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THE JEWS OF KURDISTAN A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

BY WALTER J. FISCHEL

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THE JEWS OF KURDISTAN A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

A Traveler's Record

By WALTER J. FISCHEL

There is hardly a people in the Islamic East whose origin and history, language and customs are so little known and explored as those of the Kurds.[1] One has only to gaze upon the massive, rugged hills of their mountain home, or traverse the ravines and gorges, the rapid torrents and swollen streams, to understand how Nature herself has rendered that region an impregnable fortress, and has conspired to shroud its inhabitants in obscurity.

Kurdistan is today divided politically between three states: Iran, Turkey, and Iraq.[2] It embraces an incredible variety of sects, races and nationalities. Besides the Kurdish tribes, who form the bulk of the population, there live various Arab and Turkish tribes (Circassians, Turkomens), and Christians of every denomination (Nestorians, Assyrians, Jacobites, Armenians, etc.), not to speak of the so-called Mandaeans and the sect of the Yezidis, or Devil-worshippers.[3] Side by side with them, from Mosul in the west to Urmia and Maragha in the east, are scattered communities of Jews.

[1] See the excellent survey by B. Minorsky in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam, s. v.* Kurds, Kurdistan. Cf. also Cumberland, Roger C., "The Kurds" in *Moslem World,* vol. xvi (1926), 150-57.

[2] There is also a widespread dispersion of Kurds over many parts of the Middle East; cf. Driver, G. R., "The Dispersion of the Kurds in Ancient Times" in *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society,* 1921, p. 563-72.

[3] Among recent works on Kurdistan the following are of special interest: Wigram, W., *The Cradle of Mankind. Life in Eastern Kurdistan* (London 1914); Hay, W. R., *Two Years in Kurdistan. Experiences of a Political Officer, 1918-1920* (London 1921); Luke, H. C., *Mosul and its Minorities* (London 1925); Soane, E. B., *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise* (Boston 1926); Malik, Yusuf, *The British Betrayal of the Assyrians* (Chicago 1936); Hamilton, A. W., *Road through Kurdistan* (London 1937).

How and when they came there is a mystery.[4] They are, indeed, among the least known and least explored of all the "remnants of Israel." Nothing is heard of them in historical records until so comparatively late a date as 1146/7, when they suddenly leap into prominence in connection with the appearance at Amadia of the false messiah, David Alroy.[5] The great Jewish travelers of the Middle Ages seem somehow to have passed them by. Benjamin of Tudela (c.1170), for instance, contents himself with a mere hearsay report that some 100 Jewish communities reside in the Hafton mountains;[6] while Petahia of Ratisbon (1173) seems to have visited only the larger, peripheral cities of Arbil and Kirkuk, and not to have penetrated into the interior.[7] The same

[4] The Kurdish Jews claim to be descendants of the exiles from Israel and Judah. The Aramaic Targum of Onkelos (4th cent. C. E.) identifies Ararat, where Noah's ark rested, with the mountains of Kurdistan; cf. also Josephus, *Antiquities,* 193. This is not entirely arbitrary, since the Hebrew Ararat is the Assyrian *Urartu,* which denotes Armenia. In Talmud, Baba Bathra 91a a land of כרדו is mentioned, and in B. Yebamoth 16 a the קרדויים or קרתויים are named as inhabiting Kurdistan; cf. Obermeyer, *op. cit.,* p. 131-34; Driver, G. R., "The Name Kurd and its Philological Connections," in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1923, 393-403.

[5] The main sources on David Alroy are: Benjamin of Tudela, Itinerary, ed. M. Adler (London 1907), p. 77-81; Joseph ha-Kohen, *Emek ha-Bacha, and an Arabic fragment by Samuel b. Abbas,* ed. M. Wiener (Leipzig 1858), p. 169; Ibn Verga, Solomon, *Shebet Yehudah,* ed. M. Wiener (Hannover, 1855/56), p. 50; Mendelsohn, S., *The Jews of Asia* (London 1920), p. 181-203. Cf. also *Revue des études juives,* vol. lxxxvii (1929), 347.

[6] ed. Adler, p. 77. A strange confusion still prevails among scholars concerning Benjamin's journey through Kurdistan and Persia. Anyone who knows the terrain or studies a map will see at once that he could not possibly have penetrated into Persia or into the mountainous region of Kurdistan. Gruenhut's view that he made his headquarters at Ispahan and thence took excursions to Shiraz, Khiva and Samarkand betrays only a woeful ignorance of geography. Even today, the trip to any one of these three places would take several weeks; seven hundred years ago it would have been a matter of months. A. T. Wilson is therefore undoubtedly correct when he concludes, in his *Early Spanish and Portuguese Travellers in Persia* (London 1927), p. 4-7, that Benjamin did not go far beyond Baghdad, where he is known to have resided for some time. Here, in all likelihood, he compiled the latter part of his narrative, significantly divided into "things seen" and "things heard." As Wilson says: "The almost complete absence of the smaller places and personal names so fully recorded up to this point of his narrative as well as the comparatively vague unhistorical and unscientific character of the Trans-Tigris section allow of scarcely a doubt as to the second-hand method now used to supplement the first-hand observations of the earlier narrative. . . . Indeed it can hardly be doubted that R. Benjamin did not himself visit Persia . . . he is no traveller in Persia." Cf. also Borchardt, P., "Der Reiseweg des R. Benjamin von Tudela in Mesopotamien und Persien" in *Jahrbuch der Judisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft,* 1924, p. 20; Beazley, C. R., *The Dawn of Modern Geography* (Oxford 1906), vols. ii-iii.

[7] Cf. Gruenhut, L., *Die Reisebeschreibung von Benjamin von Tudela* (Jerusalem 1903), pt. ii, p. 24.

is true also of Judah Harizi, in the thirteenth century (1238)[8] and of the Yemenite traveler and poet, Zechariah ben Saadia al-Dahiri in the sixteenth.[9] True, the communities have been visited during the past three hundred years by sundry "messengers from Zion"—eager spirits who braved the hazards of travel in order to solicit funds for religious and charitable institutions in the Holy Land. But there is no evidence that any of these intrepid voyagers left a written record; at least, no such records have survived.[10]

The Travels of David d'Beth Hillel

It was against this background of vague reports and romantic rumor that there appeared in Madras, early in 1832, the following curious advertisement:

> "The Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel begs to announce his design of publishing his travels from Jerusalem through Arabia and Koordistan, part of Persia and India to Madras. He purposes to give an account of the manners and customs of the places which he has visited, their languages, coins, weights, measures, etc., with a vocabulary of words most useful for travelers in five languages, viz. Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Hindoostany and English. He thinks also he is able to throw some light upon the existence and present state of the long lost ten tribes."[11]

This intriguing announcement was followed in short order by the

[8] Graetz's contention (*Geschichte der Juden,* Leipzig 1897 ff., vol. vi, p. 191) that Harizi penetrated into Persia is untenable.

[9] This author's work, entitled *Sefer Hamusar,* is available only in manuscript. There are copies in the Hebrew University Library, the Institute of Jewish Medieval Poetry, and in the private possession of certain Yemenite Jews in Jerusalem. Cf. Sassoon, *Ohel David,* vol. ii, p. 1021-33 (No. 995); selected chapters have been published by H. Brody in *Matmonei Mistarim* (Cracow 1894), p. 9-11, 20-26; by Z. Kehaty in *Zion,* vol. iii (1929), 43-53; J. Schirman in *Yedioth ha-Machon le-Heker ha-Shirah* (Jerusalem 1936), p. 186, and by the present writer in *Tarbiz,* vol. vi (1935), p. 177-81 and *Sinai,* vol. iii (1940), p. 231, n. 26.

[10] One of the earliest *shelihim* to Persia was Baruch Gad, who left Jerusalem in 1646 and after his return home circulated fantastic stories about the B'nei Mosheh ("Children of Moses") whom he claimed to have met.

An interesting account of a *shaliah's* journey to Kurdistan and Persia in 1859 has been published by A. Yaari in *Sinai,* vol. iv (1941), No. 46 ff. This traveler, who hailed from Safed but whose name is no longer known, also visited many Jewish communities in Syria and Mesopotamia. Although his account adds little to our knowledge, it provides a useful check on both earlier and later descriptions.

[11] *Travels,* p. vii.

publication in that same city of a singular and unusual volume entitled: *The Travels of Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel: from Jerusalem, through Arabia, Koordistan, Part of Persia, and India to Madras.*

Issued in a private edition of only 300 copies, the volume is today a collector's item. Most of those who subscribed to it were British Colonial officials[12] who, when transferred, usually left their books behind. Consequently, it is not surprising that only a few copies have reached Europe and America, and that it has been almost completely overlooked by Jewish scholars and bibliographers.[13]

Not until a few years ago was anything known concerning the identity of the author. One of the earliest references to him in a European language appears in an article published in 1837 in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* where a curious incident is reported in connection with his return journey from India to Cairo.[14] Another allusion, dating from the following year, comes from the famous explorer and scholar,

[12] A list of them, arranged according to "Madras and its stations" and "Bombay and its stations," is attached to the book on p. vii-ix.

[13] It is not mentioned in the standard works of Zunz, Steinschneider, Eisenstein and E. N. Adler dealing with Jewish geographical literature, and only its title is recorded in Roehricht's classic *Bibliotheca Geographica Palestinae.* The Catalogue of the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition (London 1887) lists it among works dealing with the Beni Israel, while the *Jewish Encyclopedia* describes it inaccurately as the first work of a Jew published in India, and dismisses it, with equal disregard of fact, as an account of travels through that country, "but otherwise of little importance." The Union Catalogue registers only three copies in the United States, viz. in the libraries of the Hebrew Union College, the University of Chicago and the Oriental American Collection of Yale University respectively. (Through the courtesy of the librarian, Mr. Walter Rothman, the first-named of these copies was placed at the writer's disposal.) In England there are two copies, in the British Museum and in the library of the late David S. Sassoon, respectively.

