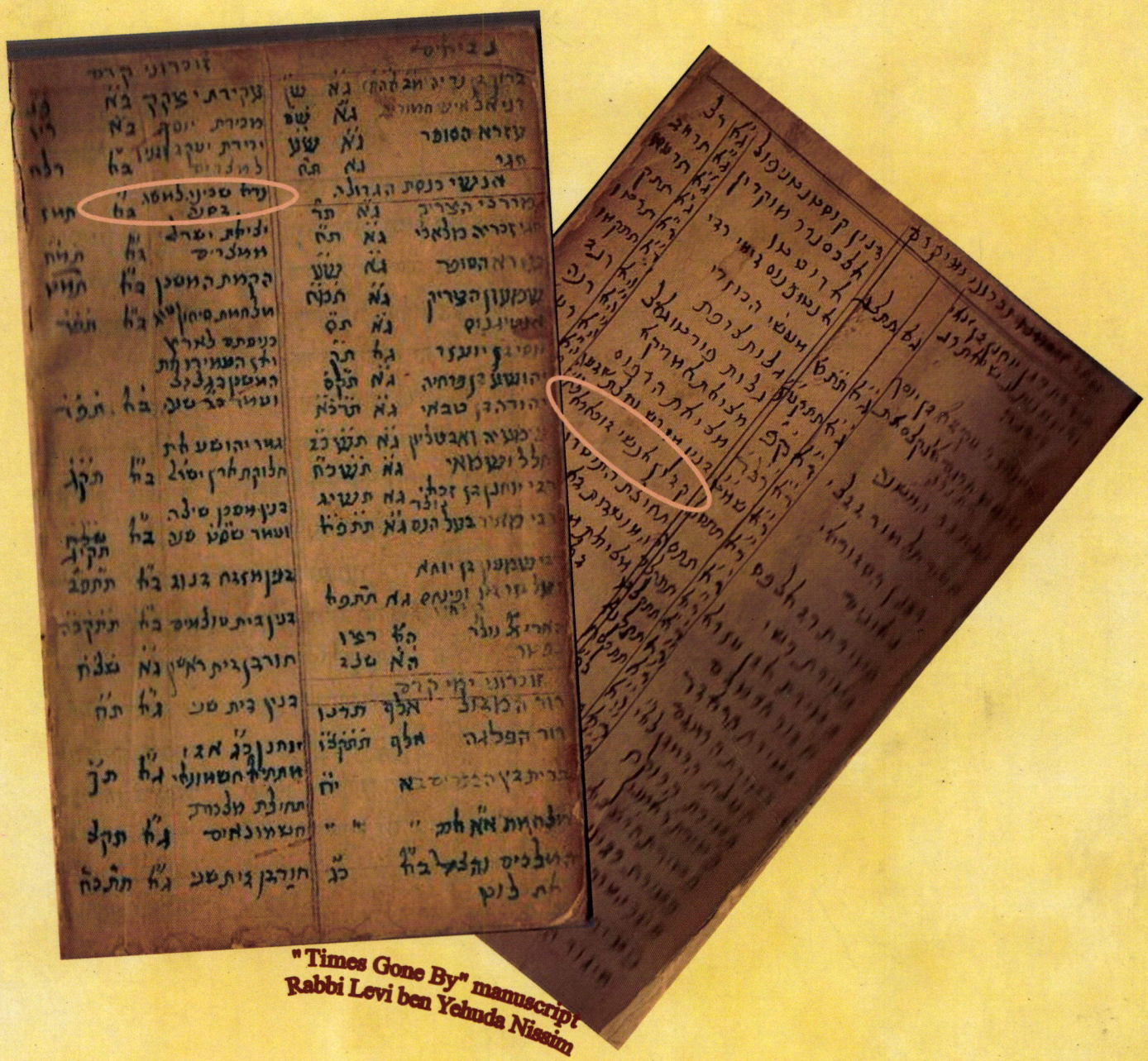
Times Gone By

זכרון ימי קדם



"Times Gone By" manuscript
Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim

תולדות יהודי משהד ומשפחות הנסימי

The Annals of Mashhadi Jews and the Nissimi Family

ב"ה

Times Gone By

Dedicated to Mashhadi Jews and to **HaRav Levi ben Yehuda Nissimi** a predominant Rabbi of the community

By Reuven Nissimi (R.N.)

2015 תשע"ה

www.nissimi.org

Dedications

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We would like to express our appreciation for the time and effort that

Reuven Nissimi has put into this extraordinary endeavor,

"Times Gone By" –

Annals of Mashadi Jews and Nissimi Families.

We are sure many people will enjoy reading this impressive history of our families and the Mashadi Jews. The research on this history has been quite extensive and thorough.

We have supported Reuven in his efforts to bring his dream of publishing this

Extraordinary volume to fruition and wish to help share this history with

Future generations.

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In loving memory of our parents,

Aghajan and Malakeh Nassimi *z"l*

Who travelled from Mashad to Teheran to Europe to New York

And were buried in Jerusalem.

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Mouris & Mahnaz Nassimi & Family

Mike & Ania Nassimi & Family

Edward & Anita Nassimi & Family
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BS"D

Many thanks to my dear cousin and good friend

REUVEN NISSIMI and his family

Whose endless love of our grandfather, Mola Abdollah, the family, and the Mashhadi community in general, made this monumental undertaking possible.

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Times Gone By

Annals of Mashhadi Jews and Nissimi Families

is a meticulous labor of love, a heritage of ancestors, a guide to our values, and a gift to our children and generations to come.
It tells of cherished memories and the common and shared legacy of our community in a selfless and honest manner.

It has been a great privilege to be part of this project, to have been given the opportunity to assist and support making this book available to our community in the U.S.

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In loving memory of my parents and my late wife,

Lotfollah ben Mola Abdollah Nassimi	**חגניה בן הרב לוי נסים**
Bibijan bat Hadi Nassimi	**בת שבע בת יצחק נסים**
&	
Estella Nassimi bat Esshagh Hakimian	**אסתר בת יצחק חכימיאן**

May G-d bless their souls and keep their memory alive.

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ISAAC NASSIMI & FAMILY
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HaRav Levi Nissim
All Israel …
With a Good Name …
A Good Name is Better than Good Oil …

*

הרב לוי נסים ליד התיבה, מעוטרת בספרי תורה.
HaRav Levi Nissim next to the Teiva (podium) crowned with the Torah scrolls, Eid-Gah, the Central Synagogue. Conclusion of Simchat Torah, 1946

In Honor of HaRav Levi ben Yehuda Nissim, 1959 (כ"ב חשוון תש"כ)

Rabbi Levi Nissim - Mola Abdolah

	All Israel have a Share in the World to Come	~1886-1959

Blessed be Those who Work in the Torah

Rabbi Levi (Mola Abdolah) was a spiritual leader and religious authority. His broad education, his knowledge of Jewish history and of its rabbis, and his fundamental understanding of the religious laws and legislations made him an authority for teaching and for answering questions in the field of Judaism and its rulings. **Mola Abdolah** was privileged to study Torah, to teach Torah and perform acts of charity. In turn, he made it possible for numerous others to do the same. He reared generations of students and civil servants. He would hurry to do any mitzvah, no matter how great or minor. He performed hundreds of circumcisions (brit milah). He arranged and performed marriage ceremonies for hundreds of couples. He conducted respectable wedding ceremonies for couples without means. He dealt with of matters of true charity such as caring for the families of the deceased. He cared for the basic needs of the poor and gave anonymously to families who had lost their means of income. All these deeds he performed quietly and humbly. **Rabbi Levi**'s personality had a large influence in shaping the character of the Mashhadi community for generations to come as a society based on the principles of the Torah and on charity.

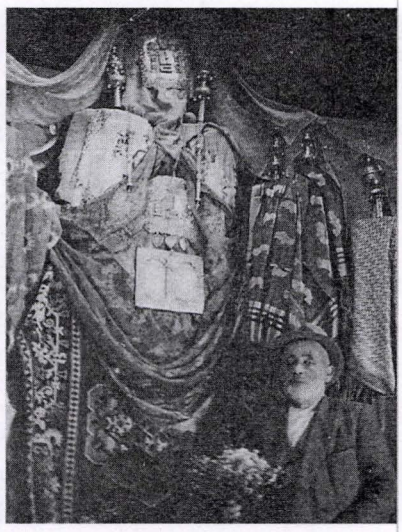
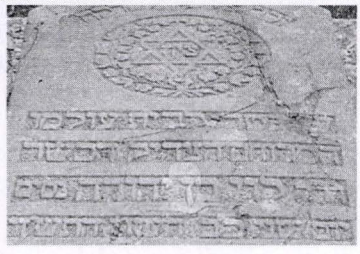
Rabbi Levi loved his fellow man and drew them close to the Torah by enjoyable means based on the principles of prophets and sages of Israel. In his Shabbat sermons Rabbi Levi would emphasize studying the prophets and Pirqei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers). Saturday class began with gathering students for a special Torah study, and towards the time for Mincha (the afternoon prayer service) a large crowd would join the class to hear the rabbi's sermon. The synagogue would fill to capacity, including the women's section. Decades later men and women still described the intensity of their experience during these sermons.

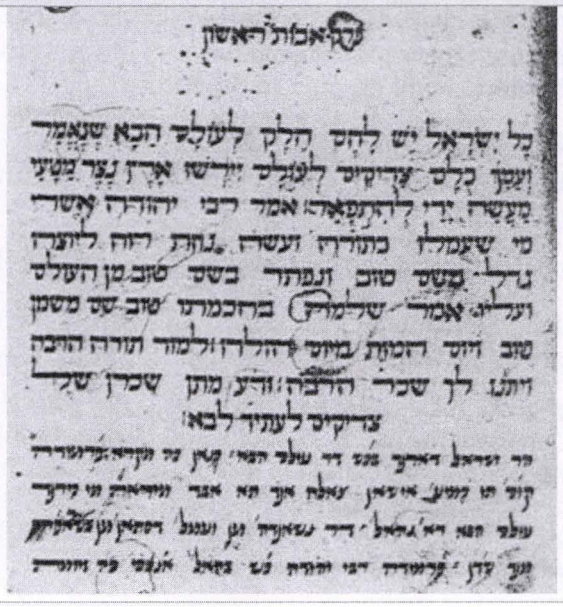
Rabbi Levi attended to the welfare of the public, for the sake of G-d, and most of his time and energy was dedicated, gratis, to the public good. Because of his integrity, gentleness, and sense of judgment he was appealed to in personal matters, family disputes and rulings in financial disputes between merchants.

Shamai said "Make the Torah a daily part of your life." **Mola Abdolah's** evening classes were primarily for students with previous Torah knowledge. During the lessons the rabbi spoke with great humility. His students adored him and years after his passing they would still speak with pride about the experience of learning with him.

Rabbi Levi was known for his diligence in preserving the sanctity of the synagogue and for his special attitude toward the commandments dealing with charity. He considered charity a primary edict that everyone must engage in, including those of limited means. He would be the first to contribute and then would go from door to door, from merchant to merchant, and then among the rows of worshipers and would collect

	money for charity. If necessary, he would appeal to the Mashhadi community in the diaspora (London and elsewhere), in order to raise the amount needed. The acts of kindness and charity of the community, its rabbis and the community leaders maintained that generation, and passed down a glorious heritage to our generation and for generations to come.	
	He Lived with a Good Name and Died with a Good Name	
Rabbi Levi	**Rabbi Levi** (Mola Abdolah) was born in ~1886 to Yehuda and Miriam **Nissim**. On his paternal side, he was the great-grandson of Yeuda Nissim who experienced and documented the forced conversion. On his maternal side, he was the grandson of Reuven Nissim (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir) who had business ties with the British Consul.	[R.N., There are differing estimates of the year in which he was born – ~1884-1886]
	In his childhood **Rabbi Levi** studied in Mashhad with Mola Yosef Bassal. He completed his Torah studies in the city of Marv with Rabbi Yosef Garji and at the yeshiva of Rabbi Shmuel Garji. **Rabbi Levi** married Esther, daughter of Rachamim, granddaughter of Rabbi Moshe Nissim - one of the prominent rabbis of the underground period. Already in his thirties he served as the rabbi of the community of Marv with Rabbi Menashe Betzalel (Mola Faraj) who also studied with the same rabbis. Mola Faraj and Mola Abdolah were faithful friends who never parted ways until the death of Mola Faraj in 1942.	1910s
	After the Communist Revolution, like many members of the community, **Rabbi Levi** and his family returned to Mashhad. The rabbi lived in Mashhad for about thirty years – during which time he made many business trips: • During the 1920s, he visited Marv several times in order to take care of the religious needs of the community that remained there (such as marriages, circumcisions, kashrut, etc.). • In 1929 he spent a year in **Kerman** for business purposes. • From 1934-1941, the rabbi stayed in Peshawar (India at that time) for commercial purposes. In Peshawar, in addition to his business, he served as rabbi of the Jewish community, which was composed of merchants from Mashhad, Herat and Bukhara.	1920s 1930s
	The next ten years, from 1941 to 1951, **Rabbi Levi** lived in Mashhad. These were difficult times and critical to the fate of the Mashhad community. These years were vitally important to the religious and community leadership of **Rabbi Levi**: • In 1942, Rabbi Menashe died. This was a great loss to the community - and especially to **Rabbi Levi**. • These were the difficult years of World War II - years of great concern and hardship for the community. It was a trying period and it was followed by waves of refugees from Bukhara and Afghanistan who found shelter and help from the Jewish community in Mashhad. • Days of fear and uncertainty followed the departure of the	1940s

	Russians. The riots of Pesach 1946 and the attack on the Jewish neighborhood by the mob – these ordeals resulted in the uprooting of the Jewish community of Mashhad to Tehran and to Israel. These were ten years of significant changes among the Jews of Mashhad – ten years of unique public and religious Jewish leadership that befell **Rabbi Levi**.  In 1951, just after the vast majority of the community had left Mashhad, **Rabbi Levi** moved to Tehran. In Tehran Rabbi Levi lived near the Levian Synagogue. His house was open to the community and many would call on him every day or so to ask questions, seek advice or just visit. **Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim** died in 1959 - with a longing for Israel – a longing that was never fulfilled because of his sudden illness and death. A large crowd accompanied him to his final resting place.	[1946 Rabbi Levi next to the ark, surrounded by Sifrei Torah. With the courtesy of Avraham and Zvia Zvuloni] 1950s [כ"ב בחשוון תש"כ]
	A Good Name is Better than Good Oil, and the Day of Death than the Day of Birth	
The Wages of the Righteous will be Paid in the Future	נפטר לבית עולמו המרוחם הצדיק הכשר הרב לוי בן יהודה נסים יום שני כ"ב חשוון התש"ך Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim Monday, November 23, 1959  The generation that lived during the lifetime of **Rabbi Levi** is passing away, but his character is preserved in the spirit of the community. Following are fragments of memories that illustrate the verse: **the wages of the righteous will be paid in the future.**	1959
I Envisioned Mola Abdolah	David ben Mola Faraj, who lost his own father at the age of two, describes his memory of Mola Abdolah as a child in Mashhad (in the 1940s): **"I envisioned ministering angels in the image of Mola Abdolah"**	[2007 during a meeting with David ben Mola Faraj Betzaleli
Admiration and Appreciation Forever	Habibolah Dilmanian, researcher of family trees, concludes the genealogy of the "Mola Abdolah Branch" with these words: Although I do not usually add any text to my genealogical trees - some of the characteristics of the blessed Mola Abdolah deserve to be mentioned. Mola Abdolah was endowed with the most noble character traits - an impressive degree of fairness, kindness, and humility. He was the good friend and comrade of Mola Faraj Elishayoff ... both served the public with all their heart and with no remuneration.	1993] [Family Tree - Habibolah Dilmanian]

	To you, with eternal admiration and appreciation, Habibolah Dilmanian, 1993, New York	
We will Remember Forever	Excerpts from the brochure of the Exhibition of our Heritage - New York 1985: ... Mola Abdolah was an educated, open-minded and perceptive person ... During World War II hundreds of Jewish refugees from Herat and Bukhara arrived in Mashhad in wretched condition. With the encouragement and leadership of Mola Abdolah and his colleagues [Mola Faraj and Dash Karim], the Mashhad community helped these refugees in an unbelievable way ... [during the forties, the hard years of war, riots and leaving Mashhad] *all religious matters fell [mostly] on the shoulders of Mola Abdolah. Despite his age and failing health, Mola Abdolah served the community with no remuneration and with all his heart. **We will remember forever** **The clear and penetrating voice of Mola Abdolah when he sang "Qol Nidrei" or "The Confession" accompanied by his tears and his words that penetrated to the depths of the heart and soul.**	[P. 39] *Mola Faraj died on 1942 and Mola Rafi had a stroke in 1949
His Righteousness will Protect Us	An excerpt from the memoirs of Soleiman Hazan - New York: I was privileged to be witness to the ... superior qualities of Mola Abdolah ... Mola Abdolah was an example of self-sacrifice and piety. He was an example of philanthropy and fellowship. An example of a dedicated public servant, gentle and humble - he worked tirelessly, for G-d's sake and with pure intent. **May his soul be saved** The right of the righteous, the Gaon Rabbi **Levi ben Yehuda**, protect our holy community. Amen. May it be His will.	2007 [Days Gone By/ Those Were the Days]
	Excerpt from Pirqei Avot with Translation in Persian	
Handwritten Pirqei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) Translation in Persian		[From the library of Rabbi Levi Nissim] Handwritten page attached to Pesach Haggadah 1879]

	Sources	
	This work is based on: • Excerpts from the life story of Rabbi Levi as published in "Qehila" (edited by Daniel Nissimi) • Collection of memories from the members of the Mashhad community	[2008]

Times Gone By
From the Burning Bush
The Chronicle
Sources
Transliteration Rules
Structure

These are the Names
The Hopes ...
...and Disappointments

And They Tortured Us ...
Before the Forced Conversion
The Forced Conversion
The Underground
The Recovery
The Settlements

... and the Lord Heard
Twilight
Dargaz
Leaving Mashhad
Those Were the Days

...And the Lord Brought us Forth
London
Milan
Tehran
New York

Israel
... Jewish Soul
... Towards Zion
...The Hope
...The Land of Zion

* Times Gone By *

From the Burning Bush

	From the Burning Bush to the Annals of Mashhadi Jews	
Back ground	My grandfather, **Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim**, summarized the history of the People of Israel in several tables that he inscribed in his prayer book (published Livorno 1892). In these tables he summed up the main events of the Biblical period, continued to the Second Temple, the Mishnah, the Talmud, the Sages of Israel and on to the beginnings of Zionism ... including "the ingathering of the Jews from Bukhara in Eretz Israel" and the "beginning of the establishment of settlements in the Land of Israel." He called these tables "**Times Gone By**" and "**the Order of the Generations.**" But they contained no reference at all to the history of the Jews of Mashhad and the forced conversion they suffered. When I was a child, my grandfather was in the habit of assembling his grandchildren together every evening for 'story time.' All the grandchildren gathered around him, the happiest ones were those on his knees, to hear the Bible stories he would tell. Those were magical moments in the journey to our history, an experience still etched in our memories. But again - no reference at all to Mashhadi Jewry and the forced conversion. Perhaps this is because the maker of history is not always aware of the historical reality in which he finds himself. My grandfather and his contemporaries, who lived for fifty years as forced converts, emerged completely untainted, leaving almost no written records of what they had endured. The few accounts by community members were written outside of the borders of Mashhad and at the end of, or after, the underground period. (See writings of Rabbi Garji, Farajelah Levi and Yaaqov Dilmanian.)	[Pictures / Documents / Yehuda / Rabbi Levi]
Lists of Rabbi Levi Nissim Mola Abdelah	Below is a segment of the summary of **Rabbi Levi Ben Yehuda Nissim** that connects the distant Biblical days to the long interlude of the Diaspora, at the end of which was born the community of Mashhadi Jews.	[The dates are as published in the Sidur of Livorno]

Event	Years from Creation
Divine Presence appeared to **Moses** in the Burning Seneh (Bush)	2447
Exodus of Israelites from Egypt	2448
Establishment of Tabernacle (משכן)	2449
.....	
Entrance to Israel and the establishment of the Tabernacle in Gilgal	2484
Building the First Temple	2925
Destruction of the First Temple	3338
Building the Second Temple	3408
Yochanan Kohen Gadol, father of Matatiyahu the Hasmonean	3420

Start of Hasmonean Kingdom	3590
Destruction of the Second Temple	3828
.....	
Completion of Babylonian Talmud	4180
Composition of the Turim (חיבור הטורים)	5100
.....	
Khazari Story	4615
Exile from Portugal	5252
.....	
Gathering of the Bukharan Jews to Eretz Israel	5650
.....	

The first event listed in the above table states that the Divine revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush. In "Shemot Rabbah" is a moving description of the sorrow of God, Blessed be He, at the suffering of the Israelites: [שמות רבה ב]

"God, Blessed be He, said unto Moses:
Do you not feel that I am grieving, just as Israel is grieving?
You should know that from where I am talking with you (from the thorns) ...
I share their sorrow."

The days of exile of the community of Mashhad were harsh and unbearable, and decrees [for the purpose of disallowing the practice of Judaism] threatened the entire Mashhadi Jewish community. Only the belief that G-d is a partner in the sorrow of Israel and that they would be delivered, as the Israelites had been delivered from Egypt, gave them their remarkable power to persevere.

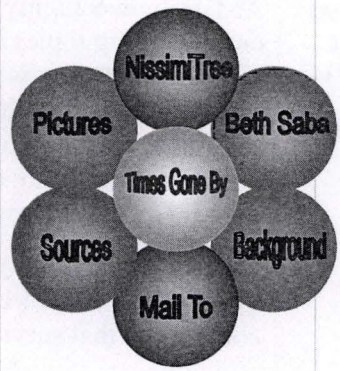
The Sefer HaAggadah (Book of Legends) states that: [ספר האגדה]

For four reasons the Israelites were delivered from Egypt:
They did not change their names,
They did not change their language,
They did not reveal their mysteries (secrets),
They did not abandon circumcision.

[Bialik & Ravnitzky, Dvir, IV]

And thus it was also with the Jews of Mashhad.

The Chronicle

	Division into Parts	
Description	The purpose of this chronicle is to analyze and compare the history of Mashhadi Jewry with the history of the Nissimi families in order to breathe life and realism into the events that took place. Merging both stories also sheds new light on both the family and the community. The illustration to the right demonstrates the method used to achieve this goal. In the center appears the part, **"Times Gone By,"** which describes the history of the Jews of Mashhad. This part both draws from and contributes to the surrounding six parts. See below a summary of each part.	
	Summary of the Chronicle Parts	
TIMES GONE BY	In our generation we have witnessed a great interest in the history of the community of Mashhad, and proof of that interest lies in the various reports and articles published about it - each from a different perspective and with a different point of view. In this paper an attempt is being made to connect what we know of the history of the community with the findings presented in the other parts. The part, **"Times Gone By,"** describes **the history of the Jews of Mashhad** – which symbolically completes my grandfather's list of the events of Jewish history up to his time - as it now also includes the story of Mashhad.	
BACK GROUND	This part provides the setting for understanding the other parts of this chronicle. It discusses the historical, geographical, and cultural backgrounds.	
SOURCES	This part contains the sources and testimonies that this chronicle relies on: • Analysis of written records • Reports by various people who lived in or visited Mashhad	
BEIT SABA	This part provides a framework for the information collected on all the branches of the Nissimi genealogical family tree, both the historical events and the personal narratives. Special emphasis is placed on **Beit Saba** ("Grandfather's House"). This was the most interesting period – during which the Saba (grandfather) was forced to live as a convert during his youth, lived as a Jew in his adult life, and was privileged to live to see Israel's independence in his old age. Everyone and his own grandfather. Everyone and his unique story. Merging all the stories together provides a vivid picture of a family whose roots are one, but whose narratives embrace cities and countries from around the world (Mashhad, Marv, London, Milan, India, New York, Israel, etc).	
PICTURES	This part illustrates the past (up to the 1960s) with pictures and photos of the Nissimi families: • Portraits of individuals and families from the various branches of the family tree	

	• Photos of various documents, such as manuscripts and notes that give a feel for handwritten texts.	
NISSIMI TREE Order of the Generations	At family events, my uncle and my parents used to have conversations for hours on fascinating topics such as: Who are the sons of whom? Who married whom in the Mashhadi community? And so on. But my generation hardly even knows their immediate family. It seemed worthwhile to discuss in this chronicle all the Mashhadi families but, because my knowledge in this area was limited, I confined myself to what I do know. I called this part the "**Order of the Generations.**" It describes the genealogy of the Nissimi families. I hope that eventually other Mashhadi families will also prepare their own family tree so they can all be bound together into a rich historical tapestry of a Jewish community that survived against all odds.	
MAIL TO (Comments are welcome)	This chronicle is based on both oral and written information obtained from the readers. All the information is located on the website (www.nissimi.org), and is available to all who are interested.	

Primary Sources

ID	Source	Author	Relates to	Comments	Year
Anissut-1	Manuscript – Seder Hoshanah Raba	Rabbi Yehuda Nissim	Forced Conversion of Mashhadi Jews	An important manuscript that seems to be lost. R. Garji describes the forced conversion of the Mashhadi Jews and refers to this manuscript.	1839
Anissut-2	Manuscript	Dilmani - Mashhad	Forced Conversion of Mashhadi Jews	Refer to Ben Zvi	1839
Benjamin of Tudela	The Travels of Benjamin of Tudela	Benjamin of Tudela	Persia	//sephardicsages.org/ben1	1159 - 1172
Bill of Sale	Hebrew University 139574	Bill of Sale between: M. Haroun and Abdol-Rahman Mashhad	Signatures of: - Yosef Levi - Moshe Nissim - Binyamin Kordevani - Azriel Aziz	http:// jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/ ketubot/ Some signatures in Hebrew and some in Persian. [R.N. In the site it is presented as a Ketuba, but it seems to be a Bill of Sale.]	1897
Donations	Archives of Sephardic Community Committee	Rishon LeTzion	Donations from: … Reza Nissim and Faraj Nissim (Zioni family)	Refer to Levy 2	1900
Ketab-e anusi1	Ketab-e anusi – Persian Jews' Chronicle	Baba ben Lotf	A lyrical document of the annals of Persian Jewry	Taken from secondary sources.	1617 - 1662
Ketab-e anusi2	Ketab-e anusi – Persian Jews' Chronicle	Baba ben Lotf (grandchild) - Kashan	A lyrical document of the annals of Kashani Jewry and other communities during the Afghan invasion	Taken from secondary sources.	1722 - 1730 1730 – 1722
Map of Eid-Gah	Map of Eid-Gah suburb in Mashhad	The Shaare' Tova Youth Organization	Eid-Gah	Persian. N.Y., 1985	1940s
PRO - Complaint	PRO	British Consulate - Mashhad	Esshagh and Abdol-Rahim (sons of Abdol-Rahman Saghir)	A complaint to the British consulate about a Persian merchant.	1905
PRO - Petition	PRO	British Consulate - Mashhad	Haji Abdur Rahman, Jadid	Petition from: Haji Abdur Rahman, Jadid - Pension for Oct-Dec, 1889	1890
PRO - Queen Victoria's Birthday	PRO	British Consulate - Mashhad	Haji Abdul Rahman	Queen Victoria's Birthday. List of British invitees: Haji Abdul Rahman (Jew Reuben)	1890
Slaughter Certification	… Documents/ Yehuda/ Rabbi Levi	Shmuel Garji - Marv	Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim	Yeshiva of Shmuel ben Shlomo Garji	1911
Yehuda Nissim	Reception Bill	Rabbi Yehuda Nissim (שו"ב) - Mashhad	Rabbi Yehuda is the grandson of Nissim (father of all	Zarach Kochav MeYaaqov – R. Hizqiah HaKohen from Bukhara. By:	~ 1820s

			Nissimis). He lived during the event of the Anissut (forced conversion)	Rav Yehuda HaKohen Rabin Rav Yitzhaq HaKohen Rabin (The bill from the library of Rav Hizqiah)	
Zionist Archives	Zionist Archives		Folders: A126, KKL5, J1, S6, 56	Folders that refer to Mashhadi Jews. Refer also to the summaries under [Sources].	1940s

Secondary Sources

[ID]	Source (book, article, site)	Author	Place	Comments	Year
Aghlarpur	"Zichron Tzadiqim" book	Bahram Aghlarpur	USA	זיכרון צדיקים	~1980
Ben Zvi 1	Nidachei Yisrael	Yitzhak Ben Zvi	Israel	נדחי ישראל	1963
Ben Zvi 2	Researches and Sources	Yitzhak Ben Zvi	Israel	מחקרים ומקורות	1966
Betzalel	Memories of Yechezqel Betzalel	Yechezqel Betzalel	Israel	זיכרונות יחזקאל בצלאל Printed by Yoram ben Yaaqov Betzalel	2004
Britannica	Encyclopedia Britannica				2004
Da'at Miqra	Atlas of Da'at Miqra	Yehuda Elitzur, Yehuda Kil	Israel	Rav Kook Institute	1998
Daniel	A History of the Persian Jews	Daniel Earl Spector	USA	University of Texas	1975
Dilmanian	History of the Jews of Mashhad	Yaghoub Dilmanian	Tehran New York	Persian (original) Persian and English	1966 2001
Exhibition	Exhibition of Our Heritage booklet	Mashhadi Youth Organization	New York	חוברת תערוכת המורשת שלנו	1985
Farajolah	Article of Farajolah Levy	Farajolah Levy	Israel	חיבורו של פרג'אלה לוי Persian	1931
Fischel 1	The Jews in Iran from the 16th to the 18th Centuries	Walter Joseph Fischel	Israel	היהודים באיראן במאות ט"ז – י"ח Pe'amim 6	1980
Fischel 2	The Jews of Persia	Walter Fischel		1795 - 1940	1950
Garji	Pleasure of Shabbat	Matatiyahu Garji	Israel	עונג שבת Original publication: Refael Later publication: Beit Midrash Nativ Meir	1913
Habib Levi	History of Jewish Communities in Iran	Dr. Habib Levi	Los Angeles	Tarikh Jame' Yahudian Iran Dr. Hooshang Abrami	1997
Jewish Encyclopedia	Jewish Encyclopedia			www.jewishencyclopedia.com	2004
Kashani	Forced Conversion of Jews of Mashhad	Reuven Kashani	Israel		1970
Chaqlai (=Khaqlai)	Courageous Leadership …	Yehuda Chaqlai	Israel	חקלאי. מנהיגות אמיצה וסיכול עלילות	2002
Levy 1	Evidence and documents – History of Mashhadi Jews	Azaria Levy	Israel	עדויות ותעודות לתולדות יהודי משהד Pe'amim 6	1980
Levy 2	Mashhadi Jews – Beginning of 20th Century	Azaria Levy	Israel	יהודי משהד בראשית המאה העשרים	1989

[ID]	Source (book, article, site)	Author	Place	Comments	Year
Levy 3	History of Jews in Iran - Case Study	Azaria Levy	Israel	פרשה בתולדות יהודי פרס כנושא לימודי Ma'alot	1977
Levy 4	The Azizolahyoff Levy Family	Azaria Levy	Israel		1998
MJCA	Two Hundred Years of Resistance - History of Mashadi Jews – Volumes A, B, C	Shlomo Kaboli	New York	מאתיים שנות עמידה - תולדות יהדות משהד - א', ב, ג' MJCA - Mashhadi Jewish Community of America	2005-2007
Nathan	History of Iranian Jews	Nathan Ben David	Tel Aviv	תולדות יהודי איראן	1989
Netzer 1	Persecutions and Forced Conversions – History of Jews in Iran – 17th Century	Amnon Netzer	Israel	רדיפות ושמדות בתולדות יהודי איראן במאה הי"ז Pe'amim 6	1980
Netzer 2	Collection of Persian Jews Manuscripts in Ben Zvi Institute	Amnon Netzer	Israel	אוצר כתבי יד של יהודי פרס במכון בן צבי	1986
Patai	Jadid al-Islam	Refael Patai	USA	Wayne State University Press, Detroit	1997
Yehushua	From Nidachei Yisrael in Afghanistan to Anussei Mashhad in Iran	Ben Zion Yehushua	Israel	מנדחי ישראל באפגאניסתאן לאנוסי משהד באיראן	1992
Zilpa	My Childhood in Mashhad and my Aliyah to Israel	Sara Zilpa Kohen	Israel	ילדותי במשהד ועלייתי לארץ ישראל	2001
Zvuloni	Parent's Home	Eliyahu Zvuloni Family	Israel	בית אב	1983

Transliteration Rules

English		Persian		Hebrew		Pronunciation	Meaning
A	Aqa, Agha	آقا	آ	אַקא	א		Mister
B	Behrouz	بهروز	ب	בַּהרוז	ב		Good day (name)
G	Gol	گل	گ	גַּול	ג		Flower
J	Jam	جام	ج	ג'אם	ג'		Glass
D	Dash	داش	د	דַּאש	ד		Big brother, cousin
Z	Zat	ذات	ذ	ד'את	ד'	D'. Pronounced 'Z'.	Nature
H	Harat(h)	هرات	ه	הַראת	ה		A city in Afghanistan
O	Dalon	دالان	و	דאלַון	ו	Is written as Dalan and pronounced by Mashhadis as Dalon.	Passageway
V	Marv	مرو		מרוַו	וו		City in Turkmenistan
Z	Zan	زن	ز	זַן	ז		Woman
H,	Hayat	حیاط	ح	חַיאט	ח		Courtyard
Kh	Khorasan	خوراسان	خ	חַוראסאן	ח'	H'=Kh	Province in Iran
T	Lotfolah	لطف الله	ط	לוטַפאלה	ט		G-d's favor (name)
Z	Mozafar	مظفر	ظ	מוט'פַר	ט'	T'. Pronounced 'Z'	Victor (name)
I	Hadi	هادی	ی	האדִי	י		Mashiyach (name)
K	Turkmenistan	تورکمنستان	ک	תורכמנסתאן	כ		Land of Turkmen
L	Kalat	کلات	ل	כלַאת	ל		A city in Khorasan
M	Mashhad	مشهد	م	מַשהד	מ		Capital of Khorasan
N	Nishapur	نیشاپور	ن	נִישאפור	נ		A city in Khorasan
S	Sabzevar	سبزوار	س	סַבזוואר	ס		A city in Khorasan
A	Abdelah	عبدالله	ع	עַבדאלה	ע		Servant of G-d
Gh	Afghanistan	افغانستان	غ	אפגַאנסתאן	ע'= ג		
F	Fars	فارس	ف	פַּארס	פ		A province in Iran
S,	Nassrelah	نصرالله	ص	נצַראלה	צ		Friend of G-d (name)
Z	Reza	رضا	ض	רצַ'א	צ'	S'. Pronounced 'Z'	Wish (name)
Q,	Qodratolah,	قدرت الله	ق	קוֹדרתאלה	ק		G-d is Mighty (name)
Gh	Ghodratolah						
R	Ruz	روز	ر	רוז	ר		Day
SH	Shah	شاه	ش	שַאה	ש		King
S	Sabzvar	سبزوار	س	סַבזוואר	ס =ש		A city in Khorasan
T(h)	Torbat	تربت	ت	תורבת	ת		A city in Khorasan
S	Mosnavi	مثنوی	ث	מות'נווי	ת'	Th'. Pronounced 'S'	A Persian poet

In many cases the Mashhadis used names that expressed praise of G-d (like Nuri'el and Micha'el in Hebrew). The structure of these names in Persian is xxx.allah, such as Nur'allah and Abd'allah. These names are pronounced Nur**o**llah (Nurolah) and Abd**o**llah (Abdolah). The Mashhadis pronounce them Nur**e**lah and Abd**e**lah. In this chronicle, the names are written in both styles according to their context.

Structure

	List of Parts	
	To understand the history of the Mashhadi Jews, in this chronicle we will concentrate on the following subjects.	
These are the Names	**Afshar Dynasty - Hope and Disappointment** The period of Nader Shah Afshar brought a short-term relaxation of the suffering of the Jews and gave birth to Mashhadi Jewry. After the assassination of Nader Shah, Khorasan was ruled by Nader Shah's heirs under Afghan influence. Karim Khan Zand dominated in most parts of Persia - except Khorasan.	1729-1747 1747-1795
And Tortured Us	**Qajar Dynasty - Forced Conversion and Underground** The Qajar period witnessed the hundred years of forced conversion of the Jewish community of Mashhad.	1795-1925
... and the Lord Heard	**Pahlavi Dynasty - End of the Underground** Mashhadi Jews' liberation from a life underground and their leaving of Mashhad.	1925-1950
And the Lord Brought Us Forth	**Diaspora Jews of Mashhad** • London • Milan • Tehran • New York	1910-2000s
Israel	**One Hundred Years of Aliyah and Settling the Land of Israel** • Ottoman Turkey • British Mandate • The State of Israel	1900-2000s

These are the Names...

"These are the names of the sons of Israel who came... each with his household"
(Exodus 1:1)

The Hopes...

	Nader Shah Afshar	1736 – 1747
General	With the weakening of the Safavid dynasty (1722), the Afghans invaded Iran from the east and the Turks from the west. Nader Shah expelled the invaders. He conquered many countries and his army marched as far as India and Iraq. All this was accomplished during a short period of 18 years. The Shah brought back many treasures from his conquests and deposited them in the hands of his guards in the "Kalaat Naderi" fort, north of the city of Mashhad. He made Mashhad his capital and brought many different populations (tens of thousands of families), including Jews, from all over Iran to Khorasan and to Mashhad, with the intention of fortifying the region against Afghan attacks and invasions. The concept of a Jewish community in Mashhad was born here.	[Levy1]
Minorities	Nader Shah was a great conqueror and in his realm lived many minorities. To achieve peace and harmony with the Sunni Turks, Nader discarded Shiitism as the official state religion. He was tolerant towards religious minorities and employed Jewish and Christian scholars from Esfahan to translate the Bible.	[Netzer2]
	The Formation of Mashhadi Jewry	
The Origins of Mashhadi Jewry	At the Shah's command, several Jewish families were transferred from the city of Qazvin and its surroundings to the city of Mashhad, with the intention of placing the Shah's treasures in their hands for safekeeping. Before the Jews reached Mashhad, Nader Shah was murdered. This was the origin of the Mashhadi Jewish community.	1746 [Levy1]
The Language	Mashhadi Jews spoke Gilaki. **Note**: Gilaki is the language of the people of Gilan (southwest to the Caspian Sea) and of the people of Mazandaran (southeast to the Caspian Sea). Gilaki is rich in Persian vocabulary but its grammar is closer to that of the European languages (for example, "red apple" in Gilaki grammar is "apple red" in Persian grammar.) Due to the penetration of the Persian language, especially in urban areas and among the youth, many Gilaki words were forgotten or lost.	[Dilmanian] [Wikipedia]
Occupation	Among other occupations, the Jews raised silkworms (a skill they brought with them to Mashhad) and produced silk fabrics that were in great demand (after all, they were situated on the Silk Route).	[Dilmanian]
Residence	From the Zoroastrians, who left the area due to persecution, the Jews purchased plots of land and houses near the wall of Mashhad, on the southern side of the city. The place was called Mahale' Eid-Gah (neighborhood of celebration and holiday),	[Levy1] [The researcher Azaria Levy is one of the descendants of

	and the Jews referred to it as Machaneh Israel (the camp of Israel). They founded a synagogue and converted the local bathhouse to a miqveh (Jewish ritual bathhouse). Simcha Levy and his wife Bemoni served as the miqveh's caretakers.	Simcha]
And These are the Names	All in all, about 40 families were transferred from Qazvin, Dillaman, and their surroundings to Kalaat Naderi, to guard the king's treasures. After Nader Shah was murdered, the soldiers in charge of the journey abandoned the Jews. Only 17 families reached **Kalaat Naderi.** Sixteen families made it to **Mashhad** and seven families reached **Sabzevar**. Therefore, there are Mashhadis with family names such as Sabzevari and Kalaati. These families formed the nucleus that grew into the Mashhadi community. **These are the names** of the families that came to Mashhad from Qazvin and its surroundings:	[Dilmanian]

Name	Comments
Kohen	
Levi	Levy, Levian, etc. Some of whom came from Sabzevar and are therefore called Sabzevari
Aharoni	Also called Zoghali
Aghlar	Aghalar, Moradi, Khafsi
Betzaleli	There were several families. From them came the Ghassabi, Saghaii, Khordi, Mellah
Garji	After the forced conversion they moved to Herat
Dilmani	Dil, Dilmani, and Dilmanian [from the city Dillaman (Salams)]
Hakimi	
Kali	
Mordekhai	
Nissim	Nissim son of Shmuel is the founding father. The family names of his descendants are: Nissim, Nissimi, Nassimi, Nassimian, Nassimiha, Zvuloni, Zioni, Ben-Ami, and Saghir-Nejad.
Rahmani	

Note: There are different estimates as to the number of immigrations, the dates of the immigrations, and the number of families that were transferred. The prevalent version is the one presented above.

...and Disappointments

	Shah Rokh and his Sons	1746 – 1795
Nader's Heirs	After the murder of Nader Shah, "heirs" from all over the country claimed the throne; thus instead of one central rule, many rulers governed in Iran, including: • **Ahmad Khan**, one of Nader's generals, proclaimed himself the ruler of	[Nathan]

	Afghanistan • **Mohammad Khan Qajar**, ruled northern Iran • **Azad Khan and Ali-Mardan Khan**, ruled Esfahan • **Karim Khan Zand**, ruled Shiraz • **Shah Rokh**, Nader Shah's grandson, ruled Khorasan and saw himself as the legitimate heir to Nader Shah Rokh and his sons ruled Mashhad, under Afghan influence. This period lacked a central authority in Iran. The rule of Shah Rokh and his sons lasted until the rise to power of Mohammad Shah Qajar at the end of the eighteenth century.	
	Mashhadi Jewry	
General	Ahmad Shah (the Afghan) transferred several Jewish families from Mashhad to Herat, and several Jews immigrated to Bukhara. However the economic prosperity of Mashhadi Jewry attracted Jews from other cities, such as Yazd, Kashan, and Lar.	1770 [Levy1]
And These are the Names – Later Waves	**These are the names** of the families that came to Mashhad in subsequent waves:	[Dilmanian]

Name	Comments
Bughari	Named after a village near Sabzevar
Zar	Short for Zarbabol (=Zrubavel) - immigrated from Yazd
Hezghia	The sons of Mola Hezghia
Yazdi	Immigrated from Yazd to Mashhad in 1770 because of the famine in Yazd
Kashani	Immigrated from Kashan at the end of the Eighteenth Century
Mangi	Named after a village near Qazvin
Lari	Immigrated from Lar at the end of the Eighteenth Century
Shamsi	

Relations

Letters sent by Rabbi Or Shraga from Yazd to Mashhad, during the years 1782 and 1783 regarding donations to Eretz Israel indicate a close relationship between Yazdi and Mashhadi Jewry. In a letter from 1783, Rabbi Shraga pleads for the release of a woman from her marriage after her husband abandoned her and left for Mashhad. [Levy1] [Ben-Zvi]

Torah scholars, such as Rabbi Siman Tov and Rabbi Binyamin Gol, from different regions in Iran, including Mashhad and Herat, studied under the supervision of Rabbi Shraga of Yazd. [Yehoshua/ 452]

Note: It is a point of interest that the two Mashhadi synagogues in Jerusalem, Haji Adoniyahu and Haji Yechezqel, are both adjacent to Rabbi Shraga's synagogue.

Rabbi Siman Tov

One of the prominent figures of this period in Mashhad was Mola Siman Tov Melamed. He was one of the Yazdis in Herat, he settled in Mashhad before 1793, and he passed away in 1828. His children returned to Herat. Rabbi Siman Tov was a scholar and a poet. His works included: [Netzer2]

Document	Description
Spirit of Life (Hayate' el Ruh)	The first edition of this book was published in Bokhara and the second edition in Jerusalem in 1897. Based on Rabbi Bachaya Ibn Pakuda's Chovot HaLevavot (Duties of the Heart) and on Maimonides' Moreh Nevuchim (The Guide for the Perplexed). Refer to Documents chapter. [Pictures/ Docs/ Rahamim]
Azharoth Warnings (in the third month of the Exodus of the Israelites)	Deals with 613 commandments (365 negative commandments and 248 positive commandments). Refer to passage from the manuscript attached to Rabbi Levi Ben Yehuda Nissim's Pesach Haggadah. Refer to Documents chapter. [Pictures/ Docs/ Yehuda]
Pirqei Avot	Refer to passage from the manuscript attached to Rabbi Levi Ben Yehuda Nissim's Pesach Haggadah. Refer to Documents chapter. [Pictures/ Docs/ Yehuda]
Assortment of Poems and Hymns	In honor of circumcision, 13 Iqarim (Thirteen Principles of Faith), etc.

M. Siman Tov was the grandson of M. Binyamin Yazdi HaKohen. According to the book Khukat Pesach, there was a plague in Mashhad. M. Binyamin summoned all the Jews to the Jewish cemetery to pray for an end to the epidemic. By the time the prayer was finished the plague ended, but M. Binyamin died on the spot. [Kashani/ 24]

And tortured us ...

"And they caused us harm...and tortured us..." (Deuteronomy 26:6)

Before the Forced Conversion

	Qajar Dynasty	1795-1925
Forced Conversion and Life Underground	Unlike the Safavid kings, the kings of the **Qajar** Dynasty were *not* religious fanatics. They preferred not to interfere in religious matters and, as far as they were concerned, the religious leaders were in charge of all spiritual matters. However, like their predecessors, the Qajar rulers retained the Shiite perception of the impurity (nejes) of non-Muslims. This perception expressed itself in legal restrictions and in pogroms, persecutions, and abusive behavior towards Jews. State laws and religious edicts fostered an atmosphere of violence and injustice towards Jews, such as: a. The inheritance of a Jew would become the rightful property of his (converted) Muslim relative. b. Belief in non-Muslim impurity created an aversion to Jews and dictated: • That a Jew must wear a patch that distinguishes him from other people • That a Jew is forbidden from living next to Muslims • That a Jew cannot leave his house on a rainy day (to avoid contaminating a Muslim) The persecution of other minorities was different from that of the Jews. Christians had the support of European countries (e.g., France and Russia), and the Zoroastrians enjoyed the support of their fellow believers in India. The Jews however had no support from outside of Iran and, being isolated, their situation was more difficult and the persecutions persisted. Although there were a few cases in which a Jew was hired to work in the palace or in the government, and although there is some small evidence of intervention by European Jewry on behalf of Iranian Jews during the second half of the Nineteenth Century, there was no real relief to the Jews' suffering. Even in cases where the Iranian authorities agreed to change a policy, the change was not carried out due to the weakness of the central authority and to the strong aversion of Muslims to minorities. This fanaticism did not overlook Mashhadi Jewry, and in Passover (Pesach) 1839 a violent mob attacked the small Mashhadi community and forcibly converted them to Islam. **...and Mashhadi Judaism was nearly forgotten for a hundred years - as if the world had made its peace with their forced conversion and their fate was sealed. They were regarded as a people lost to the**	[Nathan]

	Jewish nation just like thousands of converted Jews from other cities in Iran.	
	Mohammad Shah	1795 - 1797
General	**Mohammad Shah**, the founder of the Qajar Dynasty, made Tehran his capital. The Russians invaded Iran, taking advantage of Mohammad's weak regime, but retreated following the death of Empress Catherine. The Shah was murdered in 1797 while preparing to invade Georgia.	[Nathan]
The Jews	**Haji Ibrahim** of Shiraz assisted Mohammad Shah to the throne and was close to the king. Haji Ibrahim was of Jewish origin and was Mohammad Shah's Prime Minister. His official title was Aeth-e-mad al-Doleh. During that period many Jews from different cities in Iran (especially Damavand, Shiraz, Esfahan and Kashan) immigrated to Tehran. For 18 years, from the death of Karim Khan Zand (1779) to the death of Mohammad Shah (1797), the number of Jews in Iran decreased by tens of thousands (about 70-120 thousand people). The Jews of Gilan, Gilliard, and Dillaman completely vanished. Only the Dillamani Jews that immigrated to Mashhad survived.	[Fischel2] [Nathan]
	Fath Ali Shah	1797 - 1834
General	After the murder of Mohammad Shah, many claimed the throne – however it was **Fath Ali Shah**, with the help of Haji Ibrahim, who triumphed.	[Nathan]
The Jews	The King Fath Ali Shah had several Jewish wives - Maryam, Khadijeh, Nabat, Shirin, Shahrbanoo and more. Maryam Khanom (Madam Maryam) was the most beautiful of the Shah's wives. The King had a son, **Ahmad Ali Mirza**, with Maryam Khanom. This son became the governor of **Mashhad**. Haji Ibrahim was also the prime minister during the reign of Fath Ali Shah, and his official title, as previously mentioned, was Aeth-e-mad al-Doleh. (Eventually Haji Ibrahim and his family were executed by Fath Ali Shah.) The Shah was very fond of a Jew from Esfahan, called Yequtiel. At the Shah's command, Yequtiel converted to Islam and changed his name to Ismail. Ismail saved the king's life during one of his wars and thus became one of his ministers. Ismail did not forget his past and he treated the Jews well. As a result of a blood libel (in 1829) most of the Jews in Tabriz, about 7,000 of them, were massacred. The Jews of Ardabil, Zanjan and other cities suffered the same fate. During the reign of Fath Ali Shah, the Jewish population of Iran decreased from 50,000 men to 25,000. There was a large Jewish community in Shiraz, about 3,000 people, and nine synagogues. The Muslims attacked them (around 1830), ruined the synagogues, and forcibly converted the Jews to Islam (about 2,500 people). The Jews hoped to be spared, but salvation did not come and the	[Fischel2] [Nathan] 1829 1830

forcibly converted Jews were lost to the Jewish nation.

Jews of Mashhad

Before the forced conversions, Emam Jomeh and other religious leaders incited the crowds against the Jews and the Sufis. The Jews had already been persecuted back then, and there had been several attempts to convert them to Islam. They had been forced to wear special clothes and other indicators to set them apart (Fraser 1821, Wolff 1831). 1831 [Levy1]

However, compared to the rest of Iranian Jewry, the Mashhadi Jews' lives were tolerable - perhaps owing to their governor's origin. Wolff met Ahmad Ali Mirza, the governor of Mashhad, in 1831. Wolff found that the Mashhadi community had established a prosperous business life in Khorasan and Turkestan. There were several commercial agencies in different cities and the merchants used to live in those places, coming home to their families in Mashhad only for the holidays. [Wolff1]

There are different estimations as to the number of Jews inhabiting Mashhad at that time. For example, the French scholar Truihier, who visited Mashhad in 1807, counted about 100 Jewish families (about 500 people). By extrapolation, assuming that in every generation the community doubled itself, and during the first generation there were 40 people, then there would have been about 320 people in the fourth generation (d). [Levy1]

Generation	From Year	To Year	People	Comments
a	1700	1740	40	According to Dilmanian: 16 families came to Mashhad. They were 40 people.
b	1730	1770	80	
c	1760	1800	160	
d	1800	1840	400	

[Dilmanian]

Consider the following two factors:

- Families from Kallat, Sabzevar, Yazd and other places joined the community
- Families left the community to various destinations, for example, to Herat and Marv

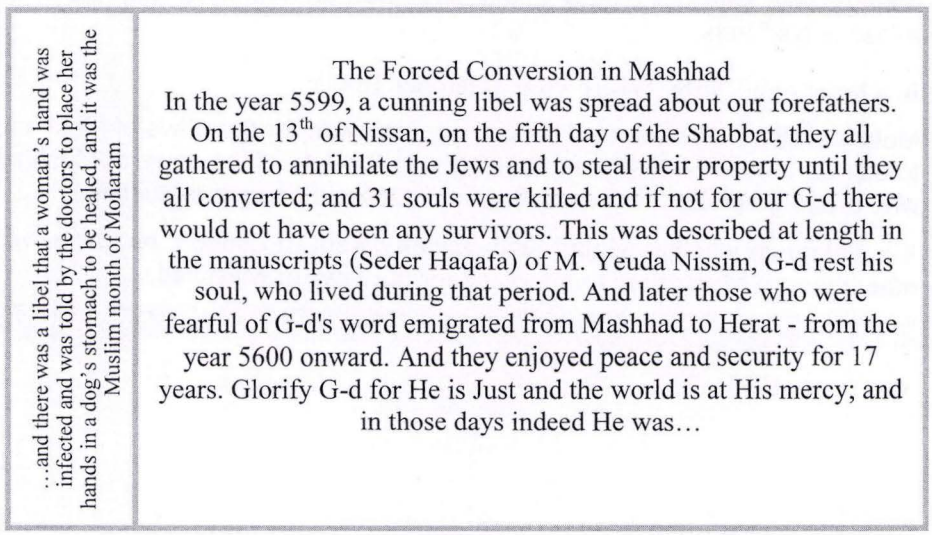
We can estimate that the number of Jews in Mashhad had to be around 400-600 (assuming more families joined than left).

The Forced Conversion

	Mahmud Shah	1834 -1848
General	**Mahmud Shah** came to power with the help of the English and Russians. In 1837, he laid siege to Herat. The English were opposed to the siege because of Herat's proximity to India. Therefore the English conquered Khark Island in the Persian Gulf, forcing the Shah to retreat from Afghanistan.	[Nathan]
The Jews	In the mid-Nineteenth Century, four Jewish brothers were among the most prominent doctors in Tehran. One of them, HaghNazar, was Mahmud Shah's personal doctor. The Shah's tolerant attitude was not shared by his people. During this same period about 130 Jews were murdered in Esfahan, among them Mola Agha Baba who was one of the community leaders.	[Fischel2] [Nathan]
The Jews of Mashhad	Back in 1741, during the reign of Nader Shah, a center for distribution of English goods, mainly woolen knits, was opened in Mashhad. During the Qajar dynasty, the activities of this center strengthened the contacts between the Mashhadi Jews and the English. The English feared the bandits and looters on the highways, and avoided travelling the roads and transporting cash. In this they were aided by the Jews; the Jews paid the Turkmen protection money and thus were not attacked on their journeys. They also knew the area well and had good connections in nearby settlements (such as Herat, Bukhara, Sabzevar, etc).	[Levy1]
M. Mashiyach	Mola Mashiyach (Mehdi Aghajan), one of the Jewish-Mashhadi leaders, was the agent for the English in the area. Lieut. Arthur Conolly mentions that M. Mehdi, the Jewish president, invited him to his home and served him wine in the yard. He describes the neighborhood as built of many yards and inner passages that connected the houses. There were gates that could be locked in times of danger. A document from 1836, found in the British Foreign Office achieves, describes: Mola Mehdi gave money to an English crook named Diskin, who was posing as a British agent. As was customary in such cases, Mola Mehdi turned to the British Embassy in Tehran to get his money back. He found out that Diskin was not an English agent but an imposter. Mola Mehdi stopped lending money to the English until the English Embassy promised to compensate him. Alice, the British ambassador in Tehran, turned to the Iranian foreign secretary, Mirza Massood, and demanded the Iranian government grab hold of Diskin's possessions in order to compensate Mola Mehdi for his loss. The Iranian government denied responsibility; in the end Mola Mehdi received 600 Toman (450 Pounds) from the British, which covered only about 70% of his loss. Other Mashhadi Jews who represented British interests were: • The brothers Mussa and Ibrahim Nathan	[Levy1] [Sources/... Conolly] [Levy1] [PRO]

	• Mola Kashi • The brothers Rahman, Efraim and Safi	
	The Forced Conversion	1839
The Residents of Mashhad	Conolly described Mashhad as a religious center: About 45,000 people lived in the city of Mashhad. About 100,000 pilgrims visited every year. During the observance of Muharram, the men beat their chests and cried, and the women wept under their veils. The ceremonies continued into the night in the Sahn (the mosque's forum), and the voices of the tormented people called out "Hassan-Hussein" and their voices echoed all around. J. Ferrier described the people of Mashhad as argumentative and quarrelsome: The Muslim population of Mashhad was well known throughout Iran as warlike and eager for combat. One spring day a bitter dispute erupted between the town residents and the garrisoned troops ... the rivals mercilessly used all kinds of weapons (sticks, daggers and swords) ... many were killed and injured during those two days of fighting.	[Sources/... Conolly] (1834) [Sources/... Ferrier] (1840)
Political Background	Mahmud Shah, encouraged by Russia, attacked Herat (1836), the capital of Afghanistan, and tried for three years to conquer it. The English opposed the attack, fearing that tensions might spill over into India. In December 1838 the Iranian army retreated. The hungry, unpaid Iranian soldiers raided Khorasan. In February 1839, the Shah camped his army near Mashhad. On the Persian New Year, Norooz (March 21), he declared a day of mourning. On March 27, an angry mob attacked the Jewish neighborhood. The president of the community, M. Mehdi, was at Qandahar at that time, at the head of a British convoy delivering supplies to the British army.	1836–1839 [Sources/... Political Background] [Levy1]
The Forced Conversion	It is told that in the Jewish neighborhood of Mashhad lived an immigrant, by the name of Avraham, from the city of Hamadan (the burial place of Esther and Mordechai). Avraham sought treatment from a Muslim doctor for wounds and an infection on his wife's hand. According to the doctor's orders, they dipped the wife's hand in the blood of a slaughtered dog ... A Seyed (a Muslim religious leader) usually erected a tent (*takia*) during the month of Muharram (the first month of the Islamic calendar) near the Jewish neighborhood (in the area of Sar-Heiteh). To cover his expenses for fasting days, he would collect money from the neighbors, including the Jews. However, the visitors at his tent would harass the Jews. Finally the Jews stipulated that their contribution would be on condition that the revelers are prevented from disturbing them. The Seyed rejected this and the Jews refused to pay. On the ninth of the month Muharram, as Avraham left his house to dispose of the dead dog, a procession of agitated masses, including the Seyed, on their way to Mosque Emam Reza passed by, beating themselves with chains.	1839 [Dilmanian]

	The Seyed, seeing Avraham, started to curse him and to accuse the Jews of being contemptuous of Islam. They entreated the Emam Jomeh (Haji Seyed-Askari) for permission to attack the Jews. The Emam refused. In the meantime, the riots quickly intensified, leaving the Jews unable to appeal to the authorities for protection. Some claim the Emam Jomeh declared a Jihad … On the Sabbath of the 13th of Muharram, the mob attacked the Mashhadi Jews. The carnage was terrible and the destruction great. One out of twenty was murdered and one out of six was injured (assuming a 1:3 ratio). Much property was stolen and the Jewish neighborhood was in ruins. Avraham and his family left Mashhad after these events ... This incident occurred in the fifth year of the reign of Mahmud Shah Qajar. Members of the Rahmani and the Hakimi families appealed to Emam Jomeh for protection in exchange for their conversion to Islam (like a reed that bends in the wind in order not to break). Most of the people opposed the idea - some left to Herat and to Turkmenistan, some stayed in Mashhad despite their objection to the conversion (like the families Nissimi, Kal, Aghalar, Yazdi, etc). After the forced conversion, Emam Jomeh agreed to return the property of the "New Muslims" (Jadid al-Islam). A cargo of silk fabric (about 8 *man*) that had belonged to a man who was murdered was returned to the community. The 'crypto-Jews' sold this property and with the money purchased a piece of land for a new cemetery. In October 1839, Iranian Foreign Minister Mirza Massood was sent to Mashhad to investigate the above incidents and to return the stolen property to the Jews. This may be one of the reasons that the silk fabric was returned to the community.	[8 *man* = 24 Kg] [Netzer1]
Evidence	Yitzhaq Ben Zvi presented a description of the forced conversions as portrayed by Dilmani, an eye witness. This description was written down shortly after the event. Additional descriptions were recorded by visitors to the area, such as Wolff, Ferrier and Neimark. Rabbi Garji, in his essay "Qorot Zemanim", pointed out that "This event was described at length in the manuscripts of Rabbi M. Yeuda Nissim, G-d rest his soul, who lived in that period". This important source, a thorough and precise document written by an eye-witness, has been lost. <u>Decree of Forced Conversions as related in the **Qorot Zemanim**, to Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji of Herat</u> Based on the handwriting of Rabbi Yehuda Nissim, who himself experienced the forced conversions	Sources\..] Forced [Conversion [Yeuda= Yehuda]

	 A photograph of Rabbi Garji's handwriting appears in Kashani's book.	[13th of Nissan, 5599, in the Jewish calendar is 28th of March, 1839 in the Christian calendar] [Fifth day of Shabbat = Thursday] [5600 in the Jewish calendar is1840 in the Christian calendar] [Kashani] [Sources\...]
Regional Insecurity	In those days (1838), it was the habit of the Turkmen to rob convoys, take the travelers hostage, and sell them at the slave market. Among their many prisoners were several Russian soldiers. Russia demanded the release of the Russian hostages, but the Amir of Bukhara refused. The English were concerned of the possibility of a Russian military intervention and sent Colonel Charles Stoddard from British Intelligence to negotiate with the Amir for the prisoners' release, but the Colonel was arrested and imprisoned. Two years later (1840) Captain Arthur Conolly was sent to release Stoddard, but he was also imprisoned. They were both tortured and forced to convert to Islam. In December 1841 Efrayim, a converted Jew from Mashhad, was sent to Bukhara to release the British prisoners; he carried with him letters from the British Foreign Minister Palmerstone and from the British Ambassador in Tehran. The Amir imprisoned him as well and he was tortured and forced to convert to Islam. He refused, claiming that he had already converted in Mashhad. After relentless torture he broke and was converted. The very next day he was beheaded so he wouldn't have a chance to change his mind. The Sufi's leader in Mashhad, Agha Mohammad-Ali Yishkafat (one of the British representatives in the area) reported that: ...Efrayim had no other purpose than to serve the British, and in so doing he lost his life... Efrayim's brother Mola Safi brought a letter to Qandahar, and another brother, Mola Rahman, I sent him to Khiva... British Ambassador McNeil wrote to Foreign Minister Lord Aberdeen: ... I inform you with great sorrow that our messenger Efrayim ... was executed in Bukhara ... his brothers ... have also proven their loyalty ... Efrayim left behind a wife and children ... I assume that a sum of 100	[Levy1]

	pounds will suffice ... and I will pay that sum immediately from the expedition's funds.	
Seeking Help	In a letter to his wife, Wolff wrote (October 1844): Mola Mehdi left with me for London, on a mission for the Jews of Mashhad, to ask Sir Moses Montefiore to intervene in the fate of the Jews of Mashhad who are in great distress and suffer from persecution by the Muslims. It is unknown whether Mola Mehdi actually went to London, but there were other pleas to Montefiore to intervene for the Jews of Mashhad.	[Sources\... Wolff2]

Underground

	Nasser al-Din Shah	1848 - 1896
General	Nasser al-Din Shah ruled Iran for nearly 50 years. He conquered Herat in Afghanistan but retreated due to English intervention. The Shah visited Europe twice - in 1873 and in 1889. In 1896 the Shah was murdered.	
	The Status of the Jews	
The Jews	As mentioned previously the Jews, as opposed to other minorities, did not receive support or protection from other states. Their only external connection was via messengers from Eretz Israel that were sent to collect donations for the Jews of Eretz Israel (Jerusalem, Hebron, Zefat and Tiberias), and from occasional visitors. Some of the visitors were: • Binyamin the Second - 1848 • Yechiel Fischel Castleman - 1859 • Efraim Neimark - 1883 • Nathan Adler - 1896 Reports made by these Jewish messengers and visitors, appeals by the Jewish Bagdad community, and pleas from the heads of European Jewry – none were strong enough to convince any government to aid Iranian Jewry.	[Fischel2]
The Awakening of European Jewry	It was only in 1856, after countless reports about the devastating state of Iranian Jewry that the London Committee of British Jews (led by Sir Moses Montefiore) and the Paris Alliance Israelite Universelle tried to organize help for the Jews. These organizations joined forces at Great Britain's and France's foreign affairs offices in Tehran, but to no avail. After the persecution of the Jews of Hamadan in 1865, Sir Montefiore decided to personally travel to Iran and meet with the Shah. In his journal Montefiore wrote: "I could not sleep all night, thinking about the miserable plight of our brethren in Iran." British Foreign Minister Layard advised Montefiore to cancel his trip to Iran, and instead to send a direct request to the Shah about the plight of the Jews. The Shah replied that he issued a directive to his people to treat the Jews justly. However, during that same year the Jews of Barfarush (near the Caspian sea) were massacred. Despite intervention by the British Foreign Office to punish the culprits, the situation did not improve. Montefiore once more decided to set off to Iran but the Foreign Office interceded, once again advising him otherwise. After further diplomatic efforts, the Shah issued directives to the governors of each district to protect the Jews. But again to no avail. The lot of the Jews did not improve.	[Fischel2] Sir Austen Layard
Intervention by European Jewry	In the summer of 1873 the Shah traveled to Europe. European Jewry organized to pressure him into improving the condition of the Jewish citizens in his country. Wherever the Shah turned, he was served with a petition expressing great concern for the Jews of Iran and a plea for help. These petitions were submitted to the Shah in: • Berlin (May 1873)	[Fischel2]

	• Amsterdam • Brussels • London – where the Shah met with Disraeli and Montefiore in Buckingham Palace for a private conversation • Paris – where the Shah met with Rothschild and Crèmieux • Vienna • Constantinople (August 1873) The Shah, in his meeting with Crèmieux, said: I shall never forget the Jew Haji Ibrahim for he helped the Qajars to the throne. And in his journal he wrote (1873): The famous Rothschild, himself a Jew, is a man of extraordinary wealth. In our meeting he warmly defended the Jews. He spoke much about the Jews of Iran and requested that I do whatever I can to ease their troubles. I said to him: 'I heard that you, the brothers, you have 1000 Krur. I think that the best solution would be for you to give 80 (Krur) to a certain state where all the Jews of the world can gather. You can be their master and rule them in peace so they will no longer be scattered around the world and they can cease their wanderings ...' We laughed with all our hearts, but he never replied and I promised him that I will protect all the foreigners in Iran. Consequently, and with the King's consent, the results of the conversations were translated both to Hebrew and English and were sent to different communities in Iran. The Shah published several decrees to ease the status of the Jews, both legally and administratively (for example, canceling the law that a Muslim inherits his Jewish relative's property). However, the central government was too weak to enforce the law, and the Jewish status did not significantly improve. In 1888 the Jews of Esfahan and Shiraz suffered another massacre – which led to the intervention of the British Consulate in Iran – but again to no avail. Jakob Polak, a Jewish physician from Vienna, was invited by Nasser al-Din Shah (1851) to be a medical professor at the military academy in Tehran. During the years 1855-1860 he became the Shah's personal doctor. The amicable relationship between the Shah and his physician lasted even after Polak's return to Vienna. The Shah met with him during his visit to Europe (1874). It is ironic that the Shah's Jewish doctor was able to save the Shah's life, but the Shah had neither the inclination nor the power to save the lives of the Jews in his kingdom.	
Failure	In 1889 the Shah visited Europe again. During this visit, he was welcomed by a distinguished company at Buckingham Palace - led by Sir Albert Sassoon and joined by Lord Rothschild, Sir Goldschmidt and Sir Montefiore – to discuss the plight of the Jews of Iran. In those very days, Sir Sassoon was involved in large investments in Iran, among which was the founding of the first bank in Iran (which later became the Royal Bank). The results of the discussions did not lead to the much needed change. It was decided once more to establish Jewish schools (Alliance) in Iran (an idea that was first brought forward in 1866), but once more in vain.	[Fischel2]

	In 1896 Nasser al-Din Shah was murdered.	
	Mashhadi Jewish Community	
General	Apparently, the fate of hundreds of Jews of Mashhad was decided. After massacres and robberies, the Jews accepted the forced conversion and became "new Muslims" – Jadid al-Islam. The Jadidis came under the protection of the Emam Jomeh. To set a personal example, the Emam married a young Jewish woman (who returned to her family after his death). A man of faith was entrusted with the children's education and he taught them the Quran and the basics of Islam. The adults took part in the religious holidays and prepared the traditional Ash (cholent=hamin) on mourning days for those who fasted. The Jadidis visited the holy cities of the Shia, such as Karbala, and they were given the honorable title –"Karbalaii". They even visited Mecca and were given the Haji title, but on their way back they did not forget to visit Jerusalem. Thanks to their credibility, some of the Jadidis were hired by the Emam Reza mosque – the most holy place of the Shiites in Iran. The few pleas to the authorities in Iran concerning the distress of the Jews did not refer to the Jadidi community because they seemed lost. This was a critical point in the future survival of the Jewish community of Mashhad - a community that went underground for nearly 100 years while giving all outward appearances of being Muslim.	
European Presence	During this period, the European presence in Mashhad became more and more pronounced. The British ran telegraph stations, and many Europeans were seen in clinics and customs posts. In 1889 the British Consulate was established and next to it, the Russian consulate. In 1890 a branch of the British Imperial Bank was set up in Mashhad, followed by a Russian branch. There was extensive economic competition between the Russians and the British in the area. The Jews of Mashhad (Jadidis) supported the English. Jewish activities appeared prominently in the journals of the British consulate - especially regarding the different branches of the economy, such as financial transactions, the import and export of merchandise (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, etc.). The English diplomat Napier (1874) estimated the population of the Mashhadi Jews to consist of 120 buildings in Eid-Gah, which housed about 400 families.	[Levy3]
Community Leaders	During those years, when an entire generation was born into forced conversion, knowing nothing about Judaism except an underground lifestyle, it is very important to understand the role of the rabbis and leaders. Below is a short description of some of the community leaders of the time: **Rabbi Yehuda Nissim** (born around 1780) Experienced the forced conversions and wrote at length about them in his copy of the Seder HaHaqafa. Rabbi Yehuda was an important personage in his time and was mentioned in several sources. **Rabbi Moshe ben David Nissim** (~1830 - 1908) One of the prominent rabbis during the period of forced conversions. He is	[Garji] [Dilmanian]

remembered as being opposed to the conversions. He immigrated to Eretz Israel and was buried at the foot of the Mount of Olives, east of Yad Avshalom.

Rabbi Yosef Betzalel (Bassal) (1835 - 1910) [Exhibition]
He was also a prominent rabbi during the forced conversions. He was one of the prisoners of Herat who settled in Mashhad. He was the teacher of many important rabbis of later periods.

Rabbi Mordechai (Mola Morad) **Aghalar** (1850 - 1936) [Aghlarpur/ Zichron Tzadiqim]
Rabbi Mordechai, son of Refael, son of Nissim Aghalar, was the prominent rabbi of this period. He managed a synagogue in his name in Mashhad. In the second decade of the Twentieth Century he visited the Mashhadi community in Turkmenistan (Marv). In the twenties, he visited the Jewish Mashhadi community in India (Bombay). In 1927 he immigrated to Jerusalem, passed away in 1936, and was buried on the Mount of Olives in the Mashhadi section. The rabbi published books of prayer and other writings.

Haji Mola Amin Kordevani (1847 - 1910) [Exhibition]
He was called the father of orphans, widows and the poor, and was active in matters of Talmud Torah. Kordevani imported Bibles in Persian from Tehran and Hamadan and instructed that every bride should receive a new Bible as part of her dowry. Mola Amin visited Mecca and, as could be expected, visited Jerusalem on his return. M. Amin lived for a time in Marv and is mentioned as one of the respected personalities there. [Neimark] [Dilmanian]

Reuven (Rahman) **Nemat** [Pictures/ Docs .../ Yehuda]
Reuven Nemat came to Jerusalem and bought land in the Bukhari Quarter. Haji M. Amin Kordevani and Rahman Nemat imported Bibles, written in Persian, to Mashhad, under the name Fazel Khani. These bibles were given to brides as part of their dowry (see Documents chapter, a photo of the cover of such a bible, published in 1856).

Note: Mashhadis pronounce Mullah (Mola) as 'Mela'.

Recovery

	Mozaffar al-Din Shah	1896-1907
General	The era of Mozaffar al-Din Shah saw several political changes, which heralded a transformation in the political and social climate in Iran – in spite of the fact that the regime and society were still bound to the intolerance that originated in the Safavid period. In 1906 the first parliament was established in Iran, along with a constitution. The Jews of Iran took part in the changes and the new parliament thanked them for their contribution. These reforms meant equal rights for all in the eyes of the law – yet the participation of non-Muslim representatives in parliament was forbidden.	[Fischel2]
The Daughters of Quchan	The circumstances of "the Daughters of Quchan" illustrate the atmosphere in those years. Here is a summary of the event: The town Quchan is situated in Northern Khorasan on the commerce route between Ashgabat in Turkmenistan and Mashhad. Most of the commerce between Iran and Russia took place on this route. Ashgabat sits on the Trans-Caspian train route that sets out from the Caspian Sea and ends in Marv in the East. The district of Khorasan held third place in terms of the export of merchandise. There was a telegraph station in Quchan. The Quchan area was very fertile and the subjects paid taxes to the local governor. During these years a severe plague of locust caused great damage to the crops. The farmers, who had been hard hit, appealed to the district governor in Mashhad, Seif al-Doleh, requesting acknowledgement of their situation and a reduction in their taxes. Seif al-Doleh took advantage of the situation by deposing the local governor in Quchan and placing his son in his stead. Seif al-Doleh's son raised the taxes and the miserable farmers were forced to sell their daughters to the Turkmen in order to pay their debts. The governor took part in these transactions and also benefitted from the selling of the young women. In their difficult hour, the farmers appealed to parliament, and parliament made the event a national issue. In time The Daughters of Quchan became "The Daughters of the Nation" who were sold into slavery. There were many efforts to bring Seif al-Doleh to trial but they all failed. As time passed, the Daughters of Quchan were forgotten and what happened to them is still unknown. The question is asked – what can possibly be expected of leaders who don't spare their own people... will they spare the minorities?	1904-1907 [Afsaneh NajmAbadi/ The Daughters of Quchan]
The Jews	There was no substantial improvement in the lives of the Jews during the reign of Mozaffar al-Din Shah, despite American endeavors at intervention and despite the important changes that occurred towards the end of his reign. In his court, the Shah had a Jewish doctor, Dr. Isidor Albu from Berlin; nevertheless, during his reign the Jews were forced to distinguish themselves from their fellow countrymen by wearing a patch on their clothes or by wearing a special hat.	[Fischel2]

	One small ray of light in this dark period was the establishment of the Alliance, the first Jewish school. The Alliance was founded in 1899 (about 10 years after the original agreement had been reached with Nasser al-Din Shah).	
	Mohammad Shah	1907 - 1909
General	During the short reign of Mohammad Shah, all new hopes were crushed regarding the establishment of parliament. The Shah was against parliamentary government and worked unremittingly to maintain the status quo - absolute monarchy. The Shah's opposition created chaos in the state and violent clashes between the Shah's supporters and the supporters of a parliamentary system. After two years of struggles (including the firing of guns on the parliament building) the Shah had no choice but to flee to the Russian Embassy and leave Iran.	[Nathan]
The Jews	Religious fanatics and mobs took advantage of the unstable situation by instigating anti-Jewish demonstrations throughout Iran. This caused great suffering and terror among the Jews – so much so that many of them left their homes and migrated to other cities (for example to Lar and Jahrom). It should be noted that during the riots of Kermanshah (1909), many Muslims physically defended the Jews (often at great personal danger) and provided humanitarian aid.	[Nathan] [Fischel2]
	Ahmad Shah	1909-1925
General	The instability and volatility during the reign of Ahmad Shah eventually led to the rise of the Pahlavi dynasty.	[Fischel2]
The Jews	During this period, acts of killing and violence towards the Jews continued. It is important to note that, at the end of the Qajar period, some cracks started to appear, both at a governmental and at a social level, in everything related to the public's dislike of non-Muslims, especially Jews. At this time, the governmental and social institutions of Iran became mature enough to provide a basis for a new Iran under the Pahlavi dynasty – above a foundation of hundreds of years of hatred and hostility. The first Jewish representative in the parliament was Azizolah Simani from Tehran. The second representative was Dr. Loghman Nehoraii. Nehoraii successfully abolished several anti-Jewish laws, such as the "Jewish hats" and the Muslim's privilege to inherit the property of his Jewish relatives.	[Nathan] [Fischel2]

<table>
<tr><td>Exterior Influence on Iranian Jewry</td><td>Iranian Jews were primarily traditional and religious. But they were constantly exposed to external influences: first, the frequent efforts of forced conversion by the Shiite majority; then, the continuous involvement of the Christian missionaries in the spiritual life of the Jews; and later, the Bahá'í influence on the local population, among them the Jews. The establishment of Jewish schools at the end of the Nineteenth Century reduced the non-Jewish influence and helped impart Jewish national values.

The Bahá'í faith does not recognize the Shiite concept of impurity - to them, all men are similar to the leaves of a tree and they are all equal. The Bahá'í faith does not require a special induction ceremony; in essence they see themselves as a messianic "religion of all religions." They saw the Shiite leaders as the main source of weakness of Iran, and they gathered many followers from the more educated classes.

The Bahá'í' influence on the Jews was not overwhelming. Lord Carson mentioned that a small number of Jews adopted the Bahá'í faith.

<table><tr><th>City</th><th>Number of Jews who Accepted the Bahá'í Faith</th></tr><tr><td>Tehran</td><td>150</td></tr><tr><td>Hamadan</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Kashan</td><td>50</td></tr><tr><td>Golpaigan</td><td>75% of the Jews</td></tr></table>
At first, the Bahá'í center for Jews was in Hamadan, but later it was moved to Kashan because of the activities of the Alliance in Hamadan.

Very few of the Mashhadi Jews (about six) accepted the Bahá'í faith. None survived (plane accidents, etc.).</td><td>[Fischel2]

[Farajelah Levy] 1930s</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>The Jewish Mashhadi Community</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>General</td><td>During this period, although many of the Mashhadi Jews lived in Turkmenistan (Marv, Sarakhs, etc.), their center remained in Mashhad. Some Mashhadi families lived in other cities of Khorasan (e.g., Sabzevar), but their connection to Mashhad remained strong.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Jews in Holy Places to Islam</td><td>During the time of the forced conversion, several tens of the Mashhadi crypto-Jews visited the holy sites of Shiite Islam. Some of them were even able to visit Jerusalem on their return trip. Fifty-five Jews visited Mecca and were given the title Haji. Fifteen Jews visited Karbala and were given the title Karbalaii. Assuming the Jewish Mashhadi population was on average 3,000 people during the underground period - then, about two percent of the crypto-Jews visited Mecca or Karbala (about 10% of the adult male population).</td><td>[Exhibition]</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
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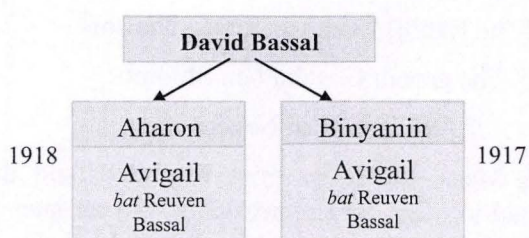
The Settlements of Mashhadi Jewry

	Introduction	
General	Mashhadi's Jewish expatriates mainly settled in: • **Turkmenistan** – Marv and Sarakhs • **Afghanistan** – Herat Mashhadis also settled in other towns, such as: • **Baku** – Nurelah Zvuloni mentioned that "there were two Mashhadis in Baku who helped me get to Ashgabat". • **Ashgabat** – Eliyahu Zvuloni was sent to trial in Ashgabat. The Mashhadi Jews in the area brought him kosher food. • **Kabul** – Reuven Nissim's (Haji Rahman Saghir) father was mentioned as Musa Kabuli. • **Kermanshah** – Neimark mentioned Avraham Sedomi (a crypto-Jew from Mashhad). • **Hamadan** – Ben Zvi mentioned a Jew called David Sedomi.	[Beit Saba /Zvuloni] [Dilmanian] [Neimark] [Ben Zvi2 /380]
	Marv	
Formation	Even before the forced conversions, Mashhadi Jews lived in Marv. Wolff mentioned some notable people living in Marv at that time, and two Mashhadi Jews who also lived in Marv and who were murdered there. Fifty years after the forced conversions, Neimark wrote: When the town was founded there were already about 20 Herati Jews who did commerce with the Turkmen. After they were requested to participate in the building of the town or leave, they bought a piece of land and built houses and shops. Neimark continued: The Mashhadi crypto-Jews also joined them, until there were about 60 of our brothers in Mashhad and Herat; and the place they bought was like a small piece of the temple (only our Russian Ashkenazi brothers were not allowed to settle there and I saw a few of them working for the army). After the forced conversion the first of the Mashhadi crypto-Jews came to Turkmenistan (Marv, Sarakhs, etc.) and joined the Mashhadi colonies in the area. After the release of the Herati prisoners, the number of Mashhadi Jews in Turkmenistan grew substantially.	[Sources/ Wolff1] 1832 [Neimark] [Levy3] 1839 1859
Russian Regime	In 1885 the Russian regime set up a base in Turkmenistan. During this time, roads were paved and security stations were erected. The sense of security and order under Russian rule attracted many more families from Mashhad. My grandmother, Esther bat Rahamim, often mentioned the orderliness, punctuality and cleanliness of the Russian trains (in her words, "wash-wash mizadan" - they shone from being polished so often). After the Russian Revolution, the Mensheviks moved into Turkmenistan. In 1918 the Bolsheviks overpowered the Mensheviks and the order and security of the area were undermined. Soon thereafter, Mashhadi Jews left Marv (and other Turkmen cities) and fled to Mashhad, leaving much of their property behind.	[Levy3] [R.N.] [Dilmanian]

Jews and Authorities	By 1902 Jews numbered 229 people (149 families). In 1910 they numbered 633, broken down as follows: • Marv – 369 • Takhte' Bazar – 23 • Tajan – 210 • Morghab, on the Tsar's estate – 31 Beginning in 1900, the Russian regime attempted to deport the Jews (mainly due to anti-Semitism). In November 1910, the regional administrator of Marv, on behalf of the Turkmen representatives in the area, sent a request to the Russians to permit the Jadidis to remain, claiming that: These Jews excelled in fairness in all the accounts we had with them. They were extremely valuable mediators in our new way of life. Because most of us are illiterate, we ran our businesses without written contracts, relying only on oral agreements. Therefore we invested our free money with the Jews. Both our commerce and our deposits have yielded large profits in the last few years. Even though all our transactions were oral ones, we never disagreed or misunderstood each other. Yesterday we learned that all of the Central Asian Jews...are being deported, effective immediately, from Marv. We were not previously notified, and therefore, until yesterday, did not halt our business activities with them, and now we find ourselves in a dreadful situation... The Iranian consulate in Ashgabat appealed to the head minister of the Trans-Caspian area not to deport the Jadids claiming that, "the Jadidis are mistakenly being referred to as Jews" and continued, "I can affirm that their fathers and forefathers were Muslims". In describing his subjects, the Iranian diplomat wrote that, "the Jadidis are very active in our community ... and very efficient in the financial development of the area. If they are deported, the whole community will suffer. Also, the Jadidis are known for their business integrity." Other representatives of the population reported that: Over the past ten years, the Turkmen conducted their trade primarily through the Jews because the Jews never let their business transaction reach the courts. They settled all their business deals amicably - they never cheated the Turkmen. However, the Armenians and the Iranians never closed one deal harmoniously - they always required the services of a mediator or had to go to court. The Turkmen feared that the Armenians or the Iranians would take the place of the Jews, resulting in great difficulties – because the Iranians were very aggressive, and they cheated and stole from the Turkmen. Currently, most of the Jews' and the Turkmens' money was invested in cotton. If the Jews were deported, not only would they all go into bankruptcy, but the Turkmen would suffer a financial blow as well ...	[A. Kaganovitch/ Muslim Jews in Central Asia]
The Jews and their Neighbor hood	In their dealings with the Russians, the crypto-Jews identified themselves as Muslims so as not to cause any harm to their fellow crypto-Jews in Mashhad. However, in their interactions with Turkmen, they identified themselves as Jews	[Levy3]

	(as Jews were preferred to Shiites). Farajelah Levy described the devoted care he received at the hands of two Turkmen healers when he fell ill and was at death's door. He suffered greatly; an infection spread to his face and he lost consciousness, but he was saved thanks to the healers' dedication (led by the elder of the two). They stayed with him until he returned to health. Only when Farajelah was safe did they return to their homes in one of the Turkmen villages. Even after leaving Marv, many of the Mashhadis maintained business relationships with the Turkmen. Sometimes, when illegally crossing the border, they were caught and had to spend some time in jail (e.g., Chanuka Nissim and Yaaqov Nissim). Yosef Moradi told the story that after the Russian invasion of Iran (many years after the gates to the USSR had closed) a few Turkmen came to his father's (M. Rafi) shop with two camels. They said they wanted to repay an old debt, from the time of their grandfather, to M. Morad. They apologized for not having paid sooner – but they explained that the delay was due to the closing of the borders. Now that the borders were open, they wished to return the debt.	[Patai] [Beit Saba] [Yosef Moradi] 1942
Synagogues	"Yom Kippur of 1886 was the first day the Jews prayed in a synagogue in the land of the Turkmen - and later some Jews from Bukhara joined them. They were Mola Moshe Cohen and Mola Amin (Binyamin) Kortevani [Kordevani]. They were the Gabbais. There was a ritual slaughterer - Mola Yaaqov. The second Gabbai was Mashhadi." According to Azariya Levy, there were two synagogues in Marv: **Aminoff and Nissimi.**	[Neimark] (1886) תרמ"ו [R.N.]
Donations to Israel	Letters that tell of donations to Eretz Israel were found in the Sephardic board's archives, in the bookkeeping records belonging to the Chief Rabbi (HaRishon LeTzion). The following is a passage from letter #336 from the 29th of September, 1899, from Jerusalem to Marv: "To our noble and kind brothers, dear community leaders in Marv ... Agha Haji Aminoff, Agha Haji Habibelah HaLevi, Agha Lotfelah ben Agha Mohammad, Agha M.Yahya Bassal, Agha Reza Nissim, Agha Faraj Nissim, Agha Yosef Ghassab, all merciful people [who donated] ..."	[Levy2] 1900 [כ"ה תשרי תר"ס]
Yeshiva	A yeshiva for biblical scholars in Marv was run by Rabbi Yosef Garji and Rabbi Shmuel Garji. Two of the most prominent Mashhadi rabbis, Rabbi Levi Nissim (M. Abdelah) and Rabbi Menashe Elishayoff (M. Faraj) studied under these rabbis. Evidence of this is the following section of a certificate that was granted by Rabbi Shemuel Garji to Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda (M. Abdelah) after he completed shechita (ritual slaughter according to Jewish law) studies in Marv: "In the tribes of Yeshurun ...M. Levi ben Yeuda ... studied under our supervision, in a certified (smicha) yeshiva and learned how to slaughter according to Jewish law..." Years later, Yaaqov ben Binyamin Nissim described the image that was etched	[Dilmanian] [R.N] [Beit Saba] 1911 [Yeuda= Yehuda]

	in his mind: "In an open field, outside a Turkmen town, Mela Abdelah sat on a rock, for his leg was broken and bandaged, and the people handed him their lambs to be slaughtered for the holiday..."	
From Bethlehem to Marv	The following story testifies to the community's commitment to preserving their Jewish heritage and the Halacha. This uncommon event takes us back to the days of Ruth and to the fields of Bethlehem in Judea. This event relates to two almost identical ketubot (marriage contracts) from Marv, with an unusual story behind them. They are 11 months apart; one is from 1917, and the other from 1918. In both ketubot the bride's name is **Avigail** bat Reuven (Haji Rahman), but in the first ketuba the groom is **Binyamin** ben David and in the second one the groom is **Aharon** ben David. The rabbi who conducted the ceremonies was **Rabbi Menashe** Betzaleli (Mola Faraj) – a relative. Behind these two ketubot lies a unique tale, told by Rachel Betzaleli, daughter of Avigail: "My mother, **Avigail** bat Reuven was beautiful, talented and young (about 14) when she married **Binyamin** ben David. Six months later **Binyamin** died of typhus. According to Halacha, the younger and single brother of the groom should marry the widow, or perform Chalitza (the ceremony by which the Halacha can be legally bypassed). Since my mother was very beloved by her husband's parents.... Their second son, my father, **Aharon** ben David, broke off his engagement with his fiancé and married **Avigail**, my mother. Their first born was named after the deceased – Binyamin."  1918 1917 Yibum (Rabbi Menashe)	1917 [Sources/ Ketubot] [Rachel Betzaleli] Bassal=Bassali= Betzalel= Betzaleli
Casualties	Wolff reports (1832) the murder of two Mashhadi Jews in Marv. (Their names were not mentioned.) Additional cases of murder of Mashhadi Jews occurred in the beginning of the Twentieth Century: • Marv – Hassan Rahmani, Abdol-Karim Nemat • Do-Shakh – Nassrelah Khurdi • The way to Takhteh-Bazar – Mola David Nissim, Nethanel (Javad) Nissim • Brothers Menashe and Yaaqov Kokhai	[Sources/ Wolff1]]Dilmanian[[Beit Saba] [Rachamim Khorsandi]

Leaving Marv	After World War I (1918) and the rise of Communism in Russia, the Bolsheviks occupied Marv. They robbed, plundered, murdered, and created an atmosphere of terror in the town. The situation was especially hard on the Mashhadi community as they were merchants and rather wealthy compared with the other people. The Mashhadi community was forced to leave Marv in a rush and in confusion, and return to Mashhad later with the help of the Turkmen. They arrived at Mashhad empty-handed, as they had been unable to save any of their property. The English, claiming that they wanted to calm the situation, entered Marv. Some of the Mashhadis returned to Marv, but just a few months later, the English retreated (1919) and the Mashhadis were again forced to escape. After the situation stabilized, an agreement was signed by the USSR and Iran permitting Iranian merchants to enter the USSR and to engage in commerce, albeit with limitations. Some of the Mashhadis tried to engage in commerce again in Russia but they were persecuted by the authorities (because the Mashhadis were not always aware of the new laws). Finally the Mashhadi Jews had to leave Russia due to difficulties in commerce as a result of new limitations.	[Dilmanian]
Joy and Sadness	After the 1918 departures, some Mashhadis returned to Marv to join those who had remained. Here is evidence: Eliyahu ben Shlomo Nissim (from Marv) and Tzipora bat Daniel Nissim (from Mashhad) married in 1927. The wedding took place in Marv at Grandfather Shlomo's house. The signatures on the ketuba are as follow: [The Rabbi] Levi ben Yeuda Nissim The groom Eliyahu ben Shlomo Shlomo ben Nissim The groom was from Marv, the bride from Mashhad, and the rabbi came especially from Mashhad to Marv for the occasion. A year later the couple had a baby boy. The newborn was circumcised by Rabbi Levi. He was given the name Mashiyach, but the joy of the occasion was greatly hampered as the father was in prison, accused of a crime that he was innocent of.	[Beit Saba] 1927
The Aliyah of the Torah Scrolls	The new situation tore families apart. The Kokhai brothers – Menashe, Yaaqov, and David – continued to live in Marv after the revolution. The new regime caused a worsening of the Jews' financial situation and poverty spread everywhere. David managed to make connections with the security services (N.K.V.D). Thanks to these connections and despite the dangers involved, David achieved some sort of freedom of commerce for the community; and in times of need he managed to provide visas to leave the USSR. One day, around noon (1925) a friend from the N.K.V.D informed David of his imminent arrest - the same evening. As soon as he heard the news, David escaped to Dargaz on a horse. That same evening, security service people raided	[Rachamim Khorsandi (Kokhai) 2006] 1919-1926

	his house in order to arrest him but since he wasn't there they took his wife (Yafa) and their two children (Mehdi and Nissan, 2 and 3 years old) to prison as hostages. After two weeks of investigations Yafa and her sons were released. At this opportunity and with the help of messengers, Yafa and her sons were smuggled to Dargaz. The authorities did not let go. They arrested Yaaqov, the elder brother, who was released twelve agonizing months later, ill and weak. Yaaqov died in his home in Marv (1926) just two weeks after his release. In 1938, Menashe, the older brother was abducted to Siberia to be investigated - without his family's knowledge. He died and was buried on the Japanese border in 1941 (according to testimony given by relatives who came to Israel in the 1990s from Marv). David Kokhai and his family lived in Dargaz at first - and then in Mashhad. David worked in manufacturing soap and was given the nickname "Aziz Saboon-Paz" (in keeping with his name, Aziz, and his profession). After the founding of the State of Israel the family made aliyah through Istanbul (1952). Rachamim remembers his father David bursting into tears at first sight of the Israeli flag hanging proudly at the Israeli embassy in Istanbul. These were tears of joy, happiness and bliss; of a dream come true. David passed away in Israel in 1957. (His daughter Zilpa was murdered in a terrorist attack in Immanuel, along with her son-in-law and granddaughter in 2002.) The rest of the family finally left Marv in the 1990s. They brought with them two Torah scrolls that are cherished today in the Mashhadi synagogue AHI Dakar in Holon. **Note**: Purim 2006. Rachamim visited the Haji Adoniyahu Synagogue in Jerusalem. An elderly and distinguished man approached Rachamim and asked if he was from Dargaz and what his father's name was. When he found out that Rachamim was the son of "Aziz Saboon-Paz", he told Rachamim that he remembered, from when he was a child, that one day a few people came to their house and started asking questions about the whereabouts of Aziz Saboon-Paz. The father (of the man who approached Rachamim) suspected them to be from the Russian security services and warned Aziz of the lurking danger and thus prevented the Russians from harming him.	[Saboon = soap] 1950s [Israel] 1990s 2006
	Sarakhs	
History	Neimark offered the following description: "On the eighth day of departure from Mashhad, heading east towards the Turkmen, you will come upon the city Sarakhs. There you will find about 20 Mashhadi crypto-Jewish merchants. This town had been built during the reign of Nader Shah, King of Iran, but was later abandoned. When the area was conquered by the Russians in 1884, many Turkmen flocked to the land and settled there."	[Neimark] 1880s
Life	Nissim (Nurelah) Zvuloni described the situation as follows: ...there lived in Sarakhs 40-50 Mashhadi families with two synagogues, belonging to M. Bozorg from Herat and M. David Kal (one of seven brothers). ...the Mashhadis lived in the bazaar area close to the Turkmen. ...the Turkmen loved the Jews. They called us Mussavis. In times of drought	[Beit Saba/ Zvuloni] 1900s Mussavi - the people

	they would throw a Jew into the river for a blessing... by chance, the skies would bless them with the much-wanted rain. ...Mondays and Thursdays were market days. ...we ate watermelons, melons, vegetables, onions, but there were no potatoes. We ate mainly lamb meat. We made our own wine and bought arak from the Armenians. We made our own matzah. The women had special outfits for that activity. ...my father had a store in Sarakhs. ...my father was the synagogue's Gabbai. I always liked dealing with public affairs. As a child I used to sweep and clean the synagogue. ...we didn't have a school in Sarakhs so I never got a proper education.	believing the religion of Moses
Close to God	Here is Leon Levian's story (summarized from sections of the Megillah): ...it was summer vacation and I am 12 years old. My dad sent me along with Mussa Karmeli (who traded Karakul skins) to Sarakhs. All the passengers were Mashhadis (among them the Haji Ramazan and Bichupan families). On our way there we sat on the merchandise. Ten hours later the truck reached Sarakhs. The place where we stayed looked like a tent or a shed. There was a large yard in front of the house where they used to collect all the cattle in the morning to lead them to pasture. One evening I went out to the main street to buy sugar and tea. On my way back I noticed someone following me. Suddenly, the man poured a bucket of water over me and disappeared. Completely stunned, I knocked on the Bichupan family's door and told them what happened. Quite amused, they told me that the area has been suffering from drought for years and the locals believe that the Mussavis, being close to G-d, can redeem them. The combination of water and a Mussavi is a blessing and can make it rain. After a few hours, at daybreak, about 4:00 AM, a strong downpour started. The next day, the Turkman that poured the water over me, approached me putting his hand on my shoulder and thanked me gently, "we do believe in you."	[Megillah 89/37] 1930s
	Herat	
The Jews of Afghanistan	Due to the forced conversions in Mashhad and the departure of many Jews in later years, the Jewish population left in Afghanistan was about 40,000. In 1857 Nasser al-Din Shah conquered Herat and led all the Jews as prisoners of war to an area near Mashhad. After two years of hardship and loss, the Shah released the prisoners to return to Herat (1859). About a decade later (1870s), due to the harsh treatment they received in Afghanistan, many Jews left to Central Asia, Iran, and Eretz Israel. The assassination of the king of Afghanistan in 1933 led to riots against the Jews. The Jews were deported from their homes and gathered mainly in Kabul, Balkh, and Herat. They were forbidden to leave the city without permission from the authorities and the payment of a special tax. Before the establishment of the State of Israel, there were only 5,000 Jews left in Afghanistan. Once Israel was founded and the gates were opened for aliyah (immigration), the remaining Jews immigrated to Israel - so that in 1969 only	[Jewish Virtual Library site/ by A. Oreck]

	300 Jews were left in Afghanistan. After the Soviet invasion in 1979 the rest of them left the country. In 1996 there were only two Jews living around the synagogue in Kabul – Zvulon Siman-Tov and Itzhaq Levi. In 2005 Levi passed away and Siman-Tov remained the only Jew living in Afghanistan. His wife and two daughters live in Israel.	
Herat Jewry	"In the city of Herat, 12 days distant from Mashhad, there are about 300 Jewish households - most of which belong to refugees from Mashhad and some from other Persian cities. When the Mashhadis went to Herat in 1840 they found 20 families there. Today, the most noteworthy are Agha Yeuda [Yehuda] Kohen, Mola Yosef Gol, and the teacher and butcher, Mola Matatiyahu. He does not take from the public funds – but works partially in commerce to support his household. In my eyes and in the eyes of the townsfolk, he is an honorable man, and is referred to as a 'Hassid'." Herati Jewry was mostly comprised of Jewish Mashhadi refugees from the time of the forced conversions. As opposed to the Jews in Mashhad who lived an underground life for about a hundred years, the Jews in Herat were privileged to live as Jews but, as a minority, their circumstances were not easy. At the beginning of the Twentieth Century, Herati Jews slowly began to immigrate to Israel. A massive wave of aliyah began in the mid-Twentieth Century - and Mashhad was used as a "bridge" for the Herati refugees on their way to Israel. With the passing years, the Herati Jews became a community separate from the Mashhadis - but their common background and identity was still preserved in their memories. This chapter is based mostly on the memories of the Herati Jews and their affinity to the Mashhadi Jews.	[Neimark /97]
The Captives of Herat	Nasser al-Din Shah conquered Herat in 1857 after a nine-month siege of the city. However, due to British intervention, he was forced to retreat. The Shah took the Jews from Herat as prisoners as he retreated - the same Jews that left Mashhad after 1839 in fear of the forced conversions. The captives were taken (around Purim time) to the Baba Ghodrat Fort, near Mashhad. They stayed there for two years, under extreme conditions of blazing sun and heat in the summer and freezing cold, along with snow and storms, in the winter - without appropriate clothing or food. The Jadidi community of Mashhad arranged some help for the Herati prisoners, though their ability was limited as they were threatened by the mob's response against the Jews. Eventually, the harsh conditions led the Jadidis to plead with the authorities to release the prisoners and, indeed, in December of 1859, the prisoners were liberated and were free to return to Herat. Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji describes the formation of Herati Jewry: "Originally our forefathers lived in Mashhad, and were ruled by the Persian Kingdom ... The gentiles libeled against the Jews and gathered around them armed; then they robbed all their property and destroyed all the synagogues and religious schools. They killed 31 people and then threatened to kill the rest	[Fischel2] [Qorot Zemanim]

	if they didn't convert. In the year 1839, on the 28th of March... the Jews whose hearts had been touched by G-d, left their homeland and traveled far away. My forefathers were among those who journeyed to Herat ... and I, the youngest, was born in Herat in 1845, seven years after the destruction of the city of Mashhad. In 1856 the Persian army laid siege to Herat and in 1857 the city was taken and the Jews were sentenced to destruction, and were banished in the month of February. They were led as prisoners to Mashhad; on the way several died from the extreme cold. Outside of town, at an inn called Baba Ghodrat, the prisoners were placed under guard. Later, G-d showed us mercy, and we returned to Herat in the month of December 1858. Then the Persian army left the town ... and the king of Kabul, with his great army, advanced on Herat. The city was taken in the month of June 1863 and the soldiers robbed and plundered the town. In 1871 there was a terrible famine ...and in 1896, with the help of G-d, I came with my son Asher on aliyah (Ziyarat) to the holy city of Jerusalem."	[י"ג ניסן תקצ"ט]
Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji	**Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji** (1845-1918) was one of the prominent rabbis of this period. He described the forced conversions as depicted by Rabbi Yehuda Nissim, and he also described the captivity of the Jews of Herat. In fact he was one of the Herati captives. He wrote the book Qorot Zemanim (*The History of Times*) and when he made aliyah to Jerusalem he wrote the Oneg Shabbat (*The Joy of Shabbat*). Here is the rabbi's self portrayal in the Qorot Zemanim: "I, the youngest, was born in Herat in 1845, seven years after the destruction (forced conversion) of the Mashhadi Jews." In Oneg Shabbat (1913) the rabbi describes the Mashhadi community in Jerusalem: "And some men of means, of the crypto-Jews, came here to the Holy City. They built a synagogue and houses, hoping to be blessed with a worthy community as soon as possible. And the rest of the crypto-Jews, who remained there [in Mashhad], follow the ways of G-d as well as they can and they act with charity and mercy (צדקה והצלחה). May they all be blessed to witness G-d's grace; and may He help them and save them from evil, and redeem them for they put their trust in Him." The authority of Rabbi Garji and his family was not limited to their home town Herat; it spread throughout to Balkh, Mashhad, and Marv, and all the way to Jerusalem. His sons had rabbinical authority as well: • Yosef Melamed – was a rabbi in Marv. Made aliyah to Eretz Israel in 1911. His son Binyamin was the founder of Tiferet Yosef Yeshiva in Jerusalem. • Yechezqel – was a rabbi in Balkh. Made aliyah to Israel in 1950. • Asher – was a rabbi in Herat. Made aliyah to Israel in 1951.	[Garji] 1900s
Teaching Method	Yechezqel Betzalel was born in Herat in 1891. In his memoir, he described Rabbi Garji's teaching method (thereby also describing the teaching method in	~ 1900 [Betzalel/4]

	Mashhad before the forced conversions): "My father (z"l) sent me to Rabbi Garji's (z"l) religious school (Beit Midrash), where I started learning from VaYikra (Leviticus) about the sacrifices. The Rabbi used to let the young children start with the subject of Qorbanot (sacrifices) because they were still pure of sin and their childlike speech was like a sacrifice to G-d Almighty. Every afternoon the children would read from their books to the Rabbi. If they made any mistakes they would have to repeat the reading the next day until they made no more mistakes. I studied the five books of the Torah in the original language for one year. I was seven years old when I started learning Genesis (Bereshit) – which I learned for two years in Persian - the native tongue. That way I could translate to Persian. I started with Neviim (Prophets) until the end of Divrei HaYamim (The Books of Chronicles), and continued until I completed the entire Bible. After that we learned Rashi and other interpretations of the Torah – all five books - and then also the six books of the Mishna ... After I finished the Mishna, I started with the Gmara (Talmud). Meanwhile the Rabbi prepared to make aliyah with his family and settle down in Eretz Israel ..."	[z"l = G-d bless his memory]
Family Ties	In his memoirs, Yechezqel Betzalel described the family ties between the Herati and the Mashhadi Jews: "...These days you can see a lot of familial ties between Jewish families from Afghanistan and Iran. I, the author of these lines, have gone, as a merchant, from India through Persia to Afghanistan several times and have met many relatives. I have met the Elishayoff family, and the Betzaleli family who are my Grandfather Betzalel's (z"l) cousins. They even invited me to their homes. Once they even invited my entire family. They have hidden synagogues, where they pray three times a day, and their own slaughter house and rabbis. One of the rabbis is Menashe Ben Yosef, called Mola Faraj Elishayoff Bassal, our grandfather's uncle's grandson. He had students and he would teach them the Talmud at night. He would also teach the young men that wanted to travel outside the country. He taught them the laws (Halacha) of Jewish kosher slaughter and certified them to slaughter chickens ..." Indeed we find many common family names among the Heratis and the Mashhadis, for example: Betzalel (Bassal), Siman-Tov, Mordekhai, Nemat, Dill, etc... and if we take a closer look we shall notice that the two communities share the same tunes (nigun) in their prayers (tefilot), the same dialects, the same foods, and the same customs.	[Betzalel/25] 1930s
	Conclusion	
	In conclusion, a short description of the Mordekhai family's journey from Mashhad to Turkmenistan and Afghanistan as they made aliyah to Israel: The forced conversions and underground life in Mashhad were very harsh, therefore Amin (Binyamin) Mordekhai left Mashhad when he was young and settled down in Marv (1870). At the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the authorities in Marv limited Jewish community life, which led to a massive expulsion and the emigration of the Mordekhai family to Bukhara (1910). The family returned to Marv a few years later. After approximately 15 years under the communist regime, the family moved to Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan (1932). Two years later they were banished to Kabul. After the founding of the	[Fathers and Sons/10. The Mordekhai family. By Avraham Mor]

	State of Israel the family set out on the long journey to Qandahar, to Herat, to Mashhad and finally to Israel (1950). This demonstrates the life and wanderings of a typical Mashhadi family, spending every generation in a different city but at the same time keeping a close relationship with Mashhad.	

... and the Lord Heard ...

"... and the Lord heard our voices, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression"
(Deuteronomy 26:7)

Twilight

	Structure	1925 - 1950
	This chapter describes: • The **Twilight** period – The period of transition during which the Mashhadi Jews were still identified as Jadidis but gradually began to reappear as Jews. • The **Dargaz Settlement** – The history of the Mashhadi Jews in Dargaz. • The **Exit from Mashhad** – The rioting and disappointment that led to the massive departure from Mashhad. • **Those were the days** – "Scenes" from Mashhad on the eve of departure.	
	Reza Shah	1925-1941
General	Reza Khan was born in 1878, in the Mazandaran district, to Colonel Abbas Ali-Khan, one of the heads of the Pahlavan families. After his father's death, his mother took him to Tehran where he enlisted in a unit under the guidance of Russian instructors. Due to his leadership skills, Reza Khan quickly rose in the ranks. In 1921, while in command of 1,200 soldiers, he took part in overthrowing the regime. Sa'id Zia al-Din, a young journalist, became Iran's Prime Minister and Reza Khan was appointed Secretary of War. Two years later (1923), Reza Khan was elected to the office of Prime Minster. Throughout this period, Ahmad Shah was residing in Europe due to an illness, refusing to return despite the Majles' (Parliament's) requests. In 1925 the Parliament overthrew the Shah and appointed Reza Khan as king of Iran. Reza Shah was crowned in 1926. Reza Shah continued the reforms he had initiated while holding the office of Prime Minister. He broke the power of the local tribes, canceled the one-sided agreements with foreign powers (which allowed them excessive privileges), laid the trans-Iranian railway, liberated women from the veil (1935), fostered education, industry, commerce and health. His foreign policy was based on manipulating the friction between Britain and the USSR. Reza Shah allied himself with Germany in an attempt to resist the British influence from the south and the Soviet Union's intervention on the north. This policy failed as a result of Britain and the USSR's cooperation during World War II, and their joint invasion of Iran in 1941 to ensure the transfer of supplies to the USSR. Reza Shah was deposed and exiled to Johannesburg where he died in 1944. In his place was crowned his son Mohammad Reza.	[Britannica] [Pahlavan= Brave]
The Jews	Soleiman Haim, a Jew from Kermanshah, was the representative of the Iranian Jews in Parliament. He was very active - he initiated the publication of a Jewish	[Fischel2]

newspaper and had a Zionist outlook.

Following the discovery of a conspiracy to overthrow the government, Soleiman was accused of participating in the conspiracy, was arrested and was imprisoned for several years. He was then executed, without ever having been tried or his guilt having been proven.

The Number of Jews

Estimates of the number of Jews in Iran according to Aziz Meir (a secretary at the British consulate at Kermanshah):

[The Zionist Archives /56/3051]

City	Number
Esfahan	12,000
Tehran	10,000
Hamadan	8,000
Kermanshah	7,000
Yazd	5,000
Kashan	3,000
Mashhad	**8,000**

The Fugitives of Bukhara

1933

Thanks

During 1933 and 1934, a large group of Jews from Bukhara fled to Mashhad as a result of persecutions by the Soviet regime. They lived in Mashhad under constant threat of deportation back to the USSR. In their plight they pleaded with the Eretz Israeli institutions for entrance visas to Israel. For the duration of a year the refugees were assisted by the Mashhadi community until they were able to make aliyah. Here are some passages from a letter sent by the refugees to Mashhad (June 21, 1934):

[Exhibition] (passages)

"We that have signed at the bottom of this letter are of the refugees of Russia ... Over a thousand of us escaped to the **Reza Shah's** government in Persia ... to Mashhad ... he granted us many favors ... along with the Jews of Mashhad, led by the blessed wealthy brothers the **Aminoffs** and the wise man Mola **Faraj Elishayoff**, and also Mola **Rafi** and Mola **Abdol-Karim Itzhaqoff**. We've been in Mashhad for almost a year now ... and they have been very kind to us; day or night; hot or cold ... May G-d reward their goodness, and may this be read in synagogues everywhere ...

1934

Written and edited by the below, signed Hananiya Itzhaqoff Kohen"

Notes:

- Although the names of the Aminoff brothers and that of Mola Rafi were inadvertently omitted from the *Exhibition Magazine*, their participation in helping the refugees is obvious from this letter.
- It is mentioned in the *Exhibition Magazine* that Mela Abdelah along with Dash Karim and Mela Faraj took care of the refugees from Bukhara. In the letter above, M. Abdelah's name is not mentioned, since M. Abdelah helped the refugees in 1933 and in the beginning of 1934, but left for Peshawar in 1934 for about seven years. Hananiya Itzhaqoff, who wrote the letter in June of 1934, may not have known M. Abdelah because he arrived in Mashhad after M. Abdelah had departed.

	The Jews of Mashhad	
Recovery	Gradually, the community began to **recover** and, despite their fears, began to build a communal life, at the same time strengthening ties with Eretz Israel and other Mashhadi communities. Here are several points that characterize the period: **Establishment of community institutions, such as:** • Adab (education) Muslim state school for the Jadidi boys in 1922 • Arze' Aghdas (Holy Land) Muslim state school for girls, for the Jadidi girls • Synagogues (e.g., M. Yosef Dil in 1924 and M. Khalil) • Otzar HaTorah School in 1940 • A community youth soccer team Tajadod (revival) in 1935 **Obligatory enlistment (conscription)** of the community youngsters into the military. **Strengthening ties with Eretz Israel as a result of:** • The formation of a Mashhadi-Afghani-Bukhari community in Jerusalem. • The flow of Bolshevik refugees from the USSR to Mashhad and the help they received from the community. • A growing interest of the Eretz Israeli institutions in the events taking place in Mashhad. **A measure of economic well-being as a result of the founding of:** • Colonies in India (Peshawar, Bombay) • A Mashhadi community in London • A Mashhadi community in Tehran and commerce relations with other towns (such as Shiraz and Kerman)	[Exhibition] (dates as they appear next to the photos) [Pictures/ Yehuda: Eliyahu Nissimi was a player in Tajadod] [Eliyahu and Lotfelah Dilmanian served as officers in the Persian army due to their high school education]
The Midwife	Sara Aghalar, the sister of M. Morad, was born in 1853 and married her cousin Aghajan ben Itzhaq Aghalar. After the death of her husband, she became a midwife in order to support her four children. She worked as a midwife for 60 years and many of the community's children were born with her assistance. Sara was so dedicated to her work that she used to sleep in her clothes and veil (chador) and had her shoes ready by her bed. Within a few minutes of being summoned, she would be ready for her sacred duty. Her reputation spread to outside of the community and several times carriages were sent by Muslim families to summon her to attend to a woman in labor. In 1934 Sara was tragically killed as she was walking in one of the alleys, when a wagon filled with carpets overturned, mortally wounding her. She passed away several days later. Sara Aghalar's hard work was not in vain. Because of the fine education she provided to her children, her son, Mela Yaaqov Aghalar, became a rabbi of the community and served the public faithfully.	[Aghlarpur/ 32]
Double Life	Although the rise to power of the Pahlavi government improved the conditions of the Jewish community in Mashhad, the Jews there still had to be careful and maintain the secret double life that had been forced on them. Here is an illustration of their situation:	1936 [Aghlarpur/ 21]

After the death of Rabbi Mordekhai Aghalar in Jerusalem many came to console his son, Rabbi Refael (M. Rafi). Among the visitors were also distinguished Muslims, men of faith and men of commerce. Agha Mussa Nassrelayoff, M. Rafi's neighbor, prepared his home to accept Muslim visitors with holy passages from the Quran and appropriate refreshments (tea, coffee etc.). Every time a Muslim visitor came, M. Rafi would leave the consolers at his house and come to see his Muslim guest at his neighbor's house. After the guest would leave M. Rafi could go back to his own home to sit Shiva for his father.

Number of Jews in Mashhad

Assuming that the generation that lived through the forced conversion numbered approximately six hundred Jews, and that each subsequent generation doubled its number, it stands to reason, as presented in the table below, that during the period of 1900 through 1940, there were about five thousand Mashhadi Jews in all their settlements (including Eretz Israel, Mashhad, London, etc.).

Generation	Years	Number
D	1800 - 1840	600
E	1830 – 1870	1,200
F	1860 - 1900	2,400
G	**1900 - 1940**	**4,800**

If we compare this number of Mashhadi Jews with Aziz Meir's report (about 8,000 Jews), the results show a gap of about three thousand people. It seems to me that the number given by Aziz was exaggerated and that there were about six thousand Mashhadi Jews at that time. The Zionist Archives' reports from the late 1940s support this assumption.

[Sources/... Passover 46]

Rabbis

... - 1950

Rabbi Menashe ben Yosef and **Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda**

[Exhibition]

Two close friends whose leadership of the community symbolizes this period are:

- Mela Faraj Elishayoff Betzaleli – Rabbi Menashe ben Yosef (1889-1942)
- Mela Abdelah Nissim – Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda (1886-1959)

M. Faraj and M. Abdelah were outstanding educators; they were leaders of the local rabbis (of Mashhad) and the rabbis of the synagogue, which was named for M. Faraj. Their sermons on Sabbath afternoon attracted a large audience. Their occupation was in trade, yet after every day's evening prayer they would study the Talmud. They were men of wisdom and knowledge and both studied under M. Yosef Bassal and M. Shmuel Garji. They were also very active, along with Dash Karim Itzhaqoff, in public affairs and charity works.

With the exception of M. Yechezqel from Bukhara, who spent some time in Mashhad on his way to Israel, M. Abdelah was the only rabbi who taught the Talmud.

[Yosef Moradi ben M. Rafi]

Rabbi Refael Aghalar – M. Rafi (1884-1950)

[Aghlarpur]

Son of Rabbi Mordekhai and his student as well. His business was trade. He married Rachel (Leila), daughter of Yehuda Nissim and sister of Rabbi Levi. After his father M. Morad made aliyah, M. Rafi took on his father's responsibilities for the synagogue. He was one of the prominent rabbis of the era and active in public

	service. Until he fell ill, he was responsible for the kosher slaughtering. He made aliyah when the State of Israel was founded but passed away shortly thereafter. **Rabbi Adoniyahu Betzaleli** – M. Khalil Sagha (1896-1974) Son of Rabbi Eliyahu Sagha and his student as well. He was a distinguished scholar who, like his father, studied the Kabala. He married Rivqa, daughter of Binyamin Nissim. He ran a school for Jewish studies (Beit Midrash) for children and sometimes shared with them topics from the hidden world of the Kabala. He made aliyah and continued his faithful service to the community at the Shabazi synagogue in Tel Aviv (marriage ceremonies, reading the Torah, giving sermons, etc.).	[Exhibition] [R.N. - as I heard from my father who was his student]
Benevolents ... - 1950	**Agha Abdol-Karim Itzhaqov** – Dash Karim (1884-1958) Agha Abdol-Karim was from Bukhara. He was a friend of M. Abdelah and M. Faraj and participated in acts of kindness and charity. In a letter of appreciation sent by the Bukharan refugees they noted the help and assistance that he and the Jewish community of Mashhad offered them in their time of need. **Haji Ebrahim Kordevani (Aminoff)** (1866-1940) Like his father before him, Ebrahim Kordevani was active in public service (elementary teaching of Jewish tradition, circumcision, etc.). He was very popular, and a leader of charitable activities.	[Exhibition]

Dargaz

The Settlement in Dargaz		1920-1950
General	Dargaz is located 300 km north of Mashhad. The road from Mashhad passes through Quchan, scales the Hezar Masjed Mountains, and goes through Allah Akbar Fort, reaching the Dargaz Plain on the Russian border. At its peak, the Jewish community at Dargaz numbered about seven hundred Jews. Those Jews lived in the Jadidis Alley and had a trusting relationship with the town's nobles. The Jews of Dargaz traded in carpets, fabrics, leather, and fur (caracal).	[Chaqlai/53] [=Ghuchan] [Chaqlai/75]
Synagogues	Dargaz was nicknamed "Little Jerusalem". Following is a list of the synagogues in the town: • Mela Khodadad ben Yequtiel, the first to establish a synagogue and a school for Jewish studies (a Beit Midrash) in Dargaz. (He had a Beit Midrash in Mashhad before he left for Dargaz). • Avraham Sha'er – Founded a synagogue at his house in 1920, and later established a Beit Midrash there as well. • Farajelah Levy – Founded a synagogue at his house. • Haji-Agha Yaghubzadeh Rahamin – Founded a synagogue at a house he acquired for that purpose.	[Chaqlai/51]
Leaders	**Agha Farajelah Levy** (Nassrelayoff) (1873-1951) Agha Farajelah Levy was a leader of the Jewish community in Dargaz. Both Jews and Muslims could turn to him for assistance, and travellers on their way to Marv and Ashgabat stayed with him. He also helped those who escaped Russia after the Bolshevik revolution. He made aliyah to Israel in 1929. He had representatives in Damascus who helped the Mashhadi Jews on their way to Eretz Israel (because aliyah had been made illegal by the British mandate's White Paper). **Rabbi Eliyahu Kashi-Malak (Mela Elias)** (1892-1967) M. Elias studied under M. Khodadad from Yazd and led the Dargazi Jews after the departure of Agha Farajelah Levy. He was the town's authority in matters of religion and Halacha (Jewish law). He was a wealthy man and had a good relationship with the town's notable citizens. The police station and the prison were his property and were rented to the local police. These relations and his pleasant manner helped to rescind limitations against the Jews, and dissipate false tales of libel. In the 1950s, M. Elias moved to Mashhad and became the leader of what remained of the town's community. **Rabbi Rahmat Hematian (Rahamin)** (1906-1990) M. Rahmat was M. Abdelah's (Rabbi Levi Nissim's) student. He served the community faithfully and without recompense. He moved to Mashhad in the 1950s and continued to serve those remaining in town.	[Patai] [Chaqlai/11] [Chaqlai/27]
Captured by Gypsies	Many of the Mashhadi Jews in Turkmenistan fled to Mashhad after the Communist Revolution. Shokrelah Kashi-Nejad and his family fled from Marv on horseback towards Iran in 1924. On their way, the family was attacked by a group of gypsies who killed the parents, stole their property, and abducted the youngest daughter	1924 [Chaqlai/59] (Menashe Chaqlai)

	Khanom Kuchak (*little lady*) who was only four years old. When the Kashi-Nejad family failed to reach their relatives, M. Elias turned to the police. Investigations revealed that several Turkmen had found the bodies of an adult male and female. The Turkmen testified that they saw a group of gypsies in the area, and in their possession was a little girl, along with the horses and the stolen property. The parents, who were Iranian citizens, were given a Jewish burial, and then a search for the little girl started. A year later the gypsies and the little girl were found, but the gypsies denied the allegations, claiming that the girl was their own. M. Elias asked the police officer to present the five year old with Jewish items in order to examine her response. M. Elias placed two candlesticks (Shabbat candles) in front of her and asked her "of what do these remind you?" and the girl replied "the candles that my mother used to light on the eve of Shabbat," mimicking her mother's gestures when lighting the candles. Then, he showed her a Chumash (Pentateuch), and the girl said "this is the book that my father used to read from on the Shabbat". Finally, M. Elias showed her a deck of cards and she said it reminded her of "Ganjiffeh" that her parents used to play. "Ganjiffeh" is an expression, unique to Mashhadi Jewry, which means a deck of cards. And so the child was returned to her rightful family in Mashhad (to her grandfather Ramadan Kashi). Years later, in 1949, Khanom Kuchak made aliyah along with her husband, Habibelah Kashi.	[חומש =] [Ramadan = Ramazan]
A Blood Libel	Spring had arrived and Pesach was nearing. It was a good time for the real estate business. The Aharoni family (Zughali) sold their house (which was at the end of the Jadidis street) to a Muslim. The Muslim decided to set up a water well (Ab-Anbar) in his yard for everyone's benefit. While digging, seven human skulls were unearthed - which caused a riot to erupt. The community was charged with the ritual killing of Muslim children on the eve of Pesach. The Rahamin brothers (the house owners before the sale), M. Rahmat Hematian and Shaban Tehrani were arrested and imprisoned (mainly to restore calm until the end of the investigation). A lab investigation in Tehran revealed that the human remains were adult skulls (and not those of children) dating back a hundred and fifty years, to a time of chaos and insecurity, during which the local governor offered a prize of ten Tomans for the head of any dead bandit. These skulls were the remnants of those days, buried in the land owned by that governor. The blood libel was retracted thanks to the efforts of M. Elias Kashi, Azizelah Sabzevari, Rafi Rafi'i, Mussa Rafi'i and other individuals in the Mashhadi community. The chief of police and the respected elder Karbalaii Jaffar Abdolahzadeh, who both knew the community well and knew that these were false accusations, also helped in this case.	1927 [Chaqlai/ 52] (A. Sabzevari)
On the Verge of Expulsion	Winter passed and spring arrived once more. Along with the improvements in the weather, commerce increased. During preparations for Pesach the chief of the Dargaz police, under orders from headquarters, informed the Jews that they must leave the town within one day to an unknown destination. The community was astonished. As the chief of police was well acquainted with the Jews, and since he was a decent man, he pleaded with Tehran for an extension, arguing that the Jewish citizens in town were honest people whose main business was trade and real estate.	1936 [Chaqlai/ 52 (Amir Kohen)]

	Meanwhile, the community representatives also turned to the Shah's palace and to the government in Tehran, by telegram, and also to the authorities in Mashhad, through influential persons from the Mashhadi community, requesting that the order be withdrawn. By the grace of God, these efforts were successful, and the puzzling command was revoked. During this event, many of those in the community sold their properties at a great loss as they prepared themselves for the worst to come. This event actually led to a departure of some of the community to Mashhad and even to Eretz Israel (see chapter about Israel). Later it was discovered that a Muslim merchant, competing with Jewish merchants in Sarakhs (a town on the border), turned to the authorities, accusing the Jews who lived on the border of espionage in favor of the Russians under the guise of being merchants. With these simple lies, the Muslim merchant, having ties within the Ministry of Finance, nearly brought about the banishment of the entire community. It was the efforts of the community representatives and a trusting relationship with the city dignitaries that allowed for the annulment of the terrible edict. Among those that helped were Elias Kashi-Malak, Amin Kaboli, Farajelah Levy and Khodabakhsh Rafi'i.	
Conclusion	The settlement of Mashhadi Jews in Dargaz existed for nearly the entire duration of the Jewish community in Mashhad. As the Jewish community left Mashhad, so did they begin leaving Dargaz, though several Jews remained for several more years in Mashhad.	1950

Leaving Mashhad

	Mohammad Reza Shah	1941 - 1951
General	**Mohammad Reza** Shah was born in 1919 and was educated in Switzerland. He was only 22 when he was crowned king, after his father was ousted. His policy was pro-western and he worked to promote his country's economy. During the first decade of his rule, Mossadegh, the leader of the pro-Soviet People's Party (Tudeh), passed a law in Parliament (Majles) nationalizing the oil rights formerly held by the British. The influence thus gained by Mossadegh forced the Shah to appoint him to the position of Prime Minister. The tension between the two increased to such an extent that the Shah was forced to leave his own homeland (1953). The Shah regained his throne several days later with the help of the American CIA.	[Britannica]
	Mashhadi Jews	1940s
General	The first decade of the Shah's reign saw serious riots against the Jews in Mashhad. This greatly increased the Jews' disappointment with the fanaticism of the local population. The existence of Mashhadi settlements outside of Mashhad and the development of modern transportation accelerated the departure of Jews from Mashhad. Following is a description of the main events of the riots mentioned above.	
Passover Events 1942	Zion Zabihi's description: A blood libel, again, on the eve of Passover. A mob of 10,000 Muslims attacked the Jewish quarters and injured people - though they didn't enter Jewish homes. The attacks lasted three days despite police intervention. Army intervention on the third day was also futile. Salvation arrived only when Ayatollah Nahawandi demanded that the rioters disperse because the Quran forbade hurting Jews. Ninety percent of the rioters scattered and the others were dispersed by the police after bribing the rioters' leaders. Acts of harassment lasted for the duration of Pesach. **Note**: I did not find any further testimony to this event. Dilmani doesn't mention it at all. I asked Mr. Shaban Hezghia, who was about 20-25 years old during that time, and he explicitly stated that in 1942 there were no riots. Therefore I assume that this description actually relates to rioting that took place on Passover of 1946. It should be noted that the descriptions are very similar and that the testimony was given 20 years after the event occurred.	[Patai/92 An interview with Zion Zabihi. 1966. Huji 813] (passages) [R.N. 2010]
Passover Events 1946	The following passages were taken from a report written by Kleinboim, a delegate for the Jewish Agency, in which he faithfully describes the events that took place during the Passover of 1946 (a while after the departure of the Red Army): "... The forced converts of Mashhad remained good Jews, religious, imbued with love and longing for Zion. ... During the last 30 years the Mashhadi Jews hardly concealed their faith. To this day, they live in constant fear of the Muslim world surrounding them, a world filled with hatred, suspicion and hostility ... ... Following the spread of a rumor in town that a Muslim boy was murdered (on the second night of Pesach); a mob of several thousands gathered in the Tehran street leading to the ghetto and attempted to break in. The Jews locked the gates and hid	[Zionist Archives/ 56-4576] (passages) The source is in Hebrew

	in their homes. The mob managed to break one of the gates and enter the ghetto. Some of the Jews' houses were damaged, doors and windows were broken, and there were even attempts to set several houses on fire. Jews captured by the mob were brutally beaten, and the casualties numbered about 15. A most serious case was that of a Jewish youngster who was doused in oil and an attempt was made to set him on fire. He was miraculously saved. The Muslim Molas and the authorities intervened....The calls of the Molas and those of several Muslim dignitaries quieted the mob and it began to scatter. Two hours later there was another attempt to break into the ghetto. By morning the situation had calmed down considerably, but most of the Jews remained in their homes and didn't attend synagogue. For the duration of Pesach the Jews of Mashhad remained fearful and distressed over their fate..."	
After the Events	The following passages taken from Kleinboim's report describe the atmosphere after the Passover events of 1946: ".... The riots shook the town's Jews and they no longer felt secure in Mashhad, living amidst a fanatic population filled with hatred for them. They feared that these events would recur and were anxious about their fate. Immediately after the riots the Mashhadi Jews reported the occurrences to Tehran, to the Jewish Agency, requesting their message be delivered to Israel, to the Jews in the United States and England, and to all the Mashhadi Jews in Israel and the Diaspora. They also turned to the Jewish Agency's office in Tehran and to the institutions for the settlement of Israel, asking that they be allowed to make aliyah ... ... It can be said with absolute certainty that materials such as textbooks, magazines, poetry books, etc., should be sent from Israel to Mashhad. Not a piece of paper from such materials will be lost and they will surely make the utmost use of it all. Everything arriving from Israel is holy to the Mashhadi Jews, be it an elementary book or "Aleh", a textbook about the history of Zionism, or about our heroes the paratroopers, a newspaper, materials from the United Israel Appeal (Keren Hayessod) or from the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet) - all is saved, all is passed from person to person, all is vigorously studied."	[Zionist Archives/ 56-4576] The source is in Hebrew
Another Attempt in April 1949	According to the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem there was another attempt to attack the Jewish neighborhood but it was prevented (mainly due to Ayatollah Nahawandi's intervention).	[Patai]
	An End to Mashhad's Exile	
	The 1946 Passover riots were a historical turning point in the life of the Jewish Mashhadi community. It was the breaking point that caused the departure of Jews from Mashhad to Tehran and Israel, and later on to settlements at other destinations. Two centuries of exile to Mashhad (1746-1946) abruptly ended and a new era began – an era of ambiguity and uncertainty as to the continued existence of the community. ... And today, more than half a century later, we can look back and marvel at this community which remains tight-knit in four major centers: London, Milan, New	1950s

York and Israel - despite great geographical and cultural differences.

... And in Mashhad, in the 1950s, there still lived a small community. M. Elias Kashi-Malak and M. Rahmat Hematian served the community. Yehuda Chaqlai (the son of M. Elias) taught at the Otzar HaTorah school. The Mey-Khosh factory, run by Lotfelah (Shimon) Dilmanians continued to provide cans of preserved fruit (compote) with a national distribution. Many of the community in Tehran still visited Mashhad for nostalgic reasons...

But Tehran had already become the community's center of gravity and, shortly thereafter, the rest of the community in Mashhad was drawn to the new center.

Those Were the Days

	The Center of Jewish Life in Mashhad	
General	Sar-Heiteh Street was the center of Jewish life in Eid-Gah. The street was paved with cobblestones as a pedestrian-only road, and just about any merchandise needed by the community could be purchased there. Due to the street's proximity to the cemetery all funeral processions passed down it. And because of its central location, on joyous occasions, brides and grooms were led down this street amidst much fanfare.	Sar-Heiteh Eid-Gah
Sar-Heiteh Alley		[2007 Following a conversation with my uncle Yehuda Nissim] [Background/ … /maps]
Tour	Our tour begins at Arz'-Aghdas, the all-girls school built on the old cemetery grounds prior to the forced conversion. We travel up Dalon' Hajihah (Hajihah Alley), turn left and continue to the corner of Sar-Heiteh St., where the Hamam' Haji Ismail bathhouse is located, serving men on Fridays and women the rest of the week. Opposite is located the clinic, run by Jewish Mashhadi doctors (Dr. Fathelah Hakimi, Dr. Yeghutiel…). Down Sar-Heiteh Street we pass by the commercial center, housing shops and workshops: • On the east side: a gentile tailor, a clinic, M. Khalil's shop, a shoe store, a blacksmith, and a writing accessories shop. • On the west side: a diner, Balali (a corn shop), Dughi (a yoghurt shop), a department store, Salah Khoneh (where animals were butchered), and a green grocer. We continue on Sar-Heiteh Street until we reach Dalon'-Kanissa [=Kanissa Alley]. This alley leads to the main synagogue where Mela Faraj and Mela Abdelah were the presiding rabbis. Most of the community's religious activities took place in this synagogue and in its neighboring houses, including a Beit Midrash (school for Jewish studies), matzo (unleavened bread) baking, sewing of shrouds and Hevre	[Yehuda Nissim] [Beit Saba/ Yishayahu] [My Routes/ Betzalel Betzalel]

	Kadisha (Jewish traditional burial society) situated at M. Aghajan's house. The alley also led to Hedayat, the all-boys school. We continue on Sar-Heiteh Street towards Tah'-Edgah Street (the lower end of Edgah). On the corner is located Haji Ali's bakery. Turning west leads us to the cemetery. Turning east leads us to the Kohanim Synagogue.	
Dalon' Kanissa	Dalon'-Kanissa (Synagogue Alley) was named for the four synagogues in the southern part of the street that were destroyed during the forced conversion. The crypto-Jews used the grounds to build several rooms to house those who had lost their homes during the riots. Over the years, the crypto-Jews built the first Beit Midrash (school for Jewish studies) in the basement of one of the houses. Later, when the forced conversion had ended, the room above the basement became the first synagogue of the community since the forced conversion. After Reza Shah's rise to power and the annulment of the forced conversions, the central Mashhadi synagogue was established on the northern side of Dalon' Kanissa, in a house previously owned by Ismail Zughali (and purchased by the community). During those years, the Adab School was built on the abandoned lot on the south end of the alley (adjacent to the cemetery). After consulting the religious leaders it was decided that the Ark of the Torah (Aron Haqodesh) would be left unchanged (it was a small room that contained old holy books). A door was added to the little room and it was always kept locked and under the supervision of the community leaders.	[MJCA I\ 451] 1935
	Religious Needs and Jewish Education	
Central Pillars	A passage from Kleinboim's report, a representative of the Jewish Agency for Eretz Israel, on a visit to Mashhad after the riots in 1947: "Mashhad could be called Persia's Jerusalem. The Mashhadi Jews are the finest of all the Iranian Jews. For decades this community has practiced Judaism in hiding, remained faithful to its religion and its nation, and has a unique character. While you are among these Jews, conversing with them or praying with them at the synagogue, you forget that they are a community of crypto-Jews in a secluded part of the world. Most of the Mashhad Jews can speak Hebrew and almost all of them understand it." During the first half of the Twentieth Century, the Mashhadi Jews numbered in the thousands, most of them living in Mashhad, and several tens to hundreds were scattered in several settlements. The religious and educational needs of the Jewish Mashhadi communities were provided for by tens of rabbis called "Mola" (Mullah). The Mola served the public by providing the following services, usually voluntarily and without financial compensation: • Halacha (religious Jewish laws) – In this category are classified those rabbis with the most comprehensive knowledge of Judaism and Jewish law. These rabbis were the religious authority of the entire community. They were the teachers and the rabbis of the Mashhadi rabbis. They were unique individuals whose Halachic authority and ability to guide earned them the right to lead the entire community. • Kashrut (Jewish dietary laws) – This was a difficult role and those who	1900-1950 [Zionist Archives/ 56-4576] The source in Hebrew [Mashhadis pronounce it as "Mela"]

fulfilled it supplied thousands of people with kosher meat. Many were qualified to slaughter chickens, but only a few were authorized to slaughter cattle and manage the butchers (financially supported by the community).

- Talmud Torah (Biblical studies) – Very few taught children and youth. Teaching took place at the Beit Midrash (school for Jewish studies) with the community's support. Many owe their Jewish education to a handful of teachers who made pedagogy their way of life.
- Synagogue – Leaders of prayer (Shaliach Tzibur) and cantors (Hazanim) often served also as rabbis of the synagogues. These rabbis were privileged to serve the attendees of services by delivering sermons, by melodic prayer, and by the joyful reading of the Bible.

According to their skills, the rabbis (Molas) served the community in various ways, such as performing marriages (qidushin), circumcisions, burial services, collecting charity, etc. To illustrate, the following two tables list the prominent rabbis of the community according to their main occupation. The first table presents the rabbis that specialized in Halacha, Kashrut and Talmud-Torah. The second table presents the synagogues' rabbis.

Decade	Halacha (Jewish Law)	Kashrut (Dietary Rules)	Talmud Torah (Biblical Studies)	Comments	[M. = Mela]
1900s	Rabbi Moshe Nissim			R. Moshe Nissim (M. Mussa) made aliyah to Eretz Israel at the beginning of the century, and was the first Mashhadi rabbi to do so. He passed away in 1908 and is buried on the Mount of Olives.	[MJCA I/510]
	Rabbi Yosef Betzalel (Bassal)		R. Yosef Betzalel (Bassal)	R. Yosef Betzalel was his father's student. He founded the first synagogue after the forced conversions. He ran a Beit Midrash in his home. Two prominent rabbis were his students, Rabbi Levi and Rabbi Menashe.	[=Mordechai]
'10s	Rabbi Mordekhai Aghalar	Rabbi Mordekhai Aghalar		R. Mordekhai Aghalar (M. Morad) was the leader of the Mashhadi community during the difficult times of the Bolshevik Revolution, which brought a flow of refugees to Mashhad. He made aliyah to Jerusalem in 1927 and published holy books with Persian translations. He passed away in 1936 and is buried on the Mount of Olives.	[MJCA I/535]
'20s	Rabbi Mordekhai Aghalar	Rabbi Mordekhai Aghalar	Rabbi Yosef Dilmani	R. Yosef Dilmani (M. Yussuf) started teaching in 1924 at the age of 23. In 1945 he ran a Beit Midrash of ten classrooms and 100 youths. He continued to teach in Tehran until he passed away in 1985. He is buried in Beheshtiyeh.	
'30s	Rabbi Menashe Betzalel		Rabbi Yosef Dilmani	R. Menashe Betzalel (M. Faraj) served as rabbi since his days in Marv (in the 1910s). He led the community in the 30s, during the difficult period of the Bukhara refugees. He passed away in 1942 in Tehran and is buried in Mashhad.	

