): 36, 40.

[73] Military Report on Iraq (Area 9) 1929: 167, 232.

[74] Consult chapters four and five in Martin van Bruinessen's, Agha, Shaikh and State, 1992.

[75] Consult W. A. (William Ainger) Wigram, The Cradle of Mankind: life in eastern Kurdistan, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1914: 138-9.

[76] Ibid., 143-4.

[77] Ibid., 164; 177-9; 313-14.

[78] Dana Adams Schmidt, Journey among Brave Men. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1964: 45. For an excellent treatment of Barzani's career see Michael M. Gunter, "Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq: The Intelligence Factor," International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, vol. 7: 465-74.

[79] Majid and Hertzel Gabbai (members of the Khawaja Khinno household of Aqra) (I#9&10)

[80] Majid and Hertzel Gabbai (I#9&10).

[81] See Zaken (2003, 2007, 2015); Shlomo Nakdimon, The Hope that crashed - The Israeli-Kurdish Connection 1963-1975, 1996 (Heb.); consult the following three reports in the Hebrew press: "I met Mustafa Barzani in the eagles' nest in Kurdistan," *Yediʿot Ahronot*, 12 April, 1991 (Heb.); "The Kurdish people: Simple, proud and experience in suffering," *Yediʿot Ahronot*, 7 April 1991(Heb.);" Gandi [nickname of General Rehavam Ze'evi] in the land of the Kurds," *Maʿariv*, 16 May 1991 (Heb.).

[82] On the Israeli involvement in Kurdistan see Eliezer (Gaizi) Tzafrir, *Ana Kurdi*, a war novel and an escape in Kurdistan, Tel-Aviv, 1998 (Heb.); Sh. Nakdimon, The hope that collapsed, The Israeli-Kurdish connection 1963-1975, Tel-Aviv, 1996 (Heb.); Shmuel Segev, The Iranian Triangle: The Secret relations between Israel-Iran- and the Unites States, Tel-Aviv, 1981 (Heb.); M. Zaken 1991 (Heb.).

[83] Moshe Yitzhak Binyamin (I#3).

[84] In 2014, a great grandchild of Shaikh Muhammad who initially contacted me through the internet told me many more details about his grandfather adding that the shaikh and his family regarded the Jews as subjects of the village, or in fact as complete citizens. They used the Arabic word "aṣḥâb," allies, or friends, an interesting choice of word, because Jews and Christians are condemned in the Qur'an, as can be read in Surat AL-Maʾidah (the table), verse 51: O you who have faith, do not take the Jews and the Christians as friends/allies. They are friends of each other. And he amongst you that turns to them for friendship is one of them. Indeed, Allah guides not a people unjust.

[85] Moshe Yoseph Mizrah (I#24.)

[86] Lewis (1984: 14-16, 65-66, 195 n.9, 197 n.24) and A. Norman Stillman, The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book. Philadelphia, 1979: 95.

[87] A person who paid *badal ʿaskari* to be redeemed from military service was known as badalchi. Ci (pronounced chi) is a suffix used in Turkish forming nouns indicating occupation, association or belief of a person.

[88] Nelida Fuccaro, The Other Kurds: Yazidis in Colonial Iraq. London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999: 49; Gerard Russell, Heirs to Forgotten Kingdoms. Simon & Schuster, 2014; Birgül Açikyildiz, The Yezidis: The History of a Community, Culture and Religion. I.B.Tauris, 2014.

[89] Joseph Meir, Social and cultural development of the Jews of Iraq, from 1830 until our time. Tel-Aviv: Naharayyim, 1989: 401 (Heb.).

[90] Edwin Black, The Farhud: Roots of the Arab-Nazi Alliance in the Holocaust, 2010; Edwin Black, "A Farhud legacy of hate," Jerusalem Post, 16 December, 2010; Abraham H. Miller, "Remembering the Farhud," FrontPageMagazine.com, June 01, 2006; Zvi Elpeleg, The Grand Mufti: Haj Amin al-Hussaini, Founder of the Palestinian National Movement, trans. David Harvey, London: Frank Cass, 1993; Klaus Gensicke, The Mufti of Jerusalem and the Nazis: The Berlin Years. London: Valentine, 2011; N. Qazzaz, "The influence of Nazism in Iraq and the anti- Jewish activity, 1933-1941," Peʿamim 29, 1987:48-71 (Heb.); Nissim Qazzaz, the Jews of Iraq in the 20th century, Jerusalem, 1991 (Heb.).

[91] A telling letter from the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Hussaini to Hitler, in Majid Khadduri, Independent Iraq 1932-1958, Oxford Press, 1960: 378-380.

[92] According to the population estimates by Andree's "Zur Volkskunde der Juden" (pub Leipzig, 1881), there were 25,000 or so Jews across Kurdistan in the 1940s. The distribution of the Kurdish Jews in Northern Iraq by 1947 is based mainly on the Iraqi statistics: 3,109 in Arbil province, 4,042 in Kirkuk, 10,345 in Mosul, 2,271 in Sulemaniya, and 2,851 in Diyala province, the total of 22,618. The estimates of the Jewish population in southeastern Turkey are more complicated, since they came from different ethnic traditions, Arabic, Spanish, Ladino, Turkish, and Kurdish or Aramaic. Most of the Jews of Urfa immigrated to Palestine already in 1896, following the massacres of the Armenians in 1895. The Jews of Jezira had left by 1924. Similarly, most of the Jews of Diyarbakir, Mardin, Bashqala, Van, Julamerk and Nisibin had left by the early 20th century. See also Amnon Cohen, "Immigration of Jews to Palestine from Persian Kurdistan and East Turkey after the First World War," Peʿamim, 5 (1980): 87-93 (Heb.).

[93] Moti Zaken, "The Lost from the Land of Ashur- the Migrations from Kurdistan and Settlement in Eretz-Israel," in *ʿEdot-ʿEdut le-Israel*, Prof. Avshalom Mizrachi and Rabbi Aharon Ben-David, eds., Netanya, 2001: The Association for Society and Culture, Documentation and Research: 340-73 (Heb.)

[94] Law No. 1 of 1950, entitled "Supplement to Ordinance Cancelling Iraqi Nationality," in fact deprived Jews of their Iraqi nationality. Section 1 stipulated that "the Council of Ministers may cancel the Iraqi nationality of the Iraqi Jew who willingly desires to leave Iraq..." Law No. 5 of 1951 entitled "A law for the Supervision and Administration of the Property of Jews who have Forfeited Iraqi Nationality" also deprived them of their property. Section 2(a) "freezes" Jewish property (Official Iraqi Gazette, 9 March, 10 March 1951, English version, p.17).

[95] Based on official census; yearbooks of the Jewish communities: The Jewish case before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1946; J. B. Schechtman, On Wings of Eagles: The flight, exodus and homecoming of Oriental Jewry, N.Y. Yosseloff, 1961.

[96] In 1962, an Israeli author of Polish origin, Yoseph Erlich, tried to recapture the experiences of their immigration and acclimatization of rural Kurdish Jews in Israel during the first decade for their arrival into Israel. He published a dramatic novel called "He-harariyim" (i.e., the mountaineers), see Y. Erlich, the mountaineers, Tel-Aviv, Am-Oved, 1961 (Heb.).

[97]One must explore the web; watch YouTube videos, read blogs and scroll through web sites to get the impression of the Kurdish flavor among the descendants of the Jewish community from Kurdistan in Israel today.