Within forty years of its appearance, the book had already become rare in India itself; for in 1872 the editor of *Mebasser,* a Judaeo-Arabic periodical of Calcutta, was obliged to appeal to his readers for assistance in locating a copy. In Europe it was, of course, even more scarce, as is shown by a Hebrew letter published in *Ha-Maggid,* vol. xx, No. 23 (1876), in which Ephraim Deinard of Kovno, the famous bibliophile, is asked by Baer Goldberg to find him a copy since the only one in Europe of which he has knowledge, *viz.,* that owned by the French scholar Joseph Derenbourg, is unavailable to him.

A Hebrew translation of Rabbi David's chapter on Palestine and Syria was published by A. Yaari in *Sinai,* vol. ii (1939), 24-53, while the sections on Kurdistan, Mesopotamia and Persia were rendered by the present writer, ib., vol. iii (1940), 218-54.

[14] Cf. "Orientalistische Justiz aus Kahira," in *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums,* No. 77 (28th September, 1837), p. 307-08. For reference to this publication, cf. (Mrs.) S. Levi, of Jerusalem, *Bamishor,* vol. i (1940), 5.

Edward Robinson, who mentions a certain "Hillel from East India" as one of his two Jewish guides during a visit to Jerusalem. This Hillel, he adds, was the author of "a book full of exaggerated descriptions of Jerusalem."[15] The first Jewish scholar to furnish substantial particulars about the life of our author and to utilize his volume for purposes of historical investigation was the late David S. Sassoon, who published an analysis of it from a copy in his own possession.[16]

That our author hailed from Europe is obvious; in the signature to his Preface he expressly describes himself as "born in Europe and established in Safed near Jerusalem." That he came from the eastern portion of the continent is equally clear; his method of transliterating and pronouncing Hebrew words points to a Lithuanian origin,[17] while his frequent comparisons of climatic conditions in Oriental countries with those in Poland and Russia afford yet a further proof of the same fact.[18] As a matter of fact, we now know for certain that he was born in Vilna, a descendant of Hillel ben Naphtali Herz, author of the famous *Beth Hillel* (Dyrhenfurt 1691), a commentary on the fourth section of the *Shulhan Aruch,* and that he went as a young man (perhaps at the age of fourteen) to Constantinople and thence to Safed, settling in the latter city in 1815, along with other pupils of the Vilna Gaon.[19] However, he did not remain there long. In 1824 he started his long journey through Palestine and Syria, penetrating in that and the following year into Kurdistan and Persia, spending a year in Babylon, visiting almost every larger Jewish community in Mesopotamia, and finally reaching Bushir

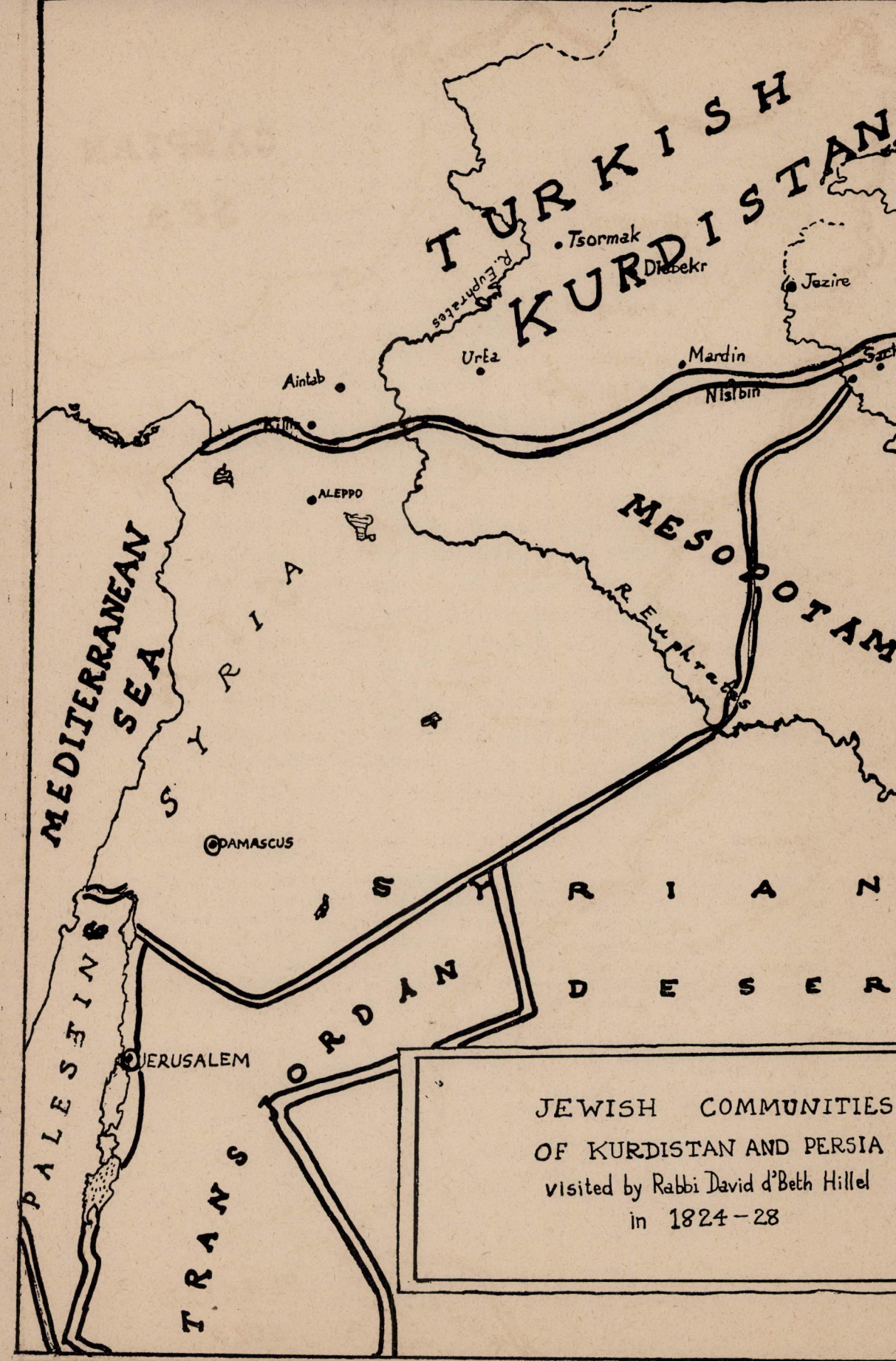
[15] Robinson, E., *Biblical Researches in Palestine. A Journal of Travels in the year 1838* (Boston 1856), vol. i, p. 353.

[16] See his *Ohel David: Catalogue of Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts* (Oxford 1932), vol. ii, p. 973-76; id., "History of the Jews in Basra" in *Jewish Quarterly Review,* New Series, vol. xvii (1926), 419, 427. Sassoon drew also on a collection of communal records emanating from the Newe Shalom Synagogue in Calcutta. These covered the years 1829-58 and were compiled by one Moses Duweik ha-Cohen of that city; *Ohel David,* vol. ii, p. 14 (No. 897). Scattered references to Rabbi David's stay in Calcutta were also extracted from local Arabic-Hebrew newspapers, and it is probable that a systematic search through the pages of the contemporary press will yield additional material.

[17] See especially, p. 186-206.

[18] *e.g.,* p. 46-47, 50, 74.

[19] See the biographical sketch by A. Yaari in *Sinai,* vol. ii (1939), 24-31; vol. iii (1940), 344-48.


TURKISH KURDISTAN
Tsormak
Diarbekr
Jezire
R. Euphrates
Urfa
Mardin
Aintab
Nisibin
ALEPPO
MESOPOTAM
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
SYRIA
R. Euphrates
DAMASCUS
SHRIAN
DESER
JERUSALEM
JORDAN
PALESTINE
TRANS
JEWISH COMMUNITIES
OF KURDISTAN AND PERSIA
visited by Rabbi David d'Beth Hillel
in 1824-28


CASPIAN
SEA
Khoï
TABRIZ
Lake
Urmia
Urmia
Maraghah
Miandob
Saugh Bulagh
Rowanduz
Saki
Arbil
Banna
Suleimania
Kirkuk
PERSIA
TEHERAN
Senna
HAMADAN
Grosh
Sehneh
Zohob
Kermanshah
BAGHDAD
Babylon
KUWAIT
PERSIAN
GULF
Bushir

on the Persian Gulf, whence he sailed for India. In October 1828 he landed at Bombay, and after a casual visit to Madras returned to that city for a two-year sojourn.[20] Thence, in 1831, he undertook a long journey throughout India, returning in January of the following year to Madras with the intention of going back to the Holy Land. Unable, however, to secure immediate passage to Egypt, he spent the interval, at the suggestion of Archdeacon T. Robinson, in recording his impressions of his previous journeys.[21] The result was the publication of the *Travels* in August 1832, after which he returned to Palestine.[22]

If it be asked what prompted this Jew from Vilna, after having immigrated to Palestine, to spend the best years of his life travelling through the countries of the Middle East and India and visiting their unknown and remote Jewish communities, we can venture only a probable answer. Certain it is that he did not travel as the formal emissary (*shaliah*) of any charitable or religious institution, neither was his journey the result of any kind of commission.[23] We are led to believe that he went on his own initiative, driven by an inner call. Asked in India about his

[20] In Bombay Rabbi David encountered considerable difficulties through the attitude of resident Baghdadian Jews. Since he wore English clothes, but was also bearded, they regarded him as an Arab who had been converted to Christianity; p. 116, 130.

[21] It is to this ecclesiastic that the book is dedicated.