		Rabbi Refael Aghalar		R. Refael Aghalar (M. Rafi) was the son of M. Morad. He was put in charge of kosher slaughtering and of his father's synagogue after his father made aliyah to Israel. He became paralyzed in 1949, and made aliyah in 1950. He is buried in Qiryat Shaul. Shlomo, the son of R. Refael Aghalar, lived in Eretz Israel for a few years but returned to Mashhad. He was not a rabbi but served as Hebrew teacher when he returned. Following his father's paralysis, he studied animal slaughter under Rabbi Levi and was made responsible for kosher slaughter.	
	'40s ...'50s	Rabbi Levi Nissim	Rabbi Refael Aghalar	Rabbi Yosef Dilmani	Rabbi Levi Nissim (M. Abdelah) was a rabbi from his days in Marv (1910s). There is evidence of his continued activity (performing marriages and circumcisions) in Marv during the 1920s even though he lived in Mashhad. During the '30s, Rabbi Levi, for the purposes of commerce, dwelt in Peshawar and led the local community of Jewish Mashhadi merchants. The '40s were marked by many changes (the Second World War, the Passover Riots of 1946, the arrival of refugees from Herat, and the departure from Mashhad). Those were the peak years of Rabbi Levi's leadership. He continued to lead the community in the '50s in Tehran, the community's new place of settlement. He passed away in 1959 and is buried in Beheshtiyeh.	
	Family Ties: Many of the above-mentioned rabbis were related to each other. Yehuda, son of Yosef Nissim, had eight children, and G-d granted him Torah-loving descendents. His son Rabbi Levi, the community rabbi, married Esther, who was Rabbi Moshe's granddaughter. Rabbi Refael Aghalar married Rachel, Yehuda's daughter. Rabbi Adoniyahu (M. Khalil) married Yehuda's granddaughter Rivqa, daughter of Hanna. The grandson, Moshe, son of Binyamin son of Yehuda, married Hanna, M. Elias HaKohen's daughter.				
The Synagogues	The following is a passage taken from a report written by Kleinboim, a representative of the Jewish Agency for Israel, who was sent to Mashhad after the riots of 1946: "The Mashhadi Jewish community's life revolves around the synagogue. They don't only pray and study the Bible there, but also read newspapers and anything else that is sent to them by Eretz Israeli institutions. At the synagogue they discuss current affairs, local and foreign. All the assemblies of the congregation and meetings regarding various public matters are held at the synagogue. The Mashhadi Jews are also fond of simply sitting in their synagogue for no reason at all. This is understandable, if one takes into account that for generations the synagogue was their only place of gathering." Indeed, there were many synagogues in Mashhad at that time. The following table lists their names:				[Zionist Archives/ 56-4576] The source in Hebrew 1940s

Synagogue	Rabbi/ Shaliach Tzibur (Emissary of the Congregation)	Comments
The Central Synagogue	M. Faraj Elishayoff (R. Menashe) M. Abdelah Nissim (R. Levi)	This is Mashhad's central synagogue, and the only one with a ritual bath (Miqveh) for purification rituals. It was sometimes referred to as Aminoffs, M. Faraj, or M. Abdelah Synagogue.
Kohanim	M. Elias Kohen M. David Karmely	Was situated in Dalon' Kohanim. It was supported by the Kali-Nissimi family, and under the leadership of M. Elias Kohen (the father-in-law of Moshe ben Binyamin Nissim).
Levian A	M. Yosef Zar	This synagogue was transferred to Tehran.
Levian B		Located in the Janat neighborhood.
Esmael "Dast Frush"		
Hakimiha	M. Shokrelah Mordekhai	In Dalon' Hajihah (Hajihah Alley).
Yosefzadeh		In Janat neighborhood.
Kalatiha	M. Yaghub Kashi	
Mola Morad	M. Rafi Aghalar	
Abdol-Karim Itzhaqoff (Dash Karim)	M. Agha Nazzar	
Faraj Boland (tall)	M. Yosef Dilmani (Dil)	
Yosefzadeh		In Janat neighborhood.
M. Yosef Bassal	M. Yosef Bassal	Was situated in the house of Lotfelah Nissim (Saghir Nejad) in Dalon' Mordekhaiha (Mordekhai's Alley].

[R.N. – as I heard from my uncle Hananiya Nissimi]

[MJCA I\ 452]

[MJCA I\ 453]

There were 30-50 people in each synagogue.

The Central Synagogue

The Name

[Hananiya Nissimi 2007]

The synagogue was usually named after its founder or its presiding rabbi. The central Mashhadi synagogue was called, at different times, Aminoffha (Aminoffs), M. Faraj, and M. Abdelah.

- The Aminoffha Synagogue was named after Haji Ibrahim Aminoff and his family, who contributed generously to the community's welfare. Their donations included the building that housed the central synagogue in the Kanissa Alley and the building of the Beit Midrash (school for Jewish studies) farther down the alley.
- The Mela Faraj Synagogue was named after M. Faraj, the synagogue's presiding rabbi until he passed away in 1942. His good friend, Mola Abdelah, joined him in 1941 when he returned from Peshawar (after seven years).
- The Mela Abdelah Synagogue was named after its last presiding rabbi who took over from M. Faraj after his demise and who presided until the

departures to Tehran.

Clarifications:

According to Azaria Levy (a researcher of Mashhadi Judaism) there were two synagogues in Marv: the Aminoff synagogue and the Nissimi synagogue. It is interesting to recall that Neimark mentions Mela Amin (Binyamin) Kordevani as one of the respected people in Marv (1886). It is also known that M. Faraj and M. Abdelah studied in Rabbi Shmuel Garji's yeshiva (an institution for the study of Talmud and Torah) in Marv and served as the local rabbis (up until, and even after the Communist revolution). [Zichron/ Settlements] [Sources/ Neimark]

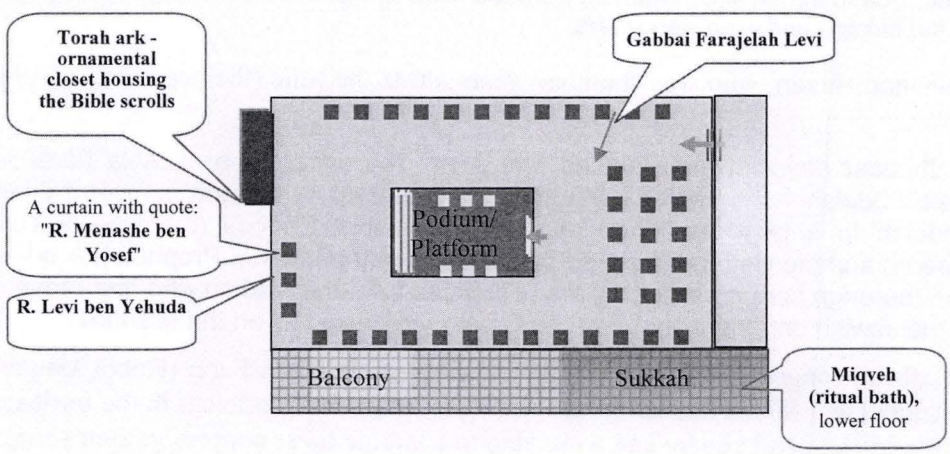
David, the son of M. Faraj, recounts an interesting meeting he had with M. Shmuel Garji's grandson (from his mother's side) that took place at their synagogue in New York. The grandson spoke with great appreciation "Grandfather M. Shmuel had three outstanding students who studied the Talmud at his yeshiva in Marv. These were M. Faraj, M. Abdelah and a third whose name I cannot recall". We have additional evidence: Rabbi Levi's certificate of qualification, hand-signed by Rabbi Shmuel Garji. [Beit Saba/ Rabbi Levi]

In addition, there are several ketubot (Jewish prenuptial agreement) from Marv, carrying M. Abdelah's and M. Faraj's signatures. [Sources/ Ketubot]

Therefore it is possible that M. Faraj and M. Abdelah served the congregation in Marv through their positions in the Aminoff and the Nissimi synagogues. We can assume that after the departure from Marv, the Aminoffha synagogue in Mashhad "inherited" the Aminoff synagogue in Marv (in terms of funding, holy books, congregation members, etc.).

The Structure of the Synagogue

The synagogue contained about 100 seats, plus a women's section where the ceiling was very low. Even after Rabbi Menashe Betzaleli (M. Faraj) passed away, his seat was kept reserved throughout the years. Rabbi Levi Nissim (M. Abdelah) usually sat at the podium (teiva), and Farajelah Levy, the Gabbai (the synagogue's warden) sat in the first row behind the platform. 1940s



[2007 Conversation with David son of M. Faraj Betzaleli]

[2007 conversation with my uncle Yehuda Nissim]

	The Synagogue's Atmosphere	1940s
The Synagogue's Rabbis	M. Faraj and M. Abdelah were excellent instructors. **Leaders of the local rabbis** .... their Shabbat (Saturday) afternoon sermons attracted large crowds. At the end of work and evening prayer every day, they would study the Torah.	[Our Heritage Exhibition]
Women	At the central synagogue, three prayers were conducted regularly. Many women also participated in the prayers, mainly on Saturdays and holidays, and also on Mondays and Thursdays.	[Beit Saba/ Yeshayahu]
Kanissa-Ro	One workday, at the time of Mincha (the afternoon prayer), M. Faraj was walking towards the synagogue. A few children were playing together (among them was Michael, son of R. Levi). M. Faraj gently addressed the children saying "very nice, I see that playing is more important than praying Mincha" and continued on his way. The embarrassed children immediately joined the prayer. The Rabbi's unique style left an enduring impression. He became a "living example" that trained the youth to become "Kanissa-Ro" (an ordinary person accustomed and desiring to attend synagogue).	[Michael Nissimi]
Like an Angel	"I would imagine the angels in the image of M. Abdelah" – those were the words of David, son of M. Faraj (who was orphaned at the age of two).	[David Betzaleli]
The Sanctity of the Synagogue	Rabbi Levi was very strict in matters concerning the sanctity of the synagogue and prohibited talking during the prayers. Once, as a result of a flagrant violation of this prohibition, the Rabbi, in protest, made a show of removing his Tallit (Jewish prayer shawl) and leaving the synagogue. He then attended the "Kohanim" synagogue until the congregation requested that he return.	[David Betzaleli]
The Ninth of Av	The eve of Tisha B'Av (annual fast commemorating the destruction of both Temples): Rabbi Levi, along with the congregation, sat on the synagogue's balcony floor (the area designated for the Sukkah) and read the Lamentations (Qinot). **Note**: Due to the summer heat, the Persians used to spend their evenings in the yard or on the balcony and even sleep there.	[David Betzaleli]
Shabbat Sermons	Soleiman Hazan, who was about ten years old at the time (the beginning of 1944) says: A Shabbat day, between Mincha and Arvit. The synagogue of Mela Faraj and Mela Abdelah – the central synagogue in Mashhad. A sermon is given by Mela Abdelah to a large audience about the Parashat Shavua (the weekly Torah portion) and the Haftarah (related passages from the book of Prophets). A brilliant and thorough sermon including many sources from the Mishna (the first redaction of the Jewish oral traditions) and the Gmara (commentary on the Mishna). Of all the congregations' scholars in Mashhad, only Mela Faraj (Rabbi Menashe Betzaleli) and Mela Abdelah (Rabbi Levi Nissimi) were proficient in the intricacies of the Mishna and Gmara and were able to combine these sources in their sermons in the Persian language. The sermons were accurate, clear, and of great interest to the congregation – who often approached the Rabbis with questions. These two	[Soleiman Hazan]

	extraordinary individuals would respond clearly and receptively.	
The Death of Mela Faraj	Mela Faraj passed away in 1942 and the community fell into a period of great mourning. Upon hearing the terrible news, Mela Abdelah burst into bitter tears. The death of this great man severely affected his good friend, Mela Abdelah. During the coming years the burden of the Torah fell upon the shoulders of Mela Abdelah alone. For years to come he continued to give sermons about the Parashat Shavua and taught Mishna and Gmara, in addition to the rest of his services, which included conducting marriage ceremonies and acts of charity and kindness.	[Soleiman Hazan]
Weekday Routine	During weekdays, after Arvit (the evening prayer), Mela Abdelah would teach the youth of the community. Sometimes the Rabbi would invite me to sit next to him on the couch by the podium and we would study the Bible in the Persian translation, particularly the books of Daniel, Job or Psalms. On one of these days, after Arvit, a person arrived at the synagogue on behalf of Mela Rafi (Rabbi Refael Aghalar) holding a lung belonging to a cow that had been slaughtered that same day. Mela Rafi was responsible for the Mashhadi community's animal slaughtering. There arose a concern over whether the cow's slaughter was kosher or not because of flaws that were found on its lungs. During those years, all questions regarding Halacha and Kashrut were addressed to Mela Abdelah, who represented the highest Halachic authority to permit or forbid, and to instruct in the proper course of action. Mela Abdelah carefully inspected the lung, inflated it with air, and finally concluded that the lung was normal and the cow was kosher and suitable for eating.	[Soleiman Hazan]
Before Yom Kippur	On the eve of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) a huge number of people would visit the synagogue in preparation for the holy day. The Mela Abdelah Synagogue was the only synagogue with a Miqveh (a ritual bath for purification). The people would first immerse themselves in the waters of the Miqveh and then would go up to the synagogue. At the corner of the synagogue stood a pillar dedicated to the observance of the Malqut mitzvah ('lashing' commandment). Each man in turn would rest his palms on the pillar, facing the wall with his bare back towards Mela Abdelah. A faithful and G-d-fearing man named Vali Hezghiya would tie the hands of the person next in line to the pillar with a band of Tefilin (phylacteries). Mela Abdelah would whip each man using a leather lash whose tip had thin strips. All in all 39 **lashings** were given – and the following words were repeated three times: "But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not. Yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath". Mela Abdelah's harmonious and moving voice and his tears during the Day of Repentance prayer are remembered, and to this day echo in the ears of his audience.	[Soleiman Hazan] [Psalms 78 38]
His Right to Protect Us	To conclude, here is Soleiman Hazan's description of Rabbi Mela Abdelah's character: ... These are some images I recall from those days. I was privileged to witness Mela Abdelah's illustrious character, and therefore I take the liberty to say that he was an exemplar of self-sacrifice and piety, a model of love for mankind and	[Soleiman Hazan]

	brotherhood, a dedicated public figure, humble and modest, working tirelessly and motivated only by holy intentions. May he rest in peace in paradise. May the deeds of Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda protect the entire holy community. Amen. May it be G-d's will...	

And the Lord brought us forth...

"And the Lord brought us forth... with a mighty hand..." (Deuteronomy 26:8)

	The Diaspora of the Jews of Mashhad	1900-2000
General	At the beginning of the 1920s Mashhadi communities began to grow in Jerusalem, Tehran, London and India (Bombay and Peshawar). During the 1950s the majority of Mashhadi Jews moved to Israel and Tehran, and the communities in India soon ceased to exist. These years also saw the formation of new Mashhadi communities in Milan and the United States. During the 1980s, after the Islamic Revolution, most of the community in Tehran moved to New York, with a minority moving to Israel and to other destinations. Today, in the 2000s, the Mashhadi communities in Diaspora are centered primarily in, London, Milan and New York. Few remain in Tehran. Over half of the community immigrated to Israel.	

London

	Mashhadi Jewish Community in London	1910-1990
	The Mashhadi community in London is the second oldest, after the one in Israel. Its beginnings coincided with the relocation of the Marv community to Mashhad.	
	The First Mashhadi in London	1910s
David Harounoff	David Harounoff was the first of the Mashhadi Jews to move to London. He arrived via Istanbul, leaving his family behind in Jerusalem. His business was importing carpets. He intended to reunite with his family as soon as he got established in his new location.	
Years of Loneliness	However, World War I separated him from his family - the United Kingdom and Ottoman Turkey were enemy countries. The Mashhadi Jews in Eretz Israel were ordered to adopt Ottoman citizenship or else they would be deported. Many elected for deportation, among them David Harounoff's family. The family sailed from Eretz Israel to Alexandria, which was under British rule at the time, aboard an American warship (the United States was neutral at the time).	
	Formation	1920s
The Family Unites	In 1923, after the war ended, David Harounoff and his family were reunited – after being apart for four years. The family lived in the Shepherd Bush area of London – near the Sephardic and Portuguese community. In the beginning, David was a member of the Bevis Marks Synagogue, and later, together with Yosef Harounoff, he was among the founders of the Sephardic and Portuguese Holland Park Synagogue.	

The First Wave	During the 1920s, additional families arrived, and so began the formation of the first Mashhadi Jewish community of London. Their names were: David Aminoff, Rahim Aminoff, Haji Agha Ebrahimoff, Haji Agha Naghioff, Mehdi Samad, Samuel Harounoff, Yussuf Azizelahyoff and Esshagh Jamshidoff. The community would turn to the two Harounoff brothers with questions and for advice, and they became the community leaders.	[R.N.-An incomplete list, e.g., Zabihelah Zabihi & wife Miriam traveled to London during 1920s]
"The Chevra"	The community established a system of voluntary self-taxation that they called the "Chevra." Within the framework of the society, community members contributed one-thousandth of their business income, which was used for the needs of the London community and for Mashhadi communities elsewhere (in Mashhad and Jerusalem).	
The Synagogue	Towards the end of the 1920s the community began moving into the Stamford Hill district. At first, the Mashhadis worshipped along with the Bukhara community in a house in Stamford Hill. Later, they procured a plot of land in East Bank, and for the first time built a synagogue in London specifically for the Mashhadi community.	
	Establishment	1930s
Occupations	During the 1930s additional Mashhadi Jews moved into the vicinity and the community became entrenched around the synagogue at Stamford Hill. During these years, Rahamim Mehdi and Yussuf Kashi led the community. The Mashhadis' main occupations were commerce in: • Carpets, at Port of London Authority (PLA) • Furs, at Garlick Hills Despite the business competition among the community members there was a feeling of warm and honest friendship. The community was prosperous and the future appeared rosy when … suddenly, World War II erupted (1939).	
	World War II	1939 – '45
Moving to Torquay	These were years of fear and anxiety. Bomb shelters were built as a defense against the aerial attacks of the Blitz and people equipped themselves with gas masks. Schools were evacuated to the suburbs because of the bombings. Many Mashhadis moved their residence to the town of Torquay. Despite its remoteness from London, the area was still prone to German attacks. A bombing raid on the Palace Hotel, which served as a military hospital, killed many of the patients. The Germans attacked civilians indiscriminately, bombed coffee shops and gunned down civilians on the beach. By the grace of God the Mashhadi community suffered no casualties.	
Occupations	During the war most of Europe was occupied, and England was subject to a naval blockade. German U-boats and warships threatened the passage of cargo. The war situation greatly destabilized the community's source of income, which was based on the import of carpets, furs and leather from the East, and their marketing to Europe. The breadwinners would leave their families during the week and travel to London,	

	which was the center of commerce. Only on the weekends would they return to their families. Several of them (including Aminoff) began trading with the United States, instead of occupied Europe. Some (Mordekhai and Naghioff) began dealing in diamonds. Others (such as Harounoff) abandoned their foreign trading businesses and instead started dealing in different branches of domestic trade, such as the sale of porcelain and antiques. [R.N. - To illustrate, my grandfather Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda sent a cargo of carpets from Peshawar to Mehdi Samad in London. The cargo was delayed in customs for a long time, which caused a large loss of profit. Only after the war had ended were they able to sell the carpets.]	
The Synagogue	In the beginning the Mashhadis held services at Cleave Court (the home of Jamshidoff), later at the Sandrigham Hotel, and after a while they moved to The Nest (the Aminoff house). Finally, along with the Ashkenazis, they founded a synagogue at Unity Hall. Rabbi Baddiel was chosen to serve as the community's rabbi. He was responsible for organizing services, for Jewish religious lessons, and for preparing the youth for bar mitzvah (Jewish coming of age ceremony). In addition, the children attended the Scouting movement and HaBonim (a Jewish-Zionist youth movement).	
For the Troops	Along with the Allied forces, many Jewish soldiers arrived in the area. They were taken in by the community which hosted them on a regular basis. The young women of the community hosted the soldiers every Saturday night at the British Legion Hall. Despite the difficulty in obtaining food, which was rationed, the young women served beverages and sandwiches. The soldiers were also frequently invited on Saturdays and holidays to the homes of community members.	
	Military Service	1940s
	Of England's Jewish population of 400,000, over 60,000 were drafted, including Mashhadi Jews, to do their part in the war effort against the Germans.	
During the War	Following are the Mashhadi soldiers that took part in the war:	

Name	Branch	Comments
Faizelah Aminoff	Infantry	Wounded in active service
Lotfelah Aminoff	Air Force	
Morad Azizelahyoff	Air Force	
Eliyahu Azizelahyoff	Infantry	Stationed overseas
Jack Azizelahyoff	Infantry	
Joy Hajiyoff	Infantry	Artillery
Jack Harounoff	Infantry	Artillery. Wounded and crippled during the battle of El-Alamein, hospitalized for several months and discharged
Matt Harounoff	Infantry	Served in North Africa and Italy
Rahamim Harounoff	Infantry	
Sam Esmaeloff	Infantry	Stationed in Algeria
A. H. Karimzadeh	Air Force	
Ernest Kahan	Infantry	Armored division

Margaret Kahan	Infantry	ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service)	
Jack Levy	Air Force		
Valli Levy	Infantry		
Sydney Lightman	Navy	Served aboard a naval minesweeper in the Mediterranean	
Joy Naghioff	Air Force	Stationed in southeast Asia	
Marcia Naghioff	Air Force	Served in HQ RAF Fighter Command	
Syd Naghioff	Air Force	Radio operator, stationed in southeast Asia. Contracted malaria	
H. Barnet Shaer	Infantry	Anti-aircraft Operator by Thames. Was wounded.	

After the War

The following are the Mashhadi soldiers served after the war:

Name	Force	Comments
Amos Azizelahyoff	Air Force	
Dr. Nissim Ebrahimoff	Air Force	Military doctor
Soli Elishayoff	Air Force	
Morris Hajiyoff	Army	Stationed in Singapore
Jack Hajiyoff	Air Force	Stationed in Malaysia with Medical Corps
Abba Norman Harounoff	Army	
Abraham Harounoff	Army	
Yehuda Harounoff	Army	
Nissim Harounoff	Army	

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The United States of America

Following are the Mashhadi soldiers who served in the U.S. military forces:

Name	Force	Comments
Benny Aminoff	Army	
Ben Hajizadeh	Navy	Served in US Marines, stationed in Japan
Nissim Ebrahimoff	Army	Served in artillery, participated in combat in Korea

After the War

1945 - 1965

Return to London

On May 8, 1945, the war ended and the Mashhadis returned to their homes in Stamford Hill, London. The entire congregation, including several Bukhari families, lived near the synagogue. Rabbi Baddiel continued serving the congregation. A friendly relationship existed among the congregation members, and the synagogue served as a social hub for the entire congregation.

The Second Wave

Additional Mashhadis, from Iran and Israel, joined the London community. However, several families of the founding generation (i.e., Aminoff, Azizelahyoff, Jamshidoff and Ebrahimoff) moved to New York. The loss of these families weakened the congregation, hurting business and communal social activities, especially those of the "Chevra".

[R.N. For example, Moshe ben Binyamin Nissim and Haji Agha Kohan-Sedegh moved from Bombay to London].

Occupatio

The community continued dealing in carpets and furs, but gradually transitioned to

ns	trading in jewelry, with Hatton Garden serving as the community's center for foreign trade. Carpets – Following a prolonged decline in the carpet trade during the war, London again became a hub of carpet exports to European markets. The prosperity continued into the 1960s, when Hamburg began competing with London. This branch was further weakened with the cessation of trade at the Port of London Authority. The principal families that traded in carpets were: Azizelahyoff, Elishayoff, Harounoff, Naghioff and Mehdi Samad. Among the new families that joined the community and that traded in carpets can be counted Nematnejad, Levian, Eliasoff, Karimzadeh and Levy Kalaty, who built an empire from scratch. Furs – Like the carpet trade, the fur trade also suffered a slowdown until the 1950s. During the '50s the fur trade recovered and the demand rose. The families that traded in furs were mainly: Aminoff, Azizelahyoff, Ebrahimoff, Elishayoff and Naghioff. Jewelry – Starting in the 1950s, the younger generation began a gradual transition to the jewelry trade, and then in the '60s veteran traders also joined this branch.	
Joyous Occasions	During the war years, not a single marriage was recorded among the Mashhadi community. Because of this, Rahim Aminoff conceived the idea of establishing a club for young men and women, the Kismet Club. This initiative became a great success as several couples got married and started a family. After exhausting the "local supply", the following years witnessed marriages between individuals of the London community and their brethren abroad.	
The Synagogue	The old synagogue at 5A East Bank served as both a place of prayer and as the community's social center. On Saturdays and holidays the synagogue was filled with worshippers. Agh Nabi Eliaszadeh and Mehdi Hajiyoff functioned as the synagogue's Gabbais (wardens). Due to the community's growth during the 1960s, a need was felt for an additional synagogue. Abdel-Rahim Azizelahyoff, Samuel Harounoff and others initiated the construction of a new synagogue in a lot adjacent to that of the first synagogue. The construction expenses were funded primarily by the 'Chevra'. In 1965 the community commemorated the inauguration of the new synagogue with an impressive celebration. In time, the Mashhadis also moved to other areas. At present, this synagogue serves mainly Sephardic congregations.	
	Today's Community	1970s-1980s
Northwest London	During the 1960s the community gradually left Stamford Hill, and by the beginning of the 1970s few remained in that area. The majority moved to N. W. London (to Finchley, Hendon, Stanmore, and Southgate). This was a turning point in the uniqueness of the congregation as they decided to join other Sephardic synagogues instead of building a synagogue of their own. They joined: • Sephardic Synagogue in Golders Green • United Synagogue in Hendon and Finchley This turning point was of additional importance due to the resulting cultural and social ties that were formed with the Ashkenazi community as a result of joint	

	academic centers at the Jewish schools and marriages between the youth of different communities.	
The Third Wave	As a result of the Iranian Islamic Revolution (1979), the majority of Mashhadi Jewry in Tehran moved to New York, though several moved to London. Their addition to the community intensified the Mashhadi identity among the London community and boosted its social and cultural life.	
Events	Starting in the 1980s, the absence of a Mashhadi synagogue became noticeably felt. Dissatisfied with the prayer arrangements, Esshagh Kashi, whose parents had passed away, and who was required to recite the Qaddish, decided to organize a Minyan at his own home. After a while, the Minyan moved to the home of Soli Kalaty. Simultaneously, an agreement was made with the Kinloss Synagogue to use the Bertha Tischler Hall for special community events. These special events included Hanukkah celebrations, Purim, and the Israeli Day of Independence.	
Occupations	These years saw a drastic decline in the fur trade, and many Mashhadis looked again to carpet trading, starting with PLA (Port of London Authority), and followed by High Gate and Hatton Garden. As a result of the Iranian Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war, a stream of immigrants inundated the area, bringing with them a large supply of carpets which flooded the market, driving down the prices and severely impairing the trade. This time, relief came from: • Real estate - with the rise in the price of properties during the 1970s, many of the community members switched to this line of work. • Jewelry trade - in the local market, as well as exports to the United States (with the move of the community from Tehran to New York).	
Women	A new women's organization, called the Ladies' Guild, was founded in 1968 for charitable and social purposes. Hanna Levy and Malka Levy served as co-chairwomen. Other members of the organization were Miriam Soleimani, Na'ir Harounoff, and Mina Mehdi. They organized 'Donation Evenings' (such as falafel parties and 'auctions' of various products), where most of the proceeds were targeted to the "mothers' home" in Tel Aviv (located on Shabazi Street). In 1983, Pauline Aminoff and Parry Aminoff were elected the chair-people. They continued the charitable tradition and even expanded the activities of the organization – such as 'Morning Coffee' and various group trips and travels. Most of the proceeds were dedicated to the building of a home for senior citizens in Hertzliya ($100,000), and what was left over was distributed to other charitable institutions.	
	Sources	
Menorah 1990/4	Based on a series of articles written by Abraham Harounoff for the newspaper 'Menorah' (1990-4). The composition was published in honor of the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Jewish Mashhadi community in London. The 80th Anniversary of the Arrival of the First Mashhadi Jews in England (by Abraham Harounoff)	

Milan

Milan		
Introduction	Jews had been living in Italy (and in Milan) since the time of the Roman Empire. In 1931, the Italian Jewish community numbered about 50,000. By the end of the World War II, the Jewish community consisted of about 30,000 (some had fled, some converted, and nearly 8,000 had been murdered). Today there are about 35,000 Jews in Italy. They are organized under the Unione delle Comunita Ebraiche Italiane, which supplies the religious, cultural and educational needs of the community, and which represents them as a community in their dealings with outsiders. Today about 10,000 Jews live in Milan. About half of them are descendants of the Spanish crypto-Jews and they speak Ladino.	[EJC]
The Core Group	The first Mashhadi to do business in Milan was Mussa Mehdi-Tash (1947). A year later, Yosef Nassimi and Bob Azizelahyoff arrived in Milan. Yosef exported silk textiles *to* Iran and Bob imported carpets *from* Iran. By the end of the '40s, with the participation of additional Mashhadis, the core of a Jewish Mashhadi community was formed in Milan. In those years Manuchehr Kashanian (carpet trader), Mordechai Nissim (dealer in precious stones), Soleiman Ghassemoff, and Mehdi Karmeli also arrived.	47-1950 [MJCA-II /70]
Formation of the Community	The 1950s were the formative years of the community. During that period, a group of Mashhadis prayed at the Ashkenazi synagogue on the Via Unione – about 15 Mashhadis occupied two rows of seats. They became the nucleus of the Mashhadi synagogue – a clear representation of the existence of the community. Many of these Mashhadi came to Milan without their families. The families joined them only after they had had time to adapt to the new environment and financially establish themselves. These 'Mashhadi bachelors' (the men who lived far from their families) were able to enjoy kosher meals at the restaurant belonging to the Ashkenazi synagogue. The families that came in the '50s were: Ismail Dil, David Kohanim, David Nissim (Sardar), Azizelah Zvuloni, Soleiman Hazan, David Loloey, Reuven Aghalar, Fathelah and David Gohari, Haji-Ben Aminoff, Eliyahu Karmeli, Esshagh Rubeni, the Zionis, Amir Nissimi, Itzhaq Nissimi, Fathelah Aziz, Moshe Loloey, Soleiman Levy, Abdel-Rahim Navaii, and Shlomo Kaboli. By the end of the '50s, they numbered more than 100. They lived in the center of town and dealt in commerce – mostly in carpets, precious gems, and jewelry. They established their first synagogue in 1958 in a rented house in the city center on Santa Marta Street. Within two years the synagogue was moved to a larger location on Piatti Street. The synagogue was called Ohel Shalom (Tent of Peace) and Soleiman Hazan read the Torah (in his youth he had studied in Mashhad under Mela Abdelah Nissim).	1950s [MJCA-II /71]

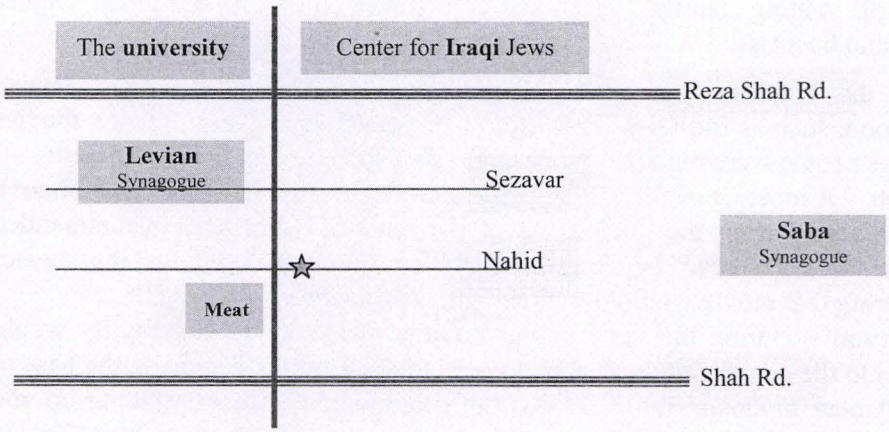
Institutionalization of the Community	It was in the 1960s that the Mashhadis started to put down roots in Milan. They continued to grow and they soon founded another synagogue, Beit Mordechai, the second synagogue for the community. Seifelah Dil read the Torah. He also initiated the establishment of a Miqveh at the synagogue.	1960s [MJCA-II /72]
	In the beginning, community affairs were mostly handled by the dignitaries of the community. In 1966, Mehdi Karmeli established a formal community committee. Its members were Mehdi Karmeli, Ramazan Azizelahyoff, Fathelah Gohari, David Gohari, Amir Haji-Bai, Nematelah Levian, Manuchehr Kashanian, Jahangir Etessami, Yaaqov Nissim, Shlomo Levy, Bob Azizelahyoff, Seifelah Dil and David Kohanim. The committee was called No'am (N'eimanei Adat Mashhad - Trustees of the Mashhad Community). Board members were elected every three years. Among the members were immigrants from Bukhara, Herat, and Orumieh.	1966 [נאמני עדת משהד]
	Before the end of the '60s (1967), thanks to the initiative of Fathelah and David Gohari, a third synagogue was established, Viatube Rose. Eliyahu Karmeli was the Torah reader.	1967
	The drafting of by-laws by the committee (in 1971) symbolized the completion of the institutionalization of the Mashhad Jewish community in Milan.	
Community Life	During the 1970s, the community expanded to approximately 200 families, and it was decided to set aside 25% of the synagogue's income for the purpose of establishing an additional synagogue. In 1974, a 1,300 cubic meter parcel of land was purchased at Via Montecuccoli. A luxurious synagogue was built on this land in 1985.	1970s [MJCA-II /73, 74]
	The structure includes a central prayer hall, a youth prayer hall, a hall for marriage ceremonies and a large parking lot in the basement.	
	The majority of the community's children went to the Dafano school, belonging to the Comunita. On Sundays, the children took part in Biblical studies classes, which were supervised by Nuriel Betzalel and Seifelah Dil.	[71]
	The community members were also elected to office in other Jewish organizations, such as: • Azizelah (Carlo) Dil - elected president of the Italian branch of the United Israel Appeal organization. • Gavriel Yaaqoboff - elected a member of the Federation in Milan.	[75]
	The Milan community was a tight-knit and warm one. The members tended to spend weekends together, often in the countryside and on the lakeshore. During summer breaks, the community organized outings to the Milan Maritima beach, where they stayed together at the same guest houses and of course attended their own synagogues. Many of the community members spent their summer breaks in Israel, and also planned to hold their celebrations with their family members in Israel.	[77]
Mutual Assistance	During the Islamic Revolution (1979), the majority of Mashhadi Jewry moved to the United States. A portion was integrated into the Mashhadi communities	1980s [MJCA-II /74]

	in Israel, London and Milan. The No'am committee, headed by Mr. Kashanian, was wise to establish a close relationship with the U.S consulate. This relationship greatly contributed to successfully attaining visas for the Mashhadis who were forced to leave their homes en masse. Many of the members of the community in Milan are Israeli citizens, Hebrew speakers, and their sons serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The community has strong ties to Israel and to Jewish organizations. This community has generously contributed to the building of the old age home in Hertzliya and took part in planting a forest, commemorating the Mashhadi Jews, in the Judean Hills.	
Organization	The Milan community is well organized, and democratically elects its representatives every three years. Following bullets illustrate this: • The chairmen to date, by chronological order, have been: Mehdi Karmeli, Nematelah Levian, David Namdar, Jahangir Etessami, Manuchehr Kashanian, Azizelah Dil, Uri Ben Yehuda, Binyamin Nassimiha • The Milan Committee of 2004 included: Binyamin Nassimiha, Efraim Levy Azizelahyoff, Doron Kohanan, Reuven Golran, David Nassimiha, Danny Loloey, David Zioni, David Aziz, Gavriel Yaaqobi Nemat Nejad, Afshin Kaboli, Yossi Karmeli • The Women's Committee of 2004 included: Anat Levy, Ruth Ben Yehuda, Yafa Nassimiha, Sara Kohanim, Irit Loloey, Adina Nassimiha, Flora Hakim, Mahin Abdelahzadeh, Osnat Loloey, Zehava Kohanpur, Yehudit Moradi	[MJCA-II /86]
	Sources	
	The History of Mashadi Jews II, published by: MJCA - Mashadi Jewish Community of America	
	See EJC website: www.eurojewcong.org	

Tehran

	Tehran	1950 -1979
The Government	During the 1960s, with American aid, the Shah led the White Revolution, which included the development of infrastructure (e.g., roads, railroads and aviation), agriculture, industry and health (fighting diseases such as malaria). He made reforms in land ownership and labored to expand education to remote agricultural settlements. During the 60s and 70s, the Shah led a more independent foreign policy and established economic ties with western states as well as with the Soviet Union. These changes were criticized by those who claimed that the changes were not progressing at a satisfactory rate, as well as by religious zealots who objected to the Shah's pro-western proclivity. The activities of the Organization of Intelligence and National Security (SAVAK) increased the resistance of the masses against the Shah. The seeds of opposition within the Shiite establishment, among students, and of bazaar merchants alike (each for different reasons), penetrated all layers of society and manifested themselves as a wave of support for the Ayatollah who had been exiled to Iraq and had later moved to Paris. In 1979, the Shah fled to Cairo, where he died in 1980. The Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran after 14 years' exile.	
The Jews	Following the stabilization in Iran during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, it can be said that all the Jews across Iran had a wider range of liberties in matters of religion, culture, education, economy, etc. Their social and financial standing was above average. During this period, despite the animosity between the State of Israel and the Arab states, there were close diplomatic, economic and military relations between Iran and Israel. Several Jewish schools were open to anyone who wanted to enroll, such as the Ettefagh School (established by Iraqi Jewry), the Ettehad School (established by the Alliance organization), the Kurosh School, the Ganje' Danesh (Otzar HaTorah - Treasure of Science) School, the Ort School, etc.	
	The Mashhadi Jewish Community in Tehran	**1950 -1979**
First Arrivals	Esshagh Alioff Etessami, along with many other Mashhadis, departed from Marv in 1919, leaving behind all his belongings. His family found refuge with his grandfather, Farajelah Levian. The Alioff and Levy families decided to enter the carpet trade, exporting to India through Kerman. Despite this, when Esshagh arrived in Tehran, he decided to settle there and establish his carpet business from the capital city. At that time there were two or three other Mashhadi families living in Tehran. Two years later, Mrs. Alioff and their children moved to Tehran along with Ebrahim Hariri Tolu's family.	[MJCA-II/ 297-298] 1926
Mashhadi Way of Life	As early as the late 1930s, a group of Mashhadi Jews settled in Tehran. This settlement became the spearhead for collecting the Mashhadi Jewish community to Tehran as the result of the 1946 riot. After the mass exit of Mashhadi Jews to Tehran, the community was blessed with 25 years of religious freedom and financial success. The good relations between the Iranian and Israeli governments provided a calm atmosphere for the Mashhadi Jews, who made many trips to Israel for the	[R.N.]

	purposes of visiting family, vacations and travel, medical treatment, higher education and business. Although the community was no longer concentrated in a single Jewish neighborhood, such as Eid-Gah, but was now dispersed throughout the city, the ties between the people were remarkably close. Several such ties could be observed: • Doreh – A meeting of friends for playing cards (mostly the game of Cholloos) • Cinema – During the golden era of the cinema, word of a recommended movie would spread like wildfire, and on Saturday evenings the theater featuring that movie would overflow with Mashhadis. • Shemron - During the hot summer months many of the community would travel to the cooler Shemron area, located to the north of Tehran, at the base of the Alborz mountain range. A favorite pastime consisted of walking up and down the road, where there were coffee shops and food stands selling Gerdoo (fresh nuts) and Balal (roasted corn). • Nature – Groups of friends and family members would select a certain mountain village for a lengthy stay of a week and upwards. Usually, during the middle of the week, several of the men would return to Tehran for work. A well-known location called Adelan, at the foothills of the Alborz mountain range, was often frequented by many of the Mashhadis. Once, a bus packed with Mashhadi men, making its way to Tehran, overturned into a deep valley, and it was only by a miracle that they all made it out safely. Each family would rent a wooden platform by a stream. They would spread carpets and mattresses on the platform, and there they would spend days and nights in nature. They would chill fruits and vegetables (such as watermelons, melons, grapes, etc.) in the river's cold water. • Beaches of the Caspian Sea – Many of the Mashhadis traveled to the Caspian Sea, in particular to Bandar (port) Pahlavi, where they stayed for weeks in reed huts, right on the seashore.	[=Shemiran] [Michael Nissimi]
Mashhadi Center	During the 1940s the first community members lived in close proximity to each other in the vicinity of the Sheikh-Hadi intersection. During the 1950s and 1960s they lived mainly in the vicinity of the Shah and Reza Shah roads (on both sides of the Levian Synagogue, to the west of the Sheikh Hadi intersection). The Shah and Reza Shah roads were the main thoroughfares in Tehran. Between these two main roads were several parallel streets. The Levian Synagogue was located on Sezavar Street, and many of the Mashhadis lived in this area. To the south of the synagogue was a shop for kosher meat. To the north was the center for Iraqi Jews (within which were a large synagogue, a large banquet hall, and the Ettefagh Jewish school).	



*Rabbi Levi Nissim resided on Nahid Street

In the 1970s, with the development of the city to the north, many of the Mashhadis moved to the area of the Karaj River Boulevard.

The Rabbis

1950 -1979

Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda

The Chief Rabbi of the community, **Rabbi Levi Nissim** (Mela Abdelah) did not live long in Tehran; he died in the autumn of 1959. 1886-1959

We will remember always
Mela Abdelah – reciting Kol Nidrei and Viduy – his melodious voice was accompanied by tears and his words reached deep into the heart and soul

The passing of Mela Abdelah, one of the illustrious men of his generation, left a gaping void in the community and his absence was sorely felt. [Exhibition/ 39]

His demise left a void in the midst of the community and left the congregation devoid of religious authority accompanied by social leadership. He was a Halachist authority who cared for the community's needs – hand in hand with the community's elders. This is attested to in the memoirs of Rabbi Yedidiya Shofet, Tehran's presiding rabbi. Rabbi Yedidiya noted at length that beginning in the 60s, the Mashhadis began turning to him for their religious needs (conducting Kiddushin, performing circumcisions, giving sermons, etc.) [MJCA-II /317]

With G-d's grace, this void did not remain empty for long, and in 1966 the Anjoman (board) was founded, which began taking care of most of the community's needs, though unfortunately a religious authority for the community was still lacking and the Mashhadi community relied on Tehran's Rabbinate.

Rabbi Yosef Zar

Mela Yussuf studied with his uncle Mela Ebrahim Yaghutiel and with Mela Yussuf Bassal. He apprenticed with Mela Faraj Elishayoff. In Mashhad he was a cantor at Mela Fathelah Nemat Synagogue, and later at the Levian Synagogue in Janat. In Tehran he served as the cantor for the Levian Synagogue, the Mashhadi's main synagogue. He was blessed to have made aliyah and to be buried in Israel. 1902-1978 [MJCA-I /535]

Rabbi Yosef Dilmani

Mela Yussuf Dilmani studied Hebrew with Mela Ebrahim Yazdi. He studied Persian and Arabic at Kamalieh School. In 1924 he began teaching and in this manner served the community for over sixty years, till the end of his days. At first 1901-1985 [MJCA-I /561]

	he taught both Hebrew and Persian to children up to fourth grade. Later, the children would transfer to a state school in the Eid-Gah neighborhood to complete their elementary school studies and receive a government certificate. In 1936, representatives from Israel interviewed him and published a report regarding the community's history. In 1945, he managed a Beit Midrash for evening classes (for ages six through fourteen) consisting of ten classes and 100 students. The Aleh (leaf) textbooks were sent from Israel, courtesy of Farajelah Levy. After the community moved to Tehran, Mela Yussuf continued teaching Hebrew at his Beit Midrash at the Levian Synagogue. Simultaneously, he also taught at Kurosh, the Jewish school.	
	Organization of the Jews of Khorasan	1960 -1979
Foundation	**The Organization of the Jews of Khorasan** (Anjoman-e' Kalimian-e' Khorasan) was established in 1964. This was a milestone in the organization and management of the community in Iran, a transition from management by trustees (rabbis, dignitaries and volunteers) to management by publicly elected officials. In 1966 the Organization's regulations were submitted to Iran's Security Service offices. For years the Organization successfully cared for the community's social needs, such as synagogues, Bible studies, aliyah, charity, community events, etc. After the revolution, the center of activities was moved to New York.	[MJCA-II /302]
Organization	The first attempt at establishing the Organization took place at the Levian Synagogue in 1963; this attempt failed. A year later, another attempt was made at the Saba Synagogue; this attempt resulted in the formation of the community organization (Anjoman). The following were elected: Abdel-Rahim Etessami, Habibelah Levy, Jamshid Ghassabian, Agha Khan Abdelahzadeh, Haji Mehdi Nassrelahian, Lotfelah BaniLevi, Azizelah Kordevani, Dr. Mussa Rajabzadeh, Habibelah Dilmanian and Nurelah Zvuloni. Members of the Anjoman were elected for a term of two to three years. Up until the revolution, five terms were filled. Members of the last term were: Abdel-Rahim Etessami, Abdel-Rahim Zar, Habibelah Levy, Mehdi Hariri Tolu, Amin-Jan BaniLevi, Ebrahim Haghighat, Esshagh Dilmani, Yussuf Abdelahzadeh, Farajelah Levy, Albert Karmeli, Hushang Namdar, Engineer Nurelah Moheban, Haroun Kohanim, Nasser Zar, Jack Nassimi.	[MJCA-II /302]
Assets	After the foundation of the Anjoman, prior to the Shah's inauguration ceremony, representatives of the Iranian Jewish community requested to participate in presenting a gift to the Shah. The Anjoman raised 100,000 toman from the community, 64,000 to be used for a gift and the remainder for the Anjoman's coffers. The coffers grew further following additional contributions made by community members, such as: • Agh-Ali-Mohammad Hakimi contributed 60,000 toman from public funds at his disposal (the Hakimi Synagogue's fund, carpets, the small Mosque (Masjedak), etc.) • The Rubenis contributed 126,000 toman in memory of their father Yussuf Rubeni to commemorate the eleventh month since his death.	[MJCA-II /303, 304]

	The funds were designated as an interest-free loan for the needy. The money was kept, unused, in the Anjoman fund due to the prosperity of the times. After the revolution, the money was sent to Israel to be used for needy Mashhadis. An important first step of the Anjoman's activities was to record the deeds of all of the Mashhadi assets and keep all the information together in one place. This included the synagogues in Tehran, the cemetery in Mashhad, the Levian Synagogue and the Yussufzadeh Synagogue (the two synagogues that remained in Janat). In later days, the Yussufzadeh Synagogue was sold, and all that remained was the Levian Synagogue in Janat. The following is a list of properties deeded to the Anjoman: • In Mashhad: The Levian Synagogue and the cemetery (including 6 dunams, the equivalent of 1.5 acres). • In Tehran: The Aziz Khan Synagogue, the Anjoman Synagogue and the Nosrat Synagogue. • In Shiraz: the Lotfelah Abdelahzadeh Synagogue.	
	Synagogues	1950 -1979
The Fist Minyan	At first, the Mashhadis held services in a separate room at the Haim Synagogue on Hassan-Abad Road. The Mashhadis prayed on Saturdays from 6:30 am till 9:00 am, and the Ashkenazis - starting from 9:00 am. Following is a list of the Mashhadis who attended the synagogue: Yussuf Rajabzadeh, Haji Rahimoff, Faizelah and Yaghub Hosseinoff, Azizelah Zar, Gholam-Ali and Haji Esshagh Rahmanian, Nassrelah Shaban, Mussa Rahmani, Soleiman Aziz, Ebrahim Alioff, and additional congregants who frequented Tehran for the purpose of trade. Esshagh Alioff conducted the Mashhadi Minyan.	[MJCA-II /298] 1920-1930s
The Aziz Khan Synagogue	The Mashhadis' first synagogue was the Aziz Khan Synagogue, which resided at the Aziz Khan intersection in a renovated old house. The founders of the synagogue were: Nassrelah Abdelahzadeh, Faizelah and Yaghub Hosseinzadeh, Ebrahim Hariri, Azizelah Zar and Esshagh Alioff. Each Mashhadi family in Tehran donated according to their ability, between 2,000 and 3,000 toman, for the purpose of purchasing and renovating the synagogue. Following the 1946 Passover riots, the Mashhadi Jews moved to Tehran. At first they lived in the Hassan-Abad and Sheikh Hadi areas. When Mela Yussuf Dil arrived in Tehran he continued the classes for religious studies at this synagogue. Later, during the 1960s this structure became the center for the manufacturing of matzot for Pesach.	[MJCA-II /298] 1945 1960s
The Abdelahzadeh Synagogue	The Korush school on Sheikh-Hadi Street was the synagogue at which many of the Mashhadis worshipped. In the course of time, with Davood Abdelahzadeh's initiative, the Mashhadis requested the use of a classroom for praying on Saturdays and holy days. After a while, they purchased a house on Vaziri Street and fixed it up as a synagogue. Later they sold the house and built a synagogue on Kakhe'-Shomali Street.	[MJCA-II /299] 1940s
Levian	In the early 1950s, Levian synagogue's first years, I recall my grandfather, Rabbi	1950s [R.N.]

Synagogue	Levi Nissim, on Yom Kippur eve, by the Torah Ark, praying, his pleasant voice causing hearts to tremble with tears and excitement, as befitting this holy evening. (Actually, I "grew up" in this synagogue. This is the synagogue in which I prayed and studied until I made aliyah to Israel in 1966.) The Levian synagogue was established in the early 1950s by Mussa Levian (in a house purchased for 50,000 toman), following his son's death. The house was renovated and expanded during the 1950s. This synagogue served as the central synagogue for the congregation in Tehran. It consisted of a two storey house with a basement, was located on Sezavar St., and had no external markings to identify it as a synagogue. Mela Yussuf Dil's Beit Midrash was held on the first floor. The second floor served as the synagogue's hall, with a raised area for the women's section.	
	Roughly speaking, the synagogue's hall could hold around 200 people. By the Torah Ark sat Mela Yussuf Zar, Mela Yussuf Dil, Mela Alnaghi Bassal and others. On the other side, behind the podium sat the Gabbais, Agh Babajan Levy and Agh Mussa Levy. The Shamash was a pleasant man; he was dumb ("Gongak" in Persian). The synagogue's maintenance was entrusted to a Muslim woman named Snubar, who lived with her son. Mela Yussuf Zar, who had a pleasant voice, served as the synagogue's cantor. I remember his reading of the Ten Commandments; it caused a shiver of excitement as if I was present at the revelation at Mt. Sinai. The Beit Midrash operated every weekday. On Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, the advanced students studied with Mela Yussuf Dil. On Mondays and Wednesdays, classes for beginners were held by Mr. Somech. On Saturday evenings a Minyan of the Beit Midrash students was held. The best of the advanced students served as cantors. On Saturdays the advanced students recited the Pesuqei Dezimra of morning services. Mr. Somech taught the alphabet and vowels with the help of two rows of wooden plaques that hung on the wall. He would drill the students by arranging the letters on the top row, with different combinations of the vowel signs below. In Mela Yussuf's classes, the students learned selected verses of the prayers (such as Ashrei, Shir HaShirim, Pesuqei Dezimra, etc). The rabbi would teach the bar mitzvah boys how	1960s

	to "lay the tefillin" and the "Qadesh Li" section. On Purim an enormous table was arranged with prizes, the rabbi would read out the names of the students, starting from the most advanced to the beginners, and each in turn would choose a prize.	
Saba Synagogue	The synagogue was originally situated in a rented house on Badey Street. Then it moved to the Se-Rahe'-Shah neighborhood, and finally to Saba Street. Most of the Bar Mitzvah parties were celebrated in the Saba Synagogue. The Bar Mitzvah ceremony was held at the Mincha hour. A large crowd participated in this ceremony and the waiting was sweetened with light refreshments (cakes, drinks, snacks). After the ceremony only the immediate family remained for the Bar Mitzvah meal – usually "Plo Khoresh" (nokhod or ghormeh-sabzi). The dishes were prepared by the legendary chef "Zan-Agh Abdel-Rahim" – a short woman – about sixty years old - with lots of tenderness, gentleness and love. On the lower floor of the synagogue were table games (billiards, table football, ping pong, etc.), where the youth would gather on Saturdays for playing and meeting with their friends.	[MJCA-II]300/ [R.N.]
Nosrat Synagogue	In 1962 the Nosrat Synagogue was founded (Nosrat Street) by Agh Abdol-Karim Levy – in a rented apartment. In 1973, they moved to a building that had been customized for the needs of a synagogue. After the revolution, about $50,000 was donated (from the sale of the carpets of the Nosrat Synagogue) to the Mashhadi Synagogue in Holon. This contribution constituted an important factor in building the synagogue in Holon.	[David, grandson of Agh Abdol-Karim (May 2006]
Anjoman Synagogue	**Khorasaniha** Synagogue (Anjoman) was established in 1974 at the initiative of a group of Saba Synagogue members and with the encouragement of The **Anjoman** (board). The **Anjoman** Synagogue became the religious, cultural and social center of the community. The synagogue was built on Zardosht Street on an area of 840 sq.m. The building had four stories, each 500 sq.m.: • First floor - Reception Hall • Second floor – Celebrations Hall (500 person capacity) • Third floor - Synagogue (400 person capacity) One of the halls served as a synagogue for the young people. The cost of building the synagogue was 3.6 million toman, and was financed as follows: 2 million toman were raised by the community, 350,000 toman raised by the members of Iranian Jewry (non-Mashhadis) during a fundraising banquet, and the rest from the Anjoman.	1970s [MJCA-II /300]
Summary	Altogether, there were 12 synagogues in Mashhad. All were sold except for the Levian Synagogue, which was registered in the name of the community. Funds from the sale were transferred to Israel. Some of the Torah scrolls were sent to Israel and some were sent to the Mashhadi synagogues in Tehran. In Tehran, each synagogue had its own funds except two synagogues - Anjoman and Aziz Khan - that had a common fund. No synagogue in Tehran was sold after the Islamic Revolution. The Abdelahzadeh Synagogue was active every day - morning and evening. The	[MJCA-II]301/

Anjoman Synagogue was active only on Saturdays and holidays, and is also used for celebrations. The majority of those attending the Levian Synagogue, the Nosrat Synagogue, and the Rafi Nia Synagogue are not Mashhadi.

List of Synagogues in Tehran

1979- ...

The following is a list of the synagogues in Tehran. The Mashhadi synagogues are marked with an asterisk (*).

Name	Phone	Address		Name
Abrishami	659906	4th St., North Felestin Ave		אברישמי
Ettehad	393440	Shohada Ave.		אתחאד
Ettefagh	6461869	Ghods St., Enghelab Ave. (יוצאי עיראק)		אתפאק
Gisha	639173	Javad Fazel St., Nassr (Gisha) Ave.		גישא
Zargarian	936908	Jamalzadeh St		זרגריאן
Khorasaniha	658541, 657522	96 West Zartosht St., Valiasr Ave.	*	חוראסאני הא
Haim	675588	Simin St., Aziz Khan Crossing, Haffez Ave.		חיים
Tafian (Hakim)	2044969	30 Third Sharestan St., Pessian St., Valiasr Ave.		טאפיאן (חכים)
Yousef abad	8710149	15th St., Seyed Jamal-Eddin Assad-Abadi Ave.		יוסף-אבאד
Kohan	924903	Aghili St., Navab Crossing, Azadi Ave.		כוהן
Kourosh	677737	58 Hatef St., Sheikh Hadi Ave.		כורש
Levian	6404458	Sezavar Crossing, Daneshgah St.	*	לויאן
Nosrat	929949	Nosrat St.	*	נוצרת
Saba	764656	Bagh Saba St., Shariati Ave.	*	סבא
Abdollahzadeh	653598	4th St., North Felestin Ave.	*	עבדאלה-זאדה
Fakhrabad	3116314	Fakhrabad St.		פחר-אבאד
Rah-e Danesh	8716712	Seyed Jamaleddin Assadabadi Ave.		ראה-א-דאנש
Rafi Nia	6462590	7 Malek St., Vessal Ave.	*	רפיעניא

Sources

Memories of Reuven Nissimi (R.N.)

The History of Mashadi Jews I and II, published by: MJCA - Mashadi Jewish Community of America

Official website of the State Department of Iran: http://www.iranembassy-sa.org.za/English/Religion.htm

New York

	Mashhadi Jewish Community in New York	
	Due to the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Jewish Mashhadi community of Tehran largely moved to New York. The three main factors leading to their success were: • The initial core of Mashhadis that grew over the years in America: the "Spearhead" • The community's organization of the Jews of Mashhad in New York just prior to the Revolution • The institutions of the Jewish community of Mashhad in Tehran formed the basis for the community's reorganization in the United States	
	The Initial Core	1940s -'70s
Business men	Yaghubzadeh was the first Mashhadi family to come to the U.S. from Mashhad - in 1928 they came as refugees from the Soviet Union. It took another decade until the initial core of the Mashhadis in America began to take shape (in the 1940s). The following table summarizes the period:	[MJCA-II /397, 398]

Years	Businessmen who Came to the USA
1940	Habib Shabanoff Anatian moved from South Africa to New York. He traded Karakul leather. His family joined him later from London.
1941	During World War II, the following families moved from London to the United States: Faizelah Aminoff, Farajelah Aminoff, Morad Aminoff, Fathelah Aminoff, Azizelah Hadi, Esshagh Jamshidoff and Yussuf Ebrahimoff
1945	Haji Agha Javadoff Hakimian arrived by ship from India. With his encouragement the following also came: David Javadoff Hakimian, Agh-Bozorg Hakimian, Rahmatelah Rajabzadeh Hakimi and Haji Mehdi Levian.
Up to '50	Yussuf BaniLevi, Lotfelah BaniLevi, and Haji BaniLevi also came.
1950s	The number of Mashhadi merchants increased in the 1950s.

Students	Mansour Rahmanan was the first Mashhadi student to come to the U.S. (1949). Encouraged, more students arrived: Hushang Nabavian, Parviz Nabavian, Seifelah Hakimi, Haj Yussuf Moheban, Parviz Levian, Baruch Afarin Maher, Hekmat Hekmatian, Haji Agha Nemati, Hekmat Iliyan, *Freidun Hakimian, *Parviz Nabavian. In the 1950s, the number of Mashhadi students increased. By the '60s, dozens of young Mashhadis were studying in America, and in the '70s the number grew to hundreds. The following factors encouraged young Mashhadis to study in the U.S.: • In America, students were able to work while studying – alleviating a great financial burden on the parents in Iran • Many of the lecturers in Tehran university were leftists who negatively	[MJCA-II /398, 403] [*Note: from Behrouz Dilmanian]

	impacted students - this was anathema to the Mashhadi parents who loved the Shah	
	Mass Immigration	1980s
The Islamic Revolution	The Islamic Revolution surprised and amazed the Mashhadi community in Tehran. Due to its abrupt eruption, many of the community's members were unable to depart Iran and safeguard their properties. The following is a condensed list of the events that took place: • August 1978 – Riots broke out in Iran on the first day of Ramadan. Thousands of people left the mosques in Isfahan and started protests. They set fire to banks, theaters, police vehicles, etc. • October – Khomeini departed Iraq for France. Riots escalated all over Iran, with PLO members actively participating. • December – Curfews were set everywhere. The crowds shouted "Allah-Akbar." from the rooftops. • January 1979 – Widespread riots. The crowds shouted 'Death to the Shah.' The Shah left Iran. • February – Khomeini entered Iran.	[MJCA-II /359, 363, 367, 374]
Immigration	As a result of the Islamic Revolution, the Mashhadi Jewish community in Tehran immediately relocated to New York. The core of Mashhadi businessmen and students already in New York were lifesavers for an entire community which had abruptly escaped the Revolution's horrors. Many of the Mashhadis arrived in the United States as political refugees. Thanks to support from both the families and the community, these immigrants were able to quickly establish themselves and support themselves with dignity.	[MJCA-II /404]
	The Hardships of Immigration	1980s
Background	The frequent riots often caused closure of government offices and banks. Once the banks did open, many "stormed" them in order to convert their money to a foreign currency and to send the money abroad. At the same time, many families started sending the women and children abroad, leaving the husband behind to take care of their finances. On the first morning of the Revolution, an angry crowd attacked the Israeli consulate*. The consular staff had time to escape before the attack, but insufficient time to destroy all the documents. Along with the attacking crowd, a number of young people infiltrated into the basement, set all the documents there on fire, and left the scene. When Arafat went to the consulate along with the mob – they found no trace of the documents. Arafat settled himself in the building and hoisted the flag of the PLO. He converted the building to the 'PLO Embassy' and renamed the street 'Palestine Street.' The threatening situation drove the people to send their families to Israel and Italy, but the men stayed behind to sell their property. Few were able to obtain a U.S. visa and get out of Iran in time. Soon the gates were locked due to the Iran-Iraq war, and many families went bankrupt. Even though the gates were later opened again, the Jews were forbidden to leave Iran. To overcome this predicament, the people had to	[MJCA-II /411, 412, 415, 417] [By Efraim Nassimi]

	avail themselves of smugglers who crossed into both Turkey and Pakistan. They were often deserted by these smugglers, their money was stolen, and they were seized by the border police and sometimes thrown into jail. *The Israeli consulate was located on Kakhe'-Shomali Street, in a building provided to the consulate by Habib Elghanayan, an Iranian Jewish dignitary. Following is an excerpt from the announcement by the Israeli Foreign Ministry shortly after his assassination (9-May-1979): "... The Government of Israel expresses deep shock at the execution of Habib Elghanayan, of blessed memory, the former leader of the Jewish community in Iran ..." The regime also executed the industrialist Danialpour and the son of Bruchim, Iranian Jewish dignitaries.	[From the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website]
Escape via Pakistan	An influx of refugees via Pakistan started in 1979. Groups of 8-12 refugees where being smuggled by Balochis across the Iranian-Pakistani border. In Karachi, Rahamim and Rachel Matatiyahu (a Jewish couple from Herat) were helping these refugees receive UN refugee certificates so they could continue on their way – to Israel, Europe or America. In many cases, the couple hosted the refugees in their own home until the date of their departure. They paid special attention to caring for the women refugees, because the Balochis often harassed them. Because of her activities, Rachel was arrested and imprisoned for ten days, and was released only after a ransom of 400,000 rupees was paid. After a while, the Jewish Agency and the Joint also began to take care of the refugees. Rachel and her husband immigrated to Israel.	[MJCA-II/ 436-440]
Escape via Turkey	When the riots broke out, Cantor Yaghub Behnam was in Mashhad on business. Because of the tense situation, his family left Mashhad immediately. Yaghub returned to Tehran and succeeded in obtaining a visa to America - but without an exit permit he was stuck in Tehran. After he sold his property, he traveled to the city of Tabriz, to a friend, in order to escape through Turkey. Kurdish smugglers managed to move him across the border into Turkey - but within a short time the Turkish border guards discovered him. During the chase, the Kurdish smuggler was shot and killed by the Turks and Yaghub was arrested. After much pleading, the Turkish commander agreed not to return Yaghub to the Iranian border guards - but to allow him to return to Iran the same way he stole across the border. Yaghub returned to his friend from Tabriz and from there to Tehran. In Tehran he appealed to Efraim Nassimi, an intense young man who had helped many escape from Iran. With Efraim's assistance, Yaghub managed to reach the border with Pakistan - and from there to cross over with the help of Balochi smugglers. In Karachi, the Matatiyahu family helped him to reach Spain - and from Spain he went to the United States.	[MJCA-II/ 442-446]
	Preliminary Organization - Anjoman Shaare Tova	
First Term of Office	Already in 1976, three years before the Revolution in Iran, the Mashhadis living in the US met to discuss their problems and welfare as a community. Consequently, after a year, 116 people gathered for elections for the first term of the Anjoman. In the 1977 election, 13 representatives were selected: Farshaad Etessami, Yussuf BaniLevi, Mansour Rahmanan, Azaria Levy, Freidun	[MJCA-III /3] 1977-1980

	Moheban, Abdel-Rahim Levian, Bahman Kamali, Bahram Hakimian Jabarzadeh, Yussuf Ebrahimoff, Lotfelah BaniLevi, Ebrahim Moheban, Abdel-Rahman Levian, Esshagh Hakimian Mortezazadeh. Within a year, by 1978, the Anjoman formulated and approved the by-laws of the organization. In the beginning, the community prayed in the basement of the Yeshurun Synagogue in Kew Gardens. After the revolution, many Mashhadi immigrants came to New York. During this period, about 150 Mashhadi families lived in two buildings in Park Lane. Due to the large number of worshippers, it was decided to transfer the synagogue to the basement of the Jackson Berger Home for Senior Citizens, which had a capacity of 400 worshippers. During this term it was decided to establish a synagogue on Abingdon Road, on land contributed by Yussuf BaniLevi.	
Second Term of Office	At the elections for the second term of office, 228 people attended. Fifteen candidates were selected: Yussuf BaniLevi, Nissim Bassalian, Farshaad Etessami, Abdel-Rahim Etessami, Joe Ebrahimoff, Abdel-Rahim Zar, Mansour Rahmanan, Freidun Moheban, Farajelah Levy, Abdel-Rahman Levian, Azaria Levy, Ebrahim Haghighat, Mirza-Aghajan Nassimi, Bahram Hakimian, Bahram Nabavian. During this period, after receiving the building license, construction of the Shaare Tova synagogue began – in the name of Yussuf BaniLevi's wife, z"l. The organization was called too, Anjoman Shaare Tova.	[MJCA-III /4] 1980-1983
Third Term of Office	At the elections for the third term, 473 people attended. Fifteen candidates were selected. In 1984, after about 40 months of work, construction of the Shaare Tova Synagogue was completed. The project cost about $3.5 million. The building also had a library and a gym.	[MJCA-III /4-6] 1983-1986
Fourth Term of Office	At the elections for the fourth term of office, 587 people attended. Fifteen candidates were selected. During this term it was decided to build an additional synagogue in Long Island.	[MJCA-III/ 7] 1986-1989
	Institutionalization – The Central Board (Anjoman)	
The Power of the Press	Issue 29 of the quarterly Megillah (magazine) brought to the attention of the readers that although over 10 years had passed since the establishment of the Anjoman Shaare Tova – the community's various organizations had not yet succeeded in completing the community's by-laws. This deficiency seriously hindered the community's ability to perform social tasks and to make decisions about community welfare.	[MJCA-III/ 240] 1989
Temporary Central Board	As a result of the news published in the Megillah, the Temporary Central Board (Anjoman) was established for a period of eighteen months. One thousand and one hundred (1,100) people attended this election. Fifteen (15) candidates were selected: Haroun Kohanim, Edward Nassimi, Michel Dilmani, Behrouz Hakimian, Jamshid Zar, Shmuel Levian, Behrouz Dilmanian, Louis Ebrani, Sirous Iliyan, Nozar Hakimian, Hushang Nematzadeh, Lawrence Levian, Freidun Hakim, Farokh Dilmanian, Bahram Kamali.	[MJCA-III /352-358] 1994

	During this period, it was decided that the tasks would be performed by various committees, such as the By-laws Committee, Finance Committee, the Committee for Long-Term Planning, the Heritage Committee, the Committee for Israel and Zionism, and so on. Committee members were selected both from the Central Board and from outside the Board. Summary of the activities of the Temporary Central Board: • Completion and approval of community by-laws • Weekly coverage, in writing, of the activities of the Anjoman (minutes) • Organization of Minyan for Yom Kippur at the Marriott Hotel (500 in 1994, 700 in 1995) • Seniors Club in Queens • Kindergarten set up in the Shira Chadasha Synagogue (for 40 children) • Gathering of 120 members of committees and sub-committees of the community (including women and young people) • Establishment of permanent office for the Central Board (including a permanent secretary)	
First Term of Office	For the first term elections, 868 people attended. Fifteen (15) candidates were elected: Haroun Kohanim, Michel Dilmani, Bahram Kamali, Behrouz Dilmanian, Edward Nassimi, Freidun Hakim, Behrouz Hakimian, Sirous Iliyan, Shmuel Levian, Louis Ebrani, Fathelah Hematian, Hushang Namdar, Nozar Hakimian, David Kordevani, Hushang Nematzadeh. During this period the community inaugurated the Mashhadi Jewish Center of Great Neck Synagogue. In addition the community purchased the land at 130 Steam Rd. to serve as a social and cultural center. Cultural projects of this period included decisions to publish a Pesach Haggadah and also to initiate publishing a book on the history of the community. This initiative quickly developed into three thick volumes.	[MJCA-III /361-367] 1995
The Other Terms of Office	Additional terms of the Central Board (Anjoman) as of today (2010) are: • 1998 - Second Term • 2001 - Third Term • 2004 - Fourth Term • 2008 - Fifth Term Finally, it should be emphasized here that the contribution and generosity of our brothers in New York, led by the Central Board, is extraordinary and greatly appreciation. The New York community contributes generously not only to the Mashhadi community in Israel but also to other Jewish and Israeli institutions.	[MJCA-III /384-385] ... 2007 [R.N.]
	Sources	
	The History of Mashadi Jews II and III, published by: MJCA - Mashadi Jewish Community of America	
	Official Internet site of Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.	

Israel

"He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey"
(Deuteronomy, 26:9)

	Return of Mashhad Jewry to Israel	
Structure of this Chapter	Naftali Herz Imber composed the song "**HaTiqva**" in Romania in 1878. In 1903, it was sung at the Sixth Zionist Congress as the national anthem for the state to be born. As long as the heart, within And onward, towards the end of the east Our hope is not yet lost To be free people in our land A Jewish soul still yearns An eye still gazes towards Zion The hope of two thousand years The land of Zion and Jerusalem The song's lyrics poignantly express the return of the Mashhadi Jews to their homeland and to freedom – a process that began with the birth of the song and was realized over the following years.	

… A Jewish Soul Still Yearns

	Reports from Zion	1800-1900
General	The words "…Nefesh Yehudi Homiyah" ("A Jewish soul still yearns") characterize the years of isolation and secrecy endured by the Jews of Mashhad – years of longing for Zion as the soul thirsts to hear tidings from Jerusalem. During these years, news of Zion arrived, drop by drop, from different sources – but with the power to ignite a passion "... and our eyes will behold your return to Zion…" in the yearning souls of the Mashhadi. The principal sources of news from Zion during this period were: • The works of rabbinic emissaries • The experiences of pilgrims • The first Mashhadis to make aliyah (to immigrate to Eretz Israel)	[Silent Prayer]
	Rabbinic Emissaries	
Peace on Jerusalem	Rabbinic emissaries (שליחים דרבנן) were the agents of religious institutions in Israel who traveled from place to place in the diaspora to collect funds. Few of them reached places as remote as Mashhad and its surrounding areas. The contribution of these emissaries is found in the verse "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem ..." Even before the forced conversions, in a letter written in 1782, Rabbi Shraga from Yazd asked the Mashhadi community to help the emissary of Hebron, Hakham Eliyahu. During the time of the forced conversions, the Jewish community of Mashhad was	[Psalms 122] [Ben Zvi 2] [חכם אליהו]

	considered lost to Judaism and therefore only very few rabbinic emissaries visited it. Around 50 years after the forced conversion of the Mashhadis, the emissary of Tiberias, Efraim Neimark, visited Mashhad on his way to Bukhara and Afghanistan. His descriptions were very picturesque and enlightening. Neimark tells the story of the community's extraordinary resistance during the first half of the forced conversion, in hiding, living an impossible double life; an entire community secretly preserving its Jewish identity in a hostile environment. Neimark was unaware that another 50 years would pass before the yoke of the conversions would be lifted and the people would attain (their dream of) living a Jewish life in Eretz Israel. His visit must have excited the yearning souls of these Jews, and breathed into them the hope and determination they needed to continue their long journey.	
	Pilgrims	
Sharing Secrets	Neimark describes: [The honorable Mashhadi crypto-Jews] "would travel to Mohammed's grave in Mecca, and on their way back would return through Jerusalem where they would visit HaRav HaGaon Rishon LeZion and share their secret [crypto-Jewish lives] with him." The suspicious Muslims in Mashhad expected the dignitaries (and the rich) from among the Jadid-al-Islam of Mashhad to visit the Shia holy places and attain the title 'Haji' or 'Karbalai' (by visiting Mecca or Karbala). More than 50 Mashhadi men set out on this long journey, and many of them returned via Jerusalem – the place to which Jewish souls yearn. After a journey of several months, on their return to Mashhad, they would bring tidings of Zion and thus help pave the way for others.	[Sources/ Neimark]
Merciful Ones	"...They met there with HaRav HaGaon Rishon LeZion and shared with him their secrets." And in fact the Rishon LeZion knew them as: "All merciful sons of merciful men" and he thanked them for their generous contributions (correspondence from Jerusalem to Marv, 1900): "To our honorable and merciful brothers, the dear men of the holy community of Marv, and specifically the honorable Agha Haji Aminoff, may G-d protect him, Agha Haji Habibolah HaLevi, may G-d protect him, Agha Lotfolah ben Agha Mohammad may G-d protect him, Agha M. Yehya Bassal, may G-d protect him, Agha Reza Nissim, may G-d protect him, Agha Faraj Nissim, Agha Yosef Qatzav, all are merciful sons of merciful men ..."	[Levy 1] Archive of the Sephardic Committee – Section from Letter # 336
	First Signs of Aliyah	1880-1900
	For the crypto-Jews of Mashhad, the pilgrimage to Jerusalem passed through Mecca, but for the Mashhadis living in Turkmenistan and Afghanistan the pilgrimage could be made more easily, directly and openly. The following three journeys illustrate this.	
Yosef Mashhadi	Israel Mishael, president of the North Afghanistan community, recounts his memories of his relative, Yosef Mashhadi, who embarked with his friend, Yechezqel Yazdi, on a journey to Jerusalem (October 5, 1880) via the following route: Herat – Mashhad – Tehran – Baghdad – Damascus – Rosh Pina – Jerusalem They arrived at their destination (February 27, 1881) after walking for five months.	[Yehoshua /258-259]
Mola	On a journey that lasted three and a half months (December 9, 1895 to March 25,	

Matatiyahu Garji	1896), Rabbi Garji and his son visited Jerusalem. Their route was: Herat – Bukhara – Baku – Kutaisi (on the shores of the Black Sea) – by ship to Istanbul – Beirut – Jaffa – by train to Jerusalem	
Rabbi David Nissim (Zvuloni)	In his youth, David ben Nissim made aliyah to Jerusalem and studied at the Yeshiva of Halabis together with Rabbi Yaaqov Addas. Upon completion of his studies, he returned to his home in Sarakhs (~1896-1898).	[Beit Saba / Zvuloni David]

...An Eye Still Gazes Toward Zion

	Aliyah of the First Mashhadis	1900-1930
General	"...an eye still gazes toward Zion" characterized the years in which the return to Zion began to be realized, and the first of the isolated Mashhadi Jews from the eastern outskirts started making aliyah (immigrating) to Israel: • Aliyah of the Dignitaries – The uniqueness of this aliyah is that it was completely the result of private initiatives – with no assistance from Jewish institutions or the emerging state. The pioneers of these aliyahs were primarily from among the dignitaries of the community – from a spiritual point of view (especially rabbis) and from a material point of view (openhearted and openhanded community leaders). • Cultural Activities – The cultural activities of the first olim (immigrants) were very impressive. The main target audiences of their activities were their brothers who remained in exile.	
	Aliyah of the Dignitaries	
Background	After the forced conversions, about half of the 'converts' of Mashhad left Mashhad and found refuge in towns in Afghanistan and Turkmenistan (most of them in Herat and Marv). The descendants of these 'converts' contributed greatly to their new communities – from both a spiritual and economic point of view. From their midst came eminent rabbis and generous community leaders. Many of the dignitaries of the converted community of Mashhad made aliyah to Israel from Mashhad itself and also from the other towns in which they had sought refuge. They were among the first pioneers to return to Zion.	
The Rabbis	• **Rabbi Moshe ben David Nissim** (~1830-1908) Made aliyah to Jerusalem in about 1900. Is buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, east of Yad Avshalom.	[Beit Saba/ Introduction]
	• **Rabbi Matatiyahu ben Mordechai Garji** (1845-1917) First visited Jerusalem in 1896 and afterwards made aliyah and settled in Jerusalem in 1908. Authored and published: Oneg Shabbat, Psalms of David, and The Temple (1913). In addition, he printed the book Azharot (Warnings) of Rabbi Siman Tov Melamed.	[Yehoshua 450-473]
	• **Rabbi Yosef ben Matatiyahu Garji** (1869-1936) Studied with his father, Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji, and served as rabbi of Marv. Two of the most important rabbis of Mashhad, Rabbi Levi Nissim and Rabbi Menashe Betzaleli, studied with him. He made aliyah to Jerusalem in 1903 and published the book, Edut B'Yehosef (Yehosef's Testimonies). He served for 26 years as a teacher and mentor of the children of the Bukharan Quarter. In addition, he was a preacher and mohel (performs ritual Jewish circumcisions). His father, Rabbi Matatiyahu, was often the godfather and they (the godfather and the mohel) often gave a generous anonymous donation to the parents of the newborn.	
	• **Rabbi Shmuel ben Shlomo Garji**	

	Cousin of Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji (both of whom were grandsons of Rabbi Avraham Garji, one of the original forced converts of Mashhad). After immigrating to Jerusalem, he published the book Minchat Shmuel (1902) in which he gives commentary on the Torah. The commentary includes 53 different sources (Ohel Yaaqov, Rabeinu B'Chai, Chizquni, Segulat Israel, Rashi, Midrash Tanchuma, Klee Yaqar, etc.) Two of the most important rabbis of Mashhad, Rabbi Levi Nissim and Rabbi Menashe Betzaleli, studied under him. He managed a "Yeshiva with Ordination" ("ישיבה שיש בה סמיכה") in Marv, and he signed the certificate granted to Rabbi Levi Nissim (1911) "I am the humble Shmuel ben Shlomo Garji, Shochet VeBodeq and a teacher."	[Documents/ Yehuda / Rabbi Levi]
	• **Rabbi Shlomo ben Mashiyach** (1872-1956) Was a student of Mola Aba. Made aliyah from Mashhad to Israel in 1906. Was among the outstanding preachers of the Haji Adoniyahu Synagogue. He was one of the known Qabbalists of Jerusalem. Wrote verses (piyyut) on the history of the Jews of Mashhad. The yeshiva "Tiferet Shlomo" in Jerusalem commemorates his name.	[MJCA/ 541] [Sources]
The Community Leaders	• **Haji Yechezqel Levy** (... -1914) Haji Yechezqel (Ismail) ben Yaaqov Levy engaged in trade and industry (he had a textile production factory). He was successful in his business and accumulated considerable wealth. Yechezqel ben Yaaqov had no children, but did have a generous and open heart. In Mashhad he set up public bathhouses for men and women (the cost in today's (2000s) terms would be $4 million). He visited Mecca and was bestowed the title Haji. He was 70 years old when he decided to make aliyah to Israel. In preparation for his aliyah, he visited Jerusalem twice and studied Hebrew with Rabbi Yosef Bassal. In Jerusalem he built a courtyard with a synagogue and 21 rooms for olim and for the needy. The inscription on this building tells of his works: I am the servant of G-d, Blessed be His Name. I dedicated all these houses and this is my residence. H. Yechezqel ben Yaaqov HaLevy, may G-d protect him [in the year 1905].	[MJCA/ 229-230] [Background / Synagogues]
	• **Haji Adoniyahu HaKohen** (... - 1901) Two years after Haji Yechezqel, the sons of Mela Aharon, called Aharonov, made aliyah to Jerusalem. The oldest brother was Haji Adoniyahu HaKohen. As one of the prominent merchants of Mashhad, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca and was granted the title "Haji." On route, he visited Jerusalem and there bought land. When he made aliyah to Israel, he built a magnificent synagogue and called it "Adoniyahu HaKohen." The inscription on this building tells of his works: "...This beautiful building was built as a synagogue and beit midrash by the community of Givat Shaul with money donated by the venerable ... Adoniyahu ... HaKohen ... and G-d willing may we receive the comfort of arriving in Zion and being allowed to	[Yehoshua / 14] [Background/ Synagogues]

take part in rebuilding Jerusalem."

World War I

David Harounoff was the first of the Mashhadi Jews to set off for London. He arrived in London via Istanbul, leaving his family in Jerusalem. David dealt in importing carpets, and he planned to reunite with his family as soon as he was financially settled.

World War I caught David and his family on either side of the divide – one in England and the other in Ottoman Turkey – two countries at war with each other. The Mashhadi Jews in Israel were ordered to obtain Ottoman citizenship, or face being forcibly deported. Many chose deportation, including David Harounoff's family. The family left Israel for Alexandria on an American warship (at that time America was neutral). Egypt was then under the British Mandate. David Harounoff and his family were reunited four years after the war – in 1923.

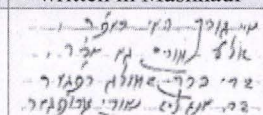
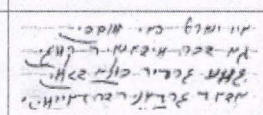
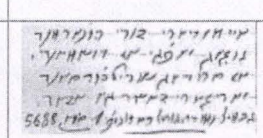
[Times Gone By /London]

Life in Jerusalem

Malka, wife of Matatiyahu Kohen Harounoff (and mother of David), lived in Jerusalem during the war. The Turkish army took control of her home and she, with a bitter heart, wrote a poem of 44 verses. Following are excerpts from the poem, which opens a window to the harsh living conditions during the war:

The soldiers are living in my house / They have destroyed my home /
They broke the doors / I watched all this / I cried in my grief /
A sigh escapes from my heart / Whenever I walk around my house

The poem ends with an appeal to make aliyah to Eretz Israel.

Verse	Original, Persian written in Mashhadi	Original, Persian written in Hebrew	Translation to English
43		איי תורכהאי כאפר זולם נמודין תא אחר בדי כרדין במולת רפטאר בר אנגליז שודין גורופתאר	Oh infidel Turks You have been so cruel You have done evil to your subjects You were finally defeated by the British
44		איי ישראלהאי מוסכין תא בכה מיבאשיד קמגין ג'מע גרדיד כולאנ בזמין אזאד גרדאניד בה דאיימין	O miserable children of Israel For how long will you lie in sorrow Go and unite in our land We will receive everlasting freedom and liberty
45		איי מאדארי בודי הונארמנד נוג'את יאפתי אז דושמאנד אז סרודאת שודים כ'ורסאנד יאדגארי באשד תא אבאד. תכמיל נמודם נוריאל הארונוף 1938	Oh Mother! … You were like an artist You were saved from the hands of the enemy You soothed us with your singing You will be forever in our memory Completed, Nuriel Harounoff, 5688

Malka died in 1927. The poem was copied by her son, Nuriel, in 1938. Nuriel was David's youngest brother.

Courtesy of Efraim Levy (Malka's great-grandson) Translated into Hebrew by R.N.

The poem contains 44 verses – verse 45 was written by the son, Nuriel

The British Mandate

After the Balfour Declaration, other prominent families immigrated: Aminoff, Azizelahyoff and Rahmani (Ebrahimoff). These families had commercial ties with London and Bombay (Mumbai). In this period two of the most prominent figures were added to the small community in Eretz Israel: [Times Gone By/ London]

- **Rabbi Mordechai ben Refael Aghalar** (1850-1936)
  Made aliyah to Jerusalem in 1927. Was buried on the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem. [Aghlarpur]

  Published holy books with translation to Persian: Siddur Tefillah (Prayer Book), Seder Selichot (Book of Penitential Prayers), Rosh HaShannah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) Prayer Book, and the Haggadah of Pesach.

- **Farajelah Levy (Nassrelahyoff)** (1873-1951)
  Was one of the leaders of the Jews in Dargaz. Helped many refugees from Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. During the long period of tension between Iran and Iraq, it was customary to make aliyah via India-Aden-Alexandria. This was a tedious journey that took about six months. The route via Iraq was considerably shorter – only about one month in duration. With the help of a friend, the representative of merchants in Parliament, Levy was able to obtain passports via Iraq. His family had commercial connections in Baghdad and Damascus. After a short stay in Baghdad, the family arrived in Damascus. Under the laws of the British Mandate, anyone who presented (could prove he possessed) 1,000 Eretz-Israeli lirot could get an immigrant visa to Eretz Israel. Levy appealed to the British Consul in Damascus, presented the required sum, and was granted an immigrant visa. In Tevet (winter) 1929, his family arrived in Jerusalem. Shortly thereafter, Levy was elected president of the community in Jerusalem and was very active in assisting the aliyah of other Mashhadi Jews. [Patai / 67]

Cultural Activities

1800-1900

Printing

The Hebrew printing press was established in Jerusalem in 1841. From the end of the nineteenth century/beginning of the twentieth century, Persian-speaking Jews (Iran, Bukhara, and Afghanistan) began to reap the cultural benefits of this industry. Since the beginning of the twentieth century we have witnessed the use of texts printed in Eretz Israel which replaced the hand-written texts. In the area of Hebrew-Persian culture, the contribution of the descendents of the Mashhadi forced converts is impressive. The following list illustrates the cultural contribution of this group. [Yehoshua / 450-473]

The Person	The Contribution
The brothers Israel, Nethanel, and Binyamin Gol	Descendants of the Mashhad forced converts from Herat who made aliyah at the beginning of the twentieth century. They worked at establishing the Bukharan neighborhood Givat Shaul and building residences and institutions for immigrants, and published books in Judeo Persian: Hayat al Ruah (Spiritual Life), Aqedat Itzhaq (Binding of Isaac), Megillat Antiochus (Scroll of Antiochus), Pri Etz Hadar (Fruit of the

		Citrus Tree), Ma'assiot Nifla'im (Amazing Tales), Shir'ei Na'im (Na'im's Songs), Tafsir Darashei Tefillin (Explanation of Phylacteries).	
	Publisher and Bookseller Yedidiya ben Yosef Harati	In the book of Chuqat HaPesach (Laws of Pesach), Yedidiya indicates that his great-grandfather Rabbi Binyamin Yazdi HaKohen – "saved the town of Mashhad from the plague and in his death atoned for the city." This is evidence from a family from Yazd that immigrated to Mashhad but, because of the forced conversion, left the city and moved to Herat and Bukhara. Yedidiya, as publisher and bookseller in Bukhara, published many books (including translations): Ahavat Zion (Love of Zion), Chuqat HaPesach (Laws of Pesach), Song of Songs, Translation of Interpretation ... of Book of Esther, Miqra'ay Qodesh (Holy Scripture), Rina and Tefillah (Song and Prayer) Seder Lichvod Shabbat (Prayers for Shabbat), and others.	
	Rabbi Shlomo Babajan Kabuli (Pinchassoff)	Rabbi Shlomo, son of a family of forced converts from Mashhad that moved to Herat and from there to Kabul. He was born in 1845 in Kabul. When he was a child, his family moved to Samarkand (1858). He was knowledgeable in Medieval Jewish literature (Maimonides, Yehuda HaLevi, Ramban, David Kimhi and Gersonides). He visited Eretz Israel twice before he immigrated with his family. On his first visit (1893) he published: • The Book of Iyov (Job), with a copy in Persian • The Keter Malchut (Royal Crown), with a copy in Persian On his second visit (1904) he published: • The book Chesheq Shlomo • Seder Shiv'ah Haqafot The third time was with his family, to make aliyah. They settled in Jerusalem. In 1907 he published: • Sefer Milim (dictionary in Hebrew, Persian, Russian, Arabic, Turkish, French / Ladino) • Interpretation of the song, Mi Kamocha (Who is Like You), written by Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi Rabbi Shlomo died in Jerusalem in 1927.	[.../ Documents / Zvuloni Eliyahu]

...The Hope of Two Thousand Years

	Mass Immigration to Israel	1920-1950
General	"...The Hope of Two Thousand Years" started to be realized with the aliyah of masses of refugees, via Mashhad, to the Land of Israel. This period is characterized by the following waves of immigration: • Bridge for Turkmenistan Refugees - The Jews of Mashhad served as a bridge for masses of refugees from Jewish communities in Turkmenistan and Bukhara • Bridge for Tehran Children – Hundreds of Jewish children who escaped eastward under the threat of World War II and were able to emigrate to Eretz Israel • HaHa'apala – Illegal immigration of Jews of Mashhad before the creation of the State of Israel • Bridge for Afghani Refugees – The Jews of Mashhad served as a bridge for the masses of refugees from the Jewish communities in Afghanistan • Mass Immigration – With the creation of the State of Israel, many Mashhadi Jews made aliyah to the homeland	[Sources / Attempts to Immigrate]
	A 1935 report prioritized, in a list, the communities in Iran that wanted to immigrate to Eretz Israel: • Mashhadi Jews – The most urgent. The most fanatical environment. • Bukharan exiles – The most difficult situation. Have been stranded in Iran for a long time without income. May be sent back to Russia. • Russian exiles – Mostly Ashkenazi. Have been waiting a long time for exit visas. • Persian Jews – Financial situation is worsening. Many of them want to immigrate to Israel.	1935 [S6 / 3051]
	Yitzhak Ben Zvi, after his return from Iran, described the situation of the Mashhadi Jews as follows: "In the last few years ... especially among the younger generation ... tired of living dual lives ... left for countries abroad ... to London ... to Eretz Israel. Among those that came to Eretz Israel ... were those with the means for engaging in commerce, and those that were well off, and those that owned land (Afula). And those without means went to work as laborers in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the settlements (moshavot) ... about 250 people ... some of them without permits (visas).	1935 [J1 / 4023]
	Bridge for Turkmenistan Refugees	1924-1935
Background	With the consolidation of the Communist regime in the cities of Turkmenistan, thousands of refugees fled to Mashhad on their way to Eretz Israel. During this entire period, for months, hundreds of refugees found sanctuary under the roofs of the generous Jews of Mashhad who helped them on their journey to Eretz Israel. The main escape route was Ashkhabad-Mashhad, but there were some who escaped through Afghanistan to Mashhad.	

Aliyah from the Cities of Turkmenistan	Efraim Even escaped, as a baby, by way of Mashhad. He related (in the name of his father and uncle) that the Jews of Mashhad … warmly received the refugees and helped them get to Tehran, in small groups, where they received immigration visas to Eretz Israel: "At the end of the journey, when the group arrived at its destination, they would tell their guide the password. The guide would repeat it to someone in Samarkand who would pay him. In this manner the refugees were able to ensure that no harm would befall them from the guides." Emmanuel Philosof of Bukhara, active in saving refugees in Afghanistan, wrote in his memoirs of a band of 13 refugees that was captured in Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan, and the authorities wanted to turn them back to the USSR. Philosof, on a Shabbat, appealed to the governor for their release: "… I fell at his feet and said pleadingly, in tears: 'Mr. Minister! They came to seek shelter with the believers in the G-d of Heaven and Earth, from fear of the infidel (communists) who don't believe in Moses, Muhammad or any of the prophets. G-d forbid you send them back to those places of evil and malice! They may be killed on the border and then would be lost without a trace and without dignity. The good Minister heard my plea and set them free." The group of refugees included Bukharan, Mashhadi and Afghani Jews who were owners of businesses and properties in Bukhara. After eighty years, the Mashhadi refugees were obliged to return to the town from which their fathers escaped because of the forced conversion.	[Yehoshua / **84-88**]
Illegal Route	The illegal immigration route from Tehran to Eretz Israel was: Tehran – Baghdad – Haleb – Beirut – Eretz Israel. The refugee committee of Beirut gave the refugees financial assistance and a place to sleep on their way to Eretz Israel. The Lebanese government acted properly towards the refugees and simply turned a blind eye. The northern settlements – Kfar Giladi, Hanita, and others – helped smuggle the illegal immigrants across the northern border. Fear and anguish accompanied those crossing from Beirut to Eretz Israel. Arab smugglers moved the refugees across the Galilee mountains in the dead of night. The Arabs would point out from afar the houses of one of the settlements, and then would leave the refugees to their fate. Many were caught and sent to Acre jail. The lucky ones – exhausted and broken from their arduous journey – found safety in one of the settlements. One of the settlements, in order to be able to help the illegal immigrants, reduced the allocation to theirs members from 4.5 to 4 grush (pennies).	(1933-1934 [Yehoshua / [264-265]
Thank-You Letter	The following are excerpts from a letter of thanks to the Jews of Mashhad (from Tehran 1934) from a group of Bukharan refugees who arrived in Tehran after spending a year in Mashhad. "We … refugees from Russia … escaped and saved our souls, more than a thousand people, and we came under Persian rule … to the city of Mashhad …	[Sources / Bukharan Refugees]

	the Jews of Mashhad ... for almost an entire year bore the burden of taking care of us while we stayed in the city of Mashhad ... and showed us mercy both day and night, both in heat and in cold ... may G-d reward them, Blessed be He, Amen. And please read this in all the synagogues ..."	
	Bridge for Tehran Children	1941-1943
Background	The "Tehran Children" were the Jewish children from Poland who escaped with their families, when World War II broke out, to the eastern regions of Poland. During the war they moved to Siberia and to the Asiatic regions of the USSR. In 1942, with the establishment of the Polish army in the USSR, under the command of General Anders, thousands of refugees joined him, and with them, the children. With the arrival of Anders' army at Iran, the Tehran Jewish Agency established a camp for the children. Seven hundred and nineteen of these children were gathered there, while the Jewish Agency arranged for them to make aliyah to Eretz Israel (summer 1943).	Wikipedia
Community in Mashhad	Betzalel Betzaleli tells of those days: "It was almost Shabbat. A large group of children (the Tehran Children) arrived in Mashhad from Russia. Immediately the community mobilized to care for the children who arrived at their doorstep. Mela Abdelah declared that taking care of the children was such a great mitzvah that it superseded Shabbat and that it was forbidden to call upon the goyim (gentiles) to help take care of them (such as heating water for them, etc.) – all must be done by the community members."	[Conversation with B. Betzaleli 2009]
The Story of Michael Kuker	Michael Kuker, one of the Tehran Children, was released from Siberia in the summer of 1941 and arrived in Eretz Israel in the summer of 1943 via Samarkand, Ashkhabad, Mashhad, Tehran and Baghdad. Following is his description of his stay in Mashhad: "When we arrived at the big city of Mashhad, they brought us, the Jews, to a huge building that was divided into apartments. The head of the Mashhad Jewish community came to visit us and brought us milk, oranges, challah (bread) and dried fruit. We didn't know how to speak Persian so we used 'sign language' (talked with our hands) and we soon understood each other. They opened prayer books (siddurim), showed us the Qriyat Shema, Jews to Jews. They touched us, hugged us, and heaped affection on us. At a certain point a Jew who spoke Russian, Persian and English came, and he translated, and explained to us that they are touching us because that is their way of blessing us. They believed we were saints because we were going to Eretz Israel, a virtue that brings blessings. They brought us clothes, for the boys and the girls, and invited us to celebrate the Shabbat in the homes of the Jews of the community. They had beautiful homes with many servants, private bathrooms, American automobiles, and it was clear that they were very rich. We stayed in Mashhad for a week and we had a very good time there, and we witnessed the great wealth of the Jews of Iran. They parted from us with warmth, and soon we were off again on our journey. We traveled ominous mountain slopes, on inferior roads, but finally we reached Tehran, and were sent straight to Children's Camp No. 3. The camp was of course under the supervision of the exiled Polish government, which had	[From Heaven to Hell and Back to Happiness - the War for Survival, by Michael Kuker]

	joined the Allied forces of Britain, the US, and Russia." [See: http://www.2all.co.il/web/Sites/mike_kuker]	
	HaHa'apala (Illegal Immigration)	1920-1950
Background	After the Communist Revolution many of the Mashhadi Jews in Turkmenistan escaped to Mashhad, leaving all their property and worldly goods behind. About 125 families (approximately 600 people) appealed to The Delegates Committee (Jerusalem) for help in immigrating to Eretz Israel. They described their situation in Mashhad as hell, and because of the danger requested to keep their appeal a secret. Their only request was for financial assistance (a loan) for travel expenses for their journey to Eretz Israel because they had been left destitute when they left Turkmenistan. They committed themselves to accept any and all work when they arrived in Eretz Israel in order to repay their loan, and they added that: "... our estates currently do not have a buyer but at any time that they can be sold they will be given to the Zionists." In 1935, Ben Zvi estimated the number of Mashhadis in Eretz Israel at 250 – therefore we understand that the request of the Russian refugees was never realized.	[Sources / Attempts to Immigrate] 1921 [A126/159]
	In parallel with and after the Turkmenistan refugee aliyah, many Mashhadi Jews started to immigrate to Eretz Israel. Following are echoes of the efforts that were made: • **Eretz Israel** – The General Committee of the Communities of Persia appealed to the Aliyah Department with these words "... Our persecuted brothers in Persia, and especially the forced converts of the city of Mashhad, whose lives are in great danger ... our request is to arrange the permits as quickly as possible, because some of them have already escaped and have arrived in Beirut and Damascus..." • **London** – Representatives of the community (Esshagh Jamshidoff) appealed to representatives of the Jewish Agency regarding the Mashhadis who got stuck at the Syrian border and were not allowed to enter Eretz Israel. Another appeal by the representatives of the community (Aminoff and others) to representatives of the Va'ad HaPoel regarding issuing permits to the Jews of Mashhad to immigrate to Eretz Israel notes that "no financial assistance was requested."	1934-5 [S6 / 3051]
	We can characterize this aliyah as follows: an aliyah of plain folks, of young people, and of illegal immigrants.	
	Yitzhak Ben Zvi, in his appeal to – "the clerk that manages government matters" states that: "Immigrants from Mashhad ... are refugees who have been persecuted because of their beliefs. If these immigrants [olim] are ever forced to return to their country of origin [Mashhad], it will bring a calamity on them and on the entire Jewish community in Mashhad. I have faith in the British tradition of sponsoring people who have been persecuted because of their religion or their beliefs. Also, the government in Eretz Israel should treat the Mashhadi refugees with special tolerance ..."	1935 [J1 / 4023]
Grassroots Immigration	The aliyah at the beginning of the 1930s was a "popular" aliyah, an aliyah from all the social layers of the community – not confined to the leadership or the wealthy. Within a short time, the children of these families were joining various	

	undergrounds. Yitzhak Ben Ami (Nissim) described his family's journey to Israel: "I was four years old and we still lived as "crypto-Jews" in Mashhad. My late father, Mashiyach (Mehdi) decided to immigrate to Eretz Israel, the Holy Land (1932). At that time it was customary to travel in groups so we joined (with my brother Rachamim and Yaaqov the infant) a group that left with Uncle Yosef, Nissim ben Efraim and Mordechai Zar (in the 1950s he was a member of Knesset for the Poalei Agudat Israel [PAI] political party). We traveled in a rickety bus to Karachi, which was then part of India. We lived in the small, dark courtyard of a synagogue. ...from Karachi we traveled to Baghdad. But when we arrived, we were immediately taken to jail. The police forced my mother to give them her jewelry and they robbed us of all our belongings. A few days later they released us. From Baghdad we traveled by bus to Syria, from Syria we went to Lebanon and from Lebanon we came to Eretz Israel."	[Beit Saba / Ben Ami]
Youth Aliyah	The aliyah at the beginning of the 1930s consisted mainly of the youth of the community, hundreds of them within a brief 'window of opportunity.' Following is an excerpt from Menashe Chaqlai (חקלאי) on the youth aliyah in those days: "...The first massive pioneering aliyah took place at the end of 1934/beginning of 1935 ... we set out, approximately 250 young men, ages 18 and up, with little money, with no baggage other than a single small suitcase with a change of clothes... as though we were going to a bathhouse. We set off illegally from our homes in small groups of 5-6 young men, and went through Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to Eretz Israel. We made the journey on foot and by car. Most of our guides were Arabs who sometimes treated us cruelly. We reached the Eretz Israel border completely exhausted, broken, and torn, after much suffering and misery. The journey from Iran to Eretz Israel lasted more than two months. Most of the young men who arrived in Eretz Israel and in the Arab countries were captured by the police as illegal immigrants and in Eretz Israel they were sent to jail in Jerusalem or in Acre for two to three months. After us came many of the families with their children. Due to the events of 1936, the aliyah stopped because the hostile Arabs would not allow us to cross their borders." One of the outstanding members of this aliyah was Mordechai Zar. Mordechai was born in 1914 in Mashhad and immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1935. Before the establishment of the state, he worked in building and road construction (1942) and soon was appointed Director of the Department of Sephardic Jews of the Histadrut (1946). After the establishment of the state he was appointed Chairman of the Sephardic Community and later elected a member of the Jerusalem City Council (1955-1965). From 1959, for ten years, he served as a Member of Knesset for Mapai-Ma'arach (Knesset 4 through Knesset 7). He died in 1982.	[Chaqlai/ 23] [Knesset Website]
Illegal Aliyah	Farajelah Levy, president of the Mashhadi Jews in Eretz Israel, has helped many illegal immigrants from Mashhad get to Eretz Israel. His representatives in Damascus and Beirut would transport the immigrants across the border into Eretz Israel (mainly via Metullah). His son Yochanan was also involved in these activities. He would occasionally visit Syria or Lebanon to help members of the	[Patai / 147]

	community who were arriving from there. In some cases, the immigrants were caught by the British police and sent to jail. Levy always made sure they were released from jail. Every illegal immigrant received an initial grant of three pounds (which was a large sum of money in those days). He would send them to Tel Aviv (because the risk of getting caught was smaller in Tel Aviv than in Jerusalem).	
	David Kohen, an activist of the community, describes below the circumstances of his aliyah and his life in Israel:	[R.N. / Interview Year 2000]
	Was born in Mashhad. As a child he resented having to learn the Qoran in school. He decided to immigrate to Eretz Israel and announced to his parents that "I'll run away if you don't send me." In 1934, with the assistance of Mela Aghajan Majid, he reached the Bnot-Yaaqov Bridge, from which he was smuggled into Eretz Israel. After some time, Agha Farajelah Levy arranged an entrance permit for him. He returned to the Bnot-Yaaqov Bridge and this time he entered Eretz Israel legally. At the age of 14, David was drafted to the Haganah – he told them that he was 16. In the Haganah he was promoted to Squad Leader. He participated in and commanded various activities, such as the "Choma-ve-Migdal" campaign (at Kibbutz Hanita) and illegal immigration. After the establishment of the state, he was made commander of a base for navy equipment (numbering 250 soldiers). In the public sphere he served for years as chairman of the board of the Mashhadi community. In the year 2000 he ended this long period of activity, but continued to manage the synagogue of immigrants from Mashhad in north Tel Aviv.	
	Excerpts from a letter that was sent by Farajelah Levy (Chairman of the Board of Olim [immigrants] from Mashhad-Jerusalem), to Yitzhak Ben Zvi (Chairman of the National Committee of the Knesset of Israel-Jerusalem):	[Sources / Attempts to Immigrate]
	"... In the matter of the status of the 'crypto-Jew' refugees from Mashhad, whom the government of Israel wants to expel from the country ... Shmuel Aghayoff (Nurelah Ghassabian) has been in prison now for more than four months ... we were informed today that Ghassabian has announced that he's going on a hunger strike in prison. We request that you at least release him temporarily, for the holidays, until you succeed in annulling his expulsion order."	1940 [J1 / 4023]
	Note: In a prior appeal from March, a guarantee was offered in the sum of 100 Eretz-Israeli Lira (thanks to the endeavors of Farajelah Nassrelahyoff and Mehdi Aminoff) but to no avail. The decision written on the appeal states: "The Commissioner reviewed the materials – and the decision is negative."	
	Bridge for Afghani Refugees	
Report from the Aliyah Department	In the summer of 1948, the "Department for Jewish Affairs in the Middle East" decided to bring the Jews of Afghanistan (about 4,000) to Israel via Mashhad and Tehran. This case was to be handled by the branch of the Aliyah Department in Tehran.	[Yehoshua / 295-296]
	The report of the Aliyah Department to the Jewish Congress (August 1951) reported that:	

	" ... Starting from June, 1950, every month 200 Afghani Jews, with permits from the government [in Afghanistan] came from Persia on their way to Israel. They were received in Persia by the Mashhad Jewish community, near the border with Afghanistan. The Mashhadis housed the immigrants in transit, and fed them. From Mashhad the immigrants went, group by group, to Tehran and there they were also supported by the Mashhadi community living in Tehran. ... By the end of February [1951] 1,200 Afghani olim had immigrated to Israel and 800 more were waiting in Tehran for their turn."	
Testimony	Testimony of a congregant at the Mashhadi Synagogue in Bene Beraq (as told in the 1980s): "Forty years ago I left all my belongings in the city of Herat and fled to Eretz Israel. On my way I reached Mashhad without a "cent" in my pocket. Feeling embarrassed, I didn't ask anyone for help. Some of the people in the community noticed my difficult situation and told me to go to Mela Abdelah. I didn't know the rabbi. I shamefacedly approached him. The rabbi sat me down next to him, quietly and respectfully listened to my tale, and with no hesitation gave me a substantial sum of money [from funds that had been set aside to help refugees] to help me on my way. The rabbi soothed me with words and quietly encouraged me. I asked him when I should return the money. He indicated with his hands that that won't be necessary."	[Beit Saba / Rabbi Levi]
	Mass Immigration	
Initial Feelers	After the events of Passover in 1946 in Mashhad, a delegation headed by Kleinbaum visited Mashhad. From his report, we learned the Zionistic character of Mashhad Jewry – Zionism that has deep roots in Judaism – Zionism that sees holiness in every scrap of paper that comes from Eretz Israel – because they were 'infected' with the holiness of Eretz Israel: "The National and Hebrew education here are remarkable. It can be said with absolute certainty that it is important to send materials from Eretz Israel to Mashhad – educational textbooks, pamphlets, poetry, etc. ...Anything and everything that comes from Eretz Israel is sacred to the Jews of Mashhad ...To them there is no difference between the holy books and the new Hebrew publications. 'This we received from Eretz Israel' – say the Jews of Mashhad with pride and reverence." Kleinbaum discussed options for immigration to Eretz Israel with the notables of the community: "During consultations with the wealthy Mashhadis, it was suggested to them that, along with their rich brethren in London, America and Eretz Israel, they should establish in Eretz Israel a settlement project, agricultural, industrial or mixed ... on condition that a solution will be found to enable the Mashhadis to immigrate [to Eretz Israel]."	[Sources / Kleinbaum]
The War of Independence	The War of Independence ... and Mashhad Jewry was making plans to immigrate to Israel – but the gates were still locked. In Israel, Mashhadi youth were participating in the national effort to repulse the enemy from the borders of the future state. Following is the description by Yosef Moradi of one of the most difficult battles in the history of the War of Independence. Yosef was the	[Aghlarpur / 25]

descendant of prominent rabbis of the community (son of Rabbi Refael, who was the son of Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar).

Yosef was born in Mashhad and immigrated to Eretz Israel in his youth. In the days of the siege of Jerusalem during the War of Independence (February 1948) Yosef was recruited to the Haganah, along with his truck (on Allenby Street in Tel Aviv). He (with his truck) participated, for months, in getting supplies to the 100,000 besieged residents of Jerusalem. Often, due to Arab attacks, the route to Jerusalem would be changed in the middle of the journey, and sometimes the whole convoy would be stopped for several hours until they received new orders to proceed. Thus, the one hour trip from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem could take as long as a few days.

The last time, in April 1948, that Yosef participated in a major operation to transfer supplies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the maneuver included 10 convoys, where each convoy consisted of 100 trucks (1,000 vehicles in total). After three days they managed to arrive, by a roundabout route, at Kibbutz Hulda near Ramle. The convoy remained on standby for a day and a half until they got the command to continue their journey to the besieged Jerusalem. In the area of Sha'ar Hagai, for a distance of about two kilometers, the convoy faced a sudden outburst of gunfire from the surrounding Arab villages located on the hills on both sides of the road. Three convoys of 100 vehicles managed to move ahead quickly and pass the barrage of gunshots. During the advance, suddenly thick smoke started billowing from the Yosef's engine. The truck stopped in the middle of the gunfire, and thus Yosef continues the story:

"A few bullets were fired on the left side of the truck, so I ducked down, moved to the right side, opened the door, and jumped into a nearby ditch. Some of the vehicles of the convoy passed me but in the confusion they didn't hear my cries for help. Towards evening the convoy had passed by and the gunfire had stopped. I feared that the Arabs would come down to the road to capture the truck or to set it on fire. I moved in close to the truck on the right side, opened the hood – and found a huge hole in the oil tank. I hopped into the truck, turned on the ignition, and with great luck managed to get out of the line of fire. Every few kilometers I had to stop and add water, and I coasted down every downhill track of the road with the motor turned off until I reached Jerusalem – close to 9:00 pm. I parked the truck and walked to my brother's house in the Bukharan neighborhood. No one was home. I was told that because of the gun shots from the Police Academy [in the hands of the Jordanians] on the neighborhood houses, the residents had moved to other locations and my brother's family had gone to the Mashhadi synagogue.

My oldest daughter was three weeks old when I joined the Jerusalem supply convoy, and when I returned home she was three months old. I hadn't seen her for more than two months.

Once, the wife of Amin Hakim asked me to take a bundle of supplies to her relatives in Jerusalem, and she blessed me before I left. Three days later I arrived in Jerusalem and took the package to Mrs. Hakim's family. Suddenly, eight children came out of the house, laughing and dancing, to greet me, and their mother blessed me. ...And I think that because of all those blessings G-d

	saved us from the hand of our enemies, from waylayers, and from all kinds of misfortunes on the way." Afterwards, Yosef was drafted to the IDF and took part in several operations on different fronts. In March 1949, after a journey of seven days, he reached Eilat – a beautiful bay with two clay houses and an Israeli flag flying proudly. In Eilat he was informed that his father, Rabbi Refael Aghalar, had arrived in Israel after many hardships en route. The rabbi had already been very sick, and a year later he died and was buried in Qiryat Shaul. At the time of the War of Independence, even though he was very sick, four of his children served in the armed forces - of the state in which he was buried.	
Obstacles	At the same time that the young people from Mashhad were fighting the war in Israel and the community was working intensively to help the refugees that were passing through Mashhad on their way to Israel – the subject of the immigration of Mashhadi Jews was being stalled by the decision-makers in Israel because of their failure to understand the way of life of the Mashhadi Jews. This went on for about a year after the establishment of the state, and until the Mashhadi Jews in the U.S. appealed to President Chaim Weizmann regarding the immigration of Mashhadi Jewry to Israel. The appeal was passed to the head of the Department of Immigration, Itzhaq Refael. Itzhaq Refael turned to the head rabbis, requesting their religious ruling on the 'crypto' community. Rabbi Hertzog claimed that: "Even if they had been willingly converted, G-d forbid, the gates of repentance would not be closed to them, and because the sons of the sons of the forcibly converted, in the end, want to return to their origins in the Holy Land ... this gives a reason for examination ... might there be descendants of mixed marriages ... also there is reason to fear that bastards were begotten ... or possibly couples ... have separated ... divorced by the Qadi (Islamic judge) ... and the wife was married to a Jew based on that divorce ... it is my opinion that a rabbi should be sent to them and he will ascertain all the details ..." Rabbi Uziel claimed that: "... the forced converts of Mashhad fiercely maintained their Judaism in their homes, and especially in matters of family ... and therefore they are true Jews in all ways." The community of 'crypto-Jews', who lived Jewish lives underground but in accordance with Jewish law, was not able to establish a Beit Din (court of law). Mola Hezqi, who came to Mashhad from Samarkand, wanted to found a Beit Din for divorce but he encountered great resistance from the community. The subject of divorce was completely irrelevant to the Mashhadi Jews and the sanctity of marriage was kept for life. The same applied to Afghani Jews, many of whom were descendants of the 'crypto-Jews', but who were even stricter and completely cancelled the institution of divorce. By the grace of G-d this episode was found to be completely irrelevant in relation to the immigration of Mashhadi Jews, and soon the masses of the	[Yehoshua / 143-144] [Yehoshua / 333] [R.N.]

	community began immigrating (while at the same time helping a wave of immigrants from other communities). Although the debate about the "kashrut" (qualifications) of the community as Jews left a bitter taste among the Mashhadis – still, from a historical point of view, the validation by the principle rabbis of Israel was actually an assertion of the great success of the community itself – success in emerging from a hundred years of living underground and leading double lives as forced converts – into the bosom of the Jewish nation.	
"Beheshti yeh" (Place of Eternal Rest)	Zion Zabihi (Mashhadi who worked for the Jewish Agency) participated in the absorption and immigration of Jewish refugees from Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan and Afghanistan. As he tells it: "The Afghani Jews crossed the western border and, after being helped by the Mashhadi Jews, who took care of their needs, continued on their way to Tehran. There were days when the camp [in Tehran] absorbed about 700 people at a time. The community in Persia, and especially the Mashhadi community, built a huge hall that housed more than a hundred people. It had bunk beds. In the winter it was freezing cold and the snow reached heights of over half a meter. The Jewish Agency supplied them with coal and wood which were used to heat the hall. In the summer they cleaned and disinfected the whole area against fleas and lice. In addition to this camp, which was set up by the Department of Immigration in an old Jewish cemetery located in Meidan-e-Shahnaz, Meidan-e-Fuziyeh, there also arrived immigrants who independently established a camp of their own in the new cemetery where Jews gathered from all over Persia."	[Yehoshua / 303-305]
"The Prophet Says..."	Nurelah Zvuloni says: "... The Jewish Agency helped us a lot with the immigration of Jews - first Itzhaq Refael and afterwards Duvdevani. In the 1950s, in the Jewish cemetery of Tehran, 8,000 immigrants were waiting for visas for Israel. People dug holes in the cemetery and erected tents. The Jewish Agency representative, upon seeing the situation, at once ordered to send them to Israel – without a visa and without bureaucracy." "The prophet says '**and I raised you from your graves**.' This I saw with my own eyes." "...Thus saith the Lord G-d ... behold I opened your graves, and raised you from your graves, my people, and brought you into the land of Israel"	[Beit Saba / Zvuloni] Yechezqel Chapter 37, Paragraph 12
Sha'ar Aliyah	Zilpa Kohen (Nissimi) relates the following: After the events of Passover 1946, the Jews of Mashhad started leaving Mashhad. The young people started learning Hebrew in special classes. The houses around us slowly started to empty and the residents traveled to Tehran or immigrated to Israel. We registered for aliyah at the Jewish Agency [in Tehran], and started the process of liquidating the house and its contents. We emptied the house within two months. In the late winter of 1951, we received our visas to Israel. We parted from our friends and relatives and traveled to Tehran by bus. ...We didn't as yet have a flight date and therefore we rented a small apartment until we could leave. ...We celebrated Purim in Tehran and impatiently waited	[Beit Saba / Yishayahu]

	for the date of our aliyah to Israel. A few days later we received a summons for inspection. In the inspection area were many small booths spread out over a large area. Thousands of immigrants from cities all over Persia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Bukhara were waiting to be checked. Many of them were living in the cemetery (Beheshtiyeh) – their temporary place of residence – looking eagerly forward to this day. A few days later we were notified of the estimated departure date – April 18, 1951. Because of a problem with the plane, the flight was postponed to the morning of the next day. The next morning we said our goodbyes to our relatives and boarded our flight to Israel – and by afternoon we landed at Lod airport. We were very excited. We thanked G-d (Shehechiyanu) and I don't remember how many times we kissed the ground. A caravan of trucks [picked us up and we] headed out for the immigrants' camp, called Sha'ar Aliyah (Immigration Gate), in Pardes Hannah. The trucks stopped near the gates of the camp, and soldiers gave us a warm welcome. We got tents and equipment for the night. And soon dinner arrived – a meal that we weren't accustomed to – but we had already undertaken to accept all the changes and differences without complaint.	(י"ב ניסן תשי"א)
The Jewish Agency	Esshagh Rokni was a manager in the Jewish Agency in Tehran. In his "Memories from the Jewish Agency in Tehran," Rokni wrote: With the establishment of the State of Israel and the founding of the Jewish Agency in Tehran – the Jewish Agency would rent airplanes from foreign companies to carry olim from the immigrant camps to Israel. These airplanes were maintained by the Iranian airlines at the Mehr Abad airport. As the demand to immigrate increased, Rafi Yussefi, from the Jewish Agency organized the immigrants into groups of 150 to 200 and would take them in buses to Turkey and from there by ship to Israel. Yussefi accomplished a lot for the Jewish immigrants of Iran and Iraq. At that time, Israel didn't have diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, Pakistan or India, and therefore the Jewish Agency in Tehran was responsible for taking care of the immigrants from those countries. Khalil Nabavian (from the Mashhadi community), who did business with these countries, did a great deal to help these immigrants. Everything he did was on a voluntary basis, and sometimes he used his own personal funds, with no recompense from the Jewish Agency. Thanks to the work of Nabavian almost all the Jews, including the contents of their synagogues, were brought to Israel.	[Shofar 315] [Esshagh Rokni married to Miriam, bat Faizelah Zabihi – Mashhadi community activist]

...The Land of Zion and Jerusalem

	Melting Pot	1950-2000
General	The lyrics "...The Land of Zion and Jerusalem" characterize the years wherein the return to Zion was fulfilled and huge numbers of immigrants fit themselves into the "melting pot" of Israeli society. It was a process that involved people from all "four corners" of the earth who spoke different languages and lived different lifestyles. The process was accompanied by numerous wars and the sorrowful loss of and mourning for the best of the young people. This steamroller of inner turmoil, security problems, and mounting national pressures created a Jewish and democratic state into which Mashhad Jewry fully and gladly integrated. The history of the community is the history of the country. Difficult periods of austerity, depression and unemployment ... periods of wars, killing and terror. ... It was all an ongoing process of struggle, progress and overcoming obstacles, a process whose results provided Jews wherever they were with feelings of satisfaction, pride and belonging. Satisfaction in building the country and its capital Jerusalem. Pride in its social, scientific and technological accomplishments. Belonging – to the possibility of advancing the only state for Jews – the state that continues to absorb immigrants from all around the world. Because we cannot sever the history of the Mashhadi community from the history of their newfound country, we will concentrate, from now on, on describing some of the characteristics associated with the community in Israel – especially on their unique characteristics within the surrounding Israeli society, and also in relation to the Mashhadis in other countries: • **Aliyah and Tourism** – Activities in the areas of immigration and tourism, strengthening the community in Israel and preserving the community ties between the veterans of the community, the new immigrants, and the tourists that still live in the diaspora (outside of Israel). • **Role Model** – The story of Lieutenant-Colonel Benzion Karmeli, whose life history reads like the history of the wars of Israel. • **Community Institutions** – Besides the intensive involvement of the community in Israeli society, many Mashhadi institutes were founded to serve the community in both religious and social matters. • **Yitgadal and Yitqadash** (may His name be exalted and sanctified) – The Israeli reality is laden with many sacrifices by its citizens, including the Mashhadi community. • **...Me'araiot Gaveru (They were stronger than lions)** – A unique experience undergone by the Mashhadi Jews in Israel, as opposed to the Mashhadis living in the diaspora, is the Israeli military experience. This unique phenomenon is experienced by all the generations – fathers, sons, and even grandfathers. Further on, a section is dedicated to the Mashhadis who fell in the wars of Israel.	
	Aliyah and Tourism	1950-1980

Aliyah and Tourism

After the events of Pesach 1946 in Mashhad, Nurelah Zvuloni, representative of the "HeChalutz" (Pioneers) of Mashhad, wrote to Eretz Israel: [Beit Saba / Zvuloni]

"... The Tehran Jewish Agency occasionally sends us some materials but this ... is not enough for us. Send us some good materials to distribute among the donors to the Jewish National Fund, and also to give to the students of our evening classes, and the members of the "HeChalutz". [החלוץ]

Several months ago we set up a "HeChalutz" House in Mashhad but unfortunately there have been riots in Mashhad and now we are afraid to act openly.

A snapshot of the situation in the 1950s and '60s is completely different. The Mashhadi community in Iran lived almost exclusively in Tehran – except for a few individuals who remained in Mashhad. There were a number of Jewish schools in Tehran. There were also several youth movements and the State of Israel was represented by an Israeli Consulate. Those who desired enjoyed abundant information, publications and news from Israel. In addition, frequent letters from families in Israel, and family visits both to Israel and from Israel gave community members an updated picture of what's going on in Israel. Following are a few personal impressions: [R.N.]

- In the years 1957 to 1965, I studied at the Jewish school Etefagh founded by the Jews of Iraq in Tehran. Our Hebrew teachers were a couple from Israel – orthodox Ashkenazi – the Fish family. In our Hebrew studies we learned to pronounce Hebrew letters, vowels, and words as was then customary in Israel – different from what we had learned at the community Beit Midrash, where we continued to study prayer in the Mashhadi accent and pronunciation (with Mela Yussuf Dilmani).
- When I was young, I started going to the Bnei Akiva youth movement. The Bnei Akiva branch was located in the house of the guide. The guide was from Israel – Yosef Gol. He was from an old, established Jerusalemite family – a family whose roots were from Herat and the forced converts of Mashhad (facts I did not know then). In Bnei Akiva we learned Hebrew and we published a newsletter for the greater community – activities that got us into trouble with the authorities. In short:

  In the two first editions of the newsletter "Bnei Akiva," we published two articles about the kibbutz settlements in Israel and about the religious kibbutz movement. Apparently, through the publisher, the newsletters reached the hands of the police. The subject of kibbutzim caused suspicion about a possible connection between us and the communists, and police officials came to our Bnei Akiva branch to investigate our guide. Due to the intervention of Jamshid Kashfi – the Jewish representative in Parliament – the subject was dropped.

- I loved to visit the Israeli Consulate. They greeted us – the kids – with warm hospitality. I used to take the booklet Israel Today (monthly) in order to find out what's currently going on in Israel. The best fun was

on Independence Day. Then they would serve us a rare treat "banana liqueur" – to toast the State of Israel.

- Before we made aliyah (at age 16) I visited Israel twice. These visits only reinforced my longing to make aliyah.

We immigrated to Israel before Rosh HaShannah, 5727 (1966), and right after Independence Day we experienced the anxieties and triumphs of the Six Day War. Following the war, masses of Mashhadis from the diaspora began to visit and explore Israel. During the summer months, Dizengoff Square in Tel Aviv was packed with Mashhadi tourists.

During the 1970s the Mashhadi tourists gathered at times at Malchei Israel Square and now and again at Atarim Square. My parents frequented these places every Saturday night. It was a kind of entertainment that they especially enjoyed. Once, after such an evening, I asked my parents, "How was it?" Disappointed, my mom answered, "Nothing. No one was there." I was surprised, "Saturday evening. Summer. And no one was there?" Suddenly I understood – there were lots of people, but not many Mashhadis. This was a big letdown for someone who knows and is part of the community.

During this period, summer nights were filled with parties, bar mitzvot, engagements, and weddings. At these parties – families and friends from Tehran, London, Milan and, of course, Israel – met together and spent a convivial multi-national evening. These were splendid events – with a mixture of languages, a variety of music, and of course a large assortment of foods. The guests spoke Hebrew, Persian, Italian and English. In accordance with the music and the singers, the crowd danced the Hora, Persian dances or ballroom dances. Occasionally, at the end of the evening a Persian vocalist would sing songs to please and delight the audience. Alongside a variety of typical Israeli foods such as humus, different salads and roast chicken, they would serve the guests two or three types of Persian sauces (choresh) with Persian rice and, of course, no one ever forgot the TahDiggi ('rice at the bottom of the pot', the rice seasoned with eggs).

This situation continued into the early eighties when, with the rise of the Islamic regime the community of Mashhadis in Tehran left Iran. Many of the community members stopped in Israel on their way to America (or Europe). Gradually, with the effort to base themselves in New York, the Mashhadi mass events of the summers in Israel came to a halt, and the chances of the Mashhad community to remain united slowly diminished.

These three decades were characterized by the consolidation of the state in the midst of wars and unrelenting Arab terrorism. The Suez Crisis and the Fedayeen activities characterized the 1950s. The Six Day War and the terrorist activities of the PLO characterized the 1960s. The War of Attrition, the Yom Kippur War, terrorism, and peace with Egypt characterized the 1970s ... and the life of Lieutenant-Colonel Benzion Karmeli exemplifies this period. The story of his life is a source of pride for the entire community. His life was full of love and sacrifice for the people of Israel and his country.

	Role Model	1937-1973
Lieutenant-Colonel Benzion Karmeli	Benzion, son of Pinchas and Esther, was born in 1937 in Bene Beraq. First, the father immigrated to Eretz Israel, and afterwards the mother and oldest son, Yehuda, one and a half years old. Their convoy traveled to Israel under difficult conditions, was captured, and the immigrants were detained. The mother and son were released three months later and the family was once again united. Benzion was born in Eretz Israel, studied in the Bene Beraq yeshiva, and worked as an engraver to support his family. He was a talented actor and before he was drafted he studied at a school for performing arts. He was drafted in 1955, completed a course in reconnaissance, and was qualified as a ranger. He was wounded in a raid on the Qalqiliya police. He completed a parachuting course and participated in operation Qadesh as a patroller in the area of Abu Ageila. For some time he was assigned to the Armored Corps, completed the Officers' course, and volunteered to be a permanent (professional) soldier. Thanks to his personality and skills as a patroller and his knowledge of armored vehicles, he was one of the most extraordinary commanders in the IDF - an example of excellence. "He is almost like Bentzi" was the biggest compliment his colleagues could give to anyone who succeeded in complicated navigational exercises. He founded the Ranger Battalion that served as the basis for the Armored Corps' reconnaissance platoon. He was then appointed deputy commander of a company of tanks, AMX type. In training, Bentzi was again injured (this time by a bullet in the chest), but he soon recovered. In spite of the fact that his condition had been diagnosed as critical, he never lost his playful mood and good spirits. A month after his return to active duty, he was again wounded – his leg was shattered. As soon as he recovered, he returned to his battalion and was appointed Battalion Intelligence Officer. He established the reconnaissance platoon of Brigade 7 and was appointed their chief. After his marriage he was released from the IDF but his longing for the army overcame him. Benzion returned to army service half a year before the Six Day War and was appointed commander of a tank company of Patton tanks. In the Six Day War, he led his division into the area of Khan Yunis – where he was wounded by a bullet to the head. The armored personnel carrier that evacuated him was hit and the crew abandoned the vehicle. Bentzi's brother-in-law, a commander in the same battle, came to rescue the wounded and, by chance, found Bentzi lying unconscious in the vehicle. For a month he fought for his life while his wife Frida sat at his bedside. After three operations on his head and a fierce fight for his life, he left the hospital with a disability of 76 percent. Due to his disability he was offered a release from the IDF, but he insisted on returning. In the beginning he was appointed to a position at Army Headquarters but after many long battles, and over the objections of his doctors, Bentzi succeeded in getting a commanding role in the Jordan Valley. After	[Excerpts from the Yizkor (Memorial) Website of the Ministry of Defense]

awhile he was appointed as commander of a battalion of tanks in the Golan Heights and later as commander of the reconnaissance battalion in the south. All the while Bentzi continued to receive medical treatment and even underwent additional surgeries to his head.

During the Yom Kippur War he was tasked with halting the advance of the Egyptian forces at a time when his division had been directed to another section of the front. The battalion, with Bentzi at its head, managed to hold the chain of hills and the Akavish (spider) axis, from which a week later the Suez Canal was crossed. During these battles of containment, Bentzi was killed.

Ariel Sharon, commander of the division that crossed the canal, said in his eulogy:

"Bentzi fell while he was in command of the battalion that held a range of high hills, of paramount importance, against Egyptian attacks.

We kept his battalion in Sinai so they could stop the Egyptians, and so they did. They did it that day and continued to do so until the end of the war. This battalion was one of the best units in the IDF. Bentzi built the battalion, nurtured it, and trained the men he commanded. His bravery, the personal example he gave, his persistence, his modesty, and his fighting spirit, can and should serve as a model to us all."

During a ceremony at which a citation of honor was posthumously awarded to Bentzi, the Chief of General Staff, Mordechai Gur, said:

"I am commending Lt. Colonel Benzion Karmeli, may he rest in peace, for displaying a spirit of volunteerism, bravery, a will to fight, and adherence to the mission. ...During the Yom Kippur War, Lt. Colonel Karmeli commanded a reconnaissance battalion on the Sinai front. Lt. Colonel Karmeli, who was crippled during the Six Day War, aspired persistently to command combat forces, despite his physical limitations. On October 8, 1973, the battalion participated in containment battles in the **Kishuf** region. Lt. Colonel Benzion Karmeli commanded the battalion under heavy artillery fire and discovered the enemy's intentions for this region. When it became apparent that the enemy was turning to the region of **Machshir Hamadiyeh**, Lt. Colonel Benzion Karmeli drove with his tank in the direction of that region. On the way, he fought and destroyed enemy tanks. In this battle he was wounded and killed. Lt. Colonel Benzion Karmeli showed by his actions a spirit of volunteering, courage, and a strong will to fight and persevere in his mission."

[Qiryat Shaul October 8, 1973]

His family established, in his memory, a scholarship fund and a Beit Midrash (seminary) called Maalot Qedoshim in Bene Beraq.

Community Institutions

1900-2010

One of the important characteristics of the Mashhadi Jews in Israel is the multitude of different institutions for maintaining community contacts, such as synagogues, various committees, and funds for the needy of the community. Below is a list of these institutions:

Institutions

#	Name	Place
1	Haji Adoniyahu HaKohen Synagogue	Jerusalem

2	Haji Yechezqel HaLevi Synagogue	Jerusalem
3	Synagogue (and Kolel [yeshiva]) for Mashhad Immigrants	Bene Beraq
4	Synagogue for Mashhad Immigrants – Beit El	Tel Aviv – North
5	Synagogue for Mashhad Immigrants	Tel Aviv – HaTiqva neighborhood
6	Synagogue for Mashhad Immigrants in Shabazi	Tel Aviv – Shabazi neighborhood (currently inactive)
7	Synagogue for Mashhad Immigrants	Hertzliya
8	Synagogue in Retirement Home for Mashhadi Forced Converts	Hertzliya Pituach
9	Synagogue for Mashhad Immigrants in Holon	Holon
10	Yeshivat Tiferet Shlomo	Jerusalem, in honor of Rabbi Shlomo Mashiyach
11	Sarakhsiha Building (currently inactive)	Jerusalem – Used for housing immigrants from Mashhad

Donations to Other Religious Institutions

#	Name	Notes
1	Synagogue on Shilo Street, Jerusalem	Sign in front indicates the contribution from the Mashhad community and Marv
2	Synagogue in Tel HaShomer	Tel HaShomer Hospital
3	Tiferet Yaaqov Synagogue in honor of Yaaqov Nissim	Ramat Gan
4	Synagogue in Yad Eliyahu	Yad Eliyahu, Tel Aviv Binyamin Nissimi, among the founders. Plaque indicates the contribution of the New York community of Mashhad – thanks to the endeavors of Aharon Kohanim.
5	Chalalei (Martyrs of) Tzur Synagogue	In honor of the Israeli Border Guard soldier, **Yoram Sufi**

Organizations

#	Name	Notes
1	The Central Committee for the Israeli Community of Forced Converts of Mashhad	Committee Members in 2010: Avi Betzaleli, Yaaqov Avrahami, Shaul Hakimi, Shmuel Ben David, Reuven Nissimi, David Hafzi, Yaaqov Yaaqobi, Uri Betzalel
2	Retirement Home for Mashhadi Forced Converts – Beit Mashhad, Hertzliya	Committee Members in 2010: Menashe Levi, David Siance/Albert Hezqiah, Babajan Itzhaqoff, Reuven Tashakori/David Zioni, Shaul Hakimi, Reuven Nissimi, Jonny Ebrahimoff, Misha Reuveni, Esther Sharon, Ora Zar
3	The Mutual Aid Fund – Women of Mashhad in Israel	Committee Member in 2010: Shoshana Ben David, Sima Dilmanian, Shula Levi, Esther Sharon
4	Audit Committee	Committee Members in 2010: Sara Berger (Zar), Avraham Hakimi, Maor Hakimi, David Sha'er
5	The Mutual Aid Fund – Founded by Mashhad Immigrants	Efraim Zvuloni, Shaul Hakimi, Shmuel Zar
6	Mashhadi Youth in Israel	
7	Community of Mashhadi Immigrants in Jerusalem	
8	Community of Mashhadi	

	Immigrants in Afula	
9	Yafa Charity Fund in Honor of Yafa Namdar	

Note: Previously published:

- Quarterly "Community" magazine - initiated by Simcha Zvuloni
- Bulletin Mash-had, to strengthen ties among community members - initiated by Avi Betzaleli

Yitgadal Ve'Yitqadash (Magnified and Sanctified) 1940-2010

Numerous war victims are part of the Israeli reality. This daily struggle for existence has left many scars, also among members of the community of Mashhad. Below is a summary of their stories, to remember always.

Sources:

- Gal-Ed: [http://www.gal-ed.co.il/leumi]
- Tagmul: [http://202.org.il/Pages/tagmul/tagmul1953.php]
- Neve Shalom: [www.turkeytravelplanner.com/SpecialInterest/JewishSites/neve_shalom.htm]
- Da'at: [http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/history/lapidot/10a-2.htm]
- "We will remember them all" – the Central Committee for Mashhad Immigrants, April 2004

Asher Namdar — 1917-1939 [Gal-Ed]

Born in Mashhad in 1917. In his youth, he landed in Russia and there worked in the retail trade and peddled his wares. At the age of 20 he immigrated to Eretz Israel. In Jerusalem he joined the Labor Movement. Walking to the movement's meeting place, he found himself by chance at the site where a detective was being assassinated, a man who was suspected by Etzel of informing to the British. Some of the shots that killed the detective wounded Asher – and caused his death.

Note: The three underground organizations executed people who they suspected of treason (Haganah 16, Etzel 16, and Lechi 42 executions). In May and June, 1939, Etzel executed four people for treason, among them Aryeh Polonsky. In that incident, a bystander, Namdar, age 22, was accidentally killed.

Mount of Olives
May 30, 1939
י"ב סיון התרצ"ט

[Da'at (דעת)]

Rivqa Shaban — 1920-1948 [Gal-Ed]

Rivqa, daughter of Leah and Avraham Betzalel, was born in 1920 in Mashhad. The family immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1922 and settled in Machanayim. Rivqa studied at the Evelina de'Rothschild school. Rivqa was a member of Etzel. Part of her job was to inform the members of the underground group about the activities of the British army. In 1937, she married Mashiyach Shaban, who was the son of a rabbi of the Mashhad community of 'crypto-Jews' in Tel Aviv.

During the War of Independence, her house was right in the line of fire. Jewish soldiers who didn't know the area often passed by her house. It was important to guide them to a nearby ditch that provided safe passage between the neighborhoods, because Arab snipers from the Police Academy at Sheikh Jarrah and from the Arab Mufti's house were incessantly firing at that area.