[22] On p. 218 Rabbi David remarks: "I have no time to stay longer in India," adding "the benefactors of the English nation may apply to me through the English Consul who is in Alexandria or in Palestine, for I hope to be at home in Judea the next year." From this and from a letter sent by the British Consul (Young), at Jerusalem to the British Consul (Hodges) at Cairo, it appears that our author was a naturalized British subject; see *Sinai,* vol. iii (1940), 347. Our author's further movements after his return to Palestine in 1833 are not yet firmly established. He appears to have been in India again in 1837, and it is certain that he was back in Jerusalem in the following year. This is attested not only by Robinson (see above n. 5) but also by a Hebrew letter written from Jerusalem in 1840 by Rabbi David himself to Isaac Baer Levinson, in connection with the Damascus affair; cf. *Bamishor,* loc. cit.; *Sinai,* vol. iii (1940), 348. From sources available in the library of the late David S. Sassoon, of London, we learn that our author was again abroad—probably on a third journey in 1845, when he turned up at Calcutta accompanied by Raphael b. Moses Zalkind; cf. *Jewish Quarterly Review,* New Series, vol. xvii (1926), 419 n. He died at Calcutta, about 1846. Of his second and probable third journeys he has left no account. His *Travels* are confined to his experiences between 1824 and 1832, and represent only a condensation of the original record.

[23] No official envoy (*shaliah*) in search of funds for a charitable institution would ever have adopted Rabbi David's itinerary, visiting remote communities from which nothing could have been expected.

aim, he replied that he desired simply "to see the world."[24] But this was obviously an evasion, designed only to satisfy the curiosity of the Maharajah who questioned him. A clearer indication of his purpose is contained in the "advertisement" of his volume, wherein he asserts his belief that "he is able to throw some light upon the existence and present state of the long lost ten tribes"; and, indeed, the *Travels* contain numerous references to these "forgotten remnants" in the various countries he visited. Whenever he met ancient groups, sects or races, he sought at once to identify their beliefs, customs, languages and manners with old Jewish or Israelite traditions, drawing somewhat hasty and mostly unfounded conclusions concerning their connections with the ten tribes. Such phrases as "therefore I conceive that they are . . . that they must be . . . some of the lost ten tribes" occur ubiquitously throughout his narrative,[25] being applied with reckless abandon to a wide variety of groups —Christian Assyrians,[26] Kurdish, Bucharian[27] and Chinese Jews,[28] the Moslem sect of the Daudijja,[29] and even the Hindus.[30] The motive for his journey was therefore, in all probability, the search for the lost remnants of Israel in Asia.

The Travels as a New Source

The *Travels* reflect their author's experiences, impressions and observations during almost nine years of travel. However, as he himself states, they cover but a part of his wanderings, being in fact an English abstract of a far larger work written in Hebrew. The entire narrative, we are informed, "would occupy about 600 to 700 pages, particularly [the portion] about India, of which I have a great deal to say."[31]

In his preface, Rabbi David informs us that he was urged, while in India, to publish his narrative because "it might benefit the public, par-

[24] p. 151.
[25] p. 48, 51, 58, etc.
[26] p. 58-59.
[27] p. 68-69.
[28] p. 99.
[29] p. 89-90.
[30] p. 126. The Hindu observance of Saturday is duly noted.
[31] The whereabouts of the Hebrew manuscript are still unknown.

ticularly those who are anxious to go to the Mediterranean through Arabia." And indeed, far from being only of Jewish interest, his volume constitutes a kind of guide-book, with valuable practical and technical suggestions, for any traveler through these regions. He never fails, for instance, to give details about the roads, the various means of communication, distances, fares by horse, mule or boat, currency, weights and measures, climatic conditions, even the hotels (which in his time were rude inns or caravanserais), food products and trade conditions. He dwells upon archaeological, topographical and historical details, never failing to mention sacred sites, tombs, mosques, churches, synagogues, or to dilate on the languages, manners and customs of the various tribes and groups.

He does not omit to mention any of those ancient races, sects and castes the remnants of which still survived. For the historian of religion, the details he gives about the Yezidis in Sinjar,[32] the Sabeans,[33] Wahabis[34] and Druzes,[35] or concerning the differences between Shiite and Sunnite Moslems[36] are of great importance. He describes the holy places of the Mohammedans in Iraq,[37] the tomb of Husain in Kerbela and of Ali at Najaf and he dwells in great detail upon the burial ceremonies of the Moslems. He can claim, incidentally, to be the first European to have given a thorough description of the sect of the Daudijja or Ahl-Al-Haqq in Western Persia.[38]

For the Jewish archaeologist and historian of religion the *Travels* are a real mine of information. The author offers a survey of almost all the historical sites, holy places, ancient buildings, tombs, towers and walls connected with Jewish tradition, which are scattered over the vast territory from Palestine to India.

In his description of the Holy Land and Syria he dwells, naturally at somewhat great length, on the ancient city of Jerusalem, its walls and

[32] p. 49, 53.
[33] p. 102.
[34] p. 94.
[35] p. 36.
[36] p. 114-15.
[37] p. 91.
[38] p. 73, 83, 86, 89. Cf. Minorsky, B., in *Encyclopedia* of Islam, *s. v.;* id., "Notes sur la secte des Ahl Haqq," in *Revue du Monde Musulman,* vol. 40/41 (1920), 79-97.

gates, the precincts of the Temple, the Wailing Wall, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, the Tombs of Rachel and Samuel, and the various synagogues of the Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Samaritans and Karaites. He records legends of Abraham and Nimrod, traditions about the burial places of Joseph, Jethro, Jonah, Elijah and Absalom, etc. He mentions a synagogue in Tripoli with a Hebrew inscription; describes in masterly fashion the ancient synagogue in Aleppo and its manuscripts; discourses genially about life in Damascus and about its main sites, and is only too eager in his search for his "lost" brethren to identify the names of villages, rivers and localities with those mentioned in the Bible.

In his description of Babylon (where he spent almost a year) he gives a very vivid and illuminating picture of the tomb of Ezekiel near Hilla,[39] of that of Ezra near Kurna,[40] of the burial-place of the high priest Joshua in Baghdad, of the sepulchres of Daniel and his three companions in Kirkuk and of the alleged tomb of Jonah near Niniveh.

He likewise reports meetings with Karaites (whom he calls erroneously "Sadducees") in Damascus, Hit on the Euphrates (where they are described as "rich and possessing great power")[41] and Jerusalem, where "the nine families of Karaites are more than any other people hated by the Israelites . . . also by the Mohammedans who say that they are half Jews."[42] The Samaritans are, of course, also mentioned.[43]

Of Persia's Jewish antiquities he mentions the famous tomb of Esther and Mordecai in Hamadan[44] and of the prophet Habakkuk in Tusercaun.

[39] p. 92. Cf. Obermeyer, J., *Die Landschaft Babylonians* (Frankfort-am-Main 1929), p. 312; Assaf, S., in *Zion,* vol. vi (1934), 10; Schechter, S., *Saadyana* (Cambridge 1903), p. 123; Lewin, B., *Iggereth R. Sherira Gaon* (Berlin 1921), p. 73.

[40] Obermeyer, *loc. cit.* Cf. also Sassoon, David S., "The History of the Jews in Basra," in *Jewish Quarterly Review,* New Series, vol. xvii (1926/27), 418-19, where R. David is cited as a witness in a document signed at the tomb of Ezra.

[41] p. 67. An interesting and curious account of the Karaites at Hit in 1808 is given, in connection with the Wahabi invasion, by the French consul, J. P. Rousseau in his *Voyage de Baghdad à Alep* (Paris 1899), p. 87-88, Cf. also Sassoon, *Ohel David,* vol. ii, p. 838.

[42] p. 6.

[43] p. 14. They are said to own a synagogue and to know a little Hebrew. "The secretary of the governor of the town [Shechem-Nablus] is a Samaritan."

[44] These tombs have been frequently described. Cf., among others: Polak, J. E., "Die Juden in Persien und Mordechais und Esthers Grabmal," in *Wiener Jahrbuch für Israeliten,* vol. iii (1856), p. 146; Levi, Israel, in *Revue des études juives,* vol. xxxvi (1898), 237-55;

Of Kurdistan's archaeological monuments he mentions the ancient synagogues in Diabekr containing manuscripts 800 years old,[45] as well as that in Sacho,[46] and the tomb of Nahum in Alkosh,[47] but fails to list Amadia as the place not only of the most venerated holy sites[48] but also of the oldest Hebrew inscription in Jewish Kurdistan, preserved on the walls of the ancient synagogue.[49]

Nor was it only history and archaeology that engrossed our author's attention. Equally lively was his interest in the linguistic peculiarities

Obermeyer, *op. cit., p.* 110-12; Levy Menahem, "Mordechai and Esther in Shushan" (Jerusalem 1932).

[45] Cf. *Bulletin of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1884.*

[46] The text of a Hebrew and Arabic inscription in their synagogue has been published by the present writer in *Sinai,* vol. iii (1939), 224 n. Cf. also Rivlin, J. J., "The Literature of the Jews of Sacho" in *Memorial Volume to S. Klein and A. Gulak* (Jerusalem 1942), p. 171-76 (Hebrew).

[47] p. 54-55. A detailed account of the ceremonies at the tomb of Nahum is contained in C. J. Rich's *Narrative of a Residence in Kurdistan* (London 1836), vol. ii. p. 111. Cf. also Shiel, J., "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz through Kurdistan," in *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,* vol. viii (1838), 93; Benjamin II, *Eight Years in Asia and Africa* (Hanover 1859), p. 71-75.

[48] *e.g.* the tombs of Hazan David and Hazan Joseph, concerning whom more details may be found in an old manuscript entitled *Sepher Pitron Halomoth* (On the Interpretation of Dreams) which the writer acquired in Amadia and which is now in the possession of the Hebrew University Library; see Assaf, *op. cit.,* p. 17-25.