On November 28, 1948, Rivqa and her little daughter climbed onto the roof of the shelter to hang out laundry. When a group of soldiers that were on their

	way to the front saw her, she called to them: "Be careful! Don't walk out there in the open. There is a ditch – use it!" The moment she came into view, a Jordanian sniper shot her in the head. Her daughter, Shoshana, two and a half years old, ran to her grandfather and called: "Mommy is dead." Rivqa was the last civilian victim of the war; two days after her death a cease fire that was signed between Jordan and Israel went into effect. She was survived by her husband, two sons and two daughters.	Jerusalem Nov 28, 1948 כ"ו מרחשון התש"ט
Tamar Namdar 	Tamar, daughter of Yosef and Rachel, was born in 1919 in Bukhara. She married David Namdar in Mashhad. The family immigrated to Israel in 1950 with their five children (Miriam, Leah, Yafa, Aharon, and Sonya) and they settled in Moshav Beit Nechemia near Lod. On the moshav, Binyamin and Esther were born to the family. In 1953, close to midnight, infiltrators from Jordan entered the moshav. They knocked on the door of the Namdar family and called to the father to come to guard duty. Tamar opened the door, and was shot and severely wounded. The infiltrators also threw a grenade into the house, which wounded the father and two of the children. It wasn't until the morning that one of the children managed to escape and call for help, but Tamar had already died from loss of blood.	1917-1939 [Gal-Ed] [Tagmul] Beit Saba / Binyamin] Lod May 26, 1953 י"ב סיון התשי"ג
Refael Nissim 	Refael ben Reuven Nissim was murdered on September 6, 1986, in a terror attack while reciting the Shacharit (morning prayer) on Shabbat in the Neve Shalom synagogue in Istanbul. In the same attack, 23 other congregants were killed. Refael was survived by his wife and five children. Note: In another attack, on Shabbat, November 15, 2003, a car bomb exploded near this same synagogue. Hundreds were injured (including non-Jews) and more than 12 were killed.	1986 [Neve Shalom] [Beit Saba / Rabbi Levi]
Gilad Zar 	Gilad, son of Yael and Moshe Zar, was born in 1960 at Kibbutz Be'erot Itzhaq. He studied at the Bnei Akiva yeshiva Or-Zion. He joined Nachal and was an officer in Battalion 960. During his army service his family moved, with Gilad and seven brothers and sisters, to live in Qarnei Shomron. Gilad studied at the Meir Institute and was among the core founders, from the institute, of the settlement Itamar, where he served as the Council's security officer. In March 2001, Gilad was shot by a terrorist and severely wounded, but quickly returned to duty. Two months later he was shot by terrorists in an ambush near the Jit village intersection. He was shot in the head three times and died. Gilad was survived by his wife and eight children.	1960-2001 [Gal-Ed] Qarnei Shomron May 29, 2001 ז' סיון התשס"א
Zilpa Kashi **Gal Shilon**	Zilpa, daughter of Yafa and David Khorsandi, was born in Mashhad in 1935. She immigrated to Israel after the War of Independence and married Moshe Mashiyach Kashi. The couple had four daughters, Iris, Anat, Ayelet, and Inbar. Gal, son of Sylvia and Yaaqov, was born in Israel in 1970, grew up in Ramat Gan, and studied at Weitzmann Elementary School and Holtz High School in Holon. Gal served in the Israeli Air Force. After his army service, he studied Business Administration, and then traveled to the U.S. There he studied and was registered as a civilian pilot, and worked as a pilot. When he returned to	1935-2002 1970-2002 2001-2002 [Gal-Ed]

Sara Tiferet	Israel he became a 'ba'al tshuva" (a religious Jew) and started studying at a yeshiva. In 1999 he married Ayelet Kashi, who was also a 'ba'alat tshuva'. They moved to Emmanuel and Ayelet gave birth to a son, Or-Haim, and twin daughters, Galia Esther and Sara Tiferet. Gal continued his Jewish studies and was active in secret acts of charity. On Tuesday, July 16, 2002, Ayelet, her three children and their grandmother, Zilpa, were returning from a visit at the grandparent's house in Givatayim. They were on a Dan bus no. 189 from Bene Beraq to Emmanuel. At 3:00 pm, about 200 meters from their settlement, the bus was attacked by a terrorist cell whose members were disguised as Israeli soldiers. The attack started with a strong explosive charge, and afterwards with gun shots and grenades being thrown into the bus. Nine people were killed in the attack, and 20 wounded. Zilpa and her granddaughter, Sara Tiferet, were killed by the terrorists' bullets, and Ayelet and her daughter Galia Esther and her son Or-Haim were wounded. During the attack Ayelet telephoned her husband to let him know what was happening. Gal and a friend from the settlement rushed to the bus by car. When they arrived, they saw a terrorist wearing an IDF uniform, didn't recognize him, and appealed for his help. The terrorist shot Gal to death.	Yarqon July 16, 2002 ז' אב התשס"ב
Jean Relevy	Jean Relevy was killed in a terrorist attack in Jerusalem. He was survived by his wife and three children.	2008 Mount of Rest (הר המנוחות) Jerusalem
	They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions (Samuel II 1:23)	1940-2010
Izkor	The nation of Israel will remember its sons and daughters… Who lost their lives in the war for the establishment of the state… Many of the sons of the Mashhadi community died while fulfilling their role in the security of Israel. This chapter is devoted to the people whose death gave us life. Following is a summary of their stories, to be remembered always. **Sources**: • We Will Remember Them All – The Central Committee of Mashhad Immigrants, April 2004 • The Internet Site of the Central Committee of Mashhad Immigrants: [http://www.mashadi.co.il] • Izkor (in memory): [http://www.izkor.mod.gov.il] • IDF Spokesperson: [http://www1.idf.il/DOVER/site/]	
David Shalti	David, son of Yafa and Zion, was born in 1928 in the Bukharan neighborhood of Jerusalem. He was a member of the Haganah and during World War II he volunteered for the British army. When the War of Independence broke out he was drafted to Hish (Haganah Field Corps) in Jerusalem. He was one of the escorts of the convoys that rode to Mt. Scopus to bring supplies to Hadassah Hospital and Hebrew University. In the Battle of Atarot his hand was severely wounded. In spite of his wounds, after three days he joined the large convoy to	1928-1948

	Kfar Etzion, and stayed there until he was killed on the day that the area was taken. In 1949 he was moved, with the rest of the fallen, to his final resting place on Mt. Hertzl in Jerusalem. David was survived by his wife, Rivqa, and two children. His second child was born while he was at Kfar Etzion. He never got to see him. Note: Rivqa was Mashhadi - Ora Zar's aunt. Zion was Bukharan.	Mt Hertzl May 13, 1948 ד' אייר התש"ח [Ora Zar]
Avraham Yaaqovi (Skoda) 	Avraham, son of Dina and Shem-Tov, was born in 1923 in Mashhad. His family immigrated to Israel in 1927 and settled in Jerusalem. Avraham studied at Tachkemoni school and spent a lot of time touring and scouting in the country. During World War II he was drafted into the Palmach and served for three years at the settlements in Emeq Yizrael. When he returned to Jerusalem, he sold electrical supplies and at the same time joined Etzel. Avraham played a special role in Etzel, and completed a course for commanders. During the War of Independence, Avraham fell in the Battle for Jerusalem. On his way to sabotage a building near the Police Academy, he stepped on a mine and was killed.	1923-1948 Mt. Hertzl April 22, 1948 י"ג ניס ן התש"ח
Itzhaq Yaaqovi 	Itzhaq, son of Dvora and Binyamin, was born in 1912 in Mashhad. He made frames and art for stages (he even appeared in the Shah's court). In 1934 he illegally immigrated to Eretz Israel. In the beginning he established a workshop in Jerusalem and at the same time wrote and directed plays for the holidays (Esther, the Hasmoneans, etc). From time to time he would read on a radio show "This Day's Biblical Chapter" with the cantillation typical to his community. With the outbreak of the War of Independence he joined the Palmach. He fell in the battle for the outposts of Ma'aleh HaChamishah – defending the road to Jerusalem. He was survived by his nine year old daughter.	1912-1948 Qiryat Anavim June 9, 1948 ב' סיו ן התש"ח
Binyamin Kashi 	Binyamin, son of Miriam and Yosef, was born in 1930 in Tel Aviv. At the age of one year, his family moved to Jerusalem, and when the family returned to Tel Aviv, Binyamin stayed with his grandmother in order to finish his studies. When he was 15, he was forced to interrupt his studies in order to help the family. When the War of Independence broke out, he was called upon to guard the city limits at night. He helped defend Shechunat HaTiqva on the night of the big attack. He returned with his finger paralyzed and told his family that he had been in an activity with "No'ar HaOved" (Working Youth – an Israeli youth movement). At the age of 17, Binyamin joined the Givati Division and fought with them in the Negev. He wrote home saying that he wasn't being sent into battle and told his family not to worry about him. "In a short time all the Negev will be ours" – he promised his parents in a letter that they received after his death – "and I'll return home with a flag of victory." With the renewal of fighting after the first break, the Givati forces occupied the Ibdis outpost, northwest of Negba. The Egyptians relentlessly attacked this critical outpost, and in his job of defending it, Binyamin fell. He was laid to rest in the military cemetery at Negba.	1930-1948 [Beit Saba / Zvuloni / Eliyahu] Negba July 9, 1948 ב' תמוז התש"ח

Avraham Zar	Avraham, son of Leah and Yosef, was born in 1932 in Mashhad. In 1937 his family immigrated to Jerusalem. He studied at the Talmud Torah of the immigrants from Iran. He was active in Maccabi, Bar-Kochva, and Beitar – and later joined Etzel. He loved sports and music, and played the lute and violin. In the War of Independence he helped defend the neighborhoods of West Jerusalem and also took part in other battles. In the battle of Malcha he was wounded by the shelling, and died defending Jerusalem.	1932-1948 Mt. Hertzl July 15, 1948 ח' תמוז התש"ח
Avraham Sasson	Avraham, son of Esther and Yaaqov, was born in 1913 and immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1935. During the War of Independence he was recruited and assigned to the Seventh Brigade, Battalion 71. He died in an automobile accident on the Haifa-Acco Road while on duty.	1913-1948 Naharia August 26, 1948 כ"א אב התש"ח
Moshe Namdar	Moshe, son of Hanna and Yishayahu, was born in 1914 in Mashhad. In his youth he wandered through Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon to Eretz Israel (1936). Moshe was captured by the British Mandate police and imprisoned. After six months he was released from prison as a refugee for religious reasons and was allowed to remain in Eretz Israel. He settled in Givatayim. He married Simcha and a son was born. He was a member of the Haganah, the Civil Defence (Haggah), and Magen David Adom. During the War of Independence he served in the Chim Brigade Qiryati Division. During the Danny operation, our troops gained control of the Modi'in area and Outpost 219. On September 24, the Arabs attacked the outpost in violation of the truce. The outpost defenders were surprised and, because of the enemies' advantage, were forced to pull back. There were many casualties due to this difficult retreat. The next day our troops attacked and re-took the outpost. In this battle Moshe was killed.	1914-1948 Nachalat Itzhaq September 28, 1948 כ"ד אלול התש"ח
Nissan Israeli	Nissan, son of Rivqa and Moshe, was born in 1928 in Samarkand. In 1930 he immigrated to Eretz Israel with his parents and studied at Tachkemoni Elementary Religious School in Tel Aviv. During World War II he joined the Jewish Brigade. Afterwards he joined the Palmach and participated, among others, in battles to open the road to Jerusalem. On March 31, 1948, a large convoy to Jerusalem was organized near Chulda. The convoy was delayed because of malfunctions and mud on the road, allowing the Arabs to organize themselves and block the road, forcing the convoy to retreat in the middle of the battle. In this battle Nissan fell, after he was wounded but refused to withdraw and leave his wounded comrades on the battlefield.	1928-1948 Chulda March 1, 1948 כ' אדר א' התש"ח
Binyamin Kashi Shmueloff	Binyamin, son of Shimshon and Hanna, was born in 1930 in the town of Andkhoy in Afghanistan. He completed his elementary school studies and immigrated to Israel in 1950. He joined the IDF in 1951. He died in 1951 and was laid to rest in the military cemetery in Qiryat Shaul.	1930-1951 Qiryat Shaul July 2, 1951 כ"ח סיוון ה תשי"א

Aharon Dayan (Dil)	Aharon, son of Shlomo and Michal, was born in 1940 in the city of Herat. He immigrated to Israel in 1953. He joined the IDF in 1960 and served in Nachal. Aharon fell in the line of duty.	1940-1961 Qiryat Shaul May 4, 1961 י"ח אייר התשכ"א
Mashiyach (Shai) Nissim	Mashiyach, son of Yoav and Na'ne-Khanom, was born in 1945 in Mashhad. His family immigrated to Israel in 1951. He studied in Tel Aviv at Kalisher Elementary School and at Ironi A High School. He loved literature and art. He joined the IDF in 1964 and served in Nachal. He fell in 1965 in the line of duty.	1945-1965 Qiryat Shaul July 28, 1965 כ"ח תמוז התשכ"ה
Refael (Yuness) Madhian	Refael, son of Yosef and Sara, was born in 1940 in Mashhad. He immigrated to Israel in 1950 with the Youth Aliyah, and attended elementary school at Ashdot Yaaqov. Refael joined the IDF in 1958 and served in the Combat Engineering Corps. During the Six Day War, while rescuing injured soldiers in the Jenin area, he was hit by a shell and killed.	1940-1967 Mt. Hertzl June 6, 1967 כ"ז אייר התש"כז
Yaaqov Yaaqovi	Yaaqov, son of David and Yocheved, was born in 1940 in Tel Aviv. He completed his studies at Tachkemoni Elementary School and later at Shevach Vocational High School in Tel Aviv. He was a trainee at the Maccabi soccer team and worked with diamonds to support his family. Was drafted by the IDF in 1958. During the Six Day War, as part of the team of an armored personnel carrier, Yaaqov was killed in the battle at Rafiah Junction.	1940-1967 Mt. Hertzl June 8, 1967 כ"ט אייר התשכ"ז
David Kashi	David, son of Nissan and Rachel, was born in 1929 in Samarkand. In 1933 he and his family immigrated to Eretz Israel. When he got older, he joined Etzel and took part in many dangerous missions. He joined the IDF in 1948 at the height of the War of Independence. In one of the battles he was severely wounded but when he recovered he promptly returned to the battlefield. As a veteran of the Palmach, his wedding ceremony was held around a bonfire. David fought in the Sinai Campaign and in the Six Day War. In 1969, while on active reserve duty in Gaza, he was killed when a grenade was thrown at him. He was survived by his wife and a daughter.	1929-1969 Qiryat Shaul July 2, 1969 ט"ז תמוז התשכ"ט
Uri Mallul	Uri, son of Hila and Machluf, was born in 1934 in the Old City of Jerusalem. In his youth he 'learned' at Cheder Talmud Sephardim in the Old City. He was just bar mitzvah'ed when the siege on the Jewish Quarter of the Old City began and, along with his father and brother, he joined the fighting forces in the besieged city. As a teenager, he served as a runner, and played a central role in linking positions. He was often exposed to enemy fire, though miraculously he was not injured. During the fighting, his father and brother were captured by the Jordanian Legion. With the fall of the Old City, his family moved outside of the walls. Uri was drafted into the IDF in 1952, to the Armored Corps. He participated in the Sinai Campaign, the Six Day War, and the War of Attrition. During the Yom Kippur War, on the way to the southern front, his tank flipped	1934-1973

	over and Uri was killed. He was survived by his wife, Hanna Kordevani, and three children.	Mt. Hertzl October 7, 1973 י"א תשרי התשל"ד
Yosef Menashe 	Yosef, son of Mazal and Naftali, was born in 1949 in Tel Aviv. As a youngster, he studied at Brenner and afterwards at the technical school, Holtz. He was drafted by the IDF in 1967 and volunteered for the Armored Corps. He did a course for tank commanders and was then stationed in the Golan Heights. He was an outstanding officer and was awarded a commendation from the commander of the brigade. With the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, Yosef was sent to the Golan Heights - where containment battles were fought against the Syrians. During the battle for Nafach he destroyed many enemy tanks, until he was hit and killed. Yosef was survived by his wife, Dina, and a daughter.	1949-1973 Qiryat Shaul October 7, 1973 י"א תשרי התשל"ד
David Levi 	David, son of Binyamin and Malka, was born in 1951 in Bene Beraq. His father was a Jerusalem 'old timer' who fought in the War of Independence and, during the war, moved to Bene Beraq. In elementary school, David studied at Maalot and afterwards completed his studies at a vocational high school. He was active in Bnei Akiva, loved to draw, to travel, and to help others. In 1969 he joined Nachal and served in the Centurion Tank Unit. When the Yom Kippur war broke out, David was drafted to reserve duty and sent with his unit to the Golan Heights. He was killed in the battles of containment on the Golan Heights on the Syrian front.	1951-1973 Mt. Hertzl October 7, 1973 י"א תשרי התשל"ד
Rachamim Soleimanoff 	Rachamim (Rami), son of Rachel and Shmuel, was born in 1953 in Tel Aviv. He studied in Tel-Chai Elementary School. Rachamim was drafted to the Armored Corps in 1971. During the Yom Kippur War he fought on the Golan Heights. In the battles of containment that took place in the area of Tel Johader his tank was hit and Rachamim was killed. He was brought to his final resting place at Mt. Hertzl in Jerusalem. A Torah, dedicated to his memory, was donated to a home for senior citizens. The Torah was later transferred to a kibbutz on the Golan Heights near where he fell.	1953-1973 Mt. Hertzl October 7, 1973 י"א תשרי התשל"ד [Ora Zar]
Benzion Karmeli 	Benzion, son of Pinchas and Esther, was born in 1937 in Bene Beraq. He studied in the Bene Beraq yeshiva and worked as an engraver to support his family. In 1955 Bentzi was drafted into the army and was wounded in a raid on the Qalqiliya police. He completed a parachuting course and participated in the Sinai Campaign as a patroller in the Abu Ageila sector. Later he was assigned to the Armored Corps, completed an officers' course, and volunteered to become a career soldier. He established the Reconnaissance troop of the Seventh Brigade and was appointed to head it. In the Six Day War he led the division into the Khan Yuness compounds - where he was wounded by a bullet to the head. In the Yom Kippur War he was ordered to contain the advancing Egyptian forces while the division was sent to another section of the front. The battalion, with Bentzi at its head, successfully held the ridge along the Akavish (Spider) Route. Bentzi was killed during one of the containment battles.	1937-1073 Qiryat Shaul October 8, 1973 י"ב תשרי התשל"ד

Zvulon Qatzabi	Zvulon, son of Miriam and Yehuda, was born in 1946 in Tel Aviv. He completed his elementary school studies at Tel Nordau and later studied at the Max Pine vocational school. Zvulon was drafted in 1964 to the Artillery Corps. In the Yom Kippur War he fought in battles against the Syrians on the Golan Heights. On October 19, 1973, near the village of a-Teiha, Zvulon's battery was hit by Syrian artillery shelling, and he was killed.	1946-1973 Mt. Hertzl October 19, 1973 כ"ג תשרי התשל"ד
Binyamin Jadidi	Binyamin (Beniya), son of Nissan and Batsheva, was born in 1946 in Mashhad. His family immigrated to Israel in 1950 and lived in the Qadima transit camp. For elementary school, he attended Manara, and completed high school in Har-ve'Gai on Kibbutz Dafna. In 1965 he joined the IDF and served with the paratrooper reconnaissance platoon. He completed an officers' course and a reconnaissance officers' course. During the Six Day War he participated in capturing the Golan Heights. Additionally, he participated in several daring missions in Samu'a, Karameh, Beirut Airport, Neja-Hamadi, and others. In 1969 he was released from the army and returned to Manara. In the Yom Kippur War he commanded a reconnaissance unit on the Golan Heights, as part of an Armored Corps unit. On the circumstances of his death writes Gen. Peled: "Our division counter-attacked the Syrian army in the southern Golan Heights. We left Tzemach on Monday at dawn, then went through Ein-Gev, El-Al, Ma'aleh Gamla, and on to Rafid Junction and to Hushniyeh. By Wednesday night, all of the Golan Heights was in our hands. However, the war was still going on along the Syrian border and beyond, the enclave. On Friday, October 19, 1973, in fighting beyond the purple line (the 1967 ceasefire line between Israel and Syria), Binyamin was killed by artillery shelling while helping the battalion commander." Binyamin is survived by his wife, Miri, and two children.	1946-1973 Manara October 19, 1973 כ"ב תשרי התשל"ד
Orna Levi	Orna, daughter of Baruch and Yocheved, was born in 1958 in Tel Aviv. She studied in Givat Shalom Elementary School and completed her studies at Ironi Z (ז) High School in Yafo. Orna was drafted in 1977 to the Signal Corps. She fell in the line of duty in 1978.	1958-1978 Holon December 10, 1978 י' כסלו התשל"ט
Yoram Sufi	Yoram, son of Miriam and Asher, was born in 1964 in Tel Aviv. He grew up and was educated in the Qiryat Shalom neighborhood in Tel Aviv. Yoram joined the Border Guard in 1982. In the Shlom HaGalil War, he fought in Lebanon. On November 11, 1982, a gas tank exploded at the Tyre military government building. The building collapsed burying its inhabitants. Yoram was among the dead. His parents founded the Chalalei Tzor ("Martyrs of Tyre") synagogue in Qiryat Shalom.	1964-1982 Holon November 11, 1982 כ"ה מרחשון התשמ"ג [Ora Zar]

Erez-Eitan Betzalel 	Erez, son of Bracha and Mishael, was born in Tel Aviv in 1964. He studied at Givat Shalom Elementary School and Gymnasia Hertzliya High School. He did volunteer service for Magen David Adom and for the Civil Guard. In 1982 he was drafted to the Nachal core unit Zahav and after basic training was posted in Lebanon for routine security duties. While planting mines in the Lebanon Valley, east of Mansura village, Erez was shot by terrorists and killed.	1964-1983 Qiryat Shaul May 11, 1983 כ"ח אייר התשמ"ג
Yosef Zvuloni 	Yosef, son of Leah and Yaaqov, was born in 1966 in Tel Aviv. During his childhood he lived in Italy. In 1973 he immigrated with his family to Israel. He studied at Maalot Elementary School in Bene Beraq, and then at Tzeitlin in Tel Aviv. He was active in Bnei Akiva and joined the core unit of Nachal "Aviad". He was drafted to the IDF in 1984 and served in the Nachal paratroopers. Yossi died from accidental dehydration while training in Teqoa.	1966-**1985** Ponevezh Yeshiva August 16, 1985 כ"ט אב התשמ"ה [Beit Saba]
Eyal Levi 	Eyal Mishael, son of Ruth and Yair, was born in 1971 in Jerusalem. He studied at Zion Ezri Elementary School and later studied electronics at the yeshiva high school, Qiryat No'ar. He was active in Bnei Akiva and was a group leader in the Qiryat Yovel branch. In 1989 he was drafted to the IDF. He started in "Gibush le'Tayiss" (pilot preparation course), but preferred to join his friends in Golani. He completed a course for infantry officers and was sent to the Baraq battalion as a squad leader and later as a platoon commander. In the summer of 1993, after a night ambush, Eyal, at the head of his troops, set out to finish their mission – to seek a hidden lookout point for preventing terrorists from reaching the northern settlements. At dawn, they entered Wadi Al Farash. While navigating difficult terrain, one of his soldiers bumped into a tripwire, which detonated several roadside bombs. Eyal and six of his soldiers were killed.	1971-1993 Mt. Hertzl August 19, 1993 ב' אלול התשנ"ג
 Yoel Dilian	Yoel, son of Hanna and Menashe, was born in 1971 in Jerusalem. He studied at Beit HaYeled Elementary School and completed Beit Chinuch High School, where he majored in chemistry, physics, and mathematics. He was an outstanding athlete and was crowned champion of the 1000 meter run for youth. In 1989 he joined the paratroopers and was accepted to the reconnaissance unit. He completed the officers' course with honors and was promoted to the rank of captain. On Erev Rosh HaShannah, 1995, Yoel drove some soldiers in his own car, from their training location to the transportation station in Efrat so they would be able to arrive home before the holiday began. On his way back to the base, his car overturned and he was killed. In Yoel's memory, a basketball tournament is held, under the auspices of the Jerusalem Municipality and the school he attended.	1971-1995 Mt. Hertzl September 25, 1995 א' תשרי התשנ"ו
Itay Avi Adler 	Itay, son of Yafa and Itzhaq, was born in 1977 in Raanana. He studied in Ziv Elementary School, continued to HaSharon Junior High School, and completed Ostrovsky High School, majoring in biology and chemistry. In 1995, he was drafted to the IDF and served in the anti-tank company of the Nachal Brigade. On the night of February 4, 1997, a helicopter disaster occurred when two Yass'ur helicopters collided over Moshav Sha'ar Yeshuv. Seventy-three	1977-1997 Raanana February 5, 1997

	soldiers making their way to Lebanon were killed in the crash and Itay among them.	כ"ח שבט התש"נז
Avraham Kanosh	Avraham, son of Sara and Asher, was born in Jafo in 1972. He grew up and was educated in Holon. Avi attended Sprinzak Elementary School and then Mitrani High School. In 1991, Avi enlisted in the Artillery Corps. He passed the Shalishut Officers Course and was discharged in 1995, after two years service as a professional soldier. In June 2000, he reported for the reserves, but from this duty he never returned. Avi fell while serving at Moran Army Base.	1972-2000 Holon June 29, 2000 כ"ו סיוון התש"ס
Moshe Mizrahi	Moshe, son of Hanna and Dror (grandson of Moshe and Tzipora Siman Tov), was born in 1982 and served in the Infantry. He fell in 2002. (His "Life Story" is missing from the IDF "Yizkor" website.)	1983-2002 Mt. Hertzl December 8, 2002 ג' טבת התשס"ג
Amir Ben Aryeh	Amir, son of Irit and Pini (grandson of Chai Mashiyach), was born in 1981 and served in the Infantry. He fell in 2002. The details of his life do not appear on the IDF "Yizkor" website. Following are some excerpts from the website of the IDF spokesman: • IDF spokesman announced (Feb. 6, 2003) An IDF officer and a soldier were killed last night (Wednesday) and two other soldiers were injured ... during a battle with terrorists in the Samaritans neighborhood in Shechem [Nablus]. Names of those killed: IDF Officer Lt. Amir Ben Aryeh (21), from Maccabim-Reut; Sgt. Idan Suzin (21), from Qiryat Tiv'on .... • IDF spokesman announced (Oct. 11, 2006) This evening, IDF forces demolished the homes of the perpetrators of the attack on the IDF station in Shechem [Nablus] ... in which Lt. Amir Ben Aryeh and Sgt. Idan Suzin were killed ...	1981-2003 Chadid February 6, 2003 ד' אדר א' התשס"ג
Naor Shmueli	Naor, son of Ofra and Shlomo, was born in 1988 in Hertzliya. He studied at Bar Ilan Elementary School and later at the Bnei Akiva Yeshiva in Raanana. During this period he was active in the Bnei Akiva youth movement. In 2008 he was drafted to the Yeshiva Program of Battalion 605 of the Combat Engineering Corps. He fell in the line of duty on August 22, 2008.	1988-2008 Hertzliya August 22, 2008 כ"א אב התשס"ח
Shmuel Karmeli	His name does not appear on the IDF "Yizkor" website.	
Mishael Itzhaqov	His name does not appear on the IDF "Yizkor" website.	
Avraham Qatzavian	His name does not appear on the IDF "Yizkor" website.	
Itzhaq Qatzavian	His name does not appear on the IDF "Yizkor" website.	
	Conclusion	
Integration	Mashhadi immigration to Eretz Israel began in the late nineteenth century.	

Initially Mashhadis stayed in the Bukharan Quarter of Jerusalem. Now most of the Mashhadis live in the Gush Dan area (Tel-Aviv, Bene Beraq, Ramat Gan, etc.). It is estimated that more than sixty percent (between 10,000 and 14,000) of Mashhadi Jews today live in Israel.

Dates	People	Estimation
1950s	3,000	Immigrated to Israel
1980s	6,000	Assuming natural growth * 2
2010s	9,000	Assuming that half the marriages were with non-Mashhadis
2010s	14,000	Assuming natural growth * 1.6

There is no accurate data; the table represents estimates only

Socially, relative to the Mashhadi communities in the diaspora, the Israeli Mashhadi community is strongly associated with the local culture. Following are a number of factors:

- Great distribution and abundance of synagogues in the country - as a result of which many of the Mashhadis go to a (non-Mashhadi) synagogue near their residence
- Open and integrated atmosphere, and life among Jews, including intensive exposure to the Israeli culture
- Attendance at public schools and military service along with the entire Israeli public

The community's contribution to the country is diverse and noteworthy. Here are a few of the areas:

- Participation in smuggling and absorbing immigrants from Mashhad during the period of illegal immigration under the British Mandate
- Active participation in pre-state militias
- Organizing and operating, for the benefit of Mashhadi Jews, during the Passover riots of 1946 (in Mashhad)
- Participation in the War of Independence and later in all the wars of Israel

Today's Mashhadi community is strongly integrated into the country from a cultural, social, economic, and business viewpoint. The community's sources of livelihood are very diverse, and can be found in academia, teaching, military, government offices, financial institutions, high-tech, private businesses, and trade.

Worldwide Federation of Mashhadi Jewry

From the end of the 1990s – after the great success of the Mashhadi Jews in New York in building a congenial community life in their new location – the New York community is now in the process of re-integrating with the community in Israel: such as group tours of NY Mashhadis to Israel, community Bar/Bat Mitzvot at the Western Wall, and 'singles' cruises for the young people of the community in different places in the world.

In summer 2009, a Federation of Worldwide Mashhadi Jewry was founded in Jerusalem - with representatives from Israel, New York, Milan and London. A great effort was invested in this conference, both at the content and at the symbolic levels.

	At the symbolic level, many logos were proposed as a symbol of the unification.... of them, the symbol of the menorah was selected. At the content level – following is a summary of the decisions of the Federation as agreed to by Bahman Kamali – philosopher and initiator of the Federation: • World Association of Mashhad Jews was established in Jerusalem to address the sense of 'togetherness' of the Mashhadi communities all over the world. • "The wise man looks into the future and sees beyond the immediate events." Mashhadi Jewish leaders in New York are troubled by the problem of assimilation in the diaspora. Although today there is no assimilation in the community, it is important to prepare an appropriate infrastructure to prevent assimilation in the next two to three decades as well. • A heritage center for Mashhadi Jewry should be established. The center will be a combination of library, archive and museum that will commemorate the legacy of the community. • Shabazi synagogue in Israel is dilapidated and not in use. It is located in an area that has great tourist value. It should be rebuilt to address the community's needs (synagogue, hall for social events, heritage center, etc.). • A senior citizens home in Hertzliya was founded in 1992 for the welfare of the elderly of the community - as a first joint project of all the communities of Mashhad. Elders of the community are warmly welcomed to enjoy the services of the home. • Sarakhsiha is currently (2009) in legal proceeding. The Federation is handling the legal problems regarding its ownership.	[Three examples from dozens] [Qohelet (Ecclesiastes) (2:14)] [R.N. The court finally decided that Sarakhsiha belongs to the Mashhadi Central Board in Israel (2012)]
A Glance into the Past	Tehran in the 1960s. As a child, I was not exposed to the concept of 'forced convert' or Jadid al-Islam. We grew up as proud Jews with strong ties to Israel. I remember that the longing for Israel burned in us as children in the diaspora. When I was a child, my cousin Itzhaq and my brother Daniel and I appealed by letter to the Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, to use his influence to help us convince our parents to send us to Israel. To our surprise, Ben-Gurion responded to us by transferring the matter to the Jewish Agency ... On the day we went to send the letter to Ben-Gurion, we saw on Shah street a procession of Muslims who were flagellating themselves with chains. It was a horrific sight, and left a strong impression ... And today, after the passing of many years, I think about it and ponder: "These self-tormentors, if they could beat themselves with such enthusiasm, could they not easily have started a riot against the Jews ...?"	[R.N.] [Year 1962. We were children, aged 9-12. Of course, no parent would agree to part with such young children and it would take another several years until we finally made aliyah].

Indeed, the disaster of the forced conversions happened during such a procession! There had been many forced conversions in Iran throughout history and the forced conversion of Mashhad was not unique, but it *was* special - special because after one hundred years of living 'underground,' the entire community came out – still Jewish.

With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Entered the forced conversion as Jews and exited as Jews - proud Jews!

With strong ties to Israel.

* Times Gone By *

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Abdolahzadeh, Agha Khan, 73
Abdolahzadeh, Davood, 74
Abdolahzadeh, Karbalaii Jaffar, 47
Abdolahzadeh, Mahin, 69
Abdolahzadeh, Nassrolah, 74
Abdolahzadeh, Yussuf, 73
Addas, RabbiYaaqov, 85
Adler, Itay Avi, 116
Afshar Dynasty, 10, 11
Aghajan, Mola Mehdi (Mashiyach), 18, 19, 22, 95
Aghalar, Aghajan ben Itzhaq, 43
Aghalar Family, 12, 20
Aghalar, Mola Yaaqov, 43
Aghalar, Rabbi Mordechai (Mola Morad Aghlar), 26, 32, 43, 44, 54, 55, 56, 89, 98
Aghalar, Rabbi Refael (Mola Rafi), 26, 32, 42, 43, 44, 53, 55, 56, 59, 99
Aghalar, Rachel, 55
Aghalar, Reuven, 67
Aghalar, Sara, 43
Aghalar, Shlomo, 55
Aghayoff, Shmuel (Nurolah Ghassabian), 96
Aghlar Family, 12
Aghlarpur, Bahram, 7, 26, 43, 44, 89, 97
Aharoni Family (Zughali), 12, 47
Ahmad Shah, 13, 28, 41
Alioff Family, 70
Alioff, Ebrahim, 74
Alioff, Esshagh, 74
Aminoff Family, 42, 56, 63, 64, 89
Aminoff, Benny, 64
Aminoff, David, 62
Aminoff, Faizolah, 63, 78
Aminoff, Farajolah, 78
Aminoff, Fatholah, 78
Aminoff, Haji, 32, 84
Aminoff, Haji-Ben, 67
Aminoff, Ibrahim, 56
Aminoff, Lotfolah, 63
Aminoff, Mehdi, 96
Aminoff, Morad, 78
Aminoff, Parry, 66
Aminoff, Pauline, 66
Aminoff, Rahim, 62, 65
Anatian, Habib Shabanoff, 78
Avrahami, Yaaqov, 107
Aziz, Azriel, 5
Aziz, David, 35, 69
Aziz, Fatholah, 67
Aziz, Soleiman, 74
Azizolahyoff, Abdol-Rahim, 65
Azizolahyoff, Amos, 64
Azizolahyoff, Bob, 67, 68
Azizolahyoff, Efraim Levy, 69
Azizolahyoff, Eliyahu, 63
Azizolahyoff Family, 8, 63, 64, 65, 89
Azizolahyoff, Jack, 63
Azizolahyoff, Morad, 63
Azizolahyoff, Ramazan, 68
Azizolahyoff, Yussuf, 62

B

Baba, Agha, 18
BaniLevi, Amin-Jan, 73
BaniLevi, Haji, 78
BaniLevi, Lotfolah, 73, 78, 81
BaniLevi, Yussuf, 78, 81
Bassal, Aharon, 33
Bassal, Avigail,, 33
Bassal, Binyamin, 33
Bassal, David, 33
Bassal, Mola Alnaghi, 75
Bassal, Mola Yahya, 32, 84
Bassalian, Nissim, 81
Behnam, Yaghub, 80
Ben Ami (Nissim) Family, 95
Ben Ami (Nissim), 95
Ben Aryeh, Amir, 117
Ben David, Nathan, 8
Ben David, Shmuel, 107
Ben David, Shoshana, 107
ben Lotf, Baba, 5
Ben Yehuda, Ruth, 69
Ben Yehuda, Uri, 69
Ben Zvi, Yitzhak, 5, 7, 20, 30, 83, 91, 94, 96
Ben Ami (Nissim), Yitzhak (Itzhaq), 95
Ben-Gurion, David, 119
Betzalel, Erez-Eitan, 116
Betzalel, Nuriel, 68
Betzalel, Rabbi Yosef (Mola Yussuf Bassal, 26, 44, 54, 56, 72, 87
Betzalel, Uri, 107
Betzalel, Yechezqel, 7, 38, 39
Betzalel, Yoram ben Yaaqov, 7
Betzaleli (Segha), Rivqa, 45
Betzaleli Elishayoff, Rabbi Menashe (Mola Faraj Bassal), 32, 33, 39, 42, 44, 45, 52, 54, 56, 57, 58, 72, 86, 87
Betzaleli Family, 12, 39
Betzaleli, Avi, 107, 108
Betzaleli, Betzalel, 93
Betzaleli, David, 57, 58
Betzaleli, Rabbi Adoniyahu (Mola Khalil Sagha), 43, 44, 45, 52, 55
Betzaleli, Rachel, 33
Bichupan Family, 36
Bruchim, Esshagh, 80

Bughari Family, 13

C

Chaqlai, Menashe, 95
Chaqlai, Yehuda, 51
Cohen, Mola Moshe, 32
Conolly, Arthur, 18, 19, 21

D

Danielpour, Albert, 80
Dayan (Dil), Aharon, 113
Dil, Azizolah, 68, 69
Dil, Ismail, 67
Dil, Seifolah, 68
Dilian, Yoel, 116
Dilmani Family, 12
Dilmani, Esshagh, 73
Dilmani, Michel, 81, 82
Dilmani, Rabbi Yosef (Mola Yussuf Dil), 43, 54, 55, 56, 72, 74, 103
Dilmanian, Behrouz, 78, 81, 82
Dilmanian, Eliyahu, 43
Dilmanian, Farokh, 82
Dilmanian, Habibolah, 73
Dilmanian, Lotfolah (Shimon), 43, 51
Dilmanian, Sima, 107
Dilmanian, Yaaqov, 1, 7, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19, 25, 26, 30, 32, 33, 34, 49
Duvdevani, 100

E

Ebrahimoff Family, 64, 89
Ebrahimoff, Haji Agha, 62
Ebrahimoff, Joe, 81
Ebrahimoff, Jonny, 107
Ebrahimoff, Nissim, 64
Ebrahimoff, Yussuf, 78, 81
Ebrani, Louis, 81, 82
Elghanayan, Habib, 80
Eliaszadeh, Agh Nabi, 65
Elishayoff Family, 39, 65
Elishayoff, Soli, 64
Elitzur, Yehuda, 7
Eliyahu Zvuloni Family, 8
Eliyahu, Hakham, 83
Emam Jomeh, 17, 20, 25
Esmaeloff, Sam, 63
Etessami, Abdol-Rahim, 73, 81
Etessami, Esshagh Alioff, 70
Etessami, Farshaad, 81
Etessami, Jahangir, 68, 69
Even, Efraim, 92

F

Fath Ali Shah, 16
Ferrier, Joseph, 19, 20
Fischel, Walter, 7, 16, 18, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 37, 41
Fish Family, 103
Frazer, James, 17

G

Garji Family, 12
Garji, Rabbi Asher, 38
Garji, Rabbi Avraham, 87
Garji, Rabbi Matatiyahu, 5, 7, 20, 37, 38, 39, 85, 86, 87
Garji, Rabbi Yosef Melamed, 38
Garji, Rabbi Shmuel, 5, 32, 44, 57, 86, 87
Garji, Rabbi Yechezqel, 38
Garji, Rabbi Yosef, 32, 86
Ghassab, Yosef, 32, 84
Ghassabian, Jamshid, 73
Ghassabian, Nurolah (Shmuel Aghayoff), 96
Ghassemoff, Soleiman, 67
Gohari, David, 67, 68
Gohari, Fatholah, 67, 68
Gol, Israel, 89
Gol, Mola Yosef, 37
Gol, Nethanel, 89
Gol, Rabbi Binyamin, 14, 89
Gol, Yosef, 103
Golran, Reuven, 69
Gur, Mordechai, 106

H

Hadi, Azizolah, 78
Hafzi, David, 107
HaGaon Rishon LeZion, 84
Haghighat, Ebrahim, 73, 81
Haim, Soleiman, 41
Haji Ibrahim of Shiraz, 16
Haji-Bai, Amir, 68
Hajiyoff, Jack, 64
Hajiyoff, Joy, 63
Hajiyoff, Mehdi, 65
Hajiyoff, Morris, 64
Hajizadeh, Ben, 64
Hakim Family, 97
Hakim, Amin, 98
Hakim, Flora, 69
Hakim, Freidun, 81, 82
Hakimi Family, 12
Hakimi, Agh-Ali-Mohammad, 73
Hakimi, Avraham, 107
Hakimi, Fatholah, 52
Hakimi, Maor, 107
Hakimi, Rahmatolah Rajabzadeh, 78
Hakimi, Seifolah, 78
Hakimi, Shaul, 107
Hakimian, Agha Javadoff, 78
Hakimian, Agh-Bozorg, 35, 78
Hakimian, Bahram, 81
Hakimian, Behrouz, 81, 82
Hakimian, David Javadoff, 78
Hakimian, Freidun, 78
Hakimian, Nozar, 81, 82
HaKohen, Adoniyahu, 87, 106

HaKohen, Mola Aharon, 87
HaKohen, Mola Binyamin Yazdi, 14
HaKohen, Mola Elias, 55
HaKohen, Rabbi Binyamin Yazdi, 90
HaKohen, Rabbi Hizqiah, 5
HaLevi, Haji Habibolah, 32, 84
Harati, Yedidiya ben Yosef, 90
Hariri, Ebrahim, 74
Harounoff Family, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 88
Harounoff, Abba Norman, 64
Harounoff, Abraham, 64, 66
Harounoff, David, 61, 88
Harounoff, Jack, 63
Harounoff, Malka, 88
Harounoff, Matt, 63
Harounoff, Na'ir, 66
Harounoff, Nissim, 64
Harounoff, Nuriel, 88
Harounoff, Rahamim, 63
Harounoff, Samuel, 62, 65
Harounoff, Yehuda, 64
Harounoff, Yosef, 61
Hazan, Soleiman, 58, 59, 67
Hekmatian, Hekmat, 78
Hematian (Rahamin), Rabbi Rahmat, 46, 47, 51
Hematian, Fatholah, 82
Hezghia Family, 13
Hezghia, Shaban, 49
Hezghiya (Hezghia), Vali, 59???
Hezqiah (Hezghia), Albert, 107
Hosseinoff, Faizolah, 74
Hosseinoff, Yaghub, 74
Hosseinzadeh, Faizolah, 74
Hosseinzadeh, Yaghub, 74

I

Iliyan, Hekmat, 78
Iliyan, Sirous, 81, 82
Imber, Naftali Herz, 83
Israeli, Nissan, 112
Itzhaqoff, Babajan, 107
Itzhaqoff (Itzhaqov), Dash Abdol-Karim, 42, 44, 45, 56
Itzhaqov, Mishael, 117

J

Jabarzadeh, Bahram Hakimian, 81
Jadidi, Binyamin (Beniya), 115
Jamshidoff Family, 64
Jamshidoff, Esshagh, 62, 63, 78, 94

K

Kaboli, Afshin, 69
Kaboli, Amin, 48
Kaboli, Shlomo, 8, 67
Kahan, Ernest, 63
Kahan, Margaret, 64
Kal, Mola David, 35
Karimzadeh, 65
Kalaty, Levy, 65
Kalaty, Soli, 66
Kali Family, 12
Kali-Nissimi Family, 56
Kamali, Bahman, 81, 119
Kamali, Bahram, 81, 82
Kanosh, Avraham, 117
Karim Khan Zand, 10, 13, 16
Karimzadeh, A. H., 63
Karmeli, Albert, 73
Karmeli, Benzion, 102, 104, 105, 106, 114
Karmeli, Eliyahu, 67, 68
Karmeli, Frida, 105
Karmeli, Mehdi, 67, 68, 69
Karmeli, Mussa, 36
Karmeli, Shmuel, 117
Karmeli, Yossi, 69
Karmely, Mola David, 56
Kashani Family, 13
Kashani, Reuven, 7, 14, 21,
Kashanian, Manuchehr, 67, 68, 69
Kashfi, Jamshid, 103
Kashi, Ayelet, 110
Kashi, Binyamin, 111
Kashi, David, 113
Kashi, Esshagh, 66
Kashi, Habibolah, 47
Kashi, Mola Yaghub, 56
Kashi, Moshe Mashiyach, 109
Kashi, Ramadan, 47
Kashi, Yussuf, 62
Kashi, Zilpa, 109
Kashi-Malak, Rabbi Eliyahu (Mola Elias), 46, 47, 51
Kashi-Nejad Family, 46, 47
Kashi-Nejad, Khanom Kuchak, 47
Kashi-Nejad, Shokrolah, 46, 47
Khanom, Maryam, 16
Chaqlai, Menashe, 95
Chaqlai, Yehuda, 7, 51
Khomeini, Ayatollah, 70, 79
Khurdi, Nassrolah, 33
Kil, Yehuda, 7
Kleinbaum, Yitzhaq, 49, 50, 53, 55, 97
Kohanim, Aharon, 107
Kohanan, Doron, 69
Kohanim, David, 67, 68
Kohanim, Haroun, 73, 81, 82
Kohanim, Sara, 69
Kohanpur, Zehava, 69
Kohan-Sedegh, Agha, 64
Kohen Family, 12
Kohen, David, 96
Kohen, Hananiya Itzhaqoff, 42
Kohen, Mola Elias, 56
Kohen, Yeuda [Yehuda], 37
Kohen, Sara Zilpa, 8, 100
Kokhai Family, 33, 34
Kokhai, David, 34, 35
Kokhai, Mehdi, 35
Kokhai, Menashe, 33, 34
Kokhai, Nissan, 35
Kokhai, Rachamim, 34

Kokhai, Yaaqov, 33, 34, 35
Kokhai, Yafa, 35
Kokhai, Zilpa, 35
Kordevani (Aminoff), Haji Ebrahim, 45
Kordevani, Azizolah, 73
Kordevani, David, 82
Kordevani, Rabbi Binyamin (Mola Amin), 5, 26, 32, 57
Kuker, Michael, 93

L

Lari Family, 13
Levi Family, 12
Levi, David, 114
Levi, Eyal Mishael, 116
Levi, Habib, 7
Levi, Itzhaq, 37
Levi, Menashe, 107
Levi, Orna, 115
Levi, Shula, 107
Levi, Yosef, 5
Levian, Abdol-Rahim, 81
Levian, Abdol-Rahman, 81
Levian, Farajolah, 70
Levian, Haji Mehdi, 78
Levian, Lawrence, 81
Levian, Leon, 36
Levian, Mussa, 75
Levian, Nematolah, 68, 69
Levian, Parviz, 78
Levian, Shmuel, 81, 82
Levy Family, 12, 70, 89
Levy Nassrelayoff, Farajolah, 7, 29, 32, 46, 48, 57, 73, 81, 89, 95, 96
Levy, Agh Abdol-Karim, 76
Levy, Agh Babajan, 75
Levy, Agh Mussa, 75
Levy, Anat, 69
Levy, Azaria, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25, 30, 31, 32, 57, 81, 84,
Levy, Bemoni, 12
Levy, Efraim, 88
Levy, Habibolah, 73
Levy, Hanna, 66
Levy, Jack, 64
Levy, Malka, 66
Levy, Shlomo, 68
Levy, Simcha, 12
Levy, Soleiman, 67
Levy, Valli, 64
Levy, Yaaqov, 87
Levy, Yechezqel (Ismail), 87
Levy, Yochanan, 95
Lightman, Sydney, 64
Loloey, Danny, 69
Loloey, David, 67
Loloey, Irit, 69
Loloey, Moshe, 67
Loloey, Osnat, 69
Lotfolah ben Mohammad, 32, 84

M

Madhian, Refael (Yuness), 113
Maher, Baruch Afarin, 78
Mahmud Shah, 18, 19, 20
Majid, Mola Aghajan, 96
Mallul, Uri, 113
Mangi Family, 13
Mashhadi, Yosef, 84
Matatiyahu, Rachel, 80
Matatiyahu, Rahamim, 80
Mehdi, Mina, 66
Mehdi, Rahamim, 62
Mehdi-Tash, Mussa, 67
Meir, Aziz, 42, 44
Melamed, Binyamin, 38
Melamed, Rabbi Siman Tov, 14, 86
Menashe, Yosef, 114
Mirza, Ahmad Ali, 16, 17
Mishael, Israel, 84
Mizrahi, Moshe, 117
Mozaffar al-Din Shah, 27,
Mohammad Shah, 13, 16, 28
Moheban, Ebrahim, 81
Moheban, Freidun, 81
Moheban, Haj Yussuf, 78
Moheban, Nurolah, 73
Mola Aba, 87
Mola Agha Nazzar, 56
Mola Aghajan, 53
Mola Haroun, 5
Mola Hezqi, 99
Mola Khodadad ben Yequtiel, 46
Montefiore, Moses, 22
Moradi, Yehudit, 69
Moradi, Yosef, 32, 44, 97
Mordekhai Family, 12, 39, 63
Mordekhai, Amin (Binyamin), 39
Mordekhai, Mola Shokrolah, 56
Mortezazadeh, Esshagh Hakimian, 81
Mozaffar al-Din Shah, 27

N

Nabavian, Bahram, 81
Nabavian, Hushang, 78
Nabavian, Khalil, 101
Nabavian, Parviz, 78
Nader Shah, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 35
Naghioff Family, 62, 63
Naghioff, Haji Agha, 62
Naghioff, Joy, 64
Naghioff, Marcia, 64
Naghioff, Syd, 64
Nahawandi, Ayatollah, 49, 50
Namdar, Asher, 108
Namdar, David, 69, 109
Namdar, Hushang, 73, 82
Namdar, Moshe, 112
Namdar, Tamar, 109
Namdar, Yafa, 108
Nasser al-Din Shah, 23, 24, 25, 28, 36, 37

Nassimi, Edward, 81, 82
Nassimi, Efraim, 79, 80
Nassimi, Itzhaq, 119
Nassimi, Jack, 73
Nassimi, Mirza-Aghajan, 81
Nassimi, Yosef, 67
Nassimiha, Adina, 69
Nassimiha, Binyamin, 69
Nassimiha, David, 69
Nassimiha, Yafa, 69
Nassrolahian, Mehdi, 73
Nassrolayoff, Mussa, 44
Navaii, Abdol-Rahim, 67
Nehoraii, Loghman, 28
Neimark, Efraim, 20, 23, 26, 30, 32, 35, 37, 57, 84
Nemat Nejad, Gavriel Yaaqobi, 69
Nemat, Abdol-Karim, 33
Nemat, Mola Fatholah, 72
Nemat, Reuven (Rahman), 26
Nemati, Haji Agha, 78
Nematzadeh, Hushang, 81, 82
Netzer, Amnon, 8, 11, 14, 20,
Nissim (Zioni), Faraj, 32, 84
Nissim (Zioni), Reza, 32, 84
Nissim Family, 3, 5, 12, 55
Nissim, Refael, 109
Nissim, Binyamin, 45
Nissim, Chanuka, 32
Nissim, David (Sardar), 33, 67
Nissim, Eliyahu, 34, 90
Nissim, Esther, 30, 55
Nissim, Faraj (Zioni), 5, 32, 84
Nissim, founding father, son of Shmuel, 12
Nissim, Lotfolah (Saghir Nejad), 56
Nissim, Mashiyach (Shai), 113
Nissim, Michael, 58
Nissim, Mordechai, 67
Nissim, Moshe ben Binyamin, 5, 56, 64
Nissim, Nethanel (Javad), 33
Nissim, Nissim ben Efraim, 95
Nissim, Rabbi David (Zvuloni), 33, 85
Nissim, Rabbi Levi (Mola Abdolah Nassimi), 1, 5, 14, 32, 34, 42, 44, 45, 46, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 63, 67, 72, 75, 86, 87, 93, 97
Nissim, Rabbi Moshe (Mola Mussa), 5, 25, 54, 86
Nissim, Rabbi Yehuda, 5, 20, 21, 25, 38, 44, 55
Nissim, Rachel (Leila), 44
Nissim, Refael, 109
Nissim, Reza, 5, 32, 84
Nissim, Tzipora, 34
Nissim, Yaaqov, 32, 68, 107
Nissim, Yehuda, 52, 55, 57
Nissim, Yosef, 55, 95
Nissimi, Amir, 67
Nissimi, Binyamin, 107
Nissimi, Daniel, 119
Nissimi, Eliyahu, 43
Nissimi Family, 3, 4, 12, 20
Nissimi, Hananiya, 56
Nissimi, Itzhaq, 67
Nissimi, Michael, 58, 71
Nissimi, Reuven, 4, 77, 107, 119

P

Pahlavi Dynasty, 10, 28, 43
Patai, Refael, 8, 32, 46, 49, 50, 89, 95,
Philosof, Emmanuel, 92
Pinchassoff, Rabbi Shlomo Babajan Kabuli, 90

Q

Qajar Dynasty, 10, 15, 16, 18
Qatzabi, Zvulon, 115
Qatzavian, Avraham, 117
Qatzavian, Itzhaq, 117

R

Rabbi Shlomo ben Mashiyach, 87, 107
Rabin, Rabbi Yehuda HaKohen, 6
Rabin, Rabbi Yitzhaq HaKohen, 6
Rafi'i, Khodabakhsh, 48
Rafi'i, Mussa, 47
Rafi'i, Rafi, 47
Rahamin, Yaghubzadeh, 46
Rahimoff, Haji, 74
Rahman, Abdul, 5
Rahman, Abdur, 5
Rahmanan, Mansour, 78, 81
Rahmani (Ebrahimoff) Family, 20, 89
Rahmani Family, 12
Rahmani, Hassan, 33
Rahmani, Mussa, 74
Rahmanian, Esshagh, 74
Rahmanian, Gholam-Ali, 74
Rajabzadeh, Mussa, 73
Rajabzadeh, Yussuf, 74
Ramazan Family, 36
Refael, Itzhaq, 99, 100
Relevy, Jean, 110
Reuveni, Misha, 107
Reza Shah, 41, 42, 53, 71
Mohammad Reza Shah, 49, 70
Rishon LeTzion, 5, 32, 84
Rokni, Esshagh, 101
Rubeni, Esshagh, 67
Rubeni, Yussuf, 73

S

Sabzevari, Azizolah, 47
Safavid Dynasty, 11, 27
Sagha, Rabbi Eliyahu, 44
Saghir, Abdol-Rahim, 5
Saghir, Abdol-Rahman, 5
Saghir, Esshagh, 5
Saghir, Rahman, 5, 30
Samad, Mehdi, 62, 63, 65
Sasson, Avraham, 112
Sedomi, Avraham, 30
Sedomi, David, 30
Sha'er, David, 107
Shaban, Mashiyach, 108
Shaban, Nassrolah, 74

Shaban, Rivqa, 108
Shaer, Avraham, 46
Shaer, H. Barnet, 64
Shah Rokh, 12, 13
Shalti, David, 110, 111
Shalti, Rivqa, 111
Shamsi Family, 13
Sharon, Esther, 107
Shilon, Ayelet, 110
Shilon, Gal, 109
Shilon, Sara Tiferet, 110
Shmueli, Naor, 117
Shmueloff, Binyamin Kashi, 112
Shofet, Rabbi Yedidiya, 72
Shraga, Rabbi Or, 14, 83
Siance, David, 107
Simani, Azizolah, 28
Siman-Tov, Zvulon, 37
Soleimani, Miriam, 66
Soleimanoff, Rachamim, 114
Somech, 75
Spector, Daniel Earl, 7
Stoddard, Charles, 21
Sufi, Yoram, 107, 115

T

Tashakori, Reuven, 107
Tolu, Ebrahim Hariri, 70
Tolu, Mehdi Hariri, 73

W

Weizmann, Chaim, 99
Wolff, Joseph, 17, 20, 22, 30, 33

Y

Yaaqobi, Yaaqov, 107
Yaaqoboff, Gavriel, 68
Yaaqovi (Skoda), Avraham, 111
Yaaqovi, Itzhaq, 111
Yaaqovi, Yaaqov, 113
Yaghubzadeh Family, 78
Yaghutiel, Mola Ebrahim, 72
Yazdi Family, 13, 14, 20
Yazdi, Mola Ebrahim, 72
Yazdi, Yechezqel, 84
Yechezqel, Mola, 44
Yeghutiel, Dr., 52
Yehushua, Ben Zion, 8
Yussefi, Rafi, 101

Z

Zabihi, Zabiholah, 62
Zabihi, Zion, 49, 100
Zabiholah, Miriam, 62
Zan-Agh Abdol-Rahim, 76
Zar Family, 13, 73
Zar, Abdol-Rahim, 73, 81
Zar, Avraham, 112
Zar, Azizolah, 74
Zar, Gilad, 109
Zar, Jamshid, 81
Zar, Mordechai, 94, 95
Zar, Nasser, 73
Zar, Ora, 107, 111, 114, 115
Zar, Rabbi Yosef (Mola Yussuf), 56, 72, 75
Zar, Sara Berger, 107
Zar, Shmuel, 107
Zioni Family, 5, 12, 67
Zioni, David, 69, 107
Zioni, Faraj (Nissim), 5
Zughali, Ismail, 53
Zvuloni (Nissim), Rabbi David, 85
Zvuloni, Azizolah, 67
Zvuloni, Efraim, 107
Zvuloni, Eliyahu, 8, 30, 90, 111
Zvuloni, Leah, 116
Zvuloni, Nissim (Nurolah), 30, 35, 73, 100, 103
Zvuloni, Simcha, 108
Zvuloni, Yaaqov, 116
Zvuloni, Yosef, 116

Notes:

- This index covers the names that are mentioned in Part A of this book "Times Gone By".
- In many cases the Mashhadis took names that expressed praise of G-d (like Nuri'el and Micha'el in Hebrew). The structure of these names in Persian is xxx.allah, such as Nur'allah and Abd'allah. These names are pronounced Nurollah (Nurolah) and Abdollah (Abdolah). The Mashhadis pronounce them Nurelah and Abdelah. In Part A, the names are written in both styles according to their context.
- Please note also that two or more people with the same name may write their name differently – therefore I apologize to those whose name is written differently, according to the above criteria.

*

Background
Introduction

*

Historical Background
Introduction
Exile in Iran
Persian Empire
Muslim Occupation
Mongolian Destruction
Safavid Period

*

Geographic Bkground
Dispersion of …
Mashhad

*

Cultural Background
Characteristics
Synagogues
Graveyards
Commemorations

*

Neighborhood
Tour
Pictures

* Background *

Introduction

	מבנה Structure	
General	This section deals with background issues necessary for understanding the history of Mashhadi Jewry. It comprises the following chapters: • Historical Background • Geographical Background • Cultural Background	
Historical Background	This chapter deals with the history of Iranian Jewry, starting with the exile of the Israelites until the reign of Nader Shah, which represents the formation of Mashhadi Jewry.	
Geographical Background	This chapter presents: • Maps showing the distribution of the Mashhad community • Maps and aerial photographs of the Jewish neighborhood in Mashhad The maps are accompanied by descriptions and explanations to help illustrate the geographic background.	
Cultural Background	This chapter describes the unique social and cultural characteristics of the community. One of the prominent characteristics is the sense of togetherness, "in life and in death." This feeling is expressed in: • The community's numerous synagogues at all the places to which they dispersed • Cemetery plots intended for deceased community members It is interesting to note that the community's sense of togetherness did not detract from their feeling that all the people of Israel are responsible for one another. This feeling is expressed in the aid and support given to other communities.	[כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה]

Historical Background

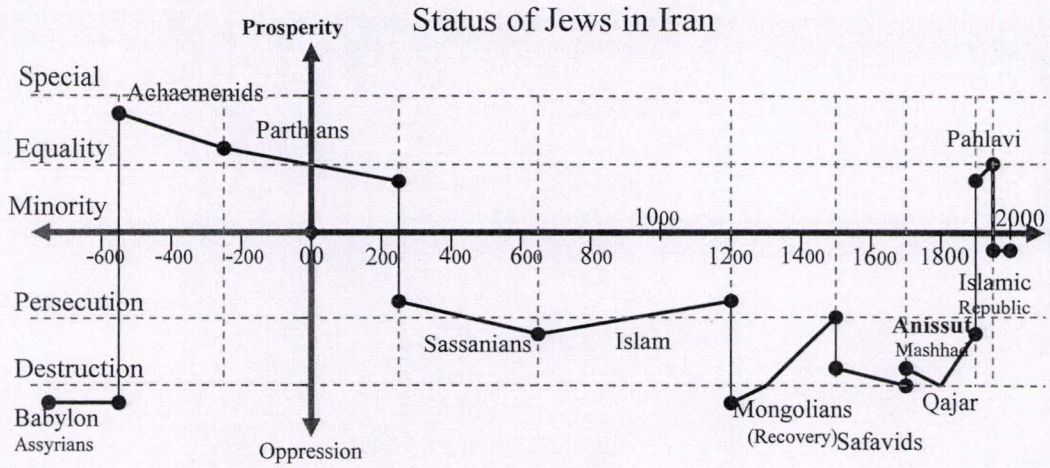
Introduction

Topics

For a better understanding of the history of Iranian Jewry, including the Mashhadi community, the following topics will be discussed.

Period	From	To	Description
Status of Jews in Exile in Iran	721 BCE	2000 AD	Prosperity vs. oppression timeline
The Persian Empire	721 BCE	642 AD	Iranian Jewry during the Persian empire
The Muslim Conquest	642 AD	1221 AD	Iranian Jewry during the Islamization of Iran
Destruction by the Mongols	1221 AD	1502 AD	Iranian Jewry during the devastation of the Mongol invasions
The Safavid Dynasty	1502 AD	1736 AD	Disaster for those who survived the Mongolian sword. The waves of violence and attempted forced conversions caused extreme suffering to Iranian Jewry.

Status of the Jews in Exile in Iran

	Exiled Jews in Iran	
Preface	Iran is a huge country with a diverse population that includes a large variety of mentalities and places of origin. Over many years, various ethnic groups settled the country – the largest of which were the Turks, Arabs and Mongols. The Iranian Jews were one of the oldest ethnic groups in the country. From the exile of the kingdom of Israel in 721 BCE, until the Islamic Revolution in 1979 CE, more than 2,700 years elapsed. After the Islamic Revolution, the majority of Iranian Jews, one of the most ancient communities in Iran, had to leave their homeland almost annihilated as a result of countless years of exile and persecution. After 2,700 years, the Jewish population of Iran numbered only a few tens of thousands (less than during the time of Mordechai and Esther), indicating the harshness and tragedy of their sojourn in Iran. Mashhadi Jewry was established near the end of the 2,700 years of exile in Iran. A short scan of the history of Iranian Jewry up to the formation of Mashhadi Jewry in 1746 reveals that the hardships our forefathers suffered in Mashhad were but a continuation of the plight of their forefathers during the long abode of the Jews in Iran. It is nothing short of a miracle that, after 100 years of forced conversion, the Mashhadi community has not vanished and has preserved its Judaism.	
		
Status of the Jews	The above graph illustrates the state of the Jewish communities from the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles to the present Iranian regime. The timeline is divided into units of 200 years, and the dynastic periods are presented between two dashed lines. The status of the Jews over this timeline is categorized as: • Special – The Jews received special and extraordinary treatment (e.g., the building of the Temple) • Equality – The Jews received the same rights as the rest of the population • Minority – The Jews were treated as a minority and second-class citizens • Persecution – The Jews suffered from government restrictions and limitations	

- Destruction – The Jews suffered from forced conversions and massacres

The curve presents the status of the Jewish communities under Iranian rulers (as described below). It demonstrates the suffering, persecution, and destruction that the Jews endured from the Sassanian period in the Third Century until today - except for a short period during the Pahlavi dynasty in the Twentieth Century. (It is important to remember, however, that the status of Jews under the Greeks, Romans and other European rulers was not particularly better (e.g., the Spanish Inquisition) than that in Iran.)

As illustrated by the curve, our forefathers experienced a wide range of treatment under the various regimes in Iran. From the nadir of forced conversions and living underground, in fear, they were elevated to prosperity under the Pahlavi dynasty – and then suddenly cast into a life of wandering, with the rise of the Islamic regime.

The Persian Empire

	The Persian Empire	- 550-642
Historical Background	First, the Medes ruled in northern Iran. They were conquered by the Assyrians and were exiled to Assyria (even before the exile of Israel). The Babylonians ruled after the fall of the Assyrians. The destruction of Babylon by the Persians marked the beginning of the Persian empire. • Achaemenids – Originated in central-south Iran (Persia). The founder of the dynasty, Cyrus, became the successor to the Medes, conquered Babylon and many other countries, and established the Persian Empire as a world power. The Achaemenids ruled from 550 to 220 BCE. This period was characterized by numerous wars against the Greeks, until the Achaemenids fell to Alexander the Great. • Parthians (Arsacids) – Originated in Parthia, in north-eastern Iran. The founder of the dynasty was Arsaces the First, who lifted the yoke of the Greek-Seleucid Empire from his kingdom in 250 BCE. The Parthians ruled until 226. Their rule was characterized by numerous wars, at first against the Seleucid Empire, and then against the Romans. • Sassanians – Originated in south-central Iran (Persia). The Sassanian dynasty was founded by Ardashir, who vanquished the Arsacids in 226. The Sassanian rule was characterized by numerous wars against the Romans, which greatly weakened the Sassanians. In 642 they were defeated by the Muslims. Thus ended the Persian Empire and Persia ceased to be a world power.	[Habib Levy] -550 - -220 -230 - +226 226 - 642
Iranian Jewry under the Achaemenids	With the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, the Jews, along with the other nations, were freed from Babylonian enslavement. Led by Ezra and Nehemiah, and encouraged by the authorities in Persia, some of the Jews returned to Judea and built the Temple. This was the beginning of the Second Temple period in Eretz Israel. Simultaneously, the large Jewish population remaining in Babylon prospered under Achaemenid rule and spread all over Iran. Conclusion: Religious freedom and a warm relationship between the authorities and the Jews prevailed during this period.	[Habib Levy]
Iranian Jewry under the Parthians	The various peoples who lived under the Parthians, among them the Jews, enjoyed great religious freedom. The Jews had religious autonomy and lived in settlements where the population was primarily Jewish. Starting in the First Century BCE, Rome became an enemy both to the Parthians and to Judea. At times of war, this situation sparked a feeling of identity and a desire to help on the part of the Parthian Jews. Here are two examples: • In 40 BCE many Jews fought in the Parthian army against Herod, the ruler of Judea on behalf of Rome, and defeated him. Herod escaped to Rome and Antigonus the Hasmonean seized power and, for a short time, was ruler of Judea. • Hasinai, a Jew from Babylon, was appointed by the Parthian king as the governor of Babylon (19-34 AD). In the following years, Parthian foreign policy tended toward subservience to	[Habib Levy]

	Rome. After suppressing the revolt in Judea, and the destruction of the Second Temple (70), the Parthian king sent Titus, the destroyer of Jerusalem, a golden crown, and congratulated him on his victory. This period witnessed the decline of the Parthians to such an extent that the Romans felt they could invade Parthia, in spite of their mutual peace treaty. The Romans conquered vast parts of Media and Babylon. This victory raised the prestige of Roman supporters in the occupied area, and hurt the Jewish inhabitants. Conclusion: This period was characterized by a relative indifference by the authorities towards religion and faith.	
Iranian Jewry under the Sassanians	As in the time of the Parthians, during the Sassanian period the Jewish population was concentrated mainly in Babylon and enjoyed a large degree of autonomy. They were led by the Rosh-Galuta (Exilarch – Head of the Diaspora). The Rosh-Galuta was responsible for Jewish institutions such as synagogues, yeshivas (colleges) and rabbinical courts (beit-din). He was also responsible to the taxation authorities. In addition to Babylon and central Iran, many Jewish communities settled in northern Iran - from Kurdistan and Azerbaijan through Mazandaran and Damavand (Gilad) to Gorgan and Khorasan. All of these communities were under the jurisdiction of the Rosh-Galuta. The most impressive accomplishment of the Jewish world during the Sassanian dominion was the completion of the Babylonian Talmud (499). The Sassanians accepted Zoroastrianism as their official state religion, thus relegating Jews and other religious communities to minorities of inferior status. Adoption by the Sassanid Empire of Zoroastrianism as their official religion coincided with the acceptance of Christianity by the Roman Empire. During this period, the rivalries and wars between the two powers, Rome and Sassanians, took on religious overtones. Under the Sassanians, the status of the Jews was affected by: • External factors - relationship between the Sassanian Empire and the Roman Empire. • Internal factors - relationship between the government and the religious leadership. External Factors: In Babylon, the large Jewish community with its own institutions and its own leadership lived in a border area between the two empires. It was an area of constant tension. There were times when the border moved eastward to the Tigris River, leaving the Jewish centers open to destruction by the Romans (e.g., the ruin of Naharda by the Romans in 261). At other times the border moved westward to the Euphrates river, providing a modicum of peace and security to the residents of Babylon. The Romans, and their Byzantine successors (Christians), harbored hatred and animosity towards the Jews. When the Sassanian king, in times of war, needed support, many Jews enlisted in the Sassanian army in order to help crush their mutual enemy. In 614, Khosrow Parviz, with 26,000 Jews serving in his army,	[Habib Levy]

conquered Jerusalem from Byzantine hands.

Internal Factors:

Between wars, the Jewish communities often suffered from restrictions that interfered with the practice of the Jewish religion. Due to these rulings, the Rosh-Galuta, Mar-Zutra, rebelled, but he was eventually defeated by the authorities (around 500). Mar-Zutra was imprisoned and killed and the Rosh-Galuta position was eliminated for nearly half of century.

Yazdegerd I (399-420) was a peace-loving king who had a warm relationship with the Jews. He married Shoshana, daughter of Mar-Kahana, the head of the Pumbedita Yeshiva. The founding of the city Shooshtar is attributed to Queen Shoshana (Shooshandokht = daughter of Shooshan). But after a short while, limitations and restrictions against the Jews were renewed. During Yazdegerd II's reign, the Jews were forbidden from observing the Shabbat (450).

During the time of Firuz, religious fanaticism increased, Jewish centers were attacked, and many Jews were killed. In the course of these attacks, half of the Jews of Isfahan were killed, the Jewish center in Sura was destroyed, and synagogues and yeshivas were demolished.

Because of religious persecution, many Jews of Babylon and Central Iran fled to the Arabian Peninsula, and many Jews from north Persia escaped to Afghanistan, India and China.

Conclusion: Discrimination, restriction, persecution, and the massacre of Jews typified this era.

The Muslim Occupation

	The Arab Regime	642-847
Historical Background	Wars and fighting between the Roman Empire and the Persian Empire weakened both powers. At that historical moment, the Muslim Arabs, imbued with fervent religious belief, invaded the area between the two empires and began their campaign of conquest towards Eretz Israel, Syria and Babylon. After several assaults, the Arabs, under the leadership of Omar, succeeded in vanquishing the Sassanian Empire in the battle of Nahavand (642). For about 200 years, Iran became one of the provinces of the Islamic Empire, whose borders extended from India in the east through Iran and Eretz Israel to Africa and Spain in the west. At first their capital moved from Kufa to Damascus, and then to Baghdad, an area inhabited by many Jews. From 642 to 847, they were first ruled by the Rashadin, then the Umayyad Caliphate, and afterwards the Abbasid Caliphate.	[Habib Levy]
Iranian Jewry	With the establishment of Islam, the Jewish communities in the Arabian peninsula were annihilated. When Caliph Omar captured Babylon, he acknowledged Bustanai, the Rosh-Galuta of Babylon. Bustanai married the daughter of the defeated King Yazdegerd III. Later, Caliph Omar II instituted discriminatory policies against minorities - called Shrute'-Omar. According to these policies, all minorities under Islam, among them the Jews, were singled out. Their rights were severely limited and heavy taxes were imposed as "protection money." Some of the restrictions were: • Prohibition against building new places of worship • Prohibition against bearing arms • Prohibition against riding a horse	[Habib Levy]
	The End of the Muslim Occupation	827-1260
Historical Background	During the next 200 years, with the weakening of the Abbasid Caliphate, different provinces in Iran (mainly in the north) rid themselves of the Arab yoke and found new independent rulers in different regions in Iran. This period was characterized by cultural wealth and great poets, such as Firdausi (in the time of the Ghaznavids) and Omar Khayyam (in the time of the Seljuqs), who brought the glorious Persian Literature to their nation and to the world as well. Following are the dynasties that ruled Iran (at some times, simultaneously):	827-1260

Periods	Years	Descriptions
Tahirian	827 - 879	Shiite. Of Arabic origin, they came from Khorasan
Safavian	864 – 1014	Shiite. Of Persian origin, they came from Sistan. They ruled in Sistan, Afghanistan, Khorasan, Gorgan, Tabarestan, Fars, and Khuzestan.

Samanian	900 - 1010	Sunni. Of Persian origin, they came from Bukhara. They ruled in Herat, Balkh, Bukhara and Samarkand.	
Deylaman	937 - 1068	Sunni. Of Persian origin, they were from Dilaman (Dil'man). They ruled in Gilan and Mazandaran.	
Ghaznavian	972 - 1203	Sunni. Of Turkish origin, they came from Ghazni – Afghanistan.	
Seljuqian	1038 - 1157	Sunni. Of Turkish origin, they came from Turkmenistan. They ruled from China to the Mediterranean sea.	
Khwarezmian	1153 - 1260	Sunni, Of Turkish origin, they came from Turkmenistan.	

This period of independence did not last long as waves of Mongols and Tatars invaded Iran.

Iranian Jewry

[Habib Levy]

Since the Ninth Century, different regions, especially Khorasan, became centers of warfare, trying to regain independence for Iran. Their activities were based on a national ideology (deportation of the ruling Arabs) and a religious ideology (rivalry between Sunni and Shiite).

The borders of the Khorasan province were vast and within those borders lived many Jews, under the Jewish leadership of Babylon. Rebellions and wars for freedom often shattered the lives of the people who fell victim to the killing and plundering of the warring parties. While it first seemed that the Jews benefited from the rule of the Shiite rebels (against the Caliphate), it was soon discovered that the Shiites were even more malicious than their predecessors.

The Deylamans were fanatic Shiites who mistreated the Sunni in the same way they mistreated minority groups. They terminated the role of the Nassi (President) among the Jews in Babylon.

The Seljuqs were fanatic Sunnis who also abused minorities, as well as Shiites. Their rule was so harsh that many Shiites left the country. The Jews suffered numerous strict limitations, including:

- Omar's restrictions were ruthlessly enforced.
- Jews were forced to wear a yellow patch.
- Prayers were not allowed to be uttered in raised voices.
- Women were forced to wear shoes from different pairs.

Due to the harshness of these restrictions many Jews again took up their wandering rods and left the Seljuqi Kingdom (among them was Beno-Sahal Shooshtari who went to Egypt and gained a high position under the Fatimid rulers).

The Jewish kingdom of Khazar was situated in the Volga area, adjacent to Khorasan and Khwarezmian. There was commerce between the Khazars and the Jews of Khorasan and Khwarezmian – and inevitably also a Jewish influence. With time, the Khazars grew weak due to Russian attacks and they perished with the

	Mongolian invasion. Benjamin of Tudela visited in Iran during the start of the Khwarezmian rule (1159-1172). He stated that in Nishapur he found the descendants of the Dan, Zvulon, Asher and Naftali tribes – self-ruled.	

The Mongolian and Timurid Destruction

	The Mongolian and Timurid Invasion	1221-1501
Historical Background	Before Iran managed to recover from the Arab conquest, the country was overrun by waves of Mongolian invasions, followed by the Timurids, who left behind them brutal devastation and destruction. Many fell by the sword and Iran suffered great losses in both life and property: • Genghis Khan - invaded northern Iran (1220-1227). • Genghis Khan's grandson, Hülagü Khan - invaded central and southern Iran (1256) and then Baghdad. He was the founder of the Il-Khans. His descendants adopted Islam. Their capital was Tabriz. • Timur - conquered Iran in 1380. Despite the fact that Timur was Muslim, he viciously killed many Muslims. Shah Rukh, his son, reconstructed the damage that his father left behind. He made Herat his capital and strengthened Sunni Islam. The Timurids fell out of power in 1501 to the Shiite Safavids.	[Habib Levy]
Iranian Jewry	Until the Mongolian invasion, Iranian Jewry was under the religious leadership of the Head of Diaspora (Exilarch) in Babylon. The Mongolian and Timurid invasions destroyed the Jewish populace in Iran. Those who were left lost their connection with the religious center in Babylon. During the Fifteenth Century, until the Safavid period, Iranian Jewry, as part of the general population in Iran, went through a process of restoration.	[Netzer2]
Shahin	The greatest Jewish Iranian poet was Shahin. Shahin lived during the Il Khan period. He may have originally been from Shiraz, but his style was similar to that of the Khorasan area. Among his works: • Bereshit Nameh (1333): Book of Genesis. • Mussa Nameh (1327): About 10,000 verses, with themes from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The themes are combined with legends and midrashes (interpretations of biblical stories). • Ezra Nameh: From the time of Cyrus. • Ardashir Nameh: Themes were Megilat Esther and the return to Zion (Shivat Zion).	[Netzer2]

The Safavid Period

	The Safavid Period	1502-1736
The Regime	The Safavids ruled Iran in keeping with the precepts of Shiite Islam. A hierarchy of religious clerks controlled every aspect of public life. Their relationships with non-Muslims were based on their perception of impurity (Nejess).	[Fischel1]
	Shah Ismail I	1502-1524
General	Shah Ismail I was the founder of the Safavid dynasty. In 1499, at the age of 13, Ismail left Gilan, leading thousands of Qizilbashes, on a journey of conquest. He turned Iran into a Shiite state and made Tabriz his capital. In 1514 he suffered a great defeat by the army of Salim I - the Ottoman Sultan. Despite the continuing war against the Sunnis (the Ottomans from the west and the Uzbeks from the northeast), Shah Ismail was strong enough to maintain his territory in its entirety, undivided.	[Britannica]
The Minority	The traveler Tome Pires who visited Iran at that time (1512-1516) reported cases of harassment towards Sunni Arabs, Christians and Jews. The root of this behavior lay in the Shiite perception of the impurity of everyone who is not a Shiite Muslim.	[Fischel1] (Tome Pires)
	Shah Tahmasp	1524-1576
General	The reign of Shah Tahmasp was exemplified by wars against the Ottomans. In these wars he lost many of the regions of his kingdom. The hostility between Iran and the Ottoman Empire was intensified by the differences between the Shiite and the Sunni beliefs. In 1555 Tahmasp signed a peace treaty with the Ottomans; and the Shah spent the rest of his life in isolation in his castle, taking no heed of the affairs of his kingdom.	[Britannica]
The Minority	The English merchant Anthony Jenkinson was sent to Iran by Queen Elizabeth to visit Qazvin, the capital. The Shah expelled him, shouting "you are a heretic." This revealed the Shah's attitude not only to his non-Muslim subjects, but also towards non-Muslim states.	[Fischel1]
	Shah Ismail II	1576-1588
General	Iran continued to grow weaker under the reign of Ismail II. During this period the Turkmen invasions into Iran became more frequent, and they did not encounter significant resistance from the central government.	[Britannica]
The Minority	Shah Ismail II refused to issue new coins imprinted with the name "Allah Muhammad", so that impure hands could not taint them with their touch. This expressed Shah Ismail II's feelings towards foreigners.	[Fischel1]

	Shah Abbas I	1588-1629
General	Among the Safavid rulers, Shah Abbas I was relatively liberal. He led vast reforms to free Iran from the growing influence of the Mujahideens and the molas (mullahs). Shah Abbas established diplomatic relationships with the empires of Europe, such as Russia, Spain and the Pope, in order to make an alliance with Europe against the Sunni Ottoman Empire. The international status of Iran was at a peak for the first time since the destruction of the Sassanian Empire. Shah Abbas transferred the capital from Qazvin to Isfahan (1597). During this period the traditional path of the Silk Road was moved south: The Old Route: Gilan (the shores of the Caspian Sea) => Haleb => the shores of the Mediterranean Sea The New Route: Gilan (the shores of the Caspian Sea) => Isfahan => the Persian Gulf => England	[Fischel1]
The Minority	Shah Abbas promised to Spanish delegate, A. D. Gobe (1602), in the city of Mashhad, freedom to all merchants of all religions. In addition he promised religious freedom to all missionaries (such as Carmelites, the Society of Jesus, etc).	[Fischel1]
The Jews	During this period, many Jews from adjacent countries immigrated to Iran – for example, the Jews from Georgia. They were led by Elazar, who assisted the Shah in his journey against the governor of Georgia (1613) and in forming the settlement Farah Abad. There is evidence that there were also relations with Eretz Israel (Zefat and other places). It has been estimated that about 8,000-10,000 Jewish families were spread all over Iran (1580), in such places as Hormoz, Isfahan, Ardabil, Bandar Abbas, Borujerd, Gilan, Golpayegan, Damavand, Hamadan, Tehran, Yazd, Kashan, Kerman, Kermanshah, Lar, Nahavand, Sistan, Farah Abad, Qazvin, Qom, Shiraz, Tabriz, etc. Jews worked primarily in crafts, commerce, mediation, jewelry, sewing, crocheting, and painting. They monopolized wine-making (as Muslims are forbidden to drink wine) and made silk (which was highly popular among European merchants). It is said that "there is a group of Jews who make silk in Mazandaran. In Shiraz the Jews make jewelry from gold and silk. They make silken sashes in Lar." The second half of Shah Abbas' reign saw a significant deterioration in the position of the Jews. First, they were forced to follow "Jame' Abassi's restrictions" and later (with the support of converted Jews), entire communities were forced to convert to Islam. These terrible events of forced conversion and persecution were documented lyrically in the Ketab-e Anusi (manuscript of the forced conversion) by Babai ben Lotf of Kashan.	[Fischel1]

Jame' Abassi's Restrictions	Restrictions of Jame' Abassi • A Jew must wear a yellow or red symbol on his chest • A Jew is forbidden to ride a horse or a donkey with both legs on one side • A Jew is forbidden to carry a weapon • A Jew should walk modestly and on the sides of the road • A Jewish woman is forbidden to cover her face (as the Shiite women) • A Jew should not increase his property • A Jew converted to Islam must never go back to Judaism (or he will face the death penalty) • Building or reconstruction of synagogues was forbidden. Praying out loud was forbidden	[Levy3]
First Wave of Restrictions	Ketab-e Anusi "Men handsome as flowers...were seen (mocked) like donkeys without tails" A shochet (a Jewish slaughterer) from Lar was ostracized by his community because he sold meat from animals that had not been slaughtered according to Jewish law. The shochet converted to Islam and changed his name to Abu El Hassan (in short Bolhassan). In revenge, the converted Jew designed an awkward and ridiculous hat for the Jews - and tried to enforce its use. He was active in Lar, Isfahan, Shiraz and Farah Abad. Due to the new hat restrictions, acts of harassment by Muslims towards the Jews worsened. During his visit to Farah Abad, he was killed by the Jews (drowned in the Caspian Sea). Eventually, according to Babai ben Lotf, the Shah dreamed of Serach, daughter of Asher, and consequently decided to cancel this restriction.	Before 1613 [Netzer1]
Second Wave of Restrictions	Ketab-e Anusi Siman Tov, the president of the Isfahan community, was charged with embezzlement of the community's public funds. The Jews filed a complaint with the Shah. Siman Tov converted to Islam and began harassing the Jews. He accused them of witchcraft. The Shah sentenced the community's four rabbis to death, and threatened the rest of the community to convert to Islam or he would release his attack dogs on them. That is how the Isfahan Jews were converted to Islam. The Jews were permitted to return to Judaism in 1621 as a result of the intervention of Baha Al-din, who came from Baalbek in Lebanon, and was one of the greatest Sufis. He reminded the Shah that according to the Prophet it is forbidden to harass Jews. They can be converted to Islam, but not by force.	1620 [Netzer1]
Third Wave of Restrictions	Ketab-e Anusi Due to accusations of witchcraft against Jews of Isfahan, they were again forced to convert to Islam.	1626 [Netzer1]

	Shah Safi	1629-1642
General	During the reign of Shah Safi, the Ottomans invaded Khorasan and Qandahar. They conquered Baghdad and Kurdistan and carried out cruel acts of slaughter in Hamadan. In a peace treaty between Shah Safi and Morad, the Ottoman Sultan, the city of Baghdad was officially transferred to the Ottoman domain.	[Nathan]
The Jews	During the Ottoman invasion of Hamadan the Jews suffered heavy losses in life and property.	[Nathan] [Fischel1]
End to Third Wave of Restrictions	Ketab-e Anusi A Jew from Abarkosh by the name of David was a friend of Shah Safi. The Jews appealed to David to intercede on their behalf, and consequently they were granted permission to return to Judaism.	1633 [Netzer1]
	Shah Abbas II	1642-1667
General	Shah Abbas II, like many of his predecessors, was a cruel and ruthless king.	[Fischel1]
The Jews	Shah Abbas II published an edict forcing all the Jews of Iran to convert to Islam (1656). This brought the Iranian Jewish community to the brink of destruction.* One Shabbat night, the Jews were dragged out of their houses into the hills surrounding the town. They were tortured and forced to convert. The synagogues were shut down and the Jews were led to the mosques, where they were forced to publically proclaim their allegiance to Islam. Later, a mola (mullah) was appointed to teach the new Muslims the Quran and the basics of Islam. They were also obliged to change their names to Muslim names and they were called 'Jadid al-Islam' (the New Muslims). *Note: (according to Chronicles) Even the women's pleas to the Shah's mother were to no avail. At that time there were reportedly 100,000 Jews in Iran. These decrees were considered vicious and tragic, like those of the Spanish Inquisition.	[Fischel1]
Forth Wave of Restriction	Ketab-e Anusi This was the most terrible period. One day the king's dagger was stolen by the gardener. The gems that were on the dagger were sold to two Jews. When the king found out, he forced all the Jews all over his kingdom to convert.	1652-1662 [Netzer1]

In the year 5416 of Creation (1656)	A cruel proclamation was decreed
The Hekhál HaQodesh was torn out	As were the new and renovated doors and the walls
The congregants wept	The women in their homes wailed
In an instant the synagogues were destroyed	So that the synagogue will be removed from the hearts of the Jews
When the people viewed the destruction	They could not sever the Torah and the Shabbat from their hearts
Their hearts mourned	For the study of Torah and Tafsir

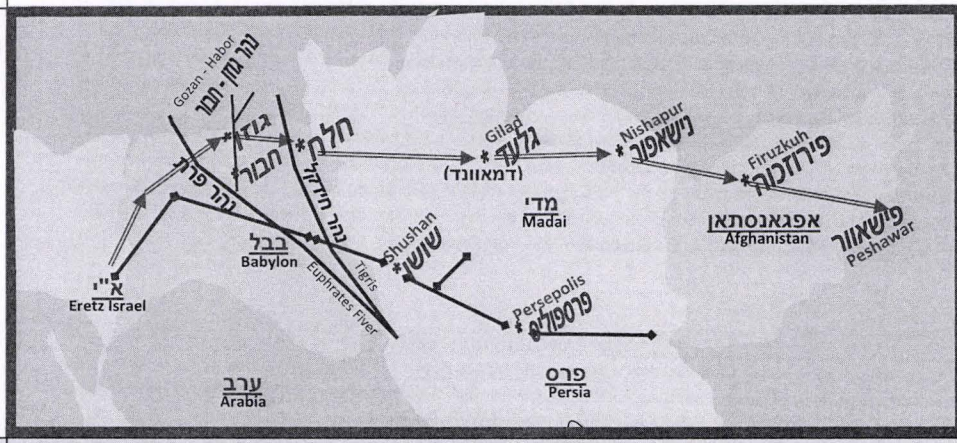
1656 התי"ו

[Hekhál HaQodesh: Ornamental closet containing Torah scrolls]

	The author describes the history of the forced conversion of the Jews of Isfahan, Kashan, Natanz, Shiraz, Hamadan, Qom, Khunsar, Golpayegan and Farah Abad. Not all the cities where the Jews were forced to convert were mentioned by Ben Lotf. The Armenian priest Arakel of Tabriz mentioned Tabriz, Fumanat and Astarabad. Ben Lotf's words were verified by other sources such as the descriptions of Arakel and the Belgian priest, Brother Dionysus (resident of Jolfa near Isfahan). The priest describes: "I cannot describe the whole picture ...the King of Persia raised his mask and exposed the venom in his heart. He commanded all the Jews in his country to convert to Islam, and there are 100,000 Jews." Later, Dionysus reported on the conversion of Armenians, Christians and other minorities.	
Release from Forced Conversion	Despite the Inquisition-like measures, most of the Jews secretly held onto their faith by living double lives. It wasn't long before the authorities realized that the forced conversions were a failure, and some of the molas (mullahs) turned to the king, saying: "Your grandfather, Abbas I, forced Islam on the Jews yet none remained faithful to our faith – you can wash a negro 200 times, but you can't make him white." The Shah allowed the Jews to return to their faith under the following conditions: • Return the immersion (conversion) fees • Pay a head tax • Resume wearing the emblem of the Jews In 1661, Shah Abbas published an order permitting the Jews to return to Judaism.	[Fischel1]
	Shah Soleiman	1667-1694
General	During the reign of Shah Soleiman most of the power was in the hands of the molas (mullahs) and religious leaders. The religious leaders continued to incite the public against the minorities.	[Nathan]
The Jews	During this period, oppression and persecution of the Jews of Iran continued, especially in Isfahan.	[Fischel1]
	Shah Soltan Hossein	1694-1722
General	Also during the reign of Shah Soltan Hossein most of the power was in the hands of the molas (mullahs) and religious leaders. The religious leaders continued to stir up hated against minorities.	[Nathan]
The Jews	During this period also, oppression and persecution of the Jews continued, especially in Isfahan. Shah Soltan Hossein commanded: "People of all races under my reign are compelled to embrace Islam."	[Fischel1]

	Shah Tahmasb	1722-1736
General	Insecurity on the borders of the kingdom and instability within the state typify the reign of Shah Tahmasb. Afghans and Ottomans invaded Iran and looted entire provinces. Tahmasb appealed to Peter the Great for help, but rather than supporting the Shah, the Russians took Gilan. Nader joined Shah Tahmasb's forces and was appointed Chief of the Army. In 1729 Nader succeeded in vanquishing and expelling the Afghan invaders.	[Nathan]
The Jews	During this era, oppression and persecution of the Jews of Iran continued, especially in Kashan.	[Fischel1]

Geographic Background

	The Wanderings of the Israelites The route taken by the Mashhadi Jews as they traveled from Qazvin and its surroundings to India and Bukhara merges with the path taken by the Israelites on their wanderings from Assyria to Media and eastwards.	
Map of the Wanderings of the Israelites		
	The Exile of Israel	
Exile of Israel the First Stage	Pekah, King of Israel, along with Rezin, King of Aram, joined forces against Assyria. Tiglath-Pileser (known as Pul) of Assyria rose against Israel, with the aid of Hosea (in 733 BCE). The Assyrian kingdom annexed Israel and appointed Hosea as king on their behalf. 1 Chronicles 5 18 The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skillful in war, were four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war. 19 And they made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur, and Nephish, and Nodab. 20 And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hands, and all that were with them: for they cried to G-d in the battle, and He was entreated by them; because they put their trust in Him. 25 And they transgressed against the G-d of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom G-d destroyed before them. 26 And the G-d of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, King of Assyria, and the spirit of Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.	733 BCE
Exile of Israel the Second Stage	Following the death of Tiglath-Pileser III, Hosea rebelled against Shalmaneser V, Tiglath-Pileser's son and heir. Shalmaneser V rose against the Kingdom of Israel (724 BCE), but the inhabitants of Samaria bravely defended the land for three years. Samaria was conquered by the Assyrians and its inhabitants were taken prisoners by Sargon, the heir of Shalmaneser (722 BCE). 2 Kings 17 6 In the ninth year of Hosea, the King of Assyria [Shalmaneser V] took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 2 Kings 18 9 And it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hosea, son of Elah King of Israel that Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, came up against Samaria, and besieged it. 10 And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hosea, King of Israel, Samaria was taken. 11 And the King of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.	733 BCE through 722 BCE

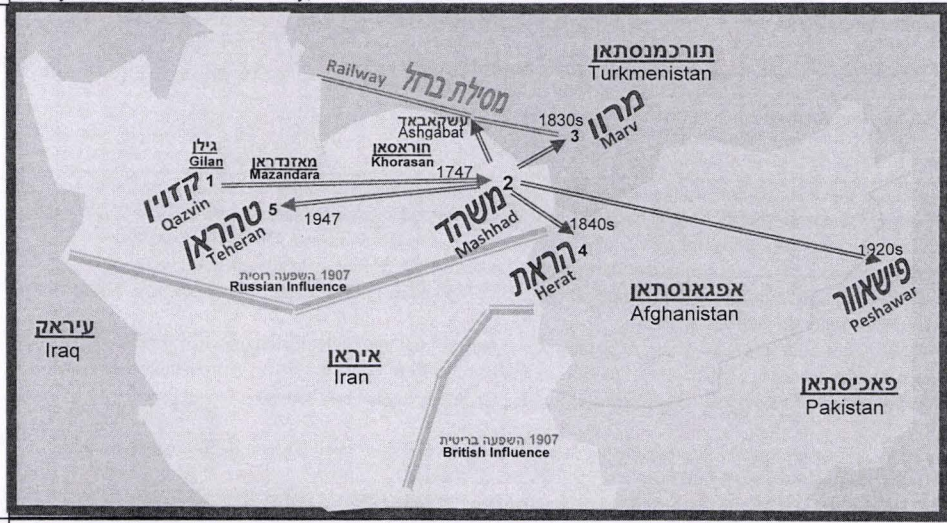
Identifying the Sites of the Exile	As early as 744 BCE, Tiglath-Pileser conquered the cities of the Medes, and their inhabitants were exiled to Assyria (to the district of Halah) as part of the Assyrian Empire's policy. In the years 733 BCE and 722 BCE, in two surges, captives from the Kingdom of Israel were exiled to the Habor and Gozan districts east of the Euphrates river, to the Halah district east of the Tigris River, and to the cities of Media to the north of the plateau of Iran (which had been previously evacuated of its Median inhabitants). The following identifies these sites: • Media – to the north of Persia (the Hamadan and northward) • Halah – the name of a district and a city north of Nineveh (near the city of Mosul) • Habor – the largest tributary of the Euphrates and also the name of a region on the banks of the river • Gozan – an Aramaic kingdom in biblical times, by the Khabur (Habor) river. The kingdom was conquered by Assyria. It is identified as Tell Halaf (where excavated documents were discovered, dating from the end of the period of Solomon's temple, containing the names of important Israelite officials) Note: There is debate regarding the locations of Khabur, Gozan and Halah, which some identify as being located in the Kingdom of Khazaria, on the banks of the Volga river, while others identify as being located in eastern Afghanistan. It should be noted that all the versions agree that the path of the exiled Israelites passed through the northeastern Tigris to the area of Orumiyeh Lake, and from there eastward in the direction of greater Khorasan and Afghanistan (and northward in the direction of the Volga river).	744 BCE [Habib Levy] 722 BCE [Jewish Enc] [Daat Miqra]
	The Diaspora of Israel	
Eastward Path of the Exile of Israel	Throughout history we have found evidence of population concentrations that originated from the exile of Israel. The locations of these places present us a path that leads us eastwards from the Assyrian region to present-day Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. Below is a sampling of several of these places.	
From Assyria to Gilan	According to Benjamin of Tudela, about 25,000 Israelites lived in Amadiya (in Assyria, north of Mosul). This was the beginning of Media in Iran. More than 100 Jewish communities were located in the mountains between Amadiya and Gilan. These Jews were the descendants of the first exile of Shalmaneser. Their language was the language of Targum, a variety of Aramaic dialects. David Alroy of Amadiya studied with Hisdai, the Exilarch ("head of the exile" in Babylon), and with the head of the Babylonian yeshiva, Yosef Gaon. He was well versed in Judaism, Halacha and Talmud, and was also very knowledgeable in general matters.	1170 [Benjamin of Tudela]
Damavand	According to Habib Levy, Damavand Jews called the place Gilad. These Jews identified themselves as descendants of Reuven, Gad, and Naftali - taken captive by the Assyrians. Damavand lies north of Tehran – at the foothills of the Alborz mountain range.	~ 1950 [Habib Levy]
Nishapur	According to Benjamin of Tudela, four tribes of Israel - Dan, Zvulon, Asher and Naftali – lived in the mountains of Nishapur. They had been taken captive by Shalmaneser to live in Halah, Habor and Gozan. They lived independently in the mountains - in towns and large villages. They were not controlled by the gentiles, and Rabbi Yosef Amralaca HaLevi was their president. Some of them were learned and well educated. They bravely maintained their Jewishness.	1170 [Benjamin of Tudela]
Firuzkuh	East of Herat is a wild mountainous region called Ghur (Ghuristan). Persian historian Al-Gozani reports on findings of a Jewish settlement in the region during the Harun al-Rashid period (786-803). The Mongols invaded the area in two separate waves. In the first wave (1221), Genghis Khan invaded northern Persia and Khorasan, and left behind him overwhelming destruction and devastation. In the second wave, Hulagu Khan (1256) invaded deep into Iran and completed the destruction and devastation of his predecessor. French and Italian delegations (1946-1960) found about 70 gravestones approximately two kilometers south of Jam (Firuzkuh) in Ghuristan. Inscriptions on the tombstones were Persian Jewish (Hebrew and a bit of Aramaic). Dates on the tombstones were mostly from 1012 to 1215, but a gravestone was found for the year 1249 (and engraved on it: "The Shah David the Elderly - Head of the Community"). From an analysis of the tombstones that were discovered in Firuzkuh and of the waves of the Mongol invasions, it was assumed that the local Jewish community was destroyed by Genghis Khan, recovered a bit for 35 years, but finally became completely extinct at the hands of Hulagu Khan.	1215 [Netzer 2] [Ben Zion Yehoshua]

Peshawar	My grandfather, Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim, being in Peshawar (India, in the thirties), met with some of the Pashtun (Pathan) tribes who identify themselves with the descendants of the exiles of Israel. These tribes live in Afghanistan and in Pakistan and are very numerous. It is important to note that in addition to the Pashtun, other tribes living in Pakistan also consider themselves descendants of Israel - despite the fact that they are now believing Muslims. In the official history of the Royal Afghani Family (written by Amir Abd-al-Rahman), it is explicitly stated that the Afghans are the descendants of the children of Israel and their names are derived from the name of the great-grandson of King Saul (Afghana ben Assaf ben Barchia ben Shaul ben Kish, King of Israel).	[RN] [Ben Zion Yehoshua]

	Judean Exile	
Exile of Judah	In 587 BCE, the Kingdom of Judea fell at the hands of the Babylonians. The Chaldean occupation brought death and destruction to Judea, to the capital Jerusalem, and to the First Temple located there. The Jews were taken to Babylon, and Judea became a wasteland: **2 Chronicles, 36** 11 Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 12 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God... 17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man... 20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia.	587 BCE
	Judean Diaspora	
	Contrary to the policies of the Assyrians who used to move populations from one place to another, the Babylonians did not resettle new populations in Judea. As a result, Judea became a wilderness, so when the Jews returned during the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, the land was uninhabited, unlike the land of Samaria, and indeed the Cutheans (Samaritans), the people who were brought from Babylon to Samaria by the Assyrians, were a threat to the Jews returning to Zion. Not all Jews returned to Zion. Some remained in Babylon and some moved into various areas of the Kingdom of Persia. In the Book of Esther we see the presence of an impressive Jewish community in Shushan the capital – which indicates that there was Jewish immigration from Babylon to the capital city of Persia. Habib Levy brings evidence of the antiquity of the community of Esfahan. According to this evidence, with the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, a number of Jewish families moved to the center of Persia. These Jews carried with them the soil of Jerusalem. When they arrived in Esfahan, they found similarities between the soil of Esfahan and that of Jerusalem, and so they decided to settle there. The place was first named Guy (valley), then Judea, and finally Esfahan. The name Esfahan was derived from the Hebrew root "hidden" and means a hidden place and safety. According to Benjamin of Tudelo and various Muslim sources, different places in the Persian Gulf area (such as Bahrain, Oman, Siraf, Kish, etc.) were centers of Jewish activity until the twelfth century.	[Ezra & Nehemiah] (-587) [Book of Esther (Megillah)] [Habib Levy] [Netzer2]
	Summary	
Jews of Persia	Over time, the descendants of the exile of Israel scattered to the east to the area of Media (a mountainous region of northern Iran) and the descendants of the exiles of Judah wandered to the east in central and southern Iran (the center of government of the Persian Empire). These two paths were not isolated from each other, and over a period of time they formed relationships, and they mixed and mingled – evidenced by the reports of Benjamin of Tudela who indicated that the communities living in the area of Assyria, Gilan and Nishapur were organized communities wherein lived learned people under the leadership of the Babylonian sages. An ancient Jewish settlement, destroyed by the Mongol invasion, was discovered in Firuzkuh. A sequence of gravestones discovered until the invasion bears silent witness to the devastation of the communities of Israel in these areas. Before the Mongol invasion, Persian Jewry was spiritually presided over by the Exilarch ("head of the exile") in Babylon. The Mongol attacks brought about the destruction of the Persian population, the extermination of the Jews within that population, and their detachment from the spiritual center in Babylon.	
Mashhad Judaism	Eventually, Jewish communities, like the other peoples of Iran, recovered from the devastation brought by the Mongols - and we once again witnessed the presence of Jewish communities in the northern areas of Persia, such as Qazvin and Dilaman. Here begins the history of the Jews of Mashhad who, at that time were transferred from these areas to Mashhad, at the order of Nader Shah (1747). The path of the wanderings of Mashhadi Jewry from Qazvin and surrounding areas to India and Bukhara coincides with the path of the wanderings of the children of Israel from Assyria to Media and eastward – the landscapes to which the exiles of Israel were sent were the same landscapes that the Jews of Mashhad experienced when living in the area.	1740s

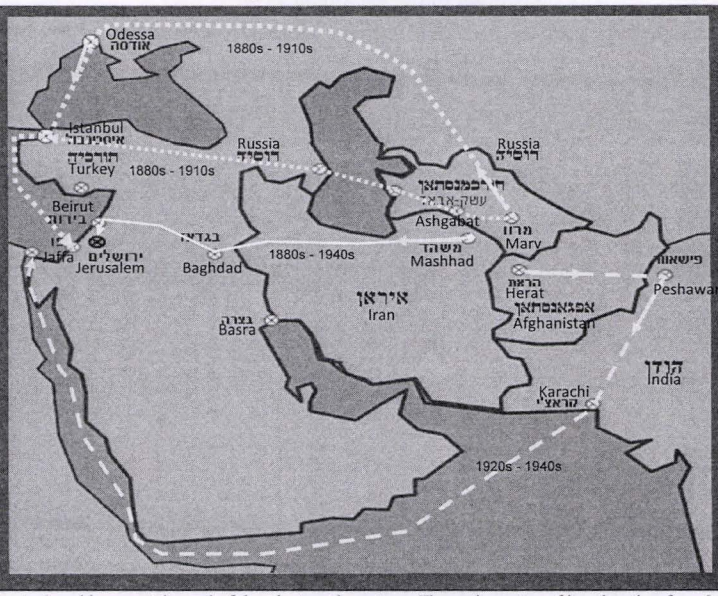
The Mashhadi Jewish Community and their Settlements

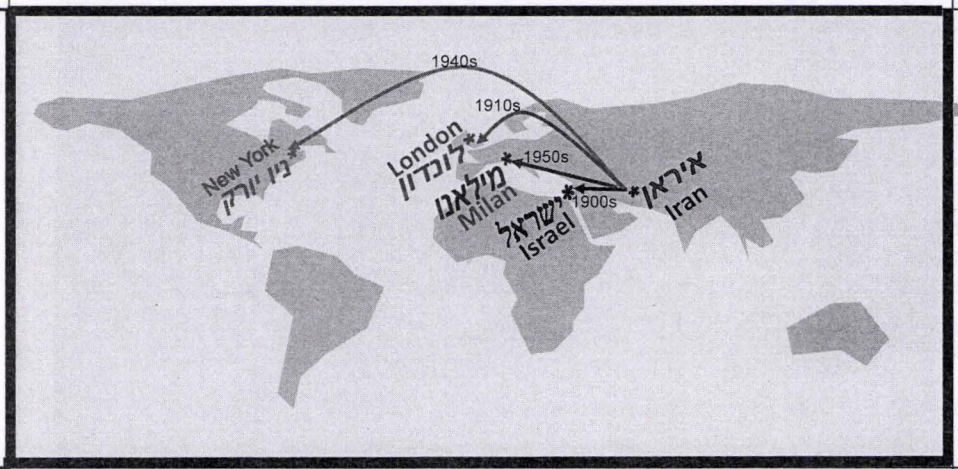
The establishment of the Mashhadi Jewish community was accompanied by the emergence of trading colonies, mainly in Herat, Peshawar, Bombay, Sarakhs and Marv.



Qazvin (1)	The city of Qazvin is located to the south of the Alborz Mountains. It was founded by the Sassanid King, Shahpur, in 250 AD. The city flourished during the time of the Muslims (seventh century), and Harun al-Rashid built a wall around it. The city was destroyed by Genghis Khan. Shah Tahmasb Safavid renovated the city and made it the capital (1524-1576). Nader Shah was crowned in Qazvin after the conquest of India (1739), prior to his return to Mashhad, his capital.	[Britannica]
	In 1747, at the behest of Nader Shah, 40 Jewish families were moved from Qazvin (and its surroundings) to Mashhad, to safeguard the king's treasures. These families were: Kohen, Levi, Aharoni, Aghalar, Betzalel, Garji, Dilmani, Hakimi, Kali, Mordechai, Nissim, Rahmani.	[Dilmanian]
	Among them was **Nissim** ben Shmuel – founder (patriarch) of the **Nissimi** families.	[Beit Saba]
Mashhad (2)	Mashhad was established in the region of the ancient city of Tus. It is located in the valley of the Kashaf River in a fertile region at an altitude of 985 meters. It serves as an important center of religion, politics, and commerce (wool and carpets). Its religious importance derives from the grave of Emam Reza, the Shiites' eighth imam (818). In the year 1220, the city was destroyed by the Mongols. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the city was ransacked by Turkmen and Uzbeks. It was restored by Shah Abbas I. Nader Shah made it the capital (1736-1747). After the death of Nader Shah the city became the capital of a small state ruled by his grandson until the rise of the Qajars.	[Britannica]
	Nader Shah was assassinated before all the Jewish families had arrived from Qazvin to Mashhad (1747). During the next years new families joined the fledgling community from other cities of Persia: Bugheri, Zar, Hezghia, Yazdi, Kashani, Mangi, Lari and Shamsi. In 1839 the Jews of Mashhad were forced to convert to Islam. The entire Jewish community went underground for 100 years.	[Dilmanian]
	• **Rabbi Yehuda Nissim** describes the events (quoted by Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji). • **Rabbi Moshe Nissim** lived during the middle of the underground period. He died in Jerusalem. • **Reuven ben Moshe** (Saghir) lived during the middle of the period of forced conversion. Due to his ties with the British Consulate, he obtained British citizenship. • **Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda** lived at the end of the underground period, until he departed Mashhad after the events of 1946.	[Beit Saba]
Marv (3)	Marv is an ancient city located in Central Asia. It served as the seat of the Achaemenid Empire. Under the Arabs in the seventh century the city was rebuilt as the capital of Khorasan and served as a base for Muslim expansion into Central Asia and China (seventh century). Marv attained the zenith of its glory during the time of the Seljugh Sultan Sanjar (reigned 1118 to 1157). The city was destroyed by the Mongols in 1221. It was rebuilt during the fifteenth century. Marv had been under Tekke Turkmen rule when it was occupied by the Russians in 1884.	[Britannica]

Herat (4)	Herat lies to the south of the Sefīd Kūh mountain range along the Harīrūd River at an elevation of 922 meters in a fertile agricultural area. It functioned as an important hub during the Arab period (660). The city was destroyed by the Mongols. Herat's greatest era was during the Timurid rule (conquered in 1393) when it became a center of science and culture. During the war between Iran and Afghanistan, rule of the city alternated between the two regimes until it finally became part of Afghanistan (1863). Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji, born in Herat, in his essay, Qorot Zemanim, describes the: • Catastrophe of the forced conversion as told by Rabbi Yehuda Nissim in 1839 • Chronicles of the prisoners of Herat (1856)	[Britannica] [Beit Saba]
Tehran (5)	Tehran is positioned at the southern foothills of the Alborz mountain range, a distance of 100 km from the Caspian Sea. It is located north of the ancient city of Ray which was destroyed by the Mongols in 1220. Alexander the Great made camp in Ray while he was pursuing Darius III in the year 330 BCE. The settlement of Tehran was a suburb of Ray during the fourth century. After the fall of Ray its inhabitants fled to Tehran. Tehran was conquered by Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar in 1785 and in 1788 it became the capital city. The city flourished under the rule of Reza Shah. In 1943 the representatives of the Allies, the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union, met in Tehran and promised the independence of Iran. Under the rule of Muhammad Reza Shah, the city of Tehran underwent an accelerated process of modernization and expansion. Its population numbers six million. In the 1950s Mashhadi Jewry was moved to Tehran following the events of 1946. During the Islamic revolution (1979), the Mashhadi Jews left Iran for the United States and Israel. Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda, the rabbi of the Mashhadi community, died in 1959.	[Britannica] [Beit Saba]
Additional Settlements	Additional settlements of Mashhadi Jews were: • Iran – Sabzevar, Kalat, Shiraz, Kerman. Existed until the 1940s. • Turkmenistan – Ashgabat and Sarakhs. Existed until the 1920s. • India – Peshawar and Bombay (presently Mumbai). Existed until the 1950s.	

	Immigration Routes to Eretz Israel	
Map of Routes		
Routes of Immigration to Eretz Israel	Immigration to Israel began at the end of the nineteenth century. The main routes of immigration from Mashhad to Eretz Israel: • **Northern** route: Used at the end of the Russian Tsarist regime and the Turkish Ottoman era. • **Central** route: The traditional route used for immigration to Eretz Israel until the establishment of the State of Israel. At first the travelers went by convoys of caravans, and later by trains and buses. • **Southern** route: A route mostly within the confines of the British Empire, which was therefore more secure and relatively more reliable.	[Yehoshua]
Northern Route	The Northern Route traversed Turkmenistan to Odessa and through Turkey, then by sea to Jafa Port. There was an alternate route – it went from the city of Marv in Turkmenistan to the Caspian Sea, and then by sea to Baku in Armenia, next to Ottoman Turkey, and from there by sea to Jafa Port.	[Yehoshua] [RN]
Central Route	The Central Route passed through Tehran and Kurdistan to Baghdad, and then through Syria and Lebanon to the Galilee.	[Sources/ Neimark]
Southern Route	The Southern Route passed through Herat and Peshawar to Karachi and from there by sea through the Suez Canal to Jafa Port. An alternate route went from Karachi through the Persian Gulf to Basra, from there to Baghdad and then on to Eretz Israel.	[Beit Saba/ Ben Ami]

	The Dispersion of the Mashhadi Jews	
	The **Dispersion** of the Jews of Mashhad is concentrated in four main centers: Israel, Milan, London and New York.	
Map of the Dispersion of the Jews of Mashhad		
Israel	Immigration to Eretz Israel began at the onset of the nineteenth century. At first the Mashhadis resided in the Bukhari neighborhood of Jerusalem. Today the majority of them live in the region of Gush Dan. It is estimated that over 60% of the Mashhadi Jews live today in Israel (approximately 10,000-14,000). Socially, compared with the other Mashhadi emigrants who have settled in other countries, the Mashhadi community in Israel identifies strongly with the local culture. Some of the factors are: • They are widely spread out throughout Israel (using not only Mashhadi synagogues) • There is an open and positive atmosphere towards integration into the local society and culture • Israeli Mashhadis attend public schools and serve in the military service The contribution of the Mashhadi community in Israel is diverse and commendable. The Mashhadi community today is well integrated in the country culturally, socially, economically, and commercially. The sources of income of the community are diverse. We find members in the academia, pedagogy, military, public service, financial institutions, high tech, public and private sectors.	
London	The Mashhadi community of London emerged during the first decade of the twentieth century. This is a wealthy community whose main source of income is from commerce. The community is well organized and their charity and concern for their brethren across the sea is noteworthy. Many of their children served in the British military fighting Germany during World War II, and the contribution of this small community to the war effort was respectable. Today the community is centered in the area northwest of London and consists of approximately 1,000 people (depending on the method of counting because there has been a lot of intermarriage with other Jews).	
Milan	The Mashhadi community of Milan emerged during the 1950s and was made up of the immigrants who left Israel and Tehran. The community is well organized, centers around the synagogue, and consists of about 1,000 people. Their source of income is primarily from commerce.	
New York	The Mashhadi community of New York emerged during World War II when several Mashhadi families from London moved to New York in search of new markets to replace those of occupied Europe. The Islamic Revolution completely changed the demographics of the New York community when, in a blink of an eye, the Tehran community, along with all their institutions, moved to New York. This community of immigrants, who had to leave behind most of their property, succeeded in restoring itself in a short time and established enviable social and cultural institutions. At first the immigrants resided in Queens and later many moved to Great Neck, Long Island. In each of these areas, synagogues were founded; they serve as important social and cultural centers. The community consists of approximately 4,000 people. It is a hub for the preservation of Mashhadi traditions, and the main factor for this purpose is the frequent publication of newspapers. These newspapers are distributed throughout the U.S., Europe and Israel and contribute much to strengthening the bonds of the Mashhadis. The New York Mashhadi community's concern, contributions and organizational abilities are worthy of respect and pride.	

Languages	Today the languages spoken by the Mashhadis is diverse. Until fifty years ago the whole community spoke Persian (with second languages such as Hebrew, English and Russian). Today, there are cases in which the language spoken by the parents is not that spoken by their children, and the language spoken by the grandfather and grandmother is not that spoken by their children or their grandchildren. Frequently we come across grandparents who speak Persian, parents who speak Hebrew, and grandchildren some of whom speak Italian and some of whom speak English. The main languages of the Jews of Mashhad are: Young Adults Israel: Hebrew Hebrew, Persian London: English English, Persian Milan: Italian Persian, Hebrew, Italian New York: English Persian, English Since the majority of the Mashhadis today live in Israel and those who live abroad know Hebrew to a certain extent, Hebrew is important for the communication of the Mashhadis throughout the world. On the other hand, since the level of English taught in Israel is very high, English also serves as an important means of communication among the community members. Naturally, the number of Persian speakers is dwindling and with them an important part of the community's culture - with its unique dialect and special Mashhadi words.	

רחוב במשהד - באדיבות ציון אהרוני
Street in Mashhad - Courtesy of Zion Aharoni

Eid-Gah עידגאה
N
Tehran Ave
רח' טהראן
Falakeh Aab
דאלון' כניסא
Dalone' Kanissa
סר-קברסטונק
Sar Qabrestonqk
ביה"ס הדאית
Heidayat school
בית כנסת
Beit Knesset
Rab Levi Nasim
הרב לוי נסים
סמטת תה'-עידגאה
TahEidgah St
SarHelteh St
סמטת סר-חייטה
ArzAqdas school
בי"ס ארץ'אקדס
Rab Menashe Bassal
הרב מנשה בצלאל
Bazar
באזאר
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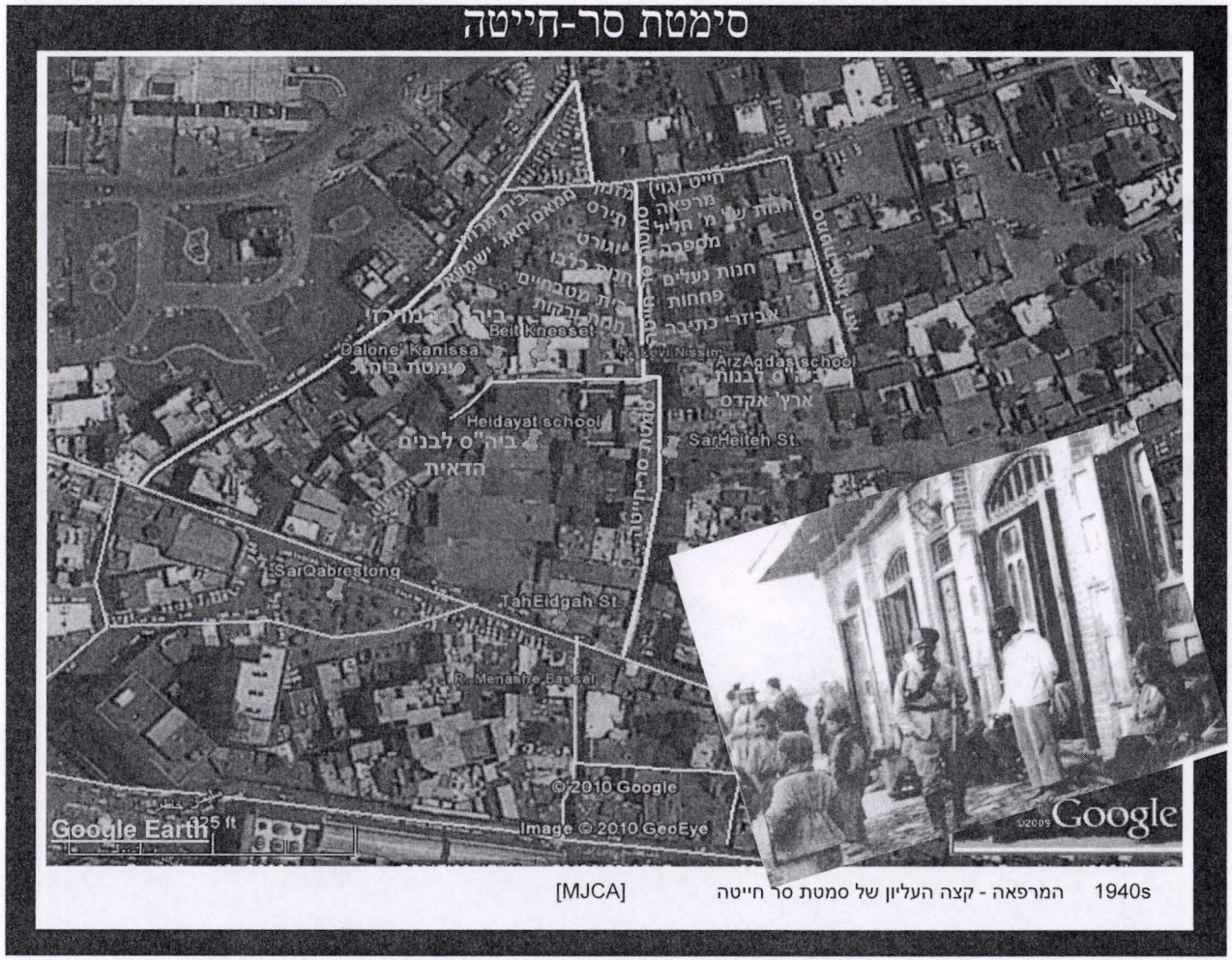
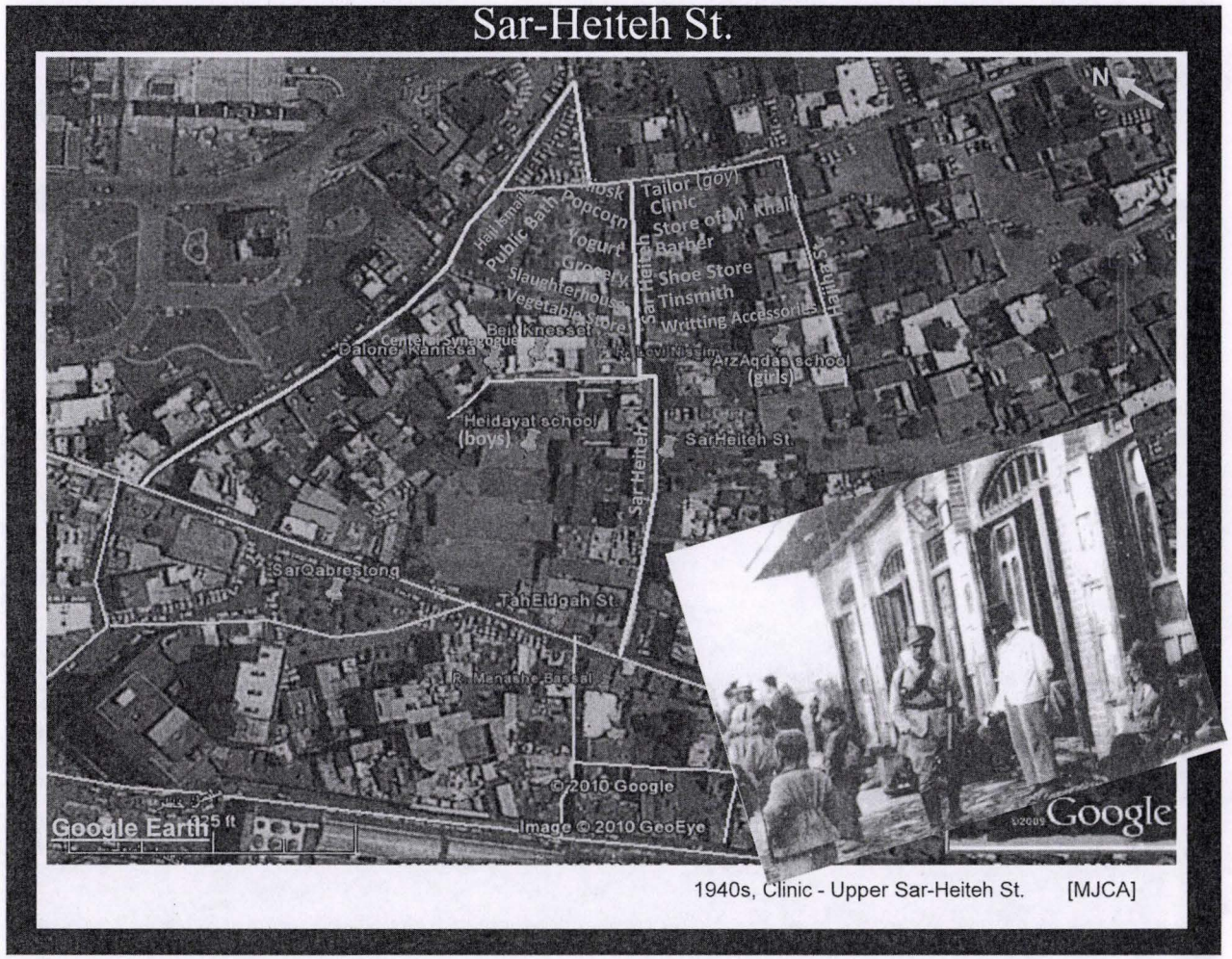
Image © 2010 GeoEye
Google Earth



1940s המרפאה - קצה העליון של סמטת סר חייטה [MJCA]



1940s, Clinic - Upper Sar-Heiteh St. [MJCA]

Eid-Gah Map מפת עידגאה

שכונת "מחנה ישראל" - עיד-גאה (אתר מועד וחג)

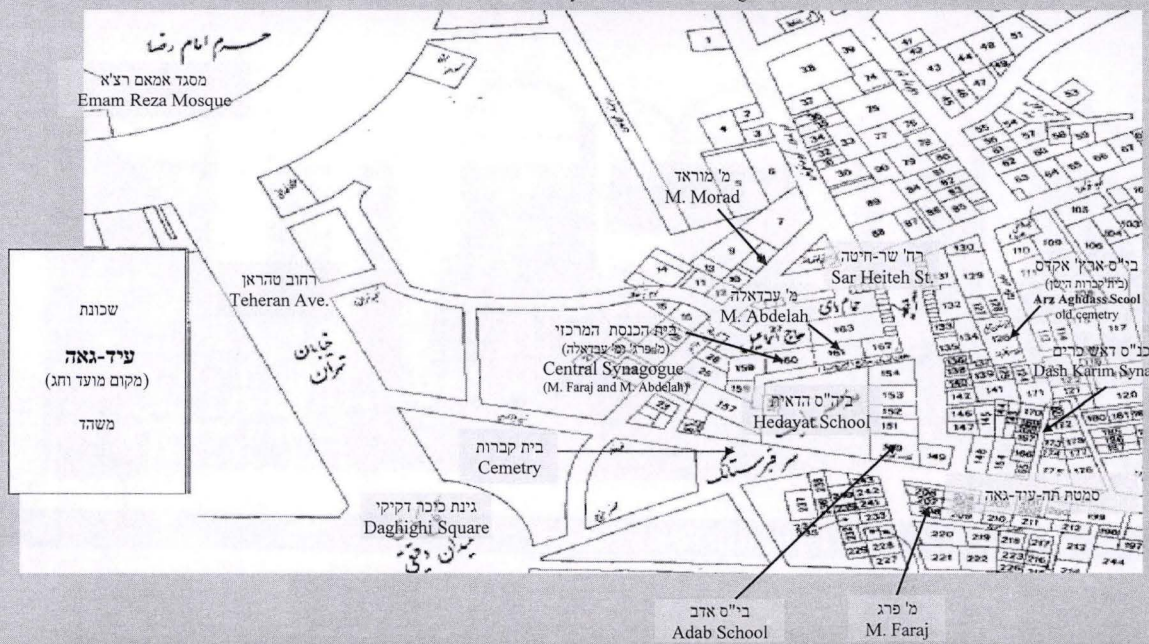
Machane' Israel neighborhood - Eid Gah (celebration place)

(1940 - 1950)

N

הוצא לאור ע"י אירגון הצעירים שערי טובה, ניו יורק.

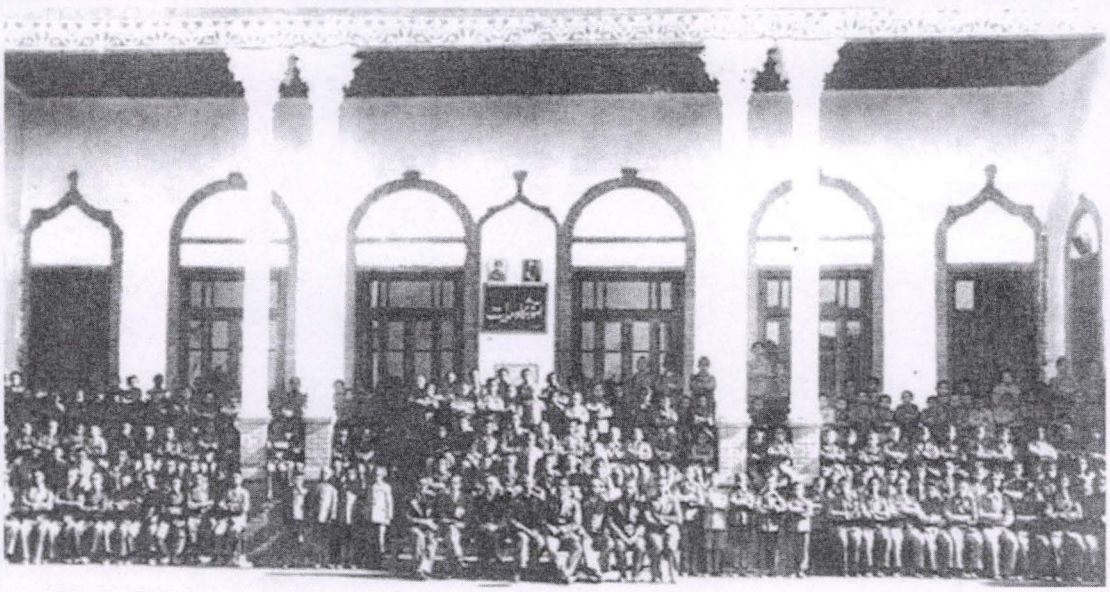
Published by Sha'are Tova Youth Org. - New York



Adab School ביה"ס אדב

Courtesy of Efraim Levi 1920s באדיבות אפרים לוי

Hedayat School ביה"ס הדאית



1930s [MJCA]

Otzar HaTorah School ביה"ס אוצר התורה

1940s [MJCA]

Arze' Aghdas School ביה"ס ארץ אקדס

1930s [MJCA]

Cultural Background

	Characteristics	
General	J. P. Ferrier describes the "Jews of Mashhad" as: • Proud • Helpful • Polite • and Loyal Indeed, all of the above qualities do characterize the Jews of Mashhad. These traits have been proven over time and therefore oblige us and future generations of the community. ... If we are now discussing matters of character and culture, we surely cannot complete the discussion without a few words about Behrouz Dilmanian – one of the most beloved of the community.	[Sources/...]
	Proud People	
He who Hates Gifts	Neimark described the central characteristics of the notables of the community of Mashhad in the image of a rabbi (whose name was not disclosed for fear of danger to the man) who served the community with no recompense: "... Amongst them was found one of a pure mind – who succeeded on his own, in self-study of the Torah ... and all his life he studied G-d's Torah, the entire community loved him very much, and he did not profit from them, he made a meager living from the toil of his own hands. ... I have not seen one who hates gifts such as he in all the cities of Persia." Sources: Gemara (Sotah Page 47): As the recipients of gifts increases, the number of days lessens and the years shorten, and it is written: **"And he who hates gifts will live" (Proverbs)** Maimonides explains: The totally righteous and the men of action will not accept gifts from any man, rather, they trust in G-d, blessed be His Name, and not in philanthropists.	1880s [Sources/ Neimark]
Proud Wives	The economic situation during World War II and its aftermath was difficult and unemployment was widespread. David Aharoni describes his childhood memories of the shop of Agha Abdol-Karim Levy: "... Abdol-Karim Levy, along with his friends, M. Faraj Elishayoff, M. Abdelah Nissim, Agha Mussa Ghassab, Nassrelah Hezghiya and others, distributed supplies (oil, rice, sugar, spices, money, etc.) to the needy ..." Also my father, Michael Nissimi, used to tell the story about my grandfather, Rabbi Levi (M. Abdelah) who, along with community leaders, used to distribute supplies and even money to the needy. There were quite a few women, with small children, whose husbands were in other cities trying to make a living. These women, despite the difficult situation they were in,	1940s [Qehila 6/16] [R.N.]

	refrained from taking money from public funds. In many cases, the community leaders would tell a woman that (supposedly) "The money was sent to her by her husband via somebody" – to eliminate the woman's resistance to accepting help.	
Care for the Poor	Research on the adaptation of Mashhadi Jews in Israel concluded that: "The Mashhadi Community Committee is active; there is constant care for the poor. Begging is prohibited for Mashhadis. There are few appeals to the Israeli Welfare Offices, they are considered an embarrassment to the community - and the committee members are opposed to them." Details of the study: • A sample of 10 Mashhadi families who lived in Jerusalem for 20 years – they came to Eretz Israel in the 1930s • Most families immigrated to Eretz Israel as Muslims in small groups of relatives supposedly intending to travel to England • Seven of the families were imprisoned during the British Mandate (because of their illegal immigration). They settled in Jerusalem in the Bukhari Quarter, living in courtyards as they once lived in Mashhad • None of the families received any aid from the government or any agency - but from relatives or from the Mashhad Community Committee in Jerusalem	[Bi-Monthly Journal for Social Matters / March '57 / Adaptation of Mashhadi Forced Converts]
	Willing to Help	
All Jews are Responsible for Each Other	Assistance to those in need was not restricted to just the Mashhadi community - but was extended to all who passed through their gates. The sense that "All Jews are responsible for each other" is the credo of the Jews of Mashhad. Following are a number of cases that illustrate this: • Providing help to the prisoners of Herat until their release (1857-1859) • Providing assistance to the refugees from Bukhara until their immigration to Eretz Israel (1924-1935) • Providing assistance to the refugees from Herat until they were able to immigrate to Israel (1948-1950) • Supporting the elderly - "Cast me not off in the time of my old age ..."	[Times Gone By/ Underground] [Times Gone By/ The Hopes]
Plunder in Herat	Neimark praises the generosity of the Mashhadis toward the Jews of Herat: They [Mashhadis] are kindhearted, and at any time that Herat experienced booty and plunder, the Mashhadis collected money and clothes and food and sent them to Herat with an appointed person.	[Sources/ Neimark] 1850-1880
Bukhari Refugees	Following are excerpts from a letter of thanks to the Jews of Mashhad (Tehran, 1934) from a group of Bukhari refugees who came to Tehran after spending a year in Mashhad. "We are ... Russian refugees ... We escaped and saved our souls, more than a thousand people, and we came under Persian rule ... to the city of Mashhad ... to the Jews of Mashhad ... For almost a year in the city of Mashhad they carried our burden ... And they extended us courtesies both day and night and in the cold and in the heat ... May God reward their	[Sources/...] 1930s

	goodness, Amen. And I pray to you to read this in all your synagogues ... "	
Herat Refugees	A report from the Aliyah (Immigration) Department states that: "... They arrive every month ... 200 Afghani Jews on their way to Israel. They are welcomed in Persia by the Mashhadi community ... This community houses the immigrants on their journey, and feeds them. From Mashhad the immigrants move on to Tehran in small groups, group after group, and also in Tehran they are supported, until their aliyah (immigration to Israel), by the Mashhadi community living in Tehran ..."	[Times Gone By / Land of Zion] 1950
"Cast me not off in the time of my old age..." Psalms 61, 9	In the community of Mashhad were 267 needy families that were supported by the entire community - discreetly and secretly. The events of 1946 instigated a mass exodus. Many of the Mashhadis immigrated to Israel, among them the disadvantaged of the community. The situation in Israel was difficult not only for the disadvantaged but also for the elderly women whose husbands had died or whose loved ones were abroad. The difficult situation of these elderly ladies touched the hearts of Mrs. Batsheva Gedaliya and some other righteous Mashhadi women in Israel. They conceived the idea of establishing housing for elderly women who could not survive on their own due to lack of funds and because they were separated from their loved ones who were still living abroad. To do this Mrs. Gedaliya traveled to Mashhad and appealed to Mela Abdelah, chief rabbi of the community, about the plight of the elderly in Israel. Mela Abdelah determined that this good deed (mitzvah) is more important than building a synagogue. He asked Mrs. Gedaliya and another lady to join him. For two days, Mela Abdelah, with his cane in his hand and the two ladies following him, visited home after home in the neighborhoods of Eid-Gah and Janat and raised funds; he credited the community with mitzvoth for their contributions - each according to his ability. Even the beneficiaries were required to contribute a small sum in order to be part of this important act.	1950s [Shmuel Dilmanian 2010] [=Wife of Itzhaq Gedaliya] [Mela Abdelah suffered from leg pains and needed a cane] [On this journey, Mrs. Gedaliya was able to bring two Sefer Torahs to Israel]
	Politeness	
	I do not know what Ferrier meant when he described the Mashhadis as 'polite'. But we can certainly say that they are shy, as befits a nation called "shy people who are sons of shy people". "Mashhadis are usually very diligent about showing respect to others, and a noble spirit and noble acts are important to them."	[ביישנים בני ביישנים]
	Loyalty and Honesty	
Entrusted	The emissary from Tveria, Neimark, called Mashhadis loyal of spirit and cites two examples of their integrity: These Jadidis are considered by the local government, the merchants, and the residents, to be honorable and loyal of spirit: • If a resident trader comes [to a shopkeeper] to buy something at night and pays for it, or comes to change one silver Gharan for copper pennies, the shopkeeper will examine and re-examine the Gharan in	1880s (Sources/ Neimark) [Gharan = Penny]

	order to determine if it is counterfeit or not, but if a Jadidi comes with one Gharan in his hand, the merchant will accept the Gharan, even at night, with just one glance. • Three hours after nightfall the police start arresting anyone they find wandering around the city, except for the Jadidis. Also many publicly-owned businesses were entrusted to the honest Jadidis. Perhaps the most striking feature of the Jews of Mashhad is honesty. It was their honesty that made them trusted by the people.	
Business Ethics	Beginning in 1900 the Russian Government attempted to expel the Jews (mainly due to anti-Semitism). In November 1910, the regional governor of Marv sent a request from the Turkmen representatives to allow the Jadidis to remain in the area, claiming that: "These Jews excel in fairness in all their accounts. ... we manage the affairs of our trade with no written guarantees or contracts, but based only on a person's **word**."	1910s [Times Gone By/ Settlements Marv]... [A. Kaganovitch]
Loyalty to Judaism	An emissary of the Jewish Agency, Kleinbaum, describes the Jews of Mashhad as "true" to their religion and their nation: "... Mashhad could be called the Jerusalem of Persia. This community of forced converts was obliged for decades to keep its religion underground, but they remained loyal to Judaism and to the Jewish nation, and they bear a unique character ..."	[Sources/ Pesach 46]
Agha Gholam-Hossein	The following remarkable story of honesty and nobility is told by Behrouz Dilmanian about great-grandfather Nissan ben Reuven, using his old Persian name Agha Gholam-Hossein: A Turkmen merchant came to Mashhad to sell his goods - rugs and pelts. At the conclusion of his business matters, he was informed by his tribe members that, due to disputes from long ago, some of his relatives were murdered in his home town. The merchant decided to entrust his money with someone trustworthy. He searched in the bazaar for a reliable person. Everyone referred him to Agha Gholam-Hossein. The Turkmen, based on his own personal acquaintance – and the recommendations of others – appealed to Agha Gholam-Hossein. The merchant said that he feared for his life and was not sure if he would survive his return to his home - therefore he wished to deposit his money with Agha Gholam-Hossein for safekeeping. The Turkmen merchant returned home to his plight. Years passed. Agha Gholam-Hossein lost his business and all its assets. After many years the Turkmen merchant returned to Mashhad, where he found Agha Gholam-Hossein in a difficult economic situation - living in a modest house with his two sons, Yaaqov and Eliyahu (Abdol-Vahab), dressed in rags and playing in the yard. The Turkmen was amazed. He asked Agha Gholam-Hossein if he	1910s [Behrouz Dilmanian - 2007] Gholam = Slave Hossein = Shiite Holy Name

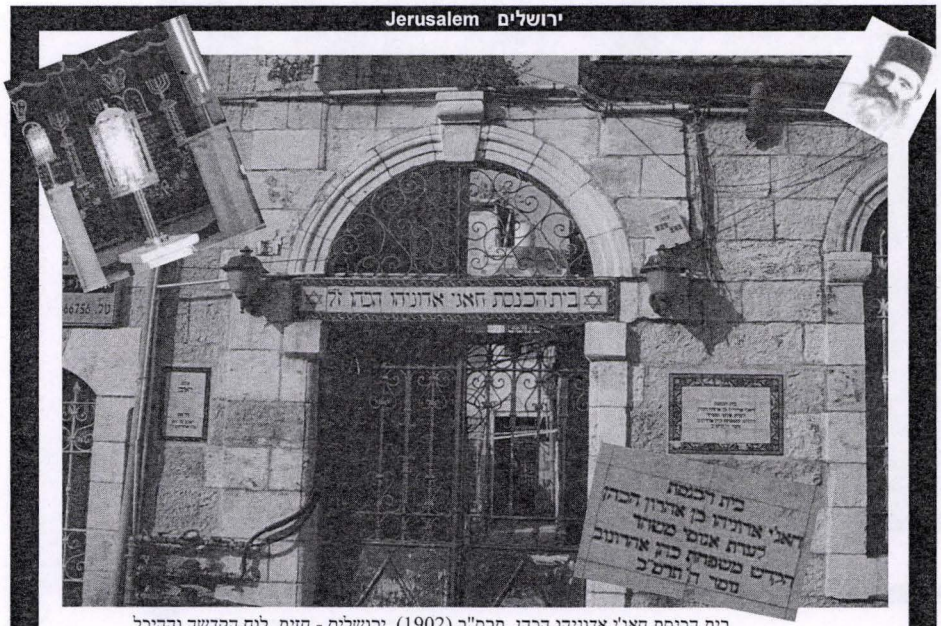
	remembered him. Agha Gholam-Hossein replied "Of course – I've been waiting for you for many years!" and he asked his wife to bring the "hamian" from its hiding place in the attic. The merchant opened the case and found the cache intact - just as he had deposited it with Agha Gholam-Hossein so many years ago when the danger of death awaited him on his return home.	Hamian = leather case bound around the hips
Alizadeh	There were two office buildings in Mashhad, called Sara'ye Sudmand and Sara'ye Parvin. Turkmen used to visit this place and trade in carpets and furs. It was the 1920s. A number of Turkmen were visiting the office of Mr. Alizadeh (Etessami) to trade with him. After the meeting they left - without tasting the tea that was served to them. A few minutes later, the Turkmen returned to the office and the older one opened with an apology: "We thought you were Shiites because of your name (Alizadeh), and therefore we refused to drink the tea. Outside they told us that you are a Jew and so we decided to come back and have that cup of tea with you."	1920s [Behrouz Dilmanian - 2007]
Shaaban Hezghiya	It was the 1940s. Yussufzadeh's family had some farmland in Ghader-Abad, in southeastern Khorasan, near the border of Afghanistan. There were three villages in that area – one large Shiite village and two small Sunni villages. Shaaban Hezghiya managed the land on behalf of Yussufzadeh's family. Once, on horseback, Hezghia arrived at Ghader-Abad at a time of acute tensions between the Shiite and Sunni. The Shiites had announced their intention of leading their Procession of the Tormented during Ashura through the Sunni areas also. Hezghiya went straight to the Shiite Qadi and explained to him, in front of everyone, that "the Shiites are free to practice their traditions of mourning in their village - but they must not enter the Sunni villages." After some time, the Sunni Qadi (Haj Ghazi) invited Hezghiya to his house and served him delicacies in gratitude for what he had done. Hezghiya politely refrained from eating. The Qadi asked him to which community he belonged. Hezghia answered Mussaii. The Qadi complimented him saying that only the Mussaii have the courage and the sense of fairness and justice that he displayed in calming tensions. He then requested that on Hezghiya's next visit - Hezghiya will be hosted in his home and that he plans to prepare dishes according to Jewish custom and they will eat together, and he said: "You are pure in our eyes."	1940s [Behrouz Dilmanian - 2007] [Mussaii = Jewish]
Mela Rafi	Mela Rafi, among other things, made his livelihood in trading precious metals (silver and gold instruments, gold medals, etc.). His brother, Agha Nabi, who worked in Tehran, introduced to Mela Rafi a merchant from Tehran named Daniel Jawaher (a jeweler). Mela Rafi and Daniel worked together for seven years without ever having met. One day Mela Rafi was informed that his partner, Daniel, had died. Mela Rafi immediately prepared a detailed report of their accounts and appealed to his brother in Tehran to submit the report to the children of Daniel in the presence of a number of Mashhadis. Daniel's children, who were not in their father's business, feared that Mela Rafi was contacting them to demand payment for the debts of their father. To their	1940s [Aghlarpur / 21]

	surprise, at the end of the meeting, it turned out that - according to Mela Rafi's accounts – he owed them money and intended to pay his debt immediately. After the Russian invasion of Iran (years after the gates were closed between Iran and the Soviet Union), several Turkmen with two camels ... appeared in the shop of Mela Rafi, and requested to pay off an old debt, from the time of his father, Mela Morad (Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar). They apologized for their failure to pay the debt on time, but explained that the delay was due to the closing of the borders. Now that the borders were open, they wished to return the debt.	[July 24, 2000 conversation with Yosef Moradi son of M. Rafi]
Scales of Justice	David Aharoni, who worked as a youth in the spice shop of Abdol-Karim Levy, indicated that the latter, when weighing spices, would put an empty bag on the scale with the weight in order to obtain a precise weight and avoid theft. As it is written: Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.	1940s [Qehila 6 /16] Leviticus 19/ 36
	Behrouz Dilmanian	
	In this chapter I discuss, among other things, some of the stories that Behrouz told me. These stories call attention to the importance of honesty, integrity and love of Israel in his way of thinking and in the makeup of his personality. You can't discuss the features that characterize the community of Mashhad without mentioning Behrouz. Below are a few characteristics, combined with certain events, which are engraved in my memory.	[Telephone conversations and via email]
Mashhad	Nissan (Behrouz) was born in Mashhad in 1948 to Zvia and Shimon (Lotfelah) Dilmanian, and died in 2009 in New York. The first 30 years of his life - a decade in Mashhad, a decade in Tehran, and a decade in Israel - were just preparation for his extensive public involvement and his future endeavors. He was born the eldest grandson of Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim (Mela Abdelah) and was influenced by the personality of his grandfather, the rabbi of the community of Mashhad. He spent his childhood in Mashhad and there he completed his elementary schooling.	[R.N.] [Behrouz was the oldest cousin and a close friend of mine]
Tehran	In Tehran Behrouz majored in biology at Alborz High School. Like many members of the community, Behrouz and I went to prayer lessons at Mela Yussuf Dil's Beit Midrash. After completing our prayer studies, we asked Mela Yussuf to teach us Hebrew - with the thought in our minds that our place and our future were linked with Israel's future. Within a short time we completed the Hebrew studies at the Beit Midrash, and we joined the "Weizmann" movement. Behrouz (in the eleventh grade) distinguished himself in the movement both in his analysis of discussion topics and also in presenting his views. Once we went together to an evening devoted to the topic of current events in Israel. During the evening, a film about Israel was shown. Behrouz suddenly	[R.N.] ["500 Word" book]

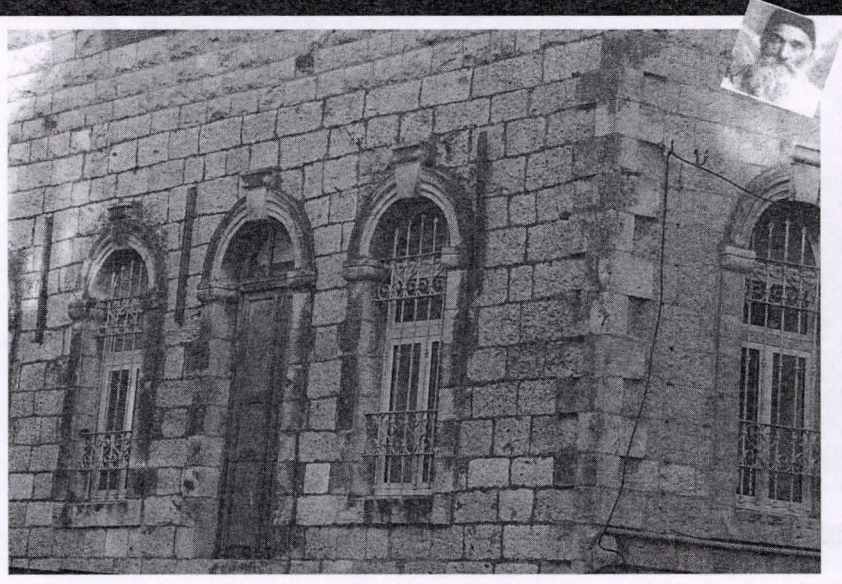
	grabbed my hand. I looked at him in admiration. Passionate about the landscapes of Israel, Behrouz's face radiated with pleasure like a bridegroom looking at his beloved.	
Israel	After graduation from high school, Behrouz left for Israel to continue his studies (1965). A year later my family also came to Israel. Upon our arrival, we went to visit Behrouz at Ma'agan Michael Kibbutz where he was studying Hebrew in preparation for the Technion. Behrouz was happy there. He quickly became a part of the Israeli culture and sang the songs that he learned there: Evening of roses / Let us go out to the grove Myrrh, spices, and frankincense / The carpet under your feet These lines faithfully characterize Behrouz – his love of poetry and love of nature. During his studies, Behrouz used to visit us on Saturdays. He loved to compete with my father, Michael Nissimi, on their knowledge of Persian poetry. One would quote a verse of poetry and the second would respond with a verse that started with last letter of the verse quoted by the opponent. They both knew enumerable poems by heart and their competitions were always very close and very exciting. As a nature lover, Behrouz enjoyed photography and he perpetuated with his camera anything interesting that he encountered. In fact photography was his favorite hobby. When the Six-Day War broke out, Behrouz was already a student at the Technion. These were days of great anxiety that ended in moments of elation and pride. During the war, Behrouz volunteered to work at Kibbutz Misgav Am – at the top of Mt. Naftali opposite the Golan Heights. After the war, he used to excitedly tell us how lucky he was to observe the battlefield spread out in front of him from the top of the Naftali Mountains. After graduating, Behrouz returned to his family in Tehran. He served in the Persian army as an officer (as his father had done) and then started working as a chemical engineer for a foreign company. In 1978, after a short job in Europe, Behrouz came to Israel to tell us about the upcoming wedding with his fiancée Roya, and I thought to myself - my oldest cousin is getting married and I won't be able to participate in his joyous occasion. Behrouz returned to Iran, but soon he and his family were forced to leave Tehran because of the revolution. Behrouz got married to 'his heart's chosen' in Israel and I was at the wedding. Shortly thereafter Roya and Behrouz moved to New York, and here begins the story of his extensive activities for the community.	[R.N.] [Words: Moshe Dor]
New York	Behrouz lived in New York for the last three decades of his life. He was among the founders of MYC and was active in it for eight years. He was a member of the "Central Board" of the Central Committee for two terms - first as head editor of the By-Laws and later as Chairman of the Audit Committee.	[Megillah 94 / Bahman Kamali] [MYC=Masha di Youth

	He was a key figure in the preparation of the book Two Centuries of Resistance. He was a senior editor of the Megillah (scroll) for 25 years. His lectures at the synagogue on Judaism, Zionism and Mashhadiism were a source of knowledge and inspiration to the community.	Committee]
	These are only a few of the milestones in the list of impressive public activities that Behrouz performed for the Mashhadi community – the community that moved, lock stock and barrel, overnight, from Tehran to New York. This period was full to overflowing with activities and events essential for establishing community institutions from scratch, for a community of thousands of immigrants. He spent 30 years in public activities and endeavors.	[R.N.]
	I liked to read the articles by Behrouz in the Megillah. He had a special style that was very captivating. He would start out by telling an interesting short story. Then he would cleverly analyze the story, comparing it with current events - and finally he would discuss the lessons learned from the story. Thus, he would convincingly convey to his readers his credo (his "I believe...") - which was replete with integrity, exemplary courtesy, and a rare wisdom.	[R.N.]

Jerusalem ירושלים



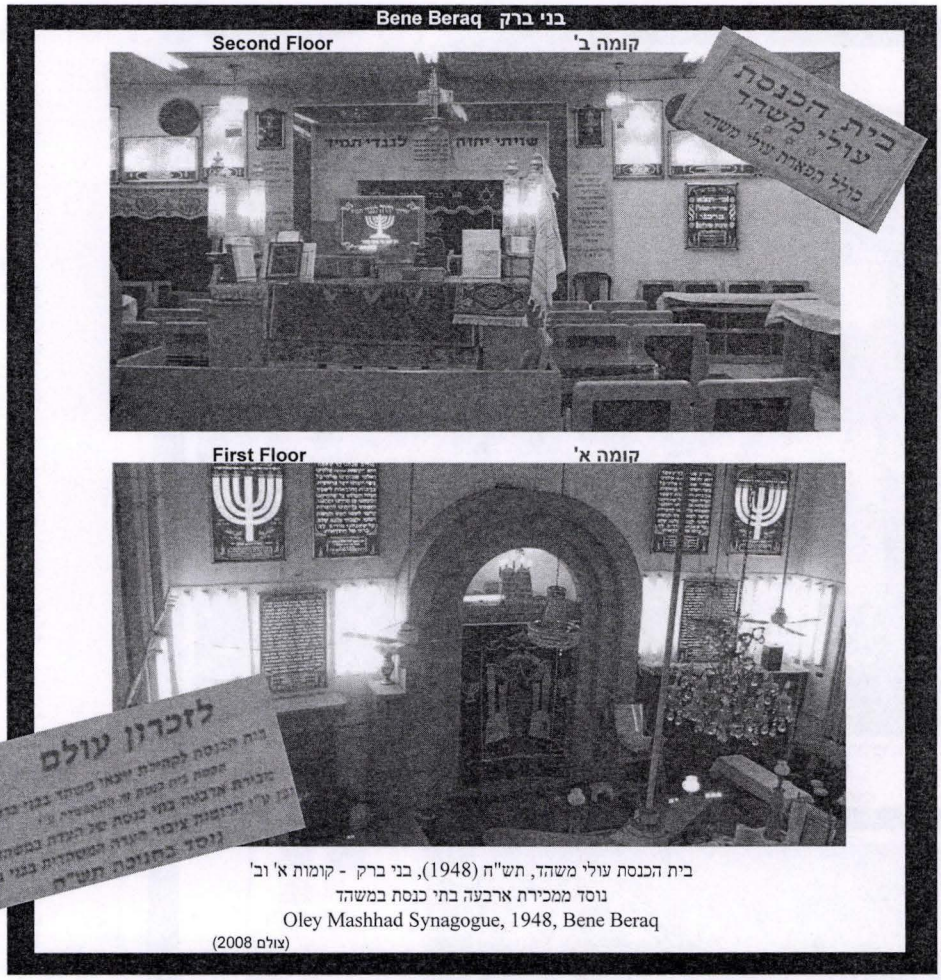
בית הכנסת חאג'י אדוניהו הכהן, תרס"ב (1902), ירושלים - חזית, לוח הקדשה וההיכל
Haji Adoniyahu HaKohen Synagogue, 1902, Jerusalem
(צולם 2006)



בית הכנסת חאג'י יחזקאל הלוי , ירושלים - לוחות הקדשה מעטרות את החלונות מסביב
Haji Yechezqel HaLevi Synagogue, Jerusalem
(צולם 2006)

Haji Adoniyahu HaKohen (1900s) חאג'י אדוניהו הכהן
Courtesy of Efraim Levi [2010] באדיבות אפרים לוי

Haji Adoniyahu HaKohen Synagogue - "Keper Khoni" (1930s) בית הכנסת חאג'י אדוניהו הכהן - "כפר חוני"
Courtesy of Efraim Levi [2010] באדיבות אפרים לוי



בית הכנסת עולי משהד, תש"ח (1948), בני ברק - קומות א' וב'
נוסד ממכירת ארבעה בתי כנסת במשהד
Oley Mashhad Synagogue, 1948, Bene Beraq
(צולם 2008)

בית הכנסת בית-אל , תש"ל (1970), צפון תל-אביב - חזית, לוח זיכרון וההיכל
Beit-El Synagogue, 1970, N. Tel-Aviv
(צולם 2006)

בית הכנסת עולי משהד אירן, התקווה
Oley Mashhad-Iran Synagogue, 1970, HaTiqva
(צולם 2007)

בית הכנסת אנוסי משהד, שבזי (לא פעיל היום)
Anussai Mashhad Synagogue, Shabazi
(צולם 2006, 2009)

בית הכנסת שבזי, 1957 - שיעור תפירה לנשים
צביה זבולוני, ציונה בצלאל (בת מ' חלייל), מרים כהן (רעית שלמה גוהרי), רחל נמדר, דבורה נסים, שרה עזיז
רחל לוי, יוכבד מלא, רעית אק-פרג' כלאתי, המורה, מלי לולואי, שרה (בת פרג' כלאתי)
מהין, יפה נוריאלי, שושנה גוהרי, מלכה כאשי
Shabazi Synagogue, 1957 - Sewing Class for Ladies
Sara Aziz, Dvora Nissim, Rachel Namdar, Miriam Kohen, Ziona Betzalel, Zvia Zvuloni
Sara Kalati, Mali Lolo'ei, Teacher, Mrs. Kalati, Yocheved Mella, Rachel HaLevi
Malka Kashi, Shoshana Gohari, Yafa Nurieli, Mahin
Courtesy of Zvia Zvuloni [2010] באדיבות צביה זבולוני

List of Members - Shabazi (1960s) **רשימת המתפללים - שבזי**

(על פי כרטסת שנשמרה)

,אברהם בן יהודה, אגאיוף יצחק, אהרוני ירמיה, איזדי משה, אמיניא אהרון, אמיניא בן אהרן יהודה, אמיניא חנה, אמיניא משה, אקלר בן משיח יהודה
אקלר דוד, אקלר מרים, אקלר מנשה

,באבא שלמה, באבא מלכה, בן אברהם משה, בן יהודה אברהם, בנימיני שלמה, בצלאל אליהו, בצלאל הרב אדוניה, בצלאל חנוכה, בשי רחמים
גאולה משה, גדליה אברהם, ג'יאן אברהם, גמשידי בן ציון, דיל דוד, דיל יוסף, דיל נתן, דילמני משיח

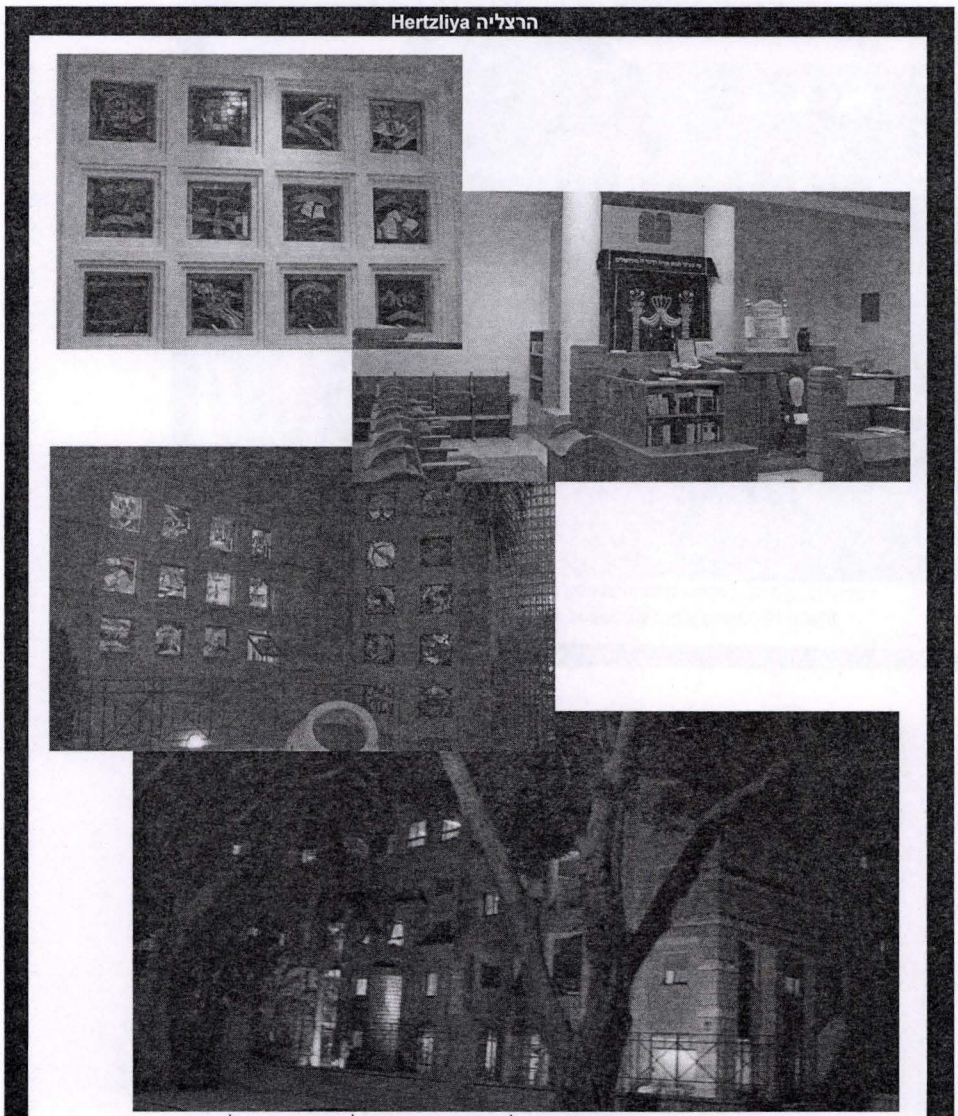
הג' באי, זבולוני יהודה, זר מינה, חכימי קפרזדה יוסף, יעקבי בנימין חכים, יעקבי דוד, יעקבי חנה ירקוני דוד ישראלי ישראל
כהן אהרון מ', כהן אליהו ואשתו, כהן מתיתיה, כוחיי יעקב, כלתי [יעקבי] חנה, כלתי שמואל, כרמלי שמועל

לוי [לרי?] גדעון, לוי משה, לוי משיח, לוי עזריה, לוי אשתו, מורדוף שלום, מורדוף שלום, מרדכא שלמה בן דוד, משיח שרה, ניסים חנוכה, נמדר
יחזקאל, נמדר ישראל, נמדר משה בן אליעזר, נמדר משיח, נמדר רחימי מרדכי, נסראלה מ' לוי

,סבז אהרון, סבז אהרון, סימון שרה, סקאב יצחק, עזריה יעקבי, עניתיאן – דוד של [אמו עניתיאן], עניתיאן יואב, עניתיאן שלמה, עניתיאן שמואל
צדיקוב משיח, קצב יעקב [קסאב], קצב משה, רחמני שמחה, שאולוף דינה

Courtesy of Hilda Nissimi [2010] באדיבות הילדה נסימי

Hertzliya הרצליה



בית הכנסת בבית האבות - הרצליה פיתוח. בצד צפון חלונות שבטי ישראל.
Beit Avot Synagogue - Hertzliya Pituach

(צולם 2007)

חגיגת פורים עם חיילים
Purim Holiday with Soldiers

בית האבות - הכנות לקראת חג השבועות
Preparations for Shavuot Holiday

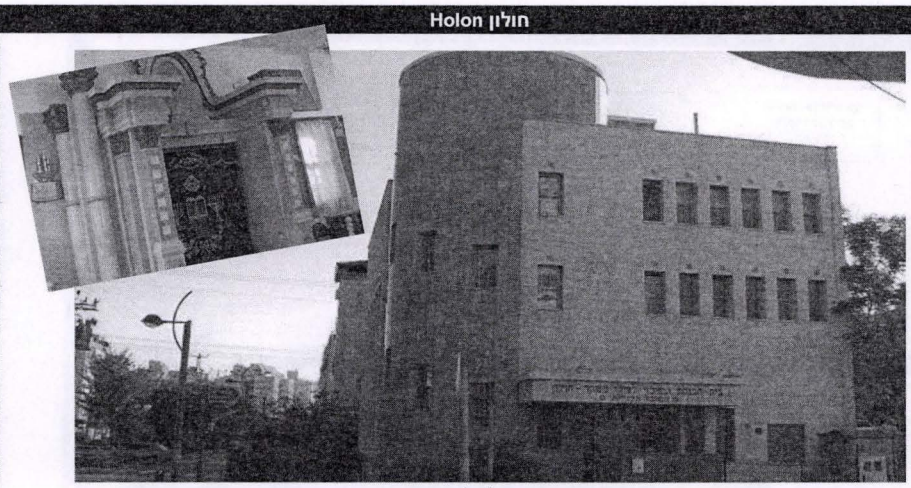
Courtesy of Ora Zar [2010] באדיבות אורה זר

בית הכנסת שער השמים, הרצליה - חזית , לוח הקדשה וההיכל

Sha'ar HaShama'yim Synagogue, Hertzliya

(צולם 2006)

חולון Holon

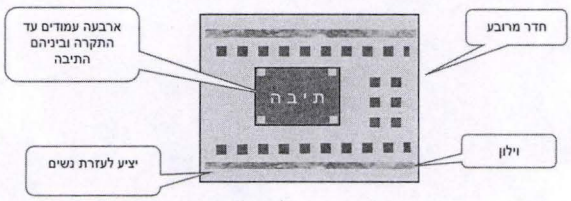


בית הכנסת המרכזי לעולי משהד

The Central Synagogue of Oley Mashhad

(צולם 2007)

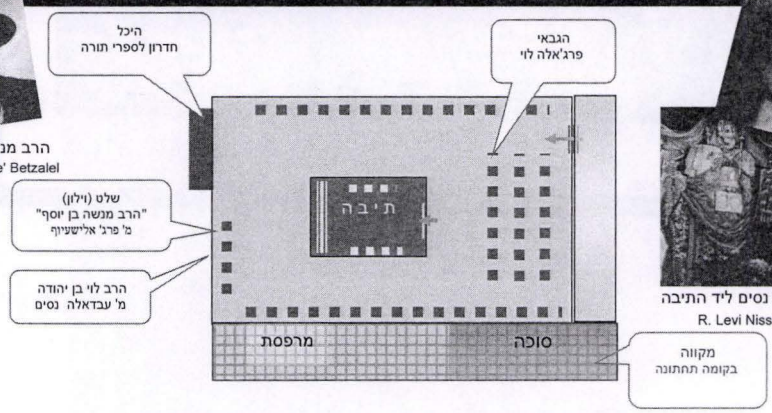
Mashhad משהד



תרשים בית הכנסת לפני האניסות - לפי תאורו של קונולי - 1830s
The Synagogue before Annissut - According to Conolly's description - 1830s

הרב מנשה בצלאל
R. Menashe' Betzalel

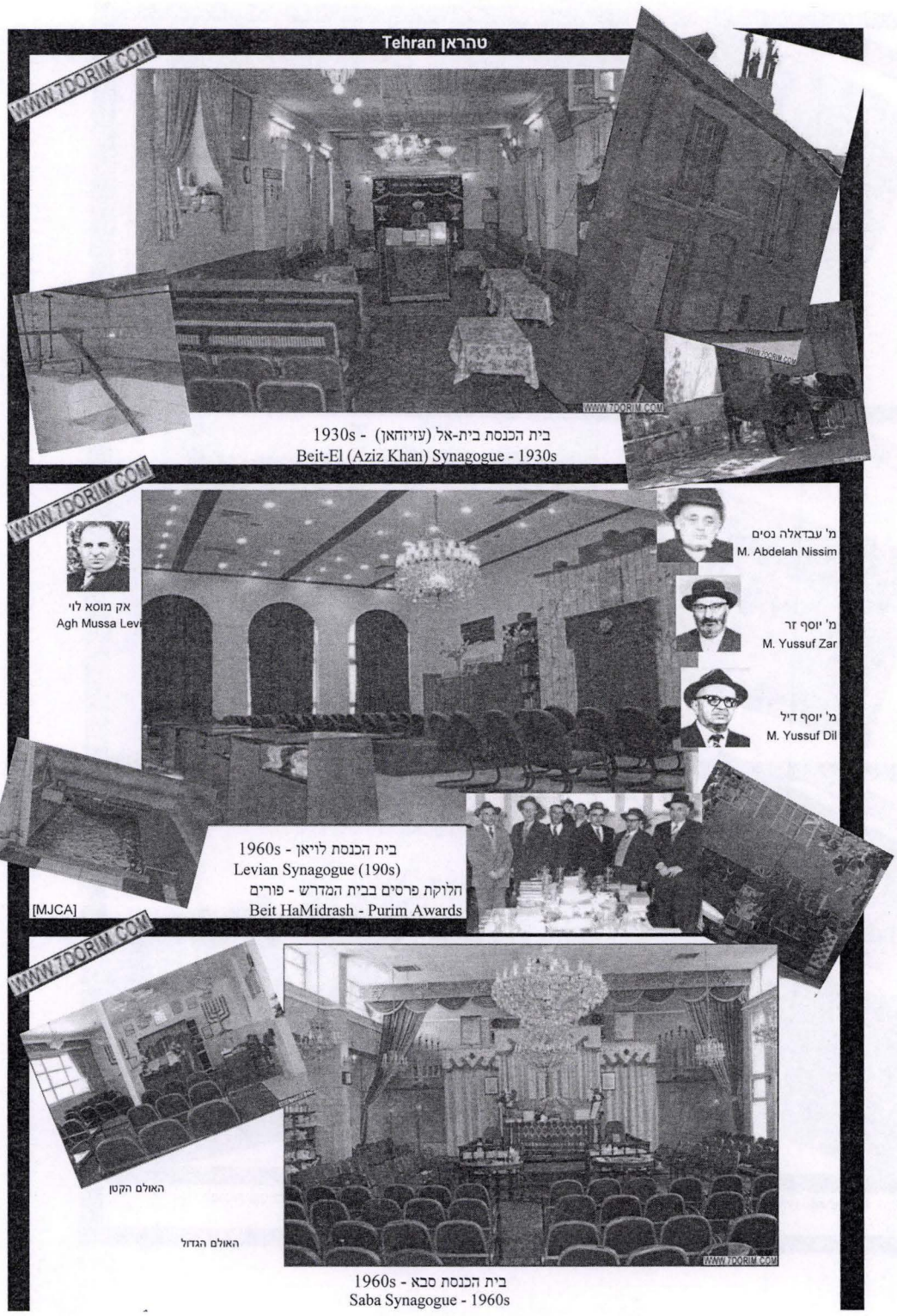
הרב לוי נסים ליד התיבה
R. Levi Nissim

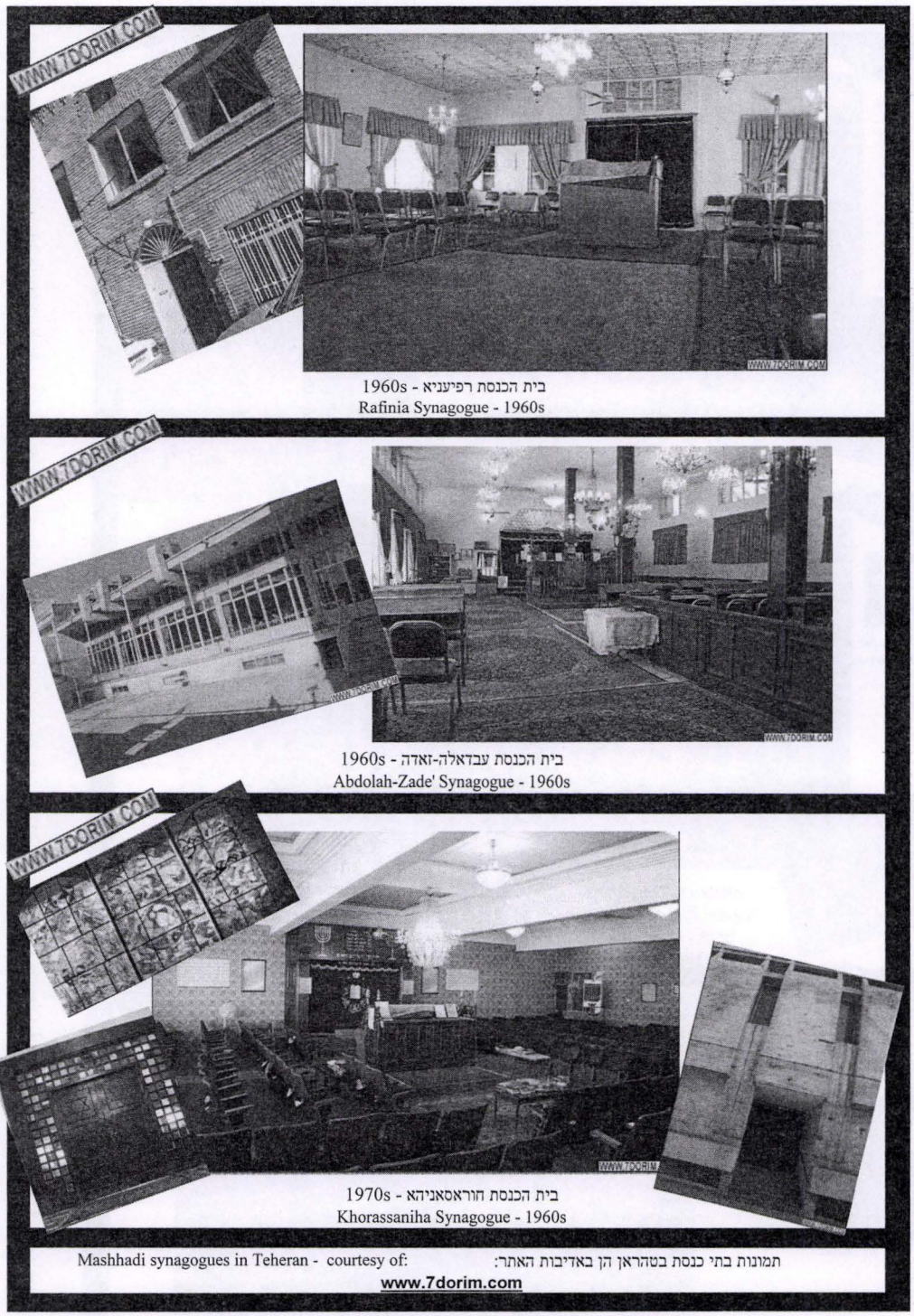


בית הכנסת המרכזי במשהד, תרשים לפי תאורו של דויד בן הרב מנשה בצלאל - 1940s
The Central Synagogue in Mashhad - based on David ben Menashe Betzalel's description - 1940s

בית מדרשו של מולא יוסף דיל - 1925
Beit Midrash of Mola Yosef Dil - 1925

[MJCA]


Tehran טהראן
WWW.7DORIM.COM
בית הכנסת בית-אל (עזיזחאן) - 1930s
Beit-El (Aziz Khan) Synagogue - 1930s
אק מוסא לוי
Agh Mussa Levi
מ' עבדאלה נסים
M. Abdelah Nissim
מ' יוסף זר
M. Yussuf Zar
מ' יוסף דיל
M. Yussuf Dil
בית הכנסת לויאן - 1960s
Levian Synagogue (190s)
חלוקת פרסים בבית המדרש - פורים
Beit HaMidrash - Purim Awards
[MJCA]
האולם הקטן
האולם הגדול
בית הכנסת סבא - 1960s
Saba Synagogue - 1960s


WWW.7DORIM.COM
WWW.7DORIM.COM
בית הכנסת רפיעניא - 1960s
Rafinia Synagogue - 1960s
WWW.7DORIM.COM
WWW.7DORIM.COM
בית הכנסת עבדאלה-זאדה - 1960s
Abdolah-Zade' Synagogue - 1960s
WWW.7DORIM.COM
WWW.7DORIM.COM
בית הכנסת חוראסאניהא - 1970s
Khorassaniha Synagogue - 1960s
Mashhadi synagogues in Teheran - courtesy of: תמונות בתי כנסת בטהראן הן באדיבות האתר:
www.7dorim.com

Bombay בומביי

בומבי 1935 - קבוצת משהדים ליד בית הכנסת

נצראלה דיל, שלמה כל (כרמלי), רחמת כל, יצחק חאג'י-באי

יצחק דיל, קודרת כלאתי, אמיר לוי-עברני, כרים רחמני, **משה נסים**,יצחק לוי-עברני, **עבדולכרים נסים**

נצראלה קצב, עבדולכרים הארוני, חאג'י אקא כהן, שוכראלה כאשי, דויד המדאני, כרבלאי אקאג'ן רחמני, חאג'י עזיזאלהיוף, ...

עבדולוואהאב דילמני, פייצ'אלה לוי בנק, פייצ'אלה נקי, דוד אקלר, נוראלה כלאתי

לוי כלאתי, יוסף עבדולאהי, אברהם עבדולאהי, **יצחק נסים**, יהודה חאג'י-רחמן, נוראלה נקי, נוראלה לוי בנק, עזיז כלאתי

Bombay 1935 - A group of Mashhadis next to Synagogue

Esshagh Hajibye, Rahmat Kal, Shlomo Kal, Nassrelah Dil

Abdol-Karim Nissim, Esshagh Levi-Ebrani, **Haji Agha (Mussa) Nissim,** Karim Rahmani, Amir Levi-Ebrani, Ghodrat Kalati, Esshagh Dil

Nurelah Kalati, Davood Aghlar, Feizelah Naghi, Feizelah Levi Bank, Abdol-Vahab Dilmani, Haji Azizelahyof, Karbalai Aghajon Rahmani, ...

Davood Hamadani, Shokrelah Kashi, Haji Agha Kohen, Abdol-Karim Harooni, Nassrelah Ghassab

Aziz Kalati, Nurelah Levi Bank, Nurelah Naghi, Yehuda Haji Rahmon, **Esshagh Nissim,** Avraham Abdolahi, Yossef Abdolahi, Levi Kalati

Courtesy of Bary Nissim [2010] באדיבות בארי נסים

בומביי 1930s - נשים המשהדיות

Bombay 1930s - Mashhadi Ladies

??,??, ?? Kalati, Zvia Zabihi, Ziona ??, Zilpa Abdolahi, ?? Abdolahi

??, ?? Kalati, **Dina Zioni, Dvora Nissimi,** Jahan Abdolahi

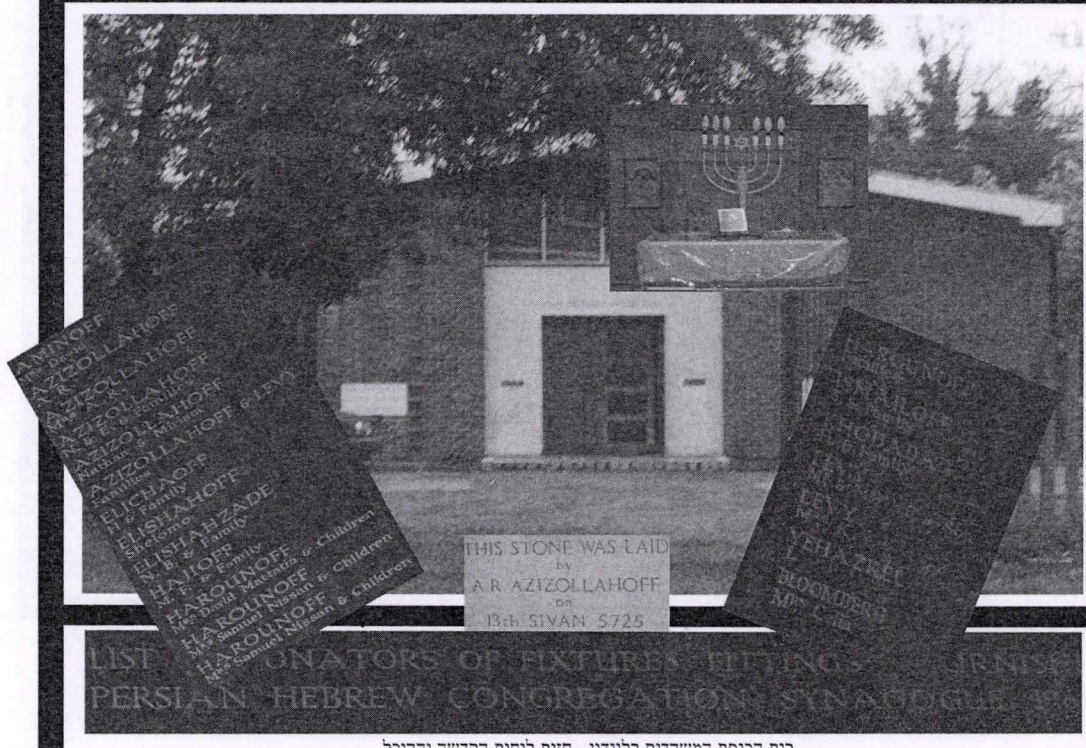
Courtesy of Avraham and Zvia Zvuloni [2010]

עבדולאהי ??, זילפה עבדולאהי, ציונה ??, צביה זביחי, ?? כלאתי, ??, ??

ג'האן עבדולאהי, **דבורה נסימי, דינה ציוני** (רעית יצחק ציוני), ?? כלאתי, ??

באדיבות אברהם וצביה זבולוני

London לונדון



בית הכנסת המשהדים בלונדן - חזית לוחות הקדשה וההיכל

Mashhadi Synagogue - London

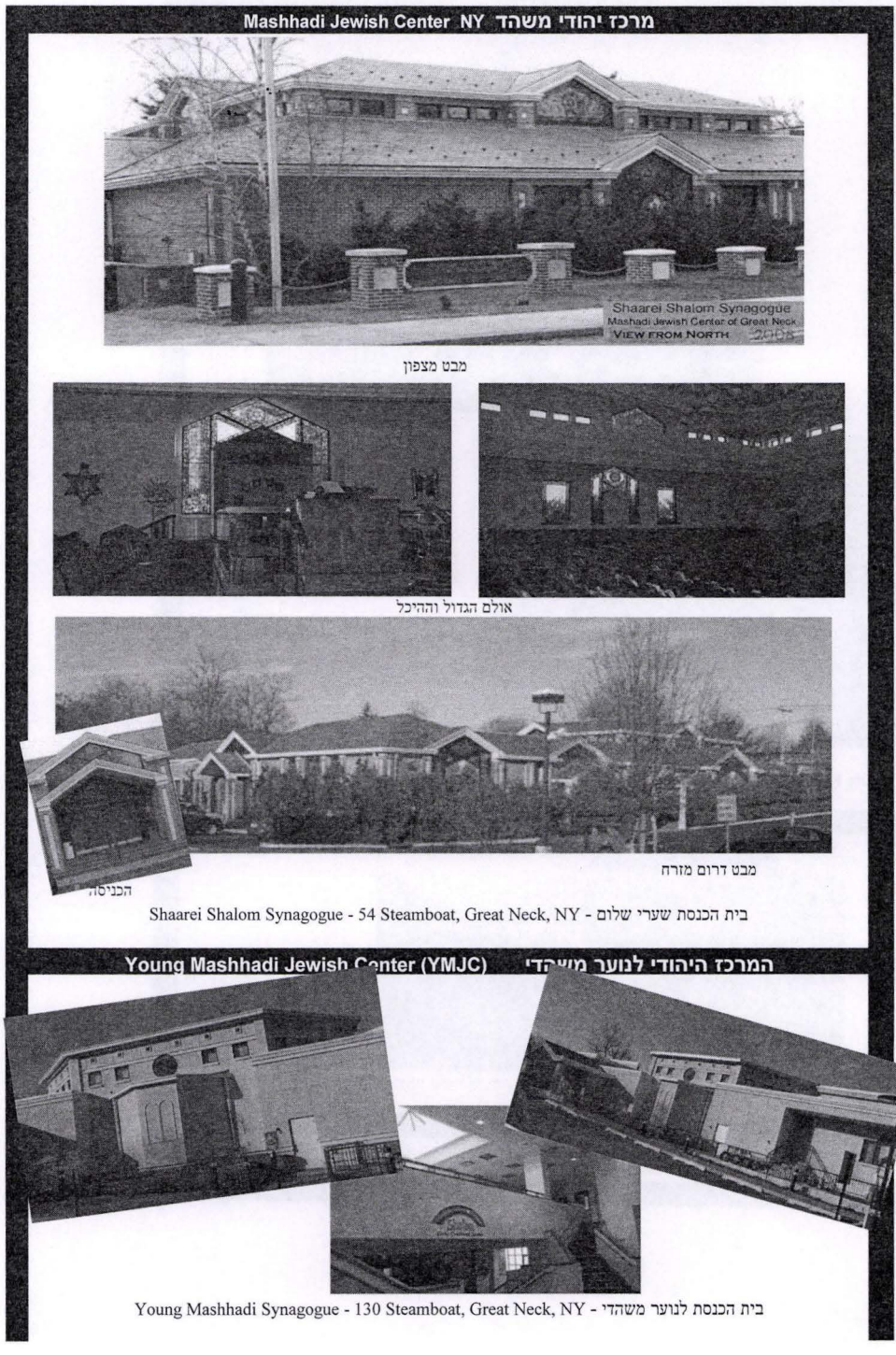
Courtesy of Esther (Nissimi) Sherman [2006] באדיבות אסתר (נסימי) שרמן

בית הכנסת המשהדים (איראנים) בלונדן - 1928

Mashhadi (Iranian) Synagogue, London - 1928

Courtesy of Leon Meir [2006] באדיבות לאון מאיר

הקהילה המשהדית בלונדון - 1930s
Mashhadi Community, London - 1930s
Courtesy of Leon Meir [2006] באדיבות לאון מאיר



מבט מצפון

אולם הגדול וההיכל

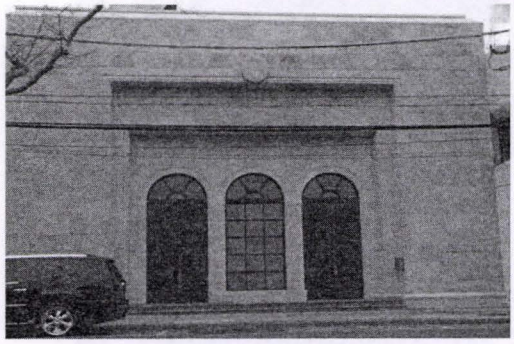
מבט דרום מזרח

הכניסה

Shaarei Shalom Synagogue - 54 Steamboat, Great Neck, NY - בית הכנסת שערי שלום

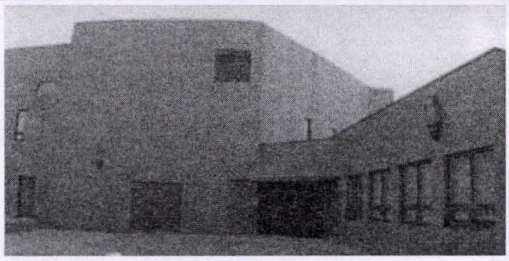
Young Mashhadi Synagogue - 130 Steamboat, Great Neck, NY - בית הכנסת לנוער משהדי

Shaare Rachamim שערי רחמים



Shaare Rachamim Synagogue - 695 Middle Neck Rd, NY - בית הכנסת שערי רחמים

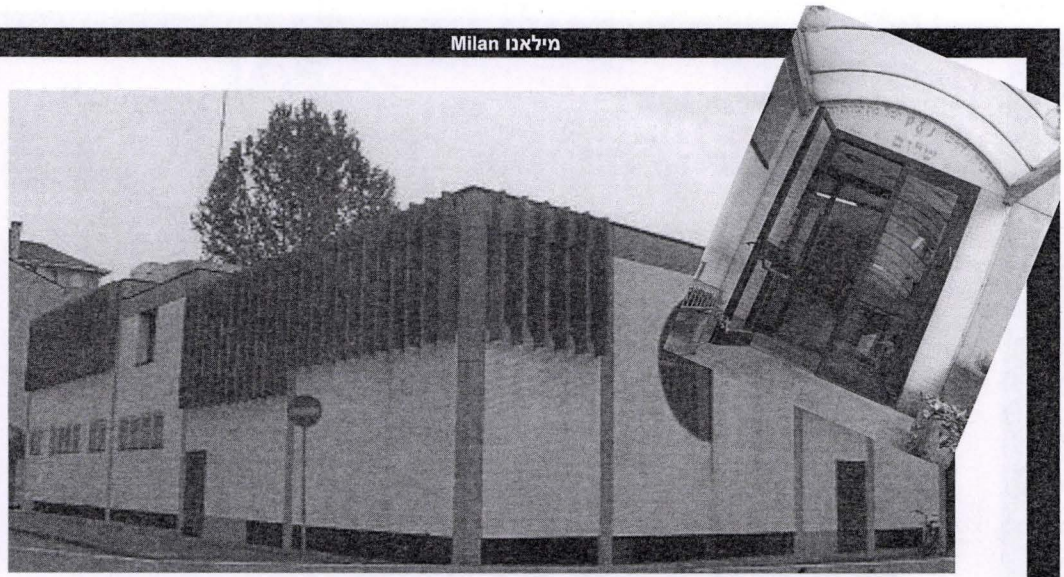
Congregation Shaarei Tovah קהילת שערי טובה



Shaarei Tova Synagogue - Kew Gardens, NY - בית הכנסת שערי טובה

Courtesy of Behrouz Dilmanian [2008] באדיבות בהרוז דילמאניאן

Milan מילאנו



Her ways are ways of **pleasantness,** and all her paths are peace (משלי ג' י"ז) דרכיה דרכי **נועם** וכל נתיבותיה שלום

Mashhadi Synagogue - Milan - בית הכנסת המשהדים

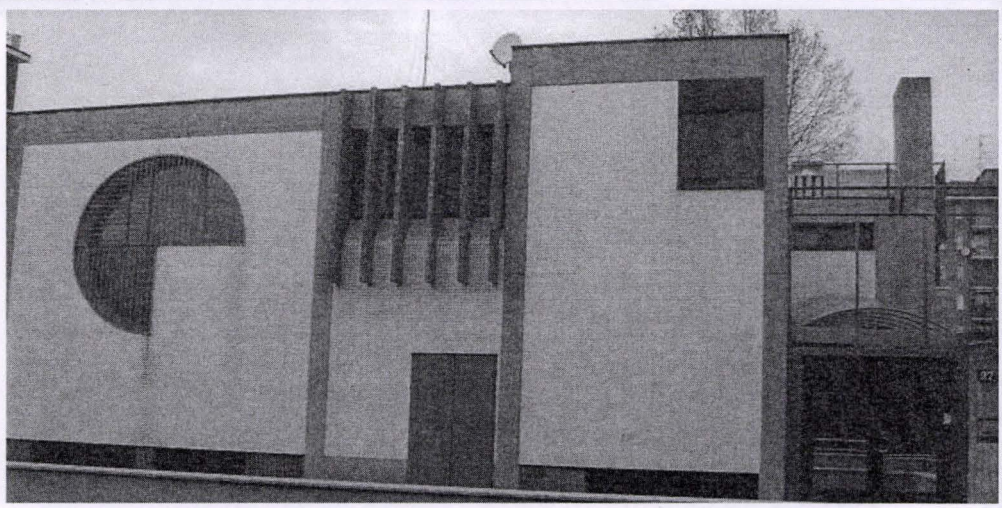
Courtesy of Eitan Yaaqobi [2009] באדיבות איתן יעקובי

Interior of Synagogue פנים בית הכנסת

Courtesy of Eitan Yaaqobi [2009] באדיבות איתן יעקובי

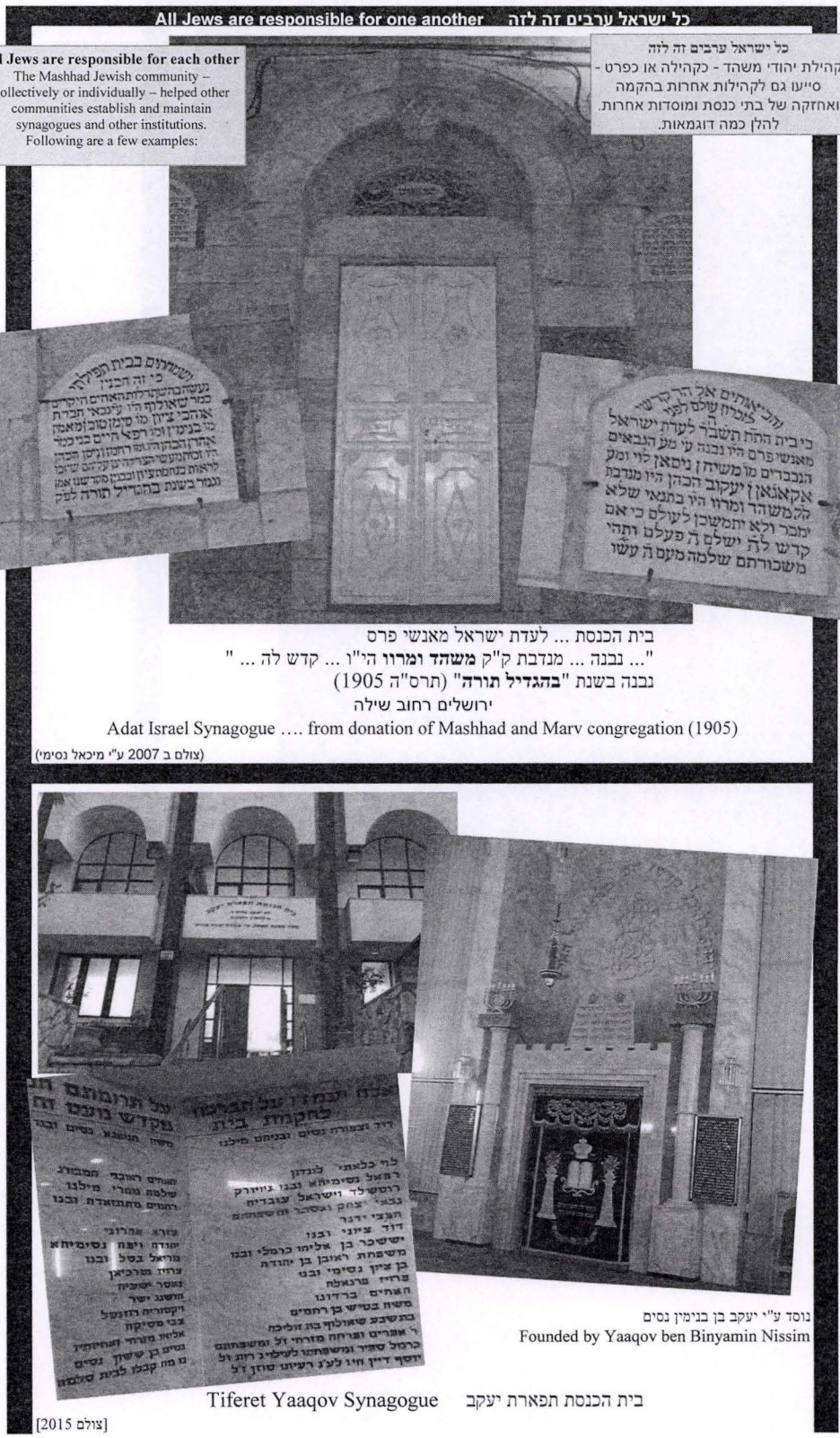
Interior of Synagogue פנים בית הכנסת

Courtesy of Eitan Yaaqobi [2009] באדיבות איתן יעקובי



חזית בית הכנסת

Courtesy of Esther (Nissim) Abdolahi [2009] באדיבות אסתר (נסים) עבדולאהי



בית הכנסת ... לעדת ישראל מאנשי פרס
"... נבנה ... מנדבת ק"ק **משהד ומרוו** הי"ו ... קדש לה ... "
נבנה בשנת "**בהגדיל תורה**" (תרס"ה 1905)
ירושלים רחוב שילה
Adat Israel Synagogue …. from donation of Mashhad and Marv congregation (1905)
(צולם ב 2007 ע"י מיכאל נסימי)

נוסד ע"י יעקב בן בנימין נסים
Founded by Yaaqov ben Binyamin Nissim

Tiferet Yaaqov Synagogue בית הכנסת תפארת יעקב
[צולם 2015]

(צולם 2007)

בית הכנסת תל חיים - יד אליהו ת"א

בנימין בן חנוכה נסימי מופיע ברשימת המיסדים.

שלט "נדבת קהילת משהד – ניו יורק, אהרון כוהנים" מציין את תרומת הקהילה.

Tel Haim Synagogue - Yad Eliyahu

Binyamin ben Hanukkah is one of the founders

A board in the synagogue states: "Donation of Mashhadi Community - NY, Aharon Kohanim"

(צולם 2007)

בית הכנסת חללי צור, נווה שלום

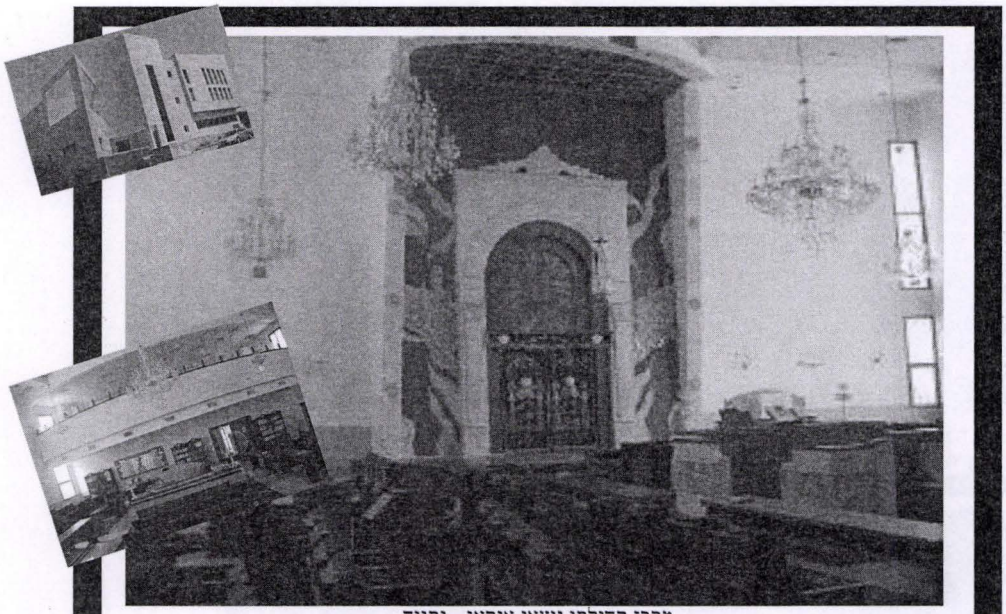
Chalalei Tzor synagogue - Neve' Shalom

(צולם 2007)

בית הכנסת שערי טובה - בית חולים תל השומר (תרומת משפחת בני-לוי)
Shaarei Tova Synagogue - Tel HaShomer Hospital (Donation of Bnei-Levy family)

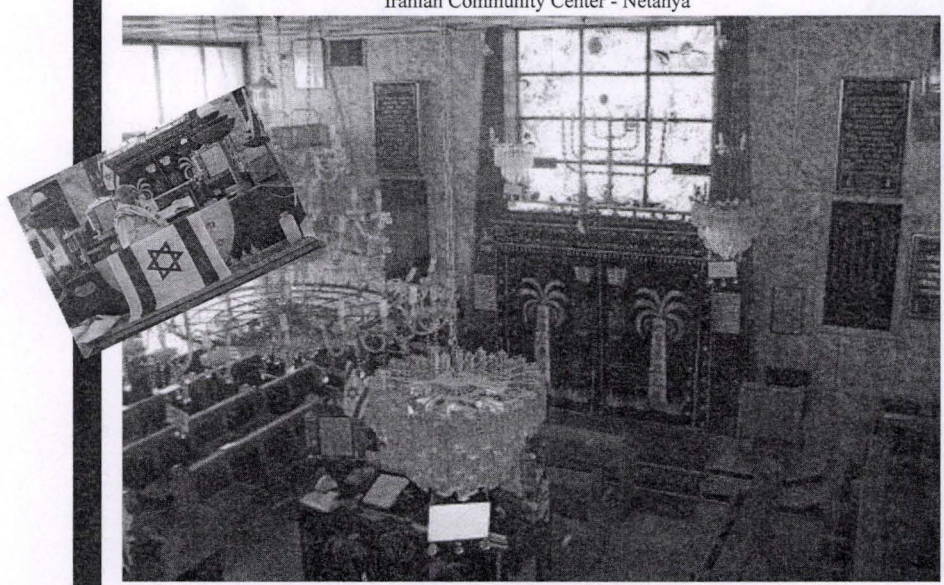
(צולם 2007)

בית הכנסת ע"ש חללי דקר
Chalalei Daqar Synagogue



מרכז קהילתי יוצאי איראן - נתניה

Iranian Community Center - Netanya



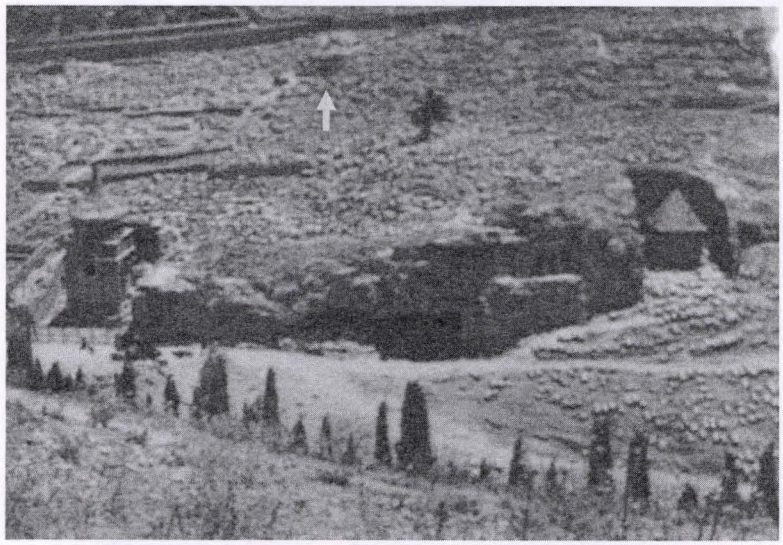
בית הכנסת זכור יוסף - נתניה (צולם 2009)

דוגמא נפלאה ל"כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה" - שאול חכימי ממייסדי בתי כנסת ומרכזים קהילתיים (לא משהדים) בנתניה.
בנוסף הוא חבר בוועד המרכזי של יהדות משהד, חבר דירקטוריון בית האבות וחבר בקופה לעזרה הדדית של העדה.

Zachur Yosef Synagogue - Netaya

Shaul Hakimi - established (non-Mashhadi) synagogues and community centers in Netanya

Mount of Olives - Sephardic Section הר הזיתים - החלקה הספרדית



מזרחית ליד אבשלום, סמוך למבנה קנטיל - החץ מראה את איזור הקבורה המשהדי ב- 1900s

מבנה (מערת) קנטיל לא קיים היום (התמונה באדיבות אפרים לוי)

East of Yad Avshalom, next to Qantil structure - The arrow shows the Mashhadi part - in 1900s

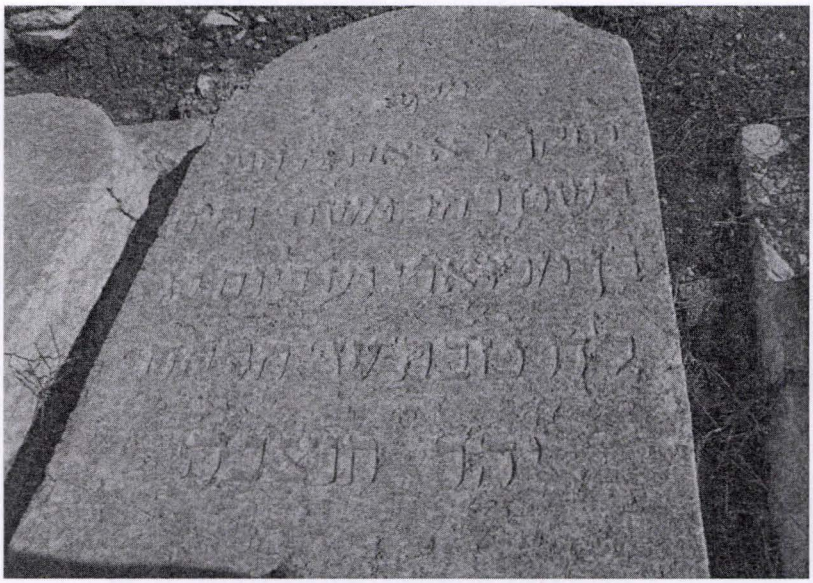
The Qantil (cave) structure does not exist today (Courtesy of Efraim Levi)

איזור הקבורה המשהדי ב- 1900s

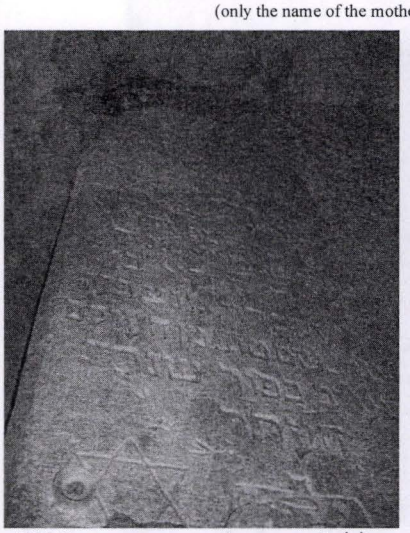
מימין לשמאל: קברי חאג'י יחזקאל לוי, הרב משה נסים וחאג'י אדוניהו הכהן

Mashhadi Part - 1900s

Left to right: Haji Adoniyahu HaKohen, HaRav Moshe Nissim and Haji Yechezqel Levi



הרב משה בן מרוארי [ודוד] נסים - כ"ג טבת תרס"ח (1907)
(במצבה מופיע שם האם בלבד)
HaRav Moshe ben Mervari [and David] Nissim, 23-Tevet (1907)
(only the name of the mother is mentioned on the gravestone)

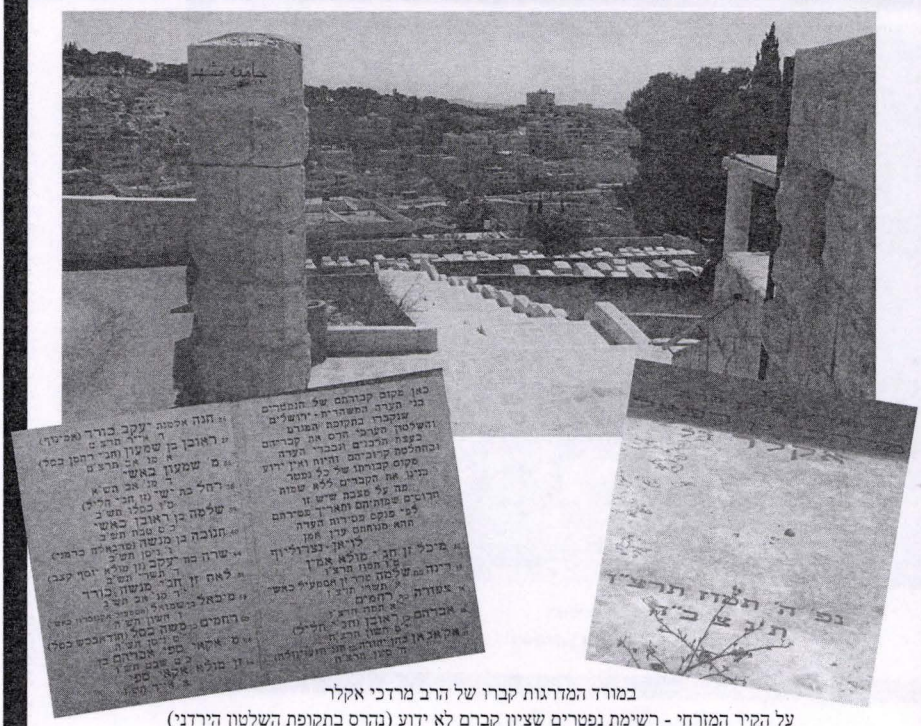


יחזקאל לוי (קבור במערה) - **ערב כיפור העתר (1914)**
Yechezqel Levi (buried in the cave), **Kippur eve (1914)**

מרדכי אדוניא הכהן - ר"ח כסלו תרס"ב (1901)
Mordechai Adoniyahu HaKohen, 1-Kislev (1901)

Guided by Efraim Levi (2010) ביקור בהדרכת אפרים לוי

Mount of Olives - Mashhadi Section הר הזיתים - החלקה המשהדית



במורד המדרגות קברו של הרב מרדכי אקלר

על הקיר המזרחי - רשימת נפטרים שציון קברם לא ידוע (נהרס בתקופת השלטון הירדני)

Grave of HaRav Mordechai Aghalar (straight downstairs)

On the eastern wall - List of Mashhadi people whose graves are unknown (ruined during the Jordanian period)

בית העלמין "הקהילה המשהדית" - הר הזיתים ירושלים

Cemetery of Mashhadi Community - Mount of Olives

Founded in 1930s - before, they buried next to Yad Avshalom נוסד בשנות השלושים - לפני כן קברו בקרבת יד אבשלום

(צולם 2008)

Givat Shaul, Jerusalem גבעת שאול, ירושלים

אסתר בת רחמים בן הרב משה ואסתר (רעיית הרב לוי נסים)

Esther bat Rahamim ben HaRav Moshe and Esther (wife of R. Levi Nissim)

בנימין בן הצדיק הרב משה נסים, ריש גלותא במשהד

Binyamin ben HaRav Moshe Nissim - Head of Diaspora in Mashhad

החלקה המשהדית - גבעת שאול, ירושלים

The Mashhadi Section, Givat Shaul, Jerusalem

(צולם 2009)

HaYarqon הירקון

החלקה המשהדית - הירקון
Mashhadi Section - HaYarqon
(צולם 2009)

Mashhad משהד

מ' רפאל בן המ' משה [אקאלר]
(אביו של הרב מרדכי אקאלר)
R. Refael ben R. Moshe Aqalar
(Father of R. Mordechai Aqalar)

בית העלמין במשהד, צולם ב- 1989 (MJCA)

בית עלמין זה מהווה עדות אילמת על תולדות יהודי משהד החל מאניסות עד עזיבת משהד בשנות החמישים
המשטר האסלמי הרס את בית העלמין למטרות פיתוח עירוני
(על שטח בית העלמין הישן הוקם בזמנו בית-ספר לבנות ארץ'-אקדס)

The cemetery in Mashhad, photographed 1989 (MJCA)

An evidence of the Jewish life during the Anissut period till 1950s that the community left the city.
It was demolished by the Islamic regime for municipal expansion

(The girls school Arze-Aghdas was built on the area of the old cemetery)

Tehran טהראן

קברו של הרב לוי בן יהודה נסים (מולא עבדאלה נסימי בן יחיא)
(צולם באדיבותו של סעיד שפיעיאן 2007 - נשלח ע"י יצחק נסימי)

בית העלמין "בהשתיה" - טהראן

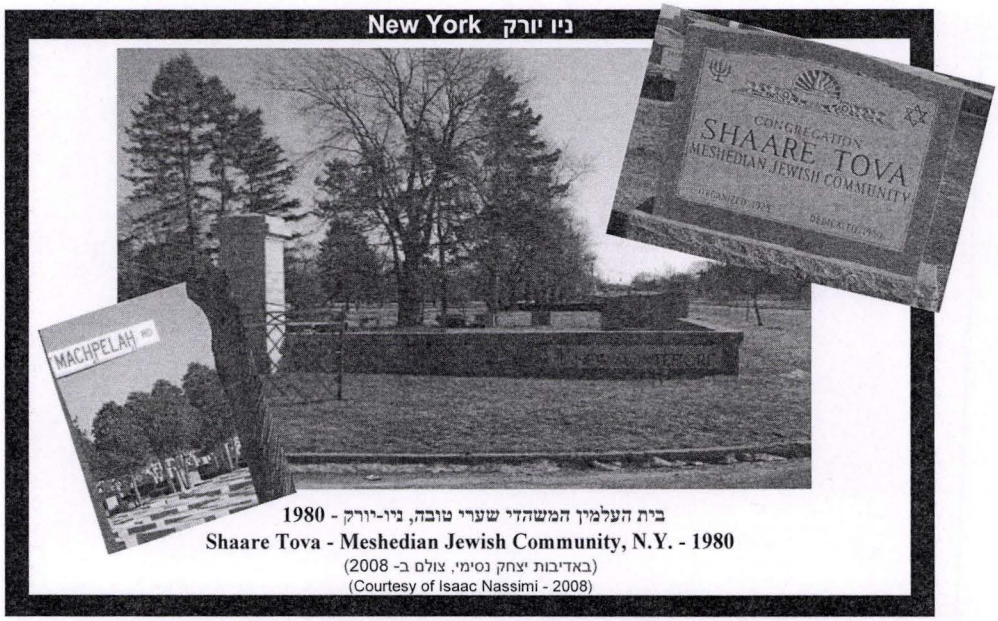
עם העליה הגדולה לאחר קום המדינה, חלקים מבית העלמין שימש כמחנה עליה.
בית עלמין זה שימש את יהודי משהד בטהראן.

Grave of HaRav Levi ben Yehuda Nissim (Mola Abdelah Nassimi ben Yahya)
(Courtesy of Sa'id Shafi'iyan - emailed by Isaac Nassimi)

Beheshtiyeh Cemetery - Tehran

Parts of this cemetery was used as an Aliyah camp during the mass immigration after the independence of Israel
This cemetery was used also by the Mashhadis in Tehran

For pictures of graves, refer to http://www.beheshtieh.com ניתן למצא צילומי המצבות באתר



בית העלמין המשהדי שערי טובה, ניו-יורק - 1980

Shaare Tova - Meshedian Jewish Community, N.Y. - 1980

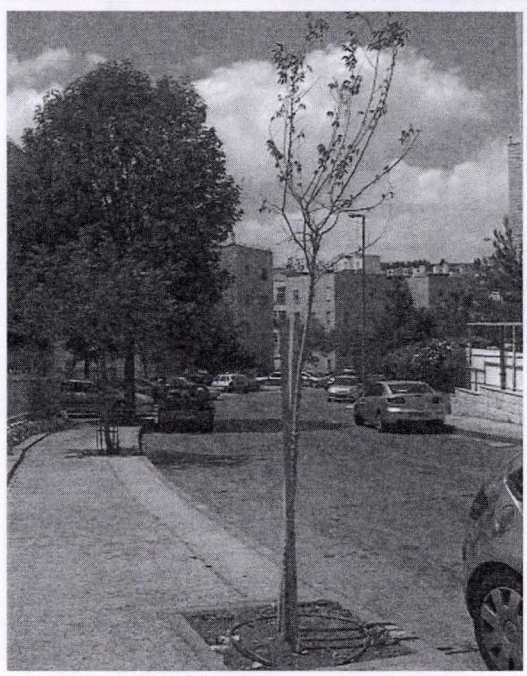
(באדיבות יצחק נסימי, צולם ב- 2008)

(Courtesy of Isaac Nassimi - 2008)

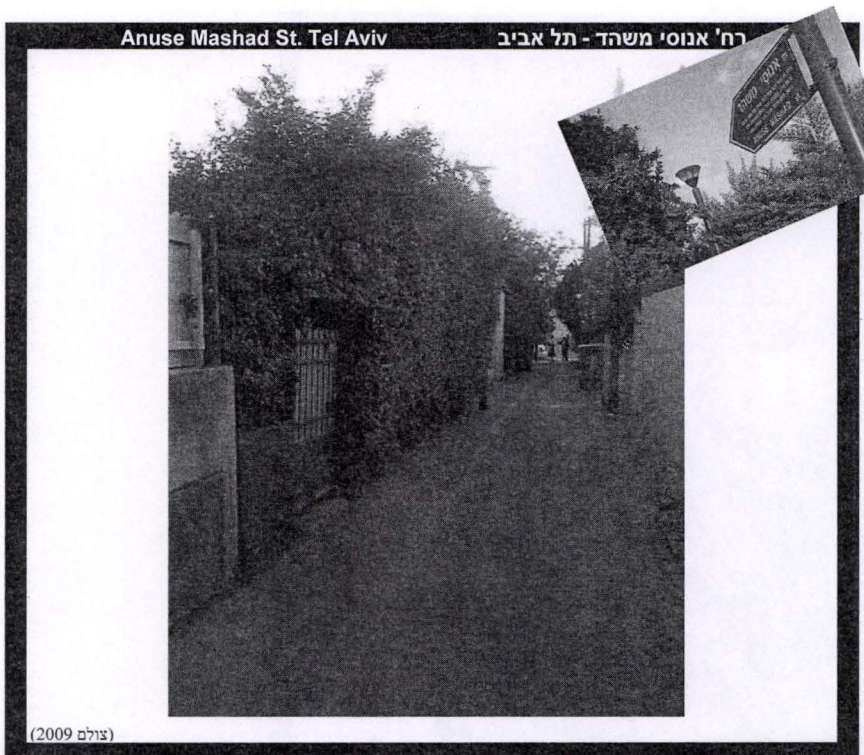
Anuse Meshed sty. - Jerusalem רח' אנוסי משהד - ירושלים

הצטלבות רח' אנוסי משהד עם רח' דויד רזיאל
Anuse Meshed & David Raziel Junction
(צולם 2009)

Anuse Meshed St. - Jerusalem רח' אנוסי משהד - ירושלים



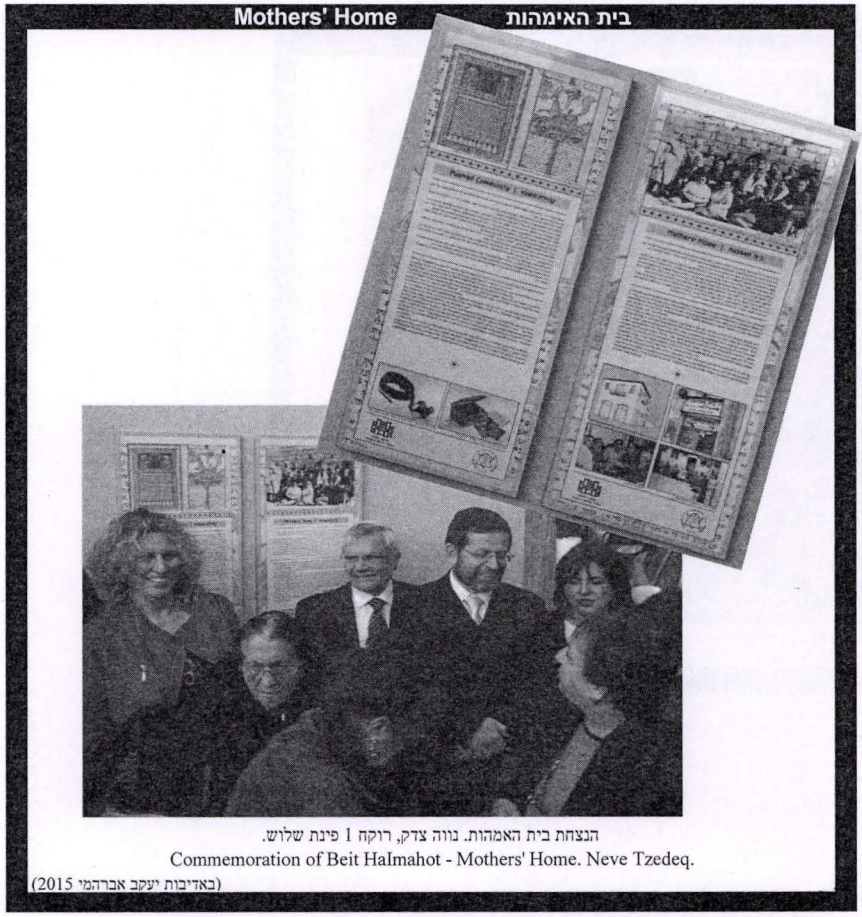
Anuse Meshed Street רח' אנוסי משהד
(צולם 2009)



(צולם 2009)

Mashhad Picnic Area תניון משהד

(צולם ב- 2010)



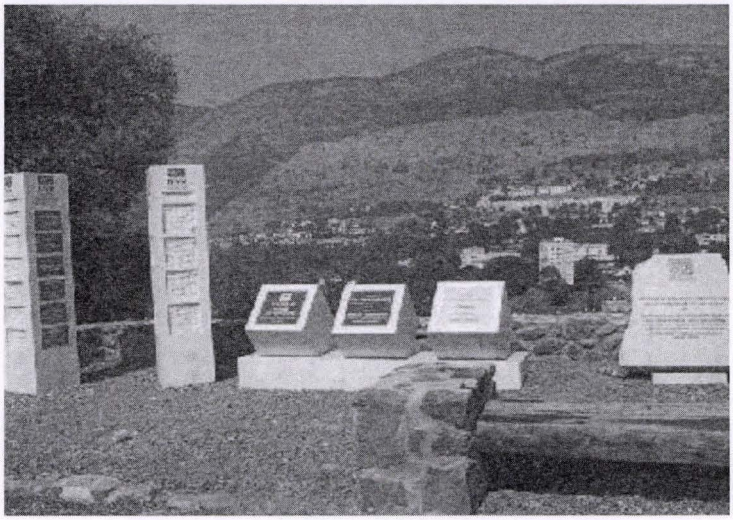
הנצחת בית האמהות. נווה צדק, רוקח 1 פינת שלוש.
Commemoration of Beit HaImahot - Mothers' Home. Neve Tzedeq.
(באדיבות יעקב אברהמי 2015)

Har Adar - On the Way to Jerusalem הר אדר - בדרך לירושלים

Mashhad Picnic Area חניון משהד

(צולם ב- 2010)

Shechumit Hill גבעת שחומית



In honor of Mashhadi Communities חורש לכבוד אנוסי משהד

(צולם 2007)

Tour of the Mashhadi Neighborhood

in the Bukharan Quarter, Jerusalem

	History of Mashhadi Jews in Eretz Israel	
Introduction	Let's start our journey from 1746 when Nader Shah moved a group of 40 Jews to Mashhad to guard his treasures. Nissim, the father of the Nissimis, was included in that group. To illustrate this journey's timeline, we will follow the descendants of Nissim until they reach Jerusalem:	1746-1908 [Beit Saba/…]
	• David ben Shlomo (grandson of Nissim) was one of the notables of Marv before the forced conversion.	1832
	• Rabbi Yehuda ben Yosef (grandson of Nissim) witnessed the forced conversion.	1839
	• Rabbi Moshe ben David (great-grandson of Nissim) was one of the rabbis during the underground years.	
	Rabbi Moshe was born about 1830. Before he reached bar mitzvah age, the forced conversion took place in Mashhad. Rabbi Moshe was one of the first rabbis who grew up during the hundred-year underground. He was the first spiritual dignitary who immigrated to Jerusalem (~1900). As will be seen below, the first aliyah of the Mashhadis comprised spiritual leaders and community leaders – those who had the drive and the means necessary to immigrate to Eretz Israel.	
	It is told that after the blessing over the wine, one Shabbat eve more than a century ago, a pair of doves flew from the window sill of Rabbi Moshe. The rabbi turned to his family, "Let us hurry to eat the Shabbat meal and recite the blessings – for my time has come." The rabbi died that Shabbat eve. He was buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem east of Yad Avshalom (before the Mashhadis had acquired their own burial plot on the Mount of Olives).	[Dani Nassimiha] 1907
	Rabbi Moshe belonged to the fourth generation of the Jews of Mashhad. This was a generation of Jews that lived their entire lives underground. His immigration was the harbinger of the foundation of the Mashhadi Jewish community in Eretz Israel. Now, just four generations since Rabbi Moshe, most Mashhadi Jews live in Israel, along with substantial communities in New York, London and Milan. Today there are no Mashhadi Jews in Mashhad. This tour was first conducted by Mrs. Dvora Nissim who grew up in Jerusalem. She is the great-granddaughter of Rabbi Moshe (the fourth generation). The aliyah of the Mashhadi community to Eretz Israel can be divided into four periods. These periods are characterized by the four stanzas of "HaTiqva."	
… A Jewish soul still yearns	The suspicious neighborhood surrounding the Mashhadi community expected the dignitaries (and the rich) of the Jadid al-Islam community to visit the Shiite holy places. More than fifty members of the community made this long journey, and many of them went through Jerusalem, the place for which the Jewish soul	1840-1900

	yearns. After a journey of months, on their return to Mashhad they brought news from Zion and thus paved the way for others. Neimark wrote: [The dignitaries of the forced conversion of Mashhad] "... journeyed to visit ... Mecca, and returned via Jerusalem. They visited the Rabbi, HaRav HaGaon Rishon LeZion, and revealed their secret to him." And indeed the Rishon LeZion knew them as: "All merciful sons of merciful men" and he thanked them for their contributions and their generosity: "To our honorable and merciful brothers, the dear men of the holy community of Marv, and specifically the honorable Agha Haji Aminoff, may G-d protect him, Agha Haji Habibolah HaLevi, may G-d protect him, Agha Lotfolah ben Agha Mohammad, may G-d protect him, Agha Mola Yahya Bassal, may G-d protect him, Agha Reza Nissim, may G-d protect him, Agha Faraj Nissim, Agha Yosef Ghassab, all merciful sons of merciful men ..." Dvora Nissim is the granddaughter of Yosef Ghassab. It is interesting to see that among the first immigrants we will meet representatives from the families mentioned above.	
... An eye still gazes towards Zion	"... An eye still gazes towards Zion" characterized the years in which the return to Zion began to be realized, and the first of the isolated Mashhadi Jews from the eastern outskirts started making aliyah to Eretz Israel. The uniqueness of this aliyah is that it was completely the result of private initiatives - with no assistance from Jewish institutions or the emerging state. The pioneers of these aliyahs were primarily from among the dignitaries of the community – outstanding rabbis (such as Rabbi Moshe) and openhearted and openhanded community leaders (such as Adoniyahu HaKohen and Yechezqel Levy).	1900-1930
... The hope of two thousand years	"... The hope of two thousand years" started to be fulfilled with the immigration of hundreds of youth – an illegal immigration! Besides the immigration of rabbis (like Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar) and caring and generous community members (like Menashe Aminoff and Farajelah Levy). Yitzhak Ben Zvi, after his return from Iran, described the circumstances of the Jews of Mashhad as follows: "In recent years ... especially among the younger generation ... tired of the duality ... they traveled to other countries ... to London ... to Eretz Israel. Among those coming to Eretz Israel ... were men with the means for engaging in commerce, and those who settled down on a plot land (in Afula). And those who were without means and who took jobs as laborers, they went to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the moshavot (small farms) ... about 250 [people] ... some of them without a permit ..."	1920-1950 1935
... The land of Zion and Jerusalem	"... The land of Zion and Jerusalem" characterizes the years wherein the return to Zion was fulfilled and huge numbers of immigrants fit themselves into the "melting pot" of Israeli society. It was a process that involved people from all "four corners" of the Earth, who spoke different languages and lived different lifestyles. The process was accompanied by numerous wars and the tragic loss of and mourning for the best of the youth. This steamroller of inner turmoil,	1950-2000

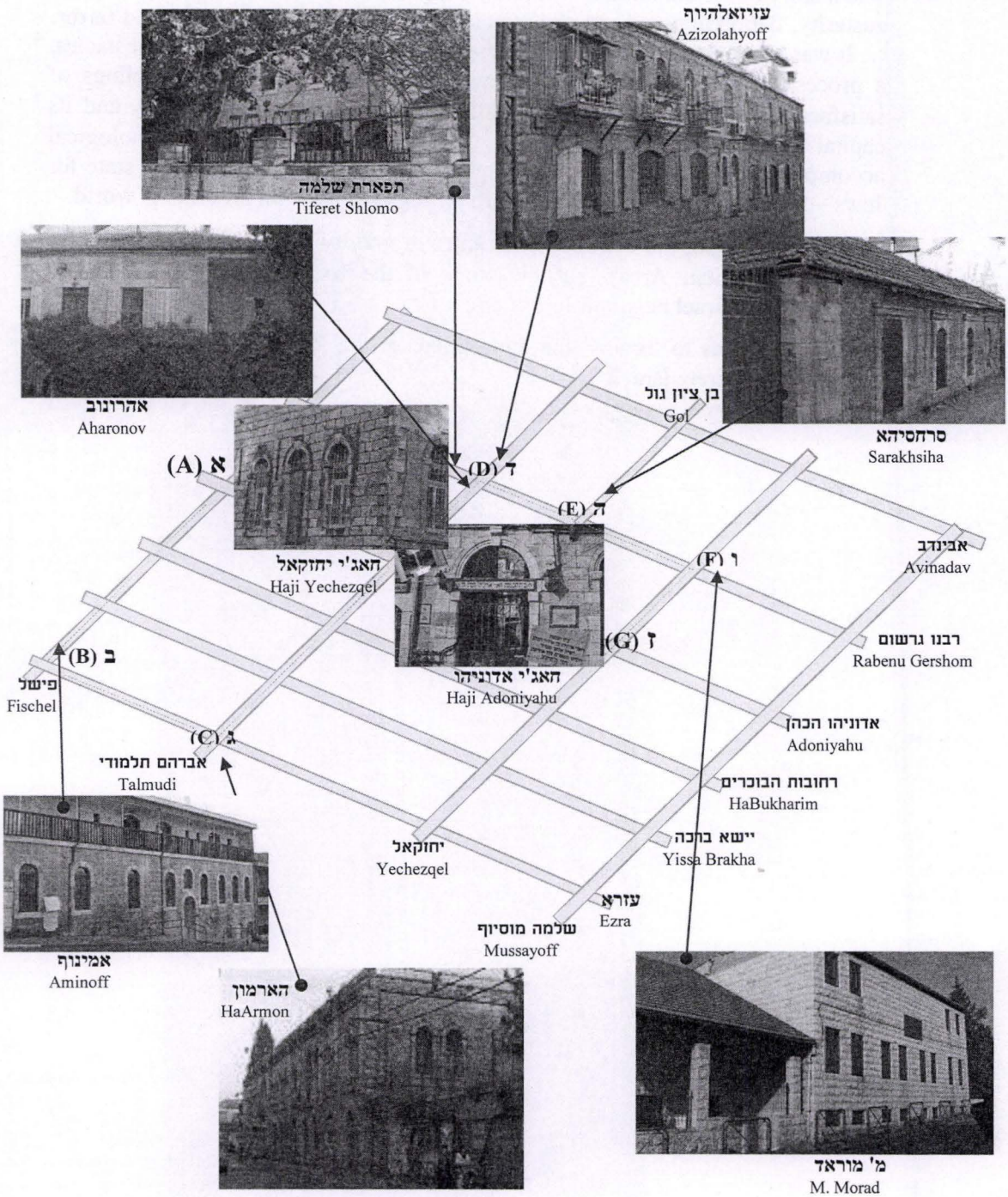
security problems, and mounting national pressures created a Jewish and democratic state into which Mashhadi Jewry fully and unreservedly integrated.

The history of the community was the history of the country. Difficult periods of austerity, depression and unemployment … periods of wars, killing and terror. … It was all an ongoing process of struggle, progress and overcoming obstacles, a process whose results provided Jews wherever they were with feelings of satisfaction, pride and belonging. Satisfaction in building the country and its capital Jerusalem. Pride in its social, scientific and technological accomplishments. Belonging – to the possibility of advancing the only state for Jews – the state that continues to absorb immigrants from all around the world.

During this period, the community's center of gravity moved to Gush Dan (Tel Aviv Metropolitan Area), but the story of the formation of the Mashhadi community in Israel began in Jerusalem.

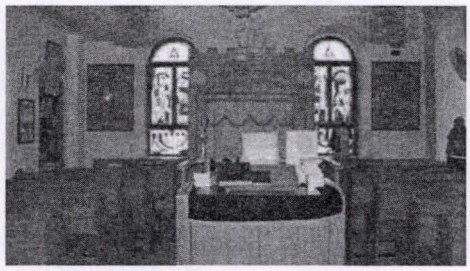
This tour intends to 'revive' the atmosphere of the first days of the Mashhadi community in Eretz Israel.

Map of the Mashhadi Neighborhood in the Bukhari Quarter



The tour starts at the Haji Yechezqel Synagogue at point A, passes through points B - F and ends in the Haji Adoniyahu Synagogue at point G.

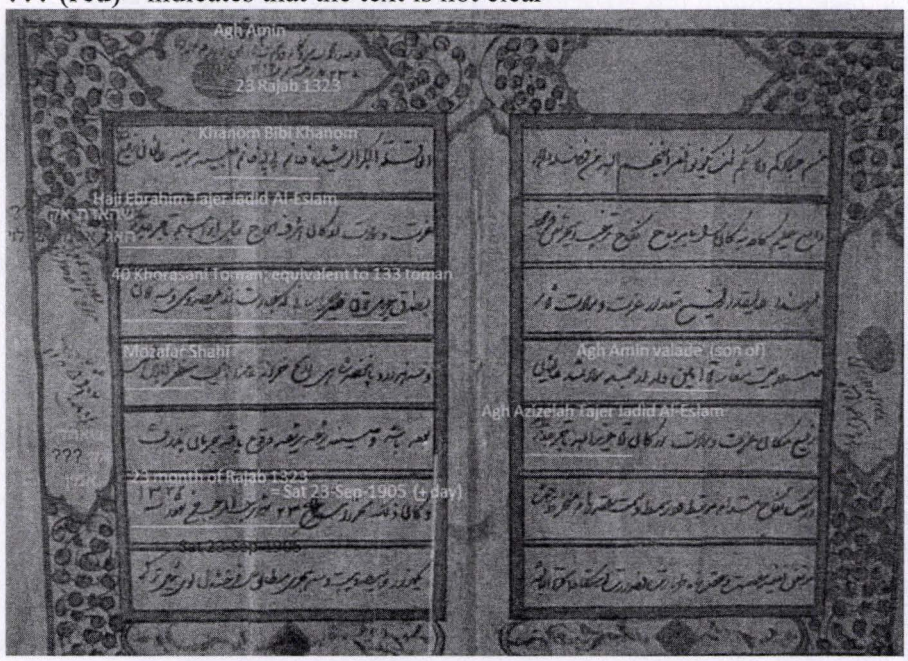
Intersection A	Haji Yechezqel Synagogue	Adoniyahu Street
Haji Yechezqel Levy	Haji Yechezqel (Esmael), ben Yaaqov Levy, dealt in trade and industry in Mashhad (he had a fabric weaving factory). He was successful in business and accumulated considerable property. He had no children, but he did have an open and giving heart. In Mashhad he established public bathhouses for men and women (the cost in today's [=2008] terms would be $4 million). He visited Mecca and was "bestowed" the title Haji. Yechezqel was about seventy years old when he decided to immigrate to Eretz Israel. In preparation, he visited Jerusalem twice and studied Hebrew with Rabbi Yosef Bassal. In Jerusalem he built a courtyard and in it a synagogue and 21 units (rooms) for immigrants and the disadvantaged. The inscription on this building tells of his works: I am the servant of G-d, Blessed be His Name. I donated all these houses, and this is my residence. H. Yechezqel ben Yaaqov HaLevy, may G-d protect me [in the year 1905].	...1914 [Times Gone By/ Israel]
Rabbi Yosef Betzalel (Bassal)	Rabbi Yosef was one of the most prominent rabbis of the period of the forced conversion. He was one of the prisoners of Herat that settled in Mashhad. He was the rabbi and teacher of prominent rabbis (such as Rabbi Levi Nissim and Rabbi Menashe Betzalel) in the periods that followed.	1835-1910 Times Gone By/ Underground]
Rabbi Matatiyahu ben Mordechai Garji	On a journey that lasted three and a half months, Rabbi Garji and his son visited Jerusalem (1896). Their route was: Herat – Bukhara – Baku – Black Sea – by ship to Istanbul – Beirut – Yafo – by train to Jerusalem. Twelve years later, Rabbi Garji made aliyah and settled in Jerusalem (1908). He authored, among others, "Oneg Shabbat". In his book he wrote, "and I, the humblest, was born in Herat ... seven years after the destruction of the city of Mashhad." Later he described the forced conversion, quoting Rabbi Yehuda Nissim who lived at that time, and finally he described the Mashhadi forced converts' community in Jerusalem: "And I dwell within Rechovot in the neighborhood of the Bukharan holy community, may G-d bless them with many blessings, as 'Rechovot' in numerology is 'Blessing' (Birkat); may G-d bless them all. And my apartment is in the courtyard of Haji Yechezqel ben Mola Yaaqov HaLevy. And he was among the forced converts. And in his old age he immigrated with his wife to the holy city of Jerusalem, which will be built and established quickly in our times. And he built houses and courtyards for endowment to the needy, and he also built a magnificent synagogue. He left this world with a good and honorable name, he and his wife Michal, daughter of Nethanel. And several other men of means from among the forced converts came to the holy city of Jerusalem and they built a synagogue, and houses and courtyards and bequeathed them to the community, so they will have a fine community in the Holy Land. And also the rest of the forced converts who remained there walked in the footsteps of G-d, doing the best they could. And all of them pursued charity and kindness, may they have the good fortune to be blessed	1845-1917 [Times Gone By/ Underground] 1846 רהובות=ברכת = 622

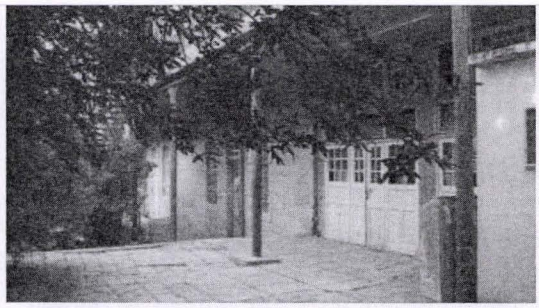
	with the grace of G-d. And G-d will help them and will save them from the wicked, and G-d will save them because they followed Him."	
Intersection B	The Aminoff House	Fischel Street
The Aminoff House	The house was built in 1922. It is a large, one-story building. It included a synagogue with decorated windows, a large yard with a well, and a private bath in the basement. Weddings for the members of the congregation were conducted here. Today the building is used as a home for senior citizens. A second floor was added. The synagogue still exists but is used as a library. Synagogue 	[Dvora Nissim] [Azaria Levy]
Haji Mela Amin Kordevani	Mela Amin lived for a while in Marv, is remembered as one of the notables of the community of Marv, and founded a synagogue there. He was known as the father of orphans, widows and the poor. He was active in matters of Torah study. He imported Bibles written in Persian and ensured that every bride have, as part of her dowry, a Bible for her new home. Mela Amin undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca, and on his way back, visited Jerusalem. His descendants are called Aminoff. This was a wealthy family who used their prosperity to help the needy.	1847-1910 [Times Gone By/ Underground]
Menashe Aminoff	Menashe (Haji Abdelah) was the oldest son of Mela Amin. He was born in Mashhad and studied at the Beit Midrash of Mela Abba. He worked with his father, who had a thriving business. In 1919 he traveled to Bombay, for commercial reasons, and lived there for ten years, staying off and on in Jerusalem. In 1922 he immigrated to Jerusalem and built a magnificent house for himself in the Bukharan neighborhood. Menashe faithfully led the congregation in Jerusalem. He initiated the shipping of clothing from the Mashhadi community in London and distributed the clothes to the needy (with the Shamash of the Haji Adoniyahu Synagogue) in Jerusalem. His generosity was not limited to those within the community - he supported the orphanage "Zion" headed by Rabbi Blumenthal, established a permanent building (1929) on the lot his father purchased back in 1896, and also ensured a continuous supply of food and clothing for the children. Menashe initiated the purchase of the Mashhadi plot on the Mount of Olives (1926). He passed away in 1938. His sons, Mehdi and Faraj, established in their home a synagogue in his memory.	1865-1938 [Azaria Levy]
Memoirs from the War of Independence	The Aminoff family had another house on Ben Yehuda Street. Before the establishment of Israel, the house was destroyed when a car bomb exploded nearby. Because of the lack of basic commodities, the beams from the yard	[Dvora Nissim] 1947

	were taken to be used for cooking and laundry. During the War of Independence, the house served as a refuge for those who lived in the *Tefer* area (the cease fire lines between Israel and Jordan). The house was in shooting range of the Jordanians - who controlled the tomb of Nabi Samuel (Shmuel HaNavi (Prophet)). More than 20 artillery shells fell on this lot. Following is a description of a pause in the shelling from Dvora Nissim: "I was 15. We took refuge in the Aminoff house because we lived in the Tefer area near Givat HaTachmoshet (Ammunition Hill). We took advantage of one of the intervals in the shelling to go upstairs and eat in a corner of the kitchen. Suddenly the shelling started again. Mother tried to run with me to the shelter, but Father pushed us into a corner ... And at that same moment a shell exploded in the courtyard. ... We heard a shout from below (from the shelter) – 'Make a sound if you are alive' ... " By the mercy of G-d, Dvora and her parents survived unharmed.	1948
Stones from the Grave of the Prophet Shmuel	In his youth, David ben Nissim went to Jerusalem and studied at the Yeshiva of Halabis with Rabbi Yaaqov Addas (1896). When his schooling was completed, David returned to Sarakhs and married Dina Kordevani (1900). Several years passed, and the young couple had no children. Rabbi David decided to return to Jerusalem (1903). Before his return, he visited the grave of Shmuel HaNavi and prayed for children. He took away with him seven stones, with the intention of returning them when he had children. When he returned home, Rabbi David's prayers were answered and he had a son whom he called Shmuel after the prophet Shmuel HaNavi. The Rabbi sent the seven stones of Jerusalem back via a traveler in order to return them (as he had promised in his prayer). On the way, one of the stones got lost and only six stones were returned to the mountain. With the rise of communism, many Jews left Marv - but Rabbi David remained. In the summer of 1921, Rabbi David travelled to the communities in the area to perform kosher slaughter for the Jews (before the month of Av). He was accompanied by his student, Nethanel ben Yehuda Nissim (the younger brother of Rabbi Levy - Mela Abdelah). Towards evening, on the road to Obeh (a Turkmen village), they were attacked by bandits and murdered on the spot. Dina was convinced that her bitter fate was due to the loss of the seventh stone - the stone that was promised to be returned to Jerusalem but was not restored to its place. After the establishment of the state, the family immigrated to Israel. Dina also made aliyah to Israel – a consolation for her loss. Rabbi Yosef Garji, in his book "Joseph's Testimony." quotes the verse "For Your servants desired its stones and favored its dust." (Psalms 102, 15), and it is noted that "whoever 'comes to Ziyareh' ('makes a pilgrimage') - he brings with him stones from Jerusalem..."	1896-1950 [Beit Saba/ Zvuloni] [עדות ביהוסף]

Intersection C	The Palace	Ezra Street
	The Bukharan quarter was considered a luxury area when it was built in the late Nineteenth Century. Its wide streets, large beautiful houses, and landscaped courtyards stood out from the neighboring areas. The Mashhadi neighborhood was located in this quarter. The 'Palace' (the Yehudayoff House) was the most luxurious house in the area - the place for Mashiyach the King when he comes. General Allenby was a guest there when he conquered Jerusalem and Herbert Samuel when he was the first High Commissioner. The Palace is included in our tour because it stands out in the neighborhood and because it was used by local residents (including the Mashhadis) as a place for celebrations, education, and also for underground activities.	[The Bukharans and their Neighborhood ...] 1914
Celebrations	On the ceiling of the top floor of the Palace were magnificent Biblical paintings. Many Mashhadis were married there.	[Dvora Nissim]
Education	The Spitzer School for Girls was located in the Palace building. Esther Moradoff (granddaughter of Rabbi Moshe) was educated there in the 1920s. Later her daughter, Dvora Nissim, studied there. Dvora relates: "I studied history under Shoshanna Raziel Spitzer. Shoshanna's mother, Hanna, ran the school." (Shoshanna Spitzer, wife of David Raziel, was arrested along with Geula Cohen during the British Mandate.) Each class had a flag. The students wore uniforms - a blue dress, white collar and blue tie. There was a piano in the hall in the school; there the students learned the finest music compositions.	[Dvora Nissim]
The Underground	Itzhaq Ben-Ami (great-grandson of Rabbi Moshe) describes the circumstances of his joining Etzel (Irgun): We lived in the Bukharan Quarter, corner of Yechezqel and David Streets. I was very impressed when I passed by the cell of the Brit HaChashmonaiim (Alliance of the Hasmoneans) – populated with young, observant Jews, and very nationalistic. They wore a dark blue uniform. All the members of the cell were educated and from prominent families. I used to pass by, and I envied them. I was 14 years old when I joined Etzel. ... I was invited [for a certain date] to the Spitzer School for Girls in the Bukharan Quarter. According to instructions, I knocked three times, and repeated the password given to me. The gate opened and closed, and someone escorted me to one of the classrooms. The place was completely dark. In a classroom, behind a small screen, sat two young men. They asked me to stand at attention, and my whole body was shaking. They asked me personal questions including the reason I wanted to join Etzel. The first thing I had to do was select an 'alias' and I chose the name "Ben-Ami." The reason I chose this name was that my relative, Nethanel Nissim, one of the first diamond cutters in the country, began his profession in Netanya. At that time, the mayor of Netanya was Oved Ben-Ami. To me, it was a beautiful and magical name, and eventually I chose it to be my family name.	[Beit Saba / Itzhaq Ben-Ami] 1940s

	Nethanel Nissim was the great-grandson of Rabbi Moshe. At that time he was in Etzel, and later he married Dvora Nissim.	[Beit Saba/ Nethanel…]
Intersection D	The Aharonov House	Talmudi Street
Intersection E	Tiferet Shlomo Yeshiva	Rabenu Gershom
	The Tiferet Shlomo Yeshiva was the first endowment of the Ebrahimoff family. Itzhaq Elishayoff raised money and built an orphanage there. Itzhaq and his wife were childless. They cared for children that had been abandoned and were homeless. Itzhaq, whenever he drank a cup of tea at the orphanage, made sure to put some money in their *tzedakah* box so as not to take advantage of their generosity.	[Azaria Levy]
Rabbi Shlomo ben Mashiyach	Rabbi Shlomo was one of the students of Mela Abba. He immigrated to Israel from Mashhad in 1906. He was among the prominent preachers at the Haji Adoniyahu Synagogue, and a known cabbalist in Jerusalem. Tiferet Shlomo Yeshiva commemorates his name. Rabbi Shlomo wrote a poem about the history of the Jews of Mashhad. Following are excerpts from his poem.	1872-1956 [Times Gone By/ Israel]
Hebrew Text of Verses		[Sources]
א	O Lord, open my lips to tell of Thy greatness Give me courage and strengthen me, that I can tell the next generation of Thy strength and Thy might If I have no good deeds, do not bring to judgment Thy servant Cast me not off, neither forsake me, for Thy mercies, O Lord	
ג	Even so in the cities of Persia, and Mashhad among them, she that was full of people There they were exiled from Qazvin in the days of Nader Shah, the poorest of the people, but they were loyal to G-d Living there to this day and they are princes of His people He preserveth the faithful, the Lord	
ד	The tear of these oppressed you noticed when they were forced to convert True faith in 1839 they exchanged for thorns and briers They have bent their bow to consume the vineyard in Nissan (Mar-Apr) when the nightingale sings [=spring] 'A vineyard of foaming wine' [=the Jewish people] they are to Thee Lord	
ה	Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, Hath Thy soul loathed the sons of Zion [=Mashhadi Jews] They have brought their honor down to the dust, pretentious, not as Thy wish Still in secret they shall weep their soul and love Thy name Where are Thy former mercies, O Lord	
ת	Tend me with Thy loving kindness, from Thy glorious skies Crush and cut off them that rise up against Thee until extermination wholly determined May the reign of insolence be uprooted And the Lord shall be King over all the earth, on that day, O Lord	

Intersection D	The Azizelahoff (Levy) House	Talmudi Street
Foundation of the House	Amin ben Azaria Azizelahoff (= Azizolahoff) Levy and his family immigrated to Eretz Israel from Mashhad in 1921. The family first lived at the courtyard of Haji Yechezqel and later began building their own home, Azizelahoff House ... the house was constructed around 1924-925. A Muslim Ketuba from Mashhad (year 1905) states: • The groom, Agh Amin ben Azizelah Tajer Jadid al-Eslam • The bride, Khanom Bibi Khanom bat Ebrahim Tajer Jadid al-Eslam Below is an excerpt from the text, with a translation of the identifying information: • Signatures - in Hebrew letters (in brown) • Names and Dates - in English letters (in yellow) **??? (red)** - indicates that the text is not clear  	[From the granddaughter Anat bat Ben-Zion Levy] [Amin and Khanom Bibi are the parents of the researcher Azaria Levy]
Celebrations	It is a large and beautiful structure, two stories high, with a courtyard, and an interior yard containing additional rooms. In these rooms lived several Mashhadi families. Many weddings were held in the Azizelahoff courtyard. In the 1940s, the young people would organize evenings of singing and dancing here (and also in other places). Because there was sometimes a shortage of young ladies, some of the men had to dance with a broom.	[Dvora Nissim]

	 The Courtyard	
Intersection E	Sarakhsiha	Gol Street
Structure	The Sarakhsiha courtyard was endowed by the Mashhadis in Sarakhs. It is made up of a courtyard, two rows of rooms, a kitchenette made of tin and only one bathroom. About 14 families and 50 children lived there. An inscription on the well commemorates the year, and there is a warning "Not To Be Sold..." Many of the first Mashhadis lived in this courtyard (Moradoff, Zar, Azariya...). Today the place is deserted and neglected. Due to legal problems it has not yet been registered in the name of the community.	[Dvora Nissim] [Avraham Azariya]
World War I	During World War I, Malka Moradoff and her children lived in the Sarakhsiha courtyard. Malka was the granddaughter of Rabbi Moshe. Her husband, at that time, was staying in Russia. Their children Shalom and Esther Moradoff (aged 10 and 7) were working in the orchard near Bab al-Amud near the Damascus Gate (Sha'ar Shechem). It was Hanukkah, 1917, and the British had captured Jerusalem. On the day the British entered the city, Shalom and Esther were sent home from the orchard. On the way home, suddenly an English soldier started running towards them, lifted Esther and grabbed Shalom and kept running. Suddenly a car bomb exploded. The soldier had saved the lives of the siblings, the grandchildren of Rabbi Moshe. After the occupation, a number of British soldiers lived at the courtyard. Shalom found some explosives and asked the soldiers if they were coal. The soldiers, not understanding Hebrew, answered "yes" in English. Shalom ignited them and was seriously injured from the explosion that ensued. Malka took the child to Dr. Wallach at the Shaare Zedek Hospital. ... Shalom was released from the hospital three years later. His bar mitzvah was celebrated in the hospital.	[Beit Saba/ Malka...] 1910s
Intersection F	The House of Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar (Mela Morad)	Rabenu Gershom
Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar	Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar was the prominent rabbi of his time. In 1927 he immigrated to Jerusalem, and he died on 1936. He was buried on the Mount of Olives in the plot of the Mashhadis. The Rabbi published prayer books and other writings. Rabbi Mordechai lived in this house, and afterwards, so did several of his	1850-1936 [Times Gone By/ Israel] [Dvora Nissim]

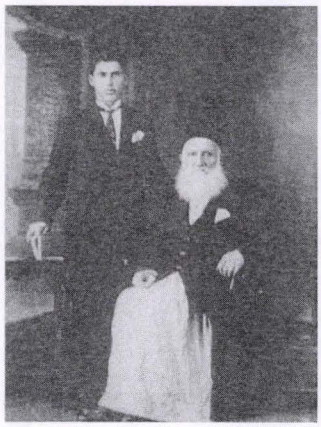
	descendants. The house had additional units that could be rented.	
Intersection G	The Haji Adoniyahu HaKohen Synagogue	Adoniyahu Street
Haji Adoniyahu HaKohen	Two years after Haji Yechezqel, the sons of Mela Aharon, called Aharonov, immigrated to Jerusalem. The head brother was Haji Adoniyahu HaKohen. As one of the prominent traders of the community in Mashhad he made a pilgrimage to Mecca and the title Haji was conferred on him. On his way, he visited Jerusalem and bought land there. When he made aliyah to Israel, he built a magnificent synagogue in his name. The stone inscription on the synagogue relates his work: "... This magnificent building ... donated by the aged and honorable... Adoniya ... HaKohen, 'his soul is in Eden' ... G-d willing we will merit the solace of Zion and the building of Jerusalem 'soon in our days, amen'..." Rabbi Moshe Nissim was one of the prayers at this synagogue. Natan Dil was the keeper of the synagogue. Today (year 2008) he is 85 years old and lives near the synagogue in north Tel Aviv. In the 1940s a number of educated young people from the community established a club inside the building. The club was closed (due to the intervention of the Aminoffs) because boys and girls were socializing together.	...- 1901 [Times Gone By/ Israel] [Azaria Levy] [Dvora Nissim]
Children of the Synagogue	Itzhaq Ben-Ami tells of his childhood memories as a new immigrant: In the year 1933 we came to the Holy Land, and settled down in the courtyard of the Mashhadi synagogue, named after Haji Adoniyahu, in the Bukharan Quarter. There was already a flourishing Mashhadi community in Jerusalem. ... [I studied] at the Talmud Torah Nezer Aharon (Crown of Aharon) under Mola Mamon on David Street. Many of the middle-class children of the community learned there. Mamon was a very wise man, an educator, knew Hebrew and grammar, and insisted that we read and write correctly.... Hananiya, the youngest son of Eliyahu HaKohen, Rabbi Itzhaq Elishayoff and I - we were "soul buddies,' and we have stayed in touch all our lives.	[Beit Saba/ Itzhaq Ben-Ami] 1930s
	The Community Organization	1920-1950
	Starting in the 1920s we founded an organized community centered in Jerusalem. The community was led by a representative body, the "Committee of Mashhadi Immigrants of Jerusalem" (Jama'at). The committee dealt with aliyah, providing support services to new immigrants, helping the needy, lending furniture and cooking utensils for celebrations or for mourning, matters of Chessed and Emet (grace and truth) (the Mashhadi cemetery plot, organizing burials), and so on. The head of the committee was Menashe Aminoff. With the aliyah of Farajelah Levy, the two of them headed the committee. Menashe Aminoff died in 1938. Farajelah Levy led the congregation until his death in 1951. The committee members were Simcha Levy (Azizelahoff), Farajelah Naamat, Ebrahim Davidoff, Habibelah Levy, Eliyahu Shmueloff, Haji Naghioff, Abdelrahim Esmaeloff. The secretary was Binyamin Aharonoff. Weddings were held in the courtyards of the synagogues and in the yards of	[Azaria Levy]

	wealthy families. The ritual purification room of the community was located in the Adoniyahu HaKohen Synagogue. In 1926 the committee purchased a plot for the Mashhadis on the Mount of Olives. Before the purchase, the deceased were buried at the foot of the Mount of Olives, to the east of Yad Avshalom (for example, Rabbi Moshe Nissim, Haji Adoniyahu and Haji Yechezqel). In 1928 The youth of the community founded a club and a library called Hertzliya. They taught Hebrew to new immigrants in the evenings. The club did not last long. In 1940 a second club was established, also with a library. The members of the club were given lessons in the Bible, Maimonides' teachings, and lectures on current affairs. In the 1940s the community numbered about 100 families (approximately 500 people). There were around 20 wealthy families, and the rest were middle class or disadvantaged.	
	Details	
Sources	• Tour with Mrs. Dvora Nissim, wife of Nethanel Nissim, of the places where they grew up. • The tour was first held during Pesach 2008 (coincidentally on the 100th anniversary of the death of the great-grandfather, Rabbi Moshe). • Abstracts from the site www.nissimi.org (Chapters: Israel, Beit Saba, Sources) • Articles by Azaria Levy – Haji Abdelah Aminoff, Committee for Mashhadi Immigrants in Jerusalem • The book The Bukharans and their Neighborhoods in Jerusalem - Yad Ben Zvi • Memoirs of Avraham Azaria	
Editor	Edited by Reuven Nissimi	2008

מייסדי הקהילה המשהדית בירושלים

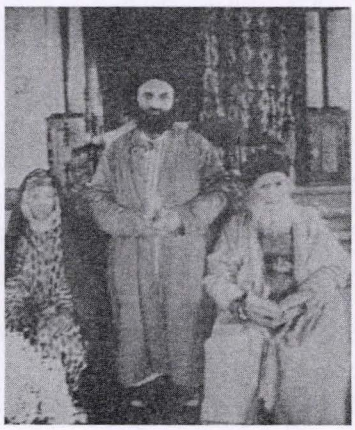
Founders of the Mashhadi Community in Jerusalem

Rabbis רבנים



הרב מרדכי אקלר עם הנכד דויד

Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar with his grandson, David



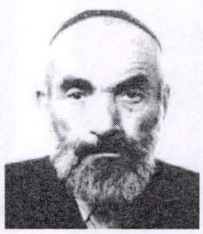
הרב מתתיהו גרג'י ורעייתו עם הבן הרב יוסף גרג'י

Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji with his wife and his son, Rabbi Yosef Garji

הרב משה נסים

Rabbi Moshe Nissim

Generosity נדיבי לב



פרג'אלה לוי

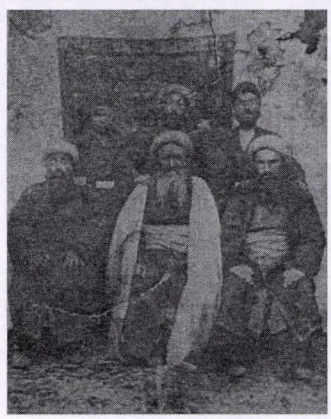
Farajelah Levi

חאג'י יחזקאל

Haji Yechezqel

חאג'י אדוניהו

Haji Adoniyahu

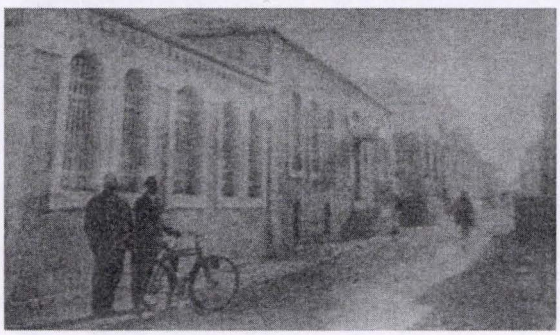


Aharon HaKohen bros.: Refael (Rafi), Haji Adoniyahu (Morteza), Matatiyahu (Haji Mehdi)
Standing: Aharon ben Nethanel HaKohen, Eliyahu HaKohen, Nissan ben Shmuel HaKohen

האחים אהרונוף כהן: מתתיה (ח' מהדי), חאג'י אדוניה (ח' מורתזא) ורפאל (רפיע)
עומדים: ניסן בן שמואל כהן, אליהו הכהן, אהרון בן נתנאל הכהן

Aharonoff Family משפחת אהרונוף

The House of the Aharonoff Family בית משפחת אהרונוף



ביתם של מתתיהו ומלכה אהרונוף - נתפס ע"י הצבא התורכי בימי מלחמת העולם הראשונה

The house of Matatiyahu and Malka Aharonoff - Occupied by the Ottoman Army during World War I

[Pictures - Courtesy of Efraim Levi (2010)]

[התמונות - באדיבות אפרים לוי (2010)]

צעירי הקהילה המשהדית בירושלים

Mashhadi Community Youth in Jerusalem

Mashhadi Club מועדון המשהדים

ירושלים 1940s - חברי מועדון המשהדים לפני קום המדינה

עומדים - רחמים עזיזאלהיוף לוי, יעקב (כושי) בצלאל, בן-ציון אמינוף, עזריה עזיזאלהיוף לוי, יעקב כורדוואני, בן-ציון נוריאלי

יושבים - נתנאל נסים, יצחק יוספון, אברהם יעקבי (נהרג במלחמת השחרור בגבעת התחמושת), מנחם נוריאל, דויד גוהרי

Jerusalem 1940s - Members of the Mashhadi Club

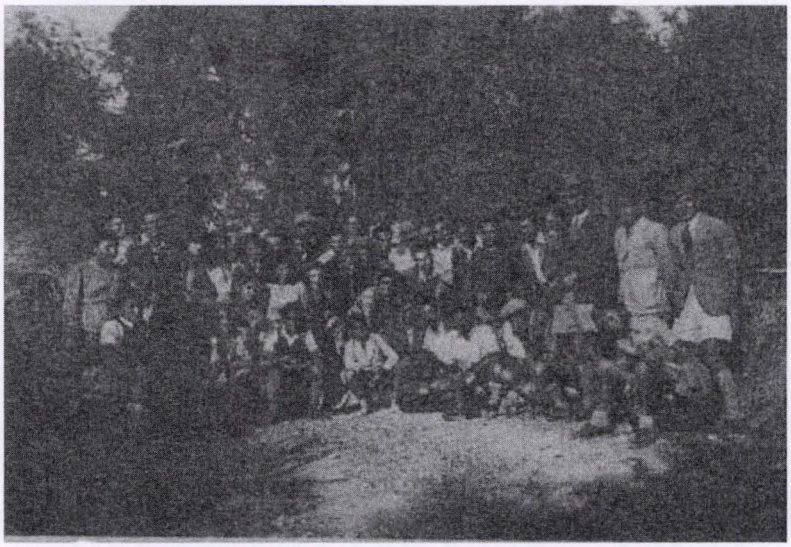
Standing: Ben Zion Nurieli, Yaaqov Kordevani, Azaria Azizelahoff Levi, Ben Zion Aminoff, Yaaqov (Kushi) Betzalel, Rachamim Azizelahoff Levi

Sitting: David Gohari, Menachem Nurieli, Avraham Yaaqobi (was killed during Independence War In Givat HaTachmoshet), Itzhaq Yosefun, Nethanel Nissim

Football Team קבוצת כדורגל

Jerusalem 1940s ירושלים

In the open country בחיק הטבע



1940s

[Pictures - Courtesy of Mrs. Dvora Nissim (2008)]
[התמונות - באדיבות גב' דבורה נסים (2008)]

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Sources
Introduction
Ketubot

*

Prior to the Forced Conversion
Rabbi Siman Tov Melamed
Political Background
Wolff - his First Voyage
Conolly

*

Forced Conversions

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From the Forced Conversion
Wolff - his Second Visit
Ferrier
Basset
Neimark
A Poem – R. Mashiyach
World War I in Jerusalem
Attempts to Immigrate
Bukhari Refugees
Pesach 1946

* Sources *

	Introduction	
Jews of Mashhad - Primary Sources	This section presents the history of the Jews of Mashhad from *primary* sources containing minimal explanations and interpretations. You can learn about the history of the Jews of Mashhad by investigating these main sources:	

Sources	Remarks
Archives	Such as Hebrew University, Central Zionist Archives, and British Archives (PRO)
Records of Emissaries' journeys	Emissaries who travelled to Iran from Eretz Israel, such as Efraim Neimark
Records of visitors' journeys	Visitors who travelled to Iran, such as Wolff and Ferrier
Reports of various delegations in Iran	Such as British and Russian officers and diplomats
Written documentation of community	Scripts on holy books, ketubot, etc.

Ketubot (Marriage Contracts) – List of Sources

Identification	Source	Years
Below is list of sources of ketubot, and a study of the ketubot, detailing their contents.		
Huji	Hebrew University http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/ketubbot/	1831-1925
Sarshar	Esther's Children book	1853-1926
Reuven	Reuven Tashakori's collection	1861-1926
Aghalar	Zikaron Tzadikim (Memoirs of the Righteous) book	1923
Namdar	Khosrow Namdar's collection (received from Bahman Kamali)	1926
Documents/ …	Refer to: Pictures\ Documents\...\ ketuba …	1918-1949
Background/ Mashhadi Neighborhood	Refer to: Background/ Mashhadi Neighborhood\ …\ ketuba	1905

Note: The names on the ketubot, no matter whether Jewish or Islamic, are sometimes in Hebrew and sometimes in Persian – therefore, in many cases, the transliteration is ambiguous. For clarity, if the source was in Hebrew I used a different transliteration rule than if the source was in Persian. For example, the Hebrew names "*Avraham ben Yosef*" and "*David ben Mordechai*" are equivalent to "*Ebrahim son of Yussuf*" and "*Davood son of Mordekhai*" in a Persian source.

In cases of Persian, I preferred to use Persian pronunciation rather than Arabic – E.g. *Ebrahim*, *Abdolah* and *JadidolEslam* instead of *Ibrahim*, *Abdullah* and *Jadid-al-Islam*.

"???" or "~": means that the text was not clear.

Study of Ketubot (Marriage Contracts)

Source	Place	Groom	Bride	Rabbi	Witness	Comments	Year
Huji ט אלול 5550	Mashhad	Nissim ben Binyamin	Dina bat Baba	Siman Tov ben Reuven	Seven names – Illegible		**1790**
Huji כט באייר תקצ"א	Mashhad	Shmuel ben Eliyahu	Elisheva bat Yosef	Reuven ben Siman Tov	David ben Binyamin Kohen Nuriel ben Yaaqov Jani ben Baba Bassal		**1831**
Huji יד בניסן תקצ"ד	Mashhad	Avraham ben Rahamim	Hanna bat Yeuda Nissim	**Moshe ben our honored teacher Rabbi Yeuda [=Yehuda] Nissim**	David ben Binyamin Kohen Nissim ben Yosef Hakim Nuriel ben Yaaqov Simcha ben Nuriel Avraham ben Simcha Yehuda ben Binyamin Nissan ben Yehonatan		**1834**
Sarshar 1853	Mashhad	Yehuda ben our honored Rabbi Yaaqov	Mervari bat Nissim	**Edited by the humble Reuven bar ... Moshe Nissim**			**1853**
Reuven ט' אדר תרכ"א	Mashhad	Moshe ben Mordechai	Dina bat Aharon		Hananiya ~, Yechezqel ben … Mordechai, Avraham ben ~, ~ ben … Eliyahu		**1861**
Huji 1865	Mashhad		Khavar bat Rajab			Muslim Ketuba. Not clear.	**1865**

Source	Place	Groom	Bride	Rabbi	Witness	Comments	Year
Huji **2 רג'ב 1284**	Mashhad	Agha Mohamad Reza son of Agha Mohamad Esmael Tajer	Michal Khanom bat Mola Alisha		Haji Abdol-Qahapour Mashhad (signed in Hebrew), Abdolah son of Haji Nassrolah Khan, in Khorasan Zeineb ben David (signed in Hebrew), Shmuel … (signed in Hebrew)	JadidolEslam ketuba in Persian	**1867**
Huji **כח בתשרי תרל"ג**	Mashhad	Avraham ben Michael	Soltan bat Daniel	Elisha ben Pinchas	Moshe ben Shimon, Yaaqov Kohen, Avraham Mor, Elisha ben Pinchas		**1872**
Huji **א אלול 5635**	Mashhad	Mashiyach bar Shaul	Esther bat Yishai	Mordechai Aghalar			**1875**
Huji **כב אלול 5635**	Mashhad	Nissan ben Yaaqov	Tzeruya bat Avraham	Elisha ben Pinchas	Mishael Bassal, NazarAli, Hezqiah		**1875**
Huji **יט טבת 5637**	Mashhad	Binyamin Shimon	???	Moshe Bassal	David Bassal, Yaaqov Bassal	Unclear	**1877**
Huji **יט סיוון תרל"ח**	Mashhad	Aharon ben NazarAli	Rachel bat David	Edited by Mordechai ben Refael (Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar)	The ketuba is not signed by witnesses or by the groom. Mordechai ben Refael is the only signatory on the ketuba.	Witnesses used to sign as well in the blank spaces which were decorated in the frame surrounding the printed text.	**1878**
Huji יח ניסן תרל"ח **ג'מאדי השני 1295**	Mashhad	Abdol son of Khodadad	Bibi daughter of Agha Davood		Avraham ben Amram **Reuven ben Moshe**	The witnesses whose names are listed here, plus four others whose names are difficult to decipher – are signed in Hebrew in the right margin.	**1878**
Huji **ו חשוון תר"ם**	Mashhad	Itzhaq ben Shmuel	Malka bat Rachamim	Mordechai ben Refael (Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar)	Shmuel ben Eliyahu, Shlomo ben David Bassal, Yaaqov ben Shem Tov Bassal, Or ben Shem Tov Kohen, ???		**1879**
Huji **כח אדר ב' תרמ"א**	Mashhad	Eliyahu ben David	Rivqa bat Yedidiya	Mordechai ben Refael (Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar)	Yaaqov ??assal, Shimshon Qam	With an addition to the ketuba, signed by the groom and the witness **Matatiya Garji** from June 28, 1900, written in Jewish Persian.	**1881**

Source	Place	Groom	Bride	Rabbi	Witness	Comments	Year
Huji **15 שעבאן 1300**	Mashhad	Habibolah JadidolEslam son of Karbalaii Aghajan	Mina Khanom daughter of Davood JadidolEslam		**Reuven ben Moshe Nissim,** Levy, Aziz		**1883**
Huji **יג טבת תרמ"ה**	Mashhad	Yaaqov ben [missing] Kohen	Hanna bat Chanuka Kohen	ben Refael Alar (Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar)	Azriel Aziz, Binyamin Bassal, Mashiyach Bassal, Yosef ben Afour, Simcha ben Uda	The groom's father's name was omitted and not written on the ketuba.	**1884**
Huji **1302**	Mashhad	Abdolah son of M. Mussa Jadid …	Khorshid daughter of Abdol-Rahim		Binyamin Kordevani, Kohen		**1884**
Huji **ב ניסן תרמה ג'מאדי הראשון 1302 16.3.1885**	Mashhad	Agha Esmael son of Agha Rafi	KhanomJan Khanom daughter of Esmael		Binyamin …, Rachamim Kohen	Ketuba in Persian, probably from Mashhad. Seven witnesses signed the ketuba, four of them in Hebrew, the names of whom are difficult to decipher.	**1885**
Huji **ג'ומאדי אלאכר 1302 8.4.1885**	Mashhad	Agha Khodabakhsh son of Agha Yahya	Khavar Khanom daughter of Agha Karbalaii Norouz		Rafi Levy, Haji Mohammad Rafi, Aghayo Kohen, Abdol-Rahman Da'lal	The witnesses signed in Hebrew	**1885**
Huji/171556 **רביע אלאול 1302 15 6.1.1885**	Mashhad	Agha Abdol-Karim son of Agha Mohamad	JanKhanom daughter of Agha Esmael		Binyamin ben ??rdvani, Ebrahim	The ketuba is in Persian, and is signed by three additional witnesses in Persian	**1885**
Sarshar **1885**	Mashhad	Yaaqov ben Yehuda	Esther bat Binyamin		**The humble Yosef Nissim**		**1885**
Huji **ד סיון 5649**	Mashhad	Rahamim ben Israel	Malka bat Yechezqel	Mordechai Aghalar	Nethanel Bassal, Haji Norouz Levy, Aghaii Nuriel		**1889**
Huji **רג'ב 1306**	Mashhad	Esmael son of Ebrahim Jadid …	Nabat daughter of Ebrahim		**Moshe Nissim,** Yaaqov, Mordechai Aghalar		**1889**
Huji **1308**	Mashhad	Esshagh Jadid son of Mola Aghajan	Bibijan daughter of Yaghub		**Moshe Nissim,** Farajolah son of Davood Tajer Jadid, Yaaqov Kohen, Morad Aghalar, Esshagh		**1890**

Source	Place	Groom	Bride	Rabbi	Witness	Comments	Year
Huji כז אדר ב' תרנ"א	Mashhad	Shimon ben Siman Tov	Hanna bat Nissan	Yosef ben Binyamin	Efraim Aziz Shalom ben Yonatan Binyamin ben Israel		**1891**
Huji 15 די אלחגדה 1309 21.7.1892	Mashhad	Agha Ramazan son of Karbalaii Esshagh	NourJan Khanom daughter of Agha Mola Aghaii		Yussuf Kashi Yaghub Kohen Norouz Kashi Haj Ism... Levy	There are other witnesses whose names are difficult to decipher. Some of the witnesses signed in Hebrew and some in Arabic. The ketuba is written in Persian in Arabic letters.	**1892**
Huji ח חשוון תרנ"ד	Mashhad	Reuven ben Shmuel	Esther bat Nethanel	Mordechai Alar (Rabbi Mordekhai Aghalar)	Yaaqov ..., Eliyahu ..., Aharon		**1893**
Reuven י"ט חשון תרנ"ג	Mashhad	Reuven ben Avraham	Batsheva bat Ishmael	Yosef ben Binyamin Bassal	Yaaqov ben Avraham, Haj Yosef ben Yaaqov (שו"ב)		**1893**
Huji יב באלול תרנ"ד	Mashhad	Matatiyah ben Shimon	Sara bat Menashe	Mordechai Aghalar (Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar)	**Reuven ben Moshe Nissim,** Rahman, Refael Levy	The ketuba is bound as a booklet with six inscribed pages.	**1894**
Huji הג'רה 1312	Mashhad	Mola Aghajan Jadid ... son of Ebrahim	Sussan Khanom daughter of Jamshid		Mola Aghajan, Yazdi, Yaghub Jadid, Morad Aghalar		**1894**
Huji הג'רה 1314	Mashhad	Esmael Jadid ... son of Rajab	Zobedeh bat Nassrolah		Mohamad Hakim, Mola Agha Bozorg, Yussuf Bassal		**1896**
Huji הג'רה 1314	Mashhad			Mola Haroun son of Mola Esshagh Haji Abdol-Rahman Tajer JadidolEslam	**Yosef Levy** **Moshe Nissim,** Binyamin Kordevani Azriel Aziz Some signed in Persian and some in Hebrew letters, with seals.	[Reuven Nissimi] I don't think that this document is a ketuba but rather a sales contract between Mola Haroun and Haji Abdol-Rahman.	**1897**
Huji 24 כג'ב 1315 02.12.1897	Mashhad	Agha Abdol-Karim son of Agha Mehdi Tajer	Khanom Agha daughter of Haji Abassi		Ebrahim Kohen, Yosef ..., ... Kohen	Three witnesses signed in Hebrew letters	**1897**

Source	Place	Groom	Bride	Rabbi	Witness	Comments	Year
Reuven **צפר 22, שנת 1318**	Mashhad	Haji Rajab Tajer JadidolEslam son of … Mola Davood JadidolEslam	Bibi Khanom daughter of Mola Mussa Tajer JadidolEslam		In Hebrew letters: Haji Yosef Aziz, Avner Shahvardi, Yosef Bassal, Haji Rahman Aziz, (3 signatures in Persian letters are illegible)	The ketuba is Muslim –in Persian (Possibly Haji Rahman Kabir. He is contemporary of the Haji Rahman Saghir)	**1900**
Huji **דו אלחג'ה 1321** **1904 פבר'**	Mashhad	Agha Rahmatolah son of Abdolah	Nabat Khanom daughter of Agha Amin		Hananiya Kohen - Hebrew Seal **Abdol-Rahman Nissim** - signed in Hebrew Yosef Amiel … - signed in Hebrew	Includes four pages connected as a booklet	**1904**
Huji **רביע אלאול 8** **1322** **24.5.1904**	Mashhad	Haji son of Abdol-Rahim Jadid	Khanom Bibi daughter of Abdol-Karim Jadid …		Nassrolah Kohen, Ebrahim Aziz, Yosef son of Yechezqel, Aghajan Yazdi	The witnesses signed in Hebrew letters. The ketuba is in the format of a four-page booklet, written in Persian in Arabic letters	**1904**
Huji **ג חשון 5665**	Mashhad	Binyamin ben Azaria	Sara bat Avraham	Yosef ben Rabbi Binyamin Bassal	Farajolah Levy, Rahmatolah Yirmiya Levy, Azizolah Levy, ?? Levy		**1904**
Huji **א כסלו 5665**	Mashhad	David ben Yoav HaKohen	Miriam bat Shlomo	Yosef ben Rabbi Binyamin Bassal	Yosef Aziz, Azariya Aziz, ?? Aziz		**1904**
Background/ Mashhadi Neighborhood **1323**	Mashhad	Agh Amin son of Azizolah Tajer JadidolEslam	Khanom Bibi Khanom daughter of Haji Ebrahim Tajer JadidolEslam		Aghaii Faraj, Haj Esmael Levi, Agh Amin, ???	A Muslim Ketuba. Courtesy of Nathan Levy. He found it when evacuating the Azizolahyoff House. **Rajab 1323** **23.9.1905**	**1905**
Documents/ … **1324**	Mashhad	**Agh Mehdi son of Agh Esmael Tajer JadidolEslam**	Fatmeh Khanom daughter of Agh Mehdi Tajer JadidolEslam		Refael Kohai (?? Kohen), **Sadogh son of M. Yosef Nissim,** Yaaqov son of Avraham	The ketuba is Muslim – in Persian. Ketuba of Mashiyach ben Shmuel and Esther – Parents of late Aghajan Nassimi. Courtesy of Mike Nassimi	**1906**

Source	Place	Groom	Bride	Rabbi	Witness	Comments	Year
Reuven 1325	Mashhad	Agha Abdolah	Hanna Khanom daughter of Abdol-Rahman Tajer JadidolEslam		Haji A.B Rahman Nis. [= Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir Nissim]	The ketuba is Muslim – written in Persian [Reuven Nissimi: Father of the bride: Possibly Haji Abdol-Rahman Kabir]	**1907**
Huji כב טבת 5677 כא טבת 5678	Marv	Binyamin ben David, Aharon ben David	Avigail bat Reuven Bassal (Haji Rahman)	Menashe Betzaleli (Mola Faraj)		Levirate marriage after death of Binyamin ben David Bassal	**1917 1918**
Documents/ … 1918	Marv	**Shmuel ben Binyamin Nissim**	**Sara bat Efraim Nissim**	The humble Mordechai Aghalar	The humble David Kal, **The humble Levi ben Yeuda (=Yehuda) Nissim**		**1918**
Reuven 1337	Mashhad	Zabiholah JadidolEslam son of Mola Aghajan JadidolEslam	Maryam Khanom daughter of Mola Abdol-Rahman JadidolEslam		Morad Aghalar, Mola Amin JadidolEslam son of Ramazan	Written in Persian. [Reuven Nissimi: The couple is among the first in the London community (parents of Lucy. Grandfather and grandmother of Leon)]	**1918**
Huji 1919	Mashhad	Nassrolah son of Mussa	Khanom Hanna		Signed in Hebrew: • Morad Agha, • Ebrahim … Another witness, Vagha Bozorg Akhund Alias, signed in Persian.	Ketuba written in Persian. The ketuba is folded in form of a four-page pamphlet.	**1919**
Huji ב- 11 שעבאן 1339 11.11.1921	Mashhad	Agha Abdol-Javad son of Mamad Agha Khan Tajer	Nour Jahan Khanom daughter of Agha Ali Tajer	Morad Aghalar (Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar)	Yosef	Both witnesses signed in Hebrew	**1921**
Reuven 1340	Mashhad	Haji Agha son of Azizolah JadidolEslam	Malekeh Khanom daughter of Agha Abdol-Rahman JadidolEslam		Haji Mehdi Levy	In Persian. Groom and bride, Moshe and Esther, see ketuba in Hebrew below.	**1922**
Reuven תרפ"ב	Mashhad	Moshe ben Yedidiya	Esther bat Rabbi Reuven	The humble Mordechai Aghalar	Refael ~, Yaaqov Mashiach ~, The humble ~		**1922**
Aghalar 1923	Mashhad	**David ben Simcha**	Esther bat Yoav		Nissim SMH [??=Moshe]	In Hebrew	**1923**
Aqlar 1923	Mashhad	**Agha Davood JadidolEslam ben Agha Reza**	Morvari Khanom bat Agha Rajab JadidolEslam			Written in Persian (See ketuba in Hebrew above)	**1923**

Source	Place	Groom	Bride	Rabbi	Witness	Comments	Year
Huji **ראש חדש אדר ב' ל באדר א תרפ"ד**	Mashhad	Itzhaq ben Yechezqel	Zilpa bat Eliyahu	Mordechai Aghalar (Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar)	Refael Aghalar, Moshe Kermani, Shlomo Kermani, Yosef Agan There are two additional witnesses.	The couple appearing in this ketuba is JadidolEslam and they also have a Muslim ketuba (see below).	**1924**
Huji **רג'ב 28,** **1342**	Mashhad	Esshagh son of Soleiman Karvatani [?? = Kordevani]	Zelfa daughter of Habibolah Bassal			This is the ketuba where the couple have also a kosher Jewish ketuba (see above)	**1924**
Huji **ג'מאדי אול 15,** **1343**	Mashhad	Agha Mehdi	Khanom Agha		Moshe (ב"שו) – Signed in Hebrew	11.1.1925	**1925**
Namdar **1344**	Mashhad	Agh Abdol-Jaffar son of Esshagh Jadid…	Maryam daughter of Haji Mola Amin Jadid …		Brothers: Haji Mohammad Ebrahim Aminzadeh, Agh Abdol-Vahab …	Persian and Hebrew Ketubot (see below)	**1926**
Namdar **כ טבת 5686**	Mashhad	Simcha ben Itzhaq	Miriam bat Binyamin	Mordechai ben Refael Aghalar	Eliyahu Abdol-Vahab, Haji Agha, Rahim	6.1.1926	**1926**
Reuven **1345**	Mashhad	**Azizolah Tajer JadidolEslam son of Agha Amin JadidolEslam Nissim**	Yafa Khanom daughter of Agha Mola Rahman JadidolEslam		~ ~ **Agha Abdol-Vahab Sadoghoff Nissim**	The groom's uncle signed in Persian.	**1926**
Documents/ … **1927**	Marv	**Eliyahu bar Shlomo**	Tzipora bat Daniel	**The humble Levi ben Yeuda NS** (Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim]	**Eliyahu bar Shlomo** (Groom), **Shlomo ben Nissim**	The book "Eliyahu Zvuloni Family"	**1927**
Documents/ … **1935**	Peshawar	**Mordechai ben Efraim Nissim**	Dvora bat Itzhaq [Zioni]	**Levi Yeuda Nissim** (Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim]	Yonatan Chaim Mirzayoff Farajolah	Curtsey of Simcha Nissim	**1935**
Huji **14 סיון 5699**	Qazvin (Ghazvin)	**Yaaqov ben Reuven Nissim** (Khodadad Nassimiha)	Salan Khatun. Widow. Daughter of Rahim ben Mashiyach (Kababiyan)		**Yaaqov ben Nethanel Nassimiha**, Shimon Aziz, ?? Levy, Mola Yaaqov ??.	On the first page, written in Persian: **Cancelled**. Received *Get* (=divorce). The Id. Card of the groom is from Mashhad. The Id. Card of the bride is from Tehran.	**1939**

Source	Place	Groom	Bride	Rabbi	Witness	Comments	Year
Documents/ … 1949	Tehran	**Michael ben Levi Nissim**	Malka bat Chanuka Nis [=Nissim]	**Levi ben Yeuda Nissim** (Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim]	**Yosef ben Yeuda Nis Michael ben Levi Lotfolah Nis [=Nissim] Elias Nassimi**	Signatures in Hebrew Signature in Persian	**1949**

Prior to the Forced Conversion

Rabbi Siman Tov Melamed

	Spirit of Life - Hayat-Al-Rouh	1780
Background	The book **Spirit of Life** (Hayat-Al-Rouh) was written by Rabbi **Siman Tov** at the time of the emergence of Mashhadi Jewry, before the forced conversion. In 1898 the book was published by the Shauloff brothers in Jerusalem. See below a passage from the introduction: "...in honor of our father ... to put his soul to rest... to print for the benefit of the public the book Hayat-Al-Rouh (Spirit of Life) written by the great Rabbi Mola **Siman Tov Melamed**, in the city of **Mashhad**, which he compiled from the book "Duties of the Heart" (Chovot HaLevavot) and from "The Guide to the Perplexed" (Moreh Nevochim), and to which he added his own words of morality in our language [Persian] and also in the holy language [Hebrew]. Until now, for nearly one hundred and twenty years, this book was hand-written. And now we have been blessed to be the first to print it. Therefore I have named it **Spirit of Life**, which brings man to fear and love the Lord and humility and meekness..." **Shauloff** Brothers	1898 Shauloff Brothers (Publishers)
Thirteen Principles	An excerpt from the book Spirit of Life - "Thirteen Principles" written as acrostics in the original in Hebrew where each letter of the author's name is found at the beginning of each stanza	Initials of Siman Tov Melamed VeMetzaer

S	Trust in the living Lord and enlighten the perplexed To the building of the thirteen principles, please give strength	
i	The principles are in number small But each one is connected by a thread to mountains of instructions (and explanations that clarify these principles)	
ma	1. The presence of G-d who was and who is	And who will be, unaltered and unchangeable
n	2. Formless yet omnipresent and unique	without substance or occurrence is his oneness
T	3. Examine His motives but not who He is	He is bodiless with neither flesh nor shape
o	4. And He precedes all beginnings and He is never-ending	And proof of Him can be found on the lips of all living
v	5. His glory is etched in our minds	Master of creation, He demeans and He elevates
Me	6. Creator of all, He spoke His words (commandments)	At the level of prophecy with pure men (Israelites)
la	7. Father to all and rabbi to Moses	He put forth the true faith and fenced it in with borders and restrictions
me	8. He is the source of life to all seekers	Bequeathed to the humble (Moses) the Law of Israel (Bible)
d	9. Good deeds He commanded for	Changeless they shall stand, not to

		thousands of generations	others he will hand
	Ve	10. Judge of all, He is all-seeing and all-knowing	Prescient, He knows all that is hidden
	me	11. Rewards good and evil deeds	To the wicked with evil and with kindness to the upright
	tz	12. The messiah's wreath will grow and his candle's light will brighten	For he shall come and walk assured
	a	13. Your daily business leave untended, and in your good deeds find glory	As you awaken on the day of the resurrection of the dead (When from the dead you come back to life)
	er	May my prayer be my soul's redemption Reward my establishing of these thirteen principles	

Political Background on the Eve of the Forced Conversions

	The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1783-1919, ***Anglo Indian Relations with Russia, ... 1835-49***	
	The Attitude of the British Raj toward Russia, Persia and Afghanistan	1835-1849
Background	During the 1830s and 1840s, the rivalry between Russia and Britain spread from the Near East to the Far East. In Britain, "Russophobia" was prevalent. This concept maintained that the Russians were planning to take over Central Asia and Afghanistan in order to attack India, which was under British rule. Despite denials from St. Petersburg, the extensive activities of Russian agents in the area left no doubt regarding the Russian's intentions to expand.	
Boundary	In 1835 India's northwestern border was vulnerable. The border had not yet expanded to the range of mountains descending from the Himalayas. This mountain range, serving as a natural barrier, would have been capable of hampering attacking forces from the west. Two independent entities ruled the region between the British territory and the mountain range: Punjab, which was controlled by Ranjit-Singh, and Sindh, which was controlled by the Talpur Amirs. This border did not serve as a natural barrier against the advancement of invading forces. The British Raj considered Afghanistan, which lay on the far side of the mountain range, as having great strategic value. In 1835 the Afghan rulership was split between Dost Muhammad in the northwest and based in Kabul, Kohandel Khan (brother of Dost Muhammad) in the south and based in Qandahār, and Kamran Mirza in the east and based in Herat. The routes from Herat to Kabul and from Herat to Qandahar, which could be used for the transport of Russian forces, posed a threat to the northwestern flank of the Indian government. An additional danger lay in the route leading from the north through the Emirates of Central Asia (for example in the Bukhara region). This route made it possible for large forces to bypass the mountain range from the east on their way to India's northwestern border.	1835
Threatened Boundary	In 1834 Fath-Ali Shah, who was usually pro-British, died in Persia. The new Shah, Mohammad Shah, preferred the Russians. Despite being warned by the British, Mohammad Shah, influenced by Russian advisors, set out on a journey of conquest in the direction of Afghanistan, with the initial intention of conquering Herat and later, possibly all of Afghanistan. • In July 1837 the Shah set out from Tehran, at the head of his army, to conquer Herat. • In November he laid siege to Herat. • In April 1838 the British representative in Tehran (John McNeil) entered Herat in an attempt to liaison between Kamran Mirza and the Persian Shah. This initiative failed due to Russian influence (by General Simonich). • In the spring of 1838 the British dispatched a military delegation to the Persian Gulf. The British conquered Kharg Island which is proximal to	1834 -1839

	Būshehr, and dispatched Colonel Charles Stoddart to the Shah in Herat to make it clear to the Shah that the British viewed the siege of Herat as an act of aggression. • **In September**, after a year of fighting, the Persian forces lifted the siege of Herat and retreated without accomplishing their end.	
Removing the Threat	Towards the end of 1838, British forces entered Afghanistan. In August 1839, the British toppled Dost Muhammad from his position and in his stead, placed as the ruler in Kabul the Shah-Shuja, who had been waiting for this opportunity from his exile in India since his previous defeat by Dost Muhammad. At the end of 1840 Dost Muhammad surrendered and was led to imprisonment in India. In response, in November 1839, the Russians conquered Khiva in retaliation for acts of robbery, looting and even enslavement of Russian convoys and citizens. This act was perceived by the British as a Russian threat against India through the emirates that ruled in Central Asia (in response to the failed attempt to conquer Herat by the Persians who were serving Russian interests). According to this precept the Russian invasion of the lower part of the valley necessitated that the British take over the top part of the valley that led to Bukhara, but in the meantime the Russian forces had been detained due to difficult road conditions, and the crisis was averted. In 1842, following the success of the British forces in Afghanistan, Dost Muhammad was restored to power in Kabul, and with the conquest at Punjab the British successfully removed the threat from their weak point at the northwestern border in India. In 1849, following the riots in Punjab, the Sikhs attacked the British forces and, in the Battle of Chillianwala, caused very heavy casualties to the British forces, to the point of creating a panic in England. But in the end, the British managed to suppress the Sikhs and reclaimed Punjab.	1838- 1849

Wolff - his First Voyage

	Joseph Wolff, ***Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans, and other Sects (1831-1834)***, Philadelphia 1837	1830s
	The Mashhadi Jews	Page
Annals	Jews from the Babylonian exile in Yemen[1] moved to Qazvin (as well as to other cities in Khorasan and in Bukhara) during the period of the Second Temple.	135
	Nader Shah transferred Jews (as well as Armenians) from Qazvin to Mashhad, and authorized them to build synagogues. He also transferred Jews to Kabul, though they recently [1830s] returned to Mashhad. The Mashhadi Jews used to call themselves "the children of Israel".[2]	
	Complying with the Shah's order, the Old Testament and the New Testament were translated into Persian, with the intention of establishing a single religion.	
	Approximately sixty years ago (during the 1770s), Jews from Yazd arrived at Mashhad due to a drought. These Jews were poor and wretched. Some of them dealt in "alternative healing" (the term "witchcraft" was used in the original text).[3]	
	Notes 1. According to Wolff's understanding. It is not clear to me what his sources were. 2. When I was a child in Tehran, once as I walked on a street by the Levian Synagogue, a few Muslim store owners asked me of what nationality I am. I replied that I am "Israel" (in the Hebrew pronunciation). They did not understand me (because I did not know the Persian pronunciation "Essra'il") and I continued on my way. Only when I had grown up, influenced by my Tehranian friends, did I begin to use the word "Yahudi" (=Jew). 3. Recently, a movie was broadcast on television about the remaining Jews in Afghanistan. The movie documented an elderly Jewish man who was visited by Muslim locals. They received from him blessings and amulets for medical and other needs.	[RN] 1950s 2008
Culture	Notable personages of the Jews of Mashhad were classified as Kohen, Levi, Rabbi, Dayan (Judge), Nassi (President) and Melamed (Teacher). Hebrew was spoken primarily by the rabbis. The Jews greatly differed from their neighbors and did not intermarry with them. Mashhadi Jews did not even marry Jews from Yazd.	162
	The Jews of Mashhad owned Persian literature, such as the poems of Hafez and also the "Yussuf and Zoleikha" poem written in Mashhadi-Jewish script. They imported books from Eastern Europe (Poland, Vilna) through Ornberg and Astrakhan. There were no Talmudic books in the region, except in Bukhara and a few in Mashhad and in Torbat. They did not have the Deuterocanonical books (such as Maccabees), though their contents were known to them from their rabbis. Since the days of Nader Shah, they had wonderful synagogues.	[Wolff: Hafiz, Youssuf and Soleikha]
	The Jew Nissim, who visits many countries, imported books of Holy Scripture to Mashhad. In Mashhad, Nissim acted as a Muslim, but as a Jew outside Mashhad (Sarakhs, Khiva, and on his trips to Europe).	135

The President	Ali Mirza[1], Governor of Mashhad, referred Wolff to Mola Mehdi Aghajan (Mashiyach)[2], president of the community. Mashiyach claimed to be a descendant of Betzalel from the tribe of Judah. According to Wolff, Mashiyach was a pleasant and a special man. He claimed to have been in possession of a Bible, written in Hebrew, which was brought from Vilna by Nissan Azaria Kohen[3]. Mola Mehdi claimed that there were many Sufis among the Jews of Mashhad, including Mola Pinchas, Mola Eliyahu, Mola Nissim, Avraham Moshe and Mola Mehdi (Mashiyach). Notes: 1. The governor of Mashhad was Prince Ahmed Ali Mirza, through the king's Jewish wife 2. Wolff: Mullah Mohde Ajoon (Meshiakh) Bezaleel This is interesting! In the genealogy of the Betzaleli families we find Mashiyach, son of Yosef, who was brother to Elisha, who in turn was grandfather to Mola Faraj Alishayoff(Rabbi Menashe ben Yosef ben Elisha Betzalel) 3. Wolff: Nisan Azariah Kohen	128 [Sufi – mystical Islamic movement]
Notable Personages	The notable personages of the Jews of Mashhad were: Names | Names as Wolff wrote them Mola David | Mullah Daud, Rabbi of Meshed Mola Yonatan | Mullah Jonathan Agha Binyamin Hakim | Aga Benjamin Hakeem, Gebeer [Gebeer: possibly Kabir = great] Mola Pinchas | Mullah Pinehas, Dayan (a Sooffee in secret) Mola Eliyahu Dayan | Mullah Eliahu Dayan Agha Avraham Sarkar | Aga Abraham Serkar Agha Rahman | Aga Rahmoon Mola Yosef | Mullah Youssuf	134 [Sooffee = Sufi]
Commerce	Every month a convoy set out from Mashhad to Bukhara and Khiva, accompanied by Turkmen from Sarakhs and from Marv. Each convoy was comprised of 40 camels. They took sugar, pepper, Kerman scarves, cinnamon, etc., and brought back hides from Bukhara.	148
Settlements	The Jews were active in trade with Turkmenistan. For this purpose they set up settlements, which were comprised mainly of men who lived there year round and only returned to their homes for the holidays (Yom Kippur and Pesach): • Settlements in Khorasan: Sabzevar, Neyshabur, Torbat, Shahr-No, Quchan, Kalat-Nadri, Dargaz • Settlements in Turkmenistan: Sarakhs, Marv, Talkhton, Tekka, Tajan, Maimona (settled also with women), Ankhoy (settled also with women)	136

	Settlements of Mashhadi Jews in Khorasan	Page
Governance	Semnan, Bustan and Mashhad were the only three cities in Khorasan that were ruled by princes of the royal house. The remaining cities were ruled by the Khans, with weak affiliations to the central regime. These Khans were often at odds with each other, and the Turkmen exploited this situation by robbing and abducting people into slavery.	98
	Often gypsies were met on the roads. Tehranis called them Ko'li. In Khorasan they were referred to as ghrosh'mal [R.N. – These were the terms my parents used when referring to hot-tempered and belligerent people].	103
Torbat-e Heydarieh	The Turkmen at Torbat-e Heydarieh claimed "We do not kidnap Jews into slavery because they are The People of the Book. We only kidnap Persians because they are apostates and traitors."	125
	Like the Jews of Mashhad, so did the Jews of Torbat claim to be descendant of the Babylonian exile that arrived at Qazvin. They lived in Qazvin until Nader Shah brought them to Mashhad. As in Mashhad, the Jews from Torbat were wealthy, clean and respectable.	
	In Torbat there was a small room that served as a synagogue in which presided Rabbi Mola Aba ben Bakhtshe from Yazd.	
	Torbat's notable personages were: Soleiman ben Sinun, David ben Eliyahu, Itzhaq ben Moshe, Yechezqel ben Yequtiel, Issachar ben Jabbar, Itzhaq ben Eliyahu, Natan ben Rahim, Nethanel ben Rachamim, Binyamin ben Rachamim, Avraham ben Mola Daniel, Matatiyahu ben Moshe, Yaaqov ben Hamumi, Zechariah ben Eliyahu, Daniel ben Mola Haim, Moshe Ben Agha Shimon.	
	Naming transliteration according to Wolff: Soleiman Ben Sinun; Daud Ben Eliahu; Aba Ben Bakhtshe; Ishak Ben Moshe; Hezkiel Ben Yekotiel; Isaschar Ben Jabar; Ishak Ben Eliahu; Nathan Ben Rahame; Nathanael Ben Rahmeen; Benjamin Ben Rahmeen; Abraham Ben Mullah Daniel; Mathatia Ben Moshe; Yakoob Ben Hamoomee; Zechariah Ben Eliahu; Daniel Ben Mullah Haym; Moshe Ben Aga Shemaan.	
Sabzevar	The origin of the Jews of Sabzevar was from the Babylonian exile. At the time of Genghis Khan, they were taken to Bukhara, Balkh, and Shahr-Sabz. Here Wolff met Mola Levi ben Mashiyach, who behaved like a Muslim in Mashhad but like a Jew in Sarakhs. His wife and children lived according to Jewish law. Mola Levi ben Mashiyach even traveled to Kashmir, where Assaf is buried on a mountain, in a grave named for Takht Soleiman (the throne of Solomon).	