[49] On the text of this inscription, which dates back about 700 years, cf. Assaf, p. 27. The importance of Amadia as a cultural center of Kurdish Jewry is borne out by the letters published by Jacob Mann in his *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature* (Cincinnati 1931), vol. i, p. 477-549. Sassoon's *Ohel David,* vol. ii, p. 1009, mentions a certain Isai b. Amram of Amadia as the copyist of a manuscript of Isaiah Horowitz's *Or Zarua.* Badger, C. D., *The Nestorians and their Ritual* (London 1852), p. 203-04, describes the synagogue at Amadia in these terms: "During the day I visited the chief synagogue of the Jews situated in the quarter of the town allotted to this people. It is a large apartment enclosed within a spacious part round which on the inside rounds a wide portical. Everything in the interior of the building looked wretched beyond description: the walls were broken through in several places and the floor was covered with filth and rubbish. This also is a work of the infidels: the poor Jews have ceased to meet together for public worship on account of the insults to which they are subjected and because their synagogues have been so frequently rifted and desecrated by the Mohammedans. There were about 20 rolls of the Law in wooden cases put up in different parts of the room, some well written and all of white sheep skin and of a modern date. Inquired whether they did not possess any ancient manuscripts but was answered in the negative. Ten years ago there were as many as 500 Jewish families in the town, now there are not more than 50. There is another small synagogue and 'a house of prayer' belonging to the Jews at Amadia besides that already described, but these I did not visit."

of the people with whom he came in contact. As a student and teacher of Hebrew[50] he was particularly keen to notice the evidence of its use as a living language. He mentions, for instance, that in Jerusalem, when Sephardim and Ashkenazim met, they conversed in Hebrew; and he is careful to record each occasion on which he himself spoke in the sacred tongue. In Baghdad he met two Jews from Buchara and adds: "All my conversation with them was in Hebrew."[51] He relates also of a meeting between a Jewish merchant from Africa and a Jew "from the tribe of Dan," that "their conversation was all in Hebrew."[52] On the whole, however, we get the impression that Hebrew was neither widespread nor deep-rooted in the Jewish Orient. More than once, our author takes occasion to observe that local Jews "are ignorant of the Hebrew language."[53]

For the rest, Rabbi David's observations enable us to classify Oriental Jews into four great linguistic categories, *viz.*, (i) Arabic-speaking, in Syria and Mesopotamia; (ii) Persian-speaking; (iii) Turkish-speaking;[54] and (iv) Aramaic-speaking.[55] The Kurdish Jews, with whom we are here concerned, belong to the last of these categories.

[50] Preface p. v. See also Rabbi David's Hebrew letter referred to above, n. 12. It was sheer modesty when, asked in India whether he knew Hebrew, he replied: "Some of it"; p. 177. In 1829-31, while in Bombay, he was "engaged as a Hebrew teacher to some gentlemen," and he also remained for over two months in Belgaum "giving instructions in the Hebrew language to some gentlemen"; p. 159. Nor should we overlook the evident gratification with which he informs us that among the "Bene Israel" of Panoovellee "there is now established a school from the Jews' society for the purpose of teaching their children the Hebrew language"; p. 138. Our author is particularly anxious to prove to his Gentile readers, that Hebrew was the common speech of mankind before the confusion of tongues at Babel, and to this end appends a lengthy philosophical excursus on the subject (p. 188-206). The phrase-book which forms the concluding section of his volume and which is a curious dictionary in Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Hindustani and English (all transcribed into Roman characters) was also designed to familiarize Gentiles with the Hebrew language (p. 207-18).

[51] p. 69.

[52] p. 26-27.

[53] p. 37, 48, 51, 59, 78, 109.

[54] p. 44, 62, 86. "Broken Turkish" was spoken in Kirkuk and other cities of Northern Mesopotamia, even—according to our author—in Hamadan. But see Abrahamian, R., *Dialectes des Israélites des Hamadan* (Paris 1936). Badger, *op. cit.* vol. i, p. 203, says of Amadia that "The Jews all speak the same language as the Nestorians and Chaldians. The Jews hereabout are very poor and ignorant, only a few among them can read talmudic and fewer still know anything of the biblical Hebrew."

[55] In India, Rabbi David met many Jews whose vernacular was one or other of the Indian dialects.

Geographical Distribution and Numerical Strength

In the many centuries which elapsed between David Alroy's appearance at Amadia in the 12th century and our author's visit in the 19th, the names of only a few Jewish settlements in the central region of Kurdistan became known. Benjamin of Tudela's remark that there were "more than 100 congregations extending to the frontiers of Media"[56] is too vague and unspecified to permit a clear conception of the geographical distribution of Kurdish Jewry in his day. Early Geniza fragments mention sundry Jewish communities in Azerbaijan,[57] while Samuel ben Abbas al Maghrebi, the author of *Ifham al Yahud,* refers to Khöi, Maragha, Tabriz and Salmas as seats of the followers of Alroy.[58] Further, through a number of recently published Hebrew letters written by Kurdish Jews between the 16th and 18th centuries, we learn of about a dozen places in Kurdistan with Jewish settlements, a few of which only can now be identified.[59] Lastly, there are a few scattered references in rabbinic responsa[60] and in the letters of *shelihim.*[61]

But a comprehensive and detailed first-hand report of the geographical dispersion and numerical strength of the Jews in the then Turkish and Persian parts of Kurdistan we receive only through Rabbi David's *Travels.* It is a picture which reveals the whole tragedy of an exiled people exposed to the ravages of both nature and fellow man over a vast mountainous area. We have but to bear in mind that before Rabbi David's time no figures or data whatsoever were available concerning the size of the local Jewish communities to realize the sociological and statis-

[56] ed. Adler, p. 77.

[57] Both Maragha and Urmia are mentioned in an eleventh century Geniza fragment published by Hartwig Hirschfeld in *Jewish Quarterly Review,* vol. xvi (1925), 293-99. On the Jews in Azerbaijan see Schwarz, P., *Iran im Mittelalter* (Leipzig 1936), vol. viii, p. 1188, 1245. There were also scattered Karaite communities in this region; cf. Mann. *op. cit.,* vol. ii, p. 74. On a Karaite family named Kurd, cf. *Jewish Quarterly Review,* vol. xv, 337-41.

[58] Maragha was the hometown of Samuel b. Abbas, and it was there that he was converted to Islam; cf. Joseph ha-Kohen, *Emek-ha-Bacha,* ed. Wiener, p. 169.

[59] Mann, *op. cit.,* vol. i, p. 480 ff.

[60] Cf. Assaf, S., "On the History of the Jews in Kurdistan," in *Zion,* vol. vi (1934), 85-112 (Hebrew); id., "Additions to the History of the Jews in Kurdistan," in *Kirjath Sefer,* vol. xiii (1936), 266-71 (Heb.).

[61] See the present writer's "Letters from Kurdistan," in *Sinai,* vol. iv (1940), 167-77 (Hebrew).

tical importance of the material he has furnished.[62] When collated with other information, it enables us to fix the changes, appearance and disappearance of Jewish settlements, their growth or their decline in this part of the world.

The communities of *Turkish* Kurdistan visited and described by our author are as follows, together with the numerical strength of each as indicated by him:[63]

[62] The account is by no means exhaustive. It omits reference to many settlements known to us from other sources and personally visited by the present writer in 1932 and 1936. This, however, may be due to the fact that in its present form Rabbi David's work is an abridgment of a larger manuscript.

[63] No attempt has here been made to collate Rabbi David's figures with those furnished by later travelers. The main sources for such a comparison would be, in chronological order, the following:

(a) *Reports of missionaries, mostly baptized Jews*:

Wolff, Joseph, *Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans and other Sects* (*London* 1835); id., *Narrative of a Mission to Buchara in the years 1843-1845* (New York, 1845); id., *Travels and Adventures* (London 1861); Stern, Henry A., *Dawning of Light in the East. . . . A Mission to the Jews in Persia, Coordistan and Mesopotamia* (London 1854); reports of P. H. Sternschuss, I. H. Bruehl and I. M. Eppstein in *Jewish Intelligence,* the organ of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews (from 1847);

(b) *Reports of Jewish Travelers*:

Benjamin, J. J., *Eight Years in Asia and Africa, 1846-1855* (Hannover 1875); Anon. "The Journey of a Messenger from Safed to the Orient," in *Sinai,* vol. iv (1941), 46 ff. (Hebrew); Schur, W., *Mahasoth ha-Hayyim* (Vienna 1884); Neumark, Ephraim, "Erez Ha-Kedem" in *Heasif,* vol. v (1889), 39-75; Adler, Elkan N., *Jews in Many Lands* (Philadelphia 1905); Fischel, Walter J., "Bei den Juden im Kurdischen Bergland," in *Juedische Rundschau,* vol. viii (1937), No. 1; id., "Iggeroth Kurdistan" in *Sinai,* vol. iv (1940), 167-77; Brawer, A. J., "From My Journeys to Syria, Babel and Ashur," Jerusalem, 1935, and "A Chapter from my Journey in Iran," Jerusalem, 1938. Informative also are the Bulletins of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and the reports of American and English missionaries who labored among the Nestorian communities in the early 19th century.

In connection with his estimates the author remarks in his Preface (p. v-vi): "Very likely the public will wonder at the number of the population that is given by me, which is not given so by many other travelers. To this I reply that the other travelers were not so well acquainted with the people and their languages as I am, they used to travel as great men and not residing in one place for a long time, by which they can never be acquainted with all classes of people that they might know properly their numbers and customs. But I was well acquainted with all the classes of the people and their languages and resided in a place at least 15 days and in some from a month to a year."

Whom he had in mind when speaking of "many other travelers," it would be most illuminating to know, because there is no indication that he consulted the accounts of former or contemporary travelers, with the single exception of Buchanan, whose work he mentions. He was acquainted, however, both with the *Seder ha-Doroth* and with the travels of Eldad ha-Dani (p. 26, 54).

Community[64]	*Approximate No. of families*
Killiz	30
Aintab	15
Urfa	40
Tsormak	40
Diabekr	40
Mardin	6
Nisibin[65]	"some"
Sallaga	1
Zacho	600
Jezira	25
Mosul	600
Alkosh	30
Socho	30
Sus	"some"
Amadia	200
Sandor	100
Dehok	10
Suleimania	100
Sardova	30
Arbil	200
Kirkuk	200

No less important and informative is Rabbi David's account of the Jewish communities in the *Persian* part of Kurdistan, whither he penetrated from the border town of Banna. The following sixteen settlements are described:[66]

[64] In the transcription of geographical names Rabbi David is none too pedantic. He usually transcribes them phonetically, as he heard them. Nevertheless, with one exception, they can all be identified.

[65] East of Nisibin as far as Mosul, in the region which he calls Cythia, our author noted 20 villages, some of which bore Jewish names, and four or five of which had a Jewish population.

[66] While waiting at Bushir for passage to India our author also collected information about some of the larger Jewish communities in the interior of Persia. In Bushir itself he found "about 200 poor families of Persian Jews having three synagogues." In Shiras, according to his informant, there were about 700; in Isfahan about 300, and in Kashan about 100 families of Jews. In Teheran, the residence of the King of Persia, there were about 100 families, and in Mazanderan, on the coast of the Caspian Sea, about sixty. Rabbi David is aware of the fact that "there are many other places in Persia, where Jews reside," but states expressly that "I have not been myself in these above-mentioned places." He admits receiving his information from "travelers who had journeyed thither." (*Travels*, p. 108-09.)

[67] For the orthography of these names see Ebtehaj, G., *Guide-book to Iran*, 2nd. ed. (Teheran 1935). Rabbi David also mentions Tabriz and Maragha, but without recording the numbers of their Jewish families. Of Jewish settlements on the shores of the Persian Gulf he mentions Muscat, with four families (p. 112) and Sahar "on the coast of Arabia . . . about 20 families . . . most of them lend money to the people of the village on interest" (p. 110).

Community[67]	*Approximate No. of families*
Banna	10
Saki	15
Saugh Bulagh	25
Taskala	10
Urmia	200
Salmas	100
Bashqala	20
Miandob	15
Grosh	25
Senna	300
Kaslan	5
Kermanshah	300
Zohob	40
Hamadan	200
Toserkaun	20
Nehawend	20

Of especial value are the figures relating to the number of families, since, until comparatively recent times, there was no national census in Persia, and estimates of the Jewish population varied considerably. The total here given would amount to about 15,000 persons. Seeing that our author did not cover the *whole* Jewish population, this figure may well be regarded as approximately correct, since the first estimate we have (of the year 1827) computes them at about 30,000 souls.[68]

Occupational Structure

The economic situation of the Jewish communities in the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire, at the time of Rabbi David's visit,

[68] Cf. Brewer, J., *A residence at Constantinople in 1827* (New Haven 1830), p. 353. Later estimates are:

1873:	Alliance Israélite Universelle	40,000
1884:	General Houtum-Schindler (quoted in Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*	19,000
1892:	London 1892, vol. ii, p. 493; vol. i, p. 510-11)	40,000
1904:	Alliance Israélite Universelle	49,500
	Greenfield, *Die Verfassung von Persien* (Berlin 1904), p. 32, 76	32,000
1910:	Sykes, E., *Persia and its People* (London 1911), p. 128	36,000
1926:	Cohen, Israel, *Jewish Life in Modern Times* (London 1929), p. 321	60,000
1929:	Arthur Ruppin	40,000
1930:	W. J. Fischel	60,000
1935:	Brawer, A. J., *op. cit.*	50-60,000
1943:	*American Jewish Year-Book*	50,000

Persian Jewry constitutes about 0.27 percent of the total population of 15,000,000.

seems to have been prosperous. In many cases he describes them as "rich," "very rich" or "poor," "very poor." Three occupational categories are recognized, *viz.*: (i) commerce and trade; (ii) handicraft and heavy labor; (iii) agriculture and farming.

Merchants. Throughout his journey from Palestine and Syria in the west to Kurdistan and Iraq in the east, Rabbi David met Jewish merchants. In cities such as Aleppo, Basra and Baghdad, Jews had even attained to leading positions in commerce and trade. The description of Baghdad's Jewish communities, though unexpectedly brief, informs us that some of the 6000 families of Israelites were "extensive merchants and very rich." Similarly, Basra, which he rightly calls the gateway of India and Persia, counted among its 300 families of Israelites, "rich merchants and respectable people." Of special interest is the graphic description of the economic background of that city and its trade connections with others, as well as the account of the pearl industry on the Island of Bahrein[69] and of the date-palm trees, "which are conveyed to Baghdad, Persia, India and . . . Yemen." Likewise in Mosul and in smaller places such as Amadia and Suleimania, Rabbi David met among the Jews "considerable merchants . . . very rich." The Urfa Jewish merchants "do most of their trade with the Beduins who dwell in tents out of the town."[70]

Curiously enough, only one place is mentioned where Jews are engaged in money-lending, though there must have been many others, especially in Baghdad. This one place is in Sahar on the coast of Arabia, where there were about twenty families of Israelites "having the same custom as the Israelites in Yemen; most of them lend money to the people of the village on interest. They have small synagogues which are much revered by the Mohammedans who call them *Vlad Sara,* meaning the children of Sara."[71]

Artisans. Jews in the Orient have never confined themselves exclusively to commerce and trade. They also have a long tradition as

[69] Cf. the equally graphic account by Benjamin of Tudela, ed. Adler, p. 89-90, and A. H. Stern in *Jewish Intelligence,* vol. xiv (1848), 255-65.

[70] p. 44. To this day a large proportion of Kurdish Jews earn their living as peddlers, visiting neighboring towns and villages with their wares laden on asses.

[71] p. 110. The "children of Sarah" are mentioned again in connection with the author's visit to Muscat; p. 113.

artisans and workmen, as evidenced already by the testimony of Benjamin of Tudela. R. David found many engaged as weavers, dyers, gold- and silversmiths[72] and workmen in other kinds of handicraft. In Sacho "most of them are weavers, goldsmiths and other artificers." Although the author nowhere defines what he means by the round terms "workmen" or "artisans," we may assume that these include tailors, cobblers, shoemakers, etc., as well as boatswains and raftsmen—an occupation in which the Jews of Sacho especially were prominent. (In the transport of timber along the rivers, Jews had then as today a considerable share.)

Farmers. Our author indicates that among Oriental Jews, there were quite a few who were connected with the soil as farmers and owners of vineyards, fields and livestock. It was duly observed by him that the so-called "native Israelites" of Galilee, the Jews (who are believed to be descendants of persons who remained in Palestine after the destruction of the Temple) are all engaged in agricultural occupations. In Pekiin he found "about twenty families of native Israelites, most of whom are owners of sheep and goats,"[73] while in Shfamer, he met with about twenty Jewish families and in Kfar Jethiv, "about fifteen families of native Israelites who are farmers." Likewise in the Kurdish communities of Mosul, Amadia and Sacho, he found Jews working in agriculture; "some are very rich, having much cattle."

In the occupational structure of the Kurdish Jews, the village of Sandor constitutes a special case. Rabbi David describes it as not only inhabited almost exclusively by Jews, but also as a large agricultural settlement.[74] The village consists of "about 100 families of Israelites,

[72] p. 70. Cf. Borchardt, P., and Berliner, R., *Silberschmiedearbeiten aus Kurdistan* (Berlin 1922), p. 9. Of eight gold- and silversmith establishments in the local bazaar at Suleimania, seven were owned by Jews.

[73] p. 28. Cf. Ben Zwi, I., *Collected Works* (Tel Aviv 1935), vol. ii, p. 73-108 (Hebrew).

[74] p. 56. In the official *Handbook of Mesopotamia* (London 1917), vol. iv, p. 125, Sandor is classified as "a Jewish village of 80 houses." See the description of the village by W. Schwarz: "Die Juden in Sandor," in *Juedische Rundschau,* Berlin, June 12, 1935. During the present writer's second journey through Kurdistan, in spring 1936, he stopped at that Jewish village and saw Jewish farmers working in fields and vineyards, and actually heard them singing Aramaic songs. He was able to investigate their old Geniza, in the still well-preserved synagogue built several hundred years ago. Among the manuscripts was a bill of divorcement over 260 years old. For other documents from Sandor see Higger, M., *Halachot W' Aggadoth* (New York 1933), p. 41. Further details about the Jews of Sandor are contained in the letters published by J. Mann: *Texts and Studies,* vol. i, p. 478-549. See also W. J. Fischel, "Iggeroth Kurdistan" in *Sinai,* vol. iv (1940), 167-77.

farmers. They have abundance of cattle . . . and most of them are very rich. They have a synagogue. The Israelites' place is separated and beyond it are a few Amonites and Moabites. This place is indeed a land flowing with milk and honey. The climate is wholesome and there are both good water and excellent wines."[75]

A similar phenomenon is represented by the small village of Socho with its 30 families of Israelites. "They have a little synagogue. They are very kind people. They are all farmers and rich having abundance of flocks. They have also a multitude of fine white cedar trees which are planted round about the village and with them they supply Assyria and Baghdad. Indeed it is a very rich and pleasant place; no other nations reside there. . . ." This village had its own autonomous administration and we learn that "the ruler of it is one of the Jews who is under the order of the Pasha of Amadia."[76]

The occupational structure of the Jews in the Persian part of Kurdistan follows similar lines. Apart from being engaged in trade and commerce, Jews were "artificers," "workmen," "goldsmiths," etc. Those of Bushir were almost exclusively active as goldsmiths, and Hamadan had quite a number of them, too.