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Settlements of Mashhadi Jews in Turkmenistan</th><th>Page</th></tr>
<tr><td>Population</td><td>The following table lists the size of the Jewish population in the major cities of Turkmenistan:
<table>
<tr><th>City</th><th>Number of Families</th></tr>
<tr><td>Bukhara</td><td>2000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Samarkand</td><td>300</td></tr>
<tr><td>Balkh</td><td>100</td></tr>
<tr><td>Shahr-Sabz</td><td>300</td></tr>
<tr><td>Kokan</td><td>100</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>2,800 families
(approximately 14,000 people)</td></tr>
</table></td><td>194</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sarakhs</td><td>There was no governor in Sarakhs. Each tribe was led by that tribe's elder (Rish-Sfid), who settled disputes. The Turkmen refrained from beating their children, believing that this would preserve the child's natural courage. They had only one wife and never divorced. Each year, the Turkmen received approval from the Mola of Bukhara to capture and enslave Persian residents. The Turkmen claimed that the captured Persian children would be raised by the Turkmen in the ways of Muhammad's four friends (Omar, Abu Bakr, Osman and Ali). The Turkmen did not capture Mussavis (Jews) or Christians (except Russians), whom the Turkmen claimed were "the People of the Book". The Turkmen did not have a mosque in Sarakhs. They prayed privately in their tents.

About 80 Jews from Mashhad lived in Sarakhs - for the following reasons:
• The oppression of Jews in Mashhad led to several Jews having [allegedly] converted to Islam
• Fair treatment of the Jews by the Turkmen, which allowed the Jews to maintain their lifestyle (including those who had allegedly converted to Islam)
• Commercial enterprises
Each Jew had a "host" benefactor from among the city's dignitaries (the tribal elders). If anything was stolen from a Jew, his "host" would act to retrieve the article. They respected the Jew's Sabbath and refrained from visiting them on this holy day.

The Sarakhs rabbis were Mola Yaaqov, Mola Michael, Mola Itzhaq and Mola Abba.

An excerpt from a song familiar to the Jews, "the Messianic King will arrive / mightiest of the mighty / the most blessed of all the blessed /" ... etc.</td><td>164

159</td></tr>
<tr><td>Marv</td><td>Marv is located in the region ruled by the King of Khiva. According to the Jews' estimates, approximately 100,000 Turkmen lived in the region of Marv, Tekka, Tajan and Talkhton.

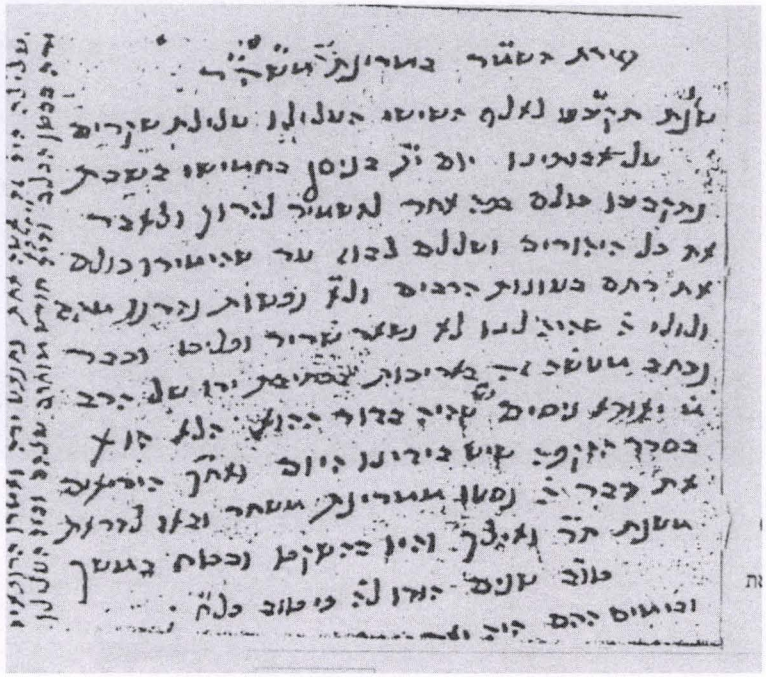
The Jews of Marv were originally from Mashhad. A few years ago, two Jews were murdered by the Turkmen. Allah Gholi Khan of Khiva avenged their</td><td>176</td></tr>
</table>

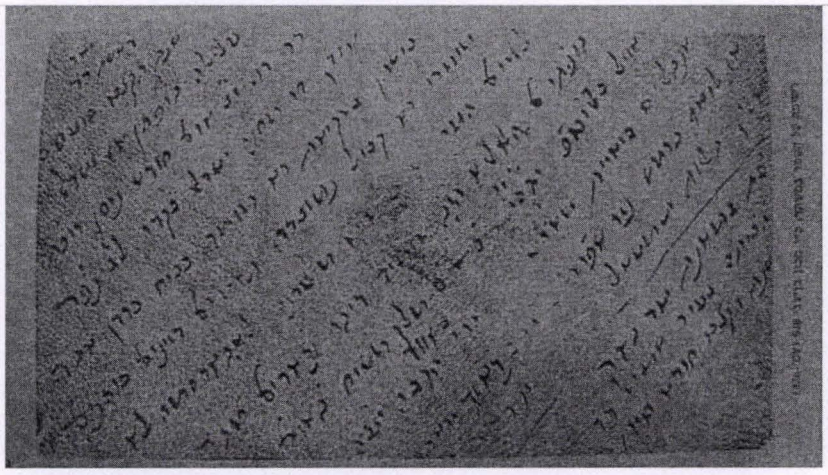
	deaths. The dignitaries of the Jewish community in Marv were: Mola Eliyahu ben Mola Daniel, Mola Michael ben Mordechai, Mola Itzhaq ben Aharon Mas, Mola Mordechai ben Agha Shlomo, David ben Aghajan Nissim. They lived in huts constructed of reeds.	[R.N. Marv 2010]
Bukhara	Approximately 200,000 people lived in Bukhara, mostly Uzbeks and Tajiks. Approximately half the population was called Gholam (Persian slaves). Some of these slaves reached high positions and did not wish to return to their homelands. Wolff met with Mola Yoav ben Babai, who was born in Mashhad. Itzhaq Kashi from Mashhad lived in Samarkand. He was knowledgeable in the Sufi doctrine.	189 194
	Summary	
Preaching	Wolff claimed that the Jews of the area were deeply impressed when they saw a person [Wolff himself] of Jewish origin preaching Christianity. Wolff recommended [to the Church establishment] the founding of a central mission in Jerusalem ... as well as in Mashhad, Bukhara, Kabul, etc., for the following reasons: • The educated Jews of Mashhad were ready to learn and recognize the true faith [Christianity]. • Mola Yaaqov of Sarakhs admitted to believing in Jesus. • The Chasid Yosef of Talkhton, along with his followers, turned in prayer to the truth of Christianity. • Mola Pinchas ben Simcha and Mola Mashiyach Sarkar (along with others) in Bukhara had already announced their belief in Jesus.	520
Abuse of Hospitality	It would appear that Wolff inadvertently misinterpreted his hosts' hospitality and their curiosity to meet with a visiting European [Wolff] as their willingness to accept his preaching. Evidence of this misconception can be found in the following words written by Ferrier who visited the region close to the time of Wolff's visit: • Mola Mehdi was very upset. He complained about Wolff's lies claiming that Wolff had converted him to Christianity. • The Imam Jomeh of Mashhad jested that Wolff had also attempted to convert him to Christianity.	[R.N.]

Conolly – a Visit to Mashhad

	Lieut. Arthur Conolly, ***Journey to the North of India, Overland from England, through Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan***, vol. I (London: Richard Bentley 1834)	1830s
	Mashhad	Pages
Their Numbers	The city of Mashhad had approximately 45,000 residents. Approximately 100,000 pilgrims frequented the city each year.	261-263
Muharram	During the sacred month of Muharram, the men of Mashhad beat their chests and the women cried bitterly under their veils. The events would last until late in the nights at "Sah'n" (the mosque's plaza), and the sounds of the tormented, as they pounded their chests and cried "Hassan-Hossein", echoed all around.	267-269
	Jews	
Their Numbers	Approximately 100 Jewish families lived in Mashhad. Their main occupation was small trade. They were not rich but their circumstances commanded admiration compared to that of their brethren in Tehran and Isfahan.	303 [R.N., approximately 1% of the population]
The Synagogue	The synagogue was constructed of a single square room. On both sides it had a segregated women's section which was separated by a curtain from the men's section. In the center of the room stood four pillars that rose to the ceiling, and between the pillars was the teiva (table). Prayer was conducted facing Jerusalem, and during the prayer the congregants covered their heads with a white mantle (tallit). Their melody was in Persian style. During a part of the prayer the Torah scrolls were raised, and the public would crowd towards the teiva to see the text. The reading of the Torah was accompanied by a sermon in the Persian language. It was an exciting spectacle, seeing these Jews of the Diaspora, despite persecution, stubbornly adhering to the tradition of their ancestors. They claimed that none of their numbers had converted from Judaism (to Islam).	304
Wedding	I [Conolly] grew very close to these people [the Jews]. In their homes was a feeling of wealth and plenty in contrast to their outwardly impoverished appearance. I was invited to a wedding. The guests were presented with a tray laden with almonds, pistachios, chickpeas, baked goods, and arak in small glasses. To my surprise, the arak did not cause drunkenness but created a pleasant atmosphere. They gracefully sang from the Psalms. Occasionally, the audience shed a tear.	306

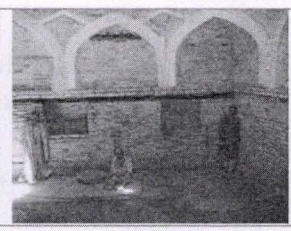
Forced Conversions

	Chronicles of Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji	
	Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji, in his Qorot Zemanim chronicles. noted that "and this act [the forced conversion] has been described at length in the manuscript of Rabbi Mola Yeuda [Yehuda] Nissim, G-d rest his soul, he was of that generation. [This manuscript] is written in the "Seder Haqafa" [book] which we have today". Regretfully, the manuscript written by Rabbi Yehuda Nissim was lost – it was a comprehensive testimony from the local rabbi, which described the forced conversions at length. See below - Rabbi Garji's manuscript as published in Reuven Kashani's book about the Mashhadi Jews.	
	 Rabbi Garji's handwriting describing the events of the forced conversions, as told by Rabbi Yehuda Nissim	[Kashani] <= Mola Yeuda Nissim
	A Description of the Forced Conversions as Told by an Eye Witness – Ben Zvi Institute/916	
A Copy and a Translation	The events of the forced conversion, written by the humble Shmuel, March 1839. Memo In the year 1839. The gentiles made a false accusation against the Jews. On the 27th of March (י"ב לחודש ניסן) They attacked the Jewish neighborhood. About 32 people were killed. The others - were forced to convert. If we had not accepted the conversion - they would have destroyed us all:	1839 [R.N. the writer used the term "Israel" not "Jewish"]

	Israelites, Judges, Kohens and Levites. Having no choice, we all said "La" [accepting Islam]. Now, we have no hope - other than to hope for – (a) The grace of G-d, (b) The coming of the King Messiah, (c) The intervention of the British ... G-d help us and redeem us... from the exile of Ishmael. This list serves as a reminder. The writer is the humble Shmuel. In the year 1839, month of March (תקצ"ט חודש סיוון) Free translation from Jewish Persian.	
A copy of the Original		[List 916]

From the Forced Conversions

Wolff - his Second Visit

	Rev. Joseph Wolff, *Mission To Bokhara 1843-1845*	1840s
	Bukhara	**Chapter**
The Jews	"The synagogue in Bukhara is very old and very poorly maintained. The Emir of Bukhara likes the Jews and often visits them on their holidays. There is a Jewish doctor in this town, and about ten thousand Jews who make their living mainly as painters and in the silk trade. To distinguish them from Muslims, they are required to wear a special hat and a special belt. Thousands of Bukharan Jews migrated to China after the Mongol conquest in 1220. "In addition to Colonel Charles Stoddart and Captain Arthur Conolly, seven Britons, three locals, and Ephraim, a Jew from Mashhad (who brought letters for Conolly), were murdered by Abdul Samut Khan. "**Ephraim, the Jew from Mashhad**, who had come to help in the matter of Stoddart, was killed by the vicious Emir."	XII XIX
The Prison in Bukhara (Zendon)	Conolly, Stoddard and Ephraim probably looked like this  The inside of the jail The prison walls	[R.N. My visit to Bukhara 2010]
Trustworthiness	"I [Wolff] appealed to several prominent Jews (M. Meshiakh, M. Simha, and Pinehas) to transfer my money to Mashhad. The Jews refused claiming that if Abdul Samut Khan found out about it, he would take the money from them by force."	XVII
Knowledge of Hebrew	Wolff was subject to the surveillance of the king's men. Only Jews had the courage to visit him. "**We would each hold a Bible and thus carry on our conversation in Hebrew. The king's men thought that my Jewish guests and I were reading the Bible, each one in turn.**"	XVIII
The Plot	Wolff escaped a plot to murder him thanks to the Jews (M. Meshiakh, Pinehas and Simha) who informed him about it.	XX
Marv	"The son of the rabbi of Mashhad was among the few Jews who converted to Islam. He became a Turkman [R.N. perhaps Wolff meant a 'Jew'.] in Marv." The Jews of Marv and Bukhara claim that the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun lived in the Hindu-Kush mountain range among the people of Balkh. They were bandits. They knew how to recite "Hear O Israel". Genghis Khan had a military	XX

	unit comprised entirely of Jews. "Joseph of Talkhtoon, of Mashhad, who lived with the Turkmen in Talkhtoon, returned to Mashhad immediately after the forced conversion. He converted to Islam, took his family to Qandahār, and reverted to Judaism."	
	Mashhad	
Background	"To demonstrate the weakness of the central government, it's enough to mention that the Shah ordered the surrender of those responsible for the massacres during the riots of 1839 - the forced conversions. The command was not obeyed. Actually, the ones in control in Mashhad and its surroundings were the Governor-Viceroy Assaff-ood-Dowla [=Assaf al-Doleh], the Imaam Jumaa [=Emam Jomeh] Mirza Askeree [=Askeri], the managers of the mosque and the chief of police. "Mashhad Jews today are called Islam Jadeeda, meaning New Muslims, just as the crypto-Jews of Spain were called New Christians. "The British nation owes a great debt to a gentle man, Mola Mehdi, who was frequently requested to provide assistance. M. Mehdi was employed by Major Henry Rawlinson during the English invasion of Qandahār and by Major Todd Baharat in Herat. Occasionally M. Mehdi was also harmed by this relationship. For example, a German traveler from Hamburg, Dieskau, posing as an English ambassador borrowed a huge sum of money from Mola Mehdi and disappeared with it." Wolff appealed to Mirza Askeree to protect the Jews and avoid an Inquisition. Askeree was very greedy, and in the past, for a certain sum allowed a number of Jews to emigrate to Herat, Yazd and Tehran. The Jewish situation was very moving. Wolff met an elderly woman walking around on the street bitterly muttering Allah-daad, Allah-daad – the Seyed's (Seyed=Muslim religious leader) call of incitement to the masses to murder the Jews of Mashhad. "The Jews, originally from Qazvin, Rasht and Yazd, had been settled in Mashhad for generations. They were known for their cleanliness, their dealings in industry, and for their taste in literature and poetry. Some of them knew the doctrine of the Sufis. They could eloquently quote the poets Hafez, Ferdowsi and Masnavi. They had a lot of property - but they displeased the authorities by failing to give them the proper bribes. Their wealth aroused the avarice of their neighbors, who were just looking for an excuse to seize their property."	XXII
The Forced Conversion	"A Jewish woman with an infection in her hand slaughtered a dog, at the command of a Muslim doctor, to heal her hand in the dog's blood. It was a Muslim holiday. One Seyed gathered the entire crowd at the Emam Reza mosque. He described what the woman did. The Seyed ascribed the woman's act as a sign of dishonor to the sanctity of Islam. Shouting Allah-daad (Allah's Justice) he agitated the crowd to attack Jewish homes. This Seyed had previously sought favors from the Jews. When he was rejected, he kept his hatred in his heart until his opportunity arrived. In this riot, 35 Jews were massacred, and those that survived - all their property was looted. This occurred at the time that Assaff-ood-Dowla [=Assaf al-Doleh], Imaam Jumaa [=Emam	XXII

	Jomeh] and the rest of the heads of government were asleep. This criminal act continued until all the survivors accepted Islam - including the community's rabbi, **Mola David Kohen**. This day is called **'Allah-daad'** both by the Jews and the Muslims."	
The Underground	In the 'underground,' the Jews preserved the heritage of their ancestors and told their children of the events of that terrible day. "Before the forced conversion, there was a learned Jewish scholar who, in addition to Judaism, was also well versed in Persian literature and the Sufi principles. His name was **Rahamim**. Rahamim, seeing the terrible massacre accompanied by cries of **Allah-daad**, converted to Islam like the other survivors - but he went insane. The word Allah-daad traumatized him. He wandered around the streets; rent his clothes, muttered **Allah-daad** over and over again. When I gave him other clothes, Rahamim tore the garments, saying, **"I'll wear clothing only when my place of worship shall be rebuilt. For now, Allah-daad! Allah-daad!"** "The old Jews still fasted on Yom Kippur. There were also Jews who converted to Islam for convenience sake prior to **Allah-daad**. They told the Muslims that the forced converts retain their Jewishness underground. On Yom Kippur, Emam Jomeh sent his servants to check out this matter at the home of one of the forced converts. When I [Wolff] heard the news, I sent a message to the servant to leave and appealed to Imam Juma to protect the Jews because all of Europe was interested in their fate. The Imam agreed [according to Wolff]."	XXII
	Wolff's Image (The Author)	
As a hyena	<u>As a hyena who lies in waiting for the remains of another predator's prey</u> Wolff, as part of a petition he was distributing, appealed to the forced converts of Mashhad - first with gentle language "My dear Brethren, I knew you fourteen years ago, a long time before the event of Allah-Daad took place. You were kind to me, and administered to me the rites of hospitality; and therefore what I am going to tell you does not proceed from any feeling of hostility or ill-will, but from a feeling of affection, regard, and compassion towards you." Later, taking into account their bitter fate, he tried to convince them that their salvation could be achieved **by accepting Christianity**.	XXII
Apostate	<u>Indeed a true apostate</u> Wolff, in the rest of his report to his superiors, listed the places most recommended for missionaries, where they might have a good chance of success in converting Jews.	

J. P. Ferrier

	J. P. Ferrier, Caravan Journey and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan, and Belloochistan, with Historical Notices of the Countries Lying between Russia and India, (1857) London, 1971	1840s
	Introduction	Chapter-Page
Background	After the severing of relations between Persia and England in 1839, due to British pressure on the Persian army to withdraw from Herat, the British military mission was expelled from Persia. The task of organizing and training the Persian army was transferred to a delegation of French officers, including one J. P. Ferrier. Ferrier served four years in the Persian army as the adjutant-general until he was dismissed due to his opposition to Russian interests. In 1845 he embarked on an extensive journey to India (Lahore) through Iran and Afghanistan. He visited Mashhad six years after the forced conversion. On his way to India, he passed through Afghanistan, seven years after the unsuccessful siege of Herat by the Persian army - and four years after the evacuation of Afghanistan by the British and shortly after the disaster in Kabul where British troops were massacred. The conquest by the British of Afghanistan stirred up anger in the hearts of the Afghans. And the life of every European traveler in Afghanistan was in danger.	
	Mashhad	
History	"The city of Mashhad is six farsang distant from the remnants of the Old City of Tus. The city had become a spiritual center for Shiites because it contained the tomb of Emam Reza and his offspring (to the fifth generation) of Ali. In 1587, the city was destroyed and most of its inhabitants were killed by Uzbeks. Only 10 years later, Shah Abbas the Great conquered the town again and annexed it to Persia. Nader Shah determined that Mashhad would be one of the four royal cities of the Kingdom of Khorasan. Mashhad city was also the capital during the reign of the grandson Shah Rokh Mirza. During his reign the Afghans attacked Khorasan and surrounded Mashhad, unsuccessfully, as a result of the opposition of the local residents. The independent self-rule of the province lasted until it was conquered by Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, and again the province of Khorasan and its capital, Mashhad, returned to Persian rule. During the Qajar period, the city of Mashhad served as the seat of the governor of Khorasan."	IX-120 Farsang =6 Km
The City	"The city of Mashhad is located on an empty plain that is not cultivated due to raids by tribes of Turkmen, Uzbeks and Afghans. Many settlements are located in the foothills of the mountains that surround Mashhad. These settlements are very well cultivated and are very fruitful. Their produce provides all the needs of the city of Mashhad. Two hills, named the Hills of Gold and Silver (pronounced Kuh' TalehNoghreh), are located at the entrance to the city. The city is surrounded by a wall of mortar and a dry moat. The perimeter is 4.5 miles. The wall is dilapidated and could not	IX-116, 117

	withstand a siege. This is an important and prosperous city due to: • **Its strategic location** - a central place for trade being at the farthest edge of the Afghan tribesmen and Tartars. • **Pilgrimage** - due to the sanctity of the city as the burial place of Emam Reza"	IX-121
Emam Reza	"Large areas of the city are covered in cemeteries - far beyond the needs of the city itself. The reason for this is the custom of bringing the bodies of the dead from far off places - and allowing them their right to be buried near the burial site of Emam Reza. "The mosque of Emam Reza is situated in the center of the city and divides the main street in two. It is very impressive in its size and in the materials from which it is constructed. It consists of two components: • **Khan** – The Khan is a large plaza surrounded by a two-story building of small apartments which face onto the plaza. The building's façade is covered in blue enamel tiles with Qoranic verses in shades of white and gold that flow on the walls. The area serves as a hotel for pilgrims, and is free of charge. Shah Abbas the Great built the structure and Nader Shah restored it. • **Mosque** – The mosque is built over the grave of Emam Reza. It has a dome and two minaretes. The building is clad in marble and decorated with gold and silver arabesques. The pinnacles of the minarets are gold plated. At sunrise, the reflection of the sun's rays on the two golden minaretes is blinding. The building was built by Shah Gohar, a descendant of Timur' Lang."	IX-123, 124 [Timur the Lame]
The Main Street	"Khiyaban, the main street, is a fine avenue that extends from the Herat Gate to the Quchan Gate. A large stream flows along this street, and plane trees were planted on both banks of the river. Many shops are located on both sides of the street. A covered bazaar and the beautiful Khan plaza make this an amiable meeting place for traders. From 11:00 to 14:00 the street is so packed with people that it is barely possible to push through the crowd. The noise and the bustle are so great, especially when added to the calls of the stall holders scattered here and there on the sides of the river - fruit stands, drinks, sherberts and other traditional products of the East."	IX-124
Commerce	"Mashhad is a major center for trade throughout the region. The following goods enter the markets in Mashhad and find their way into various markets in other cities: • **Sugar** - imported from the city of Yazd; is an important branch of the trading industry • **Fabrics** - cotton, silk • **Glass and porcelain** - imported from Europe through Tehran for the markets of Central Asia • **Knitwear** – from Kashmir • **Lamb's wool and fabrics made from camel's hair** – from Bukhara • **Fur capes** – from Kabul • **Camels** – from Khiva	IX-124,125

	• **Horses** – from Turkmenistan"	
Industry	"Many products are provided by local industries, such as: • **Carpets** – excelling in their diversity, beauty and durability • **Scarves** - called Mashhadi (in the style of Kashmir) exceeding those of Kerman • **Silk products** • **Weapons** - especially swords (which are very highly publicized) • **Quarries** – produce a type of gypsum, from south of the city"	IX-125
Transport ation	**"Preparing a journey from Mashhad to Herat:** Rent two camels - one for transporting the equipment, for a price of one toman, the other with two seats (one on each side of the camel) to transport two people, for the price of one and a half tomans."	IX-130, 132
Population	"Due to immigration from the cities of Marv, Sarakhs, Herat and Qandahār, the number of permanent residents in Mashhad was estimated at 60,000. The number of pilgrims per year is estimated at 30,000."	IX-121
Banking	"The markets of Mashhad are full of merchants from the south (such as Yazd) who deal in trade with their counterparts from Bombay. During the Persian siege of Herat, the English representative **Eldred Pottinger** was hard put to get money for his expenses. The bankers in Bombay, India, honored his banknotes at 75% of their value. Even a year later, Major Todd succeeded in getting only 84% of the value of his banknotes. "Dr. Login was able to increase the value of his banknotes to 116% of their rightful value by using the services of Mola Mehdi and Mohamed Hussein of Mashhad via the Yazd merchants."	IX-121
Stories from the Street	"Mashhad inhabitants have the reputation of being the most warelike citizens in Persia – as those who rejoice to fight. One day in the spring a bitter conflict broke out between the residents of Mashhad and an army garrison that was stationed in the city. The battle erupted in front of the Khan and caused great panic among the pilgrims and the rest of the residents of the city. Within a short time the street was emptied of passersby, pilgrims, merchants and shopkeepers. The combatants used all kinds of weapons – whatever came to hand (sticks, daggers and swords) - and without mercy. The calls and requests of the authorities were in vain and numerous people were killed and wounded during those two days of fighting."	IX-132, 133
Prominent People	"European visitors to Mashhad are very rare and many of the local people are eager to meet the occasional traveler during his stay – local citizens, Indians, Afghans, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Baluchis, and of course **Mola Mehdi**. Prominent figures in Mashhad were: • **Assaf Doulet** - Governor of Khorasan • **Mohamed Hussein** - Head of the Merchants (Tajer Bashi), an even-tempered and tolerant man with great influence over the Governor • **Abdul Ali Khan** - Artillery Commander • **Imaum Jumeh** - A learned man, tolerant and polite (rare qualities	IX-117-119

	among the religious clergy in Persia). • **Mohamed Wali Khan** – Temporary substitute for and nephew of the Governor (imprisoned in Khiva and released due to the intercession of the British Ambassador, Thompson)." Ferrier, who was a guest at the home of Mohamed Wali Khan said: "His house is in the city center. His yard is full of roses and jasmine and small rivulets of water flow among them. Carpets and chairs are arranged for the comfort of the guests. The host honors his guests with fruit, sweetmeats, sherbet, tea and a hookah." Imaum Jumeh, who did not prevent the disaster of the forced conversion, exploited the tragedy of the victims and rushed to take for himself the daughters of the Jews.	
"Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?"		IX-122
	The Jews	
Mashhad	*There were about 600 Jews in the city. Since 1839 they have been formally considered Muslims, but it was not in their hearts. It all started like this:* "The story of this forced conversion is as follows: - A Jewish woman having consulted a Mussulman doctor for an abscess she had on her hand, this empiric ordered her to open a dog recently born, and to keep her hand for one hour in the bowels. The good old lady did as she was bid; unfortunately, however, this was done on the day of the Koorban Beiram, the festival of the victim, the most remarkable of Mahomedan holidays: a sheep is killed in every Mussulman family on that day, and eaten with great rejoicings. This act of the Jewess having come to the ears of some fanatical Mussulmans, they propagated all kinds of lies in connexion with the circumstances; they asserted that the unfortunate dog had been killed in the presence of an assembly of Jews, and that in doing this they intended to cast ridicule upon the Mahomedan religion. These statements lost nothing in the telling; and at length the town was in a state of ferment and agitation, the soldiers of the garrison hurried to the Jews' quarter, pillaged it, and killed several of the wretched inhabitants. The remainders were pursued like wild beasts, and, receiving no protection from the officers of the local government, they, to save their lives, embraced a faith which they abhorred. During the time they were paralysed by these scenes the Imaum Jumeh and other mollahs, as well as some noblemen of Meshed, seized the prettiest Jewesses and married them." "Assaf Doulet, who gave the impression of being a decent man, did not try to prevent the turmoil. On the contrary, some argue that he encouraged these cruel acts. It is true that there is no evidence to this, but his hatred towards the Armenians and the Jews is well known. "Not only religious fanaticism served as a motive for this criminal act – in the background was also the envy of the masses at the success of the Jews of Mashhad in trade and business. "Since this eruption, the Jews did not set foot in the synagogue. They made a point of visiting the Imaum Reza mosque every day so as not to provide an excuse for additional persecution. They also pledged not to teach their children Hebrew, but to send them to the mollahs to learn the Quran.	IX-121-123

	"Those Jews who left for Herat openly returned to Judaism - but taking a risk, if some of them return to Mashhad. "**Mashhadi Jews are a proud people, ready to be of service, and they are polite and loyal.**"	
Herat	"Jews often practiced as doctors at Herat. Since the persecution in Mashhad, the number increased. Although forbidden to leave Mashhad because of the likelihood of heavy fines, they did not cease trying to get to Herat. In Herat they were allowed to work in trade and their businesses were successful. They were also allowed to remain Jews and the Vezir (high-ranking minister) protected them."	XXIX -443
Mola Mehdi	"**Mola Mehdi**, one of the leaders of the Jewish community of Mashhad, serves as a representative and a correspondent (vaghe-ul-nager), or more literally, newswriter, for the British Minister in Tehran. His reputation precedes him and every European visitor to Mashhad is happy to meet him. His services are very important. He helps travelers meet the 'who's who' of Mashhad, such as the governor, the leading merchants, the artillery commander and the Emam Jumah. The influence of Mola Mehdi is more widespread than just the city of Mashhad." Ferrier noted that, unfortunately, Mola Mehdi did not always receive adequate compensation for his important services to the Europeans, including the British. On his return to Mashhad Ferrier again met M. Mehdi. Mehdi was very upset. He complained to Ferrier about the lies of Wolff that Mehdi had converted through him: **"How would I, I who was born a Jew and forced to convert to Islam, convert via this crazy man and expose myself to the fury of the zealots in this city?"** Even Emam Jumah of Mashhad joked to Ferrier that Wolff tried to convert the Emam to Christianity. Ferrier pointed out that: "due to the **intervention** of this worthy man I made the acquaintance of the learned Kazi of Herat, Mohamed Hassan, who furnished me with most valuable information on Afghanistan."	IX-117-119 XXXI-488, 489

James Basset

	James Basset, *Persia, the Land of Imams*. A Narrative of Travel and Residence, 1871-1885, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886)	Page
Mashhad	"Mashhad is actually a border town (about 200 miles from Marv or Herat). The area beyond Sarakhs is controlled by Turkmen. The Turkmen are mostly from the Takah tribe. They lead and secure the caravans in the area. Mashhad is rich in copper, coal and iron. Near Mashhad are gold mines in the hills called **Kuhe Sang** and silver is produced from a nearby hill."	233
Population	"Mashhad has a population of approximately 60,000 Muslims, including about 300 Jewish families. The Jews are referred to as Jadidis (new ones) due to their recent conversion to Islam. According to their tradition, they are the descendants of the Jews brought by Nader Shah from Qazwin to Mashhad."	230
Forced Conversion	"The Jewish presence in the Holy City was anathema to Muslims. One of the Jews, who suffered from an infection in her hand, on her doctor's orders slaughtered a dog in order to cure her hand in the dog's blood (a practice that was widely accepted at the time). This event occurred in the month of Muharram. Very quickly a rumor spread that the Jews had slaughtered a dog to make a mockery of the sacred rites of the Shia. An angry crowd attacked the Jewish neighborhood. Thirty-five people were massacred and their homes destroyed. One of the Emams offered extermination or conversion to Islam. The Jews had no choice but to accept Islam in order to remove the evil decree. Today the Jews outwardly behave as Muslims and are unable to return to Judaism. Some of them were able to move to Herat or Marv - where they openly returned to Judaism. Mashhad synagogues are now in ruins. On one wall hangs a tablet bearing the names of those who were killed during the forced conversion. Some of the Jews meet secretly to maintain their Judaism. It seems that they had converted – but only outwardly."	231 232
Binyamin	"One of the most influential Jews in the city is called Binyamin. Binyamin's father saved two British officers from being massacred by the Afghans in their war with the British, but he had been detected and put to death by the Afghans. The British decided to grant a pension of 75 rupees a month to the child in Mashhad and, with the approval of the Shah, also granted him British citizenship. Later the child grew up and became an important figure in his community."	232
Between the Raindrops	"The Jews of Mashhad are fluent in Farsi [Persian], and are useful to the Mohammedans as go-betweens with the Turkmen and Afghans. Being persecuted by the Persians, they become, on that account, more acceptable to the Sunnis. This acceptance by the Sunni makes them all the more available to the Shiites. "They engage mainly in trading, and they have, among themselves many physicians. They also have a Falgeer Khanan, a place in which prayers are said and verses from the Old Testament and Talmud are written on bits of paper and worn as amulets to cure disease and give good fortune."	232-233

Efraim Neimark

	Efraim Neimark, *Travels in the Land of the East*, edited by Avraham Yaari, published by Levin-Epstein, Jerusalem, 1947	1880s
Neimark, Emissary from Tiberias	Efraim Neimark was born in 1860 in Grodno, Belarus, and immigrated to Israel in 1880. He settled in Tiberias. In December 1883 he set out on a mission to the cities of Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia (including Mashhad), Afghanistan and Bukhara. He spent about three years travelling abroad. His impressions from his journeys were printed in Ha-Assif (The Harvest) 1889 in the article, "*Travels in the Land of the East*" (an abridged edition), edited by Nahum Sokolov. In 1947 it was again printed, in a new edition, by Avraham Yaari, and published by Levin-Epstein, Jerusalem. Not all emissaries and travelers to Iran went to Mashhad. It was of great importance to Neimark's mission to Iran that he was one of the very few who came to faraway Mashhad. Neimark visited Mashhad about fifty years after the forced conversion of the Mashhadi Jews. The forced conversion occurred in May 1839, and lasted about a century. Neimark visited the community in the middle of the period of the forced conversion. His descriptions are picturesque, exhaustive and very instructive. He described the long and difficult journey from Tehran to Mashhad. He chronicled the fears of the Jews of Iran for the fate of the Jews of Mashhad who, G-d forbid, were considered as good as lost. He conveyed to us a description of the forced conversion from eye witnesses – the elders of the Mashhad community. He revealed the story of the amazing compliance of the community, during the first half of the period of the forced conversion, with a secret regimen – an impossible double life – an entire community that had preserved its Jewish identity underground for fifty years in a hostile and dangerous environment. Neimark did not know that another fifty years would pass before the yoke of the forced conversion would fall from their necks. Below are selections from his "Travels in the Land of the East."	[האסיף]
	Introduction	Page
From Tehran to Mashhad	"After informing you, dear reader, of all this, please come with me, I will take you to northeastern Iran to the township of Mashhad which is situated there. Within a few moments I will bring you there and you will see Mashhad in a vision. But the traveler from Tehran will not arrive there quickly because it takes 24 days for the journey from Tehran to Mashhad, but during the trip they will rest for two or three days in Semnan, as well as in Shahrood, Sabzvar and Nishapur... and thus the days of the trip will be drawn out to 30 or more. This caravan is impressive in the eyes of all the people of Iran... because it is the responsibility of all Shi'a to go once in a lifetime to Mashhad to pray at the grave of their holy one, Emam Reza, ... and thus every night along their trip they will wail loudly, sitting in a circle and telling the story in rhyme of that terrible day... And the listeners will all tap their hands on their hearts: **O Hassan! And O Hussein!...** the wise reader will understand the love of	p. 87

	these sanctified people for the Jew that walks with them on the journey, seeing that they pray while he sleeps and that he prays while they sleep, that he rests while they lament, that he will precede them to arrive on Friday to the hotel to which they will arrive on Saturday. And still they will be afraid of harming a man whom they recognize as not being Persian, realizing that he who is protected by a different country has a delegate who can protect him."	
Khorasan	"And if research is done on the era previous to this time, we will find in Khorasan, Mar Yose' and Mar Yosef, who were respectfully taken to the Sura Yeshiva during the time of an argument between David ben Zakkai and our Rabbi Saadia Gaon, to fill their positions." [R.N.: Khorasan is the Eastern Province and its name derives from the word Khavar, which means East in Persian.]	p. 95
Mashhad	"The city of Mashhad is a center of trade - everyone who comes here brings with him products from his country and, in exchange, takes home goods from other places. In addition, if a person looks vigilantly around him and pays attention to the routine of the city and her people, he will find a valuable vision which perhaps cannot be found nowadays anywhere else on earth."	p. 88
	The Jews	
Complete Silence	"The reader should know that Mashhad was also one of the towns whose occupants rose up to kill and annihilate Jews until... They converted to Islam, and a few of them went to live in other cities of Persia where Jews settled... Even today, in the cities of Persia, Jews can be found who originated in Mashhad but who fled from there during the forced conversions. There is a secret awareness among the Jews in Persia that you could still find elders in Mashhad who remember their religion and practice it clandestinely, but that the children who were born after the conversions know nothing of Judaism and live completely like the gentiles. "This is a closely guarded secret in Persia... there are still elders who remember the forced conversions of Mashhad and the great suffering of the Jews who were noted for their wealth and wisdom and literary prowess, as they escaped to hide in the tents of their brethren and settled wherever they found refuge, calling themselves "**Sdomi**" so that no man will know that they were originally from Mashhad - because any who converted and wished later to convert back to Judaism would be killed, and the Jews of Mashhad who converted to Islam, how could they preserve the religion of our forefathers? Not so others from other cities who were forced to convert (but openly preserved the names of their origin) because they refused to convert and were all massacred – except for those who fled. No Jews remained in those other cities as they did in Mashhad. Fearing the hatred, the Jews of Mashhad changed their names to Sdom. I met people with this name in Kermanshah and Hamadan." [R.N. – The above information was reported to Neimark regarding the Jews of Mashhad in the other cities of Persia, but when he came to Mashhad, a surprise was waiting for him...]	p. 89
Penetration into the	"Indeed if someone comes to Mashhad and carefully studies the roots of this phenomenon, then he will learn the truth. There is one street in Mashhad	p. 89

Forced Converts of Mashhad	"**Mahaleh EidGah**" it is called, the street of the Jews, and there are those who call it today "**Mahaleh Jadid**" – the street of the converted. On that street reside the Jews. Nevertheless – today, if a Jewish person comes to this street, he will not be allowed to step into a house less the house be defiled, or possibly to avoid being libeled as secretly loving the religion of their forefathers. With much labor we will be able to achieve our purpose of gaining the trust of these people. And now, listen carefully dear reader and hear the tales of the city that I was told by the honored elders of that community that I was fortunate to become acquainted with in secret."	
Catastrophe of the Forced Conversion as told by the Elders of the Community	"In the year 1839, on the 27th of March, on the day of the wailing for Hussein, a sick Jewess was ordered by her physician to bathe her hand in the blood of a dog. The woman's relatives found a dog and brought it into the courtyard but did not have the heart to kill it, and for this purpose they hired a Persian youth. An argument ensued between the relatives and the youth regarding his compensation, and the youth left and shouted that the Jews brought a dog and named it Hussein, and asked the youth to kill the dog to mock the mourners. [A nearby procession of agitated] zealots did not investigate the story about the Jews, whom they loathed, and rose with spears and swords in hand to ... kill the Jews ... After murdering about 50 men and women, they forced the Jews to convert in order to be forgiven ... The synagogues were destroyed, and Torah scrolls were burned, except for one Torah that the Jews managed to hide."	p. 90
Preserving Judaism with their Last Remaining Strength	"For many days the Muslim residents were vigilant of the converted Jews to ensure that they were not secretly practicing their old religion, in hiding. One by one, many Jews escaped to nearby Herat – a journey that took 12 days, and some of them fled to Tehran and many other cities in Persia. Those who remained slowly forgot the religion of their forefathers, except a very few that withdrew from the ways of the world and isolated themselves in their homes where they could do as they pleased. Of the Jewish teachers and butchers, some escaped and some passed away and the community remained with no one to remind them of their true religion, except for two activities that remained with them, which they cherished as their greatest treasures. These are the fasting of the Day of Atonement and the Pesach holiday. The residents of the city were unaware of when these holidays took place and could not keep the Jews from observing them, which they did in hiding, as two jewels, which served as loyal witnesses to their Jewish origins. Also, during these years they refrained from intermarriages. Of approximately 400 families, only five or six intermarried. Also, they circumcised their children in accordance with their religion – as the Persians also circumcised. Note that the Persians were unaware of the little differences due to the Jewish tradition of Priah (uncovering). ..."	p. 91

Strengthening in Recent Years	"Under these circumstances thirty years passed by, but during the last fifteen years the spirit of G-d began to awaken in the souls of the children of the notable personages, moving them to follow G-d. There was also one, pure in mind, who excelled on his own in Torah study, and he had a deep understanding of the text of the book "Ein Yaaqov" ..., and all his days he studied G-d's Torah, and the whole community loved him dearly, and he did not take charity from them, but made a meager living by the labor of his own hands. Truth to tell I have not seen a "hater of gifts" (Proverbs 15:27, he that hateth gifts shall live) such as him in all the cities of Persia. "And since then they slaughtered sheep and cattle according to the Jewish tradition, and they sold the unkosher meat to middlemen who they could trust to keep a secret. Each Saturday they opened their shops and left one shopkeeper, and the rest went to a hidden place where they prayed in quorums of ten. At midday they gathered again in a secret place to listen to the teachings of their dear teacher, who was then about 53 years old. Traditional Jewish weddings were also held in hiding, after which they went to the mosque to celebrate according to the religion of the gentiles. Similar to the ways of the strict religious Persions who diligently frequented the mosque of the tomb of Emam Reza, they also journeyed to visit the grave of Muhammad in Mecca, and when they returned they went through Jerusalem where they visited the Rabbi HaGaon Rishon LeZion, and shared their secret with him. "Obviously there were some among them who had no qualms and did not protest at being Muslims, but aren't there some like these in every group? Many heads of households discarded unkosher dishes from their homes and replaced them with new ones at the demand of their children."	p. 91
The Jews of Mashhad	"During the last century, in Mashhad there were several wonderful talents and possessors of pure mind ..., who knew research and philosophy, and were superior to the locals at debate. There were also poets among them, the most notable of which was Mola Siman Tov, whose poems are, to this day, sung in Mashhad and Bukhara. .... Many of them were also familiar with Persian literature. And the Mashhadis who fled to Bukhara were respected for their wisdom by their Bukharan brethren, and until this day there are in Bukhara Jews of Mashhadi origin who are called "Iranians" because of their origin, and most of them knew how to read and write Farsi [Persian], which was uncommon among our Bukharan brethren. "They are kind and warm-hearted, and whenever looting and plunder took place in the city of Herat, the Mashhadis collected donations of money and clothing and food to be sent to Herat, and it was delivered by a person specifically appointed for this task. And if they recognized a Jew who is arriving from a distant place, they would try to speak with him secretly and ask about the well-being of their bretheren, and try to learn from him anything he knew about the Torah. "In conclusion, I cannot mention their notables by name for fear of revealing their secret – in fact they cannot even be identified when they go to the market in Nizshani, where these forced converts go every year. Only he who has a broad knowledge could identify them, and furthermore would recognize a man that came to Marv on the new Trans-Caspian railway. He can also	p. 95 p. 92

	send to them letters written in Rashi script and the holy language via the post office which is in Marv, if he knows one of the notables of the community."	
In the Eyes of their Neighbors	"These Jadidis are well respected by the government and by local merchants, and are considered trustworthy: • If a local merchant comes to the market to buy something in the evening and pays for the item, or if he approaches a seller to change a Qaran (=Gharan) (currency) ..., the seller would carefully check the Qaran to make sure it is not counterfeit, but if a Jadidi comes to the market with a Qaran in his hands, the seller would take the money, even at night, with just a glance at it. • Each night after the passage of three hours of darkness, the police patrolling the city would detain anyone they found on the street, except for the Jadidis. Also, many of the municipal positions are assigned to the trustworthy Jadidis. "Deep in their hearts, the people know that the Jadidis are not loyal to the formal faith (Islam), but nobody says anything because the merchants keep silent, otherwise it would hurt their trade ... and the locals do not like to confess this shame because they know that their prosperity is dependent on the visiters that visit the tomb of their holy Emam...and therefore everyone chooses to turn a blind eye."	p. 92
Jewish Bread	"In one way the Jadidis of Mashhad differed from the rest of their Jewish brothers in Persia. In all the other cities in Persia, excluding Yazd, our Jewish brothers would buy bread baked by gentiles (pat nochrim) at the market. In these cities, Jewish bread could not be found at any price. In fact, in Mashhad the Jadidis did not purchase gentile bread because each baked their own bread at home, and if that was not possible, they would reluctantly buy gentile bread at the market. This custom was evidently practiced since ancient times."	p. 83
	The Diaspora	
Herat	"The city of Herat is twelve days distance from Mashhad. There are three hundred Jewish homes there, most of them belonging to the refugees from Mashhad, and the rest of them from other cities of Persia. When the Mashhadis arrived in Herat in 1840, they found about twenty homeowners. The notable personages, Agha Yeuda Kohen, Mola Yosef Gol, and a teacher and butcher whose name is Mola Matatiyahu. He did not accept charity because he made a meager living, which sufficed his family, and he was held in respect by his brethren who called him 'Hassid.'"	p. 87
Sarakhs	"If a man departs from Mashhad, and he is facing eastward to walk towards Turkmenistan, he will arrive, on the eighth day of his journey, at the city of Sarakhs. There he will find about **twenty** merchants from the **forced conversion** of Mashhad. This city was built in the days of Nader Shah, King of Persia, but was later burned and abandoned. But when the land was conquered by the Russians in 1884, the Turkemen flocked to it and established their homes there."	p. 100
Marv	"When the city of Marv was founded, about twenty Herati Jews lived there, who traded with the Turkmen. After they were commanded to leave the city if	p. 101

	they didn't take part in the building, they made an effort to purchase a piece of land on which to build houses and shops. Even the **Mashhadis, the forced converts**, joined them, until they gathered about **sixty** of our brethren whose families live in Mashhad and Herat (only our Russian Ashkenazi brothers had no permission to live there, and I only saw a few of them working in the army) and they built there a synagogue. Yom Kippur of the year 1886 was the first day that Jews prayed in the synagogue on the soil of the Turkmen. Then also a few of our Bukharan brethern came to Marv. The notable personages were: Mola Moshe Kohen and **Mola Amin** (Binyamin) **Kortevani** [=Kordevani], both of whom were gabais of the synagogue. The butcher there was Mola Yaaqov. The second gabai [Binyamin Kordevani] was Mashhadi."	1886 תרמ"ו
Kermanshah	"Kermanshah is a great city, and about 250 of our brethren live there, and they have a synagogue which has three rooms for worship. The town dignitaries are: Hakim (=Doctor) Aghajan. He is a doctor and from his work he is able to make a living, and he is also a scholar and knows some verses from the Bible, and is intelligent, all of which traits are rare there. After him come **Avraham Sdomi [one of the forced converts of Mashhad],** and a teacher and butcher by the name of Mola (Hakham) Yehezqel Yazdi."	p. 72

A Poem about the Events of the Forced Converts

	I am the humble Shlomo ben Mashiyach, 1905	1905
	Rabbi Shlomo ben Mashiyach was one of the well-known cabalists in Jerusalem. Rabbi Shlomo emigrated from Mashhad to Eretz Israel in the beginning of the Twentieth Century. The following poem appears in the prayer book of the Sabbath, which was published by Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar. On the prayer book is written, in handwriting, "property of Eliyahu Zvuloni." The poem mentions the forced conversion of 1839, and also describes other events that occurred in his time, in 1892 and 1903 (years of instability of the government in Persia). Rabbi Shlomo relates, in an artistic way, the history of the Jews of Mashhad with the lives of the people of Israel and begs G-d to bring them salvation.	
	Poem on the Event of the Forced Conversion of Mashhad, may G-d bring Salvation upon them, in Alphabetical Order	
	א-דני שפתי תפתח לספר גדולתך אמצני וחזקני להגיד זרועך לדור, לכל יבא גבורתיך אם אין לי מעשים אל תבא במשפט את עבדך אל תטשני ואל תעזבני למען חסדיך **ה'** **לך** תכלה עיני לקץ הפלאות להציל עשוק מיד עושקו ולהיות למופת ולאות לכל אויביך הראם גבורות גלויות וידעו כי אתה **ה'**	
	ברוך אתה ה' השומר הבטחתו לישראל בנפול עמו ביד צר, ביד עשו וישמעאל בהיותם בארץ אויביהם, לא מאסם ולא געלם האל כי לא יעזוב את חסידיו **ה'** **מלכי** קנא לכבוד שם קדשך מהר ושרק וקבץ הצאן והא שכינתך מאוד נפלנו ואין מקים ותומך זולתך עורה למה תישן **ה'**	
	גם בערי פרס ומהם עיר משהד, והיא רבתי עם גלו שם בימי נאדר שאה, מקזוין, דלת העם גרים שם עד היום, והמה נדיבי עם אמונים נוצר **ה'** **נא** את אבלי ציון אהליבה ואהלה נחמם מאכלם ושלח מנחם לאומללה נפשות עגומים שמח ותאמר די לצרה כי שומע אל אביונים **ה'**	
תקצ"ט 1839	**דמעת** אלו העשוקים ראית, אלו שנאנסו להמיר דת האמת, בשנת התקצ"ט, לשית ושמיר דרכו קשתם לכלות הכרם בניסן בעת הזמיר כי הם כרם חמר **ה'** **סוכת** דוד הנופלת תקים סמוך לעדתך כי אתה מפיל ומקים סודך גלה הנעתר ביד נביאים כי הנה ימים באים נאם **ה'**	
	העל אלה תתאפק האם בבני ציון געלה נפשך הורידו בעפר כבודם, בהתימרם שלא כרצונם הם עודם במסתרים, תבכה נפשם ואוהבי שמך איה חסדיך **ה'** **עמוד** בפרץ כי אתה אוהב עניים ענית לאבות בכל צרתם לעשות פלאים עשה נא לזרעם כמעשה אבות יעשה לבנים זאת נחלת עבדי **ה'**	
תרנ"ב 1892	**ולי** מה יקרו רעיך אל בעשותך שפטים ובשנת התרנ"ב בחלקי אזיא מגפות ומכאובים וגם יד ה' היתה בי בדבר ומעלילים אתה גיבור לעולם **ה'** **פקח** עיניך וראה לשה נאלמה פקוד נא ליושבת חיות אלמנה פתח לאסורים כלאם ותן חנינה כי בועליך עושיך **ה'**	
	זכור אזכור אחת מהן ותשוח עלי נפשי זדים הליצוני שנאבד בן מהם ומים זידונים עברו על ראשי זכר חסדו והנה הבן לפני העומדים שרצו לנפשי כי לא יטוש **ה'** **צמח** ישועה תצמיח ותפריח צוררי יהודה וירושלים תזניח צדקתך לעולם תצליח ותרויח להודות בשם **ה'**	
	חדשים לבקרים רבה אמונתך חננתני בכל רגע נסיך ונפלאותיך **קיים** לי כל ההבטחותיך קולי תשמע ושימח דמעתי בנאדך	

תרס"ג 1903	חליתי פניך והושעתני כשהתחכמו סוד על בניך חנון ורחום **ה'**	קרבני כימי קדם לראות בטובת בחיריך לחזות בנועם **ה'**
	טובות גמלתני שנת התרס"ג, בירח זיו הנצנים טפלו עלי זדים לשלול ולבוז המונים רעבתנים טחו עיניהם והחזרתם אף שבאו עד ביתי פעם ושנים מה רבו מעשיך **ה'**	**רוש** ותרעלה שתיתי ומציתי את כוס קובעת רפא צירי ואמור אל תירא יעקב התולעת ראה כי חרפוך ומלכות למינות נקבעת ותאמר ציון עזבני **ה'**
	יודוך רעיוני על אשר גאלתני מיד נשיאי הנכר יען שהתנכלו להדיחני מנחלת הנבחר יזמו לרעה וה' הכחדם והעבר אל קנוא ונוקם **ה'**	**שדי** השקיפה ממעון קדשך שעה לתחנתי אם לא למעני למענך שמרני ואהיה בהגלות על הר הזיתים זרועיך הנה יום בא **לה'**
	כמה עברו על ראשי צרות משונות כל האחרונות משכחות ראשונות כלים הימים והן אינן כלות כי ישר דבר **ה'**	**תטה** לי חסדיך ממרומי ערץ תמחץ ותכרית קמיך לכלה וחרץ תעביר ממשלת זדון מן הארץ והיה ה' למלך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא **ה'**

Following is a free translation of excerpts from this poem:

א	O Lord, open my lips to tell of Thy greatness Give me courage and strengthen me, that I can tell the next generation of Thy strength and Thy might If I have no good deeds, do not bring to judgment Thy servant Cast me not off, neither forsake me, for Thy mercies, O Lord
ג	Even so in the cities of Persia, and Mashhad among them, she that was full of people There they were exiled from Qazvin in the days of Nader Shah, the poorest of the people, but they were loyal to G-d Living there to this day and they are princes of His people He preserveth the faithful, the Lord
ד	The tears of these oppressed you noticed when they were forced to convert True faith in 1839 they exchanged for thorns and briers They have bent their bow to consume the vineyard in Nissan (Mar-Apr) when the nightingale sings [=spring] 'A vineyard of foaming wine' [=the Jewish people] they are to Thee Lord.
ה	Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, hath Thy soul loathed the sons of Zion [=Mashhadi Jews] They have brought their honor down to the dust, pretentious, not as Thy wish Still in secret they shall weep their soul and love Thy name Where are Thy former mercies, O Lord
ת	Tend me with Thy loving kindness, from Thy glorious skies Crush and cut off them that rise up against Thee until extermination wholly determined May the reign of insolence be uprooted And the Lord shall be King over all the earth, on that day, O Lord.

Events of World War I in Jerusalem

1914 Poem by Malka, Wife of Haji Matatiyahu Kohen Aharonoff (Harounoff) 1914

This poem was written during the first World War in Jerusalem by Malka Aharonoff – during the time when her house was requisitioned by the Turks. The poem was copied and completed by her son Yosef Haim in 1938.

The original copy is in the keeping of the great-grandson **Efraim Levy** from Jerusalem.

Verses from a Poem Composed by Malka Harounoff

[R.N.: Free translation of manuscript written in Persian using Mashhadi-Hebrew letters]

7	A decree was announced by the Sultan And this was the decree To transfer this dwelling To the ownership of the Turkish soldiers	20	Oh I am a miserable mother I remained here, begging My children left me Those who hate me became my intimates	39	As I watched their defeat I rejoiced and laughed As I thanked the heavens As I returned to my house
8	As I heard the decree My heart moaned I cried and I begged As I placed my destiny in the hands of heaven	27	They came in and settled in my house Celebrated and made merry Played music on the tambourine Danced and danced	41	After a while My children returned to me As I watched the happiness on their faces I was delighted to see them
17	One day while I was in my house Soldiers entered my house They liked my house And claimed that this was the decree	28	They lit the house with lights And where should I wander? The house is full of flags And I wallow in my misery	43	Oh the infidel Turks You caused me much suffering You were very cruel You did evil to your subjects And finally you fell at the hands of the British
19	As I heard their discussion My heart let out a sob As a tree I shivered I wept and I begged	37	And after a while And my Lord returned to me from heaven I was spared from the sword and I prevailed All fled and escaped	44	Oh miserable children of Israel How long do you wallow in misery Unite in Eretz Israel Freedom and liberty will be achieved forever

Attempts to Immigrate to Eretz Israel

	Attempts to Immigrate	1921-1940
Refugees of the Russian Revolution	Excerpts from a letter sent by the "Zionist Organization of Mesopotamia (Baghdad)" to the "Board of Deputies (Jerusalem)." This letter is classified and contains a translation of an appeal from the Mashhadi Jews to the Zionist Federation in Baghdad. – August 1921 "... Every day they threaten us ... whoever has found enough money for the trip is trying to leave. And for those of us who cannot afford, we are 125 families, 600 people... we have no money for the expenses of the trip... you know we were merchants in Russia and during the revolution... they took... all our possessions... save us from the land of the impure... try to build a home for us, move us to Jerusalem and save us from being killed, imprisoned, and looted... with G-d's help, when we arrive in Eretz Israel - we will work at any job until we can repay our debts. Our estates currently do not have a buyer, but whenever it will be possible to sell them, we will repay the Zionists... Today the city of Mashhad has become a hell for us... and it is important to inform you that whatever you do with us, keep it a secret because we are in great danger. Please do not reveal this matter to anyone... we long... for the moment that we will be able to leave Mashhad-al-Reza."	1921 [The Zionist Archives] A126/159
At the Threshold of Eretz Israel	Excerpts from a letter sent by the "World Zionist Central Office (London)" to the "Jewish Agency (Jerusalem)" – January 1934 "I have been requested by Mr. Isaac Djemshidoff, a Persian Jew living in London... on behalf of a small party of Persian Jews from Mashhad who wish to enter Palestine and who have been refused admittance at the Syria frontier. The party consists of seven persons, viz, Mr. Jacob Ibrahimzadeh and his wife and four children, and Mr. Joseph Abdolahzadeh..."	1934 S6/3051
London – For the sake of Mashhadi Jews	Excerpts from a letter sent by "J. Linton (London)" to the "Members of the Executive Board (Jerusalem)" – September 1934 "By appointment I saw yesterday three representatives of the Persian Jews in London. The deputation consisted of Mr. Aminoff and two other gentlemen. The purpose... was to acquaint us with the position of the Jews of Mashhad and to ask for Palestine Immigration Certificates... there are 2000 Jewish families in Mashhad... Although there has been some improvement in their position ... they live in constant dread of tragedy, and there is a great desire amongst them to emigrate to Palestine... the distribution of the certificates will have to be done from outside, as there can be no question of Zionist or Jewish activities in Mashhad. The penalty for a convert who returns to his original religion is death... No financial assistance would be required for us...."	1934 S6/3051

Integration into Eretz Israeli Life	First steps. Illustration of the integration of a Mashhadi family that immigrated to Israel and applied for a name change: Name Change record (1928) for Amin Haji Ali to Binyamin Elisha. Additional details: • Born: 1881, Mashhad. Residence: Bukharan Quarter. Profession: Merchant. • Spouse's name: Miriam. Children's names: David, Shlomo, Yafa, Eliyahu, Leah and Israel.	1928 Courtesy of the Granddaughter Ora Pressov bat Shlomo
Eretz Israel – For the Sake of Mashhadi Jews	Excerpts from a letter sent by "Mordechai Sinai (a Mashhadi from Tel Aviv)" to "Mr. Bachar from the Department of Immigration (Jerusalem)" – November 1934 "... At my meeting with Mr. Dobkin in Tel-Aviv, he assured me that you are planning to send a fair number of certificates to Mashhad... there are families there with seven and eight people ... Excerpts from a letter sent by the "General Committee of the Persian Community (Jerusalem)" to "Immigration Department (Jerusalem)" – October 1935 "... Regarding the immigration permits... we clarify that... the state of our persecuted brethren in Persia and in particular the forced converts in the city of Mashhad (Persia), whose lives are in great danger... we request that you arrange these permits as soon as possible, as some of them have already escaped and have arrived in Beirut and Damascus..."	1934-5 S6/3051
Types of Immigrants from Persia	This folder lists, in order of priority, the types of immigrants from Persia: • **Jews of Mashhad**: Most urgent. Live in most fanatical neighborhood. Forbidden to travel to Eretz Israel. Those returning to Judaism will be sentenced to death. • **Bukharan exiles**: Very difficult situation. Stranded in Persia for a long time without income. May be sent back to Russia. • **Russian exiles**: Mostly Ashkenazi Jews. Waiting for a long time for permits. • **Jews of Persia**: Their economic situation is deteriorating. Many of them want to immigrate to Eretz Israel.	1935 S6/3051

	The following excerpts describe the circumstances of the Jews of Mashhad: "...Mashhadi Jewish community is a forced conversion (crypto) community...During Pesach of 1839 a disaster fell upon them...they were faced with a general massacre or forced conversion...and thus they became Muslims...they are required to fulfill the Muslim rules such as prayer and the Ramadan and the pilgrimage...Leaving Islam and returning to the origin faith is punishable by death. "In spite of this, for the past 96 years, the forced converts of Mashhad remained true to their faith in their secret tents and were Muslims in appearance only. On the outside they went to a mosque, but in the ghetto...a hidden synagogue. They keep the Sabbath as best possible...and don't mix with the Persians. They are good Jews, aware of every Jewish issue...They were the first to come to the aid of the exiled Bukharans... "With the beginning of Zionism, living a double life became...intolerable. Many started to immigrate... to remove the veil of Islam... A Jewish awakening began, especially among the youth, and several hundred of them immigrated to Eretz Israel... many of them illegally. Others of means immigrated... some as merchants, some as settlers (for example, in Afula).... "In all, about 250-300 people immigrated to Eretz Israel and found work... However, the fact is that this immigration garnered a lot of special attention from the government authorities and from their envious neighbors in Mashhad, who started to keep an eye on them.... [in their passports is registered] "With the exception of Eretz Israel"... the forced converts had no choice... no way out except to immigrate to Eretz Israel... I suggest allocating 200 certificates ..."	
Request for Support for the Persecuted	Excerpts from a letter sent by "Yitzhak Ben Zvi (Jerusalem)" after his return from Persia, to the "Official Manager of Government Affairs (Jerusalem)" – September 1935 "... 96 years ago... The whole community was faced with a general massacre... the community... under the threat of death converted to Islam... they were known as "Jadid al-Islam" by the Muslims... and of course their neighbors know that these "New Muslims" secretly keep their Jewish religion but they are satisfied with the outward appearances...as Muslims... and like this they have been living for nearly a hundred years. However, any attempt... to leave Islam... and return to their ancestral religion is considered a sin that is punishable by death... "In recent years... especially among the younger generation... tired of the duplicity of their lives... they went to other countries... London... Eretz Israel. Among those who went to Eretz Israel... those with means for engaging in commerce, and those who settled and worked the land (in Afula). And those who were without means, so they went to work as laborers in Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and the agricultural settlements (moshavim)... About 250 [people]... Some of them without a permit... "Immigrants from Mashhad... are refugees persecuted for their faith. If these immigrants are forced to return to their homeland [in Persia] it will bring calamity to them and the entire Jewish community of Mashhad. I have full faith that the British tradition of always protecting people who are persecuted for their religion and their beliefs, will oblige the authorities in Eretz Israel to treat the immigrants from Mashhad with special patience..."	1935 J1/4023

Hunger Strike	Excerpts from a letter sent by "Farajolah Nassrolahoff (Chairman of the Mashhadi Immigrants Board - Jerusalem)" to "Yitzhak Ben Zvi (Chairman of the National Committee of the Knesset of Israel - Jerusalem)" – April 1940 "... Regarding the status of the forced convert refugees of Mashhad which the government of Eretz Israel wants to expel from the country... Shmuel Aghayoff (Nurolah Ghassabian) has been in prison more than four months... Today we learned that Ghassabian has declared a hunger strike in prison. We ask that you at least temporarily release him, for the holidays, until you are able to cancel the order of expulsion from the country." Note: Prior to this letter, in March, 100 pounds were offered as a guarantee (due to the efforts of Farajolah Nassrolahoff and Mehdi Aminoff), but to no avail. The decision was written on the petition: "The Commissioner reviewed the materials - the decision is negative."	1940 J1/4023

Bukharan Refugees

	The Refugees	1933-1934
Stopover in Mashhad	Excerpts from a letter sent by Bukharan refugees in Mashhad to the members of the "Committee of Bukharan Jewish Association in Jerusalem" – on November 29, 1933 "As you know, these reasons... persecution by the Bolshevik government... and the harsh famine... have forced us to put our lives in danger and flee from Russia... And today the number of Bukharan refugees in Mashhad is about seven hundred souls... Two and a half months ago, the government issued an order to deport all of us from the country, and only by the efforts of Persian notables were we able to get an extension of three months, and this extension ends at the end of the month of November... and we have not yet received from you permits to immigrate. "Please do not take this matter lightly... also the consulate of the Soviet government in Mashhad is persistently demanding that we be returned... or G-d forbid... our fate is sealed. "... We received a letter from you... That you are going to send several permits for ages 18-35... Dear brothers, is the question of age important at a time when our lives are in danger and death hovers over our heads? Dear brothers... with tears spilling from our eyes and with hearts filled with bitterness... We appeal to you to obtain permits for us, for young and old... Do not worry that we may become a burden... And all of us, from young to old, will work with all our might... "Although these days our countrymen are suffering from harsh edicts, everywhere, both in Germany and in Russia, and egregious edicts in Eretz Israel, we understand that it is very difficult. But against mortal danger there is neither reason nor edict that can be justified..."	[Zionist Archives 56-3051 (Excerpts)
Thanks	Excerpts of 'Letter of Thanks' sent to Mashhad by the refugees – Tehran, 8th of Tammuz 1934 "We the undersigned, members of the Russian refugees... we fled and saved our lives, more than a thousand people, and came under the rule of the government of Persia, Reza Shah... in the city of Mashhad... and they did us many favors... and also the Jews of the city of Mashhad, and first and foremost the blessed brothers **Aminoff**, and Rabbi **Mola Faraj Elishayoff**, and Rabbi **Mola Rafi**, and **Mola Abdol-Karim Itzhaqoff**, almost one year the people of Mashhad have suffered because of us... and rewarded us with grace both day and night and in the cold and the heat... G-d willing, they will receive full recompense from G-d, Amen. And please do read this letter in all the synagogues... "The order and the writer, the Lord's servant, Hanania Itzhaqoff Kohen." Notes: • The names of the brothers Aminoff and Mola Rafi were accidentally omitted from the booklet "Exhibition" – but the above letter clearly	[Exhibition] (Excerpts)

	shows that they were involved in helping the refugees. • The booklet "Exhibition" states that Mola Abdolah along with Dash Karim and Mola Faraj took care of the Bukharan refugees. The above letter did not mention the name of Mola Abdolah. The reason is probably that, although Mola Abdolah was engaged in helping refugees in 1933 and the early part of 1934, but in 1934 he went to Peshawar for seven years. Hanania Itzhaqoff, the refugee who wrote the letter in July, may not have met Mola Abdolah because he came to Mashhad after Mola Abdolah had left.	

Riots of Pesach 1946

	Yosef Kleinbaum (May 14-15)	1946
Report on Mashhad Visit	"... The forced converts of Mashhad remained good Jews, religious, imbued with love and longing for Zion.... For the past thirty years the Jews of Mashhad were hardly able to hide their Jewishness. What remains with them until this very day is the constant fear of the Muslim world surrounding them, a world full of hatred, suspicion and hostility. "The structure of the Mashhad ghetto, the homes and the courtyards, are testimonty to this fear. There is a gate leading to each quarter of the ghetto, which, if locked, closes off access to the entire quarter. Narrow tunnels lead into the courtyards; they make it very difficult to enter the homes of the Jews. Thusly, the courtyards of Mashhad's Jewish ghetto are surrounded by walls and corridors that protect the people from invasion ... "Over the years some of Mashhad's Jews left the city. There were those who journeyed to India, those who moved to England and the United States, those who immigrated to Eretz Israel, as well as those who went to live in the capital, Tehran. However, no matter where they were, the ties binding the Jews of Mashhad endured. For the sons of Mashhad, the city remained the home of their Jewish parents – the place you can leave but can never forget..."	[Zionist Archives 56-4576 (Excerpts)
Riots	"During the last Pesach, shortly after the Red Army left the city... a crisis hung over the community of Mashhad. Like 107 years ago, again Mashhad experienced a case of blood libel. The tense political situation and the fanaticism of the Muslims found expression in riots against the Jews.... There are several versions as to the direct cause of the blood libel and riots... in a ball game between Jewish and Muslim children a fist fight broke out... one of the Muslim children was hit by a Jewish boy... and for a long time it was not known where he was. So the Muslims circulated a rumor that the boy was killed by the Jews in order to use his blood for baking matzos. "From the statements taken from the Jews of Mashhad, the events were as follows... After the outbreak of the rumor of the murder of a Muslim boy (it was on the second night of Pesach), a crowd of several thousand gathered around Tehran Street leading to the ghetto, and tried to break in. The Jews locked the gates and hid in their homes. Part of the crowd managed to break one of the gates and entered the ghetto. Some Jewish homes were damaged, doors and windows were broken, and the rioters even tried to set fire to several houses. The Jews who fell into the hands of the crowd were sorely beaten, fifteen or so were injured. None of the cases were terribly serious. A young Jew was captured by the crowd, which poured oil on him and tried to set him on fire. Only a miracle saved the young man. The Muslim molas (=mullahs) and the authorities intervened. It is said that one of the molas appealed to the crowd to disperse. According to the Jews, the police sent to the scene of the riot displayed no interest in acting forcefully. The appeals of the molas and of several Muslim officials somewhat quieted the crowd, which began to disperse. But two hours later there was again an attempt to break into the ghetto. By morning the situation had calmed down, but most of the Jews stayed home and did not go to synagogue. All during Pesach the Jews of	

	Mashhad were frightened and full of anxiety for their fate."	
Fears	"The disturbances shocked the city's Jews, and they didn't feel safe in Mashhad. They lived in the midst of a fanatical population, imbued with hatred for them. They feared a recurrence of such events and they worried about their fate. "Immediately after the riots, the Jews of Mashhad informed the Tehran Jewish Agency of the events, and asked them to deliver the message to Eretz Israel, to the Jews of America and England, and to the Mashhadi community in Eretz Israel and throughout the Diaspora. They also contacted the Jewish Agency in Tehran and institutions in Eretz Israel with a request to allow them to make aliyah to Eretz Israel."	
Number of Jews	"The lack of statistical records makes it difficult to determine the exact number of Jews in Mashhad. It is estimated that there are between 3,000 and 4,000... not counting a few dozen Mashhadi families permanently residing in Tehran. As mentioned above, there are settlements of Mashhadi Jews in Eretz Israel, London, New York and India. No more than 2,000 to 3,000 Mashhadi Jews live outside of their home city. The relationship between the Mashhadis that are spread around the world and their brethren in Persia is very close."	
Loyalty	"You could call Mashhad the Jerusalem of Persia. The Jews of Mashhad are the finest of all the Jews of Iran. This community has been forced for decades to keep its Judaism underground, all the while remaining true to its religion and nation, and this demonstrates a very special quality. The deep and true religiousness of the Mashhadi Jews is very different from the religiousness of other eastern countries, and that of the Eastern European Jews. Mashhadi Judaism is pure inside and out in that it is void of fanaticism and superstition, and is combined with a strong sense of nationalism. The relationship between the Jews of Mashhad and Zion is vibrant."	
Synagogue	"When you are among these Jews, talking with them or praying with them in the synagogue, you forget that this is a community of forced converts in a remote corner of the world... Most of the Jews of Mashhad speak fluent Hebrew and almost all of them understand it. The synagogue is the center of their social life. They not only pray there and study Torah, they also read the Eretz Israeli press and all the materials sent to them by various Eretz Israeli institutions. In the synagogue they have conversations about world events and about activities in the local community. Public assemblies are held in the synagogue, as are gatherings about various community affairs. The Jews of Mashhad also like to just sit in the synagogue. This is easy to understand taking into account that the synagogue, for them, for generations, has been their only place of congregation."	
Education	"Most of the Jews of Mashhad are concentrated in a ghetto... In the ghetto are two Persian schools for the Jews, supervised by the government, one for boys and one for girls. Since the Jews of Mashhad are officially Muslims, it is not possible for the Alliance to establish a school in Mashhad, but the Jews of	

	Mashhad are not pleased only with the schools set up for them by the government and so they created their own school, called "Midrash", where they receive a religious education and national education together.... The national and Hebrew studies at this point are rather amazing. One could say with absolute certainty, that it is worthwhile sending learning materials from Eretz Israel to Mashhad - textbooks, pamphlets, poetry, etc. Not a single piece of these materials is lost; and they are used to the maximum – everything that comes from the Holy Land to the Jews of Mashhad – be it elementary or advanced-level textbooks, brochures on the history of Zionism or our heroic paratroopers, newspapers, pamphlets about Keren HaYesod or Keren HaKayemet. Everything is saved, everything is passed from hand to hand, everything... The Jews of Mashhad bind the books from Eretz Israel so they won't get torn, glue the leaflets and magazines to cardboard, and carefully arrange all the pictures from Eretz Israel. You cannot find any difference between Holy books and the new Hebrew publications. **"This we received from Eretz Israel"** – the Mashhadi Jews say with pride and pleasure. "In consultation with the rich and the dignitaries of Mashhad, it was proposed, together with the rich brethren in London, America and Eretz Israel, to establish in Eretz Israel an agricultural or industrial settlement (or both) where Mashhadi Jews who do not have financial resources will be able to find work, after a means of immigrating is found for them."	
	Yitzhak Ben Zvi	1946
Description of the Situation	Description of Yitzhak Ben Zvi based on the report of Mr. David Kohen (May 13, 1946) "... In the last letter it was written that not all of the details will be published so that their families in Eretz Israel will not be overly alarmed. But they are begging to be rescued from this danger. They fear that riots will begin again any day. Antisemitism there is intensifying day by day since the Russians left the city."	[Zionist Archives 56-4576 (Excerpts)
Getting Organized	"Saturday night a community meeting took place in Tel Aviv... The assembly selected a committee of four members: Azariyahu Levy, Mordechai Sinai, David Kohen, and Shmuel Kohen. This committee will carry out the requirements set by the national institutions..."	
The Plan	(Yitzhak Ben Zvi continues) "The requirements are: • Investigate the best method for rescuing the Jews immediately. Arrange an immediate meeting with the Jewish Agency for providing permits. • Send a messenger to Mashhad to organize and guide the Jews and decide how to rescue them. • Request that the authorities find out what happened during the riot and how to protect them until their rescue."	
Number of Jews	The number of Mashhadi Jews residing in Eretz Israel is estimated as follows:	

Place	*Number*
Jerusalem	800
Afula	50
Haifa	30
Bene Beraq	30
Petach Tiqva	15
Hertzelia	20
Gan Yavneh	15
Other Places	*the rest*
Total	***1500***

	Shlomo Moradi – Report by an Eye Witness	
Warnings	Description by Shlomo Moradi (son of Rabbi Refael Aghalar and Rachel, daughter of Yehuda Nissim): "On the Shabbat before Pesach the community was warned by the leaders (in the synagogues) to refrain from visiting each other, not to wear holiday clothes, and not to come into close contact with Muslims. "A few days before Pesach, a few Muslim youths began to harass Jewish girls (removing the veil from their faces, etc.). These acts continued on the night of the Seder and into the next day."	[Patai/94] [Evidence 2 1946-7] (Excerpts)
Riots	"On the first day of Pesach, the Muslims complained to the police that the Jews tried to kidnap a Muslim boy to use his blood to make matzah. As a result of the complaint, the police arrested several Jews. "Later in the day the mob began to attack Jews outside their homes, and also broke into and attacked the Jewish neighborhood Eid-Gah. "On the second night of the Seder some of the wounded were taken to a hospital and some were taken to their homes. The detainees were held at the police station. The police claimed that it was dangerous to release them even though they knew that the kidnapping story was just a false allegation. "On the second day the mob again attacked the Jewish neighborhood. They threw stones, broke windows and burned the gates. In several cases they entered homes and injured people. The presence of the military and the police did not help at all. Towards evening they attacked the synagogue. After receiving a bribe, the police fired some shots and the rioters dispersed. In the evening, a senior police officer warned the mob that the Russians had left weapons with the Jews and if they dare to go inside they might be killed. This lie had a strong impact on the behavior of the rioters. The Jews of Mashhad appealed to the Jews of the northern neighborhood of Jannat and to the British and the Russian consulates. Representatives from the Russian consulate even came to the Jewish neighborhood and it was reported in the press and on the radio in Russia. During these events the neighborhood of Jannat was also attacked several times. "The Jews gave many large bribes to police officials to appeal to the Muslim religious leaders to intervene. As a result, the elderly and respected leader Nahawandi intervened; he told his congregation of believers that these people are Jadid al-Islam who have lived with us for many years and from whom we	

saw no evil, and any Muslim who touches this group will be regarded as a traitor to his religion. The words of the old leader convinced the mob to disperse, but the tension continued for several days and harassment on the streets did not cease until several more days had passed.

"This matter was also brought to the attention of the relatives of the Mashhadis in Tehran, who petitioned the authorities. After several weeks representatives of the Jewish Agency came and met with representatives of the British and Russian consulates and intended to contact the local ruler, but Mashhadi community leaders advised them against it."

Nurolah Zvuloni's Letter

Evening Lessons and HaChalutz (the Pioneer)

[Zionist Archives] (KKL5-14737) (Excerpts)

Written from Mashhad to the Jewish National Fund - Head Office (December 26, 1946)

"... The Jewish Agency in Tehran sometimes sends us some materials, but this ... is not enough for us. Send us some nice printed materials to give to the donors to the Jewish National Fund and to distribute among the students in the evening classes and the members of the Chalutz.

"A few months ago we arranged a Chalutz house in Mashhad but to our great sorrow there were riots in Mashhad and we are all afraid to openly carry out our activities. I was elected as the representative, and I am acting to the best of my ability ...

"... I send you greetings of peace in the name of the forced converts of Mashhad....

With warmest regards,

Nurolah Zvuloni

HaChalutz

Mashhad"

Song of the Pioneers

[R.N. 2008] [Pictures/ Yehuda / Binyamin]

"Song of the Pioneers" – My mother, Malka bat Chanuka Nissimi, rest in peace, would sing the song as she had learned it in the HaChalutz movement of Mashhad. I remembered the tune and several words. For a long time I looked for the words of the song. And finally... I got the text from Mrs. Karmeli (Ashraf Loloey) who was the girls' teacher in Mashhad around 1946-1947. Below are the words:

The Pioneers! Diligent at hand Carve a path through the desert! Be happy and in merriment sing, Build your country, the ancestral land!	החלוצים! ביד חרוצים סולו סולו המסילה, ישרו הערבות! נירו הניר, בגיל ושיר בנו את ארצכם, ארץ אבות!
But do not fear! When a day of trouble arrives You will each throw your fate to G-d! From action will come redemption, And even if it is delayed – it will still arrive!	אך אל מורא! בבוא יום צרה איש מכם על א-לוהים ישליך יהבו! יש גאולה, לפעולה, ואם גם תתמהמה - עוד בוא תבוא!

[Israel Dushman 1920s]

The Beit-Mashhad (parents' home) choir sang this song on Hanukah of 2008, which was welcomed with a great deal of excitement. The choir was founded by Ora Zar.

Note: There is also a Persian version: "Galut gozasht, vakhte' aan ast..." = The exile has passed, the time has come …

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Beit Saba
Introduction

*

Yehuda
Binyamin
HaRav Levi
Yosef
Yishayahu

*

Shmuel
Itzhaq ben Eliyahu
Shmuel ben Mashiyach

*

Mishael
Shlomo

*

Reuven
Reuven
Gavriel Yaaqobi

*

Zvuloni
Nissim
Eliyahu
HaRav David

*

Zioni
David

*

Nethanel
Malka
Nethanel ben Efraim

*

Binyamin
Yaaqov

*

Rahamim
Itzhaq Ben Ami

Grandfather's House

Introduction

	Structure	1740s – 1940s
Background	And King Nader transferred Jews from the north cities to his capital, Mashhad. And it was good for the Jews ... And the Children of Israel multiplied and grew stronger. And then a new king arose over the Persian Empire. And fanaticism and hatred grew. And the religious sages forgot the Creator and His Prophet Moshe, and they besieged the Jews and killed them and robbed them and forced them to convert to Islam. The crypto-Jews suffered but they secretly kept their faith and the unique heritage of their fathers for a hundred years until the rage passed. And although they were ordered to change their names – they never forgot their Hebrew names.	
Family Tree	This section describes the story of the people in the Nissimi family tree. The genealogy of the Nissimi families was built mainly on the basis of an oral tradition (word of mouth) handed down to the seventh generation since Nissim (the father of the Nissimi line) at the time of Nader Shah. Other attempts at building a genealogy of the Nissimi families indicated that there were three separate branches (the Rabbi Yehuda branch, the Reuven branch, and the David branch), but no way to connect them - due to lack of knowledge and to ambiguity about the order of the generations, especially the second through fourth generations. In order to fill in the missing links and connect the different branches, I used other sources, such as certificates and ketubot (marriage contracts). Cross-referencing these sources with the fragments of our oral history created quite a credible picture of the early Nissimi families. The family tree includes 9-10 generations. To present a comprehensive picture, each and every individual in the family tree is identified according to the following rules: • Identification of each person by their Hebrew name written in the Hebrew alphabet, and by their non-Hebrew (usually Persian) name written in Latin script • Identification of the women (in addition to the men) • Identification of spouses	[Generations] [Sources] [.../Signatures]
Structure	This chapter is devoted to generations one through six – from the 1740s to 1940s. In this chapter, we recognize the connections between the various branches of our family tree and identify the different families derived from the Nissimis. The remaining chapters will be dedicated to the generation that	

	characterized our grandfathers (usually generations six and seven). Everyone and his grandfather - every grandfather and his life story. Thusly we will obtain a colorful mosaic of the life stories of our ancestors, sometimes embracing different countries and different events, but which displays an overall picture of a large and diverse family unit.	
Qazvin	First Generation (a)	1720 - 1746
Background	King Nader conquered many countries, from Delhi in India to Baghdad in Iraq. And the King moved forty Jewish families from their cities in the north to his capital city of Mashhad and his fortress Kalat Naderi to guard his treasures. But the Shah was murdered, leaving the Jews defenseless.	
Nissim Founder of the Family	We have little knowledge of Nissim, the founder of the family. According to our oral tradition, Nissim was the son of Shmuel. We may assume that: • Nissim ben Shmuel was born in Qazvin in about 1720. He grew up in Qazvin, an important city that was the capital of Persia at the beginning of the reign of Shah Abbas I (until 1597). • As a young man Nissim witnessed the coronation of Nader Shah in Qazvin (after the conquest of India, and before his return to the capital city of Mashhad in 1739). • At the age of ~26, Nissim and his wife and children were transferred to Mashhad at the command of Nader Shah. Now he had a new hope for a different future - hope that the riots of the Safavid rule would be behind him, and hope for a more secure future under the reign of a strong king who was not a religious fanatic. But the reality turned out to be very different - the Shah was murdered and the Jews were left unprotected in a region full of religious extremism.	[R.N., received from Itzhaq Ben-Ami: "Nissim ben Shmuel"] ~ 1720 ~1746
Mashhad	Second Generation (b)	1730 - 1770
Background	This was a period of instability. The descendants of Nader Shah controlled Khorasan Province under the influence of the Afghans, and in Turkmenistan the emirates controlled the Turkmen. The situation was precarious. There were killings, robberies and looting on the roads. A slave trade flourished, based on prisoners being captured during attacks on convoys and travelers.	
Inception	Our knowledge of the children of the founder of the family, **Nissim**, is scarce. We may conclude that the sons of Nissim are Yosef and Shlomo because: a) Yosef: We have a family tradition of using the names **Yosef** and **Yehuda** alternately. The tradition began with Nissim, the founder of the Nissimi lineage, and continues to present day. b) Shlomo: 1. The traveler Wolff mentions **David**, son of Aghajan Nissim, as one of the dignitaries of Marv (from the city of Mashhad). 2. We know that one of David's sons was named Shlomo, which in Persian is Aghajan.	[...\Signatures] [Daniel Nissimi heard from Yaaqov Nissim: "Rabbi Moshe ben David ben

3. We know that "**Rabbi Moshe**" was the son of "David ben Shlomo." Shlomo"]

c) It is also likely that Nissim had other children - but we do not know of any references to them.

We can summarize that the Nissimi families consisted of two main divisions: "Yehuda, ben Yosef" and "David ben Shlomo" (Yehuda and David were cousins). Yehuda and David brought forth other branches. For example, a Reuven branch was born from the Yehuda branch (in the fifth generation).

The table below illustrates the above points:

Table of Comparison

Generation	From Date	To Date	Location	Primary Branch Yehuda ben Yosef	Primary Branch David ben Shlomo
a. First	1700	1740	Qazvin	Nissim	Nissim
b. Second	1730	1770	Mashhad	Yosef (perhaps)	Shlomo (Aghajan)
c. Third	1760	1800	Mashhad, Marv	Rabbi Yehuda	David (Marv)
d. Fourth	1800	1840	Mashhad, Marv	**Yosef**, Moshe	Nissim, Rabbi Moshe, Shlomo (Aghajan)
e. Fifth	1830	1870	Mashhad, Marv	Yehuda	
f. Sixth	1860	1900	Mashhad, Marv	**Yosef**	
g. Seventh	1900	1940	Mashhad, Israel	Moshe	
h. Eighth	1930	1970	Israel	**Yosef**	

Shlomo ben Nissim

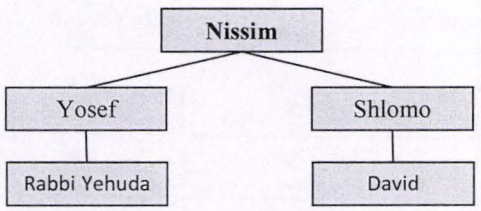
Marv was one of the trading zones of the Jews of Mashhad. **Shlomo**'s son, David ben Aghajan Nissim, was mentioned as one of the notables of that city. The security in the area was shaky, at best, and was at the mercy of the local emirates. This was certainly not conducive to trade, as evidenced by the murder of two Mashhadi Jews who were residing in Marv. The sons of David ben Shlomo were Nissim, Rabbi Moshe, and Shlomo – all of whom formed additional family lines such as Zvuloni, Zioni and Ben-Ami. Later we will encounter many of the other Nissimi families in Marv, and also in other settlements, such as Peshawar, who had an ongoing affinity with Mashhad. 1832

Wolff's Report

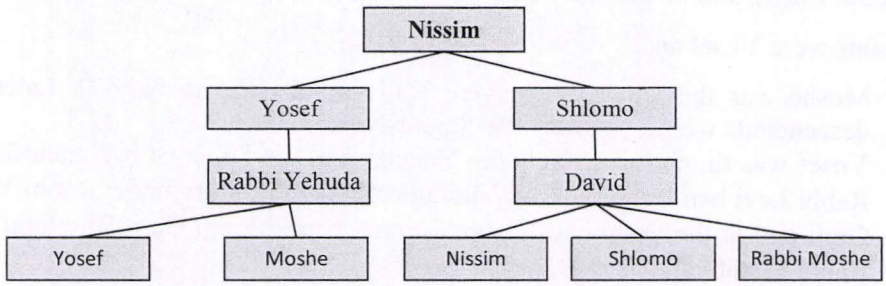
Toorkestaun, Territory of the king of Khiva: [Wolff – I]

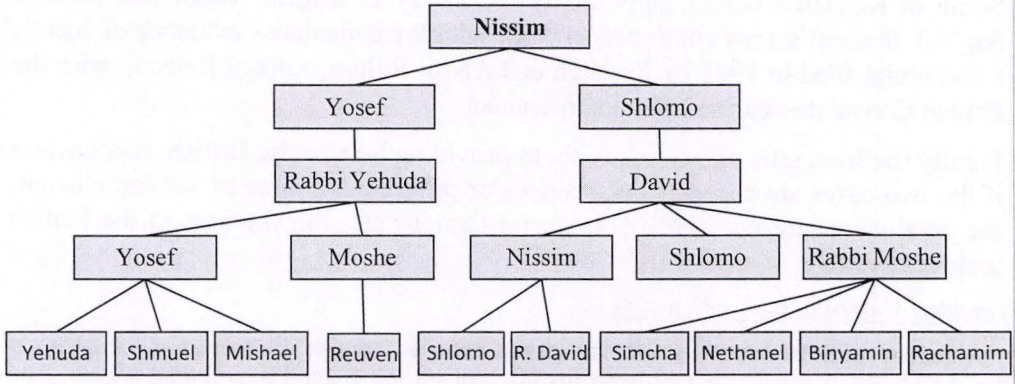
The Jews here are … from Meshed … reside here constantly. A few years ago two of them were killed by Turkmen but Allah Kolle Khan of Khiva avenged their death. The chief Jews here are Mullah Eliyahu Ben Mullah Daniel …., **David Ben AghaJoon Nissim**. [Sources]

1832

Mashhad	Third Generation (c)	1760 - 1800
Background	This was an unstable period. The governments of various provinces in Afghanistan were changing hands. The Qajar dynasty came to power and Khorasan province returned to the rule of the Persians. In Turkmenistan, the Turkmen emirates still ruled. Afghanistan and Turkmenistan formed a buffer between the Russians and the British. The British government in India was worried about the intentions of the Russians to spread out towards India. Intelligence agents of the superpowers were scattered around the entire area.	
Generations	Below is a chart of the first three generations of the Nissimi family. Nissim and his sons (Yosef and Shlomo) lived under the rule of the descendants of Nader Shah. Their grandchildren (Rabbi Yehuda and David) were witness to the changing of the regime to the Qajar dynasty, and they experienced the disaster of the forced conversion in their old age.  	
Rabbi Yehuda Nissim	**Rabbi Yehuda Nissim** was an important personage in his generation. He is mentioned in various documents (written in Mashhad) and was also known outside the borders of Persia (witness a banknote receipt from Bukhara found in the library of Rabbi Hezqiahu Kohen of Bukhara). Years after the forced conversion, Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji depicted the events of the Jews of Mashhad according to the account of **Rabbi Yeuda Nissim**, who lived in the generation of the forced conversion. From an analysis of the dates and of the family tree of the Nissimis, we can assume that: • Rabbi Yehuda Nissim, grandson of Nissim ben Shmuel, and son of Yosef, was born in Mashhad circa 1780. • He heard his grandfather describe his migration to Mashhad with the other founders of the community. • He heard his grandfather tell of the riots and the forced conversion during the reign of the Safavids. • He grew up on stories of Nader Shah, who brought Jewish families from Qazvin and surrounding areas to Mashhad. • He heard from Jewish merchants the story of the forced conversion of the Jews of Shiraz when he was 50, and he felt their pain.	~ 1780 – 1860 [Huji 1834] [זרח כוכב מיעקב] [Garji] [..\Signatures]
The Forced Conversion	Mahmud Shah, encouraged by Russia, attacked Herat (1836), the capital of Afghanistan, and for three years tried to conquer it. The British were opposed to this for fear that the unrest would spread to India. On December 1838, the Persian army withdrew. Hungry Persian soldiers who had not received their	[Levy 3] 1839

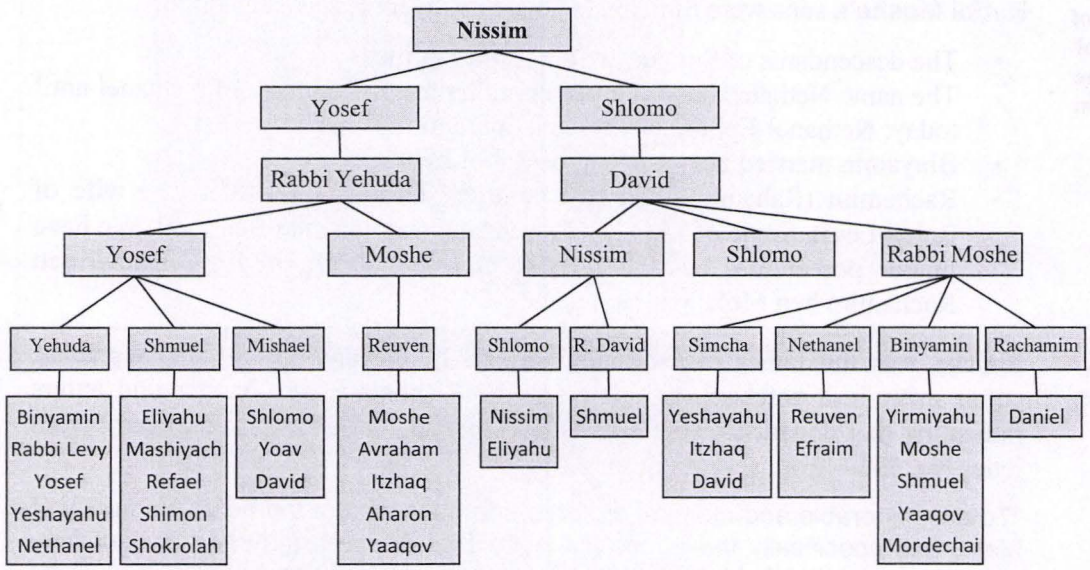
	wages raided the settlements of Khorasan. In February of 1839, the Shah parked his army in Mashhad. On the day of the Persian New Year, Norooz (on March 21), the Shah declared a state of mourning. On March 25, the British landed in Bushehr (on the Persian Gulf) to put pressure on the Persians who were retreating from their positions on the border of Afghanistan. On Passover 1839 a mob attacked the Jewish neighborhood of Mashhad.	
The Underground Generation	Rabbi Yehuda Rabbi Yehuda Nissim reached the age of 60, and had children and grandchildren. Evidence is as follows: • In 1834, the rabbi celebrated the wedding of his daughter Hanna with Avraham, son of Rachamim • The ketuba was very elegantly inscribed by his son Moshe Two years later, he and his family were suddenly struck by a terrible disaster – the forced conversion. Killing, extermination, and terrible humiliation were visited upon him and, worst of all, on his descendants. He opposed the forced conversion and with his family went into hiding. Brokenhearted, he wrote the story of their tragedy in his Seder Haqafa prayer book (which reached the hands of Rabbi Garji), and he prayed for an early redemption. His sons were Yosef and Moshe. • Moshe was the father of Reuven (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir). Later his descendants would be known as Saghir-Nejad. • Yosef was the father of Yehuda. Yehuda was the father of my grandfather, Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda. My grandfather studied in Marv under Rabbi Yosef Garji and at the yeshiva of Rabbi Shmuel ben Shlomo Garji (the family of Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji). David ben Shlomo We do not know where David was living on the eve of the forced conversion. In 1832 we found him as one of the notables of Marv. Apparently he was saved from the forced conversion and even helped the refugees that fled Mashhad on their way to Marv. David had three boys - Nissim, Rabbi Moshe and Shlomo. Rabbi Moshe was mentioned in a bill of sale from 1897.	1839 [..\Signatures] [Huji 1834] [Rabbi Yosef Garji is the grandson of Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji] [..\Signatures] [Huji 1897]
Mashhad - Marv	Fourth Generation (d)	1800 - 1840
Background	After the forced conversion, the forced converts from Mashhad started to arrive in Afghanistan (Herat) and in Turkmenistan (Marv, Sarakhs, etc.) and to join the Mashhadi community in that area.	1839
	After the release of the prisoners in Herat, the number of Mashhadi Jews in Turkmenistan increased significantly.	1857
	In 1885 the Russian government was based in Turkmenistan. During this period, streets were paved and police stations were established. The relative order and security under Russian rule drew a large migration of additional families from	1885

	Mashhad. In their relations with the Russians, the crypto-Jews identified themselves as Muslims so as not to cause harm to the forced converts in Mashhad, and in their dealings with the Turkmen, they identified themselves as Jews. My grandmother Esther bat Rachamim (granddaughter of Rabbi Moshe) pointed out that the Russian train system was orderly, precise and clean. But even the order and security of the Russian regime was not able to prevent the murder of two members of the Nissimi family (Mola David and Nethanel ben Yehuda).	[Levy 3] [Vash Vash Mizadan = gleaming from cleaning] 1921
Generations	Those born into the fourth generation lived their youth and most of their lives as forced converts, underground - except for those who left Mashhad. According to Neimark, the forced converts who left Mashhad were called by the alias "Sdomi" to conceal their Mashhad origins – because a Jadidi who returned to his old religion (Judaism) would be sentenced to death. In the book, Research and Resources was found a letter from the city of Hamadan, from the year 1877, signed by David Sdomi ... and also Avraham ben Mola Esshagh Mashhadi (perhaps Mola Esshagh left Mashhad before the forced conversions).  	[Sources/ Neimark] "מחקרים ומקורות" [Ben Zvi Tenth Letter 1877]
Moshe	In this generation we found two men named Moshe: • **Moshe** son of Rabbi Yehuda - Moshe wrote a very elegant inscription for his sister before the forced conversion (in 1834). Thusly **Moshe** identifies himself: "the humble and insignificant writer, **Moshe** son of 'our venerable teacher and rabbi' **Yeuda Nissim**." • **Rabbi Moshe** ben David - was one of the first rabbis in the period of the underground. He was named as one of the first opponents of the forced conversion. We found his signature (in Hebrew) on a Persian sales contract. Rabbi Moshe had the good luck of immigrating to Eretz Israel, and was buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.	1834 1830 – 1908~ [Huji 1897]

Mashhad	Fifth Generation (e)	1830 - 1870
Background	Nasser al-Din Shah conquered Herat in 1857 after a nine month siege. As a result of British intervention the Shah retreated. He took with him some Jewish prisoners from the city of Herat - those Jews that just 18 years earlier had left Mashhad for fear of the forced conversion. Disaster followed disaster, and the casualties were unbearably heavy. Due to the terrible situation and despite the danger, the Jadidis appealed to the authorities to release them. In the month of Kislev, 1859, the prisoners were allowed to return to Herat. The fourth and fifth generations of Mashhadi Jews lived in hiding for their entire lives - except for those who were able to leave Mashhad. In the last third of the century, many efforts were made by the Jews of Europe to alleviate the suffering of the Jews in Persia. **... And the Mashhadi Jews - were considered lost to Judaism**	
Generations	The fifth generation was born during the underground period and they lived all their lives in this dark era. Many of the fifth generation lived in Marv and openly kept their Judaism. But the area was dangerous because of road bandits and indeed several Mashhadis were murdered – among them, Rabbi David and Nethanel Nissim.  	
Yosef and his Sons	We meet **Yosef**, son of Rabbi Yehuda, at the wedding of Yaaqov and Esther when he signed the ketuba as "the humble Yosef Nissim." His children were **Yehuda**, **Shmuel** and **Mishael**. Yehuda later married Miriam bat Reuven ben Moshe Nissim, and Shmuel married Khorshid, daughter of Reuven Nissim. Two brothers married two sisters (granddaughters of their uncle Moshe Nissim). **Mishael** married Morvarid, the daughter of Haji Esmael Mordekhai, a man well known in his time.	[Sarshar /Ketuba 1885] [Leyli Mussazadeh]
Reuven Nissim	**Reuven** (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir) was the son of Moshe ben Rabbi Yehuda. Reuven experienced the forced conversion as a child and was raised and married during the underground period. He was among the community members who traveled to Mecca, some of whom even went on to Jerusalem to prostrate themselves there on the holy ground. Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir was the only	~1830 - 1910 [Exhibition]

	Nissimi (out of 55 Mashhadis) who was granted the title of Haji.	
	As a young man, Reuven prepared an elegant ketuba (marriage certificate) (1853), similar to that of his father's, Moshe. There are no signatures of witnesses on the ketuba. Perhaps they were afraid of the authorities, or perhaps an event occurred that we do not know about.	[Huji 1853] [Huji 1878]
	We may assume that among the Herat prisoners were several of Reuven's childhood friends – and probably, like many others of the community, he sympathized with their pain, and provided aid despite the dangers.	1857 - 1859
	Reuven was one of the prominent people of his generation. His signature appears on many documents. His name is mentioned in the British archives. He was a merchant. He worked with the British Consulate in Mashhad and was even invited to a birthday party for Queen Victoria (1890). The British knew him by the following names: • Haji Abdul Rahman (Jew Reuven) • Haji Abdur Rahman (Jadid)	[PRO]
	Reuven received a pension as a British subject (1889).	[Dilmanian]
	Reuven had trade relations with Bombay (Eliyahu Samson - a local merchant), and also financial ties with the British.	
	Some of Reuven's descendants are known today as **Saghir Nejad** (the sons of Saghir). Reuven's sons continued to work with the consulate - evidence of such is a complaint filed in 1905 by Esshagh and Abdol-Rahim, sons of Reuven, with the British Consulate against a Persian merchant.	[PRO]
	Family tradition tells of two cases about providing help to the British. It is unclear if the two cases are separate occurrences or different versions of the same event; the details are blurred. These two stories demonstrate the findings in the British archives in PRO: Tradition 1 - Moshe paid with his life: ... A number of British soldiers were murdered. Moshe revealed the names of the killers to the British. As a result, he paid with his life, but he left behind a pregnant widow. The British were grateful and rewarded the newborn with a guaranteed income for life and British citizenship.	[http://dorandfamily.blogspot.com]
	Tradition 2 - Reuven (Haji Rahman Saghir) and the British officers: Haji Rahman was a rich man. He acquired a village near Torbate'-Heydarieh (east of Mashhad). On a cold and snowy winter night a number of forlorn and desperate British officers wandered into the village. He took them to his house, took care of all their needs and saved them from freezing to death. The British rewarded him with a considerable grant for this act.	[Hanania ben Rabbi Levy Nissim]
Zvuloni Family Mola David and Nethanel ben Yehuda	Rabbi Moshe's brother carried the name of great-grandfather Nissim. **Nissim** was the father of the Zvuloni family that lived in Marv. Shlomo and Mola David were the sons of Nissim. Mola **David** and **Nethanel** ben Yehuda Nissim (the younger brother of Rabbi Levi) were traveling one day by train in Turkmenistan. At one of the stops, Mola	

Shlomo	David descended from the train in order to recite the evening prayers. The train started moving and Mola David was not able to catch it because of pain in his feet. Nethanel jumped from the train in order not to leave the rabbi alone. The train continued on its way without them and the two were murdered by Turkmen bandits. **Shlomo** ben Nissim immigrated to Israel and was buried in Karkur. He had two sons: Nissim (Nurolah) and Eliyahu (Azizolah). Eliyahu ben Shlomo married Tzipora (Mina), daughter of Daniel. On their ketuba was written, in this order: ... humble Levi ben Yeuda Nissim, ... groom, Eliyahu bar Shlomo and, Shlomo ben Nissim Rabbi Levi and Shlomo Nissim, who lost their brother when they were murdered by the Turkmen, were privileged to participate in the joy of the wedding of Eliyahu and Tzipora.	1921 [The book Family of Eliyahu and Tzipora Zvuloni] 1927
Sons of Rabbi Moshe Nissim	**Rabbi Moshe's** sons were Simcha, Nethanel, Binyamin and Rachamim: • The descendants of Simcha are the Zioni families • The name Nethanel has been preserved by the descendants of Nethanel until today: Nethanel-Ephraim-Nethanel-Ephraim • Binyamin married Hanna, sister of Rabbi Levi • Rachamim (Rahamim) had two children, Daniel and Esther (the wife of Rabbi Levi). Some of Daniel's descendants were named Ben-Ami. We have in our possession the book "Spirit of Life" (1900); in it is handwritten Rachamim ben Mola Moshe's name.	~ 1830 – 1908 [../Rachamim]
Zioni Family	Simcha was the father of the Zioni family. In the archives of the Sephardic community, in a notebook belonging to the Rishon LeZion, were found letters indicating that donations were sent to Eretz Israel. Following is an excerpt from letter No. 336 – from Jerusalem to Marv: "To our honorable and merciful brothers, the dear men of the holy community of Marv, and specifically the honorable Agha Haji Aminoff, may G-d protect him, Agha Haji Habibolah HaLevi, may G-d protect him, Agha Lotfolah ben Agha Mohammad, may G-d protect him, Agha Mola Yahya Bassal, may G-d protect him, **Agha Reza Nissim**, may G-d protect him, **Agha Faraj Nissim**, Agha Yosef Ghassab, all merciful sons of merciful men ..." From an examination of the family tree one can learn that Reza Nissim is Simcha ben Moshe (about 50 years old), father of the Rezaoff families, who later became the Zioni families. Faraj Nissim (about 20 years old) is Yishayahu Zioni, son of Simcha.	1900 [כה תשרי תר"ס [[Levy 2]

	Sixth Generation (f)	1860-1900
Background	It became a politically unstable period when Nasser al-Din Shah was assassinated and the government changed hands frequently until the Pahlavi dynasty, led by Reza Shah, replaced the Qajar dynasty. The sixth generation witnessed many changes: The end of the Qajar dynasty and the Pahlavi era. The rule of the Tsar in Russia. First World War. Communism. Escape from Turkmenistan to Mashhad. World War II and the occupation of the region by the Russians. Refugees from Bukhara. The Holocaust and the refugees, "Tehran Children." Passover riots of 1946 after the departure of the Russians. Leaving Mashhad. Immigration to Eretz Israel. **And independence of the State of Israel**	
Generations	We, the eighth generation (g), are the link connecting the past with the future. We can each convey the story of our grandfather and father (sixth and seventh generations) to our children and our grandchildren (ninth and tenth generations). This connection, or link, covers five generations. The following chapters tell the story of each 'Grandfather's House' in the words of the people who lived in the sixth generation (f).	[Generations] [Beit Saba]
a (Gen 1) **b** (Gen 2) **c** (Gen 3) **d** (Gen 4) **e** (Gen 5) **f** (Gen 6)		1700 1800 1900
Evidence	We find in this generation pairs of Nissimis with Hebrew and Persian ketubot (marriage certificates) where the witnesses signed in Hebrew, and among them the Nissimis. See the ketubot of David Zioni and Daniel ben Rachamim - sometimes signed as Jadid al-Islam. A unique ketuba was written in Marv in 1927 - years after the Jews left as a result of the Russian Revolution. The bride and groom were Eliyahu bar Shlomo and Tzipora bat Daniel. Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda sanctified their marriage. He traveled from Mashhad to Marv specifically for this purpose. We have in our possession a certificate of slaughter for Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda, after he completed his studies and was tested at the yeshiva of Rabbi Shmuel Garji in the city of Marv.	[Sources] [.../Signatures]

Rabbi Levi	One of the prominent leaders of this generation was **Rabbi Levi** ben Yehuda (Mola Abdolah). On his paternal side, he was the great-grandson of Mola Yehuda Nissim who experienced and documented the events of the forced conversion. On his maternal side, he was the grandson of Reuven Nissim (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir) who had business ties with the British Consulate. Rabbi Levi married Esther bat Rachamim, the granddaughter of Rabbi Moshe. **Rabbi Levi** was a spiritual leader and religious authority who served the Mashhadi community in the diaspora for fifty years – in Marv, Mashhad, Kerman, Peshawar and Tehran.	~ 1886- 1959
	Summary	1720 - 2000
Generations of Forced Conversion	Of the nine generations since the founding of the Nissim family, five generations lived during the period of the forced conversion. The first two generations (a, b) and the last two generations (h, i) were born as Jews and lived openly as Jews. Illustration: • Rabbi **Yehuda** Nissim and **David** Nissim (third generation), who experienced the disaster of the forced conversion, form the link between the period of the formation of the Mashhadi Jews and the period of underground life in the community. • Rabbi Moshe ben David Nissim experienced, as a child, the forced conversion of his people. He grew up and was educated during the forced conversion and was one of the spiritual leaders of the entire community underground. People like **Rabbi Yehuda** Nissim, his son **Yosef**, his grandson **Yehuda**, and his great-grandson, **Rabbi Levi,** lived underground lives as forced converts. Even the sons of Rabbi Levi were born during the forced conversion and learned the Quran in a school under religious Muslim supervision (the first third of the Twentieth Century.)	
Complicated Relation ships	The living conditions of our forefathers led to multiple marriages within the immediate family. This situation created an association of close and often complex relationships among the Nissimis. The members of this association were called by the Mashhadi name **Dash** (older brother, first or second male cousin) and **Dada** (older sister, first or second female cousin). Illustration 1: • My mother, Malka, used to call my father "Dash Ghodrat" – as she was married to her father's cousin. • My aunt, Batsheva, called her husband "Dash Lotfolah" - as she was married to a cousin of her father. Illustration 2: As I look at our family tree I find that I am one of the descendants of Rabbi Yehuda Nissim on the side of my grandfather, Rabbi Levi; one of the descendants of Reuven Nissim (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir) from Miriam, mother of my grandfather; and descendant of Rabbi Moshe from the side of my grandmother Esther bat Rachamim. And therefore:	

	• All the Saghir Nejads are **'Dash'** of my grandfather, Rabbi Levi, and therefore to me also. • The descendants of Rabbi Moshe are **'Dash'** through my grandmother Esther bat Rachamim, son of Rabbi Moshe. • In addition, the descendants of Binyamin ben Rabbi Moshe are **'Dash'** via Hanna, my grandfather's sister, who was married to Binyamin.	

Binyamin ben Yehuda

	Chronicles	
Binyamin Sixth Generation	Yosef ben Yehuda had three sons: **Yehuda**, Shmuel and Mishael. **Yehuda's** eldest son was **Binyamin**. Haji Esmael (Ismail) Mordekha was an important man in his generation. His sons were Hadi, Rahamim and Haji Mehdi. His daughters were Mina, Hanna, Morvarid, Batsheva and Avigail. Batsheva and Avigail married the brothers Reuven and Yaaqov Nemat. Morvarid married Mishael Nissim. Later, **Binyamin ben Yehuda** married his cousin **Sara**, the daughter of Mishael and Morvarid. Binyamin did not live long; he died at a young age, leaving behind a wife and four small children: **Zilpa, Chanuka, Moshe and Rachel**. Therefore, we don't have much information about Binyamin. Sara later married Pinchas ben Shmuel Zabihi. From this marriage were born Malka, Dvora and Leyli	1884 – 1910 [Leyli Mussazadeh]
Seventh Generation	Grandfather Chanuka	1902 – 1988
Daughters	My maternal grandfather **Chanuka** was born in 1902 in Mashhad and lost his father when he was seven. From early childhood grandfather felt a responsibility to support the family. The story is told that as a child he disappeared from his home and after a few days returned, riding on the back of a horse he had earned. As a young boy, grandfather worked in carpet stores belonging to uncles and other family members until he became an independent and successful merchant.	~1902 [Esther]
Marriage to Yafa Nemat	Grandfather Chanuka married **Yafa**, the daughter of Reuven (Rahman) Nemat (the cousin of the mother, Sara). From this union were born my mother, **Malka,** and my uncle, **Binyamin**. Their marriage did not last long as my maternal grandmother died, leaving a little girl and a one year old son. The burden of raising the children was borne by Chanuka's sister, Rachel, who lived at her brother's house.	1926
Grandfather's Business	Even though the Mashhadis left Russia long ago, commercial ties with the Turkmenistan border still existed. Stories that I heard from my mother, Malka, about grandfather Chanuka illustrate, to a certain extent, life during that period: • Once, when my grandfather crossed the border on horseback, robbers attacked him and shot at him. He got away unharmed. When he reached his home in Mashhad, he dismantled the load from the horse's back. He saw that the cargo was perforated by bullets that had been fired at him. • Another time, he crossed mountain paths on his way home from one of his journeys; there suddenly appeared on his side of the river a lion walking toward him. They quietly passed each other and the king of beasts did not attack him. In his travels, grandfather also went to Moscow and became very well acquainted with the city.	[Malka]

Marriage with Hanna Mordechai	In the beginning of the Twentieth Century, Rabbi **David** and **Leah** Mordechai lived close to the Mashhadi community in Russia. The couple had four daughters and two sons. The rabbi believed in education for girls and taught his daughters Torah, and Russian and Persian literature. Following the riots in Russia the family fled to Mashhad. The daughter **Hanna** was then about seven years old. Rabbi David died at the age of forty. With no one to support the family, the mother Leah sent two of her sons to Eretz Israel and married off her two young daughters to widowers and older men. Thus grandfather Chanuka, at the advice of the family, married again – to **Hanna,** the daughter of Rabbi David. Their children were **David**, **Esther**, **Mordechai** and **Miriam**.	1910s [Esther] ~ 1942
Education	My mother Malka attended Arz' Aghdas (the Holy Land) girls' school. Uncle Binyamin attended the school for boys Adab.	
An Experience	Uncle Binyamin (when he was about 13 years old) would go to the gym where he trained on exercise equipment, played volleyball and wrestled. Grandfather used to invite Turkmen colleagues for dinner. At one of the dinners, Aunt Esther (3 years old) "fiddled" with a pan full of oil. The pan capsized and the boiling oil burned her hand. Binyamin was sent urgently to buy medicine for his sister. On the way back, it was already dark, and Binyamin saw that two gentile boys were chasing him. Jewish child abuse by gentile teenagers was a common occurrence at the time. Binyamin casually continued on his way trying not to reveal to them that he had noticed their intention to harass him. On the way, he passed a large puddle of water, then he hid behind a wall and waited for the boys. The puddle of water prevented the boys from walking side by side – they had to walk in a line, one after the other. When the first boy reached Binyamin, the boy started to attack - but to his amazement the Jew fought back. Binyamin used one of the tactics he had learned at the gym, and the boy landed 'boom' on his back in the puddle of water. When the second boy arrived, he met the same fate: 'boom'. The boys fled for their lives, and Binyamin brought the medicine to his sister as his father had commanded. Contrary to this unique Jewish victory, many other Jewish children were beaten up by gentile boys and came home battered and crying.	[Binyamin, Esther]
Riots	Later, my mother, Malka Nissimi, told me that during the Pesach riots of 1946, her father instructed her that, "Once the rioters penetrate, you must throw yourself down the well because it is better to die from falling than at the hands of a mob." After this event my mother, like a lot of teenagers at the time, joined the HaChalutz (pioneer) movement where they learned Hebrew and songs from Eretz Israel. In 1949, my mother married Michael, the son of Rabbi Levi, and they settled in Tehran. They immigrated to Israel in 1966.	1946 [Malka]

Aliyah to Israel	The yearning for Israel was my grandparents' heart's desire. Even before the establishment of the State, grandfather Chanuka bought land in Eretz Israel in preparation for his immigration. When the time came to make aliyah, grandfather collected seeds of all kinds and types in order to fertilize the land of Israel. In 1950, grandfather and his family immigrated to Israel. Once in Israel, they found out that the land they bought was worthless due to its location and that they had lost all their savings. In the absence of financial backing, they started a new life at Moshav Beit Nechemia near the Jordanian border. They were one of the founders of the moshav. In the beginning they lived in a tent and then in a small shack. Only towards the end of the fifties were they transferred to a small, permanent house. Upon arrival at the moshav, each family was assigned a plot of land - plus a cow, a goat, a mule and a few sheep. It was a hard life for a family of 'city people' with small children, near an open border with Fedayeen terrorists. In addition to all the hard work on the farm, they had to keep watch at night to prevent incursions from across the border. Along with grandfather's family, David and Tamar Namdar and their seven children lived on the moshav. During one infiltration, terrorists attacked the Namdar home and hurled a grenade into the house. Tamar was killed. David and two of the children were injured.	[Esther] 1950 1950s 1953
The Moshav	It was 1959. During my visit to Israel I found grandfather Chanuka still riding a horse. Sometimes he would take his herd of cows to the fields near the Jordanian border. He was fearless. He loved to make merry, to dance and to play music. I loved to listen to him playing the mandolin. At the moshav I found a fertile farm with fields of corn. A barn with cows, goats and a mule. And there were chickens, turkeys and geese roaming around freely. This meant fresh eggs from the farm and fresh milk every morning.	1950s
Tel Aviv	It was the '60s. Due mainly to the distance from the family and community, grandfather and his family left the moshav to find lodgings in Tel Aviv. Since our aliyah to Israel in 1966, we lived in neighborhoods with grandfather in Neve-Sharet in Tel Aviv. During those days my brother and I were in high school and we used to visit grandfather Chanuka often and play backgammon or checkers with him. Grandfather was a champion at these games and he often won.	1960s
Wars	During the Six-Day War, Uncle Binyamin and Uncle David were recruited for a long period. Uncle Binyamin already had two babies. The family was very worried about him but, praise G-d, we were granted great salvation and both uncles returned home safely. The Yom Kippur War was unbearable for grandfather and the family. This time both sons, Binyamin and David, were recruited, and David's wife was in an advanced stage of pregnancy; and two grandchildren, Reuven and Daniel, were drafted - all of them in combat units. The war lasted a long time, the losses at the front were heavy, and I was told that my grandfather kept saying, in his grief:	1967 1973

	"They should have taken me to war, instead of my dear ones."	
Grandfather's House	As time went by, the children married and grandchildren were born: • To my mother - Reuven and Daniel • To Uncle Binyamin - Yafa, Dorit, Aviram and Jonathan • To Uncle David - Nurit and Chanoch • To Aunt Esther - Sharon and Emma • To Aunt Miriam - Aviqam, Eitan and Oded Meanwhile, Uncle Mordechai traveled to Europe for several years to engage in commerce, and then returned to Israel. Aunt Esther settled in London after her marriage and Aunt Miriam stayed on in Milan after her marriage. Grandfather's house was the unifying framework of the whole family. On holidays and on ordinary weekdays, when the family visited the grandparents, the dwelling was used to strengthen family ties. In Persian, you make a wish for someone: "May you grow old and be fruitful" (pir-o khoram beshin). This wish was realized at grandfather's house.	
Seventh Generation	Moshe	
	Moshe, son of Binyamin, left Mashhad after his military service and immigrated to Eretz Israel (in the thirties.) He married **Hanna,** daughter of Elias (Eliyahu) Kohen and lived in Tel Aviv. The couple had four children: **Sara**, **Yehudit**, **Itzhaq** and **Ora** - the first Israeli-born grandchildren of Yehuda, son of Yosef Nissim. Sara, Yehudit and Itzhaq settled in Milan after they married. Ora lives in Israel. Uncle Moshe served as the Gabbai of the North Tel Aviv Mashhadi Synagogue until his death.	
	Sources	
	This document is based on the following sources: • Conversations with Malka Nissimi (my mother) • Conversations with Binyamin Nissimi (my uncle) • Records of Esther Nissimi (my aunt) • Information from family members, and other findings	[2007 [R.N.]

Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda

	Chronicles	~1886-1959
Rabbi Levi Sixth Generation	At the halfway point of the hundred years of forced conversion my grandfather, **Rabbi Levi Nissim** (Mola Abdolah), was born to Yehuda ben Yosef and Miriam bat Reuven (about 1886).	1880s
	Rabbi Levi was the great-grandson of Rabbi Yehuda Nissim, who was present at the forced conversion. Rabbi Yehuda wrote the events of the tragedy of the forced conversions in his Seder Hoshana Rabbah book (as quoted from Rabbi Matatiyahu Garji's book).	
	On his mother's side, Rabbi Levi was the grandson of Reuven ben Moshe (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir), who had extensive contacts with the British.	1890s
	As a child, Rabbi Levi studied with Rabbi Yosef Betzalel in Mashhad along with his good friend, Mola Faraj Elishayoff.	
	Marv	1900-1919
Starting a Family	In the beginning of the Twentieth Century, many of the Jews of Mashhad lived in Turkmenistan, especially in the cities of Marv and Sarakhs. The Turkmen, who were Sunni Muslims, hated the Shiite Persians across the border and related to the Jews favorably. Many of the Nissimi families decided to live in Marv in order to openly practice their Judaism. These were years of prosperity for the community of Marv. According to Azaria Levy, there were two synagogues in Marv: the Nissimis and the Aminoffs.	1900s [Azaria Levy]
	Rabbi Levi was about twenty years old (~1906) when he married Esther bat Rachamim, granddaughter of Rabbi Moshe Nissim (Mola Mussa). The young couple lived in Marv in relative comfort and enjoyed a life of Torah and blessings from heaven.	
Studies	In Marv, Rabbi Levi supplemented his Torah studies under Mola Yosef Garji (son of Mola Matatiyahu Garji), and was ordained in Jewish ritual slaughter of livestock (cows) by Rabbi Shmuel Garji during the time he studied at the yeshiva.	1910s
סמיכה לשחיטה	יום שנפל בו כי טוב ר"ח כסליו שנת **תערב** **בשבטי ישורון נודע נאמנה כעד מוביל נתכא דנא** הלא הוא השם הטוב כ"מ **לוי 'ן יאודה** ובא האיש הזה לפנינו וישב בישיבה שיש בה סמיכה ולמד דיני הלכות שחיטה ובדיקה כדין וכשורה ואליבא דהלכתא והשחיז הסכין לפניו ובדק אותה אבשרא ואטופדא ואתלת רוחתא ומרגיש בטוב ולא נמצא עולתה בם ושחט לפנינו כמה פעמים וראינו שחיטתו כדין וכשורה ולענין ה' דברים המפסידים את השחיטה שאלנו בו וראינו	תער"ב = 1911

	שהוא בקי בהן שואל כענין ומשיב כהלכה על כן הסכמנו לתת בידו שטר לראיה ולשחוט כל מיני בהמות וחיות ועופות טהורות ואפילו ישחוט בינו לבין עצמו ואינש לא ימחא בידיה ובתנאי מודעא זו כיון שבדק הריאה בפנים אם יהיה בריאה סרכות גמורות אינו רשאי לנתק הסרכה ולבדוק אותו אלא להטריף דווקא עד משך יו"ד שנים ועוד תנאי אחרת כיון שבדק הריאה בפנים צריך להוציא את הריאה ולבדוק אותו גם מבחוץ ואפילו לא יהיה בו שום ריעותא משום מראות פוסלות ולראיית אמ"ץ נתכתי וחתמתי בעיר מרוו בז"הל ואנא זעירא שמואל 'ן שלמה גרג'י ש"וב ומו"ץ בעיר הנ"זל	
Certification for Jewish Ritual Slaughter	On this auspicious day, the twenty-second of November, 1911, **In the tribes of Yeshurun (=Jews) it has been dutifully noted …** That his honorable **Levi ben Yeuda** This man sat before us at the yeshiva, which is sanctioned, and studied the religious laws of Jewish ritual slaughter and the proper mode of inspection according to Halacha and he sharpened the knife before him and examined it as required. … and found no fault with it, and he performed the act of ritual slaughter several times in our presence and we witnessed that he carried out the slaughter legally and according to Jewish law, and in the matter of 'factors that disqualify the slaughter, we questioned him and were impressed that he was well versed in them, that he asked pointed questions and that he responded correctly. We therefore concur to grant him a certificate as proof that he is certified to slaughter all kinds of animals and birds that are pure, and he can even slaughter for himself and no one should object … and I signed in Marv … I, the Za'ira (humble) Shmuel ben Shlomo Garji Sh'oB and Mo'Tz in the city of Marv	1911
Public Services	Later Yaaqov ben Binyamin Nissim (Dash Yaghub) described an image that was etched in his memory: "In an open field outside a Turkmen village, Mola Abdolah sat on a rock, because his leg was broken and bandaged, and people brought him sheep to slaughter for the holiday ... Rabbi Levi taught his students that if, even during tea time and rest, someone approaches you with a request to slaughter, you must put down the cup of tea and hurry to fulfill the commandment."	[Daniel Nissimi]
The Children	In 1909, at the age of 23, grandfather noted the birth of his son, **Eliyahu**, in his Shulchan Aruch **Orach Chaim** book (published in Vilna in 1900), as follows: As G-d graced his servant To protect the child for his servant And I named him within Israel That his name will be Eliyahu On 22 of Heshvan, 1909	1910s [the Jewish Code of Laws – Way of Life]

	As the years passed, in another 50 years, on 22 of Heshvan, 1959, grandfather passed away. In the year 1915, grandfather noted in the same Shulchan Aruch, the birth of his daughter **Tzruya**, as follows: A good gift G-d has given me And I named her Tzruya On the fifth of Adar, 1915 In 1917 another son was born to Rabbi Levi. He was called Hanania (Lotfolah).	
Years of Sorrow	The following years brought great sorrow to the family. In ~1910, the eldest son Binyamin died leaving behind a young wife and four children. Tzruya, a beautiful child with golden curls, died when she was just three years old (~1918). In the summer of 1921 (August 2), grandfather's younger brother, Nethanel ben Yehuda, was murdered in Turkmenistan. Nethanel and Rabbi David Nissim (see also Zvuloni) were on a train trip to the local villages. Mola David descended from the train at one of the stops to pray Mincha. Suddenly the train started moving, Nethanel jumped off the train so as not to leave the Rabbi alone. Both were murdered. Representatives from the community brought the bodies to Marv and buried them outside the city.	1910s
Wanderings	In 1918 the Bolsheviks entered Marv. The Mashhadi community fled Marv and returned to Mashhad. Rabbi Levi, during the same period, stayed with his father, Yehuda, in Mashhad. His wife was six months pregnant and their two young children - ages nine and two - were stranded in Marv. With the help of some Turkmen and with great difficulty, they escaped on camels and horses to Sarakhs, a border town. Grandmother used to tell Aunt Zvia: In Marv we lived in the same courtyard together with the Sharafatkhah family. Before the escape, we hid our money and whatever gold we had in the well. We started our arduous journey with Turkmen smugglers who helped us cross the border. With all the hours of sitting and being jostled back and forth in the "Kajave" (cargo basket tied to the back of the beast of burden), my body was full of sores.... " My father was born on the trip. They didn't believe he would survive – and therefore they named him after the Archangel Michael. Yehuda and his son Levi awaited them across the border. And thus ended the period of comparative peace in Marv.	[Persia .../ Curzon] Kajave 1919
	Mashhad	1919-1951

The Extended Family	After leaving Marv, Yehuda ben Yosef and his wife Miriam bat Reuven, lived with their sons and their sons' families in Mashhad. Yehuda ben Yosef died in the late twenties (1920s).	
Trips to Marv	Not all the Mashhadis left Marv. A small part of the community continued to live under Communist regime. Evidence shows that in 1927 Rabbi Levi was invited to Marv to sanctify the marriage of Eliyahu ben Shlomo and Tzipora bat Daniel (niece of grandmother Esther). On the ketuba of the couple, the rabbi wrote: "Speech by the humble Levi, son of the merciful Yeuda Nissim" After the birth of their son, Mashiyach ben Eliyahu, Rabbi Levi entered the newborn son into the covenant of Avraham Avinu (circumcised him).	[Eliyahu Zvuloni Family]
Travel to Kerman	From his youth, Rabbi Levi devoted most of his energy to public services while, in order to support his family, he worked in the trading business. In 1929 the Rabbi travelled for two years to Kerman as a representative of Hojeynoff of Bukhara. After his return, along with his brother, he started exporting carpets to Ancho in Afghanistan. This initiative did not flourish and grandfather lost a lot of money.	
Refugees from Bukhara	In 1933 an influx of refugees from Bukhara arrived in Mashhad. Rabbi Levi, Mola Faraj, Mola Refael Aghalar, Dash Karim and the Aminoff brothers, along with many other members of the community, helped the unfortunate refugees. About 1000 refugees moved to Mashhad. A community of six to eight thousand people took care of their needs, for a year, until their immigration to Eretz Israel in the summer of 1934.	1930s [Exhibition ...]
Peshawar	In 1934, Rabbi Levi traveled for his business to Peshawar, India (now Pakistan), for seven years. Rabbi Levi and Efraim (Shokrolah) Nissim were business partners. In Peshawar, Rabbi Levi met with the elders of the tribes of Pathan (=Pashtun), who identified themselves as descendants of the ten tribes (and he also examined a number of hand-written manuscripts and documents). During these years there was a small Mashhadi community in Peshawar with their own synagogue. Later, Mola Baruch, rabbi of the Mashhadi synagogue of Hertzliya, told of his stay in Peshawar: Rabbi Levi served as rabbi of the community in Peshawar. There were about 60 Jewish men in Peshawar who were there for commercial reasons, and some were with their families. The rabbi usually gave a sermon after Shabbat Mincha, and his sermons were captivating. He performed a circumcision for my two babies (in fact, Mola Baruch himself performed the circumcision for the second baby under the supervision of grandfather). And Mola Baruch added that: with the departure of Rabbi Levi the	1930s [מ' ברוך 1994]

	special atmosphere in the community diminished and in fact all the enjoyment "faded away".	
Return to Mashhad	In the winter of 1941, Rabbi Levi returned to Mashhad and started exporting carpets to London. Due to the war, goods were delayed at the port and parts of them were damaged, causing great loss.	1940s
Death of the Mother	For more than a decade from their arrival at Mashhad, the family continued to maintain its unity. The mother, Miriam (Akhor = sister in the Gilaki language) became head of the family after the death of her husband Yehuda ben Yosef Nissim. In 1942, Miriam bat Reuven, died. Uncle Yehuda remembered his father, Rabbi Levi, near the body of his mother – who was placed in shanshin ("the royal seat" = a place of honor in the room) before being taken to the cemetery. Miriam had been an authoritative woman, intelligent and beautiful (with pale eyes, a shade of green - that her children Levi and Rachel inherited from her).	[Yehuda Nissim]
Invasion	In the summer of 1942, the Russians and the British invaded Iran. Mashhad was filled with Russian soldiers. My father, Michael ben Rabbi Levi, who was in the regular army, was released from the army with the removal of Reza Shah.	
Refugees from Herat and Bukhara	During the difficult days of World War II, and after it, hundreds of refugees fled Herat and Bukhara for Mashhad. The situation was very bad. Mola Abdolah, Mola Faraj and Dash Karim, with the assistance of many of the community members, energetically helped these refugees. Later, in the eighties, a guest who was praying at the Mashhadi Synagogue of Bene Beraq told this story: "Forty years ago I left my all property in Herat and fled to Eretz Israel. On the way I came to Mashhad without a penny in my pocket. I was so humiliated to be in this position that I did not ask anyone for help. Several of the community members who saw my wretched condition referred me to Mola Abdolah. I did not know the rabbi. With great embarrassment I approached him. The rabbi sat me next to him and quietly listened to my tale. Then he immediately gave me a considerable sum of money (from a fund for aiding refugees) so that I would be able to continue my journey. The rabbi calmed me with words of encouragement, speaking to me in a soft voice. During my stay, I asked him when I must return the money. He motioned with his hand that there was no need." The man spoke several times, telling us that the things the rabbi said and his soft voice revived his spirit and were more important to him than money.	[Exhibition ...] [Daniel Nissimi]
Riots	During Passover of 1946, after the Russian Army left Mashhad, an angry crowd attacked the Jewish neighborhood Eid-Gah. Following are excerpts from the memoirs of my Aunt Zvia Dilmanian (daughter of Rabbi Levi and Esther Nissim):	

	Pesach evening, shortly after my engagement to Lotfolah Dilmanian, the Muslims attacked Jewish homes in Eid-Gah. The next day, the wife of Agha Habibolah (my future sister-in-law) covered in a black chador came to our house accompanied by her Muslim maid and asked to take me to Janat, which was safer. My father, Mola Abdolah, who was very tense due to the situation, ordered his only daughter to cover herself with a chador and leave immediately for Janat. After the riots of 1946, the Jews of Mashhad began to leave the city. My grandfather's family left Mashhad by 1951. Years later (1979), my aunt and her family were lucky to be able to build a new house in Tehran. They didn't even have time to enjoy the new house and the new implements that they had saved for the house – when again (after 33 years from the attacks in 1946) they were forced to leave their home - due to the fall of the Shah. They came to Israel before they even had time to make a housewarming party. Today they live in the United States.	[Zvia Dilmanian] [Chador = black robe which covers the whole body from head to foot]
Residences	Since leaving Marv, the extended family (great-grandmother Miriam and sons Levi, Yishayahu and Yosef) shared the same house on the lane of the synagogue (Dalon' Kanissa). In this building also lived cousins Dash Abdol-Rahim, Dash Mehdi, Dash Khodabakhsh and Dash Shaaban. During this period, the children were growing up and the place was too small for the whole family (my grandfather's and his brother's families). Before his departure to Peshawar, grandfather decided to move the family to a rental home of Mehdi Namdar (1934). While grandfather was in Peshawar, grandmother first moved to the house of Abdol-Vahab Nissim, and later to the home of Eliyahu Kal (1940). After the riots 1946, grandfather moved to the house of Mehdi Dil - until leaving Mashhad. The neighborhood Eid-Gah was built of narrow lanes and along the lanes were the Jewish homes. Several families lived in every building. The buildings touched the lanes, and the courtyards were internal. The structures were usually two stories high with a basement. The buildings had roofs of clay with two levels. The lower level was above the warehouse and the upper level was above the houses. These two levels were used on hot summer evenings as a meeting place and as a sleeping area at night. All the courtyards were connected with a narrow opening, and in addition there was a passage between the roofs. Below are some experiences from those days: • Each family had some chickens. Sometimes the roosters would escape from one yard to another. The sight of neighbors coming in one yard and out the other in their search for their lost rooster was common in those days. Grandmother loved her chickens. She would call them "ma'am". She used to hug them and pet them. If she felt that the chicken was ready to lay an egg, she would be doubly joyful.	[Zvia Dilmanian] 1934 - 1951

	• Many of the Jews of Mashhad worked with Turkmen in Russia. With the occupation of Mashhad by the Russians these connections intensified - but not always to the satisfaction of the Russians. Once a Russian policeman pursued a Mashhadi man with the intention of arresting him. The man dressed up as a woman and escaped from the police through the roof. Aunt Zvia, as a child, remembered him running from the roof of Daniel (son of Rachamim) Nissim to the roof of the Mola David synagogue. From there he jumped to the roof of Elias Kal (grandfather rented his house), continued onto the roof of Shlomo Kal, then to the roof of Shokrolah (Efraim) Nissim, and then he disappeared.	[Soleiman Kal]
Mitzvot and Personal Ethics	I remember my grandfather in his room in Tehran, examining with precision and a sense of sacredness his knives for slaughtering. He would run his fingernail along the blade of the knife to check whether the knife was kosher for slaughter. Grandfather learned shechita (ritual slaughtering) at Rabbi Shmuel Garji's yeshiva in Marv (1911). Although he never actually practiced as a shochet, except for his own family – he was often asked to slaughter a chicken or lamb, and he did so in spite of his poor health, and of course without any compensation (not money nor any part of whatever was slaughtered).	1950s [Mitzvot = Sacred Commandments]
	Despite his knowledge of the laws of Jewish ritual slaughter and his impressive ability to perform it – for grandfather it was a difficult chore from a moral point of view. Grandfather's deeds underscored his moral approach to this contentious topic. On the one hand there was the existential necessity, and on the other hand, the taking of the life of an animal. Here are some excerpts that illustrate the professional ability of grandfather and his moral approach to this topic:	1940s [Michael Nissimi]
	• Once, in Mashhad, they tried to slaughter a cow - and it strongly opposed their efforts and no one was able to overpower it. Grandfather was requested to come and Mola Faraj appealed to him for help. Grandfather quickly got the job done and everyone present was amazed. And of course all this was free of charge.	
	• At the engagement of a Mashhadi Jewish couple, it was customary for the groom's family to bring the bride's family a sheep decorated with henna. Thus did the groom's family when Aunt Zvia got engaged to Shimon Dilmanian. A few days later the sheep was slaughtered. Aunt Zvia (a 15 year old girl) in her grief appealed to grandfather reproachfully, asking him how he could kill such an innocent creature. Grandfather, realizing the cause of her grief, kindly explained that G-d granted us permission so that we will be able to survive.	[Aunt Zvia]
	• One day a woman appeared at the home of the Rabbi with a bag in her hand. The woman asked the rabbi to slaughter the contents of her bag. The Rabbi took the bag from her in order to oblige. Upon opening the sack, his eyes beheld a number of sparrows	[Michael Nissimi]

	that had been caught by the woman for slaughtering. The astonished Rabbi **refused** and asked, "How many lives must be taken from this world in order to satisfy the hunger of one person?" • Many community members learned ritual slaughter from grandfather, and received ordination. I once asked my father why he didn't learn butchering from grandfather. My father replied that grandfather refused to teach him on the grounds that, "I spilled blood - more than enough – and I don't want my son to do the same."	[R.N.]
Day to Day Living	After the death of Mola Faraj and the sickness of Mola Refael Aghalar, most of the public affairs fell on the shoulders of Mola Abdolah. Sometimes the rabbi would visit the new neighborhood of Janat several times a day to perform mitzvot (such as marriages, circumcision, etc.). All this on foot, with his stick in his hand. And of course without financial compensation (G-d forbid). He worked as a merchant - but his main activities were in Talmud Torah, managing the synagogue, teaching ritual slaughter, and performing acts of kindness and charity, performing marriage ceremonies and circumcisions. The rabbi was sensitive, clear-minded and well educated. The wife of Itzhaq Gedalia related that in her travels to Mashhad to collect donations for a senior home for elderly women in Eretz Israel, she appealed to Mola Abdolah for help. The rabbi determined that this act of mercy is most important and vital. The rabbi, who suffered from leg pains, immediately picked up his walking stick and went from house to house and to all the neighborhood stores to raise money. Due to the respect held by the public for the rabbi, a sizable sum of money (several thousand tomans) was donated. Part of the financing for the senior citizen's home in Hertzliya Pituah originated from the sale of the old senior home for elderly ladies.	1941-1951 [Exhibition ...]
	The Children	
Uncle Eliyahu	Uncle Eliyahu was born in Marv. My grandfather used to call my grandmother "Naneh Eliyahu" (= mother of Eliyahu) after him. Eliyahu went to school in Marv. After moving to Mashhad he finished high school (one of the few at that time) and therefore in the army he was appointed to be a cavalry officer - one of the few officers from the Mashhad community. He married Hanna, daughter of Shmuel Nissim (granddaughter of Aunt Hanna = "Ameh Hanna"). In Iran he worked as an accountant and therefore was nicknamed Mirza-Elias. In the fifties he immigrated to Israel and lived in Ramat Gan. Hanna died while she was still a young woman and was laid to rest in Qiryat Shaul, Jerusalem (1955). Uncle Eliyahu died in 1997 and was buried in the	1909-1997

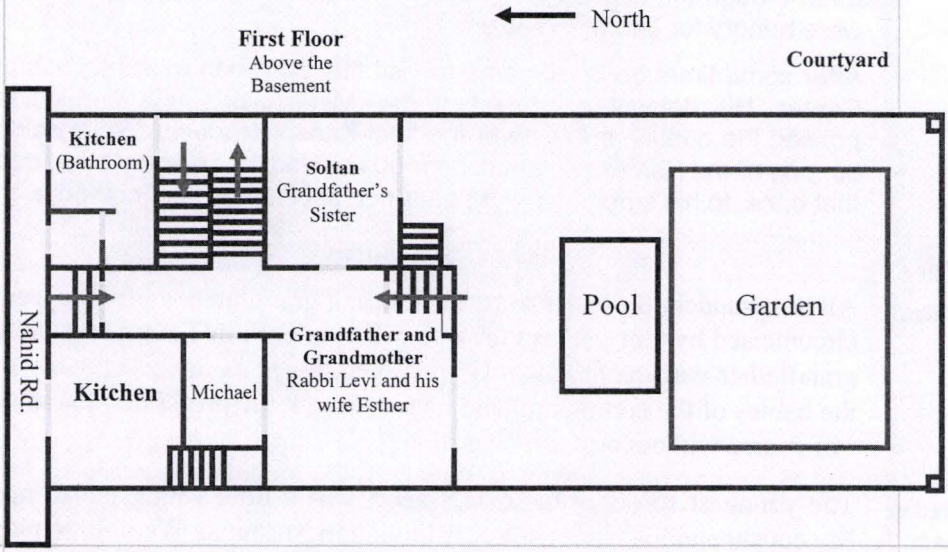
	Yarqon cemetery. Note – A dedication plaque near the sanctuary of Haji Adoniyahu Synagogue reads "Hanna, daughter of Shmuel Nissimi, August 5, 1955."	
Aunt Tzruya	Aunt Tzruya was born in Marv and died there. She was a beautiful child with golden curls. A gypsy woman, as she passed by the house, stared at the girl and then said, "I gave her the evil eye." That evening, Tzruya fell ill and died a day or two afterwards ... and she was about three years old. Moshe Nissim remembered the scene - Rabbi Levy and Binyamin, son of Rabbi Moshe (the nephew, husband of sister Hanna) sitting at Tzruya's bedside and reading Psalms.	1915- ~1918 [Grandmother Esther] [Daniel Nissimi]
Uncle Hanania **Military Service**	Uncle Hanania (Lotfolah) was born in Marv. He was a baby when his family left for Mashhad. He learned Hebrew and Persian at the Beit Midrash (religious seminary) of Mola Yosef Dil. For the third grade he went to the Adab (education) Elementary School, but he was advanced to the fourth grade. Adab was a school for boys in the Eid-Gah neighborhood, for the children of the forced converts (Jadid al-Islam). It was government controlled. Uncle Hanania served in the Signal Corps of the Persian military. He married Batsheva, the daughter of Itzhaq Nissim (granddaughter of Aunt Soltan = "Ameh Soltan"). Uncle Hanania lived in Tehran until 1979. After the Islamic revolution he moved with his family to New York. Hanania and his wife died in New York and were buried in the Mashhadi cemetery. To illustrate the atmosphere in the army at that time, here are some experiences from Hanania 's military service: Keeping Kosher: The commander ordered Uncle Hanania to eat the regular cuisine of the army, claiming that in times of war he would have to do that anyway. Hanania, in accordance with his commander's orders, took a dish of food from the kitchen - but gave the dish a Muslim soldier. His commander heard what Hanania had done, and the next time sent my uncle accompanied by another soldier named Mehdi. As soon as the commander left, Mehdi made some jokes at the expense of the commander and parted from the Jewish soldier Lotfolah. So again Hanania managed to avoid eating non-kosher food. Honors: Uncle Lotfolah started training in the Signal Corps. His unit camped outside the town of Torogh. The sergeant, whose name was Molavi, made Uncle Lotfolah responsible for securing the communications equipment. The next day, he again placed the responsibility for the	~1917-2009 1938

	communications equipment on the Jewish soldier Lotfolah. Hanania turned to Molavi and asked, "why two consecutive days?" Molavi claimed that "I don't trust the others and, in contrast, I do appreciate and like you."	
My Father, Michael	My father, Michael, was born on the way from Marv to Mashhad, in the tent of a Turkman in "Obeh", when they fled the Bolsheviks. He was born in the sixth month of my grandmother's pregnancy. They covered him with a piece of cloth and laid him in a shady corner. They were sure he would not live. But the infant survived the ordeals of the journey, and so they called him Gdodartolahwhich means Ability of G-d) and which in Hebrew is Michael.	~1919-1996
	Father went to the Adab school (education). He excelled in his studies and therefore skipped a grade, into third grade. But he did the third grade two years. He studied at the Beit Midrash of Mola Khalil. After he finished elementary school (6 years) he got all kinds of odd jobs and took professional courses until he joined the army.	
Bar Mitzvah	Before one of his trips, grandfather made a bar mitzvah for Uncle Hanania and my father (for my father the bar mitzvah was a bit premature). There was a one year difference in their ages. Grandfather provided Tefilin for them, taught them, and one morning he took them to the synagogue for their bar mitzvah.	~ 1931
Army Service	April 1940, my father was inducted into the Signal Corps. In 1942 the Russians and the British invaded Iran. Father was sent to the front to fight against the Russians. The commanders abandoned the soldiers and ran away. The army disbanded. My father and several of his Jewish friends from the unit took off their uniforms and returned to Mashhad, courtesy of a driver from the Russian army. The return of the Jewish soldiers from the front was a holiday for Jewish community of Mashhad.	1940-1942
Raising a Family	In the beginning of 1949, father married Malka, the daughter of Chanuka Nissim (granddaughter of Uncle Binyamin = "Amu Amin"). In Tehran he worked for a company that imported luxury cars "Sayar".	1949-1966
	In 1966 my father immigrated to Israel with the family. Father and mother died in Ra'anana and were buried on the Mount of Olives.	1996 , 1992
Army Experiences	To illustrate the mood of the times, following are some of my father's experiences from his army service: Flogging: The commander asked the soldier Gdodartolah (my father) to try to reach someone on the phone. But the connection was down and father was unsuccessful. The commander ordered a Muslim sergeant to punish my father with six lashes. The sergeant, aware that the punishment was unjustified, took my father to another room and ...	1940-1942

	gave six lashes to the wall (as if he were whipping my father). With each lash on the wall, father cried out in "pain" and the incident ended well. Keeping Kosher: Jewish soldiers used to receive kosher food from the Mashhadi community. Every day, on his bicycle, Mehdi Kermani would bring kosher food to Jewish soldiers. One day the commander decided that it's time to abuse the Jews a bit. He gave orders that all the Jews must stand in line for the regular camp food. Fear gripped the Jewish soldiers that they may be forced to eat non-kosher food. Suddenly a miracle happened! The commander was urgently called to leave the camp immediately ... and the Jewish soldiers immediately scattered. Commander's Visit: On one of the holidays, father's commanders suddenly appeared at grandfather's house. Father was surprised by the unexpected visit – and even more so because they arrived while he was in the middle of shaving. My grandmother gave them delicacies and asked them to watch over her son – but not before putting a sizable amount of cash into the visitors' pockets.	
Uncle Yehuda	Grandfather traveled to Kerman while his wife was pregnant with Uncle Yehuda. Yehuda was born in Mashhad. Uncle Eliyahu organized Yehuda's brit milah (circumcision) in the absence of grandfather. Mola Faraj acted as the mohel (the one who performs the circumcision). Uncle Yehuda attended the Adab elementary school, went to high school for a few years and studied photography for awhile, and then moved to Tehran. In Tehran he registered at the Jewish Agency (with the help of Nurolah Zvuloni) to make aliyah. He journeyed to Mashhad to bid his parents farewell, and then returned to Tehran. In Tehran he was told that his turn had arrived, and he must leave for Israel at the time set – very shortly. At the end of December 1949 he immigrated to Israel along with Zion, Binyamin and Miriam (children of Dash Esmael Nissim). First they were sent to Sha'ar HaAliyah. From there, Uncle Yehuda moved for a short time to Kibbutz Givat Brenner. In 1950 he was drafted into the military, the Givati unit. In 1956 he fought in the Sinai Campaign. Uncle Yehuda married Tzipora, daughter of Yaaqov Dilmanian, and moved to Bene Beraq. He died in Bene Beraq and was buried in the Yarqon cemetery. Childhood experiences: In Mashhad, in parallel with their normal public school studies, Jewish children studied Hebrew and prayers in several seminaries (Beit Midrash). The lectures given at every Beit Midrash were the responsibility of a teacher, who was called 'Mola'.	~1929-2007 [Uncle Yehuda]

	These seminars were funded by the community. The teachers had the trust of the community and were independent in their teaching methods. There were those who encouraged the students with prizes, and those who threatened the students with punishment. It was told that at one of the seminaries, the Mola used to tease the weak and punish them with corporal punishment (whipping them with a special leather strap or tightly pinching their ear lobes). These improper practices didn't last very long. A number of brave students broke into the teacher's locked box and emptied it of the "tools of torture," and set them all on fire.	
Aunt Zvia	My grandparents had several daughters who died in childhood. Aunt Zvia was the youngest child of the family and before she was a year old, grandfather travelled to Peshawar. Before his trip, he went to his daughter's cradle and then turned to look at grandmother saying, "Do not worry - she'll live." Aunt Zvia learned at the Arz' Aghdas (the Holy Land) girls' school. When she was in second grade, one summer evening while she was resting on the roof, she was informed that her father had returned from India. This was her first memory of her father - a man wearing a light-colored suit with a 'colonial' hat. A large crowd came to see the rabbi returning from his trip long. Aunt Zvia remembered the visit of Mola Faraj - when the two friends hugged each other warmly and sat down (on the small carpet that covered the mattress on the floor) together at grandfather's table for a conversation between old friends. My aunt married Shimon (Lotfolah) Dilmanian. Lotfolah was educated and because of that he served as an officer in the Persian Army. In partnership with his brother Habibolah, they set up a factory for canned goods (fruit compote) called "Mei-Khosh" in Mashhad - and later also in Tehran (Karaj). Aunt Zvia and her family lived in Mashhad until the '60s and later moved to Tehran until the Islamic Revolution. My aunt and her family used to visit Mashhad every summer; while there, they stayed within the bounds of the factory - so they never left Mashhad permanently until the Islamic Revolution*. In 1979, they left Iran due to the Islamic Revolution - leaving behind most of their property (including the factory). First, they lived in Israel for a few years and then they moved to New York. Shimon Dilmanian died in New York and was buried in the Mashhadi cemetery plot. *It is related that one of the family members traveled to Bombay on business. Before his departure he asked the owners of "Mei-Khosh" to can the contents of the pot of ghormeh sabzi prepared by his wife. When he arrived in Bombay he told the members of the community that he had with him food that his wife had prepared for Friday evening and that it wouldn't be necessary for them to prepare anything. Friday	~1932 [Aunt Zvia] [David Levy]

	night came along and everyone was waiting for their portion of the promised ghormeh sabzi. They opened the first can ... and what a disappointment - it contained compote. Ditto the rest of the boxes! Even though the dessert was delicious, it did not satisfy the men who were hungry for ghormeh sabzi! After some time the Shah came to visit the exhibition at the Industrial Center. His delegation arrived at the 'Mei-Khosh" stall. The guide praised the quality and taste of the 'Mei-Khosh' products. While doing so, one of the Shah's escorts confirmed the words of praise and added that once, to his surprise, he got ghormeh sabzi instead of compote.	
Tehran	The Grandchildren	1959-1951
Brit Milah	All the grandchildren that were born during grandfather's lifetime were circumcised by him - except the one who was born in Tehran and while grandfather was in Mashhad. Grandfather served as mohel to many of the babies of the community and he also taught the profession to others - of course without any compensation.	
Grandfather 's Tears	The youngest son of Aunt Zvia, Saeed, was a little younger than me. My cousin and his family were still living in Mashhad. We used to play together whenever they visited Tehran. One day, we received bad news from Mashhad – that little Saeed had died. I remember my grandfather burst out crying. His tears were fierce and bitter.	1955
	Tehran	1951-1959
Grandfather 's House	It was the fifties, in a house on Nahid Street in Tehran – close to the University of Tehran. Grandfather was the head of the family, and we all lived together in the same building: • My grandfather Rabbi Levi and my grandmother Esther • Their son Hanania, his wife Batsheva, and their children - Lida, Itzhaq and Janet (Dalia was born later) • Their son Michael, his wife Malka, and their children Reuven and Daniel • Grandfather's sister Soltan, her daughter-in-law Rivqa (the widow of Dash Hadi) and their children, Niara and Ismail Aunt Zvia was still living in Mashhad. Uncle Eliyahu and Uncle Yehuda had immigrated to Israel. At that point, grandfather's brothers were already in Israel.	
Diagram of House	First floor and courtyard	

	Note: On the second floor there were four rooms: two for Hanania, one for Michael and one for Rivqa. 
Grandfather and Grandmother's Room [The Family Room]	Grandfather's and grandmother's room actually served as a family room, and the grandchildren, who were the light of their lives, were always welcome. Near the window, near grandfather's seat, was situated a low table. The seat was made of a mattress and a little rug was spread out on it. This seat was a gathering place for the grandchildren every evening. We would sit on my grandfather's lap, and he would tell us Bible stories and the Midrash (interpretation) related to each story. These were magical moments – grandfather introduced us to Avraham and Itzhaq on Mount Moriah, to Yaaqov and his dream in Beit El, to Moshe and the burning bush in the Sinai Desert, to Yehoshua and the conquest of Yericho, to Shimshon in the camp of Dan and his acts of bravery, to Gidon and his handful of men at Ein Harod, to Ali and Shmuel in the temple of Shiloh, to Shaul and Yonatan in their last battle at the mountains of Gilboa, to David and his heroes in Jerusalem, and to Elisha and the son of the Shunammite woman in Shomron. Those were the most beautiful and fascinating moments of our childhood - they brought us to a world of imagination, landscapes of Eretz Israel and its history, and they were deeply engraved in our consciousness.
The Office	That same room also served as grandfather's office. People would come to him for advice, and when this happened, we were to leave the room. This room became the place where family and members of the community came to grandfather for advice on topics such as: • "I argued with my husband and I wish to leave him" • "My husband was forced to work on Saturdays and I'm alone at home" • "Our financial situation is dire since the death of my husband"

	• "My son doesn't obey me – he is rebellious" • "I travel a lot. To my great sorrow, I am forced to eat non-kosher food" At grandfather's, everyone found a sympathetic ear and advice that was practical and wise. The woman that wanted to leave stayed and she and her husband enjoyed their grandchildren together. The woman that complained about her husband working on Saturday had full Saturdays in Israel. The widow who was in a difficult financial situation received steady assistance from grandfather. The father and son reconciled, and the man who travelled a great deal refrained from turning his constraint into an excuse.	
Neighborhood Community Center	Many friends and family used to visit us with their children. The children played together in the courtyard and the adults talked, laughed and played backgammon. Grandfather loved backgammon and adults and young people loved to play with him. Grandfather taught me how to play checkers, and it was an experience to play with him. Most of all I remember uncle Lotfolah playing backgammon with Refael ben Reuven Nissim. There was always friendly tension in the air, and shouts when the dice were thrown. Refael ben Reuven Nissim was murdered by terrorists in Istanbul during the morning prayers on a Saturday in 1986. May G-d avenge his blood.	[Israel / Yitgadal]
People Who Visited Us Often	Below are some of the people who often visited us: • Aghzema Lotfolah Dilmanian, Aunt Zvia and their children. • Aghzema Azizolah Yaaqobi, Mahrokh, his wife and children. Agha Nurolah Dardras - father of Aghzema Azizolah. • Dr. Fatholah Hakimi, his wife Rayishkeh and their children. Yosef Kohan-Tzedeq and his brothers. The Reuveni family. • Dash Shaaban Nissim and his family. Zandash Khodabakhsh and her family. • Dash Esmael Nissim. Dash Yaaqov. Dash Khodabakhsh Sinai. • Refael Ben-Reuven Nissim (Rafi Dash Rachmon). Golran brothers and their family. • Dash Haji Amin Aziz (and his mother and sister on a visit to Persia). The Zabihi family (Ameh Malka).	
	The Shabbat	1951-1959
Erev Shabbat (Friday Night)	The men returned home from the synagogue. Grandfather's room was ready for Kiddush. Tablecloths were placed on the carpet for every family unit (grandfather, his sister Soltan, and the sons of Hanania and Michael) - sometimes, each family unit with its guests. Grandfather started with *Shalom Aleichem* (Peace Be With You), *Eshet Chayil (A Woman of Valor)* and *Azamer Bishvachin* (I Shall Sing Praises).	[שלום עליכם, אשת חיל, אזמר בשבחין]

Observing the Shabbat	Grandfather makes the blessings with his special Bukharan-style Kiddush cup and with homemade wine. The cup is passed from hand to hand. Each one is honored with a small sip of wine, which is a rare and expensive item. I remember my grandmother pouring a few drops into the palm of her hand – for the sake of hygiene - and thus she tasted the wine. Then everyone made a blessing on raisins and chickpeas (ברכות העץ והאדמה). We then washed our hands, recited HaMotzi (blessing on the bread), and each family savored the food. There was always an animated conversation among the adults, and laughter from the children. And at the end, Birkat HaMazon (blessing after the meal). To this routine I remember an unusual exception. These were the days of the glory of the radio, and on Fridays they broadcast the most popular programs of the week. It was a Friday evening, after the Birkat HaMazon – in an atmosphere of content, satiety and relaxation. At the other end of the room, distant from grandfather's seat, one of the youngest among the attendees brought a small radio to play something light to enhance the atmosphere. I do not remember if someone shouted or someone got angry or someone was offended. Apparently, grandfather made a quiet remark - that I was not able to hear - but the embarrassment was great and the radio went silent almost before it had even made a sound. Even though a word was not spoken, the intensity of the embarrassment of desecration of Shabbat was deeply engraved in my mind.	
Shabbat Day	In the summer, the second meal had a special atmosphere. In the yard, each family unit had a wooden bed on which they slept on hot summer nights. Saturday morning we would cover the beds with a carpet and cover the carpet with a tablecloth, each family in its own area. It was like an outdoor picnic, surrounded by Nature. Typically, we ate Shabbat eggs in the morning, with another dish such as meatballs and potatoes. Each family would offer the other families a portion of their own specialty dishes. I remember especially my aunt's (Zan-Amu Lotfolah) stuffed grape leaf dish. A fragrant dish with the taste of heaven – sweet and sour - grape leaves stuffed with a mixture of rice, ground beef, raisins and unripe grapes. But most of all we loved kishke ("Movadon" - tripe stuffed with a mixture of rice and meat - the internal parts like liver, spleen, etc.), and served cold.	
Toys	After breakfast, the children would scatter to play games. When I was about five, my parents gave me a game that was popular in those days – a multi-colored sub-machine gun that made noises and whistling sounds. It was on a Saturday, in the long hallway in our house. I took the sub-machine gun to play with. My grandfather came to me and softly said: Do not play with this on Shabbat because it makes sparks. This was my first awareness of the prohibition of turning on and off electrical appliances and their derivatives on Shabbat.	

	The Holidays	1951- 1959
Yom Kippur	**Eve of Yom Kippur and grandfather stood on the teiva, praying and crying in his strong but broken voice. And I, a small child playing under my grandfather's chair at the synagogue western wall, Not understanding what is happening, but feeling that this is an awesome day.**	1954 [Levian Synagogue – Tehran] (western wall – facing Israel)
Hanukkah	Hanukkah always reminded me of my grandmother. A few days before the holiday she would prepare cotton wicks with great skill. The menorah was made up of nine small tin bowls (for the candles). On the eve of the holiday she would line them up, one next to another, and would place a wick in each bowl, and then pour oil into each one so they would be ready for the blessing. It is assumed that the use of nine separate bowls originated during the difficult period of the forced conversion in which the Jews were prohibited from possessing objects with Jewish religious associations.	1950s
Purim	The Fast of Esther was afforded great importance in our home. Almost everyone fasted. With the completion of the fast and the reading of the Megillah, all those who were in mourning would honor the public with halva (made from rice). To each his own recipe. Each dish had its distinct smell and taste. All of them were delicious - very delicious. At home awaited us Non-Tafton (a type of dairy cookie), Goosh-Fil (very thin cookies in the shape of an elephant's ear) and of course Halva. This was also a recipe for Mishloach Manot (Purim gift baskets of food and goodies). My father used to tell us with nostalgia that when he was a child in Mashhad the kids used to receive painted eggs and colored almonds. By the time of my childhood in Tehran, the adults had already done away with this indulgence for children. All in all, Purim was celebrated by the community with a lot of restraint. My brother and I went to a Jewish school of the Iraqi community - Etefagh. Hebrew lessons were given by teachers from Israel and the Israeli influence was felt. The height of the Purim festivities was the performances by the children at school. Many children would come to these celebrations in Purim disguises. The child with the most impressive Purim disguise would receive an award and gifts. My mother, influenced by the new atmosphere, dressed us up and stood us in line to leave the house in the direction of the school. Grandfather, seeing us, to our astonishment expressed displeasure, claiming that the quiet and peace we enjoy in Tehran may be tenuous so it is best to keep a low profile. We felt a bit strange and sad that grandfather disturbed the joy of the holiday. Two decades later, with the fall of the Shah and the rise of the Islamic regime, grandfather's wisdom became clear to us.	1957

Pesach	Pesach falls after the Persian new year (Norooz = New Day) in early spring. These are days when the sun's rays are soft and warm, after the snows and frost of the winter. School students got 13 days off, and I - I went to a Jewish school - twenty-some days off. This gave me an opportunity to see all the Pesach preparations, to enjoy the Seder and the whole Pesach holiday.	1950s
Preparations	Preparations for Pesach would start the day after Purim: • Abhozi (water-drawer) pumped the water from the pool that was located in the middle of the courtyard and scoured it carefully in order to fill it with clean water. • The gardener planted in the garden a variety of flowers, such as pansies, snapdragons, etc. • RakhtShoor (the laundress) was requested to help do the laundry. • The entire contents of all the rooms were moved into the yard. The carpets were turned upside down and spread out on the wooden beds in the courtyard, which served as a great place for the kids to play. • The copper utensils were bleached. In the middle of the yard grandfather lit a big bonfire over which a huge pot was placed in which to scald the utensils. • Wine, matzo, and oil were prepared by hand at home. Kosher-for-Pesach wine from the grape season, big, round and tasty unleavened bread, and oil prepared from animal sources (schmaltz). Little by little, over time, with the strengthening of ties with Israel, we received wine and liquors from Israel. We bought matzo from a matzo factory set up by the initiative of Mr. Nurolah Zvuloni. We moved from homemade animal fats to olive oil made in Israel. Though we made progress in easing the Pesach preparations, we lost the art of making homemade wine, matzo, and fats with special flavors.	
Pesach Night	The Seder was performed with great festivity in grandfather and grandmother's room. Grandfather and grandmother used to sit on a small carpet which was spread out over a mattress next to a low table. Around the room other guests sat on mattresses with tablecloths spread out over the carpet. Attending the Seder were grandfather's cousins (the Dash Shaaban and the Dash Khodabakhsh families), the sons and their families (Lotfolah and Gdodartolah), the family of my grandfather's sister (Ameh Soltan, Zandash Hadi and the children), and a grandson of brother Binyamin, Dash Haji Amin. The Seder would start with singing "Qadesh Urchatz", and with great festivity. The tune was taught to and rehearsed by the children during the preparations. Grandfather would start with "Kiddush" and "Avadim Hayinu" (Slaves we were). In between the chapters we would burst out	

First Day of Pesach	with "Qadesh Urchatz." At "Urchatz" time the children would walk among the guests with the copper water jug placed on a special bowl, so the guests could perform the blessing of Netilat Yadayim (rinsing the hands). The joy of the evening reached its culmination with the merry song "Da'yenu". Along with "Da'yenu" we would flog each other with green onions (even grandfather). Grandmother, with all the work of the holiday behind her and the happiness of the celebrations before her eyes, would say with the first glass of wine in her hands, "we waited for the holiday for so long, and now it's over." The next morning, after completion of the prayers in the synagogue and eating breakfast, everyone would go out to visit friends and neighbors, and to wish them a "Peaceful Holiday" and a "Joyous Holiday." The younger people would always visit their elders first. On this day all the notables of our community showed up at our house to greet grandfather for the holiday. My grandmother, my aunt (Batsheva) and my mother (Malka) worked hard to prepare a full table for our honored guests. The house would fill up with a crowd of people and the holiday was something special. The participants drank a toast and then tasted the delicacies of the holiday: • Rice cakes and almond cookies • Raisins, dates, pistachios and nuts • Potatoes and boiled eggs seasoned with turmeric • Vegetable and potato cutlets, etc. • Sweets such as sugared almonds and "Loz" (almond candies in diamond shape, etc.)	[מועדים שלום ומועדים לשמחה]
	Farewell to Grandfather	1959
Grandfather 's Health Deteriorates	Towards the end of his life grandfather was very sick - especially after a deep pit in the yard opened up and swallowed him. One cold winter's day (I was about nine years old) I returned from school with my mother and I ran ahead into the courtyard. Suddenly, in the yard, I saw a few paces ahead of me a deep, wide hole. I didn't understand what was happening; I thought someone had come to fix something. Suddenly I heard my grandfather calling my grandmother from inside the hole (Naneh Eliyahu = Eliyahu's mother). I was overwhelmed, and I went into the house. I went to grandfather's room and looked out onto the courtyard. Grandmother suddenly entered the room carrying a tray of food (maybe Torshi-Ghaliyeh). I turned to her and asked: "Who is the food was for? Grandfather is in the hole in the yard." Immediately she started shouting and running. The fire department was called and soon the yard was filled with neighbors and shopkeepers. The firemen were slow in arriving, so in the meantime the shopkeepers (Muslims) brought a ladder, tied a rope to it, cast the rope into the hole and told grandfather to tie himself to the rope. The shopkeepers pulled the ladder (keeping it horizontal) and with each pull, grandfather was	Nahid Street – Tehran

	gradually raised from the pit ... and I stood in grandfather's room, looking out and seeing grandfather by the pool all bruised and battered, supported by people, and walking heavily to his room. For many days my grandmother, my parents, my aunt and uncle took care of grandfather until he recovered, but he never got completely well again, and in fact his general health deteriorated from day to day.	
Learning a Lesson	I remember that one evening grandfather was reading scriptures at his desk and I sat with my parents at the other end of the room and played with a bow and arrow my father bought me (after much prodding). I was happily playing with the new toy when suddenly an arrow discharged from between my fingers, hit the window, and then bounced back onto grandfather. Grandfather broke the arrow and with an authoritative voice said, "It is true you saved me from the pit, but that does not justify such games." Years later I saw an air rifle at a friend's house. I asked my father to buy me one as well. My father told me firmly, neither I nor your grandfather had a gun - and you also will not (perhaps due to the influence of these words, no guns or pistols were found in my children's toy chest).	
Yearning for Israel	In the summer of 1959, my mother, my brother and I went to Israel to visit my grandfather Chanuka who lived on Moshav Beit Nechemia. Before the flight to Israel, my brother and I went to grandfather Levi, who was sitting in the yard on one of the beds. He put his hands on our heads and blessed us. He asked us to say goodbye to him the moment that the plane takes off because he would not be able to accompany us to the airport. We flew with Air France. At the moment of take-off, we sat close to the window and parted with grandfather in "Shalom". During our stay in Israel, at one of the family meetings, Uncle Eliyahu showed mother a letter from grandfather Levi saying that he wished to immigrate to Israel, but unfortunately his illness overcame him shortly thereafter. I didn't see my grandfather when he died. My father told me that grandfather was looking forward to our return before his death - but we missed him by four days. We received news of his death the evening before we returned. **Grandfather died with a longing for Israel like that of Moses on Mount Nevo. In his Biblical world, he trod on every clod of earth in the Land of Israel, though in real life he was not privileged to enter the country.**	
Grandfather 's Letter (Translation from Persian)		September 1959

1	My honorable children, Mr. Elias Nissimi and Mr. Amir-Agha, honorable ladies, my dear Reuven and Daniel I wish you good health.
2	Since the wife of my son Gdodartolah went to Israel, just two letters were received from you, and one letter that I wrote has most likely arrived.

		3	My health is as I wrote. Of course we have spared no expense to date on doctor visits and purchasing drugs.	
		4	But apparently my fever comes and goes; still every few days I burn up with fever and this very much weakens me.	
		5	And the weather is hot _____ since I fell into the pit eight months ago; I have been sick and bedridden _____.	
		6	We had huge expenses (here in Tehran), visits to doctors and buying drugs, and the children are not skimping on treatments or expenses.	
		7	You are less aware of my condition. Mother always helps me in any way she can.	
		8	In any case, I very, very much miss you. My sight has greatly weakened. It is a sign of old age and that the time for reaching out for help has come.	
		9	Yesterday, Mr. Itzhaq Zioni visited me and told me in the name of Mr. Nurolah Dardras that it would be good if Mola Abdolah would go to Israel to one of the free hospitals or one of the homes for senior citizens in Israel.	As opposed to the very expensive medical care in Tehran - Grandpa was offered good medical care in Israel
		10	Mr. Itzhaq said that he liked Nurolah's idea. "And what would you yourself suggest?"	
		11	I answered that it would be good if I were in Israel and it was my wish to write to Elias to see if I am able to start such a journey.	
		12	Now, my sons! Mother and the children here do not accept this suggestion. I do not know what you propose. I beg you to check out this matter.	In spite of his great yearning and his desire to be in Israel, grandfather rejected solutions such as a home for senior citizens, "I don't need such things" because it was not honorable for the family and noted that he had no options for treatment other than the care of his children.
		13	Please behave in an honorable and prestigious way for me and for you. The intention is that I did not need and I do not need these things.	
		14	And I will do whatever I can, but my future is in the hands of the Almighty, blessed be He, and I don't want to be a nuisance or a burden in the future.	
		15	My only wish is that the way (the way you select) will not lead to a situation that is not honorable for me and for you, and in the future will not cause heartbreak.	
		16	Check with Mola Itzhaq (Zioni) and send me an answer. It is not sufficient to get just advice for the rest of my life.	
		17	Right now, I have no strength left. Give greetings to everyone. May G-d give you all health. I hope to see all of you in good health.	
		18	Again I emphasize that without receiving advice from you - there is no other advice for me; and, without your help and help from the other children, I have no other treatment.	
		19	I look forward to hearing from you. Regards from Mola Abdolah Nassimi.	
		20	Of course I will consult on this matter with mother and the children here. If you were in Tehran this letter would not be necessary. Thank G-d, for the past couple of days I have been	

	feeling better – put your mind to rest.	
Death of Rabbi Levi	Yom Kippur 1959, a few weeks before his death, grandfather was not able to visit the synagogue. Many worshipers came to visit him on that day and found him wrapped in a prayer shawl, praying and crying. No words were spoken, but the excitement was intense. The people saw the rabbi with his great spiritual strength despite his physical weakness - and the rabbi felt the grace of his congregation that did not desert him even with the ebbing of his strength.	[Daniel Nissimi]
	Before his death, grandfather asked grandmother's forgiveness for all the trouble his sickness had caused her. He asked his children to make sure that the gravestone on his grave be no higher or more prominent than other gravestones, that the writing on the gravestone be accurate (name, date, etc.), and that the boys persevere in saying Qaddish for him for the year of mourning.	
	Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda died on 23 November 1959, at 5:00 am. On the morning of that day Mrs. Miriam Etessami came to our home and in her hand a bar of soap from Eretz Israel with which to perfume the body of the holy rabbi and soil from the Land of Israel to accompany him to the "Land of Truth".	[כ"ב חשון תש"כ] [Zvia Dilmanian] [Photos/ Shmuel/ Mashiyach] Miriam E.
	A large convoy of cars trailed behind a vehicle carrying the casket. At a great distance from the cemetery the procession stopped. A large crowd of escorts carried the body with their hands to the cemetery in order to share among them this last show of respect. In the funeral hall, the people parted with the rabbi - for a long time, with many prayers and eulogies.	
	On the seventh day, the Levian Synagogue was packed solid - and I sat on the steps of the temple and Rabbi Yedidiya, Rabbi of Tehran, eulogized grandfather. For months and perhaps even years I refused to believe that grandfather was no more, and sometimes I even imagined that he would return.	[R.N.]
	It was customary to visit the cemetery on Tisha B'Av. The first time I visited the cemetery was the year my grandfather died. Grandmother, Uncle Lotfolah my father, my cousin Itzhaq and my brother Danny, we all drove to the Jewish cemetery in Tehran to visit the grave. On the way back, the taxi radio played songs. We felt great discomfort to hear music on this sad day, and this feeling remains to this day.	[Exhibition of Our Heritage]
	Decades after his death, the community chose thusly to remember grandfather:	
	He was among the most revered of this generation. His death left a great void in the community. His absence is strongly felt.	
	His clear and penetrating voice when singing "Qol Nidrei" or "The	

	Confession" accompanied by his tears and his captivating words are etched forever in memory.	
Kiddush Cup	With the death of grandfather, grandmother contributed to the synagogue (Levian in Tehran) a number of bottles of wine, handmade, and also a cup and saucer made of silver for saying Kiddush. It was customary to say Kiddush at the synagogue on Shabbat nights. The cup and saucer were the same ones that grandfather had used at home to sanctify the Shabbat and holidays and also to sanctify his children's marriage. Decades later, after the Islamic Revolution in Iran - we learned that the cup and saucer arrived to the Mashhadi Synagogue in Bene Beraq. We heard the good news from the brothers Binyamin and Shlomo Vahapour at a wedding, and when they found out we were the grandsons of Mola Abdolah they rejoiced. Shlomo told us that as a child they were neighbors of my grandparents, and grandfather would sit him on his lap, and he still remembers this experience. As a result of the long journey, the cup was damaged and distorted and therefore is not used in the synagogue in Bene Beraq. My brother and I, with the approval of our parents and after consulting a Rabbi, redeemed the cup and the saucer with two Torah reading pointers (fingers), one in memory of my grandfather and one in memory of my grandmother. We gave the beautiful cup (in Bukharan style) to be repaired, and my father, z"l, used it to sanctify the Shabbat.	
Sixth Generation	**Grandmother – Esther bat Rachamim**	~1893-1968
	My grandmother was a wonderful woman, filled with warmth, love and wisdom. Her daughters-in-law were precious to her like her only daughter and her son-in-law as her sons. She would collect money from her own family to be used for charity. In the evenings she would sit at the door to give money to the needy that would pass by the house. It was an unforgettable sight - how Grandma would chat with the poor, ask how they were doing, and joking with them. Grandmother was the permanent babysitter for her grandchildren when the parents wanted to go out to enjoy themselves. I still remember little Janet who used to cry and grandmother would tell her a story about the wonderful gifts she would receive as soon as her parents returned. Most soothing were the moments when we lay next to grandmother, where the head resting on her lap ... and she would look for lice in our hair - but in vain. It was a game of pampering. Who would believe that in Israel of the 2000s, our children would have lice. Erev Yom Kippur we would kiss the hand of the adults and ask for forgiveness. Grandmother always objected to our kissing her hand - a woman so wonderful and so humble. Although we lived in the same building, grandmother always maintained her independence. Even after my grandfather died, she used	

	to cook for herself. I still remember the smell and taste of her "Torshi Ghalieh" (a thick vegetable soup with red beans and meat patties), and grandmother always enjoyed giving us a taste on our return from school. Grandmother immigrated to Israel after the Six Day War and died shortly thereafter on February 16, 1968. She was buried in the holy city of Jerusalem, in the Qiryat Shaul cemetery.	[י"ז שבט תשכ"ח]
	Grandfather's Bookcase	
Donation to the Synagogue	Grandfather's bookcase consisted mostly of religious books. Uncle Hanania remembered that Ben Zvi, on his visit to Iran searching for rare manuscripts, also visited grandfather (my uncle does not remember if Ben Zvi found what he was looking for or not). Years after grandfather's death it was decided to donate his books to the Levian Synagogue (~1963). Mola Yosef Dil accepted the books on behalf of the synagogue and Mola Yosef Zar, seeing the books, sighed and said "where will we find someone who will understand all of these?" Mola Yosef Dil suggested that we take a few of the books as a remembrance, and asked our permission to take a number of documents handwritten by grandfather (perhaps sermons). I took among others a Pesach Haggadah from the late Nineteenth Century. The book is attached with Azharot (warnings) from Mola Siman Tov, handwritten, and Pirqei Avot with a handwritten Tafsir (commentary). I also took the book by Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl - "The Jewish State". This little book sits inside a bookcase that is filled with holy tomes. After we immigrated to Israel we began to long for grandfather's books but it was already too late, and after the Islamic Revolution we did not know what happened to the books. A few years before the revolution, my cousin Behrouz (during one of the search efforts) identified grandfather's prayer book and brought it to Israel. We knew that grandfather gave several of the books to friends and relatives, among them Khodabakhsh Sinai. One evening at my mother's request, my brother drove the widow of Mr. Sinai's home. On the way, he asked her about grandfather's books. She led him to the bookcase and my brother Daniel immediately recognized grandfather's Shulchan Aruch, and as proof that it was indeed his, written by hand in the book were the dates of the birth of his children Eliyahu and Tzruya.	~1963

List of Grandfather 's Books that are in Our Possession

Name	Date	Published	Notes
Prayer Book (Machzor) for Yom Kippur מחזור ליום כיפור	1841	Livorno. Shlomo Belforti and Friends	Recorded in handwriting in the Machzor: "**I am the young Yosef Nissim**" (Grandfather of Rabbi Levi)
Prayer Book (Machzor) for Yom Kippur מחזור ליום כיפור	Ancient		The first pages containing information about the publisher are missing.
Seder Haggadah of Pesach with Ten Commentaries סדר הגדה של פסח עם עשרה פרושים	1879	The Widow and the Brothers Ram – Vilna 1879	Pasted to it are two magnificent manuscripts: Azharot (Mola Siman Tov) Pirqei Avot and Tafsir (translation to Persian)
Seder Tefilat HaChadash According to Sephardic Custom ספר תפלת החדש כמנהג קהל קדוש ספרדים	1882	Livorno. Shlomo Belforti and Friends, 1882	Grandfather's hand-written tables: - Chronicles - The Order of the Generations
Seder Qri'ey Mo'ed סדר קריאי מועד	1891	Yosef Shelazingar	
Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim, Part II שולחן ערוך אורח חיים חלק ב'	1900	Rabbi A. Z. Razankranz and Rabbi M. M. Shriftzattzar, Vilna, 1990	Grandfather wrote in this book the birth dates of his children Eliyahu and Tzruya
Megillat Esther מגילת אסתר	Ancient		Megillah of 11 Rows (In the possession of uncle Lotfolah)
Manuscripts (handwritten) כתבי יד	Ancient	(parchment) (paper) (parchment)	3 Menorahs - אנא בכוח - למנצח - שיר למעלות (in the possession of uncle Lotfolah)
One of Grandfather's Books אחד מספרי סבא	~1930		Inside is a table to define the Hebrew calendar Grandfather's handwriting – (In the possession of uncle Lotfolah)
Booklet A חוברת א'	~1930	Grandfather's handwriting	Contains: - The prayer book for the cemetery - The prayer book for blessing trees - Blessing for the Sun
Booklet B חוברת ב'	~1930	Grandfather's handwriting	Contains Tafsir for confession on Yom Kippur
The Five Books of Moses חמשה חומשי תורה	1939	Printmaster Trawitzt and Son	Year 1929 On the book, in handwriting: Yeudah ben Abdolah Nissim (grandfather's son)

		Prayer Book of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals מחזור לשלש רגלים	~1944	Sinai, Tel Aviv, Israel	Printed before 1948 because it is inscribed: Printed in Palestine	
		The Jewish State – Theodor Ze'ev Herzl מדינת היהודים - בנימין זאב הרצל	1944	Department of Youth Affairs, Zionist Organization, 1944	Contains a seal: The Jewish Agency of Israel – Office of Eretz Israel in Tehran	
		Sources				
		This work is based on the following sources: • Conversations with Michael Nissimi (my father) • Testimony from family members and other findings				[2000-2010] [R.N.]
		Better is a good name than fine oil				

Yosef ben Yehuda

	Chronicles	
Great-Grandfather Paternal Fifth Generation	**Yehuda** ben Yosef Nissim married **Miriam** (Akhor) bat Reuven (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir). They had eight children: • Five sons - Binyamin, Levi, **Yosef**, Yishayahu and Nethanel • Three daughters - Hanna, Rachel and Dvora	1880s [Generations]
Great-Grandfather Maternal Fifth Generation	**Shmuel** was the brother of great-grandfather Yehuda. **Shmuel's** children with his first wife were Eliyahu, Mashiyach and Sara. After his wife's death, **Shmuel** married **Leah** (Khorshid), daughter of Reuven – sister of great-grandmother Miriam. From this marriage were born Refael, Shimon, Shokrolah and **Rivqa** (Tuti).	
Grandfather's House Sixth Generation	Grandfather **Yosef** married **Rivqa** bat Shmuel. The couple had **Rachamim** (Abdol-Karim), **Dina** (Mina), **Nethanel** (Javad) and **Moshe**.	1910s
	Rachamim married **Khorshid** bat Refael (Khodabakhsh) Nissim. **Rachamim** died prematurely. He had no children.	1940s
	Dina married **Mashiyach** Mashiyach (Mehdi Agha ben Shaul Zughali). The couple begat Avraham, Itzhaq and Zvia.	1950s
	Nethanel (Javad) married **Zoleikha** daughter of Yaaqov Ghassab. He died suddenly in Haifa, at a young age, before having any children. His cousin Eliyahu Nissimi together with the widow **Zoleikha** brought the body for burial to Qiryat Shaul in Tel Aviv.	1960s
	Moshe married **Farideh** Nobakhat. The couple had four children - **Yosef**, **Nethanel**, **Rivqa** and **Liora**. Moshe died at an early age.	
	Mashhad	1930s
Studying Hebrew	**Mehdi Agha** began studying at the age four at the Beit Midrash of Mola **Yosef** Dil. He studied Hebrew and religious studies. Due to the lack of books and constant memorization of prayers, **Mehdi Agha** knew large parts of the prayers by heart. **Mehdi Agha** could recite all of the "**Shema Israel**". Once, after the evening prayers, **Mola Faraj** called **Mehdi Agha** and asked to test his rendition of "**Shema Israel**. **Mehdi Agha** recited the entire **Shema** by heart. One of the worshipers at the synagogue - called Abdol-Karim Chehel-Khar – was moved by the expertise of the child and invited him to come the following day to his place of business. Abdol-Karim, who imported religious books (among others) from Eastern Europe, gave **Mehdi Agha** a set of the Five Books of Moses (in the year 1930).	1930 [=Dash Karim]
Life in the Courtyard	Grandfather **Yosef** along with his two brothers (Rabbi Levi, and Yishayahu) lived in the same courtyard in Mashhad. The courtyard bordered the Central Synagogue (Mola Faraj and Mola Abdolah). Great-grandmother **Miriam** was a dominant personality who earned the reverence and respect of the family. She	1930s

	ruled the household. There was a weekly rotation of the brides in preparing food for the household, and **Miriam** would distribute, every day, meals for the family. In addition, the brothers of Grandmother **Rivqa** (Mashiyach, Refael and Shimon) lived in the same courtyard. **Mashiyach** (Mehdi Agha) used to visit his sister Esther (wife of Refael) in a shared courtyard. **Dina and Mashiyach** first met (as children) in this courtyard.	
Eid-Gah	**In the Name of Heaven** - Yaaqov Zar, one of the mohels of the community, would receive compensation from wealthy families for circumcising their sons ... and would place the money in the diaper of the infants he circumcised for needy families. He kept a ledger of the full details of every baby that was circumcised. **Leadership** - Occasionally rabbis and community leaders gathered together at the Central Synagogue where they discussed community issues and set rules at the community level. **Security** – There were several 'contact' people (such as Aziz Zar, Nurolah Zar and Nurolah Dardras) who were on good terms with the police. These men would reward the police with money and gifts – for the security of the community – but not always successfully. **Trade** - Many in the community had shops in the Saraye' Azizolahyoff (shopping center). Near the shopping center was a gentile greengrocer who behaved in an inappropriate manner towards the Jews. Consequently, the community leaders ordered the community members to stop buying produce from him. Within a short time, the greengrocer started losing money because most of his income came from the Mashhadi community. Finally, he implored the congregation, admitted that his actions were improper and beseeched them to bring the boycott to an end. "Lifting the boycott" was discussed at a meeting in the Central Synagogue and the community was allowed to return to buying from the penitent greengrocer.	[Mohel = person who performs the Jewish rite of circumcision]
Treatment of Converts	Grandmother **Rivqa** had two half-brothers from her mother **Khorshid's** first husband. These two brothers converted to the Baha'i religion and lived in Russia. They were very rich and would often visit Mashhad. Over the course of time, they and their families perished young and tragically and nothing was left of them. Zabiholah, one of the brothers, was killed when the plane he was flying in crashed. At that time, Grandfather **Yosef** was staying in Afghanistan. Grandmother **Rivqa**, the stepsister of Zabiholah, requested that **Mehdi Agha** (then a boy of about ten) accompany her on a condolence call. **Mehdi Agha** refused to enter the home of the mourners because "they are not Jews and their customs are not our customs.	1930s
1940s	Tehran – Second World War	1940s
Marriage	During World War II, after the Allies entered Iran, Reza Shah was deposed	1942

	and the army dispersed. **Mashiyach,** who was at the end of his army service in Shiraz, was released from the army and traveled to Tehran. In Tehran, **Mashiyach** started working in warehouses for the **Joint** to help Jewish refugees in Russia. In these warehouses were shipping centers for food, clothing, shoes, etc. from the U.S. Jewish community, where packages for refugees were organized, loaded onto trucks and sent to Jewish refugees In Turkmenistan, Russia. **Mashiyach**, along with two other Mashhadis, were kept busy securing these warehouses. In addition, a group of girls (including **Dina** - Mashiyach's future wife) were occupied with sewing and organizing packages for shipment. The place was managed by a representative from Eretz Israel. **Mashiyach** communicated with the manager in Hebrew because, as we know, Mashiyach learned the Hebrew at a tender age. Over time, the manager grew fond of **Mashiyach** and, in their conversations, he encouraged **Mashiyach** to marry. **Mashiyach** tried in vain to convince the manager that he couldn't start a family at the present time because he had no way to support one. **Mashiyach's** situation touched the heart of the manager –he promised to help Mashiyach and told him not to see the financial issue as an obstacle. Encouraged by the manager, and at the recommendation of one of the Mashhadis, finally **Mashiyach** asked for the hand of **Dina** sending Khazendeh (official delegation to the girl's parents). The manager stood by his word. He helped the young couple with their wedding expenses and with the rental of a house in which to live.	1945
Activities of the Joint in Tehran	Below is an excerpt describing the activities of the Joint in Iran during the war (from the website of the organization): As Hitler consolidated power between 1933 and 1939, JDC accelerated its aid to German Jewry. JDC helped 250,000 Jews flee Germany and 125,000 leave Austria. As the German armies approached Paris in 1940, JDC transferred its offices to Lisbon. From there, we helped thousands escape from Europe. .... **Some 250,000 packages from Tehran sustained Polish and Ukrainian Jews in Asiatic Russia.** Supplies were parachuted to Yugoslavia, and funds were smuggled to the Polish Jewish underground.	[www.jdc.org] **J**oint **D**istribution **C**ommittee
1940s	Aliyah to Eretz Israel	1940
Smuggling Jews	At the end of the Second World War, **Mashiyach** started working for the Jewish Agency. An Iraqi Jew named Haji Abdolah would travel along the Iraqi border with **Mehdi Agha**. **Mehdi Agha** would remain at the Iranian border and Haji Abdolah would continue to Baghdad to smuggle groups of immigrants to Iran. In Tehran young Iranian Jews were placed with the Iraqi immigrant families and were then sent to Israel. In order to "facilitate" their passage, the young Iranians would dress in Arab clothes and they would "reward" the border control agents with various kinds of presents (money, food and beverages). Within the framework of this activity - **Mashiyach** first sent **Nethanel** to Eretz Israel and one year later, he sent **Moshe**.	1945 1947, 1948
Immigration and Absorption	In the early 1950s, **Mashiyach** planned to come to Israel with his family - but he was asked to postpone his aliyah to help the immigration of the Kurds who	1950s

	were then living in Beheshtiyeh (a temporary encampment for immigrants in a cemetery in Tehran). Finally, in December 1950, **Mashiyach** succeeded in immigrating to Israel with his pregnant wife and his son who was two and a half years old. Like many others they arrived at "Aliyah Gate", a tent camp near Haifa. That same night, they were greeted with a severe storm accompanied by snow. The tents collapsed because of the stormy weather and the young family spent their first night roofless - exposed to the cold and frost. The next morning, Dina's brother, Moshe, came to meet them. It turned out that the **Mashiyach** family was intended to go north to Rosh Pina. **Moshe**, after a bit of a dispute and then some convincing, succeeded in persuading the authorities to change the records and transfer the family to Pardes Hanna – a British camp which housed four families in one room (including **Zoleikha** and her family). **Dina** soon gave birth to **Itzhaq** in the hospital in Hadera. The hospital management (as was the custom then) organized a circumcision party for the newborn - including lodging expenses for the family members. Afterwards, the **Mashiyach** family moved to a "tent city" in Hertzliya (assisted by a cousin who was acquainted with the person in charge of the camp). One Saturday night that winter there was a torrential rainstorm and the entire contents of the tent were washed away by the flood that resulted. **Dina** sought refuge on the table – for herself and the baby, while **Mashiyach** was frantically looking for **Avraham** who had got lost in the tumult. After several moments of anxiety, local military officials informed the residents of the tent city that all the children were well and had been gathered together in the movie theater Tiferet*. The children were getting special treatment in the temporary "summer camp". With so much food and treats and toys - little **Avraham** begged to stay longer at the makeshift "summer camp". The family lived that way for four years, in a tent. There, in the immigrant tent, the family expanded with the birth of a daughter **Zvia**. In 1954 they were moved to permanent housing in Neve Israel. Within a decade from their aliyah, both Grandmother **Rivqa** and Grandfather **Yosef** immigrated to Israel. They got to see their children and their grandchildren in Israel - and **Rivqa** even experienced the joy of holding her great-granddaughter Natalie in her arms.	* Sha'ar Shamayim Synagogue in Hertzliya was built by Agha Asadolah Yaaqoboff. The movie theater Tiferet also belonged to him. 1960s 1970s
Amu and Zanamu (Uncle and Aunt)	**Amu-Yussuf** and **Zanamu-Yussuf** (this was my parents' nickname for them – their uncle and aunt) were very pleasant people, with a love of life and contentment with their lot (like they look in their photos). I remember in the late fifties **Amu** and **Zanamu** stayed for several days in our house (in my Grandfather Mola Abdolah's courtyard) before their immigration to Israel. I was about eight - **Amu-Yussuf** took me for a walk in the area of the Karaj River, north of Tehran. The region was quite isolated during that period. There I was exposed for the first time, via **Amu-Yussuf,** to the world of insects. He taught me how to catch a grasshopper and a ladybird). **Amu-**	~ 1958 [R.N.]

	Yussuf was possessed with a love of nature, and that trip stands out in my memory as a thrilling experience. After the Six Day War, my Grandmother **Esther** (wife of Mola Abdolah), immigrated to Israel. **Zanamu-Yussuf** came to visit my grandmother (who was her sister-in-law.) This meeting was marked by a joy for life and inner happiness. Both elderly women savored a possible collaboration of a blind woman with a lame woman (*kurak ve shalak*). Despite the fact that Zanamu had been blind for years and my grandmother suffered from difficulty walking – the two women joked together at the thought that they complement one other.	1967
	Sources	
	This work was prepared by the courtesy of: • Mr. Mashiyach Mashiyach (Agha Mehdi-Agha Zughali) and his daughter Zvia	2007

Yeshayahu ben Yehuda

	Chronicles	
Grandfather and Grandmother (Paternal) Fifth Generation	Grandfather, **Yehuda** ben Yosef Nissim married **Miriam** bat Reuven (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir). They had five sons and three daughters. The eldest son died young, leaving a wife and small children. The youngest son was murdered by robbers. My grandparents had blessed and G-d-fearing children. There emerged from amongst them a scholar and well-known teacher, my uncle Mola Abdolah who served as rabbi of the community. In addition my aunt married Mola Rafi Aghalar, the son of Mola Morad.	1880s
Grandfather and Grandmother (Maternal) Sixth Generation	Grandfather, **David** ben Mishael Nissim, was a successful man. He worked as a goldsmith and traded in gold and precious stones. He was a reliable and honest man. He loved singing and was a talented writer. Grandfather David married **Sara** bat Shmuel (she was his cousin). The couple had five daughters, of whom my mother was the youngest. The first daughter married young. While my mother was still a baby in a crib – the second daughter got engaged, and all the preparations were carefully planned. Gifts and jewelry were purchased and delicacies were prepared for the engagement which was planned for Hanukkah. On the day before the holiday, David set out at dawn to handle a business deal. In vain the family waited for his return to light the candles. Grandfather did not come back that night, nor did he ever get to light the first candle of the holiday. A few days later his body was found, after bandits had killed him and stolen his goods. Grandfather did not live to celebrate his second daughter's engagement. Grandmother, being a strong woman, worked at all kinds of odd jobs in order to support her daughters. She worked days and nights at sewing, knitting and spinning jobs and earned enough to live a life of dignity and to educate her girls.	1890s 1900s
Parents Sixth Generation	The parents, **Yeshayahu** (Abdol-Samad) ben Yehuda and **Dvora** bat David, lived in Marv when they were young. In Marv they had their first daughter Malka. When the Communists came to power in Russia, the parents fled to Mashhad. Before leaving Marv, they buried their possessions (money, gold and jewelry) in a pit that they dug for that purpose. Later, father under the cover of night, returned to the cache, removed it from the hole, and started his return to Mashhad. At the border, bandits attacked him but he fought with them and succeeded in crossing the border, healthy, all in one piece, and with all his possessions.	1910s
	Mashhad	1919 - 1951
	In Mashhad, father was a broker of leathers and furs. Due to his known integrity, dedication and hard work, he was well accepted by traders. My mother, in addition to housekeeping, used to prepare all kinds of concoctions from flowers and plants (rose water, willow water, etc.). Two daughters were born to them in Mashhad, Yafa and Zilpa. Yafa married Shlomo, the son of Aunt Leyla and Mola Rafi, in	

	Mashhad. Zilpa married Asher Kohen in Israel.	
The Main Street	Sar-Heiteh Street was the central shopping area of the Jews of Eid-Gah, and our lane (Dalon) started at one end of Sar-Heiteh. Most of the community's needs - fruits and vegetables, groceries, bakery items, stationery and textiles, as well as popcorn, ice cream and strawberries - could be purchased on Sar-Heiteh Street. On one side of the street was a clinic where my cousin Dr. Fatholah Hakimian was the doctor. Across the street was a butcher yard. The guards used to stay in the butcher yard, and we invited them to be our Shabbat Goy on Shabbat and holidays. Sar-Heiteh Street was paved with stones and no traffic was allowed on it – it was a pedestrian only street. Due to its proximity to the cemetery, all funerals passed through this street. And at joyful times, because of its central location, brides and grooms were transported along it with happiness and jubilation.	
The Synagogue	My family's greatest pleasure was that we lived in the heart of the Eid-Gah neighborhood, on a street called Synagogue Lane (Dalone' Kanissa). Our house was adjacent to the large synagogue which was ministered by Mola Faraj Elishayoff and my uncle Rabbi Levi. The Great Synagogue regularly held three prayer sessions a day. Many women also participated in the prayers, especially on Shabbat and holidays, and on Mondays and Thursdays. We were very much involved in the religious life of the community and the religious experience became imprinted in our being. In this synagogue and in the homes located around it were concentrated most of the community's religious activities - religious seminaries, the baking of matzot, the sewing of shrouds and the burial society (in the home of Mola **Aghajan**). Under the synagogue was a mikveh (מקווה) for the purpose of purification. Mola Faraj was one of the prominent rabbis of Mashhad and he had a strong influence on the community. For a living, he worked in trade but he actually devoted most of his energy to public purposes (Talmud Torah, ritual slaughtering, circumcisions, weddings, etc.). He died prematurely in 1942. The entire community was stunned and in pain as they accompanied him on his final journey to his funeral. A great sorrow engulfed the community at the death of their favorite rabbi. His great contribution and his memory will not be forgotten. During the next ten years, until the departure of the Jews from Mashhad, the burden of the community's needs fell on my uncle, Rabbi Levi. Rabbi Levi (Mola Abdolah) was one of the prominent rabbis of Mashhad. I admired him and was proud he was my uncle. He was meticulous about collecting funds from the public to be given as charity. I remember that on the eve of holidays, and especially during the ceremony of HaTarat Nedarim (Nullification of Vows) of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, he would pass through the rows of the synagogue to collect donations for the poor members of the community. Among other things, the rabbi taught ritual slaughter to several of the young of the community (such as Mola Esshagh Aghalar and Shlomo Moradi, son of Mola Refael) to maintain the continued observance of kashrut (keeping kosher) among	1940s

	the Jews of Mashhad after him. Everything he did was for the love of G-d and Israel - which guided him throughout his life. During Selichot the synagogue was completely filled. My uncle, Rabbi Levi, would begin chanting the Selichot in a pleasant and melancholy voice, and after him the rest of the men and boys continued with the traditional melody. I really took pleasure in the songs and melodies of Selichot. The Mincha prayers of Yom Kippur were recited in the Persian translation of the Haftarat Yonah (Tafsir). This was a gesture to all those who did not understand the language of Scripture. Complete silence prevailed in the synagogue, my uncle read the Haftarah in a forceful voice and with a mournful melody. I loved to listen to the Tafsir. Everyone was moved by the Haftarat Yonah, and some even cried. The rabbi moved many in the synagogue that night, with his sad and soulful voice. His sermons and his recitals of Pirqei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) before Mincha attracted a large audience. My uncle died in Tehran in 1959; he never made it to Israel, which had always been his heart's desire. The community of Mashhad lost one of its greatest and most trusted spiritual leaders and they paid their last respects with much grandeur. With the news of his death, a large number of the Mashhadi community in Israel, in respect and bereavement, came to my father to offer condolences. May his soul be bound in the bond of life.	
Hanukkah	My mother wove her own wicks for the brass Hanukkiah (a menorah specifically designed for Hanukkah) that was made up of nine brass bowls (lamps). The lighting of the first candle was usually a festive event accompanied by guests and a gala banquet. We all gathered around my father who lit the first candle with great ceremony. The light of the candle and fragrance of the dishes my mother had cooked contributed significantly to the holiday spirit.	1940s
Pesach (Riots)	As was our custom, the night of the Seder we hosted our neighbors and relatives. Everything went in order. The men returned from the synagogue. The Bread of Affliction (הא לחמא עניא) was joyfully recited. And we sanctified the four cups of wine, as was our tradition. Suddenly we heard the crash of shattering windows and shouts from the neighbor's house next door, which fronted Sar-Heiteh Street. We were paralyzed by fear, not knowing what the commotion was all about. In those seconds the voices grew louder and we heard an outbreak of people onto our Dalon towards the synagogue next door. The cries of the Shamash (synagogue warden) and the shattering of windows left no doubt in our hearts that a pogrom was again being carried out against the Jewish community. We all went silent and the men rushed to close the gates from all the streets to prevent the rioters from getting into the house. We heard the voices of the injured – the same guests that were returning home at the end of the Pesach Seder and happened upon the rioters. The sense of their suffering and humiliation struck us like a sword thrust and the spilling of blood. The next morning I went to school (**Arz' Aghdas).** Due to the situation and the	1946

	attendance of so few students, the principal (**Shazdeh Khanom**, a Muslim woman) announced that all the classes were cancelled. My cousin, who was a teacher and a secretary at the school, offered to accompany me home because of the perilous situation. The streets to my home were blocked and dangerous to cross. Some of the neighbors rushed to our rescue and took us via the roofs to a house close to our home. But even from that point we were not able to get home. In the meantime, anxiety gripped our parents at home. Father, protected by the Muslim gatekeeper at the butchers' yard (with whom we maintained a good relationship and mutual trust), began a house to house search for me. It was a difficult and treacherous undertaking because the houses were closed and barred. Around afternoon, father found us. Seeing my father was very emotional. His pallor and his great anxiety were not concealed from me. With trembling knees we stumbled towards our house. The community leaders, accompanied by local police officers, brought to the attention of the local government the seriousness of the situation - but they didn't go out of their way to calm things down ... ... During the same period we heard many rumors about the struggle for independence in Israel and we prayed for the victory of the Jewish nation.	
	Immigrating to Israel	1951
Preparations for Aliyah	After the events of Passover 1946, the Jews of Mashhad began leaving. The young people began to study Hebrew in special classes for that purpose. The houses around us gradually emptied as the neighbors moved to Tehran or immigrated to Israel. We registered with the Jewish Agency to immigrate, and we began selling our home and its contents. Within two months we had emptied the house. Late in the winter of 1951, we received visas to Israel. We parted from our relatives and acquaintances and traveled to Tehran by bus. My cousins invited us to stay at their home. That Shabbat was full of visits from relatives and friends as there already was a large number of Jews from Mashhad in Tehran. We still didn't have a date for the flight to Israel, so we rented a small apartment until our aliyah. The apartment was above the office of my cousin, Mirza Elias, who worked there as an accountant. We celebrated Purim in Tehran and waited impatiently for the date of our flight to Israel. A few days later we received a summons for medical examinations. In the examination vicinity there were many small cabins that were spread out over a large area. Tens of thousands of immigrants from the cities of Iran and Iraq, Afghanistan and Bukhara waited for their examinations. For many people, the cemetery (Beheshtiyeh) was their temporary residence - and they all waited impatiently for the day of their aliyah. After several days we were informed of the approximate date of our flight – April 18, 1951. However, due to a malfunction on the plane, the flight was postponed until the next morning.	Eliyahu, son of Rabbi Levi Nissim
Aliyah to Israel	The next morning we bade farewell to our relatives and flew to Israel - and by afternoon we had already landed at Lod airport. We were enormously excited. We recited Shehechiyanu (prayer - "He who has given us life") and I don't remember	[שהחיינו]

	how many times we kissed the ground of Israel. We were put on a convoy of trucks headed out to Camp Olim, a camp for new arrivals in Pardes Hanna. The trucks stopped at the gates of the camp and female soldiers came out and greeted us warmly. We received tents and equipment for the night. Also, dinner was soon served - a meal that we were not used to and that was strange to us - but we had already decided to take upon ourselves, without complaint, both the changes and the recompense of our new life.	
Pesach	Our hearts swelled with excitement that it was the eve of the thirteen of Nissan – the eve of our exodus from Egypt - and we were among the thousands of immigrants with our bags and our belongings against the background of tents facing the waves of the sea. My father, who was joyful and thrilled by the fact of our presence in the land of Israel and all that he saw before him, energetically and without delay took care of all the administrative procedures. After breakfast we thoroughly cleaned our tent and its surroundings of chametz (anything that is not kosher for Pesach). And in the tent - there was not even the smell of anything of the approaching holiday - there were only stripped beds, without sheets, sunk in the sand. When noon came, it was time for distributing food, so my parents went to get our meals for the holiday. Suddenly, someone came into the tent and asked how we were doing. Before I could identify him - my parents returned and upon seeing my cousin from Tel Aviv they embraced him with hugs and kisses. We went with my cousin to my mother's sister's house to celebrate Pesach. When we arrived at my aunt's house, she and her children greeted us in festive dress and with great joy. The meeting between my mother and her sister was very emotional after 25 years of separation. The Seder table was set to perfection. The Seder was conducted with great joy with our relatives, and not alone in an empty tent in Camp Olim.	
Life in the Transit Camp	Camp Olim, in which we stayed, was near Pardes Hanna. It was a huge camp divided into three regions with showers and toilets. Large public kitchens provided us meals three times a day. Within the camp grounds were synagogues, schools and evening classes for learning Hebrew. In the summer we were invited to the wedding of relatives in Jerusalem – thus for the first time we came to Jerusalem and stayed there for the entire Shabbat – for the Shabbat Chatan (a festive ritual after the marriage ceremony). During this time my father took odd jobs such as selling food from the villages to the cities and we, the young people, were occupied with picking fruit and vegetables in addition to going to school. We stayed at the transit camp for about six months. After this time, we moved to Tel Aviv where many of our relatives and acquaintances lived.	[שבת חתן]

	Sources	
	This chapter is based on the book: "**בשובך לציון**" (תשנ"ט) - מאת: שרה-זילפה כהן **"Your Return to Zion"** (1998) - By Sara-Zilpa Kohen	[2000]

Itzhaq ben Eliyahu

	Chronicles	
Eliyahu Sixth Generation	Yosef ben Yehuda had three sons: Yehuda, **Shmuel** (Esmael) and Mishael. Shmuel's children from his first wife were **Eliyahu** (Abdol-Rahim), Mashiyach and Sara. After his wife's death, Shmuel married **Khorshid** bat Reuven Nissim (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir). From this marriage were born Refael, Shimon, Shokrolah and Rivqa. **Eliyahu** married his cousin **Dvora** (Soltan), daughter of Yehuda. The couple had one son, **Itzhaq** (Hadi). Like many of the Nissimis, the brothers **Eliyahu** and **Mashiyach** lived in Marv. They were partners in a textile business. After a while, due to the Communist revolution and a slump in business, they moved to Mashhad. In Mashhad the brothers lived together in one house with their cousins, Rabbi Levi, Yosef and Yeshayahu.	[Esmael = Ismail] 1910s [../Shmuel ben Mashiyach]
Seventh Generation	Grandfather Itzhaq	
Raising a Family	**Itzhaq** married **Rivqa** bat Eliyahu Kohan-Tzedeq. The couple had six daughters - Bibijan (Batsheva), Mahrokh (Hanna), Tavus, Shokat (Yehudit), Rayishkeh (Rachel) and Niara. After years of hopeful anticipation, a male child was born - Shmuel (Esmael).	1920s-40s
Commerce	Mid-1930s. **Itzhaq** lived in Bombay along with many members of the community who were engaged in trade with India. In the mid-forties, Itzhaq worked with his father in Mashhad in the carpet trade with London. The family had a carpet store in "Saraye' Azizolahoff" (an area of shops owned by the Azizolahoff family).	1930s-40s [Pictures/...] [Yehuda Nissim]
Mourning	In 1947, Itzhaq returned from Torbate'-Heydarieh (to which he had traveled on business). Sick and weak, he fell ill and died from typhus after a short time. He was sorely mourned – by his parents who lost their only son and by his wife who was left widowed with seven small children - their youngest son was only three years old. Typhus is an infectious disease. To prevent the spread of the disease, the family was forced to disinfect the whole house and everything that had come into contact with the ill-fated Itzhaq.	1940s [Yehuda Nissim)
Days of Sorrow	The mother **Dvora** was heartbroken from the tragedy that befell the family. Her brother Rabbi Levi (Mola Abdolah) stayed at her home day and night for a long time. The father Eliyahu could no longer function. At the end of his life he asked his brother in law, Rabbi Levi, to take care of his family after his death. Eliyahu died within a year of the death of his son.	[Yehuda Nissim]

	Eliyahu had a beautiful and well cared for home. In the yard was a pond with goldfish and stunning flowers. He was very close to Mola Abdolah. They used to sit by the pool and chat and have a beverage together.	[Michael Nissimi]
Days of Joy	Rabbi Levi married his son Hanania to Batsheva, Itzhaq's oldest daughter. His daughter Hanna married Azizolah Dardras (Yaaqobi), and his daughter, Rachel, married Dr. Fatholah Hakimian. The daughters Tavus and Yehudit immigrated to Israel. Tavus married Nurolah Mordekhai and Yehudit married the writer Pinchas Sadeh.	1940s-50s [R.N.]
Tehran	The 1950s. The mother **Dvora**, the wife Rivqa, and children Niara and Shmuel live in Tehran on Nahid Street - in the same house as Mola Abdolah, with his sons Hanania and Michael. Due to the personality of Mola Abdolah – the house was the focus of the family and many members of the community. This was a house with a large yard in which one could always hear the sounds of children's laughter mingled with the discourse of numerous visitors. The mother **Dvora** passed away in the mid-1950s. Rabbi Levi continued to take care of **Rivqa's** family until the end of his days (in 1959). In this year Niara married Yosef Kohan-Tzedeq and a few years later Shmuel married Liora Dil from Israel.	1950s-1960s [R.N.]
	Sources	
	This essay is based on the following sources: • Conversations with Yehuda Nissim (my uncle) • Testimonies from family members • Itzhaq ben Lotfolah Nassimi and Itzhaq ben Esmael Nassimi were both named after their grandfather **Itzhaq**	[2007] [Generations]

Shmuel ben Mashiyach

	Chronicles	
Beit Saba Fifth Generation	Yosef ben Yehuda had three sons: Yehuda, **Shmuel** (Esmael) and Mishael. Shmuel and his first wife had three children - Eliyahu, **Mashiyach** (Mehdi) and Sara. After his wife's death, Shmuel married Khorshid, daughter of Reuven Nissim (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir). From their marriage were born Refael, Shimon, Shokrolah (died in Russia) and Rivqa.	[Generations] [Esmael = Ismail]
Beit Abba Sixth Generation	Mashiyach (Mehdi) married Esther (Fatemeh) bat Haji Mehdi Levy (Bene-Levy). They had Khanom-Agha, Shmuel (Aghajan), Aharon (Esmael), Yosef and Tavus. The family lived in Marv and the brothers Eliyahu and Mashiyach became partners in a textile business.	[Generations]
	Mashhad	1910s-1930s
Housing	Shmuel describes the circumstances of the transition from Marv to Mashhad: I was born in Marv (1914). I was about 3 or 4 when my parents sent me and my sister to Mashhad. After a year or two, due to the slump in business in Marv, my family also moved to Mashhad. With their departure from Marv, my uncle (Abdol-Rahim) turned to my father, saying, "I have one son (Hadi) ... and the time has come for me to work with him." The brothers divided their property among themselves and the departure from Marv ended the partnership between my father and uncle. We lived in a big house in Mashhad with another four families: Uncle Eliyahu and cousins of my father - Rabbi Levi (Mola Abdolah) and his brothers Yosef and Yeshayahu. **Note**: The brothers Yehuda and Shmuel were married to two sisters, Miriam and Khorshid. Thus, the extended families of the two brothers Yehuda and Shmuel (and of course the extended families of the two sisters, Miriam and Khorshid) lived together in the same house. In addition, the brother Eliyahu was married to Dvora bat Yehuda, and the sister Rivqa was married to Yosef ben Yehuda. Thus lived together the families that were related by blood for two generations - both on the side of the mother and grandmother, and also on the side of the father and the grandfather. The house had 4-5 rooms. At night they slept on the top floor - and by day, they lived together on the ground floor.	[Megillah] [Generations]
Education	In Mashhad I went to Adab Elementary School. After three years of study my father asked me to bring my studies to an end in order to help support the family – because the family was in a difficult financial position. My father found a job for me in Sarakhs with the new owners of our former textile shop. They offered me a job and place of residence - and I accepted the offer	[Megillah]

	with enthusiasm to help the family. Fortunately, my father's stepmother, Khorshid, prevented the move because she did not see any future for me in the sale of textiles. Thanks to her wisdom I continued to study until the end of elementary school and obtained a diploma for sixth grade. During those three years, I completed each grade with honors. In the sixth grade, in the nationwide final exams, I came in third out of 120,000 graduates.	
Employment	At that same time, Shokrolah Hosseinoff (Kohanim) was looking for a bright and reliable employee for his business. My cousin, Ebrahim Hariri recommended me to Shokrolah Hosseinoff. Upon completion of the state exams, I began to work immediately for Shokrolah. My cousin Ebrahim told my mother my test results. When I arrived for work, my employer told me to sweep the store. In the past, I had never swept floors. I was very disappointed. Even though I had succeeded so well with my studies, I was still had to do cleaning jobs. The son, Faizolah Hosseinoff, was the accountant in the family business. After a month Faizolah noticed my abilities and appointed me as his accounting assistant. Over time, my responsibilities expanded. The first year I earned a half dollar a month (3 tomans). To illustrate - the total income of our family (along with my father's income) amounted to 8-10 tomans a month – for a family of seven!! As time went on I advanced in my job and received a raise of 60 percent – a handsome sum to add to the family income. After Faizolah went to London, I was appointed as the new accountant of the business. Since then I have been nicknamed by the community as "Mirza" (meaning 'CPA' in Persian). During this period, I worked directly with Faizolah in London and provided him creative ideas for expanding the business; and the business flourished. The family claimed that I brought them a blessing and I was very grateful that the Holy One, blessed be He, had always helped me. I worked for Hosseinoff for seven years and my salary increased gradually to twenty tomans. I felt I had reached the upper limits in my position, so with the blessings of Hosseinoff I accepted Itzhaq Alioff's proposal to serve as their accountant in Tehran (which also included a raise).	[Megillah]
	Tehran	1940s
Employment	At the same time, Itzhaq Alioff (Etessami) was having business problems – therefore, his father-in-law Farajolah Levy requested that he immigrate to Eretz Israel. Itzhaq hired me as his secretary so he could travel back and forth between Eretz Israel and Iran. I	[Megillah]

	was earning 35 tomans per month. I worked hard and until late at night even though when night fell, the Tehran Fabrics Bazaar became a dangerous place for young Jews. In Tehran, I lived with my aunt (the Hariri-Tlu family). Alioff traded in carpets and leather (in the markets of Tehran and Mashhad). I dealt with placing orders and the sale of goods from the office. With the grace of G-d the business flourished from day to day – which made it unnecessary for Itzhaq Alioff to leave to Eretz Israel.	
Raising a Family	During her visit to Tehran – my mother met Malka, the oldest daughter of my employer, and she liked her. I refrained from asking for Malka's hand until I could promise her a life style that she deserved - so I asked my mother to allow me a one year postponement. I started importing gelatin from Eretz Israel. The profits were good. I rented a house near Tlu and managed to save 10,000 tomans. Ebrahim Hariri and Mussa Levian accepted the mission to request the girl's hand for me. Mr. and Mrs. Alioff who knew me through my work and appreciated my qualities, agreed to my request to become engaged to their daughter. For the wedding, I brought my family to Tehran and, thanks to G-d, we had a beautiful wedding. In Tehran G-d blessed us with three sons - Avraham, Yaaqov, and Mashiyach.	[Megillah]
My Own Business	After the wedding, my father-in-law and I became partners for awhile. Eventually I set up an independent textile business. My little brother Yosef joined me in the business in Tehran. My older brother Aharon went to Italy to manage the operations of the import and export of the goods. Again, by the grace of G-d, our business was very successful.	[Megillah]
Leaving Iran	While I was in business I met many different people. My Zionist activities – assisting aliyah to Eretz Israel - made enemies for me in some circles among the gentiles. My business was always based on complete honesty and all those who come in contact with me made a profit. One of my acquaintances, who was very successful because of his business with me, was told by my enemies to do away with me. After reminding this acquaintance of the profits that he had acquired in the past because of me, and after I gave him a proper bribe – I succeeded in delaying my "sentence" for awhile. It was the most terrible time in my life. I was shocked. My life and my family's lives were in danger and our chances of escaping were slim. After the failure of the first attempt, I felt a strong fear that these enemies would get someone else to assassinate me. With the help of a friend, an attorney by profession, who had contacts in the Ministry of the	[Megillah]

	Interior – I soon got a passport and left Iran for good.	
	Hamburg	1947-1981
Stabilization	It was about a year after the end of World War II. After a short stay in Italy to look after the merchandise that was en route, I went to Switzerland. There I found out that I am not legally authorized to work independently (in Switzerland) and so I went to London. There I learned the trade practices and the British lifestyle. Meanwhile I visited Germany. During my visit I met a carpet merchant who had lost his fortune during the war. I started working in importing rugs from Iran and marketing them to this man. Despite the hefty profits I decided to move to my area of expertise which was textiles. Thanks to G-d, and the right timing, and my determination to succeed, my German business flourished. I lived alone for a year and a half, I ate bread and fruit, and I lost a lot of weight. My wife found out about my situation and decided to join me with the three boys. I rented a large house in Hamburg, which had five or six bedrooms. At the same time the Khak-Shuri family moved to Germany. Since both families were new to this foreign country - we decided to live together for awhile, in the same house. Two years later Malka and I had another son – Itzhaq.	[Megillah]
Community Life	There was no kosher food in Hamburg and therefore the living conditions for a Jewish family were difficult. The war had just recently ended and the Jews refrained from revealing their origins, fearing the Nazis. Even my children hid their Judaism inside the walls of the school where they studied. A number of Jewish adults who received a government pension remained in Germany. In addition, the Germans returned to the Jews a building that had belonged to the community in the past – and there it was possible to get a little kosher food. Along with Khak-Shuri we established in this building a Minyan for Shabbat. After a while, a Jew who knew how to perform ritual slaughter joined the Jewish community. Since private slaughter was banned in Hamburg, I would bring live chickens to the Shochet (ritual slaughterer) and after he finished his work we would throw the remains into the river. On Rosh Hashanah we invited all the business people, about 20 in all, to a kosher Seder at our home. Later we employed a rabbi to conduct the Shabbat prayers and to manage the preparation of kosher meat. With the consent of the authorities, the rabbi would	[Megillah]

	go early in the morning to one of the villages outside of Hamburg and, based on the orders from the community, would slaughter the poultry. Further, thanks to my wife Malka and to Mrs. Khak-Shuri – we organized Talmud Torah classes for the youth, led by the rabbi. During this time we established a central committee of the community and we founded a new synagogue where I served as a senior member. Because of my deep faith in G-d, I was very active in Jewish issues and thank G-d we succeeded in expanding the Minyan to Mondays and Thursdays and we also succeeded in establishing a special Minyan in the homes of people who were in mourning. During this period, due to the benefits of free trade in Hamburg, a significant number of carpet vendors from Iran came to Hamburg and the Hamburg Port became the basis for the marketing of goods all across Europe. Our house was always open to Jews from Iran. We always made sure that these businessmen would have whatever was needed for properly observing Shabbat and the holidays and that they could enjoy easily accessible kosher food. With the encouragement of my wife and myself, these men learned how to maintain a Jewish life in Hamburg. There were even some who did not know the Hebrew alphabet. For them, we wrote the Torah blessings in Persian so that they could "La'alot LeTorah" (be called up to read from the Torah) on Shabbat. Every Saturday we invited about 70 Jews. Thus, even people who had no ties to Judaism got to know the way of life at a Jewish home and the value of the commandments - such as bar mitzvah parties for boys when they reached the age of 'mitzvot' (13). Due to our influence the community became an observant community that lived together in harmony.	
Commandment to Honor Father and Mother vs. Social Responsibility	One year, close to Pesach, my brother Yosef informed me that my mother needed an operation – there was suspicion of a terminal disease. So my brother suggested that we make Pesach in Italy. This was a difficult decision because we had invited about 60 people to be with us during the days of Pesach – people who had no other holiday arrangements. Therefore I went to Italy, spoke with the doctor and explained the situation to him. The doctor agreed to postpone the operation until after Pesach. The operation was carried out as planned, after Pesach, and thanks to G-d it turned out that the tumor was benign. I felt that G-d had answered my prayers because my wife and I had only good intentions to perform mitzvot.	[Megillah]

On Behalf of Israel	In my heart, I have always been a Zionist. I used to visit Israel several times a year - for business, for pleasure and for investing. I always encouraged others to visit Israel and support our country. In addition we would always invite representatives from the Israel Consulate to our home and develop close relationships with them. During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, they called me from the Israel Consulate in Bonn raise money for Israel. Within an hour I invited ten friends to my home for afternoon tea. I made the situation in Israel clear to those present and stressed that if we do not lend a hand to Israel at this time - Heaven forbid, again we will become a wandering people without a homeland. I was the first to submit a suggested donation - and the rest followed my example. Within an hour I was able to raise a million dollars. I called the Israeli consulate in Bonn and announced that within two days I would transfer to them that amount. At the Consulate they were surprised. This method of fundraising had never been heard of until then in Israel. This event accompanied me in the years that followed and became my Zionist signature for the next years. Afterwards I got involved in three major Zionist organizations – Israel Bonds, Keren Kayemet and Keren HaYesod. My Zionist activities brought me in contact with some key Israeli politicians - leaders like Ariel Sharon, Moshe Katsav and the Chief Rabbi were guests in my home. I developed a close relationship with Binyamin Netanyahu, Menachem Begin and Yosef Burg. My love for Israel came from deep within my heart. I always did my utmost to help the country - and my award was appreciation for my work.	[Megillah]
	New York	1981 - 2008
	I lived in Germany until 1981. My three oldest sons successfully ran the business in Germany. We began looking for new directions of expansion and thus we opened a branch in the United States and appointed my son **Itzhaq** (Edward), who had just graduated from his studies in the United States, to manage the branch. I shuttled between New York and Germany to keep a close eye on the business. Finally, the appeal of the New York Jewish community with a convenient supply of community services, such as the synagogue and Kashrut and the transfer of Mashhadi Jews to New York from Tehran were the decisive factor that led us to move to New York.	[Megillah]
A Woman of Valor	**A woman of valour who can find? For her price is far above rubies.** The public and social contributions of Malka Nassimi are very	[Proverbs 31] [Shabbat Shmooz]

	impressive. Here are some of the areas: • Establishment and support of the **Organization of Mashhadi Women** and later as president of the organization • Initiation of various social programs (such Bar/Bat Mitzvah events and gift baskets as donations for Simchat Torah) • Shipping of packages of appreciation to nursing homes in Israel and active participation in the Pesach events there	
Grace and Truth	**Mercy and truth shall never leave you ... and you shall find grace in the eyes of G-d and man** The public and social contributions of Shmuel Nassimi in New York were diverse and included many disciplines. Following, for illustration, are some of the areas: a. **New York** • Support in the establishment of the Shaare Tova and Shaare Shalom synagogues • Support in the establishment of the **Central Committee of Mashhad** (Central Board), and encouragement of the various activities of the organization (such as a variety of youth activities and publishing of the Megillah) • Support in the organization and financing of annual trips to Israel for Mashhadi youth • Support in a variety of social programs for the community, such as higher education, Talmud Torah, senior centers, etc. • Generous contribution to **Rescue** (Hatzalah) organization (ambulances) b. **Israel** • Support for building the Holon Synagogue • Extensive support for home for senior citizens in Hertzliya • Generous donation to **Magen David Adom (ambulance)** c. **Jewish Institutions** • Vice-President of the **Sephardic Federation** (of the World and America) • Member of the Council of **Presidents of Jewish Organizations** • Continuous support for the **United Jewish Appeal** • Member of the Sephardic Board of Directors at Yeshiva University	[Proverbs 3] [Shabbat Shmooz] Sephardic Federation UJF
May his Memory be Blessed	**Shmuel ben Mashiyach** died in 2008. He was privileged to be buried in Jerusalem. May his memory be blessed.	[י"ב אדר תשס"ח]

	Sources	
	This paper is based on the following sources: *Megillah87- Dec 2006 -* ***Interview with Aghajan Nassimi*** *by Honey Ebrani* *Shabbat Shmooz - Oct 2004 -* ***Exemplary Human Beings & Community Servants***	[2008]

Shlomo ben Mishael

	Chronicles	
Grandfather and Grandmother [My father's parents] Sixth Generation	Yosef ben Yehuda had three sons: Yehuda, Shmuel and **Mishael**. Mishael married **Morvarid**, daughter of Haji Esmael Mordekhai. My grandfather, **Shlomo** ben Mishael Nissim, married **Khorshid**. The couple had a son named **Moshe** (1897). After a while, grandmother died and Moshe was left motherless. Aunt Miriam, my grandfather's sister, took it upon herself to raise Moshe, my father. Aunt Miriam was married to Eli Kohen Tzedeq. She was an intelligent, educated lady, and she taught women how to read and write in Persian. My father loved Aunt Miriam very much. When he had enough money, he bought a large house in Mashhad and as a sign of appreciation invited Aunt Miriam to come live in his house. After a while, grandfather married (again) with Miriam Dilmanian and they had two sons and five daughters.	
Grandfather and Grandmother [My mother's parents]	My grandfather, **Rahmatolah** Nemat, was a wealthy man. He and his family lived in Marv. They had a large house with many rooms. Some of the rooms were rented to other families. The house had a large courtyard through which flowed a water channel. Two dogs guarded the house. The good life came to a halt with the rise of the Bolsheviks. Fear of looting caused my grandparents to bury their money and jewelry in the kitchen, under the floor. Their fears materialized very quickly as the Bolsheviks soon took over the house and threw out all the inhabitants. After many requests and pleas, the intruders allowed the owners to live in one of the rooms. The family remained with no money and no source of revenue. Grandfather was sent to do heavy physical labor on the railway. Grandmother would search the market (Bazaar-Taka), buy fabrics, sew clothes and sell them to help support the family. Despite the hard life she would encourage the family to hold on until the crisis passed. After a time, the Bolsheviks left their home, leaving it in total devastation. The family tried to repair the ruins and to bring themselves back to what they had been before. It is not known what happened to the cache - whether my grandparents were able to save it or not. In any case, their life in Marv never returned to what it had been, and the family became fed up with living under the Bolsheviks. Soon they packed up whatever was left and returned to Mashhad. After a brief period in Mashhad the family decided to go to Eretz Israel leaving behind their daughter Tzipora who had just gotten married in Mashhad.	1918 - 1930
My Parents Sixth Generation	First father married **Dina**, the daughter of David. The couple had four daughters. **Dina** died from kidney disease and left father (who had grown up as an orphan) to raise their orphaned daughters. After a while, father married my mother (**Tzipora** Nemat) - the age difference	

	between them was seventeen years. To make a living, my parents left Mashhad and moved to a small town Baj-Giran - close to the Russian border (**Ashgabat**). Father worked for Customs in this town.	
	World War II	1942 - 1946
	In 1942 the Russians entered Khorasan in Persia. The Russian invasion route passed from Ashgabat to Mashhad via Baj-Giran. Most of the residents fled the town. By the time the Russians arrived at Baj-Giran, it was already a ghost town. They went from door to door to try to find any residents who had remained in the city. Suddenly, at our home we heard a knock at the door. The family felt great fear and dread. The little children hid under the sheets. At that time, grandfather Shlomo was living with our parents. grandfather and father did not know what to do – should they open the door or not? As the banging got louder, mother mustered up all her courage and opened the door. She turned to the soldiers in a friendly manner and said to them in Russian, "Welcome brothers - how may we help you?" The Russians asked solemnly, "Why are all the shops and houses closed? We want just to go from here to Mashhad." To appease the Russians - first, mother gave them water and cigarettes, and later father invited them to eat and drink and served them beverages and wine. Father, who knew Russian well, offered them his help in providing them supplies (sugar, etc.) and traveled with them to Mashhad. During the war, my father, in partnership with Nurolah Zvuloni, provided supplies to the Russians and thus supported their families.	
	After the War	1946 - 1950
Childhood Experiences	In Mashhad we lived in a new neighborhood - Janat. We had a large courtyard surrounded by rooms. In the summer we spread out a large carpet in the courtyard. Then we laid mattresses on the carpet and we would sleep under the stars. On the nights of Selichot we would wake up to the sound of knocking on the door - knocking which meant "it's time for Selichot (forgiveness)." The adults would get up quietly lest they waken the children, and they would go out for Selichot. And the children would go back to sleep again in their bedding.	
	Immigrating to Israel	1950 - 1970
	With the establishment of the State, during the period of austerity, father immigrated to Israel, taking with him much property (rugs, blankets, etc.), which he sent by ship. After awhile, he returned to Tehran to his family. Father did not get to go back again to Israel; he died in Tehran - but his sons and daughters did go to Israel. In 1969 my mother and I also went to Israel and we were reunited with the rest of the family.	
	Sources	1950 - 1970
	This narrative is based on: • Memoirs of Esther Shahvardi	[2005]

Reuven ben Aharon

	Chronicles	
Ancestry	**Reuven** ben Moshe Nissim was a wealthy and respected man. He had four sons and five daughters: • The sons: Aghajan, Itzhaq, **Aharon** (Abdol-Rahim) and Yaaqov • The daughters: Miriam, Khorshid, Rivqa, Sarvi and Khavar	1880 [Generations]
	As was the custom in those days, **Aharon** and his wife **Tzruya** lived with Reuven, Aharon's father. The couple had three children - **Mashiyach**, Dvora and Bibijan. **Aharon** was a businessman like his father and he traded in precious stones. He traveled extensively for work, and was frequently absent from home.	1900s
	Years went by. Mashiyach grew up and got engaged. He decided to go to his father, who was staying in India, and bring him home – for his wedding – the wedding of his eldest son! The father did, in fact, return and during the next few years he and his wife Tzruya had another three children (with a difference of more than 12 years in age) – Esther, **Reuven** and Dina. Before he had time to enjoy the children and watch them grow up – **Aharon** died – only ten years later. **Reuven** ben Moshe transferred the management of the businesses and the care of the family to his oldest grandson **Mashiyach**.	1920s
Childhood	My grandfather, **Reuven** ben Aharon, was born in 1920 He was red-haired, athletic, sensitive, good-natured, intelligent, brave, strong and shy. This combination describes his life.	1920s
	As a child, Reuven excelled in sports and was outstanding in this talent to the end of his life. His stories about the "human pyramids" where he stood on the very top were told and retold in detail to his children and grandchildren.	[R.N. Movadon is a Mashhadi sausage – intestines filled with rice and entrails such as liver. Usually served for Shabbat breakfast]
	In later times, he would tell his children and grandchildren about his memories of his childhood in Mashhad – childhood stories that were accompanied by descriptions down to the last detail – such as the carpet that covered the floor of the room, or the smell of sausages in the basement, and on and on. And we all experienced the smells, tastes, sights and feelings as if we too were there with him and we too were living in that era.	
	Immigrating to Eretz Israel	
Long Road to the Homeland	The Twenties were difficult years for the Jews. The revolution in Russia caused financial hardship to the population of Iran in general, and in particular to the Jews who dealt in trade. Against this background, in 1935, my grandfather's older sister, Dvora (wife of Yosef Nissim - cousin) decided to get organized to immigrate to Israel. They took with them **Reuven** the younger brother who was about 15 years. The family set off with a nice-sized group of Jews from Mashhad.	1930s
	They supplied themselves with forged documents and they set off on their journey. They passed through Tehran and continued to Iraq and Syria up to the border with Eretz Israel. When night fell, the driver stopped his vehicle, let his passengers out with their belongings, and instructed them: "Continue on foot in the direction of those lights on the horizon ... there is a kibbutz – they will help you." The group walked all night - men, women and children - on dark and	

	unfamiliar roads. Early in the morning they met an Arab and asked him where the kibbutz was. The Arab tricked them. He took their documents from them, asked for money for his services, and disappeared with his booty. Moreover, he denounced them to the authorities. The British soon arrived and arrested the illegal immigrants. They were taken to the detention center in Rosh Pina (perhaps Zefat) and held there for a month and then transferred to Bethlehem. One of their relatives learned of the detainees, came to their place of detention, and obtained their release by promising that within two weeks they would leave the country if their case was not resolved.	
	Settling In	
Tel Aviv	The family, which at that time numbered seven persons, went to live in the home of a relative in Jerusalem. But after a short time, due to overcrowding, the family moved to Tel Aviv. The family settled in, like many others, in a "sheet-metal shacks" neighborhood. They worked at all kinds of odd jobs and slowly acclimated to their new life. Later they move to the Shabazi neighborhood. These were the days of the Second World War and the British recruited Jews to work as security guards. **Reuven** was also recruited by the official Jewish Settlement Police as a **"Gafir"** guard. After that period, Reuven, who had "golden hands", and his friend opened a bicycle repair shop (the main form of transportation in those days).	1940s Jewish Settlement Police Legal Jewish Police Force during the Mandate Period
Raising a Family	At around the same time, my grandfather met my grandmother, **Aliza** - the eldest daughter of Nissim and Bracha Qandoff. Aliza's grandmother's parents emigrated from Bukhara - but she and all her siblings were born in Eretz Israel. Her father, who was talented in everything he did, built a three-story building with his own hands in the Shapira neighborhood in Tel Aviv – which after his death supported his wife and children. The couple married on the roof of the building and the families took care of all the preparations. The Mashhadi community accepted my grandmother and loved her even though she was, as they would say "not one of ours …"	1940s
Netanya	Following the establishment of the diamond industry and incentives for industry professions - Reuven and his new wife moved to Netanya. They lived in a rented one-room apartment in the Ben-Zion neighborhood. Here they had three children. After a time, the couple purchased a small two-family unit on one dunam of land in an old neighborhood east of Netanya, and there were born two daughters, one of which is my mother **Gila** (Nissim) Myers. And these are the names of the children: • Zvia – married family name Aziz. Was named after her grandmother • Aharon Nissim - was named after his grandfather • Chemda - married name Moshketel • Gila - married Howard, son of David Myers • Dalia - married name Navon Reuven continued working in the diamond profession for the rest of his life and was considered an expert in his field. Aliza his wife also learned the profession	1950s

	and worked part-time in the diamond business – but the majority of her time was devoted to raising and caring for her children.	
Ramat Gan	Later, the family moved to a rented apartment in Ramat Gan (170 Ben Gurion Street). And after another few years they moved to another rented apartment on Lev HaZahav Street. Finally my grandparents bought an apartment at 46 HaBiluim Street in Ramat Gan and stayed there until their last days. Reuven and Aliza together raised a wonderful family; they instilled in their children and grandchildren the values of Jewish tradition, of belonging and pride, and a love of the land of Israel, together with knowledge of their roots from the past, loyalty to and unity of the family. And when they passed away they were surrounded by their numerous offspring.	1970s 1990s
	Sources	
	This paper is based on: • The work of Dor Myers about his Grandfather Reuven • See site: http://dorandfamily.blogspot.com/	2009

Gavriel ben Nethanel Yaaqobi

	Chronicles	
Grandfather and Grandmother	Mola **Mashiyach** (Fatholah), son of Yaaqov Nemat, married **Rivqa** (Snubar) daughter of Reuven Nissim (Haji Abdol-Rahman Saghir). Their children were Nuriel (Nurolah), **Nethanel** (Faizolah), Ariel (Asadolah), and Tova.	1880s [Generations]
	A plaque at the entrance to the Gate of Heaven synagogue in Herzliya bears the following inscription:	[Background / Synagogues]
	"This synagogue was founded and built by the generosity of Mr. **Ariel** Yaaqoboff, rest in peace, for the ascent of souls	1930
	His father, R. **Mashiyach** Yaaqoboff ben R. Yaaqov, z"l, who died and was buried in 1930 in the city of **Mashhad**, Iran	1942 [z"l = of blessed memory]
	His mother, Mrs. **Rivqa** Yaaqoboff, bat Rabbi Reuven, z"l, who died and was buried in 1942 in **Egypt.**"	י"ב אדר תר"צ ג' מרחשון תש"ג
Parents	To the parents, **Nethanel** Yaaqoboff and Malka (bat Shmuel) Yaaqoboff were born: Yequtiel (Azizolah), Yaaqov, **Gavriel** (Babajan), Eliyahu, Michael, Helen and Ben-Zion. They lived in a large house in Eid-Gah. The extended family was engaged in trading carpets and had representatives in Bombay, Turkey, Egypt and Eretz Israel.	1930s
	Gavriel was born in 1933 in Mashhad. This chapter tells his story as a Mashhadi child who was lucky enough to grow up in Eretz Israel, and to experience the period of struggle for the independence of Israel.	
A Sensitive Child – Memories from Mashhad	It was the 1930s. My brother Yaaqov attended Mola Yosef Dil's school (Beit Midrash). One day Yaaqov took his younger brother Gavriel to school. That day Yaaqov was "feeling good" and was acting rowdy. Mola Yosef, to calm him down, gave him a few smacks on the hand with a ruler (the custom in those days). Gavriel burst into tears when he saw his brother being punished.	1938 [R.N. I studied with Mola Yosef 1962-64. He never raised a hand to a child. To each period its customs]
	Immigration to Eretz Israel	
Long Journey to the Jewish Homeland	The 1920s. First, my maternal Grandfather Shmuel (Farajolah) Yaaqoboff (brother of Grandfather Mashiyach) went to Jerusalem and built a house (1923) in the Bukharan Quarter, 32 David Street.	1920s
	The 1930s. My son-in-law Yosef Bene-Levy (Sha are Tova Synagogue in New York, named after his wife, Tova) engaged in trade in Bombay, and at the same time Uncle Ariel lived in Egypt.	1930s
	The family left Mashhad in 1939. They illegally immigrated to Eretz Israel via Iraq and Syria. Before they even had time to taste the flavor of the homeland, the family was detained by the British and deported. They went to Egypt, where they were helped by Uncle Ariel who lived there, and they became partners in the trade business with father.	
	The 1940s. Gavriel learned English, French and Arabic in Egypt. After a year the family succeeded in obtaining a visa to immigrate to Eretz	1940s

	Israel. Father returned to Tehran for his business, but visited us often. In Jerusalem Gavriel completed ten years of French studies at the Ratisbonne French School. Most of the students there were Jewish.	
	Underground	1940s
Beitar	At the age of 12, on the recommendation of a friend, Gavriel joined Beitar, which was located in the neighborhood of the Italian Hospital on Strauss Street. The reason: "because Beitar did serious things such as practice drills, exercises with rods, and later on, training with firearms." Once, while training, a message was received that the British were coming to search the place ... and immediately the Beitarists jumped over the roof and disappeared from the area.	1945
Joining Etzel	Soon, in Beitar, Gavriel started to hear about Etzel. Gavriel, who looked older than his true age, joined Etzel when he was 13, by claiming that he was 15. Below are the circumstances of his recruitment to Etzel. "... I was told to wait in the evening at any corner of the Mahane Yehuda market. After waiting awhile, a stranger came and took me to another corner about 100 meters away. After awhile someone else came and took me to another corner, and then again, for the third time, I was taken to another place by a messenger." Finally, Gavriel was taken to a dark room where he was questioned in the shadows. During the questioning and investigation, he was asked in hints if he would like to join Etzel ... without hesitation, Gavriel said "Most certainly! I've been waiting for this." On that same occasion – with his hand on the Bible and a gun - Gavriel was sworn into Etzel. Early in the morning, while it was still dark outside, Gavriel would take his *Tallit* and *Tefillin* and leave the house. His mother would greet him, "I wish this child only goodness – he goes to synagogue morning and evening" ... and Gavriel would paste flyers on the walls before dawn.	1946 ["Ghorb one' in bacheh besham. Sobho shab mireh kanissa"]
The Armed Struggle	After World War II, as a result of a rapprochement between Etzel and Lechi, and the Haganah, there arose the "United Resistance" movement (1945). After about 10 months, as a result of the King David Hotel bombing, the resistance movement began falling apart and the Haganah retired from the armed struggle. In September 1946, Etzel renewed its attack on British targets, principal of which were: • Etzel was to re-establish cells around the world and act against British missions and organize propaganda operations against Britain. In October 1946 Etzel bombed the British Embassy in Rome in response to their locking the gates of the country to the remaining Holocaust survivors. • In December 1946 a young member of Etzel was sentenced to 18 years in prison and 18 lashes. Etzel kidnapped British officers and whipped them. After this operation, dubbed "Night of the Floggings," no other Jews were beaten by the British. • Etzel increased its activities. It attacked military bases, compounds, main roads and vehicles. Among others, it attacked	[Wikipedia]

	in one day five British camps with small arms fire and mortars. One notable attack was the bombing of an officer's club in Jerusalem. As a result of the demolishment of the building 17 people were killed, including senior officers employed by the secret service. These actions and the deaths shocked Britain. Many British families were moved from their homes to military camps, and later returned to their own countries. In July 1947 in other retaliation activities, two British officers were hanged by Etzel ... and there was a huge outcry in England to leave Eretz Israel.	
Activities	"We were in the neighborhood of the Yeshurun Synagogue. My friend and I were on a mission. Suddenly the British were shooting at us. First we hid ourselves and then we bypassed the area we were in to get to a more secure vicinity. Passersby told us that the British were looking for two suspects. " Farajolah Aminoff was one of the wealthiest of the Mashhadi community in the Bukharan neighborhood. Some of the Etzel members appealed to him to donate money to cover expenses. At that time, Gavriel was patrolling the edge of the British neighborhood without knowing that Etzel men were visiting Mr. Aminoff. Mr. Aminoff did not agree to Etzel's request, and he met Gavriel on the street. The coincidence raised his suspicion and he turned to Gavriel with a question of "You, too". The following day Farajolah visited Gavriel's grandfather. They summoned him and tried to convince him that "This is not for you." Gavriel of course denied everything and somehow got out of the situation. Saturday evening. In the vicinity of the Edison Cinema in Geula. Gavriel and a friend were distributing leaflets. Suddenly, Gavriel felt a hand from behind gripping his neck. A British officer, accompanied by a Jewish policeman and an Arab policeman, tried to arrest him. His friend "disappeared" into the crowd and managed to escape, while Gavriel, held by the British officer, looked at him in shock. Within moments Gavriel collected himself and turned to the Jewish policeman saying "Translate to the commander ... either he releases me immediately ... or he'll be getting himself entangled with two underground men that are in the crowd. If necessary, they will not hesitate to kill him." Those were days of killings and reprisals. The British officer would prefer to allow him to "get lost" ... with time the missions took on a more dangerous character. Missions with firearms. King George Street, corner of Yafo Road. Gavriel and a friend headed out on a mission. Gavriel's friend threw a grenade into a club for British soldiers and the two of them immediately fled. Two Britons were killed and several were injured ...	1945-1948 1947

	War of Independence	
Historical Background Jerusalem	Due to uncertainty regarding the status of Jerusalem, which according to the Partition Plan was supposed to be under international control, Etzel (like all the other organizations) continued to operate independently and his units were referred to as the "Jerusalem Battalion". The number of fighters in the city stood at 400. Prior to the British withdrawal from the city, the combat units in the city were organized to take control of the areas designated for evacuation. To Etzel was assigned the areas of the Police Academy and Sheikh Jarrah. On May 14, the British began to evacuate. Etzel fighters stormed the Generali building in the security area and started waving the national flag on it. They also captured the secret service buildings, the prison in the Russian Compound and the Courthouse. With the cooperation of the Haganah they held onto other interests as well. Etzel later occupied the Police Academy but had to withdraw due to heavy losses because of the Arab forces in Sheikh Jarrah.	[Wikipedia]
Etzel	In the Ramat Eshkol region. Gavriel was stationed at the front. Arabs were bombarding from the Shmuel HaNavi (the Prophet) mountain ridge. Twice a day Gavriel would run home to see what was going on there. "It was a Saturday. I arrived at the front yard running. I saw my brother Ben-Zion with my little cousin on the stairs. Suddenly there was the loud explosion of a shell. My cousin fell to the ground as shrapnel hit his head. I took him to an IDF position just 200 meters from the incident ... my cousin was no longer alive, and he had been just five years old. And because of the situation, he was not buried." Transition period from Etzel into the IDF. Gavriel was appointed to handle the Etzel people. One day there came a knocking on the door of an Etzel branch. Gavriel opened the door and saw with astonishment Menachem Begin standing in the doorway. This was his first meeting with the leader. Over time, Begin became impressed with Gavriel and asked him to be his assistant. Thus began a warm friendship that lasted over many years and continues to this day with the son, Binyamin Begin. After the Shlom HaGalil war, Gavriel tried to invite Begin to Milan so he could rest - but in the end it did not work out.	1948 [The same Shabbat on which shells fell on the home of Aminoff. See Background/ Tour of Jerusalem] 1980s
Israel Defence Forces	In 1949, Gavriel enlisted in the IDF. He served for about 14 months and was then released because his service in Etzel was recognized. In the IDF he served as a truck driver. In this capacity he carried troops and weapons to combat zones. Once he was assigned to carry a truckload of soldiers and weapons to the Galilee. The truck drove up a mountain and then down the slope. Suddenly the brakes gave out. The truck started racing down the mountain and the lives of many soldiers were in jeopardy. Gavriel yanked the handbrake with all his strength. After a few moments that seemed like an eternity the truck started to slow down and came to a halt. A fire broke out underneath the truck. With great resourcefulness, Gavriel put out the fire. Both the soldiers and the weapons were saved from harm - Gavriel was the only one who was injured – his hand was severely burned.	1949

	Raising a Family	
	"... Our yard (Yaaqoboff) was the center of events. Weddings were held and sometimes parties for young people who came to dance. At one of the weddings I invited my sister's friend to dance – and thus I married Rachel (Raya) bat Efraim Nissim (1955)." At the same time, Gavriel worked at the distribution of tea. His brother-in-law, Eliyahu Nissim, suggested that he go to Milan and engage in trade. The timing was right – robbers had just stolen his merchandise and his cash. So he went to Milan in 1961 – one of the first of the Mashhadi community there. Within a short time Gavriel mastered Italian and started a trade business. Gems from Israel, pearls from Japan, semi-precious stones from Bangkok and carpets from Iran. In addition to his businesses, Gavriel engaged in public services such as becoming a member of the Likud, B'nai B'rith, and NOAM, an Italian Jewish organization. Today he and his family live in Israel.	1955-2009
	Sources	
	This account is based on: • An interview with Gavriel and Rachel Yaaqobi	2009

Nissim ben Shlomo

Sixth Generation	Chronicles	1893-1994
Childhood	I was born in 1893. When I was six, we moved to Sarakhs in Russia until the outbreak of the First World War (1914). We were five brothers. Three brothers died. Two brothers, Nissim (I) and Eliyahu, and two sisters, Miriam and Rachel, survived. Father had a shop in Sarakhs. Sarakhs had no school so I wasn't able to learn in the customary, orderly manner. In Sarakhs there were 40-50 Mashhadi families and two synagogues (Mola Bozorg from Herat and Mola David Kal [seven brothers]). The Mashhadis lived in an area near the bazaar, close to the Turkmen. Mondays and Thursdays were market days. The Turkmen loved the Jews. They called us Mussavi (the people of the Mosaic religion). During a drought, it was their custom to throw a Jew into the river for good luck. …And indeed it came to pass that the heavens opened and the residents were blessed with the much needed rain. We ate watermelons, melons, vegetables, onions - but there were no potatoes. We ate mainly mutton. We made our own wine but bought arak from the Armenians. We made our own matzah. Women wore special clothes for making matzah. My father was the caretaker (gabbai) of the synagogue. I always loved dealing with all kinds of public and community needs. Even as a child I used to sweep and clean the synagogue. In Mashhad, starting from 1920, we were required to acquire identity cards. They asked me what my family name was. I replied Nassimi. Because the name was so common, I was asked to choose a different name. I chose Zabulani [=Zvuloni].	1890s
Return to Russia	In 1917 I went to Marv for a year, to my uncle's shop (my mother's brother). At that time the Bolsheviks came to Sarakhs. The English invaded Russia up to Tashkent and withdrew. Then again the Russians spread out over the territories evacuated by the English. About a hundred Mashhadis fled on foot to Sarakhs, myself included. Later, when everything went back to normal, I returned to Marv.	1900s
Profit and Loss	In the following years my business flourished. I had a commerce level 5 rating (*Peter-Aza)* - the highest rank. I had a number of branches. Within a short time I had 1000 pieces of Karakul leather. The value of each unit - one gold coin (10 *Manat*). I was almost a millionaire. The Communist regime issued a new law whereby I was required to give the leather to the authorities. I put the hides in leather bags and sent all the merchandise to Moscow. I sold them at a large profit - 18 Manat each. In cooperation with the Iranian consul in Moscow and a man known as	1920s

	Shalom Saadia, we bought antiques and sent them to Germany. In Moscow, when I tried to arrange my passport, I found out that the authorities were looking for me, so I ran away via Stalingrad-Leningrad-Tfilis-Baku-Ashkabad-Dargaz-Mashhad. In Baku two Mashhadis helped me get to Ashkabad. I hid there in a house for ten days and then escaped to Dargaz to Asadolah Levy, one of the Jews of Mashhad who greatly helped wayfarers. From Dargaz I went to Mashhad. In return for the goods we sold in Germany, in cooperation with Shalom Saadia, we bought shoes and sent them to India. Because the Indian market was flooded with cheap Japanese shoes, we took a great loss.	[Tfilis= Tbilisi]
Russians in Mashhad	Outside of Mashhad we established a factory for oil, plus we had 30-40 milk cows. The Russians came to Persia. Bombs fell in Mashhad. People ran for their lives. We lived outside of the town near the factory. We raised a white flag. A number of Russian officers came to the factory and took me to the Russian Embassy. They told me that they have about a hundred thousand soldiers and they expect me to provide them with meat. I told them that I had a few dairy cows, and thus I started working for them - for six years. Once they asked me for 100 camels which they needed because of the lack of fuel and the rail traffic disruptions. After that they asked me for thousands of sheep. We purchased from an Afghani approximately thirty thousand sheep, one hundred at a time. I accumulated large debts. I appealed to the Russians. In return I received 400 units of cloth, and thus I covered my debts. Then a disease was discovered among the army horses. On Rosh Hashanah a number of Russian officers came to me at the synagogue and took me from my prayers in order to check the feed storage. They didn't find anything wrong with the fodder I had provided them. I received a letter of commendation from Stalingrad. After the war, they took me, along with six other Persian representatives, to Ashkabad and gave us gifts for our contribution (carpet).	1940s
Riots	I knew we would be facing danger after the departure of the Russians, so I went to the Russian commander in Mashhad. The commander took me to the governor of Mashhad, Ali Mansour was his name (later prime minister). The commander said to the governor, "I am putting these Jews in your hands - if anything happens to them, we will return our forces to Persia." Ali Mansour agreed to watch out for us. As expected, after the departure of the Russians, the mob started attacking the Jewish neighborhood. Several were injured, including my nephew, Moshe, who was wounded in the head. The Russian Embassy sent a jeep to pick me up but to no avail because they weren't even able to get close. They turned to Ali Mansour, warning him that if the situation doesn't calm down soon – Russian forces will return. The	1946

	Governor appealed to the Mufti of Mashhad to stop the riots. The Mufti, mounted on a donkey, arrived and declared that any person who was a Muslim must accompany him. A crowd of twenty or thirty thousand people left us and started walking in the direction of the Emam Reza Mosque. There, the Mufti warned them not to harm the Jews. Later the Persian army arrived and calm returned - but the Jews, in their hearts, decided to leave Mashhad forever.	
Experiences	Once, during a visit to Ashkabad, my host set before me an abundance of food - beef, lamb, cheeses, fish and other delicacies. I refrained from eating non-kosher food. I'm not a big eater anyway. Morning – bread, cheese and tea. Afternoon – soup. And at night – I usually don't eat. I liked walking. I never drank or smoked cigarettes. And I made sure to observe the Sabbath. Once, the Russians wanted to take me on a Saturday. I told them I cannot ride on Saturday. We agreed on an hour at the end of the Sabbath – my driver would take me to the border and from the border the Russians would take me to the event.	
Zionist Activities	Nissim participated in the HaChalutz Conference in 1945. He was the oldest representative. He primarily dealt with immigration to Eretz Israel. In Mashhad he represented Keren Kayemet, Keren HaYesod and the Jewish Agency. Other activists were Ebrahim Tlu, Abdol-Rahim Etessami, Abdol-Rahim Mortezazadeh, Abdol-Rahim Zar, Azizolah Zar, Arbabzadeh, etc. Nissim continues: I helped the Jews of India to immigrate to Israel - through Mashhad and Tehran. All in all I helped the immigration of Jews from Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Iraq, etc. We received money from the community, who spared nothing to help us. I opened 80 bank accounts at Bank Discount and Bank Leumi. I would send the money of the Mashhadi immigrants to Geneva and from there to Israel. Thusly we got out tens of millions of dollars.	1950s
Talmud Torah	Here in Bene-Beraq we built a yeshiva on top of the Mashhadi synagogue. Twenty yeshiva students study at the yeshiva from morning till night. They study for 10 years. Since 1974, three classes have graduated. Among the graduates are rabbis, teachers and ritual slaughterers who work in their professions and make a good living.	1974-1994
Conclusion	In my opinion, all Jews should return to Eretz Israel, as written in the Prophets. We do not know what will happen in the future. What happened in the Soviet Union could happen in the United States - and suddenly a wave of Jews will immigrate to Israel. The Jewish Agency helped us immensely in our aliya. First Itzhaq Refael and then Duvdevani. In the 1950s, in the Jewish cemetery in Tehran, eight thousand Jews waited for immigrant visas to Israel. People dug holes in	1994

	the cemetery and set up tents. The Jewish Agency representative, seeing the situation, immediately ordered that they be sent to Israel - without a visa and without bureaucracy. **The prophet tells that G-d will take all of you out of the grave. This I saw with my own eyes.**	
	Memories (by Reuven Nissimi)	
Tehran	In 1966, when I was in the tenth grade in Tehran - we used to go to the Bnei Akiva youth movement. Soon before Independence Day we decided to talk to our Bnei Akiva leader and organize an Independence Day ceremony with movies about the State of Israel for the Mashhadi community. For this purpose, we needed a hall. We thought the Levian Synagogue might be a suitable place. This was to be an unusual event for that period in the synagogue. We wondered whom to turn, the rabbis, the maintenance personnel, or maybe someone else? As kids - our eyes sought Mr. Nurolah Zvuloni. He sat some distance from us in the synagogue. His face radiated calm mixed with energy and alertness. We knew this was the man. We appealed to him. He responded immediately. After several days, as a result of his efforts, we were able to bring a whiff of Israel to the people of the community. It was the 18th birthday of the State of Israel. Only after decades of delving into the history of our community and inspecting documents from the Central Zionist Archives, did I find out about the Zionist activities of Nissim ben Shlomo Zvuloni. The following are excerpts from a letter by Nurolah Zvuloni: Written from Mashhad. Keren Kayemet - Head Office 26/12/1946. ...The Tehran Jewish Agency sometimes sends us some publications, but this is not enough for us ... send us some nice materials to distribute to the donors to the Jewish National Fund and to the students in the evening classes and to the members of HaChalutz. A few months ago we set up a Beit Chalutz in Mashhad but to our great sorrow there were riots in Mashhad and we were afraid to practice our activities openly. In my role as the chosen leader I try to present an example of strength. ...I forward you blessings on behalf of the forced converts of Mashhad ... With hopes for your well being, from Nurolah Zvuloni HaChalutz Mashhad	1966 [Zionist Archives] [KKL5-14737] (Excerpts)

	Sources	
	This paper is based on: • A tape in Persian, 1994 - Interview with Nissim ben Shlomo on reaching the age of 101 • Testimonies and other sources	[2005]

Eliyahu ben Shlomo

Sixth Generation	Chronicles	
Grandfather (Paternal) **Fifth Generation**	Grandfather **Shlomo** (son of Nissim and Dina) married **Rivqa** (daughter of Nethanel and Sara). They had Nissim, **Eliyahu** (**1905**), Miriam and Rachel. Grandmother Rivqa was a righteous woman. She used to gently and lovingly wake her grandchildren on the nights of Selichot prayers. She was called *Agh-neh* (mother of the father = grandmother). All the poor knew her; she helped everyone. After dinner she would eat dry bread to remind herself of the poor. Grandmother died in Mashhad (1948). Note: Zvia, the daughter of Rabbi Levi, remembers the family sitting Shiva for Rivqa. Mrs Aminoff (Kord), from one of the most noble and respected families, came to pay her condolences. This caused a commotion among the women who showed their respect by offering her a seat in an honorable place in the room. Mrs Aminoff politely declined and sat down near the entrance (a less honorable place). Her modesty left a strong impression. Grandfather moved to Israel, died in Jerusalem, and was buried in Pardes Hanna (Karkur - 1954).	1900s [Zvia 2005]
Grandfather (Maternal) **Sixth Generation**	Grandfather **Daniel** (son of Rachamim and Rachel) and Grandmother Dvora (daughter of Binyamin and Hanna) were cousins and descendants of Rabbi Moshe (the brothers Rachamim and Binyamin, sons of Rabbi Moshe). The grandparents were related to the rabbi of the community, **Rabbi Levi** ben Yehuda Nissim (Mola Abdolah). He was a remarkable rabbi. To this day the community continues his customs and Halachic rulings. Dvora was a niece of Rabbi Levi and Daniel was his brother-in-law (Daniel's sister Esther was married to the rabbi). Daniel and Dvora were married in Mashhad. They had Mashiyach, Moshe, Tzipora (1912), Avraham, Yosef, Sara and Binyamin. Grandfather Daniel was a prosperous man but humble - a righteous man, honest, intelligent and of good reputation. He was fortunate to have been able to immigrate to Israel, but he died a short while afterwards (1950). Thus grandmother was left alone, and many misfortunes befell her. Two years after her husband's death, her daughter Sara - a young woman married for two years but without children - died. Then her son Yosef died, leaving three orphans. Her son Avraham was widowed at a young age and remained a bachelor thereafter. Her other son Mashiyach went to Karachi for business purposes and grandmother was never to see him again. But grandmother did find much pleasure from her daughter Tzipora, who also immigrated to Eretz Israel.	1910s
Sixth Generation	The Parents	1905-1984
Wedding in Marv	**Tzipora** grew to be a credit to the family. She was a good and hard-working girl. When Tzipora was 10 years old, great-grandfather, Nethanel, son of Rabbi Moshe, (father of Grandmother Rivqa) betrothed his grandson Eliyahu, who was in Russia, to Tzipora. Great-grandfather sent a letter with a bag of candy to his daughter	1920s

	Rivqa telling her that Eliyahu and Tzipora were engaged. When asked, 17-year-old Eliyahu expressed his approval with a smile. They were engaged for three years without seeing each other until Eliyahu traveled to Mashhad for several months. After awhile, great-grandmother Dina (wife of Nissim), along with the bride's father, Daniel, took Tzipora to Russia, to the city of Marv, to her betrothed **Eliyahu**. The bride's mother was not able to join them because of the difficult economic situation. The wedding was held in Grandfather **Shlomo's** large courtyard. **Rabbi Levi** sanctified the couple. Below is an excerpt from the ketuba: On the ninth day of the month of Tevet in the year five thousand six hundred and eighty-seven ... here in the city of Marv ... the glorious groom ... Eliyahu bar Shlomo ... [married] the bride Tzipora bat Daniel Speech by the humble Levi, son of Merucham Yeuda N.S. [=Nissim] Speech by the groom Eliyahu bar Shlomo The humble witness Shlomo bar Nissim During the day there was a grand feast for the women of the town, and at night a feast of 'mitzvah' for all the men. The seven days of the wedding ceremony were filled with splendor and gladness. The good times and dancing were accompanied by an orchestra of Habibolah Kermani. Every day they invited the poor of the city to join their joyous occasion. After the seven days of the wedding, great-grandmother and Grandfather Daniel returned to Mashhad leaving the young couple in Marv.	1927
Life in Marv	In the first year of their marriage a daughter, Esther was born, but she died a short time later. While Tzipora was pregnant, Eliyahu was falsely accused by the Bolsheviks. They asked him to tell them where his brother Nurolah (Nissim) was hiding. Under no circumstances would Eliyahu agree to turn over his brother, and in the meantime Nissim managed to escape and cross the border to Persia. Eliyahu was imprisoned for six months under harsh conditions. Every day the family brought him kosher food but it was only with great difficulty that they were able to ensure the food was actually given to him. During his incarceration his son Mashiyach was born, but Eliyahu was not released, not even for the Brit Milah (circumcision) of his first son. Before the Brit, Tzipora brought the newborn to the prison. The prison guards ordered her to undress the baby for fear she might be smuggling something in to Eliyahu. Thus she brought the baby to his father for the blessing of Shehechiyanu ("*Who has given us life*"). Then the mother and child returned home for the circumcision. The Brit Mila party was held in their home with the participation of Rabbi Levi (Mola Abdolah) Nissim. The rabbi circumcised the child, and he was named Mashiyach. Those were difficult days for the young bride and also for Eliyahu. During his stay in prison several of the Jews who were with him were murdered. On the second night of Pesach, without any advance notice to the family, the authorities transferred Eliyahu to the city of Ashkabad, a distance of 36 hours by train. Except for a cup of tea before the trip, Eliyahu did not eat anything because of Kashrut (the dietary laws of keeping kosher) and because of Pesach. The day after the	

	holiday Tzipora and the family went to visit Eliyahu but could not find him – and a great anxiety took hold of them until they learned that he had been taken to trial. They immediately made contact with the Jews of Ashkabad to provide kosher food for Eliyahu. Eliyahu was acquitted at his trial and was released. Eliyahu began his life anew with his young wife Tzipora. After a short but beautiful period, the family decided to leave Russia because of the political circumstances and the communist regime. Grandfather Shlomo and Grandmother Rivqa, along with Tzipora and their grandson Mashiyach left Marv by bus (and journeyed part of the way on horseback) to Mashhad. Eliyahu remained in Russia for six more months in order to gather their property, sell whatever was possible, and join the family in Mashhad.	
Mashhad	In Mashhad, the extended family (Grandfather Shlomo and his brother, Mola David) bought a house with a courtyard that they shared. Each family was allotted a room – one room for Grandfather Shlomo, a room for Mola David, grandfather's brother, a room for Uncle Nissim (Nurolah), and the barn for mother and father. Their second son Moshe was born in this barn. In Mashhad everyone was required to hold a Persian identity card. Below is the text of mother's identity card: Issue Date 1310 [1932] Mina Zabulani Jadid Date of Birth 1290 [1912] Daughter of Rahmatolah and Nabat This shows that even in 1932, during the reign of Reza Shah, the Jews of Mashhad were still identified as Jadid al-Islam. After getting themselves established, the family set up a soap and oil factory (Kar Khaneh) in the suburbs of Mashhad and they moved to live nearby. The family prospered. The brother, Nissim, went to Germany. Eliyahu worked at the factory and Grandfather Shlomo grew vegetables for the whole family. After awhile, Esther, Rachamim, and Yaaqov were born. The economic situation improved and the family could afford to buy a house in the center of Mashhad and return to the city.	1930s [Pictures/ Documents] [Zabulani = Zvuloni]
The Children	As previously mentioned, Mashiyach was born in Marv, in Turkmenistan (where the oldest daughter died). Moshe, Esther, Rachamim, Yaaqov, Yocheved, Hanna and Rivqa were born in Mashhad (two daughters, Soraya and Tamara died). Sara, the youngest, was born in Israel.	
The War	In World War II, the Russians invaded Iran. Eliyahu and his brother Nissim worked with the Russians. During this period there were about six thousand Jews in Mashhad. After the departure of the Russians, the Jews were exposed to danger and blood libels from	1940s

	the Muslim population.	
Family Atmosphere	Mashiyach got engaged to Sonia. A delegation from the groom's family went to Sonia's family and asked if they were willing to give their daughter in marriage. Grandmother Dina (wife of Uncle Mola David) immediately took the candy bowl and distributed candy to everyone as a sign of agreement. The betrothal took place in a large courtyard in Mashhad. The yard was illuminated with colored candles and with wicks lighted inside eggshells. The men celebrated in one yard and the women in a different yard. The guests were served, among other things, sweet (sugar) rice. The family also experienced great sorrow when the little girl Tamara drowned in the pool in the courtyard and died - just a few days before Pesach. In this courtyard, Yocheved and Hanna were later born. Rivqa was born a year after the death of her Grandmother Rivqa. It was a courtyard that saw much joy and sorrow, intertwined.	
Pesach	Pesach eve 1946. Eliyahu and his son Moshe had just returned from the synagogue. They were sitting at the table commemorating the holiday by reading the Haggadah (text that sets forth the order of the Pesach Seder) with the family. Suddenly, after the Kiddush (blessing on the wine), they heard disturbances in the neighborhood. Together they jumped from their seats and ran outside in order to inform the police – they knew that all the ghetto's Jews were in grave danger. On their way to the police, some Muslims recognized them as Jews. They grabbed Moshe, beat him all over his body with iron bars, and tortured him for two hours. Miraculously, a policeman arrived and transferred him to the police station and from there to the hospital. Eliyahu managed to escape the same fate by hiding in a nearby shop.	1946
Aunt Miriam **A Bereaved Mother**	Aunt Miriam and her husband Mola Yosef Kashi immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1927. At first they lived in Jerusalem in the Bukhari Quarter (1 Rabenu Gershom Street) and later they moved to Tel Aviv. They had four boys, Yehuda, Binyamin, Moshe and Yaaqov. All of them served in the army and participated in Israel's wars. Yehuda was wounded in the shoulder during the War of Independence and Binyamin was killed. Binyamin was born in Tel Aviv. In his youth he joined Etzel and with the establishment of the state, he volunteered to the IDF - and he was only 17 years old. His first battle experience was in the southern neighborhoods of Tel Aviv. Later he participated in the bloody battles of the Negev. While he was at Nitzanim, during one of the breaks in the fighting, some of the soldiers in the company, and Binyamin among them, went on a break. The remaining soldiers were surrounded by Egyptians and were taken captive. Binyamin and his buddies returned from their holiday. In the battle against the Iraq-Sueidan police, they were surrounded and heavily bombarded and many of the soldiers were killed. Binyamin fell in the attack on a hill called Ibdis that commanded the whole area. This hill changed hands several times until it was finally conquered after a fierce and cruel battle. Only during a temporary lull in the fighting were the Israeli	1927-1950

	soldiers able to bring out the fallen to be buried in Israel - fifteen IDF soldiers, who could not be individually identified, were laid to rest in Kibbutz Negba - in a common grave. The POWs were released after a period of imprisonment. After the war, with the mass immigration to Israel, Aunt Miriam's house became a refuge, full of warmth and love, for immigrants.	
Aliyah to Israel	After the events of Passover 1946, the Jews began to leave Mashhad. Eliyahu's family also left, intending to go to Israel. Eliyahu again had to remain in order to salvage what he could of their properties. Tzipora and the children left Mashhad and went to Tehran – and a year later they succeeded in landing in Israel. Mashiyach, Moshe and Rachamim were the first ones to immigrate. The brothers lived in the neighborhood of Salame in Tel Aviv, at Aunt Miriam's home (wife of Mola Yosef Kashi). Moshe and Rachamim enlisted in the IDF. After them, Grandfather Shlomo, Mother (Tzipora), 15-year-old Yaaqov and the daughters immigrated. They lived in tents in Shaar HaAliya (an immigrant absorption center) where they had rationed food to eat. Father (Eliyahu) arrived two years later. After some time at Shaar HaAliya, the family went to live with Aunt Miriam in Salame, and then to a room in a rented apartment in the same area. Grandfather Daniel and Grandmother Dvora lived not far away. And here little sister Sara was born.	1950-1952
A Passing Generation	Grandfather Shlomo died in 1954. Grandfather Daniel died in 1950. Grandmother Dvora died fifteen years later in 1965.	ט' אב תשי"ד כ' חשוון תשי"א י"ח סיוון תשכ"ה
Bene Beraq	A few years later the family moved to the Chazon Eish Street in Bene Beraq. They rented an apartment consisting of a room and a half - without water, electricity or windows and with a sand floor. They bathed in the chicken coop. Around the house were orange groves, and near the house was an agricultural area with poisonous snakes. Those were the days of the Fedayeen. Father and Moshe worked on the family farm in Tzur Moshe. During the day they worked on the farm and at night as guards against infiltrators. In 1956 the Sinai War broke out. Moshe and Yaaqov participated in the war. Due to financial hardships, father went to Italy. He returned home five years later. The family began to build itself up in Israel. The children grew up and were educated. They learned primarily that their house is an open Jewish home – open to the family, the neighbors, and the needy.	
Mother	Mother, Tzipora bat Daniel, died in 1975. Her passing was announced on Radio Israel. Hundreds attended her funeral. Rabbi Kagan eulogized that "The Light of the City of Bene Beraq has been extinguished." Mother always had good advice to give. She was a woman of wisdom, insight and	א' אב תשל"ה

	virtue. With adults she was an adult, with the young, she was young, and with children – she was like a little girl. She loved her daughters-in-law as her own daughters and her son-in-law as a son. Her door was open to all passers-by and to the poor and forgotten. A person with a sack of troubles would enter her home with a heavy heart and leave it with a sense of relief and respite. Her morale was always high, even at times of hunger, deprivation and disease, war and danger.	
Father	Even after mother's death, father continued to maintain an open house. He set up a charitable fund in mother's name, and instituted Torah lessons every Saturday. Father died on 1984. Hundreds attended his funeral. The rabbi eulogized that "when a person woos honor - honor turns away from him. A man who spurns honor - honor courts him. They meet in the hour of death. Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo always shunned honor and now after his death honor cries out and all of Bene Beraq shows him respect." Dad was a rarity – a hardworking person who loved his work. Despite his commitment to work, he never missed his Minyan prayers. Every spare moment was devoted to studying and reading Psalms. He was an educated man with knowledge of five languages. He liked to help but never asked for help. He made an excellent wine with his own hands to delight visitors to his home. After mother's death, he continued to maintain the centrality of the home for his children and grandchildren. Preparation of the third meal on Shabbat greatly added to a sense of family togetherness. The fact that his sons lived in Italy gave him no rest. He spent much effort and diligence in building a house in Israel and returning to live there. He took care not only of his own children - but of other Jews as well. On his trips to Russia he would wear four Prayer Shawls and would hide Mezuzahs and holy books in his suitcases in order to bring a *taste* of Judaism and Israel to those Jews in the diaspora. And this he did in spite of great fear and personal risk. Despite his serious illness, he never complained. He remained cheerful, and would say that this suffering one must gladly accept. Even in the last moments of his life, when the children were distanced from him lest their noise disturb him – he asked that they be brought closer because the sounds of his grandchildren raised his spirits. Until the very last moment his mind was clear and he discussed matters concerning Eretz Israel, saying, "I am concerned for our people. We need a strong national-religious government that will lead the nation."	ז"י אב תשד"מ [Documents/ Zvuloni]
The Grandchild	"I am concerned for our people ..." – about a year after he made this statement his grandson Yosef, a soldier in the Nahal Parachute Brigade, died in the line of duty. Yosef, son of Leah and Yaaqov, was born on June 22, 1966, in Tel Aviv. During his childhood he lived in Italy until his family returned to Israel (1973). The family lived in Bene Beraq. Yossi studied in Maalot and Givat Shmuel and finished high school at Zeitlin. Yossi was very active in Bnei Akiva, joined the Aviad group, and when he was recruited in September 1984 he joined the Nahal Parachute Brigade. Yosef fell in the line of duty, of dehydration, while training in	1966-1985 [Times Gone By/ Israel]

	the area of Teqoa (1985). In the words of the commander of the unit - Yossi was a model of loyalty, honesty and willingness to help his friends at all times.	כ"ט אב תשמ"ה
	קטעים מן השיר "ביתו של אדם"	
	יש דברים מרובים וחשובים בעולם החשוב מכולם הוא ביתו של האדם. יש בית שהוא כמבצר על ההר יש בית והוא כארמון מפואר. אך לא העיקר הוא ארמון או בקתה חשוב הוא בית שבנית אתה. כי בית מעניק הרגשת ביטחון כי בית הוא ילד, רעיה מצפה. כי בית הוא גג ופינה חמימה כי בית לעניים פתוח לרווחה. ובית מלא שמחה ואורה רק עם יש לו יסוד איתן של תורה.	
	Excerpts from the poem "A Man's Home"	
	Many things are important in this world But the most important of all is a man's home. A home imparts a sense of security As a home is a child, a waiting wife. There are homes that are like a mountain-top fortress There are homes that are like a luxurious palace. A home is a roof and a warm corner A home for the poor is open and welcoming. It doesn't matter whether you live in a palace or a shed What's important is that your home is of your own making. And your home will be full of joy and light Only if it is firmly founded on the Torah.	
	Sources	
	This article is based on the book "The Family of Eliyahu and Tzipora Zvuloni" (1984) The book was prepared by the efforts of the children, and was edited by the daughter Hanna Vahapour	[אלול תדש"מ]

Rabbi David ben Nissim

	Chronicles	
Great-grandfather Fourth Generation	Great-grandfather, **Nissim** ben David, married Dina (Mina), daughter of Nassrolah Levi. The couple had three children: Shlomo, **David** and Michal. Grandfather, **Rabbi David**, was born about 1880 in the city of Sarakhs. Great-grandmother Dina was fortunate to be able to immigrate to Eretz Israel, and was buried on the Mount of Olives. Her place of burial was destroyed under Jordanian rule. In the Mashhadi cemetery, her name is mentioned among those whose burial place is unknown.	1880s
	Sarakhs	
	As a young man, David ben Nissim went to Jerusalem and studied at the Halabi Yeshiva with Rabbi Yaaqov Ades (~1896-1898). At the end of his schooling, grandfather returned to Sarakhs.	1890s
	The immigration paths to Eretz Israel in those years were: • From Turkmenistan to Odessa. From Odessa by ship to Jaffa. • From Turkmenistan through Iraq and Syria to Eretz Israel.	[../Geographic Background]
Jerusalem Stones	In Sarakhs, grandfather married Dina bat Itzhaq Kordevani (1900). Several years passed and the young couple had no children. Grandfather decided to go back to Jerusalem (~1903-1905). Before his return, he visited the Tomb of the Prophet Shmuel and prayed for children. He took seven stones away with him intending to return them when he and his wife had children.	1900s
Traditions	Rabbi Yosef Garji in his "Edut B'Yehosef" quotes the verse (Psalms, Chapter 102, verse 15): "For Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and love her dust." And states that: "Whoever shall come to "ziareh" (make a pilgrimage) to Jerusalem and take with him stones from Jerusalem, and people will buy them with best wishes."	[Yehoshua / 250] [עדות ביהוסף] [*www.mechon-mamre.org*]
Return of the Jerusalem Stones	Upon his return home, the prayers of Rabbi David were answered and his wife gave birth to a son who was called Shmuel, after the Prophet Shmuel. Grandfather sent the seven stones back to Jerusalem in the hands of a traveler in order to return them to their original site (as he had originally intended). On the way, one stone was lost and only six stones were returned to the mountain of their origin.	
	Marv	
Hard Times	The family moved to Marv and lived in a large courtyard surrounded by rooms. About fourteen families lived in this courtyard. Everyone helped everyone else and sometimes the women watched their neighbors' children	1910s

	and even wet-nursed them. In Marv, David and Dina had five more children: Efraim, Faraj, Shlomo, Sara and Batsheva. Only Shmuel and Batsheva survived; the others died in their childhood (due to the greater mortality rate among children in that period). With the rise of Communism, many Jews left Marv – but grandmother and grandfather continued to live there. In the summer of 1921, Rabbi David went to the settlements in the area to provide the Jews with kosher slaughter (before the month of Av). He was accompanied by a student Nethanel ben Yehuda Nissim (the younger brother of Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda - Mola Abdolah). Towards evening, on the way to Obeh (a Turkmenistan village) the train stopped at a service station to stock up with coal and water. The Rabbi got off the train for Mincha. The train began to move. The Rabbi, who suffered from leg pains, ran after the train but was not able to reach it. Nethanel, appreciating the situation, jumped off the train in order not to leave Rabbi David alone. The station manager told them that the next train would only come in a few days and advised them to go to another station – a few miles away – where the train traffic was more frequent. Rabbi David and Nethanel started off, but before long they were attacked by bandits and killed on the spot (1921). At that same time in Marv, Rabbi David's horse returned home from pasture – the horse was agitated and behaving fretfully, as if it sensed the loss of its master. Grandmother had a bad feeling and feared that something had happened to her husband. And indeed, two days later they received the bitter news. After several days of crying grandmother dreamed about grandfather. In her dream she asked, "Why did you not give the robbers what they wanted?" Grandfather replied, "I even gave them my watch and still they had no mercy on me." The robbers were caught by the police and brought to Marv. In the police investigation, grandmother's dream was proven true. When grandmother was asked what to do with the murderers, she answered: "Who is the man that can choose their destiny? – G-d will avenge their blood." She was no longer interested in the murderers and therefore their fate is not known. The son Shmuel with Nurolah Zvuloni and other representatives from the community brought their bodies back to Marv. At a certain distance from the city, the Railway Control Authority no longer allowed the transport of bodies on the train, and they were removed at the outskirts of the city. There the bodies were buried. Grandmother Dina was about 36 years old when she was widowed, and her son Shmuel was about 16 when his father died. Grandmother fought hard to support the family and, among others, was involved in the manufacture and sale of wine and arak.	1920s [Mincha = afternoon prayer] [כ"ז תמוז תרפ"א]
Traditions	In the Mashhad community it was customary for the parents to select a future spouse for each of their children, and to have them engaged while	

	they were still just children. The engagements (NomZadi) were made as follows (depending on the age of the children): • Up to the age of seven - the groom's family presents the bride's family with a tray of candy and a pair of earrings • Past the age of seven - the groom's family sends a delegation to the parents of the bride to formally ask for the girl's hand in marriage (Khazendeh)	NomZadi = Engagement Khazendeh = Delegation sent to family of chosen one
Marriage	Shmuel was engaged to the daughter of Simcha Nissim (Zioni's ancestor). Efraim, his brother, was engaged to Zilpa Kordevani. Shmuel's fiancée died as a child and so did his brother, Efraim. The parents decided to make a kind of "levirate marriage" (the marriage of a man to his late brother's childless widow) (KhunBast) – and thus Shmuel and Zilpa become engaged. In due time the couple married and gave birth to sons and daughters. Zilpa was the daughter of Yaaqov Kordevani. Her grandfather, Yaaqov, was a righteous man who dealt with commerce and brokerage. His father, Habib Kord, was nicknamed "Habib Tabib" because he practiced medicine. Grandmother (his first wife) died at a young age. Grandfather married another woman who died five years later, also at an early age.	KhunBast = blood relationship
Success	Father, Shmuel, achieved a high level in the civil service, (lieutenant colonel). Using his connections, he was able to help other Jews (for instance, he released Yaaqov ben Binyamin Nissim from a Russian prison). He also worked in the Ministry of Commerce. He was also an expert in Karakul skins.	1930s
Departure	During the 1930s, Turkmenistan Jews were persecuted by the Communist Regime and many of them escaped from the towns of Turkmenistan toward Mashhad (and some of them to Herat with the intention of reaching Mashhad). Practicing Judaism became impossible. The young couple, Shmuel and Zilpa, gave birth to three children in Marv: David, Sara (Soniya) and Efraim (named after his brother). The Brit Milah for the newborn, Efraim, was conducted in secret. They could hardly gather together a Minyan, and after the Brit, everyone left. The Mohel, Mola Yaaqov Zar, was later seized and exiled to Siberia (and never heard from again). Life became impossible. Many refugees from Turkmenistan towns were escaping to Mashhad. The populace in the region was suffering from severe starvation. The family existed on melon and barley flour that cost like gold. Finally, in the year 1935, the family returned to Mashhad. Shmuel remained in Marv.	
	Mashhad	

The Family	As previously mentioned, the family decided to leave Russia. The first to leave was grandmother, mother, and the children – they all left for Mashhad in 1935. Two years later, Father joined them. Two additional children were born in Mashhad – Binyamin and Tzipora. Shortly thereafter, during Simchat Torah, Father developed strong pains in his stomach and was taken to the hospital. The doctors were not able to save his life. Father died in 1937.	1930s [כ"ב תשרי תרח"צ]
Studies	Efraim went to Hadayat Elementary School. The school was financed by the community and the teachers were paid by them. In 1945, in the sixth grade, there were two teachers who hated Jews. There were 40 male students in the classroom. The teachers did nothing all year long – and did not fulfill their responsibility of preparing the students for the government exams at the completion of elementary school. That year, the exams were given in the Reza-Shah High School in the Janat neighborhood. The entire class failed. The group failure was doubly astonishing due to the fact that the Hedayat school of the community won, every year in the past, significant achievements. After that event, the two teachers disappeared from the school. The entire class of 1945 had to repeat the sixth grade, and the next year the same children achieved first place in the government exams.	1940s Hedayat = Instruction
Life in the Underground	Officially, the community was considered as new Muslims – therefore the children were required to attend school on Saturdays also. On Saturdays, the first class was Quran studies. The Quran lesson often coincided with the time that the Torah was removed from Aron HaKodesh (the Holy Ark of the synagogue) and therefore many children were late for it. The teacher used to question the children about their reason for being late for the class – but the children couldn't say that they had been in the synagogue. In many instances, in the absence of an excuse, punishment was swift... In the days of winter cold and frost in Mashhad, being present when Raising the Torah and declaring V'Zot HaTora (this is the Torah …) was not suitable compensation for the whip lashings the children got on the palms of their hands. Occasionally on Saturdays Efraim had a special turn of duty in the shop of one of the community members. His job was to refuse the customers by telling them that the store owner was not currently in attendance at the store. It happened that Efraim was cursed and even beaten because it was no longer a secret that the loyalty of the community was to Judaism.	1940s
Torture	One day, due of an eye ailment, Efraim and his brother Binyamin walked to the medical clinic in the northern part of the Janat neighborhood. On their way, some of the local riffraff accosted them, cursing the brothers and calling them a derogatory name "Blind Johuds". The crowd continued their abuse, beating and slapping the two Jewish boys vigorously and without mercy. Finally, the brothers were forced to recite the "Kalame'," to signify their acceptance of Islam. Efraim and Binyamin, as they repeated the	[Kalame' = a verse to accept Muhammad's

	Kalame', faked the verse and then seized the moment of the crowds' astonishment to flee the scene. About six months later, Efraim met one of the attackers again. Efraim, not losing his wits, laughingly addressed the boy and said, "Okay, in our previous meeting you fed me with blows and gave me a hard time – perhaps this time you will feed me with delicacies and we will be like brothers!!" The neighborhood thug joined in the moment of laughter and he said, "First you misquote the verse in the Quran and now you want a prize for it?"	Mission, etc.]
Blood Libel	During the riots of Passover 1946, Zvia (later Efraim's wife) was studying at the girls' community school "Arz' Aghdas." Zvia remembered a conversation between her teacher and the principal (Shazdeh Khanom). The teacher excitedly told the principal "I saw with my own eyes that the Jews killed a Muslim boy..." The principal, acquainted with the people in the community, refused to believe the teacher's words and insisted that it was impossible.	[Shazdeh Khanom = The Princess (from the Qajar dynasty)]
Pesach Riots 1946	Efraim remembered that during the events of the Passover riots in 1946, a mob of riffraff approached the walls of Eid Gah. He and his friends tried to deal with the situation as follows: • Transfer of Information - Efraim and his friends would pass information from one side to the other by jumping from roof to roof over the alleys (Dalon). • Defense - Efraim and his friend patrolled on the roof and tried to distance the crowds by throwing stones and also handmade firebombs (Molotov Cocktails) of Cheragh-Mushi (= oil lamp).	[Dalon = 2 meter-wide Corridor]
	Israel	
Consolation	Grandmother Dina always lamented her fate - losing her husband and her children because of the loss of one stone – the stone that was promised to be returned to Jerusalem but that was never restored to its place. After the establishment of the State of Israel, the family immigrated to Israel. Grandmother Dina was privileged to make Aliyah to Israel – as consolation for her loss.	1950s
Kashrut	Grandmother Dina was a special person and a very smart woman. Although she could not read and write, she possessed extensive knowledge of Judaism and Halacha - knowledge acquired from her grandfather (Rabbi Moshe Kord) and her husband, both of them rabbis. During the harsh days of austerity in Israel, it occurred several times that she forbade eating chicken slaughtered by the local butcher in the immigrants' camp – because she found a Halachic flaw in the chicken (a broken wing, a torn gizzard or a punctured lung).	