No Jewish farmers, however, are mentioned in this area. Although our author indicates in a number of places that the Jews are poor (*e. g.* in Tuserçaun, Nehawend, Kermanshah) he extends to the majority of communities the attribute of "rich merchants." In Bashkala, for instance, he finds that the Jews "are mostly rich merchants," while in Senna and

[75] See Badger, G. P.: *The Nestorians and their Ritual* (London 1852), vol. i, p. 203: "Sindor, a large village . . . is entirely inhabited by Jews; from one source I learned that they numbered there no less than 300 families while another informant insured me that it did not now contain more than 50 houses." The village has also been described by many of the other travelers mentioned above, *e.g.* Stern, Benjamin II, the anonymous itinerant from Safed and E. Neumark.

[76] The employment of Oriental Jews in agriculture must have been fairly common in previous centuries. Thus, the Portuguese traveler, Pedro Texeira reports of those at Ana, in Mesopotamia that "there are 120 Jews not rich but living decently" and that they "are well looked upon by the lord of the land and his officers. . . . They have houses and lands of their own like the Moors" (*The Six Voyages,* London, Hakluyt Society, 1902, p. 84). Concerning Jewish shepherds in Kurdistan see Layard A. H., *Niniveh and Babylon* (London 1867) p. 200. Cf. also J. E. Polak in *Jahrbuch fuer Israeliten* (Vienna 1856), p. 146: "In Kurdistan betreiben die Juden haeufig Viehzucht." There can be little doubt that other Jewish agricultural villages were in existence in previous years, probably in the vicinity of Amadia; cf. Benjamin II's description of the Jews in Tanura, *op. cit.* p. 70.

Grosh "some are rich merchants, others are workmen." The leading Jewish merchants were apparently those in Salmas, this city having then played a dominant role in the economic life of the Orient. It was a center for the production of cotton, silk, raisins, wool, gallnuts, etc., and the local Jews, consisting of some 100 families, seem to have participated in the distribution of these products. They had commercial relations with peoples beyond the border of Persia, extending as far as Georgia, Sirwan, Sakee and Dagistan—a kind of international trade which rendered them, according to Rabbi David, "very rich people and considerable merchants."

A special place is occupied by the community of Hamadan. Here were about 200 Jewish families speaking Turkish; most of them were physicians held in high esteem by the governor and nobles. They were very rich, possessing stately homes with fine gardens.[77]

Linguistic and Cultural Aspects

Consonant with his deep interest in languages, our author pays special attention to the linguistic peculiarities of the Kurdish Jews. It was long known from Benjamin of Tudela and others that the Jews in this region spoke a form of Aramaic Syriac called *Leshon ha-Targum.* Rabbi David, however, is the first to deal in detail with this phenomenon, showing the spread of the dialect in question over the whole region of Turkish-Persian Kurdistan both among Jews and Christians.[78] He re-

[77] p. 85-86. According to J. E. Polak, writing in the *Jahrbuch fuer Israeliten,* New Series, vol. iii (1856), 147, there were about 150 Jewish families in Hamadan. They were mainly vinedressers, gold-refiners and moneylenders. The Jews of this city, as also of Teheran and other Persian centers, are known also to have supplied the court with physicians. In the time of Shah Mahmud (1834-48) a Jewish physician named Hak Nazar is reported to have been the court physician in Teheran. Certain Jewish families seem to have held a monopoly in the medical profession and it was only under the Shah Nasr ad-Din (1848-96) that European physicians were invited to Teheran. One of the first was a Jewish physician from Vienna, Dr. J. E. Polak, who was invited in 1851 to be professor of anatomy and surgery at the military academy. Four years later, on the death of the French court physician Dr. Cloque, he was appointed private physician to the Shah. Dr. Polak became one of the latter's most intimate friends, and was even visited by him in Vienna after his retirement in 1873. Nasr ad-Din's successor, Shah Muzaffar ad-Din, likewise invited to his court a certain Jewish physician from Berlin, Dr. F. Albu; cf. *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums,* 1907, p. 91.

[78] Considerable attention has been paid by modern philologists to the Aramaic dialect of Nestorians and Jews in Kurdistan. Nevertheless, although a number of texts have been published during the past sixty years, the scientific investigation of the language is still in its initial stages. For a bibliographical survey of studies in this field see the writer's article, "Kurdistan" in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* vol. x.

marks that the language spoken by the Jews "is very much like Hebrew—indeed it is very near, for the language in itself is called *Lishna Yahudia* [the Jewish tongue]." On more than one occasion he expresses astonishment that "even the Christians who are in this country speak the same language as the Israelites. In Fesh-Chabur, for instance, "all the Nazarenes talk the 'Caldes' (Chaldee) language which is very similar to the language written in some chapters of Ezra and Daniel; they call it *Lishna Yahudia* which means Jewish language and the Arabs call it *Jabali* [the Mountain language]." He likewise observes frequently that Christians in both the Turkish and Persian portions of Kurdistan, in Salmas as well as Urmia, "use the same language as the Israelites," thus furnishing additional proof for his contention that "they must be the successors of these captives . . ." in other words, the remnants of the ten tribes.

Concerning the cultural and religious lives of the Kurdish Jews our author has but little to say. To be sure he usually reports the numbers and sizes of synagogues and the various archaeological attractions in the several cities which he visits, but in little more than summary, statistical fashion.

He sheds no light whatever upon such subjects as the structure of the community,[79] its educational level, its school system (if any), its religious observances, liturgical usage and popular songs,[80] the functions of its congregational officers (*haham* and *shohet*) and its folklore,[81] beliefs[82] and superstitions nor does he trouble to describe those kabbalistic prac-

[79] But the fact that he speaks frequently of a "headman" (*nasi*) would suggest that the community possessed at least a rudimentary form of organization.

[80] Haham Baruch Samuel Mizrahi has published a collection of songs current among Kurdish Jews, under the title *Sefer Shirei Zimrah* (Jerusalem 1930). On the literary composition of the Kurdish Jews see the writer's article "Kurdistan" in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica.* Reference may also be made to his more recent study, "Letters from Kurdistan" in *Sinai,* loc. cit., which contains a list of works acquired during the course of his travels and now deposited in the Hebrew University Library. These deal mainly with religious and ritualistic questions (*e.g.* dietary laws) and include also several translations from the Bible.

[81] Cf. Brauer, Erich, "Bräuche der Kurdischen Juden, Kinder and Kindheit" in *Almanach des Schocken Verlags . . .* 5699 (1939), p. 105-12; id., "Der Heilsame Granatapfelbaum," ib., 5698 (1938), p. 167-73, and "Rites and Customs in Times of Drought among the Jews of Kurdistan" in *Magnes Anniversary Volume* (Jerusalem 1938), p. 50-51 (Heb.). A comprehensive work, *The Ethnology of the Jews of Kurdistan,* completed by this scholar before his death in 1942, is ready for publication.

[82] Both the eighteenth century letters published by Mann, *loc. cit.,* and those of the twentieth century published by the present writer attest the strong attachment of the Kurdish Jews to Palestine and Zion—an attachment enhanced, no doubt, by the successive envoys (*shelihim*) from the Holy Land. First settling in Jerusalem in 1812 (cf. Ben Zwi, I., *Ochlosenu ba-*

tices, which, as we know, were (and still are) so prevalent among them.[83] One significant remark, however, he does make. There is no outward difference, he observes, between Jews and Kurds, but "all the Israelites are very separate from the other nations in all their customs and manners."[84] This indeed is a revealing statement since it indicates that the Kurdish Jews remained unassimilated, clinging tenaciously to their ancestral faith and preserving their religious and cultural identity. They adhered rigorously to the traditional dietary laws, practised no intermarriage and observed the sabbath and festivals.[85]

The Jewish "Comptrollers"

At the time of Rabbi David's visit, Palestine, Syria, Kurdistan, and Mesopotamia formed part of the Asiatic sway of Sultan Mahmud (1803-39).[86] They were ruled by pashas, who, as representatives of the Sultan, exercised almost unlimited authority over life and property, and whose main task was to transmit annually to the Imperial Treasurer in Constantinople the amount of money which the Central Government expected to obtain from the subjects of his province. Every pasha knew that he could rely on the favor of his master, the Sultan or Grand Vizier, and of the court circle only so long as he met their fiscal demands. In his feverish anxiety to extract as much money as possible by taxation, confiscation or

Arez, Jerusalem 1929, vol. i, p. 67), there are now more than 5,000 of them in the country, one of their agricultural settlements in the Emek bearing the name of David Alroy. One of the most frequent requests made to the writer during his travels in Kurdistan was for a "certificate" to enable one or another Kurdistan Jew to escape "the Kurdish and Mahommedan exile" and get to Palestine.

[83] Haham Elijah Abraham Mizrahi, a Kurdish Jew of Dehok long settled in Jerusalem, has published two kabbalistic treatises entitled respectively *Sefer Refuah we-Hayyim* and *Sefer Keneseth Eliahu*. Both appeared at Jerusalem in 1931.

[84] p. 48, 59.

[85] The strict observance of the Sabbath by Oriental Jews is mentioned by R. David only once, with reference to India, but his observation probably applies also to Kurdistan: "I never as yet met with a congregation of the most ignorant Jews who ever violated the Saturday in public"; p. 126-27, 135. It is known from recent sources that the Kurdish Jews were very strict in keeping the Sabbath. Says Hamilton, *op. cit.* p. 191: "The Jews were the most exacting of all in their observances. No Jew may work on a Saturday and perhaps that is why so few ever came to my camp as workmen. There were quite a number living in the villages near the road under the protection of the Kurdish chiefs who seems to treat them well."