Brit Milah	Among her other skills, grandmother served as a midwife when necessary. At the Brit Milah of the great-grandson Shmuel ben Efraim – the Mohel refused to circumcise the child, claiming that the child was not ready for circumcision. Grandmother showed the Mohel indications that the baby was indeed ready and that it was not necessary to postpone the circumcision: • She showed that the child grasps and holds her finger • She rubbed his right thumb and showed that blood flows there And indeed the Mohel was convinced and the baby entered the Covenant of Abraham (was circumcised) – on time!	1960s
Closure	As time passed, at the entrance to Marv, the burial place of Rabbi David and Nethanel Nissim became a holy pilgrimage site for the local residents (non-Jews). Eliyahu Zvuloni (nephew of Rabbi David) used to visit the place during his trips to the Soviet Union. The last time he visited the site he could not find the graves because the authorities had destroyed them. Grandmother never complained about the difficult times during the period of austerity and used to say that she raised her children on melon and bread. Grandmother lived a long life and died at the ripe old age of 92 in 1977.	1970s [כ"א טבת תשל"ז]
	Sources	
	This narrative is based on: • Memoirs of **Zvia** and **Efraim** Zvuloni	[2005]

David ben Simcha Zioni

	Chronicles	
Zioni Family Fifth Generation	Simcha was the father of the Zioni family. In the archives of the Sephardic Committee, in an old notebook belonging to the Rishon LeZion, letters were found that testified that Simcha sent contributions to Eretz Israel. Following is an excerpt from letter #336 (1899) – from Jerusalem to Marv: "למע"כ אחינו מרחמינו. הגבירים היקרים בק"ק מרב ובתוכה מע"כ אגא חאג'י אמינוף יצ"ו, אגא חאג'י חביבוללה הלוי יצ"ו, אגא לוטפולה בן אגא מחמד יצ"ו, אגא מו' יחיא בצל יצ"ו, **אגא ריזה נסים** יצ"ו, **אגא פרג' נסים**, אגא יוסף קצב, יחד כולם רחמנים בני רחמנים" "To ... our merciful brothers ... of the Holy Community of Marv ... Agha Haji Aminoff, Agha Haji Habibolah Halevy, Agha Lotfolah ben Agha Mohamad, Agha Mola Yahya Bassal, **Agha Reza Nissim**, **Agha Faraj Nissim**, Agha Yosef Ghassab, all of them together, merciful of merciful." Reza Nissim was Simcha ben Moshe, father of the Rezaoff families who later became the Zioni families, and Faraj Nissim (about 20 years old) was Yeshayahu Zioni, son of Simcha.	[Beit Saba/ Introduction] [כ"ה תשרי תר"ס]
Unusual Name	The Nissimis used to choose names for their children that were not typical Islamic names, e.g.: • Abdolah (Servant of God), Lotfolah (Hananiya [=Mercy]), Shokrolah (Praise G-d) - are regular names • Mohammad, Reza, Hossein - are the names of Shiite saints According to Yaaqov Dilmanian – the name **Reza** was unusual among the Nissimis and giving this name, which is typical Shiite, was because the family lived in neighborhoods with Muslim families (at the height of the forced conversion).	[Dilmanian]
Beit Saba Fifth Generation	Simcha, son of Rabbi Moshe, had: • Three sons: Yeshayahu (Farajolah), Yitzhaq and **David** • And four daughters: Zilpa, Snubar, Hanna and Miriam Like many Nissim families, Simcha Nissim lived in Marv in the early twentieth century.	[Generations]
Beit Aba Sixth Generation	**David** ben Simcha married Esther, daughter of Yoav Bassal. The couple had **Shlomo** (Shokrolah), Simcha (Hushang) and Shmuel.	[Generations]
	Mashhad	1920s-1940s
Livelihood	The extended family of Beit Saba lived in Mashhad after leaving Marv. In Mashhad, my father David and uncles Yeshayahu and Itzhaq, were partners and worked together in the business of trading Karakul skins with the Aminoff family in London. Uncle Itzhaq and father used to reside in Afghanistan for business purposes for periods of two to three years each. Uncle Yeshayahu was unable to travel due to pain in his legs. Father also spent some time in Moscow for business.	

	Tehran	1946-1952
Way Station	We were all shocked and appalled by the events of Passover 1946. After things calmed down, my father and my uncle sold their houses in Mashhad and moved to Tehran. Life in Tehran was completely different from what we experienced in Mashhad. In Tehran we enjoyed not only spacious and comfortable living but also a sense of freedom. After six years, the family immigrated to Israel.	
	India - Pakistan	1948-1952
Religious Freedom	After two years in Tehran, at age 18, I (Shlomo) went to Bombay. The thing that stood out most in India was a sense of religious freedom – a feeling that cannot be matched anywhere else in the world. In India you find a variety of religions and beliefs that live together in peace - with mutual appreciation and respect. As an example, every Rosh Hashanah, the Times of India newspaper would proclaim on its front page: "Happy New Year to all Jewish People" After three years in India, in 1951, I moved to Pakistan – where I stayed for two years.	
	Israel	
Raising a Family	After about six years, the Zioni families left Tehran and immigrated to Israel. After spending five years in India and Pakistan I left for Israel. These were the difficult years of the ingathering of exiles in the country - but for me it was a joyous time during which I married my cousin Soraya, daughter of Itzhaq Zioni.	1953-1954
Parents	My father David died in 1986 at age 86 and my mother Esther died in 1991 at the age of 92. They were fortunate to have lived a long life and to be buried in Eretz Israel.	1986-1991
	Milan	1953 - 2008
Establishing a Community	In late 1953 I went to Milan which was absent of Mashhadis. A year later Mashhadi families started slowly trickling in. At first business was very difficult in Milan – but about ten years later, business started to improve and more Mashhadis began to arrive. In the 1960s, the Mashhadi community increased to about 1,000 people and succeeded in setting up community institutions (NOAM, synagogue, etc.). ... In recent years, due to the slump in business many young people have been leaving Milan - especially to New York (for an education and for employment).	
	Sources	
	This paper is based on: Conversations with Mr. Shokrolah Zioni in the summer of 2008 and again a series of questions and answers via email.	[2008]

Malka bat Nethanel

	Chronicles	
Beit Saba	Grandmother **Malka** (Khavar) bat Nethanel Nissim was born in ~1884 in Marv. Grandfather, **Yeshayahu** ben Mordechai Moradoff, was born in ~1875 in **Mashhad**. Grandfather was a veterinarian by profession and was known as "Faraj Doctor". They married in Marv, and grandmother ... was just nine years old. Grandfather Yeshayahu was handsome and grandmother **Malka** was marked by a special wisdom. In ~1895 the young couple immigrated to Eretz Israel. In Israel they resided in the Bukharan Quarter of Jerusalem. Grandmother's grandfather, **Rabbi Moshe** Nissim came to Israel shortly thereafter.	1890s
Background of the Era	This was the period of the First Aliyah (1882-1903), in which many Jews emigrated from Russia due to the pogroms there. Most immigrants went to the United States; only about two percent came to Eretz Israel. Both the Russian and the Turkish governments approved the emigration of Jews - which made aliyah to Eretz Israel easier. However, because of the difficult conditions only 5,000 of the 25,000 who immigrated to Eretz Israel remained there. Most of those that stayed were aged 30-40, with families, and from small towns. Some of the refugees were organized by Chovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) and others just arrived individually or in small groups. They made their living as small businessmen and craftsmen (not in agriculture). In most of them prevailed a desire for a better and more traditional life and nationalistic ideals. During this period, new moshavot (settlements) were founded (Rishon LeZion, Petach Tiqva, etc.) and new neighborhoods were built in Jerusalem, outside the Western Wall. The Bukharan Quarter was the most elegant of the new neighborhoods, and within it was built a luxury home known to all as the Palace. The Palace was built by the Yehudayoff family (1891) and included a room dedicated to Mashiyach - when he comes.	1882-1903 [סופות בנגב]
First World War	The young couple, Yeshayahu and Malka, had four children in Jerusalem: Avraham, Shalom, Esther and Leah. The boys were educated in the Talmud Torah school and the girls in the Spitzer School (which was located in the Armon [Palace]). In 1914 the First World War began. Life was difficult in Eretz Israel and therefore grandfather Yeshayahu returned to Russia with his eldest son Avraham. His wife Malka insisted on remaining in Eretz Israel. To support her children grandmother was forced to accept all kinds of odd jobs - even whitewashing houses. She had good relations with their Arab neighbors - they would bring her figs for the children to help relieve their hardships. But the hunger was unbearable and due to malnutrition, Leah became ill. Grandmother went out to sell her sewing machine to pay for the medical fees for her daughter – and when she returned home she found her daughter lifeless.	1910s
After the War	On Hanukkah 1917, the British conquered Jerusalem. Uncle Shalom was 10 years old and mother (Esther) was seven. They worked in the orchard near Bab-al-Amud close to the Damascus Gate of the Old City. On the day the British entered the city, Shalom and Esther were released from work so they could go home. On the way, suddenly an	1910s

	English soldier ran towards them, lifted Esther and grabbed Shalom and continued running, distancing them from the site - and suddenly there was a blast of an explosive device, and Shalom was injured. This soldier had saved Shalom's life. Meanwhile, a few British soldiers lived in their courtyard (Sarakhsiha). Shalom found some explosives and asked the soldiers if they were coals. The soldiers, who did not know Hebrew, replied in English "yes". Shalom lit them and was seriously injured from the fierce explosion that ensued. Grandmother Malka took the child to Dr. Wallach. The doctor told her to come back three days later. But Shalom was only discharged from the hospital three years later. Dr. Wallach arranged his bar mitzvah in the hospital.	[=Donors from the city of Sarakhs]
Wanderings and Sorrow	Grandfather married twice. He married another wife during his stay abroad and had children who live in Israel. After 18 years of wandering, grandfather Yeshayahu returned with his son Avraham to Eretz Israel. Both of them were weak and sick. After several months, they died. Hanna, Avraham's wife, never remarried and stayed at my grandmother's house (her mother-in-law) the rest of her life.	1932
Sound of Joy and Happiness	Miriam, daughter of Avraham, was a very pretty girl - Dizengoff (a family friend) would take little Miriam for a ride on his horse. Grandmother intended Shalom and Miriam to marry one another. On their wedding day, grandmother Malka personally rode to Dr. Wallach in a magnificent carriage. She asked the coachman to call the doctor and tell him that a "very rich" woman is waiting for him outside. When Dr. Wallach arrived, grandmother turned to him saying, "You are the man who saved my son's life - you will lead him to the wedding canopy." Thus Shalom and Miriam were married. (Dr. Wallach had no children, so Shalom said Qaddish for him after his death.)	
Commerce	Grandmother Malka, who was from a family of merchants and who had learned the craft from her early childhood, began to engage in trade in order to earn a living. Grandmother would travel to Beirut and Halab and would import carpets and gold to Eretz Israel. Their economic situation soon began to improve. Grandmother Malka, on one of her trips, tried to pass some of her goods through the window of the train - but suddenly the train began to move and grandmother fell out onto the tracks and was run over by the wheels of the train. She was crippled for life, but this disability did not break her spirit and because of her strong character she quickly returned to trade - this time on an improvised wheelchair. After awhile, grandmother moved to Rothschild Boulevard in Tel Aviv. In the beginning they lived in a warehouse that also served as a home. And when the situation improved grandmother bought a lot in Neve Tzedek 13 (from the Shlush family) and built a house on it. Uncle Shalom opened in Tel Aviv the first store for carpets and Betzalel artworks. It became very well known in Eretz Israel and abroad. Friends of the family circle were Baruch Agadati (who composed a dance for grandmother), Moshe Castel (one of his works adorns the Knesset), Chaim Nachman Bialik, Dizengoff and Israel Rokach.	
Industry	During World War II, Eretz Israel's borders were closed to immigration and trade – so, not being able to work in commerce, grandmother moved over to industry. She would buy sheep wool from the kibbutzim and spin the wool into threads for weaving carpets	1940s

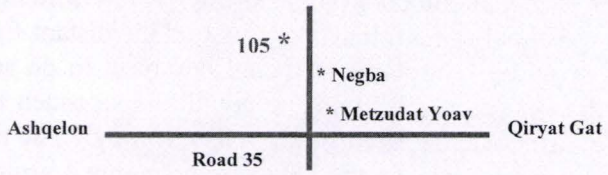
	and for knitting. This provided not only grandmother and the kibbutzim with a living, but also the many families who learned the craft from her and worked spinning wool.	
The Next Generation	My paternal grandfather was Mola Yosef Ghassab (Yaaqobi) and my grandmother was Sara, daughter of Yaaqov Aminoff (Kordevani). My grandparents had three sons, Mordechai, **Moshe** and Nissim. My parents, **Esther** and **Moshe**, were married in 1931. They had Yaaqov, Binyamin, Yosef, **Dvora** and Malka. I (Dvora) was about 14 when I got engaged to **Nethanel** ben Efraim. Grandmother encouraged this union and claimed that Nethanel had the same scent as her brother (being considerably distant from her family abroad).	
Eternal Rest	On Shushan Purim 1947 we came from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv to visit grandmother ... but she had just died - and she was only 63 years old. Grandmother Malka asked in her will to be buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. These were days of resistance against the British. Etzel blew up the British Officers Club in Jerusalem and the country was put under a strict curfew because of the explosion. The whole country was closed and locked down. Uncle Shalom appealed to his friend Rokach, the Mayor of Tel Aviv. Rokach at that time was in a meeting with the British military adjutant to regulate the matter of the food supply to the city. Uncle Shalom told him about the death of his mother and her request to be buried in Jerusalem. Due to the efforts of the mayor, the army made two command cars available to the family. Grandmother Malka was taken to Jerusalem and buried on that same Friday on the Mount of Olives in the city she loved so dearly (near the grave of grandfather Rabbi Moshe – and close to the Avshalom monument). Grandmother was probably the last person buried on the Mount of Olives. Because of the War of Independence, the family was not able to erect a gravestone on her grave. After 20 years, with the liberation of the Old City, the Mount of Olives was also returned to Israeli sovereignty, but during the years under Jordanian rule, grandmother's exact burial place became blurred and the precise location is not known to the family today.	1947
	Sources	
	This paper is based on the following sources: • Memoirs of **Dvora** Nissim, wife of **Nethanel** ben Efraim • Booklet "**The Jewish Dream**" by the granddaughter **Helen**	[2007]

Nethanel ben Efraim

Seventh Generation	Chronicles	1926-2005
Leaving Mashhad	In the evening hours we left Mashhad, heading for India. When we reached the border (Kondi) I became sick and the entire group was delayed because of me. We traveled by train to Peshawar; this was the first time I saw a train. On the way we stopped in Lahore which has a large station that serves as a central hub for many destinations in India. With us were also Bukharans, Afghans and Persians, and we were even fortunate enough to organize a temporary *Minyan*. My brother-in-law Yehuda left us at Lahore and traveled to Bombay, while we continued to Peshawar. At the Lahore train station we bought a watermelon and put it on a bench while we wandered around a bit. Suddenly we heard the train's whistle. We ran as fast as we could to catch our train, and boarded at the last moment, leaving the watermelon behind.	1934 [Minyan= quorum of ten Jewish adults required for certain religious obligations]
Peshawar	We arrived at Peshawar with my brother Eliyahu and my future sister-in-law Dvora. My brother Mordechai (Morad) and Dvora got married in Peshawar in a beautiful ceremony, like those seen in the movies, with garlands of flowers around their necks. I was a favored child in the Mashhadi community in Peshawar. On Saturday nights, at the synagogue, whenever the *Havdalah* candle didn't light well, Mola Abdolah Nissim (Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda) would jokingly say that "Nethanel must have been mischievous today." I started going to school. At school, a single book would be placed on the floor and the students all sat around it. In this manner we learned to read from all directions. The town's clock was located at *Gante'-Gar*. It was a huge clock, much larger than the clock at Jaffa square. The vicinity was filled with shops, and all the shopkeepers knew me. I would take goods from the stores and sell them at the market, and this is how I earned money as a child of school age. Once, while I was roaming the market, I noticed a Sikh man following a Pakistani man. The Sikh suddenly pulled out an ax and hacked the Pakistani in two. Right next to me. About 10 months later it was decided that I would be sent to Eretz Israel with grandmother. I did not want to leave Peshawar but I had no choice. I cried the entire way.	[Rabbi Levi married the couple] [Havdalah= ceremony that marks the end of Shabbat and ushers in the new week]
Baghdad	We took the train to Karachi. After a three-day layover we boarded a cargo ship headed for Basra. We couldn't afford a cabin and therefore grandmother and I slept on deck during the five nights of the voyage. We traveled from Basra to Baghdad, where we met my uncle Mashiyach Betzaleli (*Aghzema*, husband of my father's sister). We spent approximately two weeks at a hotel. My uncle took us to a restaurant by the river. To this day I can taste in my mouth the fish we ate there. We traveled to Damascus through the Syrian desert on a rough unpaved road. The bus got stuck deep in the mud and it took much time and effort until we managed to extract it. It was known that sometimes travelers disappeared in the desert before reaching their destination. After many tribulations we reached Damascus. It took us ten days until	

	we found a smuggler (a guide to lead us to Eretz Israel), for the price of five Liras. We attempted to cross the border via the Golan Heights, but we were captured by the Syrian border police. We explained that we got lost during a trip, and the guards believed us and sent us back to Damascus. Despite the bitterly cold winter weather I wore only a shirt and sandals because we had no money to buy warm clothes.	
Irbid	After several days we met a different smuggler who led us through the Jordan River. We were a group of 11 people – men, women and two children – and I was the youngest. In Jordan we were again captured. After an interrogation we were again taken back to the Syrian border. This took place during the evening hours. We marched until morning, until we reached a Syrian police station. The Syrians arrested us and after another interrogation sent us, the following morning, to the Jordanian border. Again we marched until we came to a Jordanian police station, again we were arrested, and this time we were transferred to a prison at Irbid. The prison was located at the highest point in Irbid, and contained a separate wing for men and one for women and children. A gate separated the men's courtyard from that of the women. When the gate was opened I would go to the men's wing to join the members of our group. We children used to play outside the prison by the gate. We would place on the ground a tin can or a large rock as a target, and we would throw stones at it. In a matter of time we became expert marksmen. Even though we were outside the gate we couldn't stray far because the guards were watching us. We assumed that in Eretz Israel they did not know what had happened to us, and therefore the adults in our group wrote a letter to Eretz Israel and asked us (the children) to sneak out of the prison, run down to the post office in the town and send the letter. The men inside the prison, after verifying the location of the post office, instructed us on how to get there. On the other side of the prison, in the women's wing, there were barred windows. We managed to squeeze through the bars and jump out. Quietly we crept towards the town. Thus, following our instructions, we arrived at the post office, purchased a stamp and sent the letter. Here a surprise awaited us. A rumor had suddenly spread that three Jewish children had escaped and were heading in the direction of the post office. Approximately 30 youths had gathered at the post office and were waiting for us outside... [This is where Nethanel's handwritten account of their journey ends. From here, the story was completed by Dvora, Nethanel's wife.] Chased by the rabble, the children fled back to the prison. Every so often a Jewish child would fling rocks towards the youths in an attempt to slow them down. Exhausted, the children reached the prison, no small thanks to the marksmanship skills they had acquired in throwing stones. When they reached the prison the guards protected them and rescued them from their pursuers.	

Jerusalem	After a while the Jordanians released the group of travelers and sent them off in the direction of the railroad tracks. But they deliberately deviated from the path of the tracks for fear of being discovered and arrested again. They marched on foot westward about 30 km. They crossed the Jordan River and after a few kilometers arrived at a populated area. Hiding behind some foliage they spotted the distant figure of a man carrying a hoe on his shoulder. They sent Nethanel on ahead to do some scouting. Nethanel approached the figure quickly, until he could almost touch him, and then he tugged at the man's clothes, and declared, "I am a Jewish boy." The man, a farmer from Menachamiya, realized immediately the he was confronting a group of illegal immigrants. That very evening, the members of the settlement divided the group amongst their families and very generously took care of us. Then the group was transported by bus to a place in the vicinity of Tveria (Tiberias). They bypassed Tveria by foot, lest they be discovered by the British, and headed towards Poriya. From there they continued on a long journey to Kfar Tavor, and throughout the entire journey two farmers helped and supported grandmother. At Kfar Tavor, Mordechai Sinai was waiting for them and took grandmother and Nethanel to Jerusalem.	[R.N. Probably the railroad from Daraa to Haifa, which crossed over the Yarmouk Bridge.]
Childhood	At first, Nethanel studied at the Alliance School and later at Doresh Zion. From the age of 12 he began working at odd jobs (at a department store, at Kapulsky [a bakery], etc.). In Jerusalem, the Mashhadi youth group started a football team named Moledet ('homeland'). These Mashhadi youth, who worked for a living, allowed themselves to purchase uniforms and a quality ball ... and thus they were called "rich" by their neighbors.	1940s
The Resistance	Later, Nethanel moved to Netanya to learn the craft of diamond polishing. At night he slept in a warehouse with some friends. In Netanya, Nethanel joined Etzel and participated in underground activities such as hanging posters. One night the British began searching the area – and Nethanel and his friends had with them at the warehouse bundles of posters against the British. In order not to arouse suspicion, they made a small bonfire and thus disposed of the pile of posters in their possession.	1942
War of Independence	Immediately following November 29, Shimon Avidan was tasked with establishing the Fifth Brigade, as part of the first six brigades. The brigade encompassed Hish (Haganah Field Corps) of the Tel Aviv and Southern Districts, as well as forces from Mahal (foreign volunteers) and from the Etzel battalion. During the War of Independence, the brigade guarded the Tel Aviv District, took part in escorting convoys to Jerusalem, and also in operations to open the road to Jerusalem, such as the Nachshon operation. On the eve of the second truce, the brigade's combatants conquered the Ibdis outpost and protected it from enemy attack. The Shualei Shimshon (Samson's Foxes) squadron was established during the first truce, in June, 1948, as part of 54th Regiment under the command of Tzvi Tzur. Aba Kovner came up with the name Shualei Shimshon. The squadron consisted of jeeps with front mounted machine guns and an additional machine gun mounted from	1948 [Wikipedia] [Tzur, Chief of Staff in 1961] [Kovner, the

	behind. The company fought on the southern front against the invading Egyptian army. They occupied Hill 105 and prevented the cutting off of Negba, which heroically withstood heavy attacks from both air and land.	brigade's education officer]
		
	On the eve of the establishment of the State of Israel, the British handed over the police fortress of Iraq-Sueidan to the Arabs. The Egyptians controlled the region due to the strategic location of the police fortress and thus threatened to cut off the Negev. Over a period of six months, the IDF attacked the fortress eight times, finally eliminating the Egyptians from the region. After the conquest, the name was changed to Metzudat Yoav (Yoav Fortress).	[Yoav, the nickname of Itzhaq Dubno, who was killed at Negba.]
	As a soldier in the Shualei Shimshon reconnaissance units, Nethanel took part in the various operations described above. Following are some anecdotes from those days.	
	• Uri Avnery, who also served in Shualei Shimshon, managed to "arrange" several rabbits (most likely from the kibbutz's petting zoo), which he intended to barbecue for the guys. Nethanel, who did not care much for Uri, set the rabbits free from their cage. Uri was furious. • In anticipation of the Egyptian invasion, due to the lack of military equipment, Nethanel laid in ambush, near Gedera, with a Molotov cocktail as his weapon of defense against invaders. Later he was sent to the area of Iraq-Sueidan as a gunner. He lay there waiting for two months, which seemed like an eternity. Finally reinforcements arrived. The newly arrived officers were unfamiliar with the area and Nethanel, who was already well acquainted with it, guided them and helped them with navigation and orientation. During one of their ambushes, an Egyptian unit appeared on the top of a hill. The force eliminated the Egyptian unit on the spot.	
Raising a Family	Malka, Nethanel's aunt, even though separated from her family abroad, would say that "Nethanel smells like my brother Efraim." She designated her granddaughter Dvora to be Nethanel's bride. Dvora was about 14 years old when she got engaged to Nethanel (1947). Nethanel and Dvora were married in 1950.	1950
	Sources	
	This essay is based on: • Memoirs of **Nethanel** Nissim, written just prior to his death • Augmented and enhanced by his wife **Dvora** Nissim **Note**: Nethanel summarized the history of his immigration to Eretz Israel, a unique tale of a journey of a boy with his elderly grandmother. Unfortunately he was overcome by his illness before he was able to complete this fascinating essay. The composition was completed by his wife, Dvora.	[2007]

Yaaqov ben Binyamin

	Chronicles	
The Parents' Home Fifth Generation	**Binyamin** ben Rabbi Moshe and **Hanna** bat Yehuda, had nine children: • Boys – Yirmiyahu, Moshe, Shmuel, **Yaaqov** and Mordechai • Girls – Dvora, Tzipora, Rivqa and Esther Yaaqov never married, and I, who knew him from my childhood, have taken the liberty of telling the story of his life, from my own perspective.	[R.N]
Dash Yaghub Sixth Generation	I was fortunate to be familiar with "Uncle" Yaaqov (Dash Yaghub, my father's cousin) for 40 years, from the time I was a young child in the 1950s in Tehran, until he died in Israel. During the late 1950s, Uncle Yaaqov came to Tehran for several years from Israel. Yaaqov was the son of my grandfather's (Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda) sister. He was very close to his uncle (Da-Ei) and his aunt (Zan-Da-Ei) and was a frequent visitor at our home. Uncle Yaaqov remained by his uncle's side for the entirety of his uncle's illness, until his death (1959). After grandfather's death, Uncle Yaaqov would frequently visit grandmother and would even sleep at our house to support her during her deep mourning.	
The Russian Prison	Uncle Yaaqov taught us how to play chess. He would recount to us how he learned the game while imprisoned during his youth in a Russian prison, for crossing the "closed" border for the purpose of commerce (during the 1920s).	1920s
The Scent of Israel	David Kohen, chairman of the community's Central Committee in Israel, in an interview that I conducted with him, said that as a child "I saw a photograph of Yaaqov Nissim carrying stones in Eretz Israel (during the 1930s) - This image sparked my imagination and inspired me to make aliyah (immigrate) to Eretz Israel". As a child I remember him as a strong and kind man (in Tehran during the 1950s). Both adults and children found him pleasant to be around. To our minds he carried the fragrance of Israel. He immigrated to Eretz Israel during the 1930s, and made a living doing hard manual labor. Once (in the 1980s) I drove him from Jaffa to his house in Ramat Gan. On our way we drove along Allenby Street in Tel Aviv, in the vicinity of the Great Synagogue. I would not be exaggerating if I were to say that he pointed at every other house we passed by and said "I built that one." It filled me with pride that my uncle was involved in the construction of the first Jewish city in Eretz Israel.	[David Kohen 2000] 1930s [R.N]
Tehran	Uncle Yaaqov lived in a rented apartment not far from us. He was very socially involved, often inviting friends and family members to his home and he was also a welcomed guest at the homes of his acquaintances. His cousins (my parents and my uncles) often tried to sway him to get married, but to no avail; he would jokingly avoid the subject.	1960s

Ramat Gan	After several years in Tehran, back in the 1960s, Uncle Yaaqov returned to Israel. He lived in Ramat Gan, in a small but beautiful apartment, which was tastefully decorated with beautiful pieces of art. Uncle Yaaqov was very active in matters of the community. He was among the founders of the Fund for Mutual Community Assistance and contributed much to public social activities.	1970s [הקופה ההדדית]
	As compensation for being childless, he established a synagogue in his name, called Tiferet Yaaqov, in Ramat Gan (at 28 HaAmal St.) At the end of his life he moved to the home for senior citizens in Ramat Gan.	
	After Yaaqov's death, a memorial ceremony was held at the Mashhadi immigrants' Central Synagogue in Holon. The community initiated an auction of the art works in his apartment. The art pieces were sold to those who cherished Yaaqov and the proceedings were donated to the public fund. The ark in the synagogue in Holon was dedicated to Yaaqov ben Hanna and Binyamin Nissim.	1980s
	Many years after his death (in 2010), during a ceremony awarding scholarships to Mashhadi students, the title 'Beloved of the Community' was awarded to Yaaqov Nissim.	**2010**
	Sources	
	This essay is based on my long acquaintance with Uncle Yaaqov from my childhood in Tehran until his death in Israel in 1996. Reuven Nissimi	[2010] [ח' סיוון תשע"ו]

Itzhaq ben Mashiyach

	Chronicles	
Beit Saba Sixth Generation	I remember when we lived on the second floor next to Grandfather **Daniel** and Grandmother **Dvora**, rest in peace. Their parents lived on the same floor, Grandfather **Rachamim**, of blessed memory, and next to them lived the Shmuel Nissimi family (Agha Esmael) who later became my father-in-law, father of my wife Miriam Nissimi, who was not yet born. Grandmother Dvora sat near the samovar in the courtyard – wrapped up in a large shawl to warm her shoulders – and asked me if I'd like to sit next to her under her shawl and warm up. Thusly grandmother expressed her love for me, her first grandchild. I remember **Great-grandfather Rachamim** as a tall man with a long beard lying sick on his bed, with his medicine bottles next to him. One morning I saw that many people were gathered near our home and my Grandfather Daniel was shouting and crying and hitting his head – Great-grandfather Rachamim had died. This was the first time I saw Grandfather Daniel - he had just returned from a business trip to Afghanistan and had arrived just in time to pay his last respects to his father.	
Beit Aba Seventh Generation	I was born in 1928 in the city of Mashhad to my honorable father **Mashiyach** son of the late Daniel and to my beloved mother the late **Malka** of the Karmeli family. My first childhood memories in Mashhad were of the religious seminary where my forefathers prayed. There I first learned to read from the Torah – it was close to where we lived. Engraved in my mind was the image of Uncle Simcha (Reza) the Elder, head of the Zioni family. I saw him a few times standing in the middle of the courtyard near the water well with the staff that he would lean on, holding in his hand a bottle with tobacco water. If a child would utter a bad word, he would open the child's mouth, and threaten to pour the bitter water in.	1928 [Beit Midrash]
	Eretz Israel	
Immigration to Eretz Israel	When I was four years old, we still lived as forced converts in Mashhad. My late father Mashiyach (Mehdi) decided to immigrate to the Holy Land. At that time people usually travelled in groups and we joined (with my brother Rachamim and Yaaqov the infant) a group with Uncle Yosef, Nissim ben Efraim, and Mordechai Zar. We took a dilapidated bus to Karachi, which was then part of India. We lived in the synagogue courtyard, which was small and dark. In Karachi, my father teamed up with a few families and established trade relations with Karakul skins and carpets. We stayed there for a few months and never imagined then that Karachi would eventually become a second home to my father. To support his family in Jerusalem, father had to return to Karachi because of the hunger and hardships in Eretz Israel. My father lived there until the day of his death, and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Karachi. We traveled from Karachi to Baghdad. But when we arrived, we were immediately put in jail. The police forced my mother to give them her jewelry and stole everything we	1932 [Mordechai Zar was a Member of Knesset in the 1950s]

	had brought with us. A few days later we were released. We took a bus from Baghdad to Syria, from Syria we went to Lebanon, and from Lebanon we walked to Eretz Israel.	
Jerusalem	In 1933 we arrived in our Holy Land, and lived in a house in the courtyard of the Mashhadi synagogue of Haji Adoniyahu in the Bukharan Quarter. Even then there was already a flourishing Mashhadi community in Jerusalem. In that same house my brother Ben-Zion was born. My father worked as a construction worker. He took me to study at the Talmud Torah "Nezer Aharon" with Mola Mamon on David Street. Many of the middle-class members of our community studied there. Mola Mamon was intelligent, sharp and an educator. He knew Hebrew grammar, and made a point of reading and writing properly. He believed in strong discipline and punishment. Hananiya, the youngest son of Eliyahu HaKohen (among the community elders of the neighborhood), Itzhaq Elishayoff and I – we were close friends and stayed in touch all our lives.	1933
Bene Beraq	In 1936 we left Jerusalem and moved to a sandy, unpaved village called Bene Beraq, where some of our relatives lived. That was the first time I met my uncles, my father's brothers: Moshe, Avraham, Yosef and Binyamin and their sister Tzipora (Mina).	1936
Kfar Avraham	Grandfather Daniel, of blessed memory, who lived and worked in Peshawar (then part of India), sent us money and told us to buy a plot of land in Israel so that all of his five sons could work together. With this money we purchased a plot of land in Kfar Avraham, one of the first moshavim of HaPoel HaMizrahi named after Rabbi Avraham HaCohen Kook, of blessed memory. The residents of Kfar Avraham belonged to the Yavneh group, who were trained in Germany and from there were sent to the kibbutzim and moshavim of the movement. Grandfather's house was being built in Kfar Avraham, but the money ran out before they could install windows, doors, electricity and water. We lived a modest life there, very difficult for father and mother, but for me those childhood days were, even though short-lived, the most beautiful of my life. The Ashkenazi families from Germany were very good to us. In the village there were many great educational institutions "Mossad Aliyah," "Yeshivat Torah and Melacha," the "ORT" institution and the "Netzach Israel" school. All the boys wore uniforms, blue shirts and gray pants. We had a wonderful life, in nature - hiking, growing vegetables, working in the chicken coop, raising goats, etc.	
Back to Jerusalem	Suddenly the beautiful childhood days at Kfar Avraham were over. In 1938 my father decided to move to Jerusalem, hoping to earn a better living. We lived at 2 Yechezqel Street in Geula. We had one large room with a water faucet, beds, and a table and chairs. Mother cooked on a primus stove in the stairwell. The room was behind a butcher shop and on the common wall was a cooling machine that worked incessantly and was disturbing at night. I went to the "Nezer Aaron" school, and father opened a small shop for fruits and	1938

	vegetables. It did not take long before he went bankrupt because on hot summer days, at the end of the day, all the produce was spoiled and rotting. My father went back to work in construction, carrying heavy stones. There occurred a work accident. He suffered great pain so much so that he could not work at construction anymore. To find a good job he had to join the organized labor movement whose members wore a blue shirt with a red ribbon (tie) and who paid membership dues and carried red flags. This reminded my father of the ruthless Bolshevik regime in the Soviet Union everyone had fled from – and here in our own country, our fellow Jews from Russia and Poland were members of this party. He did not see himself suited to modern life where our Ashkenazi brothers led the way in the new country, and this may have been one of the reasons he decided to leave Eretz Israel and go to Peshawar to work with his father who dealt in rugs and Karakul skins. The bitter day arrived when I was about eleven years old. My father called me and said: My firstborn son, I'm going to India for a few years and you must be responsible for your mother and five brothers. He sailed through the Suez Canal to India.	
	The Holocaust	
Meeting the Refugees	During World War II, the Jewish community was aware and apprehensive about everything that occurred on the front lines. We anxiously followed the news about the movements on various fronts and the small community mobilized itself for war against the Nazi enemy. Many young people joined the British Army and the Jewish Brigade and were the first to come face to face with Holocaust survivors, who were just skin and bones. The few survivors and refugees of the Holocaust could not find a safe place to which to flee. Eretz Israel (Palestine) was under the ruling of the White Papers which prevented Holocaust refugees from entering Eretz Israel - the land where their brethren were prepared for all struggles and all efforts to save them and accept them with open arms. The diplomatic approach was to call upon the heads of free countries. But the young people did not see any other option but to fight British rule with force - because they saw that time was short and they had no confidence in the English policy (whose excuse was to maintain a "balance" between the Jewish and Arab communities). The European Jewry Holocaust shocked the country and left its mark on us all, from the elderly to the young. We were happy to see in the newspapers photos of Jews who were fortunate enough to tread on holy ground. After the Belz Rebbe was ransomed and saved, he spent his first Shabbat in Jerusalem in the "Zion" orphanage in the Bukharan Quarter. We were allowed to look upon him after the prayers. Even I, the little one, wanted to see him. To my surprise, I found myself in a line a few hundred meters from the entrance to the orphanage. At the entrance they told us that when we pass by him, we should make two blessings: "Mechaye HaMetim" (revival of the dead מחיה מתים) and "Shehechiyanu" (He who has given us life שהחיינו). When I entered, I saw the Rebbe sitting on a chair wearing Shabbat clothes and covered with holiness, and his body was that of a boy of ten years. I'll never forget that image; it made a huge impression on me. Every Saturday, the community leaders, from all the political parties, held rallies at 11:00 am at the Edison Cinema. The speakers who got us excited and enthusiastic then	Beginning of the 1940s

	were Zvi Kolitz, D. A. Altman, Moshe Sharett, etc. They pointed the youth in different directions. One who influenced me – I still cannot forget his words - was the speech of the late Rabbi Ze'ev Gold, who returned from his trip to Europe after his visit to the extermination camps. With a hoarse voice he described before a large audience the events that took place in the death camps. With tears in his eyes, he said that all the cases mentioned in Parashat "Ki Tavo" (דברים פרק כ"ו) were realized in us, and that the European Holocaust demands that every Jewish youth must think about practical actions to save our people.	
	The Underground	1940s
Etzel	Most of the young people in those days belonged, by education and upbringing, to a particular organization - the Haganah, Etzel or Lechi. I chose the middle faction - Etzel. This faction was right-leaning, and many of its members were observant Jews. I had heard about Etzel via the leaflets they distributed. One of the flyers announced the fall of Commander David Raziel - who was a disciple of the late Rabbi Kook, of blessed memory. I got closer to the Mizrachi faction because their leaders – such as Rabbi Bar Ilan, Rabbi Maimon and Rabbi Ze'ev Gold – leaned more towards Etzel. Another thing that influenced me to join Etzel was that when I lived in the Bukharan Quarter, corner of Yechezqel and David Sts. - I used to pass by the cell of the Brit HaChashmonaiim (Alliance of the Hasmoneans) – whose members were young, observant Jews, and very nationalistic. They wore a dark blue uniform. All the members were educated and from prominent families. I used to pass by, and I envied them. I was 14 years old when I joined Etzel. At that time I worked in an office building as an elevator boy. A member of our community, whose name was Menachem Nuriel, worked in one of the offices. Once, when I took him up in the elevator I learned about his admiration for Etzel. Some days later I was approached by a young man who asked me if I wanted to join Etzel, and when I answered in the affirmative he invited me for a certain time on a certain evening to the Spitzer School for Girls, in the Bukharan Quarter. According to instructions, I knocked three times and repeated the password given to me. The gate opened and closed and someone escorted me to one of the classrooms. The place was completely dark; in a classroom behind a small screen sat two young men. I was told to stand at attention – and my whole body was shaking. They asked me personal questions, including the reason I decided to join Etzel. The first thing I had to do was to choose an 'alias'. I chose the name "Ben-Ami." The reason I chose this name was that my relative, Nethanel Nissim, one of the first diamond cutters in the country, began his profession in Netanya. At that time, the mayor of Netanya was Oved Ben-Ami. To me, it was a beautiful and magical name, and eventually I chose it to be my family name.	1942
Basic Training	Our first Etzel meeting was scheduled for Saturday in the Sanhedria neighborhood and to my surprise I found there eight young men from my class, who belonged to the Afghani community from the neighborhood of Beit Israel. The first operations we performed were drill and discipline. Our commander was a young Yemeni, serious and tall-standing. He spoke of Jewish pride and glory. Sometimes he would take us to a	

	store to buy us a cold drink, and he demanded that we drink like soldiers and make a toast. His instructions were that if we see him in the street, we should behave as if we do not know him. The "Afghani cell" was later disbanded for lack of discipline and lack of punctuality in appearing at meetings.	
First Military Actions	Our new group consisted of seven members from the various Sephardic communities. My alias was "Yosef". This group was commanded by Itzhaq White whose alias was "Ehud". White was the opposite of his predecessor – he was cheerful and happy and fully trusted us. We even knew his place of residence. Under his command I carried out my first activities for Etzel – putting up posters. Most of the time we would go out at midnight, and we were busiest especially before Yom Kippur because the British were warned not to stop us from blowing the shofar at the Western Wall. For hanging posters, I was accompanied by a girl named Reuma. She was the first girl I ever dated. The practice was that, if a British police car passes, we were to behave like a pair of lovers. No such opportunity ever arose. Our leader Itzhaq White (rest in peace) was killed in the War of Independence. An article was written about him in the "Herut" newspaper, and a book was written in his memory. Our third commander was Menachem Avigdor, later Attorney Avigdor. Menachem was educated, comfortable in speaking and a persuasive person. One member of our group was Avshalom Habib - one of the fourteen of Olei HaGardom ("those hanged in the gallows"). Menachem chose me one evening to stand with him on Shmuel HaNavi Street to welcome a new candidate. The candidate never showed up. Menachem asked me if I have a girlfriend. It was a rarity at that time for a commander to hold a conversation on topics that did not strictly relate to the organization. I said 'no', and I asked him how a person can tell if a girl is suitable for him. Menachem said there was no need to worry about it or think about it, that the right one will come along. "When you see her, you'll know she's for you," he said, and continued – "when a young man comes of age, and thinks about a girl, it is natural that at first he thinks mostly about the exterior, the superficial - which is later dwarfed by the daily relationship of the couple. The other side of the coin is very important – the girl's character, educating the children, and the home." Later he said that in the organization a lot of the young women fell in love with their commanders and thought they were great – but these commanders were very different in their daily lives and the match was unsuccessful. I found much wisdom in his words and repeated them to my students in the coming years.	
Unfounded Hatred	Commander Menachem Avigdor promoted me to the role of Adjutant to the Jerusalem commander "Assaf" (alias), who was Eliyahu Lankin, commander of the ship "Altalena". This job required many hours of work; they decided on a "salary" for me, and my new role came with new responsibilities and opened up secrets. I had to go to the commander's office which was located in Nachlaot. On my first visit to his office I noticed that everything was different from the offices I was used to. It was located behind an old broken-down house. It was a room of about 3 x 2 meters and contained a table and two old chairs. There I met "Assaf" (Eliyahu Lankin), commander of Etzel in Jerusalem and third in command of Etzel nationally. He had a serious face and a tough body, was kind and gentle-looking, and he spoke in a whisper. He was modest and did	

	not make himself conspicuous. My job was to be the link between the commanders in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. In Tel Aviv a young man and woman would wait for me at a designated hour, and take an envelope from me. My job was not particularly dangerous but it was essential. Only once did "Assaf" assign me a dangerous role for which, in those days, I could have received a death sentence. He requested that I put a gun in my pouch and transfer it to another office in Jerusalem. He wrapped the gun in a handkerchief, and asked for forgiveness for putting me at risk. That was a difficult time in my life. It was a period of strife and hatred between brothers. We heard that the Palmach was doing its absolute best to follow our young men and inform on them to the British. One morning I had to meet "Assaf" on King George Street. He did not show up. This was an extremely rare occurrence in the underground. I went back to the empty office. Several hours later, I was informed that "Assaf" and Attorney Yaaqov Meridor had been arrested by the British.	
Questioning	My new commander Yehoshafat had a distinctive way of walking and his behavior was like that of a diplomat. Our meetings were short, on the street. During my service as the link between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, I often slept at night in Tel Aviv, on Ahad HaAm Street, corner of Herzl, second floor – which was used as a carpet warehouse by one of our community members, HaTzadiq Mehdi. He gave me shelter there and asked no questions. I thought the storm was over, but when I returned to Jerusalem I discovered that the Palmach was following me. They also stood guard opposite our house. Later, my mother, of blessed memory, noticed that people were watching our house and that something was going on with me, but she never asked questions. One evening I went out and suddenly two burly guys approached me, put sunglasses on me, grabbed me from both sides and ordered me to quietly get into their car. We stopped on a busy street and they took me upstairs and placed me in a room. I sat on a chair and they tied my hands. They told me they knew all about my family and they knew I worked for Etzel and they were ready and willing to hand me over to the British, but refrained from doing so because I was supporting a mother and five siblings, but in return they wanted from me the names of all the people I knew who worked in the office of Etzel. I told them that I didn't know any of the leaders of Etzel. They insisted, and when I refused, they threatened to harass me and my family. Then they loosened my hands and took me out to the street. Later I noticed that the investigation had taken place on the top floor of the Tel Or cinema. I also noticed that they took me through the front entrance of the theater and that it was at a time when people were walking into and out of the cinema.	
Imprisonment at Kishleh	The British imposed a total curfew in the evenings. One evening, a bomb was placed right in front of our house and two British soldiers were killed. Immediately after the explosion, British troops broke into many homes and arrested several hundred people. At midnight they also broke into our room and beat us with the butts of their guns and ordered me to get into a military truck and took us to the Kishleh Prison in the Russian Compound.	

	The room they put us in was huge and looked like a cave. The investigators asked me personal questions, and also if I belonged to one of the organizations. I told them that our family was loyal to the British and that my father was in Peshawar (Pakistan), working at the post office, and that he often urged me to learn English - his wish was that we will go to Britain. Some days later they released me.	
	War of Independence	
From Etzel to the IDF	On November 29, 1947, in Jerusalem, word spread about the partition proposal – which meant that the British would leave, the Jewish refugees from Europe would come to Eretz Israel, and the underground would be exposed. Etzel, whose strength was greatest in Jerusalem, conquered key Jerusalem positions. Our first military camp was in the school in Katamon with a few dozen friends in the classrooms. The first news we received was that within a few days we would see the commander in chief. In the heat of the day, several thousands of us stood at attention when Menachem Begin himself appeared with senior Etzel commanders. Begin wore a brown suit, he was slim, and his glasses and mustache were prominent. He spoke for the first time on the balcony of the Varshavsky Hotel before an audience of thousands of people who listened to one of his most impassioned speeches. The rumors that the British were leaving were true, and we received instructions to get on the trucks heading out to Sheikh Jarrah (today Ramat Eshkol). There we looked out over the rooftops at the Central School for British Police Officers that stood at a key crossroads and at an important point in northern Jerusalem. The British evacuated the building on Saturday morning and when we went inside, we found a large number of police uniforms. Each of us was allowed to choose pants, a shirt and a sweater, because generally speaking we were in pretty forlorn condition. The next day we cleared the place for those coming after us - they arrived under fire and shelling by the Jordanians. Some of our friends were killed in this action. Our second operation was in Dir Yassin. We arrived there on the second wave. Our mission was to go from house to house to see if the place was purified. Dir Yassin shocked me. Most of the Arab villagers had been killed or had fled. We were sent back to Sheikh Jarrah to occupy the mosque that stood at the crossroads near the tomb of Shimon HaTzadiq, on the road leading up to Mount Scopus. We were to lay explosives, blow it up, and then storm the mosque. The Jordanians saw us and started shooting at us. We received orders to retreat immediately. It turned out that the dynamite did not explode as a result of the humidity, the operation failed, and Etzel had two wounded men. The Etzel men in Jerusalem were the last who enlisted in the IDF because of the special status of Jerusalem, and thus I became IDF soldier number 140411 at Schneller Camp, not far from my family in the Geula neighborhood. My military service in the IDF was shortened because I was the only breadwinner in my family.	1947
Conclusion	During the years of my childhood I supported my dear mother and my five brothers by doing work such as selling newspapers, selling fruit and vegetables, selling papers on the streets, delivering letters to various offices in Jerusalem, and operating the elevator for the people who lived at 2 Ben Yehuda Street.	1997

	In my younger years I loved all creatures, I used to get involved with everyone I spoke with. I paid attention to every conversation I heard, and eventually during the establishment of Israel I was sent by the Jewish Agency for training at Montefiore College in Ramsgate, England. In college I was trained to be a teacher and 'Shaliach' (emissary) to the diaspora communities that needed Jewish education and relations with Israel. I was sent to India and Singapore. I taught in all the Jewish schools in those countries, and then returned to Israel to find a life partner. In 1959 I married Miriam of the Nissimi family, who had also been born in Mashhad, was a relative, and also a student of Aliyat HaNoar [a Jewish organization that rescued thousands of Jewish children from the Nazis and resettled them in Eretz Israel]. Together we were sent to faraway New Zealand and Australia, and thus I have dedicated my life to teaching Jewish heritage in Jewish schools and, above all, I educated my students to love the people of Israel and the Land of Israel. Itzhaq Nissim (Ben-Ami) died in 1997 in Australia. He was buried at Har HaMenuchot in Jerusalem, the city he grew up in, he protected, and he so loved	
	Sources	
	This paper is based on: Memoirs of **Itzhaq Ben-Ami**, edited by his wife, **Miriam**	[2004]

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Pictures & Documents
Introduction

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Pictures
Yehuda
Shmuel
Mishael
Reuven
Zvuloni
Zioni
Nethanel
Binyamin
Rachamim

*

Documents
Yehuda
Shmuel
Mishael
Reuven
Zvuloni
Zioni
Nethanel
Binyamin
Rachamim

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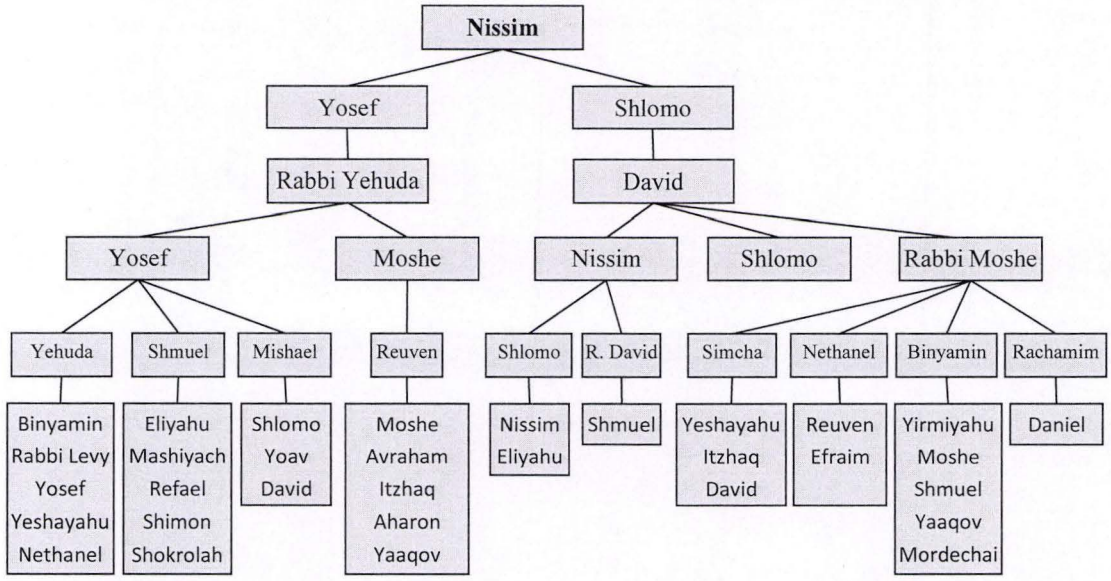
Pictures

Introduction

	Structure	
Generations	This section presents pictures and documents related to branch E of the Nissimi families.	[Nissimi Tree]
a		1700
b		
c		
d		1800
e		
f		1900

Saghir Nejad Zvuloni Zioni

Under the **Nissimi Tree** you can find the names and pictures of the a-f generations.

	Origin of Pictures & Documents	

The pictures and documents in this section are courtesy of:

Branch	Names
Yehuda	Malka Nissimi, Behrouz Dilmanian, Itzhaq Nassimi, Mashiyach Mashiyach, Sara Zilpa Kohen
Shmuel	Itzhaq Nassimi, Mike and Ania Nassimi
Mishael	Esther Shahvardi
Reuven	Shira Nissim (presentation), Dor Mayers (site), Gavriel Yaaqobi, Hanna and Simon Kohen Zedeq
Zvuloni	Shlomo and Hanna Vahapour, Efraim and Zvia Zvuloni, Avraham and Zvia Zvuloni
Zioni	Shlomo Zioni
Nethanel	Dvora Nissim, Nathan Nissim (ben Nissim) Simcha ben Mordechai Nissim

	Binyamin: Dina Elyaqim, Hanna Vahapour, Barry Nissim, Malka Nissimi, Anat Rahmani Rachamim: Itzhaq and Miriam Ben-Ami, Hanna Vahapour (In some cases the name is mentioned only next to the picture.)	

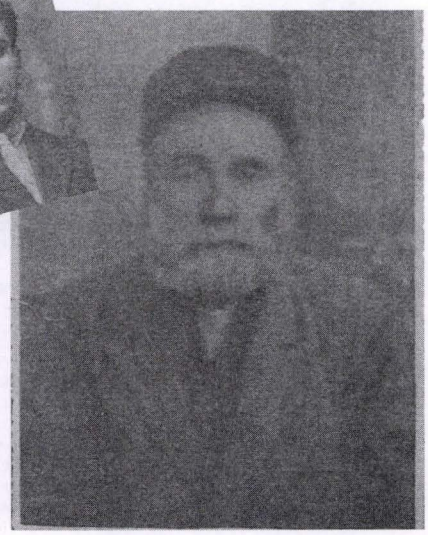
בנימין - Amin

סבתא רבתא שרה בת מישאל (רעיית בנימין)
Great Grandmother Sara bat Mishael (Binyamin's wife)

חסרה תמונת
בנימין בן יהודה נסים
Missing Picture of

Mashhad משהד

משהד 1926 ~ - חנוכה בן בנימין נסים ויפה בת ראובן
Mashhad ~1926 - Chanuka ben Binyamin Nissim and Yafa bat Reuven



משהד 1940 ~ - ראובן בן אברהם נעמת (אביה של סבתא יפה)
Mashhad ~1940 - Reuven ben Avraham Nemat (father of grandmother Yafa)

משהד 1933 - חנוכה
בנימין, מלכה (יתומים מאימא)
Mashhad 1933 - Chanuka
Malka and Binyamin (orphaned by their mother)

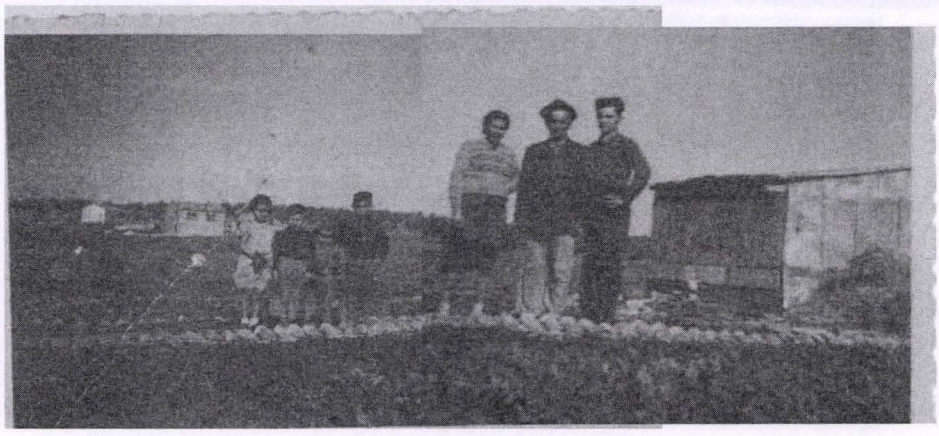
משהד 1935 - פייצ'אלה זביחי, חנוכה נסים
סבתא רבתא שרה בת מישאל (באמצע) עם הבנות מלכה זביחי, רחל נסים, לילי זביחי
מלכה, בנימין
Mashhad 1935 - Chanuka Nissim, Feizolah Zabihi
Great grandmother Sara bat Mishael (middle) with her daughters
Lili Zabihi, Rachel Nissim and Malka Zabihi
Binyamin and Malka

Hebrew Class שיעור עברית

משהד 1947 - שיעור עיברית (זיהוי באדיבותה של צביה בת הרב לוי נסים)
מארוס איליאן, יפה נאמדאר, אניס כהן, רחל כהן, עצמת (Esmat) בצלאלי, תאנום-נאז נוואיי, אסנת כהן, דבורה קצב
ויקטוריה כהן, יפה עזיז, יפה נאמדאר, **מלכה נסימי**, אשרף לולואי, ביבי-ג'אן אקאלר, שרה קצב, יוכבד
מלוכ מלאת, אפסר גורג'יאן, מלוכ גורג'יאן, אשרף אקאלר
מאחורי התמונה כתוב: (למלכה נסימי) לזכרון הימים בכתתנו לשעור העברית - חנה לולואי

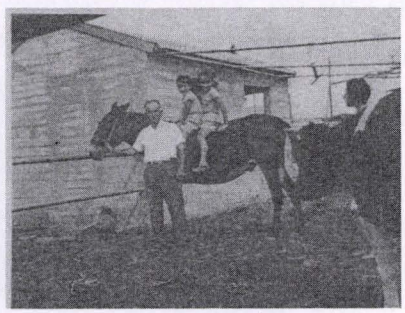
Mashhad 1947 - Hebrew class (names are identified by Zviya bat Rabbi Levi Nissim)
Dvora Ghassab, Osnat Kohen, KhanomNaz Navaey, Esmat Bassali, Rachel Kohen, Enis Kohen, Yaffa Namdar, Maruss Eliyan
Yocheved, Sara Ghassab, BibiJan Aghalar, Ashraf Loloey, **Malka Nissimi,** Yaffa Namdar, Yaffa Aziz, Victoria Kohen
Ashraf Aghalar, Mluk Gorjian, Afsar Gorjian, Mluk Mella
At the back of picture is written: [To Malka Nissimi] in memory of the days in our Hebrew school - Hanna Loloey

Israel - Living on Moshav ישראל - חיים במושב



מושב בית נחמיה 1954- בנימין , חנוכה, חנה, דויד, מרים, מרדכי, אסתר
Moshav Beit Nechemiya 1954 - Esther, Mordechai, Miriam, David, Hanna, Chanuka, Binyamin

שדות המושב 1959 - אמי מלכה, דוד בנימין
דניאל, ראובן
Moshav fields 1959 - Uncle Binyamin, my mother Malka
Reuven, Daniel



הרפת 1959 - אימי מלכה, ראובן, דניאל, סבא חנוכה
Cowshed 1959 - Grandfather Chanuka, Daniel, Reuven, my mother Malka

מושב 1959- דויד, רחל, מלכה, בנימין, חנוכה, חנה, מרים
ראובן, מרדכי, דניאל
Moshav 1959 - Miriam, Hanna, Chanuka, Binyamin, Malka, Rachel, David
Daniel, Mordechai, Reuven

Bar Mitzva בר מצווה

ת"א 1986- בר מצווה של **אבירם** בן בנימין נסימי
דורית, האב בנימין, מלכה, סבתא, **אבי (בר מצווה)**, האם זילפה, סבתא חנה, מוטי, דודה רחל, סבא חנוכה, הלן
יפית, יוני, חנוך
Tel Aviv 1986 - Bar Mitzva of **Aviram** ben Binyamin Nissimi
Helen, Saba Chanuka, Aunt Rachel, Moti, Sabta Hanna, Zilpa (mother) Avi (Bar Mitzvah), Sabta, Malka, Binyamin (father), Dorit
Chanoch, Yoni, Yafit

Grandson wedding בחתונת הנכד

ישראל 1986- סבא חנוכה וסבתא חנה בחתונת הנכד (ראובן והילדה)
Israel 1986 - Saba and Sabta at their grandson's wedding (Reuven and Hilda)

Zeved HaBat - Malka זבד הבת - מלכה

סעודת זבד הבת של הנינה (מלכה) 1988- סבא רבה חנוכה נפטר לאחר כשבועיים
סבא רבה חנוכה ואחיו זילפה, משה, רחל, לילי
Zeved HaBat (new-born celibration) of great granddaughter (Malka) 1988 - Saba Raba Chanuka passed away later two weeks
Saba Raba (great grandfather) Chanuka with his brother Moshe and his sisters Zilpa, Rachel and Leili

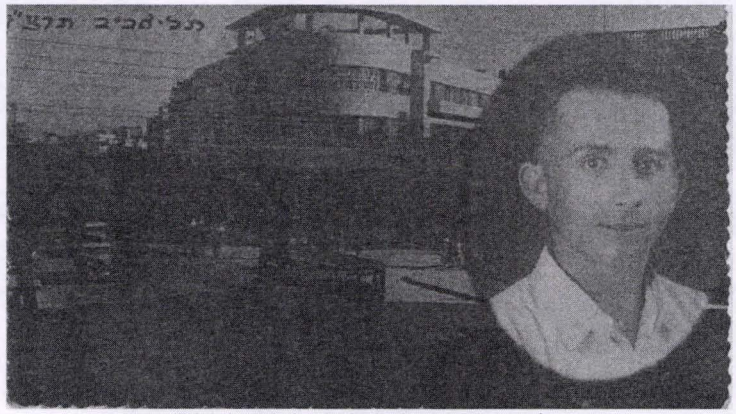
Pictures of Moshe ben Binyamin Nissim **תמונות משה בן בנימין נסים**

In the Persian Army בצבא הפרסי

משהד 1930 ~ - משה נסים חייל בצבא הפרסי

Mashhad ~1930 - Moshe Nissim, a soldier in the Persian army

Tel Aviv תל אביב



Tel Aviv - Moshe Nissim 1936 תלאביב - משה נסים

Wedding חתונה

Jerusalem - Moshe Nissim and his wife Hanna 1938 ירושלים - משה נסים ורעייתו חנה

M. Abdolah - הרב לוי

Rabbi Levi and his wife הרב לוי ורעייתו

טהראן 1967 - אסתר בת רחמים

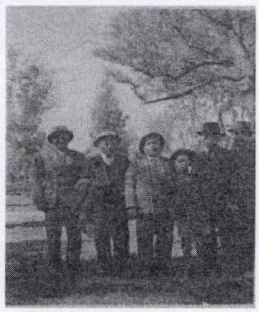
Tehran 1967 - Esther bat Rahamim

הרב לוי ליד התיבה, מעוטרת בספרי תורה
עידגאה, בית הכנסת המרכזי. מוצאי שימחת תורה תש"ו , 1946
(באדיבות אברהם וצביה זבולוני)

Rabbi Levi next to Teiva with Torah scrolls on it
Eid-Gah, Central Synagauge, conclusion of Simhat Torah, 1946
(Courtsey of Zvia Zvuloni)

Peshawar 1941 -1934 פישאוור

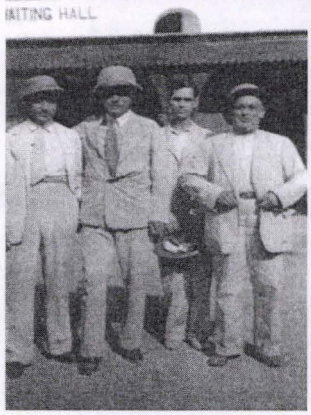
הרב לוי עם אחד מבני העדה
R. Levi with a Mashhadi friend



הרב לוי (באמצע) עם בני העדה
R. Levi (middle) with Mashhadi friends

הרב לוי - תמונת דרכון
R. Levi - A passport picture

Peshawar 1934-1941 פישאוור



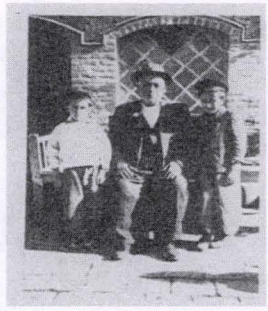
הרב לוי, אליהו בן אפרים נסים, שלמה כרמלי, מרדכי נסים

פישאוור 1930s - הרב לוי, מרדכי נסים, שלמה כרמלי

Peshawar, 1930s - Shlomo Karmeli, Mordechai Nissim, R. Levi
Mordechai Nissim, Shlomo Karmeli, Eliyahu ben Efraim Nissim, R. Levi

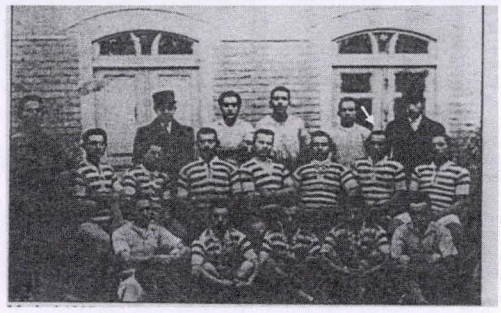
Mashhad משהד

משהד 1930~ - הרב לוי (כובע זה הונהג ע"י רצ'א שאה)
Mashhad ~1930 - R. Levi (this hat was introduced by Reza Shah)



משהד 1949 ~ - הרב לוי עם האחים והאפור
Mashhad ~1949 - R. Levi with Vahapur brothers
(Courtsey of Vahapur brothers באדיבות האחים והאפור)

New horizons during Pahlavi period אפיקים חדשים של תקופת הפהלווים



משהד 1935 - קבוצת כדורגל תג'דוד (התחדשות, מלשון ג'דיד)
אין זהוי למעט **אליהו נסים** (שורה שניה - שני מימין)
Mashhad 1935 - Tajadod (renewal) football team

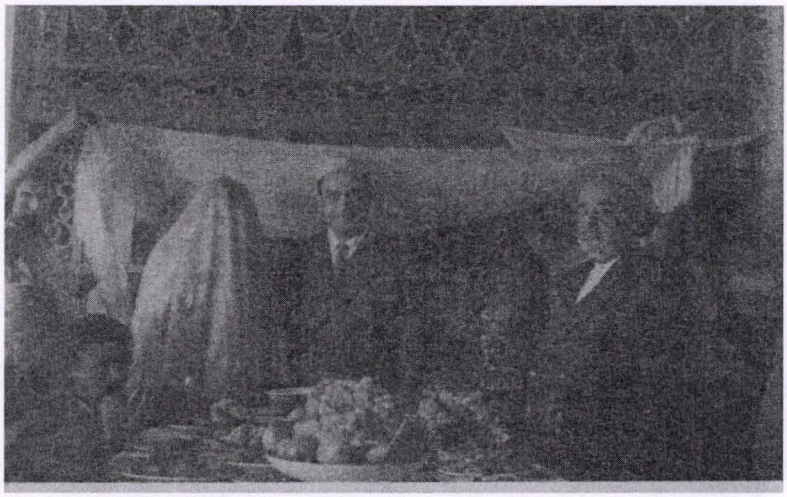
"14 אספנד 1314 - **לסבתי הנכבדה, מאת אליאס נסימי"**
[באדיבות משיח משיח]

משהד 1936 ~ - **אליהו נסים** - אחד הקציניים הבודדים מקרב יהודי משהד
Mashhad ~ 1936 - Eliyahu Nissim - One of (few) officers of the community
[Cortesy of Mashiyach Mashiyach]

R. Levi at Engagement of his Daughter הרב לוי מקדש את בתו

משהד 1946- הרב לוי , אליהו דילמאניאן ובנו החתן שמעון (לוטפאלה), הכלה צביה נסים
Mashhad 1946 - R. Levi, Eliyahu Dilmanian and his son the groom Shimon (Lotfolah), the bride Zvia Nissim

R. Levi at Engagement of his Son הרב לוי מקדש את בנו



משהד 1946- הרב לוי , החתן חנניה (לוטפאלה) והכלה בת-שבע בת יצחק נסים

Mashhad 1946 - R. Levi, his son the groom Hananiya (Lotfolah), the bride BatSheva bat Esshagh Nissim

Religious Meal סעודת מצווה

דויד בן חנוכה (ילד), בנימין בן דניאל, ציון בן שמואל, החתן שמעון והכלה צביה, הכלה בת-שבע והחתן חנניה, יהודה בן הרב לוי

הערה: הנשים הן בחדר השני (סבתא ?? מסתכלת מאחורי החלון)

Yehuda ben R. Levi, bride & grooms BatSheva & Hananiya and Zvia & Shimon, Zion ben Shmuel, Binyamin ben Daniel, David ben Chanuka

Note: The women are in the back room (Grandmother ?? is looking inside from the window)

Weddings חתונות

טהראן 1949 Tehran
מיכאל ומלכה
Michael & Malka

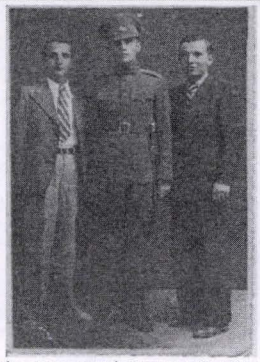
Israel - 1962 ישראל
יהודה וציפורה
Yehuda and Tzipora

Mashhad 1947 משהד
חנניה ובת שבע
Hananiya & BatSheva

Mashhad - ~ 1947 משהד
שמעון דילמאניאן וצביה בת הרב לוי
Shimon Dilmanian and Zvia bat R. Levi

Mashhad ~ 1942 משהד
אליהו וחנה
Eliyahu & Hanna

Mashhad משהד



משהד 1938 ~ - דויד נעמת-נז'אד, שמעון דילמאניאן (קצין), אליהו נסים

משהד 1953 ~ - שמעון, ניסן (בהרוז), צביה, סעיד
(חצר בית במשהד - בתקופה זו מרבית יהודי משהד כבר עזבו את העיר)
Mashhad ~ 1953 - Sa'iid, Zvia, Nissan (Behrouz), Shimon

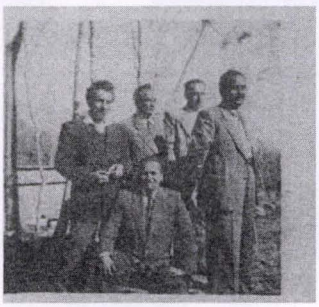
Mashhad ~1938 - Eliyahu Nissim, Shimon Dilmanian (officer), David Nemat-Nejad

Saba and Sabta in Tehran for the wedding of the son Michael סבא וסבתא מגיעים לטהראן לרגל נשואי הבן מיכאל

Tehran - 1949 טהראן
זן-דאש האדי, בהרוז, אסתר בת רחמים, זן-דאש אסמעאל
ZanDash Esmael, Esther bat Rahamim, Behrouz, ZanDash Hadi

הרב לוי מחזיק את נכדו הראשון ניסן (בהרוז) דילמאניאן
R. Levi with his first grandson Nissan (Behrouz) Dilmanian

Picnic פיקניק



Tehran 1949 טהראן

חנה (אשת אליהו),
יפה (אשת רפאל), מלכה, בת שבע, דבורה (אחות רפאל)
Hanna (wife of Eliyahu),
Dvora (sister of Refael), Bat-Sheva, Malka, Yafa (wife of Refael)

חנניה, רפאל בן ראובן, אליהו, ציון בן שמואל , מיכאל
Zion ben Shmuel, Eliyahu, Refael ben Reuven, Hananiya Michael

Saba in Teheran סבא בטהראן

עזיזאלה יעקוב-זאדה, אלברט בן עזיזאלה, **שמואל בן יצחק נסים - בר מצווה**, חנניה בן הרב לוי
דניאל וראובן בן מיכאל, יצחק בן חנניה, **הרב לוי בן יהודה**
בית כנסת לויאן בטהראן 1956 ~ - בר מצווה של שמואל בן יצחק נסים

טהראן 1952 ~ - שלמה כרמלי, לא מזוהה
לא מזוהה, הרב לוי, שמואל בן בנימין

Hananiya ben R. Levi, **Shmuel ben Esshagh Nissim - Bar Mitzva**, Albert ben Azizolah, Azizolah YaghubZadeh
R. Levi ben Yehuda, Itzhaq ben Hananiya, Reuven and Daniel ben Michael
Levian Synagogue ~1956 - **Shmuel ben Esshagh** Nissim's Bar Mitzva celebration

Tehran ~ 1952 - ??, Shlomo Karmeli
Shmuel ben Binyamin, R. Levi, ??

Birthday יום הולדת

שורה א

Line b שורה ב

Line a

Line c שורה ג

Teheran, Reuven's Birthday 1959 טהראן, יום הולדת לראובן

א. זומי, אסתר, חכמת, לידא, עצמת, חאג'י אמין ובתו, שמואל, רפי, ניאורא, מורה לאנגלית, בת-שבע והבת ז'אנט

ב. אלברט, **מלכה**, חבר, חבר, **מיכאל**

ג. חבר, **ראובן**, דנאל, יצחק

a. Bat Sheva and her dauther Janet, English teacher, Niyara, Rafi, Shmuel, HajiAmin and his daughter, Essmat, Lida, Hekmat, Esther, Zomi

b. Michael, Moshe (friend), Isaac (friend), **Malka,** Albert

c. Itzchaq, Dani, **Reuven,** Roni (friend)

Bar Mitzva בר-מצווה

Tehran - Behrouz's Bar Mitzva, Levian Synagogue 1961 טהראן - בר מצווה של בהרוז, ליד ההיכל של בית הכנסת לויאן

בת-שבע וחנניה, **בהרוז** (ניסן), מלכה

לידא, יצחק, צביה, ראובן, מיכאל, שמעון (מחזיק את פארה)

דני, ז'אנט, מינו

Malka, **Behrouz** (Nissan), Hananiya, Bat Sheva

Shimon (with Farah), Michael, Reuven, Zvia, Itzchaq, Lida

Minoo, Janet, Dani

Bar Mitzvot בר-מצוות

טהראן 1963 - בר מצווה של **ראובן**, בית כנסת "סבא"

הרב יוסף דיל מכבד את תלמידו בהנחת התפילין

Tehran 1963 - **Reuven's** Bar Mitzva, Saba Synagogue

R. Yosef Dil honor's Reuven in binding Tefilin

טהראן 1963 - בר מצווה של **יצחק**, כניסה לאולם בית כנסת "סבא"

פארה, סבתא אסתר, יצחק

Teheran 1963 - **Itzhaq's** Bar Mitzva, Saba Synagogue

Itzhaq, Sabta Esther, Farah

Bar Mitzvah בר-מצווה

Tel Aviv - Bar Mitzva of Daniel 1965 ת"א - בר מצווה של דניאל

רחל, דוד, ראובן, מרים, זילפה, בנימין, אסתר, יהודה, ציפורה

מיכאל, מלכה, אליהו, חנוכה, **דני הבר מצווה**, מוטי, חנה

Zipora, Yehuda, Esther, Binyamin, Zilpa, Miriam, Reuven, David, Rachel

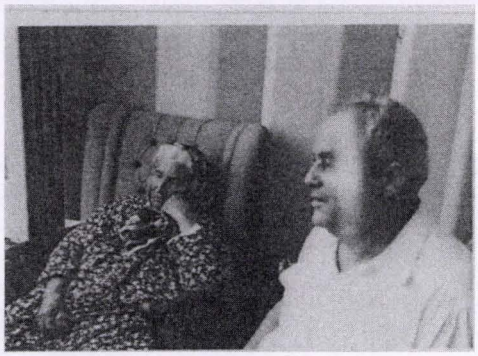
Hanna, Moti, **Dani** (Bar Mitzva), Chanuka, Eliyahu, Malka, Michael

Behrouz, waiting for flight to Israel בהרוז, לפני המראתו לארץ

טהראן 1965, נמל תעופה מהראבאד - מלכה, סבתא אסתר, דני, בהרוז

Tehran 1965, MehrAbad Airport - Behrouz, Dani, Sabta Esther, Malka

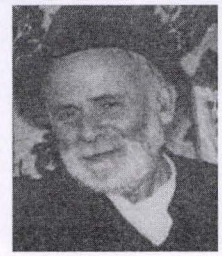
Grandmother makes Aliya סבתא עולה לא"י



Israel - Esther bat Rahamim with the son Michael 1968 ישראל - אסתר בת רחמים עם בנה מיכאל

Yussuf - יוסף

Saba and Sabta סבא וסבתא



ישראל 1960 - סבא יוסף וסבתא רבקה
Israel 1960 - Saba Yosef and Sabta Rivqa

Tehran טהראן

טהראן 1945 - דינה בחצר הבית
Tehran 1945 - Dina at her home

טהראן 1944 - מחסני ג'וינט למשלוח מצרכים לפליטים ברוסיה. משיח עומד ליד הג'יפ.
Tehran 1944 - Joint storehouse for donations to refugees from Russia. Mashiyach stands next to the Jeep

Teheran, ... how good and how pleasant it is ... to dwell together in unity 1946 טהראן, הנה מה טוב ומה נעים - שבת אחים גם יחד

משה, משיח ודינה, רחמים וחורשיד, עזיזאלה ומאהרוח, חנניה
Hananiya, Azizolah & Mahrokh, Rahamim & Khorshid, Mashiyach & Dina, Moshe

חורשיד, דינה, (עומדת - ??), מאהרוח, חנה, מיכאל, רחמים, חנניה, עזיזאלה
Azizolah, Hananiya, Rahamim, Michael, Hanna, Mahrokh, (standing - ??), Dina, Khorshid

חנניה בן הרב לוי, עזיזאלה דרדרס, רחמים ומשיח
Mashiyach, Rahamim, Azizolah, Hananiya

חנניה בן הרב לוי, עזיזאלה דדרס, מיכאל בן הרב לוי, רחמים
חנה (אשת אליהו בן הרב לוי), מאהרוח, דינה וחורשיד
Rahamim, Michael ben R. Levi, Azizolah Dadrass, Hananiya ben R. Levi
Khorshid, Dina, MahRokh, Hanna (wife of Eliyahu ben R. Levi)

Relationship קשרי משפחה

רחמים, משה ודינה הם אחים. חורשיד (אשת רחמים) היא הבת של דוד רפאל. משיח (בעלה של דינה) הוא האח של אשת דוד רפאל.
חנניה ומיכאל הם בני הדוד מ' עבדאלה. חנה, אשת אליהו היא נכדה של דודה חנה. מאהרוח, אשת עזיזאלה היא נכדה של דודה דבורה.

Rahamim, Moshe and Dina are brothers and sister. Khorshid (wife of Rahamim) is the daughter of Uncle Refael. Mashiyach (husband of Dina) is the brother of the wife of uncle Refael.
Hananiya and Michael are M. Abdolah's sons. Hana, wife of Eliyahu is the grand daughter of aunt Hana. MahRokh, wife of Azizolah is the grand daughter of aunt Dvora

Starting a Family הקמת משפחה

ישראל 1963 - משה ופרידה
Israel 1963 - Moshe and Fridah

ישראל 1951 - נתנאל וזוליכה
Israel 1951 - Nethanel and Zoleicha

טהראן 1945 - משיח משיח ודינה
Tehran 1945 - Mashiyach Mashiyach and Dina

טהראן 1949 - רחמים וחורשיד
Tehran 1949 - Rahamim and Khorshid
"לאחותי הנכבדה וגיסי הנכבד מהדי אקא - 9 אבאן 1327"

ישראל 1960s - משה ופרידה
Israel 1960s - Moshe and Fridah

טהראן 1946 - משיח משיח ודינה
Tehran 1946 - Mashiyach Mashiyach and Dina

טהראן 1950s - רחמים וחורשיד
Tehran 1950s - Rahamim and Khorshid
"למזכרת - לכבי מר מהדי אקא - ב' ניסן"

Aliyah to Israel עליה לישראל

ישראל 1951 - משיח, דינה, והילדים אבי ויצחק. נתנאל וזוליכה
Israel 1952 - Zoleicha and Nethanel. Dina, Mashiyach and the sons Itzhaq and Avi

טהראן 1950 - תמונת דרכון לארץ
Tehran 1950 - Passport picture

הרצליה 1955 - משיח, דינה והילדים אברהם, יצחק וצביה
Hertzeliya 1955 - Dina & Mashiyach. Kids Avraham, Itzhaq and Zvia

הרצליה 1951 - מעברה. משיח, דינה והילדים אברהם ויצחק
Hertzliya 1951 - Maabara (immigration camp)
Mashiyach, Dina and the sons Avraham and Itzhaq

Happiness שמחות

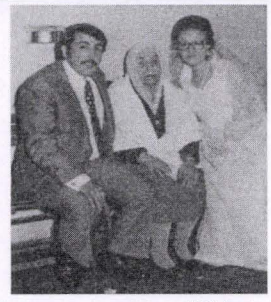
ישראל 1960 - דינה, סבא יוסף ואברהם
Israel 1960 - Avraham, Saba Yosef and Dina

ישראל 1960 - חתן הבר מצווה אברהם עם סבא וסבתא
Israel 1960 - Hatan Bar Mitzva Avraham with Saba and Sabta

ישראל 1960 - אברהם, אליהו בן הרב לוי נסים (בן דוד של ההורים)
Israel 1960 - Avraham and Eliyahu ben Rabbi Levi Nissim (parents' cousin)

ישראל 1960 - האם דינה, אברהם, משה, סבתא רבקה ומשיח
Israel 1960 - Mashiyach, Sabta Rivqa, Moshe, Avraham, Dina

ישראל 1975 - סבתא עם הנכדים ריקי, ליאורה ונתי. והנינה נטלי (בת אברהם)
Israel 1975 - Sabta with the grandchildren Riqi, Liora and Nathi. And Nataly bat Avraham



ישראל 1973 - סבתא בחתונת הנכד אברהם
Israel 1973 - Sabta at the wedding of her grandson Avraham

AbdolSamad - ישעיהו

Israel ישראל

תל-אביב 1964 ~ - ישעיהו נסים ורעייתו דבורה
Tel Aviv ~ 1964 - Yeshayahu Nissim and his wife Dvora

Daughters - הבנות

Hanna and Binyamin Nissim חנה ובנימין נסים

בנימין בן הרב משה נסים וחנה בת יהודה נסים

Hanna bat Yehuda Nissim and Binyamin ben Rabbi Moshe Nissim

Courtesy of Hannah Vahapour באדיבות חנה ווהאפור

Rachel and Rabbi Refael Aqalar רחל והרב רפאל אקלר

הרב הרב רפאל בן הרב מרדכי אקלר ורחל בת יהודה נסים

Rachel bat Yehuda Nissim and Rabbi Refael ben Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar

Courtesy of Misha Reuveni באדיבות מישה ראובני

Soltan and Eliyahu Nissim סולטאן ואליהו נסים

חסרות תמונות של סולטאן בת יהודה נסים ואליהו בן שמואל נסים

Missing pictures of Soltan bat Yehuda Nissim and Eliyahu ben Shmuel Nissim

AbdolRahim - אליהו

Eliyahu אליהו

Missing pictures of
Eliyahu ben Shmuel
and his wife **Soltan bat Yehuda**

חסרות תמונותיהם של
אליהו בן שמואל
ורעייתו **סולטאן בת יהודה**

Itzhaq and Rivqa יצחק ורבקה

משהד 1935~ - רבקה בת אליהו כהן, אשת יצחק נסים
Mashhad ~1935 - Rivqa bat Eliyahu Kohen, wife of Itzhaq Nissim

בומבי 1935 - יצחק (האדי) נסים בן אליהו
Bombay 1935 - Itzhaq (Hadi) Nissim ben Eliyahu

משהד 1935~ - רבקה בת אליהו כהן והבנות בת-שבע (ביבי-ג'אן) וחנה (מאהרוח)
Mashhad ~1935 - Rivqa and daugthers Hanna (MahRokh) and Bat Sheva (BibiJan)

משהד 1940~ - יצחק נסים בן אליהו
Mashhad ~1940 - Itzhaq Nissim ben Eliyahu

Summer Holiday חופשת קיץ

אושאן (כפר נופש בקירבת טהראן) **1953** - תמונה קבוצתית של נשי העדה באושאן, רחוק ממוקד מהומות פרשת "מוצדק" [מגילה/89]

מודגש: ענף שמואל וענף ראובן (צע'יר)

א. אסתר (בת שמואל נסימי) רעיית יהודה ארפע-כהן, מהין ניסאני, חורייה עבדאלהואדה, **ניארא (בת יצחק נסים) רעיית יוסף כהן צדק** , אסתר (פרחאנדה) רעיית משה (אקא ג'אן) נסימי

ב. **בת-שבע נסימי (בת יצחק) ובנה יצחק**, מרים בת נצראלה נסימי (אחות אקא ג'אן)

ג. לא-מזוהה, רבקה (בת דויד) רעיית שמואל (פרצ'אלה) נסימי, ביבי ג'אן נאמדאר, פרווין דודזאדה, רעיית דויד נעמתג'אד והבן, שרה (בת דויד) רעיית אליהו בצליאן, מלכה בני-לוי

ד. מרסדה לוי, מהנאז נסימי, נירה מרדכי, סוראיא לוי

ה. רוזאלין (דודזאדה) לויאן, רוברט לוי, לא-מזוהה, **אלברט יעקבזאדה, זומי (יעקבזאדה) נצראלהי, חנה (בת יצחק נסים) רעיית עזיזאלה יעקבזאדה (דרדרס)**

Ushan (resort close to Tehran) **1953** - A group of Mashhadi women in Ushan, far from the center of Mossadegh riot [Megillah/89]

Bolded: Shmuel and **Reuven** branches

a. **Esther wife of Moshe (AghaJan) Nissim, Niyara (bat Itzhaq Nissim) wife of Yosef Kohen,** Hurieh AbdolahZadeh, Mahin Nissani,
Esther (bat Shmuel Nassimi) wife of Yehuda Arfa-Kohen

b. Miriam bat Nassrolah Nassimi (sister of AghaJan), Bat Sheva Nassimi (bat Itzhaq) & her son Itzhaq

c. Malka Bnei-Levy, **Sara (bat David) wife of Eliyahu Bassalian,** wife of David NematNejad & son, Parvin DavoodZadeh, BibiJan Namdar,
Rivqa (bat David) wife of Shmuel (Feizolah) Nassimi, ??

d. Soraya Levi, **Niyara Mordechai,** Mehnaz Nassimi, Mersedeh Levi

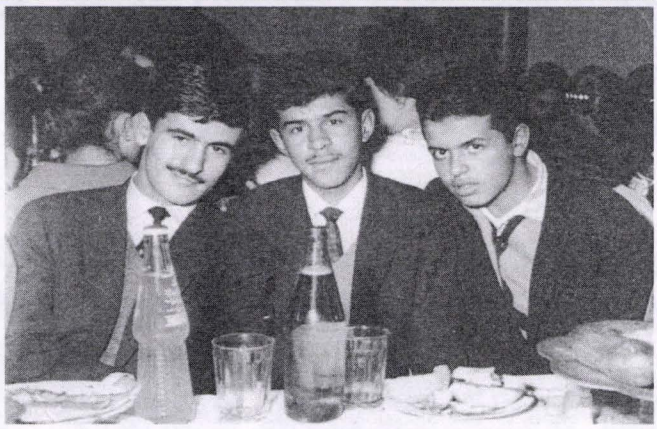
e. **Hana (bat Itzhaq Nissim) wife of Azizolah YaghubZadeh (Dadrass), Zomi (YaghubZadeh) Nassrolahi, Albert YaghubZadeh,**
??, Robert Levi, Rozalin (Davoodzadeh) Levian

Bar Mitzva בר-מצווה

בית הכנסת לויאן בטהראן 1956 ~ - בר מצווה של שמואל בן יצחק נסימי
עזיזאלה יעקוב-זאדה (דרדרס), אלברט בן עזיזאלה, **שמואל** (בר מצווה), חנניה בן הרב לוי
דניאל וראובן בן מיכאל, יצחק בן חנניה, **הרב לוי בן יהודה**

Levian Synagogue, Tehran ~1956 - Bar Mitzva of Shmuel ben Itzhaq Nassimi
Hananiya ben Rabbi Levi, **Shmuel** (Bar Mitzva), Albert ben Azizolah, Azizolah YaghubZadeh (Dardrass)
Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda, Itzhaq ben Hananiya, Reuven and Daniel ben Michael

Shmuel and Friends שמואל וחברים



Tehran ~ 1960 טהראן

Three Generations שלשה דורות

בית כנסת סבא 1963 ~ - בר מצווה של ראובן נסימי
רבקה (זן-דאש-האדי) והבנות ראישקה, ניארא וטאווס
הנכדים דוריס ואלי
Rivqa (Zan-Dash-Hadi) with her daughters Tavuss, Niyara and Ra'ishkeh
Grandchildren Eli and Doris

Mehdi - משיח

Mashiyach משיח

Missing pictures of
Mashiyach ben Shmuel
and his wife **Fatemeh Levi**

חסרות תמונותיהם של
משיח בן שמואל
ורעייתו **פטמה לוי**

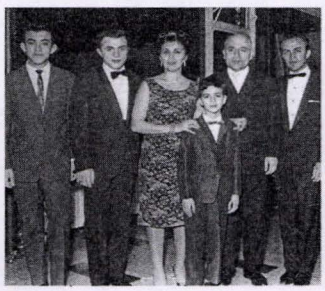
Shmuel and Malka-Esther שמואל ומלכה-אסתר

טהראן - שמואל ומלכה-אסתר
Tehran -Shmuel & Malka-Esther

Tehran - with the family טהראן - עם בני משפחה

אברהם ואלברט בני שמואל נסימי. [ג'האנגיר, מאהרוח (עבראני), יפה (חכימי) והבת שהלאה, עבדולרחים, מוסא, דאריוש] אעתצאמי
שמואל נסימי, רעייתו מלכה (עליוף) והבן משיח. יצחק ומרים עליוף אעתצאמי והנכד כאמראן. פרי ועבדולרחים לויאן והבת אליזאבת
[Daryoush, Mussa, Abdolrahim, Yafa + child Shahla (Hakimi), Mahrokh (Ebrani), Jahangir] Etessami; **Mouris Nassimi, Albert Nassimi**
[Abdolrahim + child Elisabeth, Pary] Levian; [Maryam Aliof, Esshagh Aliof + grand child Kamran] Etessami; **Malakeh Nassimi, AghaJan Nassimi and the son Mehdi**

Family Pictures תמונות המשפחה



האמבורג - ההורים שמואל ומלכה-אסתר. הילדים אברהם, יעקב, משיח ויצחק
Hamburg - Parents Shmuel and Malka-Esther. Sons Itzhaq, Mashiyach, Yaaqov and Avraham

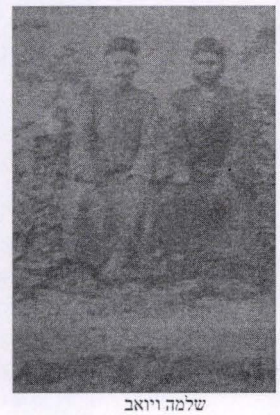
פגישות עם צמרת רוחנית ופוליטית בישראל
Meetings with leaders in Israel

Sadogh - מישאל

Sons of Mishael בני מישאל

דוד
David

יואב
Yoav



שלמה ויואב
Yoav and Shlomo

Marv 1910s מרוו

Shlomo and his Family שלמה ובני המשפחה

משהד 1935 ~ - שלמה בן מישאל ובני משפחה

ציפורה נעמתי (רעית משה), **משה בן שלמה (נוראלה)** מחזיק את בנו אברהם אליהו אלישעי ובנו יעקב

ציפורה בת משה (מאישתו הראשונה דינה) - רעית דויד חכימאן, **שלמה בן מישאל נסים**, אימו של אליהו אלישעי, רעית אליהו - חורשיד בת משה (מאישתו הראשונה)

מישאל בן משה, תמר בת משה

Mashhad ~ 1935 - Shlomo ben Mishael and his Family

Eliyahu Elisha'ii & his son Yaaqov **Moshe ben Shlomo (Nurolah)** with his son Avraham, Zipora Nemati (Moshe's wife)

Wife of Eliyahu - **Khorshid bat Moshe** (from the first wife), Mother of Eliyahu, **Shlomo ben Mishael Nissim,** wife of David Hakimian -**Ziporah bat Moshe** (from the first wife, Dina)

Tamar bat Moshe, Mishael ben Moshe

David ben Shlomo דויד בן שלמה

Israel - David Nassimian & Tamar Dil 1964 ישראל - דויד נסימיאן ותמר דיל

Miriam bat Mishael מרים בת מישאל

משהד 1935 - לא מזוהה, משה, אליהו כהן צדק, שמואל, מרים בת מישאל

Mashhad 1935 - Miriam bat Mishael, Shmuel, Eliyahu Kohan Sedegh, Moshe, ??

מרים, הבן שמואל. הבנות: נגאר, הבת הקטנה, מינא ורבקה

Miriam with her daughters Rivqa, Mina, younger daughter, Negar and her son Shmuel

AghaJan - משה

Moshe ben Reuven Saghir משה בן ראובן צע'יר

Missing the pictures of
Moshe and his wife **Dina**

חסרות תמונות
משה ורעייתו **דינה**

David ben Moshe Nissim דוד בן משה נסים

מלכה - רעית דוד

Malka wife of David

משהד (תורקובה ?), 1928 -דוד והילדים מינא ויצחק
תורקובה - מקום בחיק הטבע לפיקניק

Mashhad (Torghobeh ??), 1928 - David with his children Itzhaq and Mina

Davids Children בני דוד

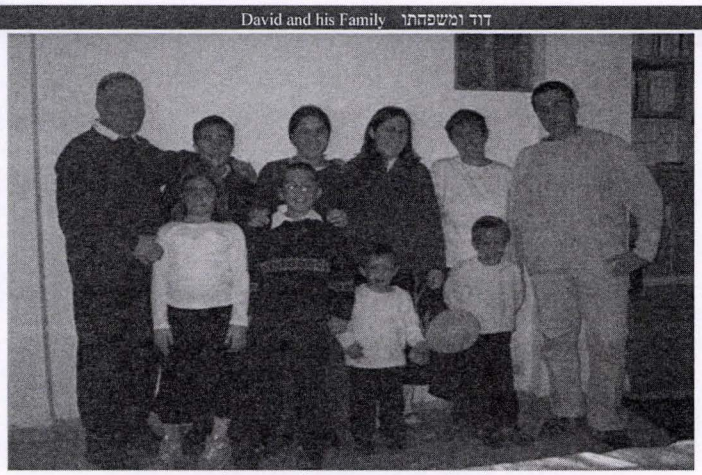
Rivqa רבקה

Mina מינא

Itzhaq and his wife Tamar יצחק ורעייתו תמר

Sara שרה

David and his Family דוד ומשפחתו



דוד ורעייתו **יעל** - הילדים: עדי, אורי, שירה, אלעד, נועם, הילה, ישי, אסף

David and his wife **Yael** with their children: Adi, Ori, Shira, ElAd, Noam, Hila, Ishai, Assaf

Yosef ben Moshe Nissim יוסף בן משה נסים

משהד, 1930s - יוסף (יושב מימין) ומאחוריו בן דודו חביבאלה מרדכי
Mashhad, 1930s - Yosef (sitting at right); behind him Habibolah Mordechai, his cousin

Yosef ben Moshe Nissim יוסף בן משה נסים

א"י, 1940 - שלמה (היה באצ"ל), יוסף ורעייתו דבורה בת אהרון,משה
דינה, אהרון,חנה
התמונות עוצבו בבולי Palestine
Eretz Israel, 1940 - Moshe, Yosef & his wife Dvora bat Aharon, Shlomo (served in Etzel - Irgun)
Hanna, Aharon, Dina

א"י 1945 - יוסף, דורה והילדים
Eretz Israel, 1945 - Yosef, Dora and the children

AbdolRahim - אהרון

Aharon ben Reuven Saghir אהרון בן ראובן צע"יר

משהד, 1930s - אהרון וצרויה בת מישאל נסים

Mashhad, 1930s - Aharon and Tzruya bat Mishael Nissim

Mashiyach ben Aharon Nissim משיח בן אהרון נסים

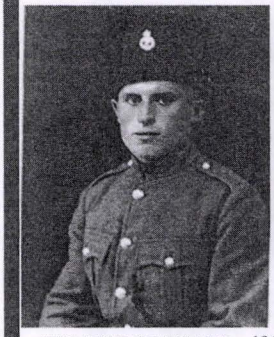
צביה, משה, משיח

Mashiyach, Moshe, Zviya

משהד, 1930s - אהרון, משה , **משיח** ודינה, גול-אנדאם, שרה

Mashhad, 1930s - Sara, GolAndam, **Mashiyach** and Dina, Moshe, Aharon

Reuven Ben Aharon Nissim ראובן בן אהרון נסים



א"י, 1940~ - ראובן במדי נוטר בתקופת המנדט

Eretz Israel, ~ 1940 - Reuven in police uniform during the Mandate

א"י, 1935 ~ - ראובן עם האחיות דבורה ואסתר

Eretz Israel,~1935 - Reuven with his sisters Esther and Dvora

משהד, עיד-גאה. 1927~ -ראובן בחזית בית הספר

Mashhad, EidGah. ~1927 - Reuven in front of his school

Dauthers of Reuven - בנות ראובן

Miriam bat Reuven מרים בת ראובן

Missing the pictures of
Miriam bat Reuven and her housband
Yehuda ben Yosef Nissim

חסרות תמונות
מרים בת ראובן ובעלה
יהודה בן יוסף נסים

Leah bat Reuven לאה בת ראובן

Missing the pictures of
Leah bat Reuven and her Housband
Shmuel ben Yosef Nissim

חסרות תמונות
לאה בת ראובן ובעלה

Rivqa bat Reuven רבקה בת ראובן

Missing the pictures of
Rivqa bat Reuven and her housband
M. Mashiyach Nemat

חסרות תמונות
רבקה בת ראובן ובעלה

Nethanel ben Mashiyach נתנאל בן משיח

נתנאל בן משיח ורעייתו ומלכה
Nethanel ben Mashiyach and his wife Malka

Gavriel ben Nethanel Yaaqobi גבריאל בן נתנאל יעקובי

ירושלים 1955 - גבריאל ורחל
Jerusalem 1955 - Gavriel and Rachel

צה"ל 1951
Zahal 1951

Yaaqobof Courtyard - Extended family חצר יעקובוף - המשפחה המורחבת

יקותיאל ורעייתו שושנה, גבריאל ורעייתו רחל
ההורים נתנאל ומלכה, באמצע דיאנה בת יקותיאל

Gavriel with his wife Rachel, Yequtiel and his wife Shoshana
The parents Nethanel and Malka, in the middle Diana bat Yequtiel

יקותיאל, אליהו, גבריאל
שושנה, מלכה, דיאנה, נתנאל, רחל
הלן, ארלט (בת אסדאלה)
Gavriel, Eliyahu, Yequtiel
Rachel, Nethanel, Diana, Malka, Shoshana
Arlet (bat Assadolah), Helen

ירושלים, שכונת הבוכרים, חצר יעקובוף - 1955 - Jerusalem, Bukhari quarter, Yaaqobof Courtyard - 1955

1960 - רחל ובנה אפרים (בן 4)

1960 - Rachel and her son Efraim (4 yrs old)

מארי בת נוראלה, מורווריד יעקובוף (בנה בן החמש נהרג במלחמת השחרור), טובה (בכ"נ שערי טובה על שמה), צביה מלכה רעיית נתנאל יעקובוף, רעיית נוראלה יעקובוף

Zviyah, Tova (Shaarai Tova Synagogue is named after her), Morvarid Yaaqobof (her 5 yrs son was killed in Independence war), Mary bat Nurelah Wife of Nurelah Yaaqobof, Malka wife of Nethanel Yaaqobof

With the Prime Ministers עם ראשי ממשלה

גבריאל עם רה"מ מנחם בגין

Gavriel with Prime Minister Begin

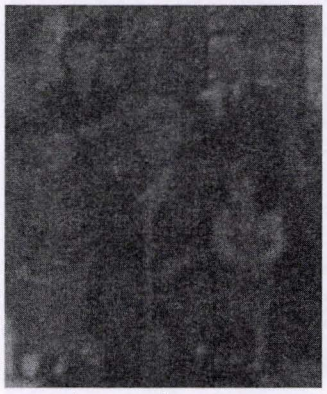
גבריאל עם רה"מ שמיר

Gavriel with Prime Minister Shamir

גבריאל עם רה"מ שרון ורעייתו

Gavriel with Prime Minister Sharon and his wife

Zvia bat Reuven צביה בת ראובן



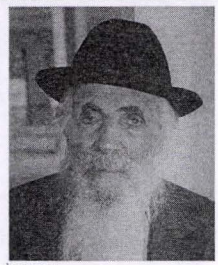
סרווי בת ראובן - רעית אליהו (עבדולוואהאב)אמדאר
Sarvi bat Reuven - wife of Eliyahu (AbdolVahab) Namdar

יוכבד ומשיה מרדכי. הבן אלישע,רעיתו וילדיו
Yocheved and Mashiyach Mordechai, the son Elisha and his wife and children

Yocheved bat Reuven יוכב בת ראובן

יוכבד ומשיה (עבדולחמיד) מרדכי
Mashiyach (AbdolHamid) Mordechai and Yocheved

Nurolah - נסים



נסים זבולוני (1990s) ורעייתו חנה בצלאלי (1942)
Nissim Zvuloni (1990s) and his wife Hanna Bassali (1942)

Mashhad משהד

משהד 1942 - חנה זבולוני (באמצע) עם הילדים נתנאל, שמחה,אברהם ושרה
Mashhad 1942 - Hanna Zvuloni (middle) with her children Sara, Avrahan, Simcha, and Nethanel

משהד 1946 - אסתר בת עזיזאלה זבולוני , שרה בת שמואל זבולוני, מלכה בת מ' חליל, שרה בת נוראלה זבולוני, יפה בת נוראלה זבולוני
(רעית יצחק סקאב), (רעית משיח זבולוני), (רעית נתנאל זבולוני), (רעית ניסן חורסנדי), (רעית דוד זבולוני)
Mashhad 1946 - Yafa bat Nurolah Zvuloni, Sara bat Nurolah Zvuloni, Malka bat M. Khalil, Sara bat Shmuel Zvuloni, Esther bat Azizolah Zvuloni
(wife of Itzhaq Saghab), (wife of Nissan Khorsandi), (wife of Nethanel Zvuloni), (wife of Mashiyach Zvuloni, (wife of David Zvuloni)

טהראן 1950 (לפני עליה לארץ) - דבורה סקאב, עזיזאלה זבולוני, יפה זבולוני ובעלה יצחק סקאב
מרים סקאב, חנה זבולוני, אסתר סקאב, נוראלה זבולוני, בן ציון זבולוני, יוסף סקאב
מלכה זבולוני, ??? קצב
Teheran 1950 (before aliyah to Israel) - Itzhaq Saghab and his wife Yafa Zvuloni, Azizolah Zvuloni, Dvora Saghab
Yosef Saghab, Ben Zion Zvuloni, Nurolah Zvuloni, Esther Saghab, Hanna Zvuloni, Miriam Saghab
?? Ghassab, Malka Zvuloni

משהד 1939. יצחק סקאב (עומד, שני משמאל), סולימאן אהרוני (ישב, שלישי משמאל)
Mashhad 1939. Itzhaq Ghassab (back, second left), Soleiman Aharoni (front, third left)

משהד 1946 - יצחק סקאב ורעייתו יפה, מרים (אם יצחק)
הבנות צביה,אסתר ודבורה
Mashhad 1946 - Itzhaq Saghab with his mother Miriam and his wife Yafa
The daughters Dvora, Esther and Zvia

משהד 1946 - דבורה, צביה
יצחק סקאב מחזיק את אסתר, האם מרים, הרעיה יפה בת נוראלה זבולוני
Mashhad 1946 - Zvia, Dvora
Itzhaq Saghab with his mother Miriam, his wife Yafa bat Nurolah Zvuloni and his daughter Esther

משהד 1947. צביה בת יצחק סקאב
Zvia bat Itzhaq Saghab

משהד 1947 - יצחק בן יוסף סקאב, רעייתו והבנות אסתר ודבורה (לבוש תורכמני)
מעבר לגג - סמטת (כוצ'ה) האג'יהא ובית מוהבאן
Mashhad 1947 - Itzhaq ben Yosef Saghab, his wife, and his dauthers Dvora and Esther (wearingTurkoman dresses)
Beyond the roof - Hajiha street (Kucheh) and Moheban's house

מסורת משפחתית: סבא רבא, יצחק בצלאלי, היה עיוור. ראה בחלום את אליהו הנביא מורה לו לחלק מים בסימטת האג'יהא.
הוא מתעורר ועיניו רואות. מאותו יום הוא לוקח על עצמו לחלק מים חינם בסימטת האג'יהא – לכן קוראים למשפחה סקאב (סקאיי).

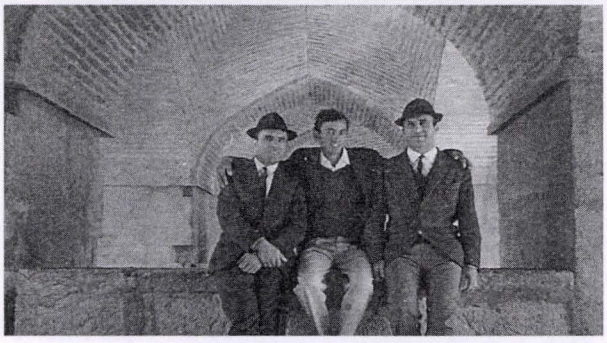
Family Tradition: Great grandfather, Itzhaq Betzaleli (Bassali), was blind. In his dream, he saw Eliyahu HaNavi, asking him to supply water in the Hajiha St.
He wakes up - enable to see. Consequently he took upon himself to supply water, free of charge, along the Hajiha st. - therefore his family is known as Saghab (Saghaii)

רבקה (רוקו), רעית עבדאלה חכימי

משהד 1930s - עבדאלה חכימי, ??, ??
רבקה חכימי, הבת אק-ביבי, ??
עבדאלה חכימי - מייסד בי"ס לבנות ארץ' אקדס. מאחורי התמונה כתוב: אקא יוסף יצחקוף

Rivqa (Roghi), wife of Abdolah Hakimi

Mashhad 1930s - ??, ??, Abdolah Hakimi
??, Rivqah Hakimi with her daughter Agh Bibi
Abdolah Hakimi - Founded the Arze' Aghdass girls school. At the back of the picture is written: Agha Yosef Itzhaqof (Esshaghof)



איראן 1966 - רחמים, ??, אברהם (מאחורי התמונה כתוב: פנים גשר חוואג'ר)
Iran 1966 - Avraham, ??, Rahamim (at the back of the picture is written: Inside of Havajer bridge)

Weddings חתונות

טהראן 1950 ~ - נתנאל ומלכה זבולוני
Tehran ~ 1950 - Malka and Nethanel Zvuloni

ישראל 1951 - צביה ואברהם זבולוני
Israel 1951 - Avraham and Zvia Zvuloni

Israel ישראל

ישראל 1959 - בר מצווה של בן-ציון בן נוראלה זבולוני , מולא חליל ונוראלה
Israel 1959 - Bar mitzva of Ben Zion ben Nurolah Zvuloni, Mola Khalil and Nurolah

ישראל 1986 - נוראלה עם הרב פלמן והרב שך
Iisrael 1986 - Nurolah with Rabbi Pelman and Rabbi Shach

Azizolah - אליהו

Mashhad משהד

משהד 1900 ~ - שלמה בן נסים ורבקה בת נתנאל

Mashhad ~1900 - Shlomo ben Nissim and Rivqa bat Nethanel

משהד 1920s ~ - מיכל כאשי, מינה, **מרים בת שלמה זבולוני**, יהודה, **מ' יוסף כאשי** (בן נתן ומיכל) , דינה, נתן כאשי שפרה, שרה

Mashhad ~ 1920s - Nathan Kashi, Dina, **M. Yosef Kashi** (ben Nathan and Michal), Yehuda, **Miriam bat Shlomo Zvuloni**, Mina, Michal Kashi Sara, Shifra

Marv מרוו

מרוו 1930 -משיח בן אליהו

Marv 1930 - Mashiyach ben Eliyahu

Mashhad משהד

משהד (תורקובה) 1950 ~ - ציפורה, יוכבד, חנה (עומדת), רבקה, אליהו

Mashhad (Torghobeh) ~ 1950 - Eliyahu, Rivqa, Hana (standing), Yocheved, Tzipora

Israel ישראל

ישראל 1974- חתונת רחמים בן אליהו זבולוני ורחל בת דויד בן ראובן נסים
לאה (אשת משה), לא מזוהה, יעקב בן אליהו, אליהו זבולוני, רחל בת דויד, רחמים בן אליהו, צפורה בת בנימין, לא מזוהה, דויד נסים, משה בן בנימין נסים, אסתר בת בנימין
בארי בן משה, דניאל בן דויד, ציון בן דויד. חנה בת דויד, ראובן בן דויד, לא מזוהים

Israel, 1974 - Wedding of Rahamim ben Eliyahu Zvuloni and Rachel bat David ben Reuven Nissim
Esther bat Binyamin, Moshe ben Binyamin Nissim, David Nissim, ??, Zipora bat Binyamin, Rahamim ben Eliyahu, Rachel bat David, Eliyahu Zvuloni, Yaaqov ben Eliyahu, ??, Leah wife of Moshe
??, ??, ??, Reuven ben David, Hanna bat David, Zion ben David, Daniel ben David, Barry ben Moshe

ישראל 1974- ציפורה ואליהו
Israel 1974 - Eliyahu and Tzipora

Shmuel - שמואל

Grandparents סבים

מרוו 1910 ~ - סבא הרב דויד בן נסים
Marv ~1910 - Grandfather Rabbi David Nissim

מרוו 1925 ~ - סבתא דינה בת יצחק כורדווני
Marv ~1925 - Grandmother Dina bat Itzhaq Kordevani

Marv מרוו

מרוו 1937 ~ - שמואל, לפני עזיבה למשהד
Marv ~1937 - Shmuel before leaving to Mashhad

מרוו 1928 ~ - (במדים) שמואל בן הרב דויד. בחור רוסי, מ' אקא-ג'ון ששון (ד'וג'אלי)
Marv ~1928 - M. Aghajan Sasson (Zughali), Russian young, (in uniform) **Shmuel ben Rabbi David**

מרוו 1930 ~ - עבדולרחים סימן טוב, אברהם ששון (נהרג במלחמת השחרור), פייצ'אלה ששון
דינה סימן טוב (בת יעקב ששון). זלפה (רעית שמואל) והבת בת-שבע, דינה (רעית הרב דויד), רעית אקא-ג'אן ששון (בת דויד נאמדאר)
שמואל בן הרב דויד, אקא-ג'אן ששון
Marv ~1930 - Feizolah Sasson, Avraham Sasson (was killed in the independence war), AbdolRahim Siman Tov
Wife of Aghajan Sasson, **Dina** (wife of R. David), **Zilpa** (wife of Shmuel) and her daughter **Bat Sheva**, Dina Siman Tov (bat Yaaqov Sasson)
Aghajan Sasson, Shmuel ben Rabbi David

Mashhad משהד

משהד 1939 ~ - חתונת בת-שבע בת הרב דויד עם דויד כלאתי - ווהאפור (בחצר של עבדול-והאב כלאתי)
Mashhad ~1939 - Wedding of Bat Sheva bat Rabbi David with David Kalati - Vahapur (in the courtyard of AbdolVahab Kalati)

משהד 1940 ~ - בת-שבע בת הרב דויד עם בנה ליד האם דינה
Mashhad ~1940 - Bat Sheva bat Rabbi David with her son next to her mother Dina

משהד 1939 ~ - אהרון (רחמתאלה) בן יעקב כורדווני , יעקב בן שמחה, אפרים זבולוני, דויד זבולוני
יושבים - יעקב כורדווני, עבדולוואהב כלאתי, יהודה קורדבני והבן חביב, עבדאלה כלאתי (והאפור), **צביה (רעית אפריים זבולוני),** ישעיהו עבדולאחי, פיצ'אלה ששון, יוסף ד'ג'אלי
Mashhad ~1939 - **David Zvuloni, Efraim Zvuloni,** Yaaqov ben Simcha, Aharon (Rahmatolah) ben Yaaqov Kordevani

Yosef Zughali, Feizolah Sasson, Yeshayahu Abdolahi, Zviya (wife of Efraim Zvuloni), Abdolah Kalati (Vahapur), Yehuda Kordevani and his son Habib, AbdolVahab Kalati, Yaaqov Kordevani

Zioni - ציוני

Zioni Family Father אבי משפחת ציוני

Mashhad - Simcha (Reza) Nissim and his wife Malka Betzalel 1920s משהד - שימחה (רצ'א) נסים ורעייתו מלכה בצלאל

אבי משפחת ציוני (רצ'איוף)

Father of Zioni Family (Rezaof)

Zioni Brothers האחים ציוני

ישראל 1990s - דויד, ישעיהו, יצחק

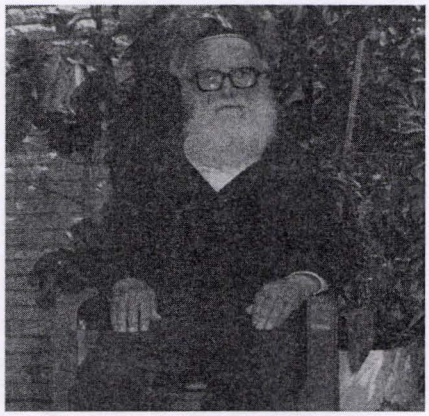
Israel 1990s - Itzhaq, Yeshayahu, David

Yeshayahu ישעיהו

ישראל 1990s - ישעיהו (פרג'אלה)

Israel 1990s - Yeshayahu (Farajolah)

Itzhaq יצחק

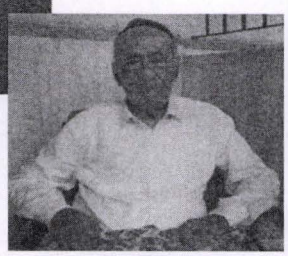


ישראל 1990s - יצחק (בן 93) ורעייתו דינה (בת 86)
Israel 1990s -Itzhaq (93 years old) and his wife Dina (86 years old)

David דויד

ישראל 1980s - דויד ורעייתו אסתר
Israel 1980s - David and his wife Esther

אסתר בת 92
Esther (92 years old)



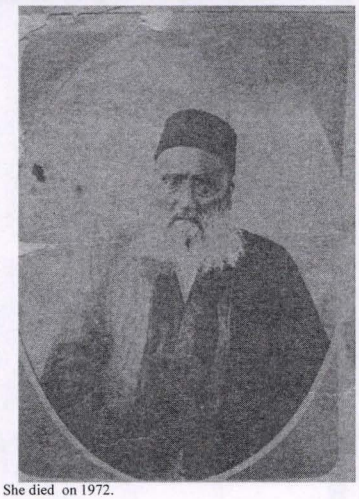
דויד בן 85
David (85 years)

Khodadad - נתנאל

Great-Grandparents סבא רבא וסבתא רבתא

חסרה תמונת
שרה
רעייתו הראשונה
של נתנאל

Missing the Picture of
Sara



ירושלים 1960s~ - אסתר בת משה (ביבי ירושלמי)
ביבי (סבתא) ירושלמי הייתה רעייתו השניה של נתנאל בן הרב משה
לא היו לה ילדים. עלתה יחד עם ה"נכדים" נתנאל ונסים לא"י ולמעשה גידלה אותם. נפטרה ב- 1972.

Jerusalem 1960s ~ - Esther bat Moshe' (Bibi Yerushalmi)
Bibi (grandmother) Yerushalmi was the second wife of Nethanel ben Rabbi Moshe'
She had no children. She made aliyah with Nethanel and Nissim, the "grandchildren", and actually raised them. She died on 1972.

מרוו 1910s~ - נתנאל בן הרב משה (מולא חודאדאד)
כתוב מאחור: עולם הבא ... של מולא חודאדאד ב ... 1342 [16 יוני 1924]
חותמת מאחור: שוכראלה חודאדאדוף - דוד רחמאן זאדה - משהד - 1350 => תירגום החותמת: אפרים בן נתנאל - דויד בן ראובן (סרדאר) - משהד - 1931

Marv 1910s ~ - Nethanel ben Rabbi Moshe (Mola Khodadad)
Written on the back: Was dead on … 1342 (16-Jun-1924)
Signature on the back: Shokrolah Khodadadof - Davood RahmanZadeh - Mashhad - 1350 => Meaning: Efraim ben Nethanel - David ben Reuven (Sardar) - Mashhad - 1931

Eretz Israel א"י

ירושלים 1960s - נתן בן נסים ואחותו אסתר, דבורה ציוני (רעיית מרדכי)
ביבי ירושלמי, נתנאל הלוי ורעייתו חנה (בת נסים), מרדכי בן אפרים

Jerusalem 1960s - Dvora Zioni (Mordechai's wife), Esther bat Nissim and her brother Nathan
Mordechai ben Efraim, Hanna bat Nissim and her husband Nethanel HaLevi, Bibi Yerushalmi

ישראל 1954 - ביבי (סבתא) ירושלמי עם ה"נכדים" מרדכי בן אפרים (אק מוראד) ונסים בן אפרים
כתוב מאחור: מיום ברית מילה של אפרים ת"א 54

Israel 1954 - Bibi (grand mom) Yerushalmi with the "grandsons" Mordechai ben Efraim (Agh Morad), and Nissim ben Efraim
Written on the Back: From the Brith Mila of Efraim, T.A. 54

Torah Dedication הכנסת ספר תורה

רושלים 1960s - הכנסת ספר תורה על שם אסתר בת משה (ביבי ירושלמי)

לא מזוהה, אק מוראד ורעייתו, נתן בן נסים, **ספר התורה**, דבורה, ביבי ירושלמי, פנינה והנכד עמוס, אליהו ציוני, נסים, לא מזוהה

Jerusalem 1960s - Torah Dedication in memory of Esther bat Moshe (Bibi Yerushalmi)

??, Nissim, Eliyahu Zioni, Pnina and the grandson Amos, Bibi Yerushalmi, Dvora, **Torah,** Nathan ben Nissim, Agh Morad and his wife, ??

Rahman - ראובן

Grandparents סבא וסבתא

שמואל בן יצחק כרמלי - 1909
Shmuel ben Itzhaq - 1909

זילפה בת שמואל כרמלי
Zilpa bat Shmuel Karmeli

חסרה תמונת
ראובן בן נתנאל

Missing the Picture of
Reuven ben Nethanel

Bombay בומביי

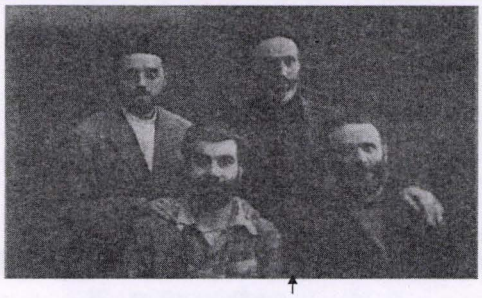
בומביי 1949 - יהודה ויפה
Bombay 1949 - Yehuda and Yaffa

Tehran טהראן

טהראן 1949 - החתן והכלה רפאל ויפה, מלכה נסימי
Teheran 1949 - Malka Nissimi, Bride and Groom Yaffa and Refael

Shokrelah - אפרים

Efraim אפרים



Three Generations שלש דורות

ישראל 1950 - סבא אפרים ורעייתו. הילדים מרדכי, נסים, נתנאל ורחל.