[86] For the general historical background see Longrigg, A., *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Oxford 1925), Coke, R., *Baghdad, the City of Peace* (London 1927).

other methods, he would tend to lay hands especially on his non-Moslem subjects, whom he squeezed to the utmost.[87] Moreover, he would often find it profitable to employ their services and abilities in his money-raising duties. Christians and Jews, but particularly the latter, thus became an instrument for carrying out the financial tasks entrusted to him; and in exchange, they naturally expected protection for their co-religionists.[88]

It would scarcely have been natural had our Jewish traveler failed to mention those of his brethren whom he found engaged in this capacity. In Acco, for example, he soon heard tell of the illustrious Haim Farhi, whom he describes in the following terms:

> "Mylyn [Mu'allim] H'aim was the ruler over all Palestine and Mount Libanus during the reign of *Jeezar pasha,* who was a native of H'etteen, in the province of Wallachia, and in his youth came to Palestine, and became a Paha of Aca [Acco]. He was a very brave man but of a barbarous character. He cleared Palestine of robbers and thieves, by cutting off their hands and noses, and putting out their eyes. This too he did to his best friend and beloved Mylym H'aim Farchee, a man rich, charitable, and kind to people of all nations. He cast him into prison several times, and deprived him of his nose and one eye. After that he exalted him higher than before, and his accusers were killed because it was found that they had made false charges against him. His kingdom was supported by Mylym H'aim Farchee until his death. After him, reigned *Sooliman* [Suleiman] *Pasha,* who was sluggish and eagerly followed after pleasures. Whereupon Mylym H'aim Farchee supported the kingdom. After the death of Sooliman pasha, Mylym H'aim raised to power the present Pasha, Abdallah, then a young man, the son of a friend, who at his death, had requested Mylym H'aim, to take him under his charge. Abdallah forgot all the great obligations the Jew had heaped upon him; and by the advice of enemies caused him to be strangled and thrown into the sea. These things were noticed by the present sultan Mah'mood for he had a very good opinion of him, then he sent his army to destroy Abdallah pasha, and he shut up the fort for ten months, afterwards he gave a great deal of money to the sultan, and through the supplication of Mah'amad Ally [Mahmud Ali] Pasha the king of Egypt he was forgiven."[89]

[87] Cf. Mignan, R., *A Winter Journey through . . . Koordistan* (London 1839), vol. ii, p. 67: "Sums are invariably extorted from the Armenian and Jewish merchants on a promise of repayment. . . ."

[88] Cf. Budge, E. A. W., *By Nile and Tigris* (London 1920), p. 192: "The Jews owing to their wealth and tenacity of purpose formed a powerful section of the country and it was said that the Baghdad Government found their help and support indispensable."

[89] p. 30-31.

Another member of that famous Farhi family he met in Damascus, and the details he conveys add considerably to the picture, fragmentary as it is, which can be recovered from other sources about that leading Jewish family in the East.

> "The chief of the Israelites is Moalim Moses Farkhee. He is very rich, charitable and kind to all the nations. He is a ruler over all Damascus and the surrounding countries and part of Judaea, which belongs to Damascus. . . . A Pasha resides here but the Government is in the hands of Moalim Moses."[90] Likewise, in Baghdad our author found that the "treasurer of the Pasha is an Israelite who rules over them" and adds: "The common Jew call him the King of Israel, he has great power to punish them with money and stripes according to his wish even when not lawful. In ancient times it was required here that the treasurer of the pasha should be of the seed of David and it was an inheritance from father to son;[91] but about a hundred years or more the thing became so common that it was bought with money and caused the others to be slain by even bringing reports to the pasha or sultan and succeeded in his stead. In the course of my stay there two Israelite Chiefs were killed in this manner and their adversaries succeeded them."[92]

In Basra too, R. David observed that: "The treasurer of this town is an Israelite and their chief."[93]

That Jews were engaged by the Turkish authorities as comptrollers or bankers was not entirely new to the historian.[94]

From R. David's keen observations, however, we learn that it was not

[90] p. 23. A study of the important family of Farhi has still to be written. Considerable material is available in contemporary books of travel, as also in the hitherto unnoticed article by Sheikh al Maghrebi on "The Jews in Syria 100 Years Ago" in *Revue de l'Academie Arabe,* Damas (1922).

[91] An obvious reference to the Resh Galutha of ancient times.

[92] On this incident cf. Sassoon, *Ohel David,* vol. i, p. 400.

[93] p. 97. J. B. Rousseau in his *Description du Pashalique de Baghdad* (Paris 1809), p. 32, remarks that the "Armenian, Jewish and Indian merchants of Basra are regarded as the busiest and wealthiest in all Turkey."

[94] One of the most outstanding native Jews of Aleppo to attain distinction in India during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was Shalom b. Aron b. Obadiah ha-Kohen, who became court-jeweler to the Nawabs of Delhi and was greatly esteemed by them. In 1816 he was invested with a ceremonial robe of honor by the Nawab Wazir Ghazi el Din Haidar at Luckenow. Shalom's diary, covering the years 1779-1834 and describing his journey from Aleppo to Calcutta, via Baghdad, Basra, Bombay and Surat, exists in manuscript in the Sassoon collection; cf. *Ohel David,* vol. i, 372, 405; vol. ii, p. 974. The present writer hopes in due course to publish this valuable and interesting record.

only in such large centers as Damascus, Aleppo, Mosul, Baghdad or Basra that they were engaged in this official capacity. It appears, in fact, from our author's account that the phenomenon of court-Jews, "the Jewish treasurer," was by this time widespread throughout the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire; almost every important village seems to have possessed its Jewish comptroller, taxgatherer or customs officer. Even before he had reached Kurdistan, for instance, R. David had found at Killiz a Jewish community of about 30 families where "the treasurer of the Pasha is an Israelite and he is a chief over them." Similarly he reports of Aintab that "the treasurer of the Pasha is an Israelite and is their chief," while in Nisibin he is again confronted with the phenomenon of a Jewish official and reports that one of the Israelites of Cythia is a collector of this custom house and a treasurer of the Sheik of the Caddarites." The same observation is made concerning Suleimania and Sacho and in Hillah we are introduced to a certain "Mr. Skoory, an Israelite, a very excellent man . . . treasurer of the Governor."[95]

Of especial interest in this connection is our author's account of his visit to Najaf the Holy place of the Shiite Moslems and burial place of the fourth Caliph, Ali (657). As sacred to the Shiites as is Mecca to Mohammedans in general it was, of course, not allowed to have a Jewish population, while all Europeans, Christians and Jews alike were strictly barred from it as "infidels." R. David, however, visited this city, the first European Jew of whose visit we have record; and he has left us a peculiarly vivid description of its special features. Not the least interesting of these is the fact that at the bridge leading from Lumlum to Najaf the tax-collector was a Jew from Baghdad who was personally acquainted with the traveler and therefore exacted no toll! Equally diverting is our author's description of the conditions which governed interment in this favorite burial place of the Persian Shiites. Burial plots, we are informed, were divided into three categories: for interment outside the city the fee was 25 Piasters; in the trench around the wall, 50 Piasters, and within the city 100 Piasters. For such as wished to be buried in the very courtyard of 'Ali's sepulchre there was no fixed rate, the price

[95] This "Mr. Skoory," the headman (*nasi*) of the community at Hilla, is mentioned again in Sassoon, *Ohel David,* vol. ii, p. 567.

being determined by "agreement." Then comes the most intriguing detail. "The collector," adds our author, "is an Israelite sent by the treasurer of the Pasha of Baghdad." With this official he "was accustomed to sit down in the gate of the town and converse." Bearing in mind how vigorously Jews, Christians and even Sunnite Moslems were (and are) barred from Najaf,[96] it is indeed strange to visualize the curious spectacle of this rabbi from Vilna and the Jewish collector of Moslem burial fees, sitting together chatting in the gate.

On the other hand, it is significant that the only *Persian* community in which Rabbi David found a Jew in the office of comptroller was that of Senna, concerning which he writes: "The treasurer of the Governor is a Jew, and he is their (the community's) chief."[96a]

Unfortunately, Rabbi David nowhere defines what he means by the oft-repeated term "treasurer of the Pasha," nor are we able in the light of his report to determine the special duties and functions of this official or his role within the hierarchy of the Turkish administration. Neither do other contemporary sources shed much light on the question. A missionary report of 1883 concerning Rowanduz speaks indeed of Jews being employed along with Kurds in responsible offices particularly in the custom houses";[97] but until more information is available, we shall have to rely on our author's testimony to this otherwise unattested institution.[98]

One thing at least seems clear: the presence and influence of these officials appears to have insured a certain stability and political security for the Jewish communities in the centers where they functioned. Conversely, the absence of any such leading Jew led at times to political diffi-

[96] Pedro Teixera, the seventeenth century traveler, remarked already in his time that "no Jew nor Christian may dwell among them, for they bear mortal hate for them and no less for all Moors not of their own sect"; *Travels,* ed. Hakluyt Society (London 1902), p. 49. For further details concerning the holy sites of the Shiites in Iraq, see Donaldson, D., *The Shi'ite Religion: A History of Islam in Mesopotamia* (London 1933).

[96a] On present day Jewish life in Senna, cf. Brawer, A. J., "A Chapter from my Journey in Iran," in *Sinai,* vols. i-ii (1938), p. 433-38 (Heb.).

[97] Perkins, J., "Journal of a Tour from Oromiah to Mossul through the Koordish Mountains," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* vol. ii (1851), 95.

[98] The modern history of the Jews in Baghdad and throughout Iraq is still an unwritten chapter. On Court-Jews in Baghdad, Cairo and Persia see the writer's study *Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Mediaeval Islam,* Royal Asiatic Society Monographs, No. xxii (London 1937); cf. also Lutzki, A., "The 'Francos' and the Effect of the Capitulations on the Jews in Aleppo" (Hebrew) in *Zion,* vol. v (1940), 46-79.

culties and even persecution. Nowhere, for example, does our author report grievances about the political status of the Kurdish Jews, except in the single instance of Arbil where significantly enough there was no Jewish treasurer or comptroller. There he states, "Jews are very badly treated by the Mohammedans."[99]

Persecution

How long the system of "Jewish comptrollers" lasted we do not know; but it is certain that the political situation of the Kurdish Jews must have altered for the worse with the general changes which took place in the years immediately following Rabbi David's visit. In 1832, when the Turkish authorities decided to crush the rebellious spirit of the Kurdish feudal lords and chieftains, the Jews must certainly have been affected by the continuous struggle and bloodshed;[100] and it is very likely that as a consequence of the deterioration of their social and political position, many emigrated to other parts of Turkey. The gloomy picture painted by Benjamin II some twenty years after our author's visit[101] probably reflects the results of these turbulent years, during which the sufferings of the Jews must have become increasingly severe. So bad, indeed, did conditions subsequently become that in 1863, the Chief Rabbi of Constantinople was moved to intervene at the court of the Grand Vizier,[102] though the ineffectiveness of such action is shown by the fact that the Kurdish Jews nevertheless found it necessary to appeal later (1885) to the Alliance Israélite Universelle,[103] and repeatedly after that date to Jewish authorities in Europe.

In appraising Rabbi David's account of the situation in *Persian* Kurdistan it must be remembered that he entered Persia during the reign of Shah Fath Ali,[104] second of the dynasty of Kadjars, and the fact is that this dynasty based its attitude towards nonbelievers (Jews, Christians,

[99] p. 62.

[100] The murder of a Jew by a Kurd in Tel Kfar, near Djebel Sindjar, is reported in a Hebrew document of 1832; see Assaf, *op. cit.*, p. 5, n. 6.

[101] Benjamin II, *Eight Years . . .*, p. 91-104.

[102] Franco, M., *Essai sur l'histoire des Israélites de L'Empire Ottomane* (1897), p. 141-42.

[103] Cf. Bulletin of the Alliance Israélite Universelle for 1885, and Leven, N., *Cinquante ans de l'histoire de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle,* 1860-1910 (Paris 1911).

[104] Our author pronounces his name Phatellisha (p. 86) and Fath Elisha (p. 108).

etc.) on the same principles as did that of the Sefavids who introduced Shiite Mohammedanism as a state religion of Persia. Basic thereto was the conception that the Jew was ritually unclean, and had therefore to be distinguished by differences in costume, architecture of houses and in many other more cruel and humiliating ways. Rabbi David himself experienced and described that attitude. "They (the Shiites) do not eat with anyone of another nation, even touching their bread and liquids or fresh fruits; they consider it as defiled and will never eat it." It is their belief "that all the other nations are unclean, that no one who believes in Mohammed ought to be well acquainted with them and ought not to touch their victuals—and only to be acquainted with them in trade."[105] On many occasions during his visit to Persia was our author to meet with this attitude. Arriving one night at a village near Bashkala "nobody would receive me into their houses for any money I offered to them, saying that the house would be defiled by my coming in, because they knew me to be a Jew and the same night was a very cold one and abundance of snow had fallen and it was impossible to sleep in the street. After many supplications, I gave half a rupee to be allowed to sleep in a stable among their cattle."

From Urmia he reports that about two months before his arrival (1826) a blood libel had stirred up animosity against the entire Jewish community.[106] "A Mohammedan child being missing, the Persians accused the Jews of having murdered him in order to use his blood for the coming Passover (which was, however, of full five months away). Consequently, they rounded up all the Jews and removed them to prison, with the exception of their chief, one Rafael, he being a very old man and much respected by the Mohammedans.[107] His children, however, were

[105] p. 115. Reports of travelers throughout the nineteenth century show that the charge of ritual uncleanliness continued to be the determining factor in Persia's policy towards the Jews and other "infidels"; cf. Goldziher, I., *Vorlesungen ueber den Islam* (Heidelberg 1925), p. 232 ff. It was only as the result of reforms introduced by Riza Khan Pehlevi in 1925 and subsequent years that interfaith relations entered upon a new and happier phase; see the writer's forthcoming *History of the Jews of Persia.*

[106] p. 74-75.

[107] This Mulla Rafael is one of the few rabbis whom our author mentions by name. In contrast to Benjamin of Tudela who faithfully recorded the names of all persons whom he met and with whom he conversed, Rabbi David is unfortunately somewhat reticent in this respect.

taken prisoner. One of the Jews was hewn in two in the gate of the town and the others were beaten nearly to death."[108] Through the intervention, however, of the Governor, Abbas Mirza,[109] who resided in Tabriz, the plight of the Jews was relieved and the money taken from them returned.

The suffering of the Jews in Urmia[110] had its repercussions on their brethren in Salmas. "On these also," says our author, "came the disaster of the Urmia Jews. To that the wicked Mohammedans said, surely it happened to them on account of the blood of the above child. Some of them fled away and some of them were put into prison, but they were not so unfortunate as to be put to death or flogged, but go free by means of money."[111] Due to the persecution of their Moslem neighbors, many once

[108] There are parallel reports of this event from non-Jewish observers. Thus, Perkins, *op. cit.*, p. 276, observes categorically that "the hostility cherished by Mohammedans towards the Jews is inconceivably more bitter than their hatred to Christians." He reports the public beheading and subsequent burning of a Jew, and relates that the Moslems of Urmia petitioned the Governor for the extermination of the entire Jewish population. Cf. also Grant, A., *The Nestorians, or the Lost Tribes* (New York 1845), p. 383; "During my residence in Urmia a Jew was publicly burned to death in that city by order of the Governor on an allegation of the assumed crime. Naphtha was freely poured over him, the torch was applied and the miserable man was instantly enveloped in flames."

[109] Abbas Mirza was the father of Shah Mahmud. Our author describes him as a friend of the Jews and their protector against the fanaticism of the Moslem clergy and masses. Cf. Perkins, *op. cit.*, p. 276, 433, 444.

[110] A revealing account of the present Jewish community at Urmia is given by S. Rubashov in the Palestinian daily, *Dabar* of September 6, 1940. See also the letter of the local Jews to the traveler J. J. Tschorni published in the latter's *Sefer ha-Massa'oth* (Petersburg 1884), vol. ii, p. 240-41.

[111] p. 77. That our author did not exaggerate is shown by the contemporary reports of Christian travelers and missionaries, who even add to the tragic picture of the Jewish situation.

Only a few years after Rabbi David's visit two representatives of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Messrs. E. Smith and H. G. O. Dwight, undertook a tour of investigation into Armenia and Persia. Summarizing their findings, in a volume entitled *Researches* . . . (Boston 1833), they thus describe the general situation: "We found the Jewish synagogue (in Salmas) neater and better carpeted than the Christians' [church] and the Jews better dressed than the Christians. Their copies of the Law were beautiful and we tried to purchase one but in vain. They reckon 30 or 35 families here." The priest of the Nestorians informed them that these Jews "are doubtless much oppressed but less so than his own townsmen; for not being cultivators of the soil their property is not so tangible. . . ." "The Jews of Persia," add our authors, "generally are the most ignorant, demoralized and oppressed part of the community. They are said to have neither tradition nor history to inform them when their ancestors came into the country. Jerusalem Rabbis often pass by them on their way to the north. We found one at Salmas at the time of our visit . . ." (vol. ii, p. 195).

flourishing communities entirely disappeared. Maragha, for example, ceased to be the seat of a Jewish community around 1800, when the Jews were driven out on account of a blood libel.[112] Similarly, Tabriz, where over 50 Jewish families are supposed to have lived, became *Judenrein* towards the end of the 18th century through similar circumstances.[113]

In some places persecution of the Jews took the form of forced conversions.[114] In Shiras—so our author was informed—"some years ago a number of Jews turned Mohammedan owing to great oppression from the Mohammedans. They are not, however, connected with them in marriage, but with their own people, and it is the same in many parts of Persia where Jews have become Mohammedan by reason of great oppression."

Of Bushir, he reports that the 200 poor families of Persian Jews there "are very badly treated by the common Mohammedans."

* * *

All in all, Rabbi David's accounts furnish our most reliable starting-point for the study of the Jews of Kurdistan. When supplemented by information gleaned from later travelers, it is possible to trace the changes which have successively ensued among these almost forgotten communities. Under the present Iraqian and Iranian administrations, their cultural isolationism is gradually disappearing, and the impact of new trends

[112] Interesting details concerning the community at Maragha will be found in Mann, *Texts,* vol. i, p. 481, 494, and Assaf, *op. cit.,* p. 17-25.

[113] p. 80-82. The outburst of religious fanaticism against the Jews in the Northern Persian communities of Urmia, Salmas, Maragha and Tabriz, etc. has been attested by many travelers, *e.g.,* by S. G Wilson in *Missionary Review of the World* (New York 1895), p 738-40. The author lived for fourteen years as a missionary in Tabriz. Writing some fifty years earlier J. B. Rousseau relates, in his *Notice historique sur la Perse* (Marseille 1818), p. 27-28, the gruesome story of how, as the result of a blood libel, Agha Mahmud Khan tried to induce his nephew, the predecessor of Shah Fath Ali, to exterminate all the Jews of Persia, and how the monarch was persuaded by his ministers to compromise on this suggestion by ordering the mass slaughter of all those living in Tabriz.

[114] Cf. Peterman, H., *Reisen im Orient* (Leipzig 1861), vol. ii, p. 175-76: "Jews live in Persia under dire oppression. They are the most despised of all peoples and are subjected to constant maltreatment. For this reason thousands of them have renounced their faith. . . . They are not permitted, however, to embrace Christianity. . . . The entire Jewish population of Lar and Meshed have become converted to Islam."

in this part of the world may tend to alter their pattern of life. Such development affords excellent material for the study of the process of acculturation, but in order to assess that process it is necessary first to be fully acquainted with past conditions.[115]

[115] For further details see the present writer's forthcoming work, *The Jews of Persia, Their History and Literature.*