שמחה בן מרדכי, דבורה ציוני אשת מרדכי, נתנאל ורעייתו דבורה יעקבי, רחל בת אפרים, נסים ורעייתו שפרה באשי

חנה בת מרדכי, מרדכי בן אפרים, **סבא אפרים בן נתנאל**, שמואל בן מרדכי, **סבתא פנינה** (ציוני), חנה בת נסים

מאחורי התמונה כתוב בפרסית: תמונה משפחתית למזכרת. עבור אחותי שרה - מאת מורבארי נסים 14.4.50

Israel 1950 - Grandfather Efraim and his wife. The children Mordechai, Nissim, Nethanel and Rachel

Nissim and his wife Shifra Kashi, Rachel bat Efraim, Nethanel and his wife Dvora Yaaqobi, Dvora Zioni wife of Mordechai, Simha ben Mordechai

Hanna bat Nissim, , grandmother **Pnina** (Zioni), Shmuel ben Mordchai, grandfather **Efraim** ben Nethanel, Mordechai ben Efraim, Hanna bat Mordechai

At the back of the picture, in Persian: A remembrance picture of the family. For my sister Sara - from Morvarid Nissim 14.4.50

ישראל 1950s - אירוסין של **חנה** עם **אליהו** יעקובי

בן ציון בן נתנאל יעקובי, **אליהו** בן נתנאל יעקובי

רבקה רעיית אליהו, **דבורה** רעיית נתנאל, **שמואל** בן אק-מוראד, ???, **רינה** ציוני ...

חנה בת אק-מוראד, **יפה ורחל** בנות אפרים, **דבורה** רעיית אק-מוראד, **חנה** בת נסים

דינה אשת יצחק ציוני והנבדה **דינה**, **מלכה** רעיית נתנאל יעקובי, **יוסף ובנימין** ?? (בני ציון ציוני), **שפרה** אשת נסים

נסים בן אפרים והילדים נתן ואסתר, **נתנאל** בן אפרים

עתידים להינשא:שמואל ורינה, יוסף ודינה

Israel 1950s - Engagement of **Hanna** and **Eliyahu** Yaaqobi

Eliyahu ben Nethanel Yaaqobi, **BenZion** ben Nethanel Yaaqobi

Hanna bat Nissim, **Dvora** wife of Agh Morad, **Rachel** and **Yaffa** (daughters of Efraim), **Hanna** bat Agh Morad ....

... **Rina** Zioni, ???, **Shmuel** ben Agh Morad, **Dvora** wife of Nethanel, **Rivqa** wife of Eliyahu

Shifra wife of Nissim, **Binyamin** and **Yosef** ?? (sons of Zion Zioni), **Malka** wife of Nethanel Yaaqobi, **Dina** wife of Itzhaq Zioni and the granddaughter **Dina**

Nethanel ben Efraim, **Nissim** ben Efraim with his children **Esther** and **Nathan**

To be married: Yosef and Dina, Shmuel and Rina

Mordechai ben Efraim מרדכי בן אפרים

Peshawar פישאוור

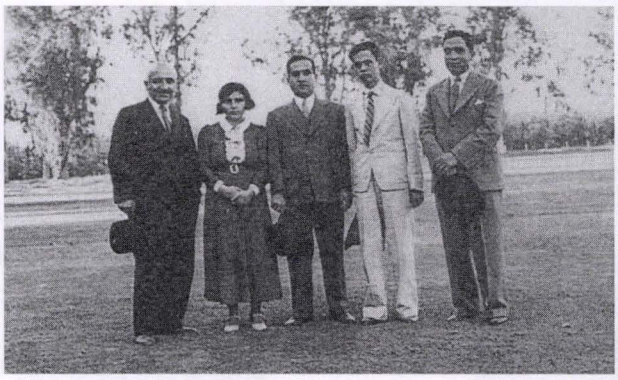
פישאוור 1935 - חתונה של מרדכי נסים עם דבורה ציוני

לא מזוהה. הרב לוי נסים (מולא עבדאלה), חתן וכלה (האח נתנאל ביניהם), ביבי ירושלמי

נתנאל נסים בזכרונותיו כותב "חתונת פאר כמו בסרטים – עם זרי פרחים על הצוואר"

Peshawar 1935 - Wedding of Mordechai Nissim with Dvora Zioni

Bibi Yerushalmi, Bride and Groom (his brotherNethanel in between), Rabbi Levi Nissim (Mola Abdolah), ??



שלמה כרמלי, אליהו נסים, מרדכי ודבורה נסים, האב יצחק ציוני

Itzhaq Zioni, Dvora and Mordechai Nissim, Eliyahu Nissim, Shlomo Karmeli

פישאוור 1930s - מרדכי נסים ורעייתו דבורה (ציוני)

Peshawar 1930s - Dvora and Mordechai Nissim

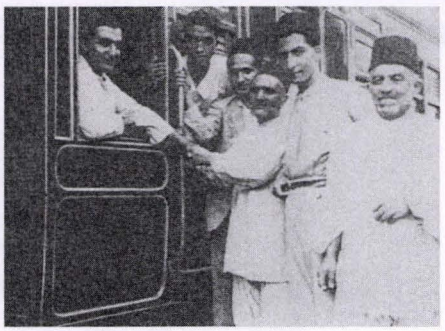
רעית לוטפאלה כרמלי, אסתר רעית שלמה כרמלי, דבורה רעית מרדכי נסים

Dvora wife of Mordechai Nissim, Esther wife of Shlomo Karmeli, wife of Lotfolah Karmeli

פישאוור 1930s - לא מזוהה. ?רעיית יהודה לוי, רעיית אהרוני, דבורה נסים, אסתר כרמלי, רעיית אק-חוסיין-קולי

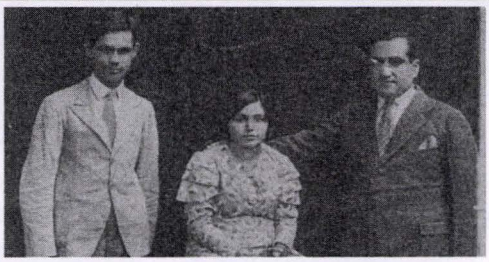
Peshawar 1930s - Wife of Agh Hossain Gholi, Esther Karmeli, Dvora Nissim, Wife of Aharoni, ? Wife of Yehuda Levy, ??

מרדכי בן אפרים נסים (באמצע)
Mordechai ben Efraim Nissim (middle)



פישאוור 1930s - לא מזוהה, לא מזוהה, לוטפאלה בן מ' דויד כרמלי, לא מזוהה, מרדכי בן אפרים נסים
Peshawar 1930s - Mordechai ben Efraim Nissim, ??, Lotfolah ben R. David Karmeli, ??, ??

פישאוור 1935 - עומדים: לא מזוהה, שלמה כרמלי, אליהו ונתנאל נסים, לא מזוהה, לא מזוהה
יושבים: לא מזוהה, הרב לוי נסים, לא מזוהה, מרדכי נסים
Peshawar 1935 - Standing: ??, ??, Nethanel and Eliyahu Nissim, Shlomo Karmeli, ??
Sitting: ??, ?? Mordechai Nissim, ??, Harav Levi Nissim, ??



פישאוור 1935 - מרדכי בן אפרים ורעייתו דבורה, האח אליהו נסים
כתוב מאחור: למזכרת שנה חדשה ...לאחותי שרה ... מאת מורד חודאדאדוף ומרוואר יצחק ...
Peshawar 1935 - Eliyahu, Dvora with her husband Mordechai ben Efraim
Written at the back: In remembrance of the New Year … to my sister Sara … from Morad Khodadadof and Mervari Esshagh

פישאוור 1940 ~ - לא מזוהה. מרדכי בן אפרים, רעייתו והילדים שמואל ושמחה
Peshawar ~ 1940 - Mordechai ben Efraim with his wife and their sons Simcha and Shmuel, ??

Nissim ben Efraim נסים בן אפרים

Engagement אירוסין

ירושלים 1936 ~ - נסים בן אפרים וארוסתו שפרה

Jerusalem ~1936 - Nissim ben Efraim with his fiance Shifra

Circumcision of the son-grandson-great-grandson ברית מילה לבן-נכד-נין

ירושלים 1948 - ברית מילה

רחל בת אפרים, **נסים** בן אפרים, ??, ?? מוראדוף, **יפה** בת אפרים, **נתנאל** בן אפרים, **דבורה** רעיית נתנאל, יהודה כאשי

שפרה והבת אסתר, ??, ??, **אפרים** בן נתנאל עם הנכד נתן, ביבי ירושלמי, חנה בת נסים, **פנינה** (רעיית אפרים)

Jerusalem 1948 - Brith Mila

Yehuda Kashi, **Dvora** wife of Nethanel, **Nethanel** ben Efraim, **Yafa** bat Efraim, Moradof, ??, ??, **Nissim** ben Efraim, **Rachel** bat Efraim **Pnina** wife of Efraim, **Hanna** bat Nissim, **Bibi** Yerushalmi, **Efraim** ben Nethanel with the grandson **Nathan,** ??, ??, **Shifra** with her daughter **Esther**

ירושלים 1948 - ברית מילה

ביבי ירושלמי, נסים ורעייתו שפרה, הבנות אסתר וחנה והתינוק נתן

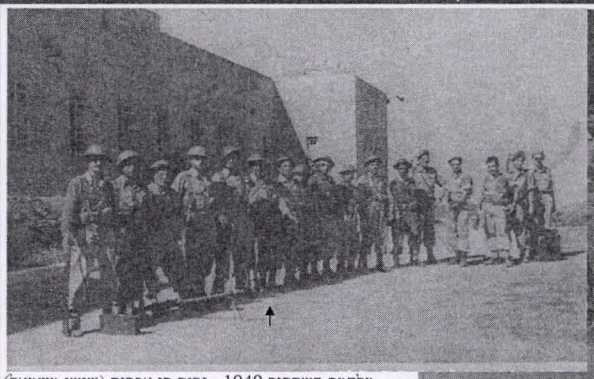
כתוב מאחור: למזכרת ...להורי המכובדים ... שיפרה נסימיהא - כ"ט סיוון

Jerusalem 1948 - Brith Mila

Bibi Yerushalmi, Nissim with his wife Esther, their baby Nathan, their daughters Hanna and Esther

Written at the back: In remembrance … to my honored parents … Shifra Nassimiha - Sivan 29

Independence עצמאות



מלחמת השחרור 1949 - נסים בן אפרים (שישי משמאל)
Independence war 1949 - Nissim ben Efraim (6 from left)

יום העצמאות 1950 - נסים ושיפרה והבת חנה
Independence day 1950 - Nissim, Shifra and the daughter Hanna

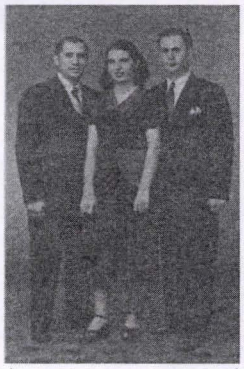
Experiences חוויה

טיול 1950s - נסים ושיפרה
Trip 1950s - Nissim and Shifra

שלג בירושלים 1950 - נסים, נתן, חנה, שיפרה ואסתר
Snow in Jerusalem 1950 - Shifra, Esther, Hanna, Nathan and Nissim

Eliyahu ben Efraim אליהו בן אפרים

Eliyahu אליהו



ישראל 1950s - אליהו בן אפרים, יפה בת אפרים ובעלה יהודה בן ראובן
Israel 1950s - Yehuda ben Reuven and his wife Yaffa bat Efraim, Eliyahu ben Efraim

ירושלים 1950s - נתן בן נסים ואליהו בן אפרים
ברקע רח' שמואל הנביא, שכונת הבוכרים והגבול עם ירדן
Jerusalem 1950s - Eliyahu ben Rfraim and Nathan ben Nissim
At backgroung Shmuel HaNavi, the Bukhari quarter and the frontier with Jordan

Nethanel ben Efraim נתנאל בן אפרים

Nethanel נתנאל

ירושלים 1940s - חברי מועדון המשהדים לפני קום המדינה
עומדים - רחמים עזיזאלהיוף לוי, יעקב (כושי) בצלאל, בן-ציון אמינוף, עזריה עזיזאלהיוף לוי, יעקב כורדוואני, בן-ציון נוריאלי
יושבים - **נתנאל נסים**, יצחק יוספון, אברהם יעקבי (נהרג במלחמת השחרור בגבעת התחמושת), מנחם נוריאל, דויד גוהרי

ישראל 1950 - נתנאל בן אפרים ורעייתו דבורה
Israel 1950 - Nethanel ben Efraim and his wife Dvora

Jerusalem 1940s - Members of the Mashhadi club, before the independance
Standing: Ben Zion Nurieli, Yaaqov Kordevani, Azaria Azizolayof Levy, BenZion Aminof, Yaaqov (Kushi) betzalel, Rahamim Azizolayof Levi
Sitting: David Gohari, Menahem Nuriel, Avraham Yaaqobi (killed during the war at Givat Hatachmoshet), Itzhaq Yosefon, **Nethanel Nissim**

Khavar - מלכה

Eretz Israel א"י

Jerusalem - Malka Moradof bat Nethanel 1910s ירושלים - מלכה מוראדוף בת נתנאל

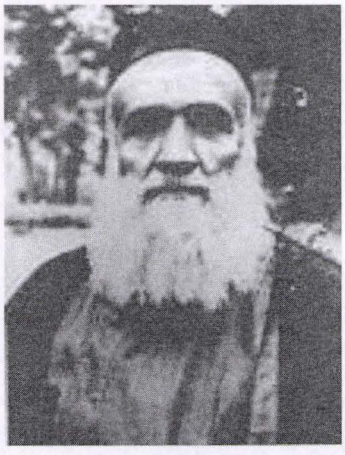
עלתה לא"י עם בעלה ישעיה מוראדוף ב- 1895~. נפטרה בגיל 63 בשושן פורים 1947.

Made aliyah with her husband Yeshayah Moradof - ~ 1895. Died on Shushan Purim 1947 (63 years old)

Amin & Hana - בנימין וחנה

Binyamin and Hana Nissim בנימין וחנה נסים

משהד 1930 ~ - חנה בת יהודה נסים
Mashhad ~ 1930 - Hana bat Binyamin Nissim



משהד 1920s - בנימין בן הרב משה נסים
Mashhad 1920s - Binyamin ben Rabbi Moshe Nissim

Nurolah -ירמיהו

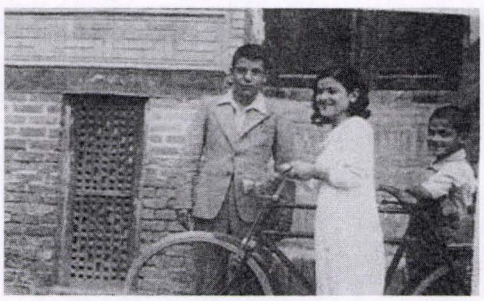
Yirmiyahu and Sara Nissim ירמיהו ושרה נסים

משהד 1940s - שרה בת מיכאל הוסיין-קולי
Mashhad 1940s - Sara bat Michael Hossain-Gholi

ישראל 1950s - ירמיהו בן בנימין
Israel 1950s - Yirmiyahu ben Binyamin

משהד 1926 - שרה וילדיה רחל, משיח, רפאל. עומד מאחור אברהם (אח של שרה)
Mashhad 1926 - Sara and her children Refael, Mashiyach and Rachel. Avraham, Sara's brother, standing at the back

Mashhad - 1930s משהד



משיח, רחל, רפאל
Refael, Rachel, Mashiyach

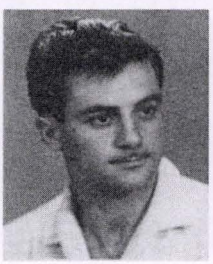
משיח (עבדולרחים)
Mashiyach (AbdolRahim)

רפאל, משיח
Mashiyach, Refael

Children - Israel הילדים - ישראל

נירה
Niyara

רחל
Rachel



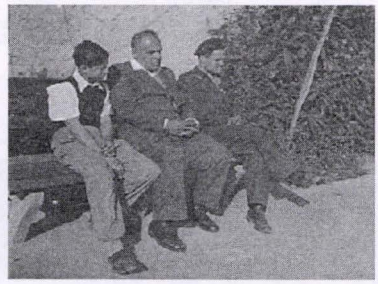
ראובן
Reuven

משיח (עבדולרחים)
Mashiyach (AbdolRahim)

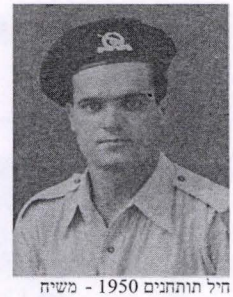
רפאל
Refael

Army Service שרות צבאי

משיח עם האח ראובן (מעלה החמישה)
Mashiyach with his brother Reuven (Maale' HaChamisha)



משיח, דוד יעקב, ראובן
Reuven, Uncle Yaaqov, Mashiyach



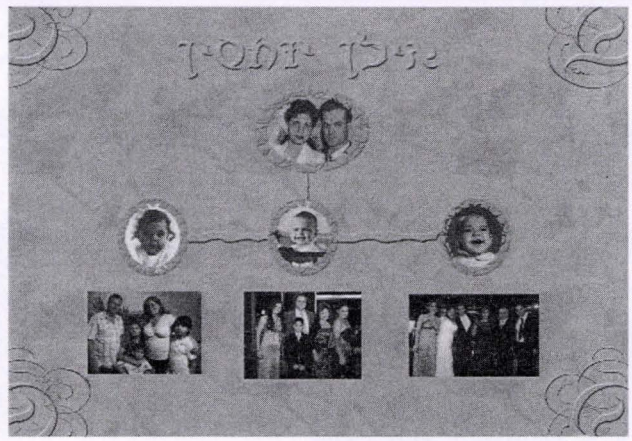
חיל תותחנים 1950 - משיח
Artilary unit 1950 - Mashiyach

Happiness שמחות

ראובן ופרוואנה באמצע. בצדדים ההורים ירמיהו ושרה (מחזיקה את אסתר בת משיח)
עומדים: דבורה (ובנה עופר), נירה, רחל, משיח
Parvaneh and Reuven in the middle. The parents Sara and Yirmiyahu at each side.
Standing: Mashiyach, Rachel, Niyara, Dvora with her son Ofer

ת"א 1953 - משיח נסים ודבורה בת אהרון האג'י-רמדאן
Tel Aviv 1953 - Mashiyach Nissim and Dvora bat Haji Ramazan

Mashiyach and his Family משיח ומשפחתו



HajiAgha - משה

India הודו

בומבי 1935 - קבוצת משהדים ליד בית הכנסת

נצראלה דיל, שלמה כל (כרמלי), רחמת כל, יצחק חאג'י-באי

יצחק דיל, קודרת כלאתי, אמיר לוי-עברני, כרים רחמני, **משה נסים**,יצחק לוי-עברני, **עבדולכרים נסים**

נצראלה קצב, עבדולכרים הארוני, חאג' אקא כהן, שוכראלה כאשי, דויד המדאני, כרבלאי אקאגן רחמני, חאג' עזיזאלהיוף, עבדלוואהאב דילמני, פייצ'אלה לוי בנק, פייצ'אלה נקי, דוד אקאלר, נוראלה כלאתי

לוי כלאתי, יוסף עבדולאהי, אברהם עבדולאהי, **יצחק נסים**, יהודה חאג'י-רחמן, נוראלה נקי, נוראלה לוי בנק, עזיז כלאתי

Bombay 1935 - A group of Mahhadis in front of the Synagogue

Esshagh Hajiby, Rahmat Kal, Shlomo Kal, Nassrolah Dil

Abdolkarim Nissim, Esshagh Levy-Ebrani, **Moshe Nissim**, Karim Rahmani, Amir Levy Ebrani, Ghodrat Kalati, Esshagh Dil

Nurolah Kalati, David Aghalar, Feizolah Naghi, Feizolah Levy Bank, Abdolvahab Dilmani, Haji Azizolahof, Karbalai Aghajan Rahmani, David Hamadani, Shokrolah Kashi, Haji Agha Kohen => ... => Abdolkarim Haruni, Nassrolah Ghassab

Aziz Kalati, Nurolah levy Bank, Nurolah Naghi, Yehuda Haji Rahman, **Esshagh Nissim,** Avraham Abdolahi, Yosef Abdolahi, Levi Kalati

England אנגליה

~ 1950 - משה נסים ורעיתו לאה

~ 1950 - Moshe Nissim and his wife Leah

לונדון 1954 - משה בן בנימין נסים ובנו בארי

מאחורי התמונה כתוב בפרסית: לכבוד דודי המכובד אדוני מולא עבדאלה בן יחיא - חאג'י נסים

London 1954 - Moshe ben Binyamin Nissim with his son Barry

At the back is written: To my honored uncle, Mola Abdolah ben Yahya - Haji Nissim

Israel ישראל

ישראל 1981 - יעקב, ירמיהו ומשה
[Courtesy of Barry ben Moshe - London]

[באדיבות בארי בן משה -לונדון]
Israel 1981 - Moshe, Yirmiyahu and Yaaqov

שמואל - Ismail

Shmuel and Sara Nissim שמואל ושרה נסים

טהראן 1952 ~ - שמואל בן בנימין
Tehran ~ 1952 - Shmuel ben Binyamin

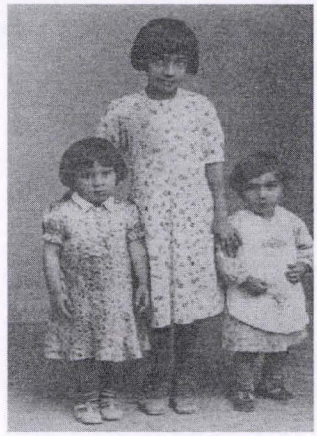
משהד 1940 ~ - שרה בת אפרים נסים
Mashhad ~1940 - Sara bat Efraim Nissim

Marv מרוו

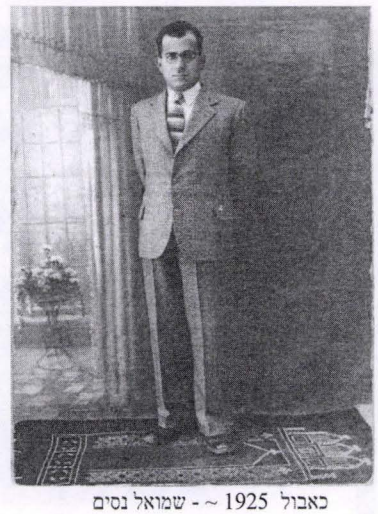
מרוו 1923 - אישה בוחארית, שרה והבת חנה
Marv 1923 - Hanna and her mother Sara, a Bukhari lady

מרוו 1925 - שרה בת אפרים נסים וחנה בתה
Marv 1925 - Sara bat Efraim Nissim and Hana

Family Pictures תמונות משפחה



משהד 1941 - בנימין, יפה וסוריאה
Mashhad 1941 - Sorayah, Yaffa, Binyamin



כאבול 1925 ~ - שמואל נסים
Kabul 1925 - Shmuel Nissim

Sinai War מבצע קדש

אירוע לחיילים שהשתתפו במבצע קדש - 1956
בנימין נסים לוקח את בנות המשפחה לאירוע - חנה בת מרדכי, סוריאה בת שמואל, משה דיין, בנימין בן יוסף ופרווין בת יוסף
Celebration with the soldiers who participated in the Sinai war - 1956
Binyamin Nissim brings the family girls to the celebration: Parvin bat Yosef, Binyamin ben Yosef, Moshe Dayan, Sorayah bat Shmuel, Hanna bat Mordechai

Yaaqov - יעקב

Eretz Israel א"י

א"י 1935 - יעקב בן בנימין נסים

מאחורי התמונה כתוב: לאחי ישמעאל ניסים ... שנה טובה - נסימי יעקב

Eretz Israel 1935 - Yaaqov ben Binyamin Nissim

On the back is written: To my brother Ismail Nissim … Shana Tova - Nissimi Yaaqov

ישראל 1986 - יעקב בן בנימין נסים (בחתונת הילדה וראובן נסימי)

Israel 1986 - Yaaqov ben Binyamin Nissim (in the wedding of Hilda and Reuven Nissimi)

Holon Synagogue בית הכנסת - חולון

בית הכנסת המרכזי לעולי משהד, חולון - ארון הקודש לע"נ יעקב בן חנה ובנימין נסים

The centeral synagogue of Olay Mashhad - the Holy Ark in memory of Yaaqov ben Hanna and Binyamin Nissim

Morad - מרדכי

The Family המשפחה

ישראל 1953 ~ - מרדכי ובני ומשפחה

ציונה בת מרדכי, בנימין בן שמואל, **אביבה** בת מרדכי, חנה בת אק-מוראד

מרים בת שמואל (בן-עמי), בנימין בן דניאל, שמחה בן אק-מוראד, **מרדכי בן בנימין**, **חנה** בת מרדכי

Israel ~ 1953 - Mordechai and his family

Hanna bat Agh-Morad, **Aviva** bat Mordechai, Binyamin ben Shmuel, **Ziona** bat Mordechai

Hanna bat Mordechai, **Mordechai ben Binyamin**, Simha ben Agh-Morad, Binyamin ben Daniel, Miriam bat Shmuel (Ben-Ami)

Daughters - הבנות

Dvora bat Daniel דבורה ודניאל

ישראל 1954 ~ - דבורה בת בנימין אשת דניאל בן רחמים (ראה ענף רחמים)

Israel ~1954 - Dvora bat Binyamin wife of Daniel ben Rahamim (See Rahamim branch)

Tzipora and David ben Reuven צפורה ודויד בן ראובן

Rivqa and Mola Khalil רבקה ומולא חליל

Esther and Shlomo אסתר ושלמה

בומביי 1939 - אסתר בת בנימין ושלמה כרמלי

מאחורי התמונה כתוב בפרסית: לזכרון לכבוד אדוני מולא עבדאלה בן יחיא נסים - סולייימאן כרמלי

Bombay 1939 - Esther bat Binyamin and Shlomo Karmeli

On the picture back is written: For remembrance, to Mola Abdolah ben Yahya Nissim - Soleiman Karmeli

Abdolah - רחמים

Rabbi Moshe Nissim הרב משה נסים

בני ברק - 1985
הכנסת ספר תורה של הרב משה נסים לבית הכנסת של עולי משהד
Benei Beraq - 1985
Dedication of Rabbi Moshe Nissim's Torah to the Oley Mashhad synagogue

ירושלים (?) 1900 ~ - הרב משה בן דויד נסים
נפטר בירושלים (תרס"ח)
Jerusalem (?) ~ 1900 - Rabbi Moshe ben David Nissim
Passed away in Jerusalem (1908)

חסרות תמונות
רחמים בן משה ורעייתו

Missing Pictures of
Rachamim ben Moshe and his wife

Children הילדים

טהראן 1967 - אסתר בת רחמים (אשת הרב לוי נסים)
Teheran 1967 - Esther bat Rachamim (wife of Rabbi Levi Nissim)

משהד 1948 ~ דניאל בן רחמים
Mashhad ~ 1948 - Daniel ben Rahamim

Rahmatolah - דניאל

Daniel and his Wife דניאל ורעייתו

ישראל 1954 ~ - דבורה בת בנימין
Israel ~ 1954 - Dvora bat Binyamin

משהד 1948 ~ - דניאל בן רחמים
Mashhad ~ 1948 - Daniel ben Rahamim

Dvora with her Children and Grand-children דבורה עם הילדים והנכדים

משהד 1948 ~ - יעקב בן אליהו, **בנימין בן דניאל**, משה בן אליהו, רחמים בן אליהו, מורווריד בת מ' חליל
צפורה בת דניאל (אשת אליהו זבולוני), **דבורה בת בנימין**, **שרה בת דניאל**, אסתר בת אליהו
יוכבד
Mashhad ~1948 - Morvarid bat Mola Khalil, Rahamim ben Eliyahu, Moshe ben Eliyahu, **Binyamin ben Daniel**, Yaaqov ben Eliyahu
Esther bat Eliyahu, **Sara bat Daniel**, **Dvora bat Binyamin**, **Zipora bat Daniel** (wife of Eliyahu Zvuloni)
יוכבד

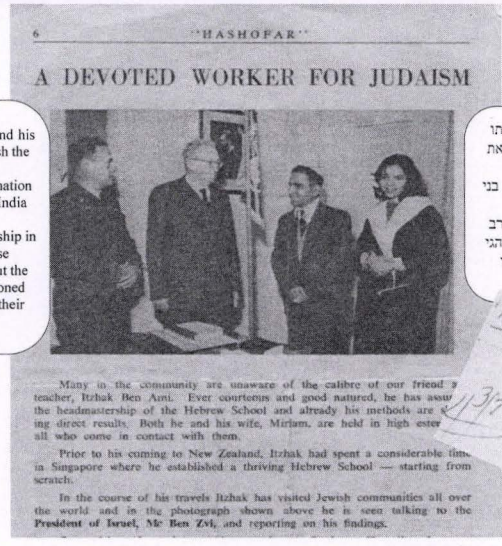
Mashiach ben Daniel Family משפחתו של משיח בן דניאל

ירושלים 1946 ~ - יצחק, יעקב, האם מלכה כרמלי, דוד, בן ציון, מרדכי, רחמים
Jerusalem ~ 1946 - Rahamim, Mordechi, Ben Zion, David, Malka Karmeli (mother), Yaaqov,Itzhaq

Karachi קראצ'י

קראצ'י 1959 - משיח בן דניאל עם הבנים רחמים ויצחק והכלה מרים בת שמואל
Karachi 1959 - Mashiach ben Daniel with his sons: Itzhaq with his wife Miriam, and Rachamim

Miriam and Itzhaq Ben-Ami מרים ויצחק בן-עמי



6 "HASHOFAR"

A DEVOTED WORKER FOR JUDAISM

Many in the community are unaware of the calibre of our friend a teacher, Itzhak Ben Ami. Ever courteous and good natured, he has assu the headmastership of the Hebrew School and already his methods are g ing direct results. Both he and his wife, Miriam, are held in high ester all who come in contact with them.

Prior to his coming to New Zealand, Itzhak had spent a considerable time in Singapore where he established a thriving Hebrew School — starting from scratch.

In the course of his travels Itzhak has visited Jewish communities all over the world and in the photograph shown above he is seen talking to the **President of Israel, Mr Ben Zvi,** and reporting on his findings.

President Yitzhak Ben Zvi, hosts Itzhaq and his wife Miriam for his contribution to publish the president's "*Nidachai Israel*" book.
Itzhaq provided the president valued iformation about Jews of Kuchin and Bnei Israel in India and Pakistan.
There were some doubts among the leadership in Israel regarding the Jewishness of these communities. Itzhaq's investigations about the wedding and divorcing and his well-reasoned evidences contributed to the decision of their aliyah.

הנשיא יצחק בן-צבי מקבל את יצחק ורעייתו מרים כדי להודות לו על תרומתו לרגל הוצאת הספר "נדחי ישראל".
יצחק מסר לנשיא מידע רב על יהודי קוצ'ין, בני ישראל בהודו וכן בפאכיסתן.
היו ספקות על יהדותם של יהודים אלה בקרב מנהיגי ישראל. מחקריו של יצחק בדבר מנהגי קידושין-וגירושין ועדותו המנומקת תרמו להעלתם לא"י.

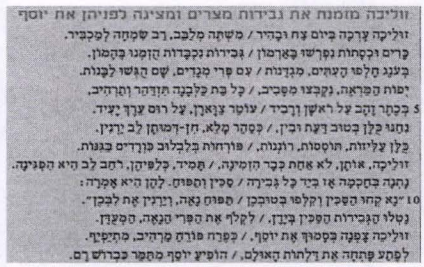
ניוזילנד (אוקלנד) 1959 - העיתון המקומי "השופר" מציין את השגיו החינוכיים של יצחק בן עמי
מרים ויצחק בן-עמי עם הנשיא בן-צבי
New Zealand (Auckland) 1959 - The local journal "Shofar" dedicates an article about the pedagogy achievements of Itzhaq Ben-Ami
Miriam and Itzhaq Ben-Ami with the president Ben-Zvi

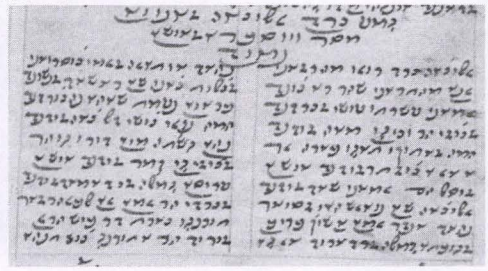
בנימין - Amin

Breshit Nameh - Shahin בראשית נאמה - שאהין

קטע פיוט מתוך קורות יוסף הצדיק מאת המשורר שאהין שחי במאה ה- 14

A passage from the poem about Yosef HaTzadiq (righteous), written by the poet Shahin from 14th century





תרגום מאת ד"ר אבנר פרץ

(btjerusalem.com/avner/Matseget-Shahin/shahin.pps)

Translation to Hebrew by Dr. Avner Peretz

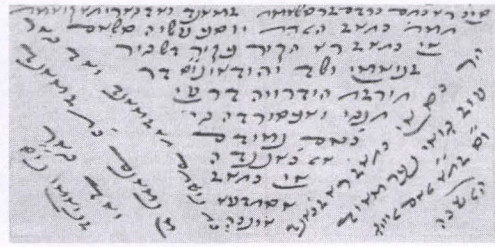
כתב יד מאת בנימין בן יהודה נסים

Manuscript copied by Binyamin ben Yehuda Nissim

סוף ספר יוסף עליו השלום
אני הקטן, הדל והעצוב, בנימין בן יהודא נ"ס (נסים)
סיימתי את הספר הזה בתורבת הייידריה בהיותי שרוע
בבדידות ועצב

זה הכתב יהיה לזיכרון
אני לא אתקיים אך הכתב יישאר לזיכרון
בנימין נ"ס

1908



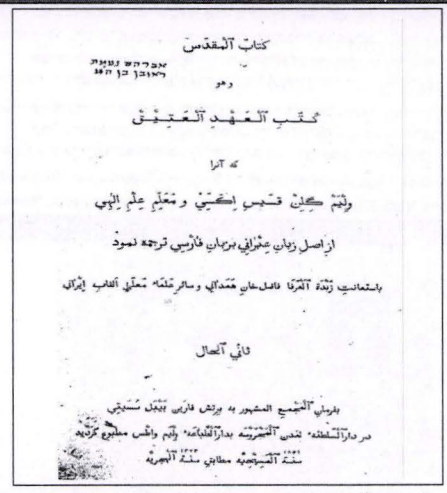
באדיבות אורה כהן בת משה נסים

Courtesy of Ora Kohen bat Moshe Nissim

תורבת היידריה 1908 - בנימין בן יהודה נסים העתיק את הפיוט בכתב יהודי-משהדי (מעל 3500 בתים)

Torbate'-Heydariyeh 1908 - Binyamin ben Yehuda Nissim copied the poem in Jewish Mashhadi letters (3500 + lines)

Bible in Persian תנ"ך מתורגם בפרסית



كتاب ٱلمقدس

אברהם נעמת
ראובן בן הח

و

كتب ٱلعهد ٱلعتيق

كه آنرا

ولقم كدن قسس إسكيني و معلم علم إلهي

از اصل زبان عبراني بزبان فارسي ترجمه نمود

باستعانت زندة ٱلقرنا فاضل خاص همداني و سائر علماء معلمي ألقاب إيران

في ٱلحال

بطبع ٱلصحيح المشهور به برنس فازل ببلغ سنبلي

در دار ٱلسلطنه لندن ٱلمحروسه بدار ٱلطباعه ولقم واقس مطبوع گرديد

سنة ٱلمسيحيه مطابق سنة ٱلهجريه

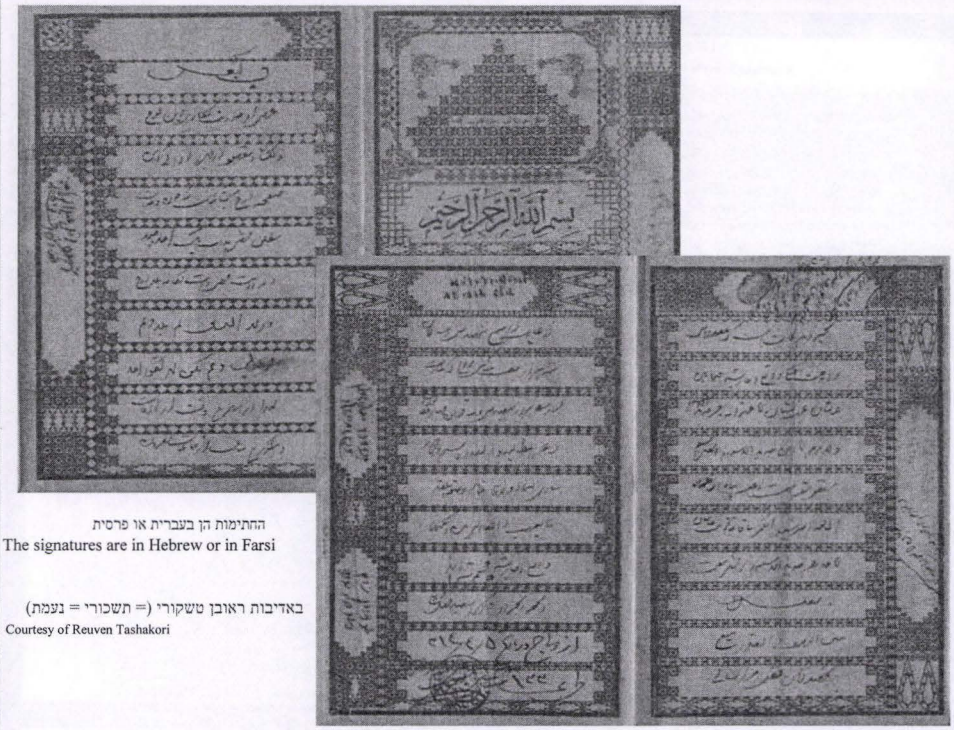
שער ספר התנ"ך "פאצ'ל האני" - הוצאת : British Foreign Bible Society (1856)

מן הנדוניה של אימי, מלכה בת חנוכה נסימי (נכדתו של רחמאן נעמת שהיה מייבא את ספרי התנ"ך)

First page of the Fazel Khani Bible - Published by British Foreign Bible Society (1856)

Dowry of my mother, Malka bat Chanuka Nissimi (granddaughter of Rahman Nemat that imported these Bibles)

Ketuba - Persian כתובה - פרסית



החתימות הן בעברית או פרסית
The signatures are in Hebrew or in Farsi

באדיבות ראובן טשקורי (= תשכורי = נעמת)
Courtesy of Reuven Tashakori

כתובה בפרסית - משהד 1926 Ketuba in Persian - Mashhad

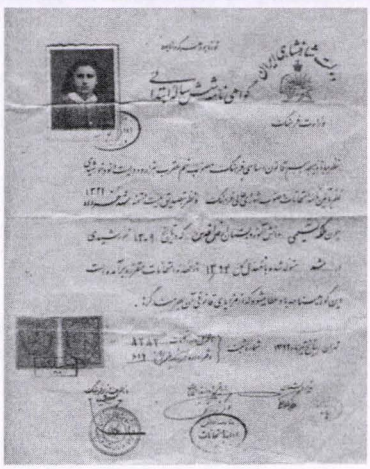
החתן: עזיזאלה תאג'ר ג'דיד אל אסלאם בן המרוחם אקא אמין ג'דיד אל אסלאם ~ נסים (חנוכה בן בנימין נסים)
הכלה: יאפא חאנום בת אקא מ' רחמן ג'דיד אלאסלאם (יפה בת ראובן נעמת)
חתומים : אשהד אקא עבדאל-ווהאב צאדקאוף נסים (עבדולוואהאב בן מישאל נסים), היתר לא ברור

החתן: עזיזאלה תאג'ר ג'דיד אל אסלאם בן המרוחם אקא אמין ג'דיד אל אסלאם ~ נסים (חנוכה בן בנימין נסים)
הכלה: יאפא חאנום בת אקא מ' רחמן ג'דיד אלאסלאם (יפה בת ראובן נעמת)
חתומים : אשהד אקא עבדאל-ווהאב צאדקאוף נסים (עבדולוואהאב בן מישאל נסים), היתר לא ברור

The Groom: Azizolah Tajer Jadid al-Islam ... Nissim (Chanuka ben Binyamin Nissim)

The Bride: Yafa Khanom ... Jadid al-Islam (Yafa bat Reuven Nemat)

Certificate -Arze' Aghdas School for Girls תעודה - בית הספר לבנות ארצ' אקדס



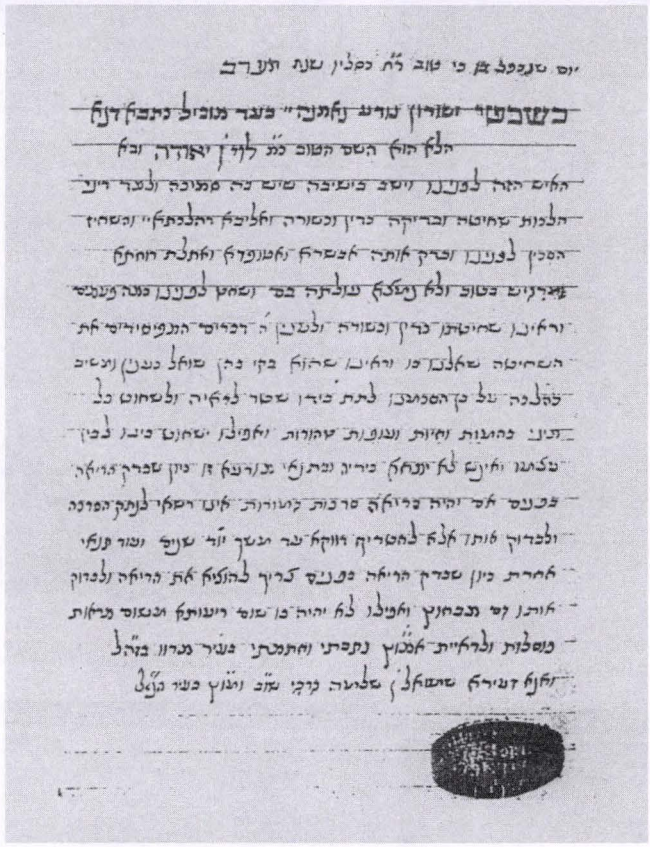
משהד 1944 - תעודת גמר ממשלתית של בית הספר היסודי "ארץ' אקדס"

"מלכה נסרמי תלמידה בבית-ספר **ארץ' אקדס** במשהד"
חתומים: מנהלת בית הספר, מנהל מדור הבחינות, בשם שר החינוך

Mashhad 1944 - Certificate of Malkeh Nassimi from the Arze' Aghdas Elementry School

M. Abdolah - הרב לוי

Certification תעודת סמיכה



מרוו 1911 - סמיכה לשחיטה של הרב לוי מישיבתו של הרב גרג'י

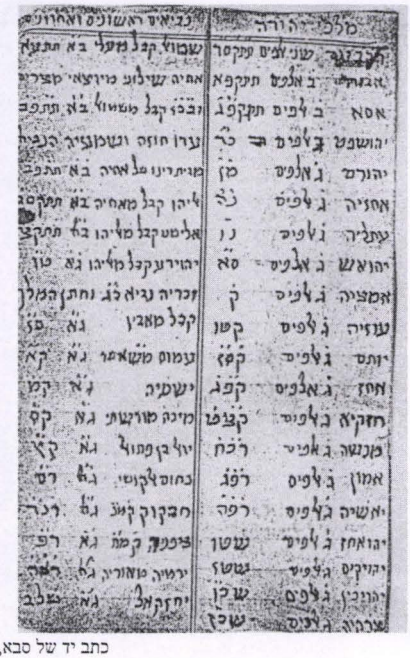
Marv 1911 - Shechita (Ritual Slaughtering) Certification of Rabbi Levi from the Yeshiva of Rabbi Garji

Kippur כיפור

קטע מחוברת וידוי של יום כיפור - הרב לוי בן יהודה

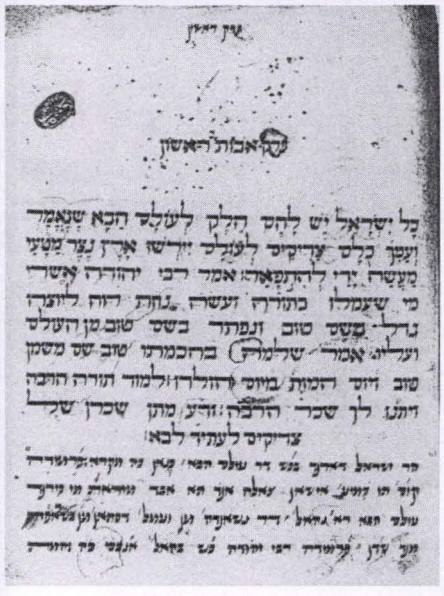
Translation of "Viduy" in Yom Kippur - Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda

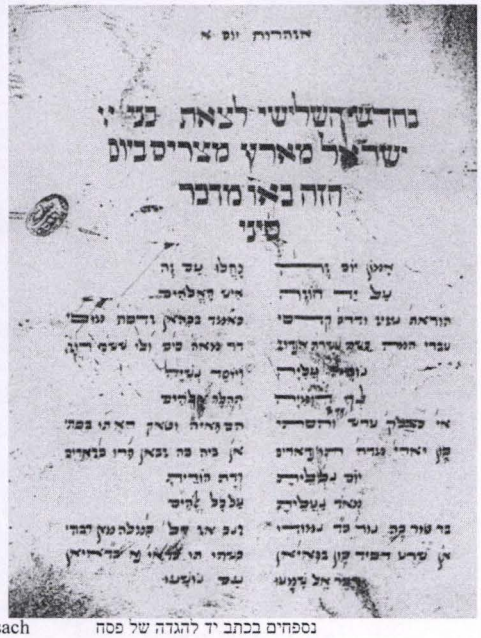
Sidur Tfilat HaChodesh (1882) ספר תפלת החדש כמנהג קהל קדוש ספרדים



כתב יד של סבא, הרב לוי בן יהודה
טבלאות סדר הדורות וזכרוני ימי קדם
Tables of "Seder HaDorot" and "Zichronei Yemei Qedem" (order of Generations and Times Gone By)
- Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda

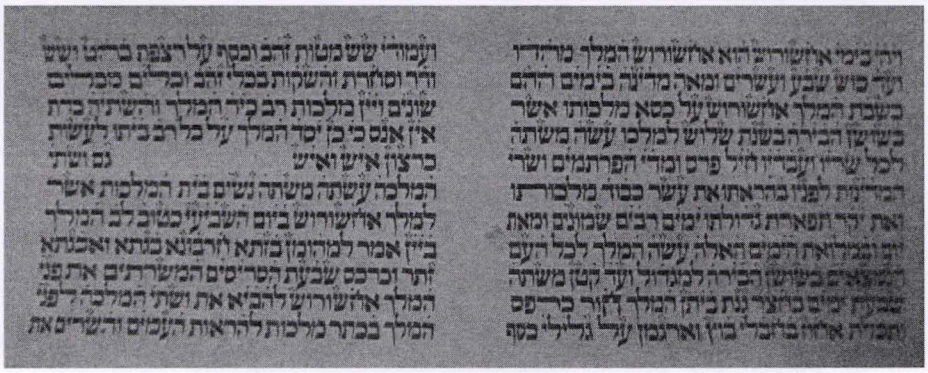
Haggadah of Pesach (1879) סדר הגדה של פסה עם עשרה פרושים





Attachments to Haggadah of Pesach נספחים בכתב יד להגדה של פסה
Pirqei Avot - פרקי אבות Azharot - אזהרות (עם תרגום בפרסית מאת הרב סימן טוב)

Megillat Esther מגילת אסתר



מגילת אסתר - אחת עשרה שורות (קלף)

Courtesy of Isaac ben Lotfolah Nassimi באדיבות יצחק בן חנניה נסים

Menorot מנורות

מנורה: "למנצח בנגינות" "לדוד ה' אורי וישעי" מנורות: "אנא בכוח","למנצח בנגינות","שיר למעלות"

נייר קלף קלף

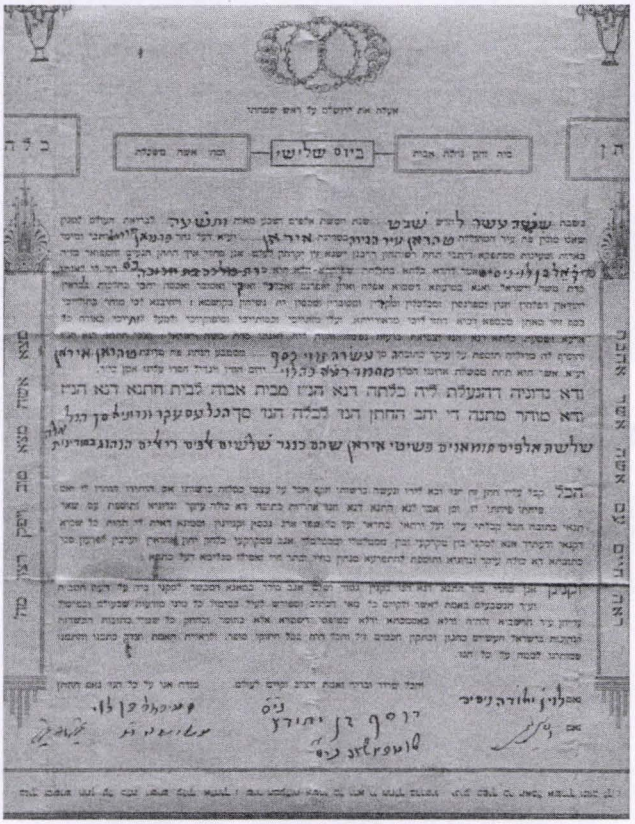
Courtesy of Isaac ben Lotfolah Nassimi באדיבות יצחק בן חנניה נסים

Pitom HaQetoret פיטום הקטורת

קלף

Courtesy of Isaac ben Lotfolah Nassimi באדיבות יצחק בן חנניה נסים

Ketuba כתובה



טהראן 1949 - כתובה של מיכאל ומלכה נסימי, נאום לוי בן יאודה נסים
Tehran 1949 - Ketuba of Michael and Malka Nissimi. Signed by Rabbi Levi Nissim.

Marriage Contract in Persian כתובה בפרסית

טהראן 1949 - כתובה בפרסית של קודרתאלה (מיכאל) ומלכה נסימי
חתומים: עבדאלה נסימי, עזיזאלה נסימי, יוסף נסימי, מהדי ד'וג'אלי
Tehran 1949 - Ketubah of Ghodratolah (Michael) and Malka (Malekeh) Nassimi. Signed by Rabbi Levi Nissim.

Certificate - Adab School for Boys תעודה - בית הספר לבנים אדב

משהד 1935 - תעודת גמר ממשלתית של בית הספר היסודי "אדב"

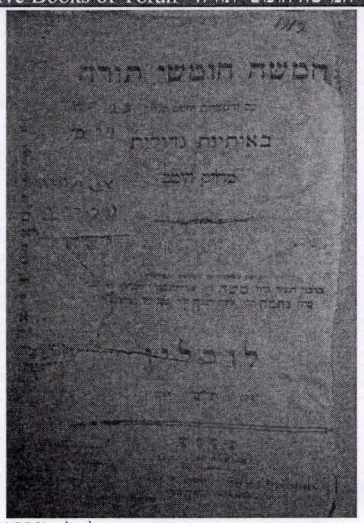
"**קודרתאלה נסימי** בן מולא עבדאלה תלמיד בבית-ספר **אדב** במשהד"

חתומים: מנהל החינוך חוראסאן, מנהל הבחינות, מנהל כללי של חינוך, שר החינוך

Mashhad 1935 - Certificate of Ghodratolah (Michael) Nassimi from the Adab Elementary School

נתנאל- Javad

Five Books of Torah חמישה חומשי תורה



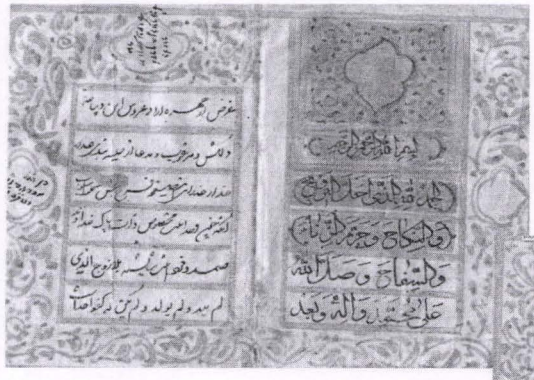
באדיבות גב' זילפה כהן
Courtesy of Zilpa Kohen

שער חמישה חומשי תורה - הוצאת : לובלין (1900)
הספר היה שייך לנתנאל (ג'ואד) בן יהודה נסים - הוא חותם ג'ואד נסים 1912
נתנאל נרצה ע"י שודדים תורכמנים (1921)
1912 - Abdol-Javad's Torah (printed in Lublin 1900)
(Nethanel ben Yehuda Nissim)

Shmuel -שמואל

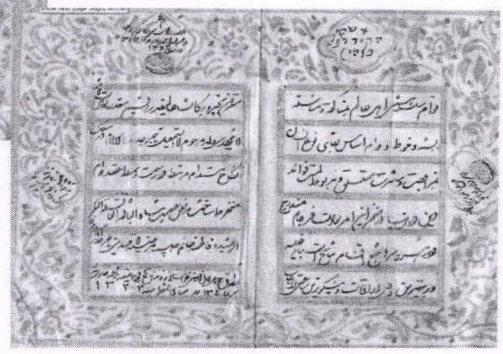
Ketuba כתובה

משהד. 1906 - כתובה של מהדי ופאטמה (משיח בן שמואל נסים ואסתר בת חאג'י מהדי לוי)



חתן: אק מהדי בן המרוחם אק אסמעאל תאג'ר ג'דיד אלאסלאם
כלה: פאטמה האנום בת אק מהדי תאג'ר ג'דיד אלאסלאם

עדים:
רפאל כוחי (אולי כהן ??)
צדוק בן המרוחם מולא יוסף נסים
יעקב בן המרוחם אברהם



Groom: Agh Mehdi ben Agh Esmael Tajer Jadid Al-Eslam
Bride: Fatmeh Khanom bat Agh Mehdi Tajer Jadid Al-Eslam

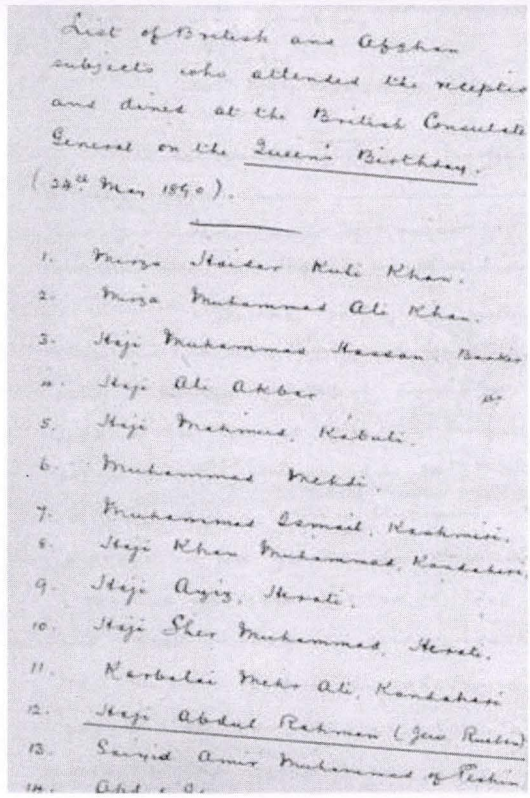
Witnesses
Refael Kohai (Kohen??)
Sadogh son of late M. Yosef Nissim
Yaaqov son of late Avraham

Mashad. 1906 - Ketuba of Mehdi (Mashiyach) and Fatmeh (Esther)

Courtesy of Mike Nassimi, NY 2011 באדיבות מהדי נסימי, ניו יורק

Reuven - ראובן

A document from the Public Record Office (PRO) מסמך מן הארכיון הבריטי



List of British and Afghan subjects who attended the reception and dinner at the British Consulate General on the Queen's Birthday.
(24th May 1890).

1. Mirza Haidar Kuli Khan.
2. Mirza Muhammad Ali Khan.
3. Haji Muhammad Hassan Banker
4. Haji Ali Akbar
5. Haji Mahmud, Kabuli.
6. Muhammad Mehdi.
7. Muhammad Ismail, Kashmiri.
8. Haji Khan Muhammad, Kandahari.
9. Haji Aziz, Herati.
10. Haji Sher Muhammad, Herati.
11. Karbalai Mehr Ali, Kandahari
12. Haji Abdul Rahman (Jew Ruben)
13. Sayid Amir Muhammad of Tirkin

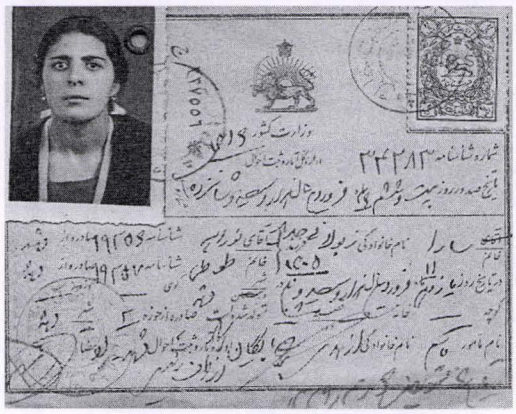
משהד. הקונסוליה הבריטית 1890 - רשימת מוזמנים לכבוד יום הולדת המלכה ויקטוריה
בין המוזמנים האג'י עבדול רחמן (היהודי ראובן)

Mashhad, British Consulate 1890 - List of invitees to Queen Victoria's birthday
among them **Haji Abdul Rahman** (Jew Ruben)

500

Nurolah - נסים

Identity Card תעודת זהות



משהד 1938 - תעודת זהות של שרה בת נוראלה
שרה זבולאני ג'דיד בת נוראלה וטוטי - ילידת 1927
Mashhad 1938 - Identity Card of Sara bat Nurolah
Sara Zabulani (Zvuloni) Jadid, daughter of Nurolah and Tuti - Borned 1927

Azizolah - אליהו

Hebrew-Persian-Russian Dictionary מילון עברי-פרסי-רוסי

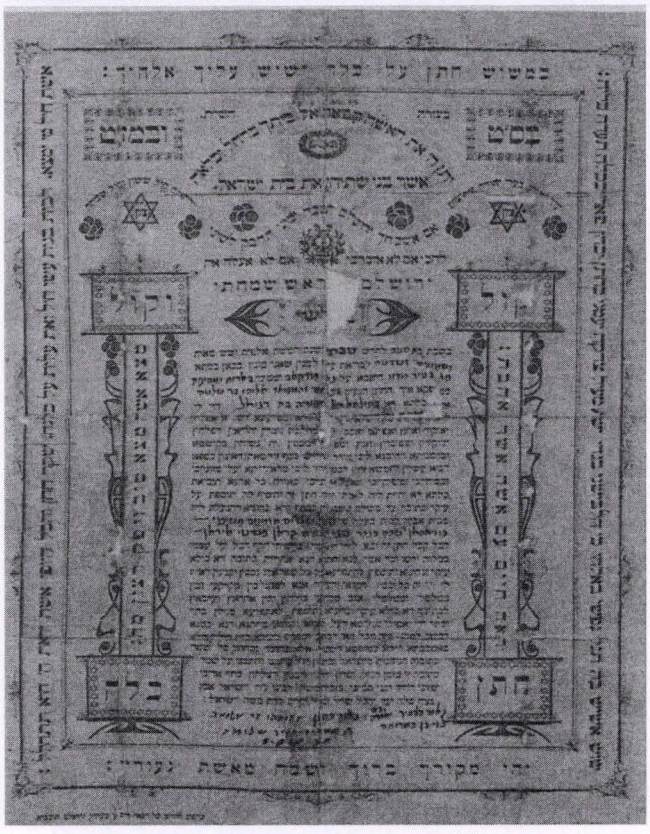
ירושלים 1907 - ספר המילים, מאת דוד כויילך תושב בוכארא

במדור "בית-סבא" מובא כי אליהו "היה אדם משכיל עם ידע בחמש שפות" - עדות לכך: המילון הזה שנמצא ברשותו

Jerusalem 1907 - "Book of Words", by David Kuyalek from Bukhara

Eliyahu was "an intelectual man and knew 5 languages" - refer to Beith Saba. This is Eliyahu's dictionary.

Ketuba כתובה



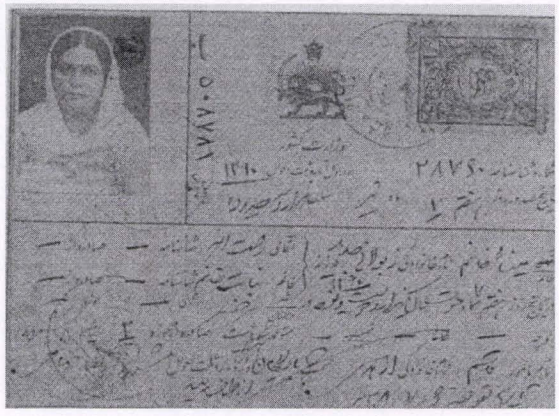
Marv - Ketuba of Eliyahu and Tzipora 1927 מרוו - כתובה של אליהו וציפורה

Signed by Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim נאום: לוי בן יאדה נסים

עדים: החתן אליהו בר שלמה, השאהד (העד) הקיר (עניו) שלמה בן ניסים

Signed by: the groom Eliyahu bar Shlomo, Shlomo ben Nissim

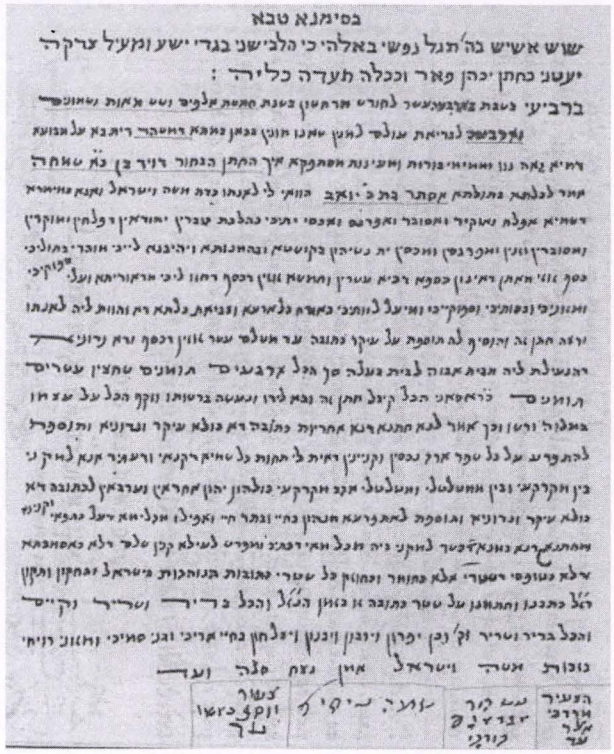
Identity Card תעודת זהות



Mashhad - Identity Card of Tzipora bat Daniel 1932 משהד - תעודת זהות של צפורה בת דניאל
Mina Zabulani bat Rahmatolah and Nabat - Born 1912 מינא זבולאני ג'דיד בת רחמתאלה ונבאת - ילידת

David -דוד

Ketuba כתובה



בסימנא טבא

ששׂושׂ אשיש בה׳ תגל נפשי באלהי כי הלבישני בגדי ישע ומעיל צדקה יעטני כחתן יכהן פאר וככלה תעדה כליה׳

Rabbi Mordechai Aghalar witness מקדש: הצעיר מרדכי אקלר עד

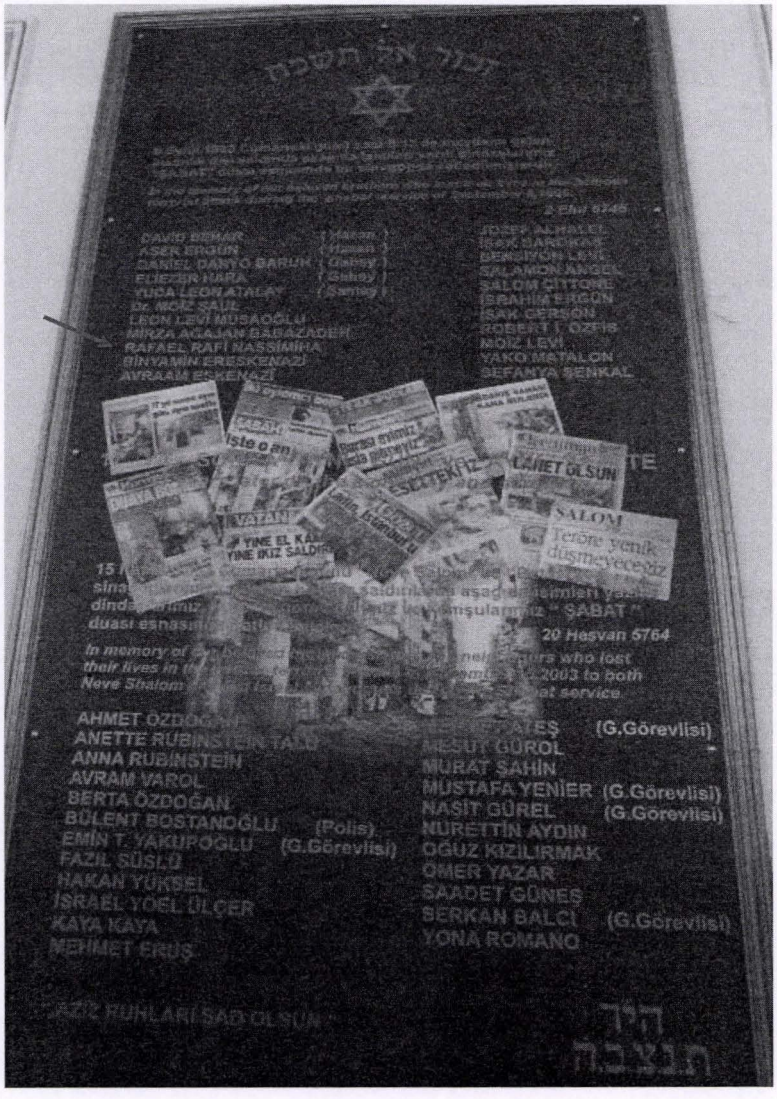
משהד 1923 - כתובה של דויד ואסתר ציוני

Mashhad 1923 - Ketuba of David and Esther Zioni

[אקלרפור Aghlarpur]

Rafi - רפאל

Memorial board - Neve Shalom Synagogue לוח זיכרון - בית הכנסת נווה שלום



Neve Shalom synagogue, Istanbul 1986 בית כנסת נווה שלום, איסטנבול

רפאל בן ראובן נסים, נרצח בפיגוע טרור בזמן תפילת שחרית של שבת

במהלך התקפה זו נהרגו 23 ממתפללי בית-הכנסת

Refael ben Reuven Nissim, was killed during a terrorist act when praying shacharit on shabat morning

During this terrorist act 23 prayers where killed

Morad - מרדכי

Ketuba כתובה

פישאואר הודו המזרחית דעל נהר כהנה 1935 - כתובה של מרדכי ודבורה נסים

מקדש: לוי בן יאודא ני"ס

המודה בכל הנ"זל: מרדכי בן אפרים ני"ס

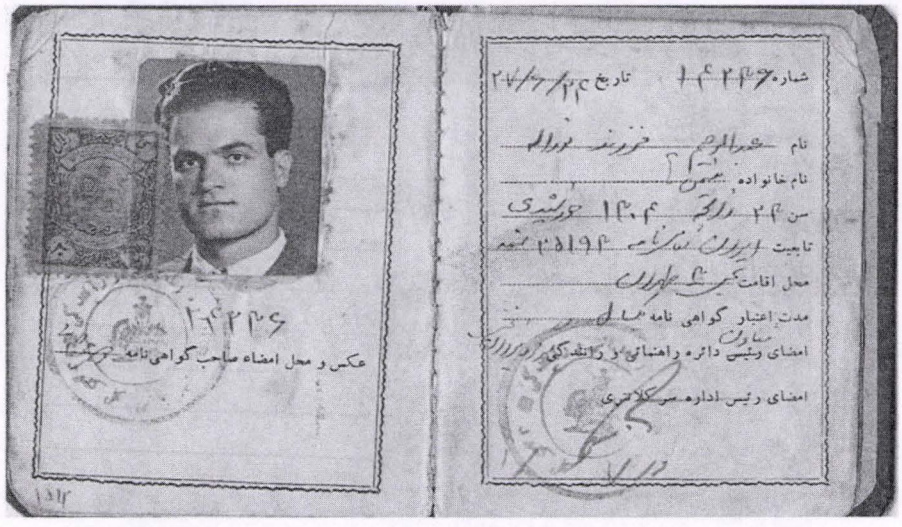
Peshawar, East India, next to Kahaneh river 1935 - Ketuba of Mordechai and Dvora Nissim

Rabbi Levi ben Yehuda Nissim

Signed by: Mordechai ben Efraim Nissim

Nurolah - ירמיהו

Driving License רשיון נהיגה



Tehran 1946 טהראן

Driving License of AbdolRahim son of Nurolah Nassimiha רשיון נהיגה של עבדולרחים בן נוראלה נסימיהא

Ismail - שמואל

Ketuba כתובה

Marv, next to Morghab river 1918 מרוו, על נהר מרקאב

Ketuba of Sara and Shmuel Nissimi כתובה של שמואל ושרה נסים

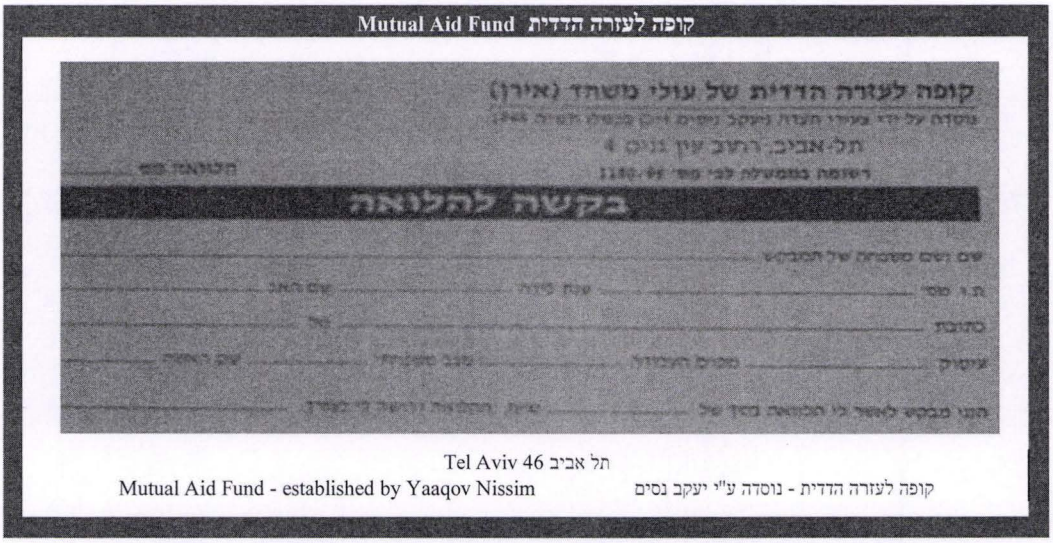
Rabbi Mordechai ben Refael Aghalar נאום: הצעיר מרדכי בן ה"מ רפאל נ"ע אקלר עד

The groom Shmuel ben Binyamin Nissim נאום החתן: שמואל בן בנימין נ"ס

David Kal witness הצעיר דוד כל עד

Levi ben Yehuda Nissim צעיר לוי בן יאודא ניסים

Yaaqov - יעקב



Tel Aviv 46 תל אביב

Mutual Aid Fund - established by Yaaqov Nissim קופה לעזרה הדדית - נוסדה ע"י יעקב נסים

Rahmatolah - דניאל

Spirit of Life - Rabbi Siman Tov Melamed רוח חיים - הרב סימן טוב מלמד

ספר

חיאת אל רוח

רוח חיים

מהרב הגדול ע"ה הנדיב

מוהר סימן טוב מלמד זצוק"ל

כל עין חוזה תאשרם וכל לב אנוש יתעצם ויפצא מתעג לנפשו
במצאו עיון לפניו בו הגוע בעו לכן קטו יתברך ויתעלה.

יצא לאור בהוצאות והשתדלות האחים
ישראל נתנאל ובנימין שאולוף

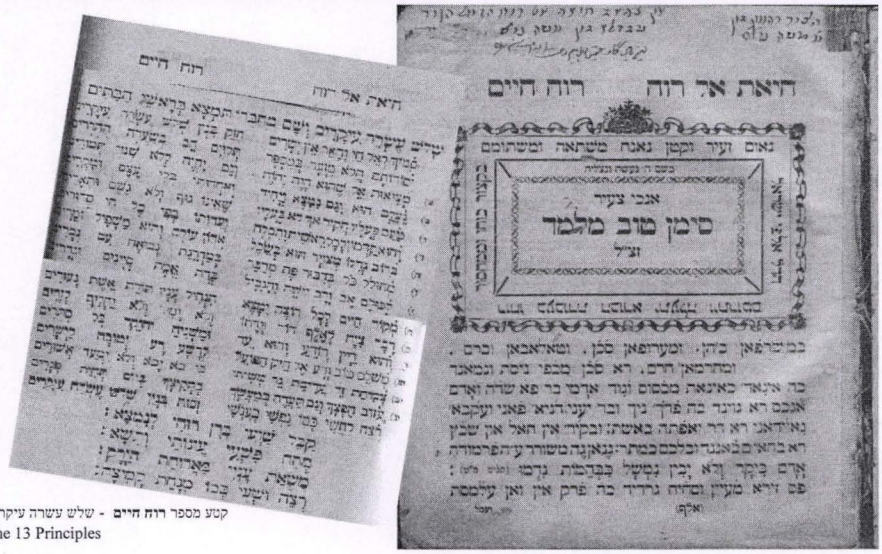
פעה"ק ירושלם תובב"א

שנת תרנ"ח לפ"ק

Mashhad - Hayat-Al-Ruh, Rabbi Siman Tov Melamed ~1780 משהד - חייאת אלרוח מאת הרב סימן טוב מלמד

Jerusalem - Published by Shaulof brothers 1898 ירושלים - יצא לאור בהשתדלות האחים שאוולוף

Spirit of Life - Rabbi Siman Tov Melamed רוח חיים - הרב סימן טוב מלמד


חיאת אל רוח רוח חיים

אבי עזיר
סימן טוב מלמד
זצ"ל

קטע מספר **רוח חיים** - שלש עשרה עיקרים
The 13 Principles

משהד 1900~ - הספר השתייך לרחמים בן הרב משה נסים כפי שמצויין בכתב ידו "הצעיר רחמים בן מ' משה נסים"

יתכן שהספר נשלח ע"י **הרב משה** שחי בירושלים אל בנו למשהד. הספר עבר מאב לבן למשך דורות. אנו מוצאים את תאריך לידתו של **משה בן דניאל בן רחמים** וכן את הקדשתו של **אברהם בן דניאל**. נראה שלקראת עלייתו לארץ, **דניאל** מבקש מידידיו לכתוב מילות פרידה בכריכה האחורית של הספר - כך אנו מוצאים את בירכתו של **הרב לוי נסים**.

ישראל 1999 - באדיבות גברת חנה והאפור, נכדה של דניאל בן רחמים (מתוך חבילת ספרים שמסרה לי)

[ר"נ: רחמים בן הרב משה הינו סבא רבא שלי מצד סבתי אסתר]

Mashhad ~1900 - This book belonged to Rahamim ben Harav Moshe Nissim

Possibly the book was sent by Rabbi Moshe who lived in Jerusalem to his son in Mashhad. The book was passed from father to son during generations. We can find the birth day of Moshe ben Daniel ben Rahamim, an inscription of Avraham ben Daniel and also blessings from Harav Levi Nissim. It seems that the relatives wrote some blessing texts on the cover page before Daniel's Aliya.

Israel 19999 - In courtesy of Hanna Vahapur (granddaughter of Daniel)

[RN: Rahamim ben Harav Moshe is my great grandfather. Father of my grandmother Esther]

*

Nissimi Tree
Introduction
Sources

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Nissimis
Pictures
Signatures
Branches

Generations

Introduction

The Nissimi Family

Family Branches

The **Nissimi Family's** family tree (genealogy) encompasses more than 300 years – three generations per century – a total of nine generations labeled **a** through **i** – at intervals of 30 to 40 years. The first generation belongs to the period 1700-1740 and the ninth generation belongs to the period 1960-2000.

For purposes of demonstration, the family tree maps the generational sequence; the fifth generation (signified by e) is the level in which the various branches of the family were defined.

Generation	Nissimis Born in this Period	Period	Notes
First (a)	**Nissim** ben Shmuel	1700-1740	Founder of the Dynasty
Second (b)	Yosef, Shlomo	1730-1770	
Third (c)	**Yehuda, David**	1760-1800	**Main** Branches
Fourth (d)	Yosef, Moshe, Nissim, Shlomo, Rabbi Moshe	1800-1840	
Fifth (e)	**Yehuda, Shmuel, Mishael, Reuven (Saghir-Nejad), Zvuloni (Nissim), Zioni (Simcha), Nethanel, Binyamin, Rachamim** (Ben-Ami families are derived from Rachamim)	1830-1870	**Branches** according to which the family tree was built

Family Tree Searches

1960s

When I was a kid (in the sixties), I was hospitalized for a few days in the hospital in Tehran. An elderly man from the community, who happened to be in the area, stopped by to visit me. While asking me about my health, he told me that he knew who my ancestors were, and also the ancestors of my ancestors, and he recited them all the way back to Nissim. I remembered part of his narrative, and part I forgot, but thus I learned the source of my family name. Later I saw him again but I was too embarrassed to approach him and question him, putting it off to a later date. Since then, I never saw him again and I do not even know who he was.

1970s

But that encounter deepened my curiosity and I addressed many questions to my parents, my uncles and the rest of my family. Most of my curiosity was aimed at learning the names from far back in the past (and not so much in getting the wider view). We knew that the **founder** was called **Nissim** and we tried to connect the sequence from us to him – seven generations back.

1980s

In 1983, when I was in Singapore, I decided to celebrate Pesach in the city of Perth, Australia. To my delight I learned of a relative who lived in Perth, named Itzhaq Ben-Ami (one of the Nissimi branches). I celebrated the

	Seder evening with him and his family. From him I learned that Nissim was the son of Shmuel and thus I learned how the Zvulonis were connected to the Nissimis.	
Recording and Documenting	In 1992 my mother, Malka bat Chanuka, z"l, fell ill with a malignant disease. We spent many hours at her bedside in the hospital. At this time I began to question my father, Michael ben Rabbi Levi, z"l. He knew a lot of information about the family, but it was all located in his mind – and it was difficult for me to remember everything ... I needed to document and systematically organize all that information. The Nissimi families, whose family line has persisted over a three hundred year period, are a very large and extended family. What I drew from my father I put into my computer - but some branches were incomplete according to the recording principles I set up: • Identify each person by their Hebrew name and non-Hebrew name (local name) • Identify each man's wife by her name, the name of her father and her maiden name • Identify the women • Identify the name of the husband of the woman, the name of her father and her family name	1990s
Three Separate Branches	Around 1994 we received from the US the exceptional work of Habibolah Dilmanian (brother of my aunt's husband, Shimon ben Eliyahu, z"l), which enhanced our knowledge of the various branches. Mr. Habibolah's genealogical tree contained the names (in Persian) of the men only. Fortunately, in many cases my father remembered the Hebrew names and also the names of the women, two to three generations back - especially in the Yehuda branch. At this stage we had a general knowledge about three branches without knowing how these branches connected to each other. These branches were: Main Branch of Yehuda (third generation), Main Branch of David (third generation) and the Saghir Nejad (fifth generation) branch. In order to broaden my knowledge I had to expand my circle of sources. To this end, within the framework of the manuscript **Days Gone By**, and on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the death of my grandfather, Rabbi Levi, of blessed memory, I also published a family tree accurate (to the extent of our knowledge) as of 1999. As a result of this step I became exposed, as expected, to other sources such as the genealogy of the David Branch. This splendid genealogy in the format of a scroll-shaped family tree was prepared by Binyamin ben David Nissim. The tree was in Hebrew and related to the Main Branch of David. It contained the names of the men and their dates.	[זכרונות ימי קדם]
Connecting the Three	After many long searches and analyses of different sources I was able to connect the different branches of the Nissimi families as follows:	2000s [Beit Saba/ Introduction]

Branches	• We wondered for a long time which link connected **Nissim** (first generation) to **Rabbi Yehuda** (third generation). Lacking additional resources, we applied the family tradition according to which **Yosef** would be the father of Rabbi Yehuda (which was the name of his grandson and his grandson's grandson), and would be the connecting link (second generation) between the founder of the family and Rabbi Yehuda Nissim. • At first the relationship between **Abdol-Rahman Saghir (Reuven)** and **Nissim** was not clear to us. With the help of the guidelines of the researcher Azaria Levy and an analysis of ancient ketubot (marriage contracts) we learned that Reuven belonged to the fifth generation, and his father was **Moshe** son of **Rabbi Yehuda** (third generation). • In the genealogical scroll the lineage indicated that Nissim begot David (same as in Mr. Habibolah's family tree). In analyzing the order of the generations, there is a high probability that a generation was skipped here – that is, a link was missing between **Nissim** and **David**. My brother Daniel heard from the late Yaaqov Nissim ... "Rabbi Moshe ben David ben Shlomo." The knowledge that the brother of Rabbi Moshe was Shlomo, who was probably named after his grandfather, supports this supposition. In addition, the name David ben Aghajan (Shlomo) Nissim was mentioned in Wolff's book.	
Enigma	According to Habibolah Dilmanian there is an additional secondary branch that we don't know about but that connects to the Nissimis. The name Rajab Nissim appears on the map of Eid Gah as one of the house owners. Rajab was also mentioned by H. Dilmanian - therefore, for the sake of identification, we called this branch Rajab. For a long time I researched the Mashhadi ketubot and in addition I got in touch with the descendants of the Rajab branch, but I've not yet succeeded in connecting them with the Nissimi genealogy. My hope is that publication of this book will help us solve this mystery.	[Background/ ... Mashhad]
Responses and Availability of the Info rmation	In the last years I have received additional information to supplement the many important facts in the family tree. The accumulated data is currently being managed on my computer and is accessible to all at the website. My hope is that as more and more members of the family are exposed to the site, we will be able to better update the genealogy with input for modifications and expanding families.	

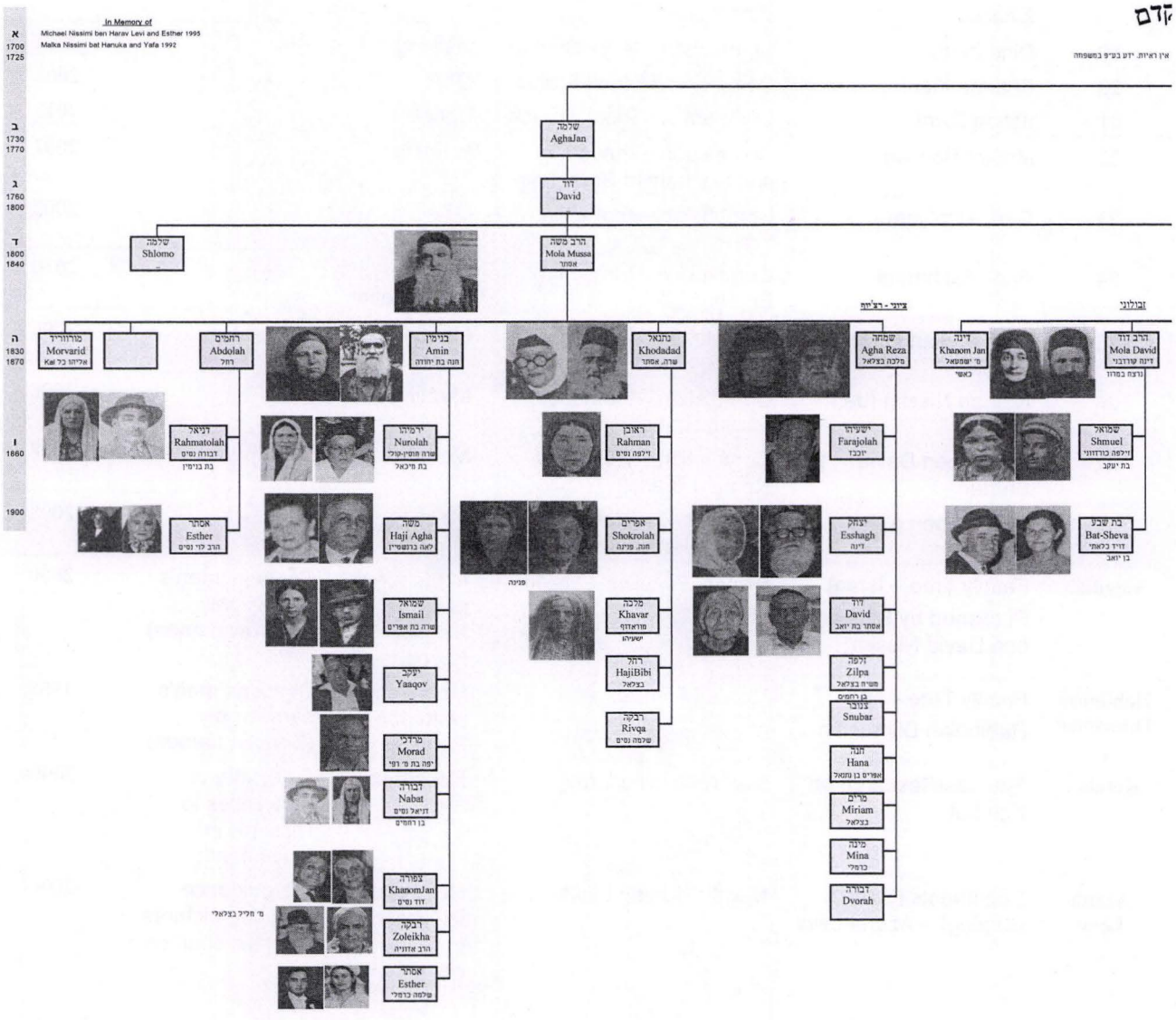
Family Tree Sources

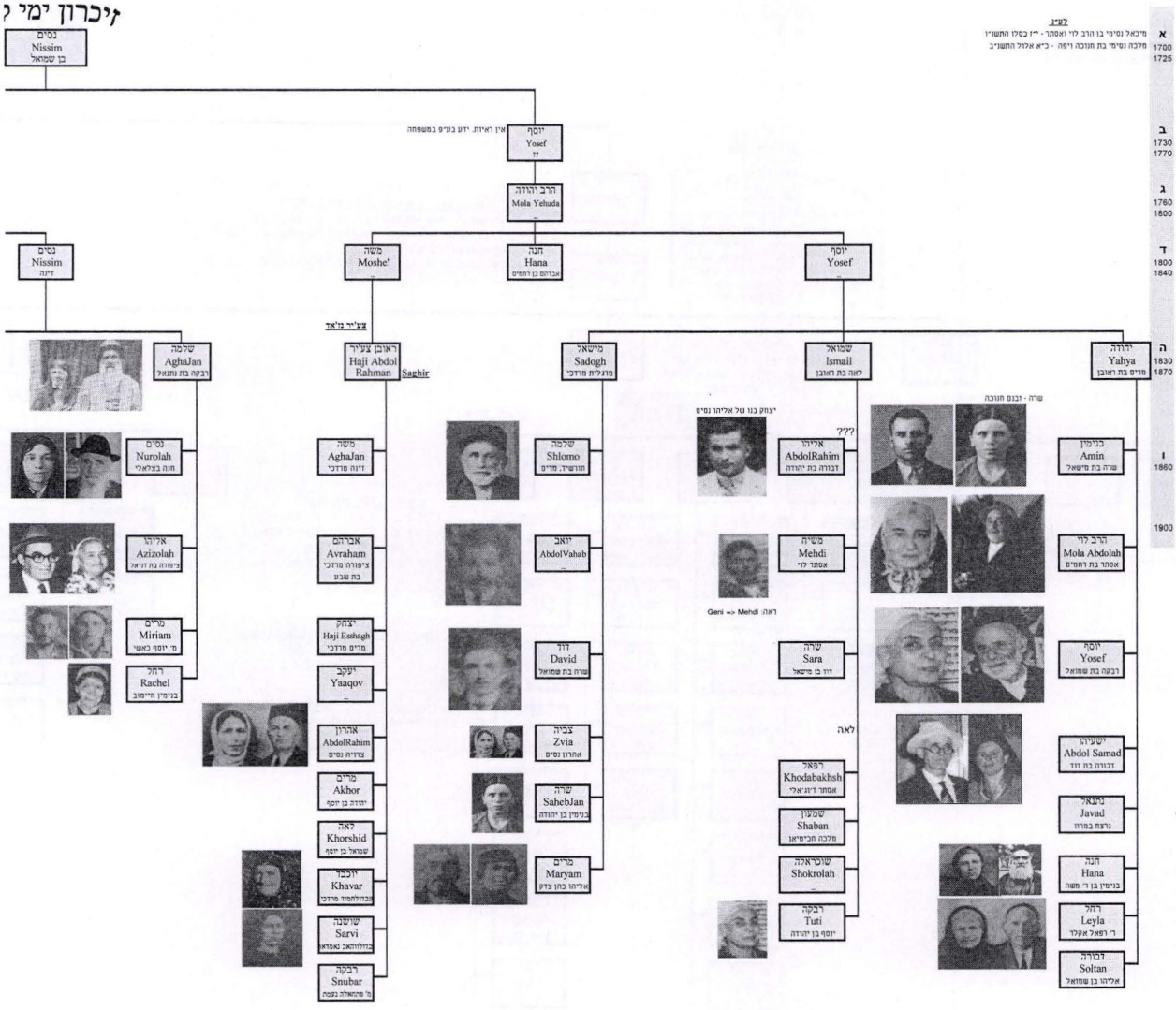
ID	Source	Relates to	Type of Information	Comments	Year
1	My father, Michael Nissimi	All the Branches: Hebrew and Persian Names, Women's Names	Question and Answer (Q&A)	Gathering my father's (Michael) unwritten knowledge	1980s - 1996
2	My brother, Daniel Nissimi	Completion	Q&A		1990s
3	My uncles and aunt: Eliyahu Nissim, Hananiya Nissimi, Yehuda Nissim, Zvia Dilmanian	Completion	Q&A		1990s
4	Itzhaq Ben-Ami	Nissim, Founder of the Family	Q&A	"Nissim ben Shmuel"	1985
5	Ania Nassimi	Completion – Shmuel Branch	Q&A email	Including an article in the Megillah	2003 2013
6	Yoni ben Binyamin	Completion – Mishael Branch	Q&A		2001
7	Sara Zilpa bat Yishayahu Kohen	Completion – Mishael Branch	Q&A		2001
8	Esther Shahvardi	Completion – Mishael Branch	Meeting		2004
9	Hanna Kohen Tzedeq and son Simon	Completion – Mishael Branch	Meeting		2010
10	Yaaqov Nissim	Clarification– Reuven Branch /Saghir Nejad	Q&A	"Reuven ben Moshe Kaboli"	1990s
11	Amanolah Saghir Nejad	Completion– Reuven Branch /Saghir Najad	Q&A	Courtesy of Ania Nassimi	2003
12	Shira Nissim	Completion– Reuven Branch /Saghir Najad	Presentation	Picture presentation and family connections	2007
13	Zvia, Aharon, Chemda, Gila and Dalia (children of Reuven Nissim)	Completion – Reuven Branch	Research on roots, Meeting	Roots research done by Dor – See "Beit Saba"	2010
14	Hanna Kohen-Tzedeq and son Simon	Completion– Reuven Branch	Meeting		2010
15	Hanna Vahapour	Completion – David ben Shlomo Branch and especially the Zvuloni and Rachamim Branches	Meeting		2001
16	Simcha Zvuloni	Completion – Zvuloni Branch	Meeting		2002
17	Efraim and Zvia Zvuloni	Completion – Zvuloni Branch	Meeting		2005
18	Avraham and Zvia	Completion – Zvuloni	Q&A		2010

	Zvuloni	Branch			
19	Dina Zioni	Completion – Zioni Branch	Meeting		2002
20	Shlomo Zioni	Completion – Zioni Branch	Q&A		2008
21	Itzhaq Zioni	Completion – Zioni Branch	Updates		2013
22	Miriam Ben-Ami	Completion – Binyamin and Rachamim Branches	Meeting		2002
23	Dina Alqa'yam	Completion – Binyamin Branch	Q&A		2002
24	Anat Rachmani	Completion – Binyamin Branch	Q&A, Presentation		2010
25	Nethanel and Dvora Nissim	Completion – Nethanel Branch	Meeting		2004
26	Nathan Nissim (ben Nissim)	Completion – Nethanel/ Efraim Branch	Meeting		2006
27	Daniel ben David Sardar	Completion – Nethanel/ Reuven Branch	Meeting		2008
28	Simcha ben Agha-Morad	Completion – Nethanel/ Efraim Branch	Meeting		2008
Megillah	Family Tree – Israel Published by Binyamin ben David Nissim	Nissimi Families – David Branch	In the format of a Megillah (scroll)	Contains men's names only (Hebrew names)	2000
Habibolah Dilmanian	Family Tree – NY Habibolah Dilmanian	Nissimi Families	Manuscript written in Persian	Contains men's names only (Persian names)	1993
Ketubot	Sources/Research on Ketubot	Mainly Missing Links	Research	Discovery of references to Nissimis in Documents	2000s
Azaria Levy	Documents (Card Catalog) – Azaria Levy	Mainly Missing Links	References to Nissimis in documents	His guidance included pictures from his sources	2000s

קדם

אין ראיות. ידע בע"פ במשפחה




זיכרון ימי נ
נסים
Nissim
בן שמואל
יוסף
Yosef
??
אין ראיות, ידוע בע"פ במשפחה
הרב יהודה
Mola Yehuda
נסים
Nissim
דינה
משה
Moshe'
חנה
Hana
אברהם בן רחמים
יוסף
Yosef
שלמה
AghaJan
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ראובן צעיר
Haji Abdol Rahman
Saghir
מישאל
Sadogh
מרגלית מרדכי
שמואל
Ismail
לאה בת ראובן
יהודה
Yahya
מרים בת ראובן
נסים
Nurolah
חנה בצלאל
משה
AghaJan
דינה מרדכי
שלמה
Shlomo
מורשיד, מרים
אליהו
AbdolRahim
דבורה בת יהודה
בנימין
Amin
שרה בת מישאל
אליהו
Azizolah
ציפורה בת זיעאל
אברהם
Avraham
ציפורה מרדכי
בת שבע
יואב
AbdolVahab
משיח
Mehdi
אסתר לוי
הרב לוי
Mola Abdolah
אסתר בת רחמים
מרים
Miriam
מ' יוסף כאשי
יצחק
Haji Esshagh
מרים מרדכי
דוד
David
שרה בת שמואל
שרה
Sara
דוד בן מישאל
יוסף
Yosef
רבקה בת שמואל
רחל
Rachel
בנימין מיימון
יעקב
Yaaqov
צביה
Zvia
אהרון נסים
לאה
רפאל
Khodabakhsh
אסתר ז'ינ'אלי
ישעיהו
Abdol Samad
דבורה בת דוד
אהרון
AbdolRahim
צדיה נסים
שרה
SabebJan
בנימין בן יהודה
שפעון
Shaban
מלכה חכימיאן
נתנאל
Javad
נרצח במרוו
מרים
Akhor
יהודה בן יוסף
מריים
Maryam
אליהו כהן צדק
שוכראלה
Shokrolah
חנה
Hana
בנימין בן ר' משה
לאה
Khorshid
שמואל בן יוסף
רבקה
Tuti
יוסף בן יהודה
רחל
Leyla
ר' רפאל אקלו
יוכבד
Khavar
מבחולחמיד מרדכי
דבורה
Soltan
אליהו בן שמואל
שושנה
Sarvi
בחולוחאב נאמואו
רבקה
Snubar
מ' מחאזלה נעמה
צעיר
מיכאל ונסימי בן הרב לוי ואמתר - י"ז בסיון התשע"ו
מלכה ונסימי בת חנוכה וימה - כ"א אלול התשע"ב
א 1700 1725
ב 1730 1770
ג 1760 1800
ד 1800 1640
ה 1830 1870
ו 1860
1900
Geni => Mehdi ראה
יצחק בנו של אליהו נסים
שרה - דבנם חנוכה

זן ימי קדם

In Memory of
Michael Nissimi ben Harav Levi and Esther 1995
Malka Nissimi bat Hanuka and Yafa 1992

א 1700 1725 | ב 1730 1770 | ג 1760 1800 | ד 1800 1840 | ה 1830 1870

נסים
Nissim

שלמה
AghaJan

דוד
David

Wolf 1832, Toorkestaun - Territory of the king of Khiva
The Jews here are … from Meshed … reside here constantly.
A few years ago two of them were killed by Turkomans but Allah Kolle khan of khiva avanged their death.
The chief Jews here are Mullah Eliyahu ben Mullah Daniel …., **David**

הכנסת תורה 1985, בני ברק

שלמה
Shlomo

תזוה מכר 1897, משהד - (huji)
Molah Harun Valad' Molah Esh'agh
Haji AbdolRahman Tajer JadidolEslam
החתומים: **משה** נסים ואחרים

הרב משה
Mola Mussa
אסתר

נסים
Nissim
דינה לוי

ציוני - רצ'יוה

זבולוני

רות חיים 1900, משהד
ע"ג הספר כתוב בכתב יד

מורוריד
Morvarid
אליהו כל
Elias Kal

רחמים
Abdolah
רחל

בנימין
Amin
תנה בת יהודה

נתנאל
Khodadad
שרה, אסתר

שמחה
Aqa Reza

דינה
Khanom Jan
מ' ישמעאל
כאשי

הרב דוד
Mola David
דינה קורדבני
נרצח במרוו

שלמה
AghaJan
רבקה בת נתנאל

כתובה 1904, משהד (huji)
Rahmatolah valad Abdolah
Tajer JadidolEslam
Nabat Khanom bat Agh
Amin Tajer JadidolEslam

דניאל
Rahmatolah
דבורה בת בנימין

אסתר
Esther
הרב לוי נסים

ירמיהו
Nurolah
שרה חומין-קולי
בת מיכאל

משה
Haji Agha
לאה ברנשטין

שמואל
Ismail
שרה בת אפרים

יעקב
Yaaqov

מרדכי
Morad
יפה בת ר' רפאל

דבורה
Nabat
דניאל בן רחמים

צפורה
H'anom Jan
דוד בן ראובן

רבקה
Zoleik'a
ר' אדוניה בצלאלי
מ' חליל

אסתר
Esther
שלמה כרמלי

ראובן
Rahman
מירפה בת שמואל

אפרים
Shokrolah
חנה, פנינה

מלכה
Khavar
מוראדוף

רחל ??
HajiBibi
בצלאל

רבקה
Rivqa
שלמה בן נסים
זבולוני

ישעיהו
Farajolah
יוכבד

יצחק
Esshagh
דינה

דוד
David
אסתר בת יואב

זלפה
Zilpa
משיח בצלאל
בן רחמים

צנובר
Znubar

חנה
Hana
אפרים בן נתנאל

מרים
Miriam
בצלאל

מינה
Mina
כרמלי

דבורה
Dvorah

מכתב תרדה 1900, ירושלים
(ארכיון ועד ספרדים - איגרת 336)
מכתב תודה מאת ראשון לציון על תרומות ממרוו
למע"כ אחינו מרדחמינו ..
אגא **ריזה** נסים יצ"ו, אגא **פרג'** נסים

כתובה 1923, משהד (ספר זכרון צדיקים - אקלר)
חתן: **דויד** בן כ"א שמחה
כלה: אסתר בת כ' יואב

כתובה 1923, משהד (ספר זכרון צדיקים - אקלר)
חתן: Aqa **Davud** JadidolEslam ben Agha Reza

כתובה 1911, מרוו (מקורות)
חתן: **שמואל** בן בנימין נ"ס
כלה: **שרה** בת אפרים
נאום: הצעיר מרדכי בן ה"מ רפאל נ"ע אקלר
עד: הצעיר דוד כל עד
עד: צעיר **לוי** בן יאודא נסים

נסים
Nurolah
תנה בצלאלי

אליהו
Azizolah
ציפורה בת זיאל

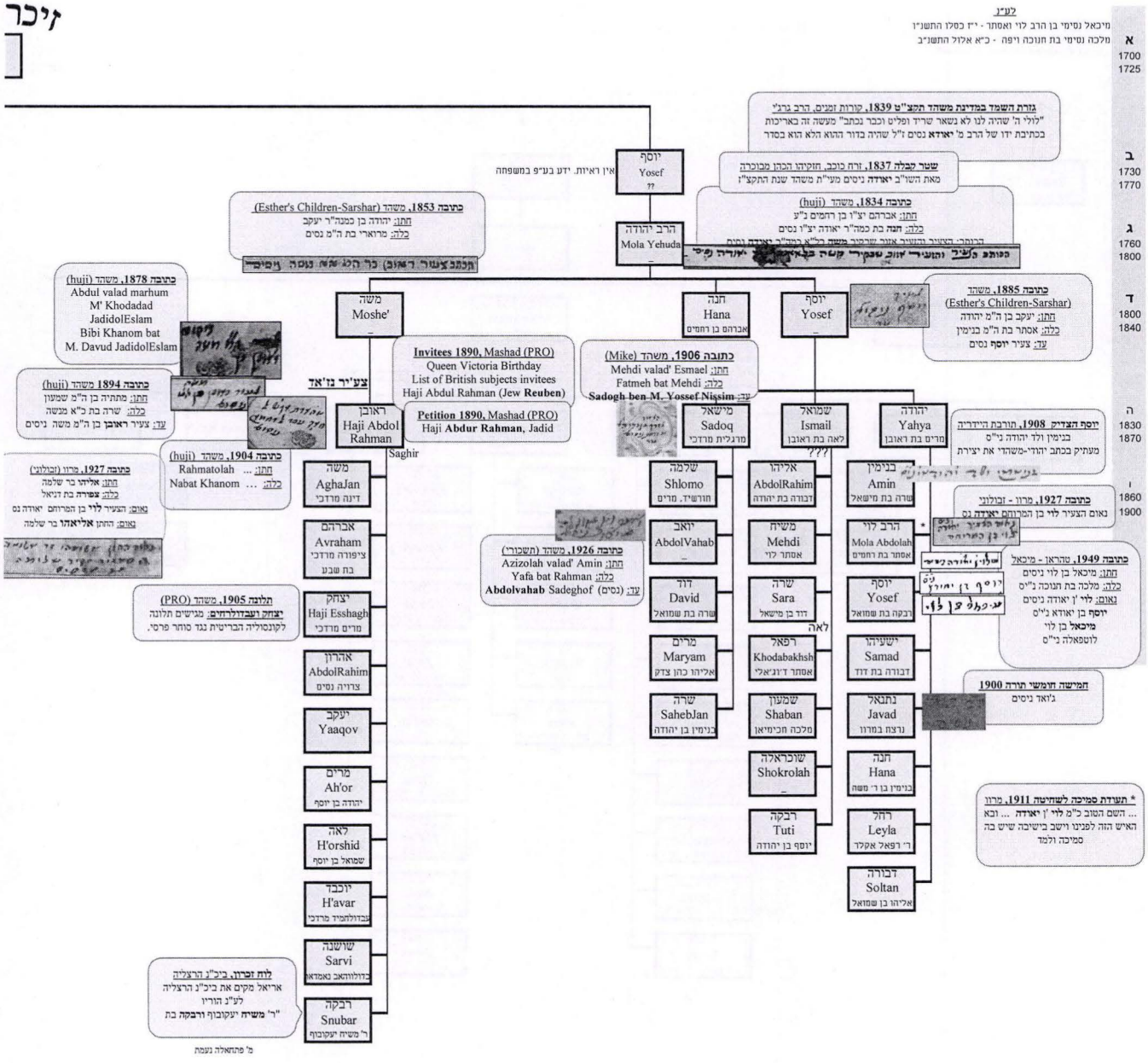
מרים
Miryam
מ' יוסף כאשי

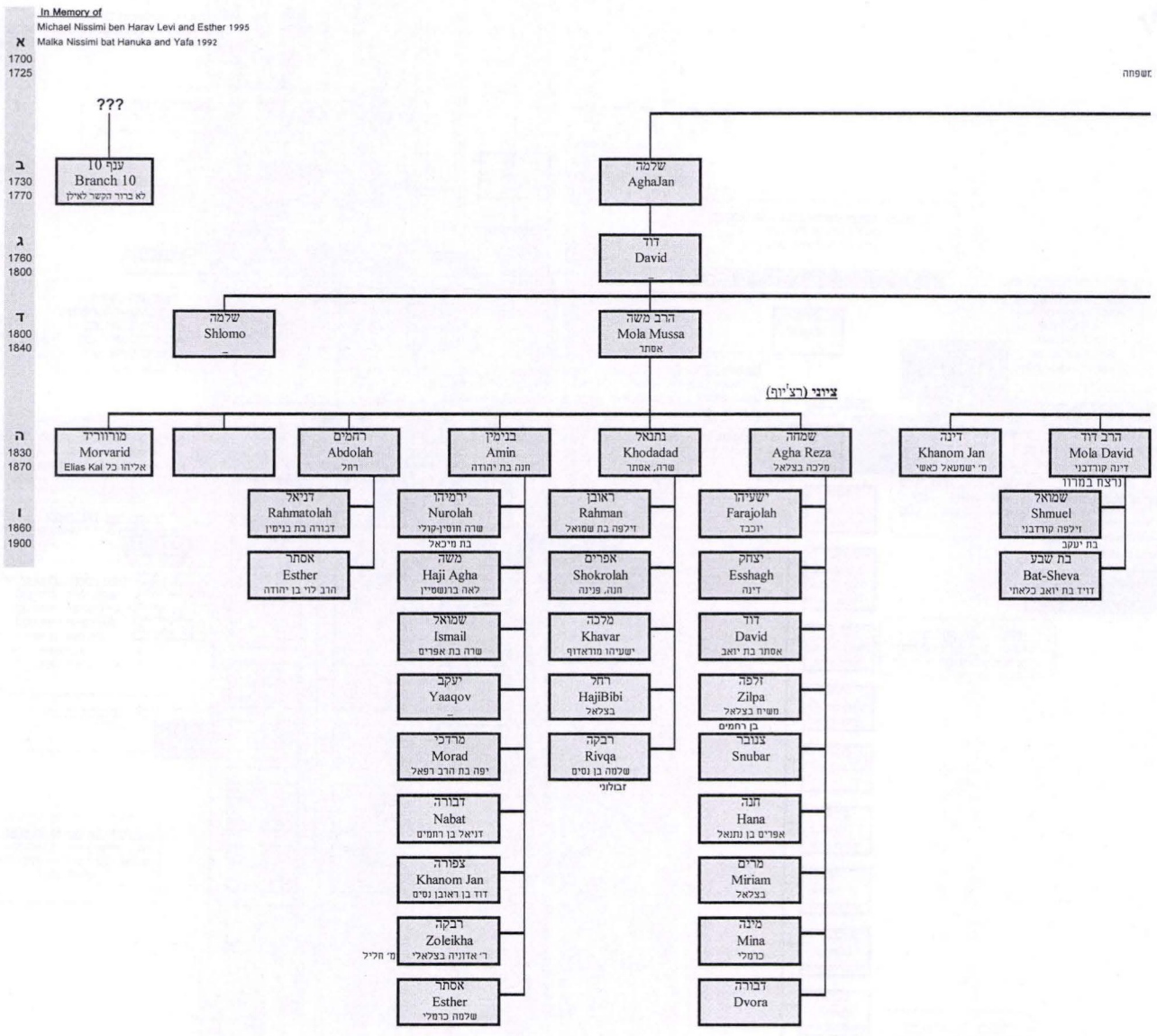
רחל
Rah'el
בנימין חיימוב

שמואל
Shmuel
זילפה קורדבני
בת יעקב

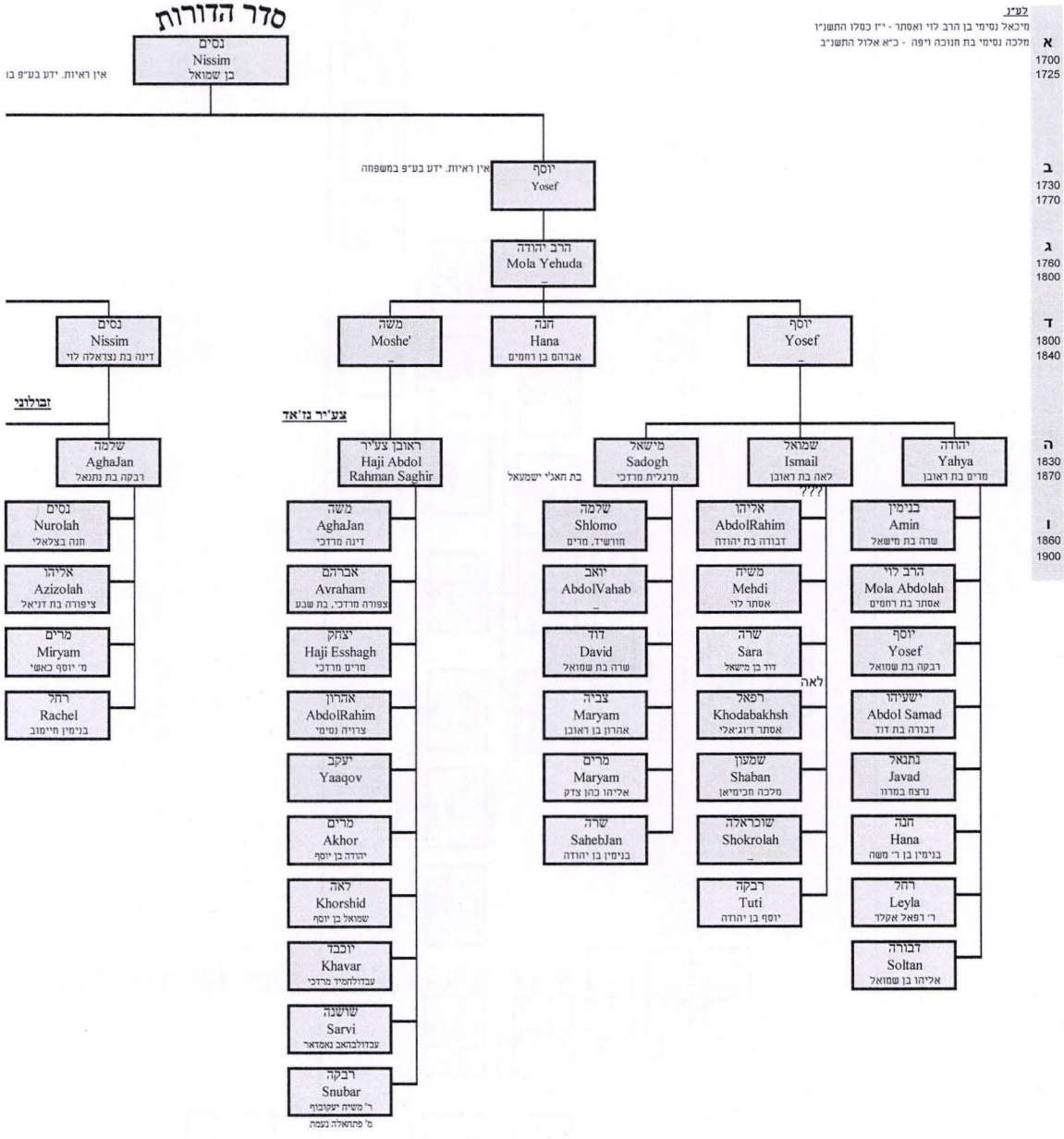
בת שבע
Bat Sheva
דויד כלאחי

זיכר


לע"נ
מיכאל נסימי בן הרב לוי ואסתר - י"ז כסלו התשנ"ו
מלכה נסימי בת חנוכה ויפה - כ"א אלול התשנ"ב
א
ב
ג
ד
ה
ו
1700
1725
1730
1770
1760
1800
1800
1840
1830
1870
1860
1900
יוסף Yosef ??
אין ראיות, ידע בע"פ במשפחה
הרב יהודה Mola Yehuda
משה Moshe'
חנה Hana אברהם בן רחמים
יוסף Yosef
ראובן Haji Abdol Rahman Saghir
משה AghaJan דיינה מרדכי
אברהם Avraham ציפורה מרדכי בת שבע
יצחק Haji Esshagh מרים מרדכי
אהרון AbdolRahim צדריה נסים
יעקב Ya'aqov
מרים Ah'or יהודה בן יוסף
לאה H'orshid שמואל בן יוסף
יוכבד H'avar עבדולחמיד מרדכי
שרשנה Sarvi בדולוהאב נאמדאו
רבקה Snubar ר' משיח יעקובוף
מ' פתחאלה נעמת
מישאל Sadoq מרגלית מרדכי
שלמה Shlomo חורשיד, מרים
יואב AbdolVahab
דוד David שרה בת שמואל
מרים Maryam אליהו כהן צדק
שרה SahebJan
שמואל Ismail לאה בת ראובן
אליהו AbdolRahim דבורה בת יהודה
משיח Mehdi אסתר לוי
שרה Sara דוד בן מישאל
רפאל Khodabakhsh אסתר ד'ונג'אלי
שמעון Shaban מלכה חכיתיאן
שוכראלה Shokrolah
רבקה Tuti יוסף בן יהודה
יהודה Yahya מרים בת ראובן
בנימין Amin שרה בת מישאל
הרב לוי Mola Abdolah אסתר בת רחמים
יוסף Yosef רבקה בת שמואל
ישעיהו Samad דבורה בת דוד
נתנאל Javad נרצח במרוו
חנה Hana בנימין בן ר' משה
רחל Leyla ר' רפאל אקלר
דבורה Soltan אליהו בן שמואל
לאה
???
צע'יר נז'אד
גזרת השמד במדינת משהד תקצ"ט 1839, קורות זמנים, הרב גרג'י
"לולי ה' שהיה לנו לא נשאר שריד ופליט וכבר נכתב" מעשה זה באריכות בכתיבת ידו של הרב מ' יאודא נסים ז"ל שהיה בדור ההוא הלא הוא בסדר
שטר קבלה 1837, זרח כוכב, חזקיהו הכהן מבוכרה
מאת השו"ב יאודה ניסים מע"ת משהד שנת התקצ"ז
כתובה 1834, משהד (huji)
חתן: אברהם יצ'ו בן רחמים נ"ע
כלה: חנה בת כמה"ר יאודה יצ"ו נסים
הרבמי: האציר והשיר אזר שרקיר משה בר"א רחה"ב יאודה נסים
כתובה 1853, משהד (Esther's Children-Sarshar)
חתן: יהודה בן כמנה"ר יעקב
כלה: מרואריי בת ה"מ נסים
כתובה 1878, משהד (huji)
Abdul valad marhum M' Khodadad JadidolEslam
Bibi Khanom bat M. Davud JadidolEslam
כתובה 1894 משהד (huji)
חתן: מתתיה בן ה"מ שמעון
כלה: שרה בת כ"א מנשה
עד: צעיר ראובן בן ה"מ משה ניסים
כתובה 1904, משהד (huji)
Rahmatolah ... חתן:
Nabat Khanom ... כלה:
כתובה 1927, מרוו (זבולוני)
חתן: אליהו בר שלמה
כלה: צפורה בת דניאל
נאום: הצעיר לוי בן המרוחם יאודה נס
נאום: ההתן אליאהו בר שלמה
Invitees 1890, Mashad (PRO)
Queen Victoria Birthday
List of British subjects invitees
Haji Abdul Rahman (Jew Reuben)
Petition 1890, Mashad (PRO)
Haji Abdur Rahman, Jadid
כתובה (Mike) 1906, משהד
חתן: Mehdi valad' Esmael
כלה: Fatmeh bat Mehdi
עד: Sadogh ben M. Yossef Nissim
כתובה 1926, משהד (תשכורי)
חתן: Azizolah valad' Amin
כלה: Yafa bat Rahman
עד: (נסים) Abdolvahab Sadeghof
כתובה 1885, משהד (Esther's Children-Sarshar)
חתן: יעקב בן ה"מ יהודה
כלה: אסתר בת ה"מ בנימין
עד: צעיר יוסף נסים
יוסף הצדיק 1908, תורכת הירדירה
בנימין ולד יהודה נ"ס
מעתיק בכתב יהודי-משהדי את יצירת
כתובה 1927, מרוו - זבולוני
נאום הצעיר לוי בן המרוחם יאודה נס
כתובה 1949, טהראן - מיכאל
חתן: מיכאל בן לוי ניסים
כלה: מלכה בת חנוכה נ"ס
נאום: לוי 'ן יאודה ניסים
יוסף בן יאודא נ"ס
מיכאל בן לוי
לוטפאלה נ"ס
חמישה חומשי תורה 1900
ג'ואד ניסים
* תעודת סמיכה לשחיטה 1911, מרוו
... השם הטוב כ"מ לוי 'ן יאודה ... ובא
האיש הזה לפנינו וישב בישיבה שיש בה
סמיכה ולמד
הלוח זכרון, ביכ"נ הרצליה
אריאל מקים את ביכ"נ הרצליה
לע"נ הוריו
"ר' משיח יעקובוף ורבקה בת
תלונה 1905, משהד (PRO)
יצחק ועבדולרחים: מגישים תלונה
לקונסוליה הבריטית נגד סוחר פרסי.


In Memory of
Michael Nissimi ben Harav Levi and Esther 1995
Malka Nissimi bat Hanuka and Yafa 1992
א
1700
1725
משפחה
???
ב
1730
1770
ענף 10
Branch 10
לא ברור הקשר לאילן
שלמה
AghaJan
ג
1760
1800
דוד
David
ד
1800
1840
שלמה
Shlomo
הרב משה
Mola Mussa
אסתר
ציוני (רצ'יוף)
ה
1830
1870
מורווריד
Morvarid
אליהו כל Elias Kal
רחמים
Abdolah
רחל
בנימין
Amin
חנה בת יהודה
נתנאל
Khodadad
שרה, אסתר
שמחה
Agha Reza
מלכה בצלאל
דינה
Khanom Jan
מ' ישמעאל כאשי
הרב דוד
Mola David
דינה קורדבני
נרצח במורו
ו
1860
1900
דניאל
Rahmatolah
דבורה בת בנימין
אסתר
Esther
הרב לוי בן יהודה
ירמיהו
Nurolah
שרה חוסין-קולי
בת מיכאל
משה
Haji Agha
לאה ברנשטיין
שמואל
Ismail
שרה בת אפרים
יעקב
Yaaqov
מרדכי
Morad
יפה בת הרב רפאל
דבורה
Nabat
דניאל בן רחמים
צפורה
Khanom Jan
דוד בן ראובן נסים
רבקה
Zoleikha
מ' חליל
ר' אזוניה בצלאלי
אסתר
Esther
שלמה כרמלי
ראובן
Rahman
זילפה בת שמואל
אפרים
Shokrolah
חנה, פנינה
מלכה
Khavar
ישעיהו מזראדוף
רחל
HajiBibi
בצלאל
רבקה
Rivqa
שלמה בן נסים
זבולוני
ישעיהו
Farajolah
יוכבד
יצחק
Esshagh
דינה
דוד
David
אסתר בת יואב
זלפה
Zilpa
משיח בצלאל
בן רחמים
צנובר
Snubar
חנה
Hana
אפרים בן נתנאל
מרים
Miriam
בצלאל
מינה
Mina
כרמלי
דבורה
Dvora
שמואל
Shmuel
זילפה קורדבני
בת יעקב
בת שבע
Bat-Sheva
דויד בת יואב כלאחי

סדר הדורות

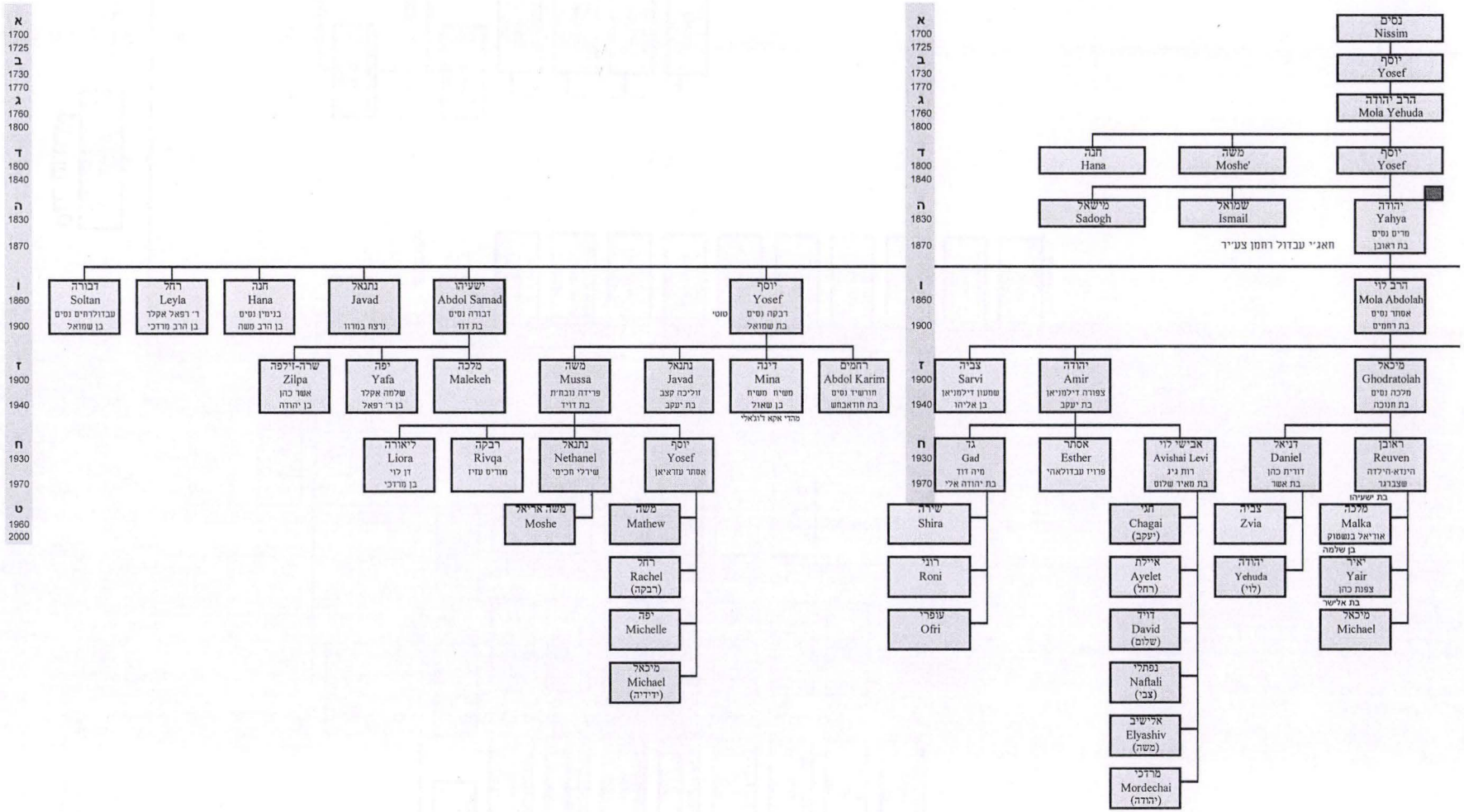


ע"נ

מיכאל נסימי בן הרב לוי ואסתר - י"ז כסלו התשנ"ו

מלכה נסימי בת חנוכה וירפה - כ"א אלול התשנ"ב

א	1700
	1725
ב	1730
	1770
ג	1760
	1800
ד	1800
	1840
ה	1830
	1870
ו	1860
	1900


א
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ב
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ד
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ה
1830
1870
ו
1860
1900
ז
1900
1940
ח
1930
1970
ט
1960
2000
נסים
Nissim
יוסף
Yosef
הרב יהודה
Mola Yehuda
יוסף
Yosef
משה
Moshe'
חנה
Hana
יהודה
Yahya
מרים נסים
בת ראובן
שמואל
Ismail
מישאל
Sadogh
תאג'י עבדול רחמן צע"יר
הרב לוי
Mola Abdolah
אסתר נסים
בת רחמים
מיכאל
Ghodratolah
מלכה נסים
בת חנוכה
יוסף
Yosef
רבקה נסים
בת שמואל
טוסי
יהודה
Amir
צפורה דילמניאן
בת יעקב
צביה
Sarvi
שמעון דילמניאן
בן אליהו
דינה
Mina
משיח משיח
בן שאול
מהדי אקא דונאלי
רחמים
Abdol Karim
חורשיד נסים
בת חודאבחש
ישעיהו
Abdol Samad
דבורה נסים
בת דוד
נתנאל
Javad
נרצח במדוו
חנה
Hana
בנימין נסים
בן הרב משה
רחל
Leyla
ר' רפאל אקלר
בן הרב מרדכי
דבורה
Soltan
עבדולרחים נסים
בן שמואל
מלכה
Malekeh
יפה
Yafa
שלמה אקלד
בן ר' רפאל
שרה-זילפה
Zilpa
אשר כהן
בן יהודה
נתנאל
Javad
זוליכה קצב
בת יעקב
משה
Mussa
פרידה נובת'ת
בת דויד
יוסף
Yosef
אסתר עזראיאן
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Nethanel
שירלי חכימי
רבקה
Rivqa
מורים עזיז
ליאורה
Liora
דן לוי
בן מרדכי
משה אריאל
Moshe
משה
Mathew
רחל
Rachel
(רבקה)
יפה
Michelle
מיכאל
Michael
(ידידיה)
גד
Gad
מיה דוד
בת יהודה אלי
אסתר
Esther
פרויז עבדולאהי
אבישי לוי
Avishai Levi
רות ניג
בת מאיר שלום
דניאל
Daniel
דורית כהן
בת אשר
ראובן
Reuven
הינדא-הילדה
שצברגר
בת ישעיהו
שירה
Shira
רוני
Roni
עופרי
Ofri
חגי
Chagai
(יעקב)
איילת
Ayelet
(רחל)
דויד
David
(שלום)
נפתלי
Naftali
(צבי)
אלישיב
Elyashiv
(משה)
מרדכי
Mordechai
(יהודה)
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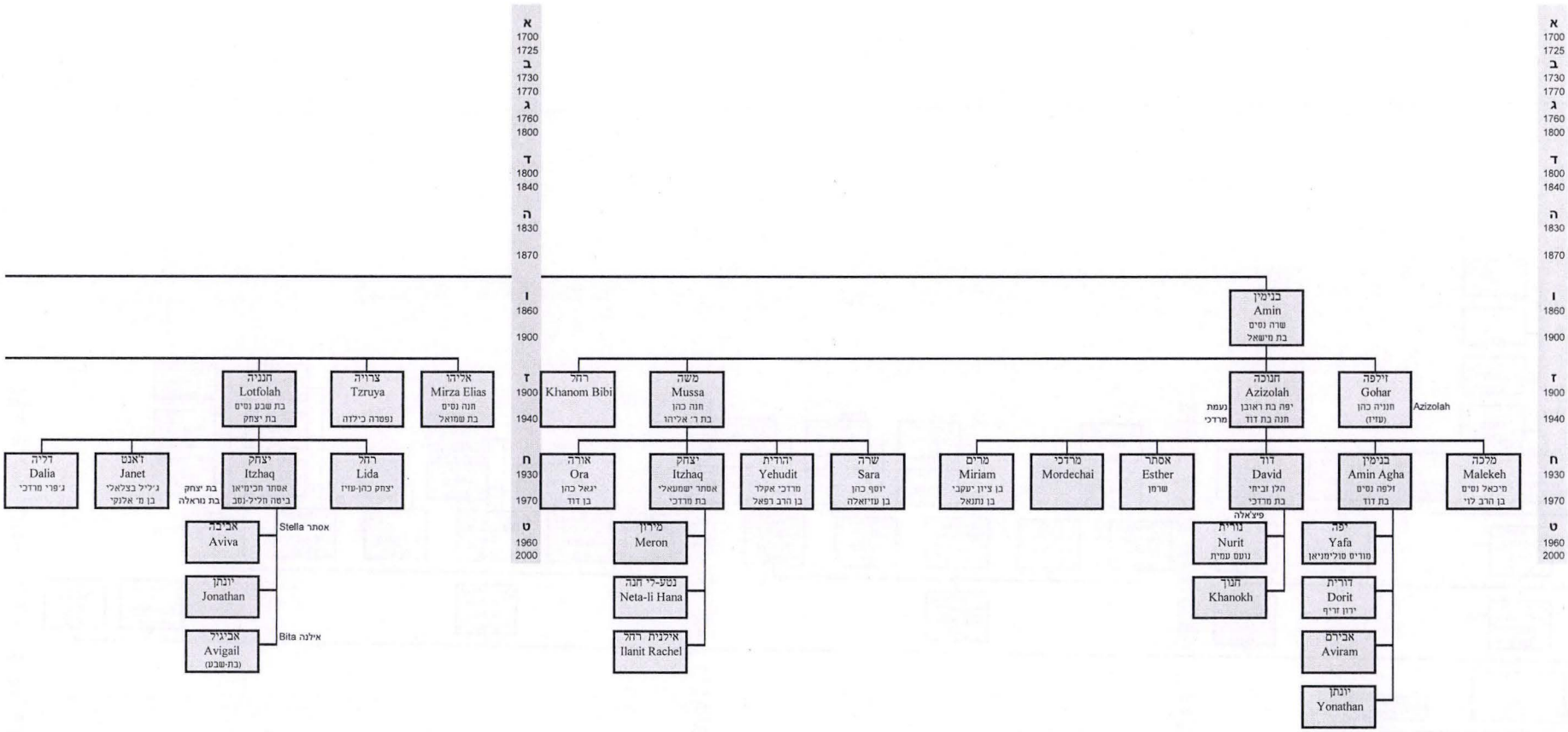
Zvia
יהודה
Yehuda
(לוי)
מלכה
Malka
אוריאל בנשמוק
בן שלמה
יאיר
Yair
צפנת כהן
בת אלישר
מיכאל
Michael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חנוכה
Azizolah
יפת בת ראובן
חנה בת דוד
נעמת
מרדכי
זילפה
Gohar
חנניה כהן
(עזיז)
Azizolah
חנניה
Lotfolah
בת שבע נסים
בת יצחק
צרויה
Tzruya
נפטרה כילדה
אליהו
Mirza Elias
חנה נסים
בת שמואל
רחל
Khanom Bibi
משה
Mussa
חנה כהן
בת ר' אליהו
מרים
Miriam
בן ציון יעקב
בן נתנאל
מרדכי
Mordechai
אסתר
Esther
שרמן
דוד
David
הלן זביחי
בת מרדכי
בנימין
Amin Agha
זלפה נסים
בת דוד
מלכה
Malekeh
מיכאל נסים
בן הרב לוי
דליה
Dalia
ג'פרי מרדכי
ז'אנט
Janet
ג'ליל בצלאלי
בן מ' אלנקי
יצחק
Itzhaq
אסתר חכימיאן
בימה חליל-נסב
בת יצחק
בת נוראלה
רחל
Lida
יצחק כהן-עזיז
אורה
Ora
יגאל כהן
בן דוד
יצחק
Itzhaq
אסתר ישמעאלי
בת מרדכי
יהודית
Yehudit
מרדכי אקלר
בן הרב רפאל
שרה
Sara
יוסף כהן
בן עזיזאלה
פיצאלה
נורית
Nurit
נועם עמית
חנוך
Khanokh
יפה
Yafa
מורים סוליימניאן
דורית
Dorit
ירון זריף
אביגיל
Avigail
(בת-שבע)
אביבה
Aviva
Stella אסתר
יונתן
Jonathan
Bita אילנה
מירון
Meron
נטע-לי חנה
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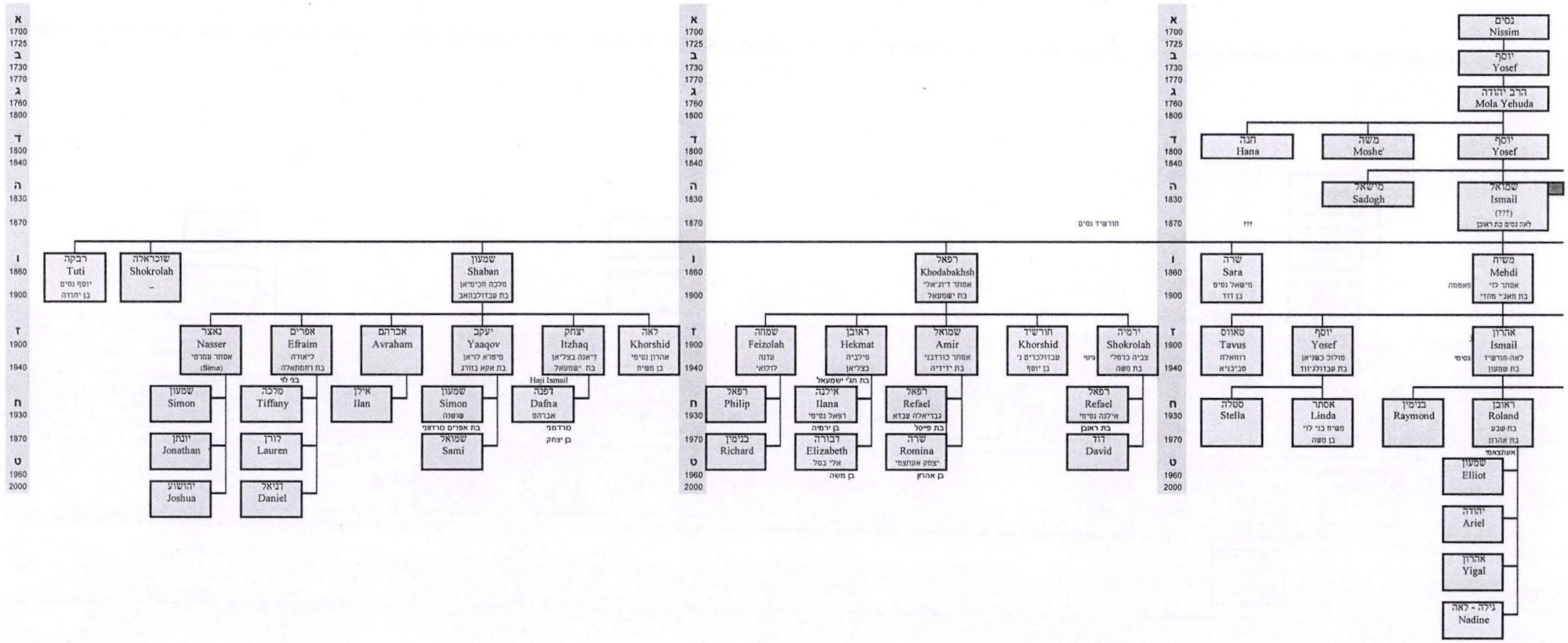
יונתן
Yonathan


נסים
Nissim
יוסף
Yosef
הרב יהודה
Mola Yehuda
יוסף
Yosef
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Moshe'
חנה
Hana
שמואל
Ismail
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לאה נסים בת ראובן
מישאל
Sadogh
משיח
Mehdi
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אהרון
Ismail
לאה-מודשיד
בת שמעון
נסימי
ראובן
Roland
בת-שבע
בת אהרון
אשוצאמי
שמעון
Elliot
יהודה
Ariel
אהרון
Yigal
גילה - לאה
Nadine
יוסף
Yosef
מזלוכ כשוראן
בת עבדולנ'יוד
אסתר
Linda
משיח בני לזי
בן משה
בנימין
Raymond
טאווס
Tavus
רזואלה
סביבניא
סטלה
Stella
שרה
Sara
מישאל נסים
בן דוד
דוד
חורשיד נסים
רפאל
Khodabakhsh
אסתר דינ'אלי
בת ישמעאל
שמואל
Amir
אסתר כורדבני
בת ידידיה
חורשיד
Khorshid
עבדוכרים נ'
בן יוסף
ירמיה
Shokrolah
צביה כרמלי
בת משה
ניסי
רפאל
Refael
עבריאלה עבדא
בת פיסל
שרה
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יצחק אסוצמי
בן אהרון
רפאל
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בת ראובן
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רפאל
Philip
בנימין
Richard
ראובן
Hekmat
סיביה
בצליאן
בת חנ' ישמעאל
אילנה
Ilana
רפאל נסימי
בן ירמיה
דבורה
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אלי בסל
בן משה
שמעון
Shaban
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רבקה
Tuti
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שוכראלה
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Nasser
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(Sima)
שמעון
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יונתן
Jonathan
יהושוע
Joshua
אפרים
Efraim
ליאורה
בת רחמתאלה
בני לזי
מלכה
Tiffany
לורן
Lauren
דניאל
Daniel
אברהם
Avraham
אילן
Ilan
יעקב
Yaaqov
מיסרא לזיאן
בת אקא בוזרג
שמעון
Simon
שושנה
בת אפרים מרדפוי
שמואל
Sami
יצחק
Itzhaq
דיאנה בצליאן
בת ישמעאל
Haji Ismail
דפנה
Dafna
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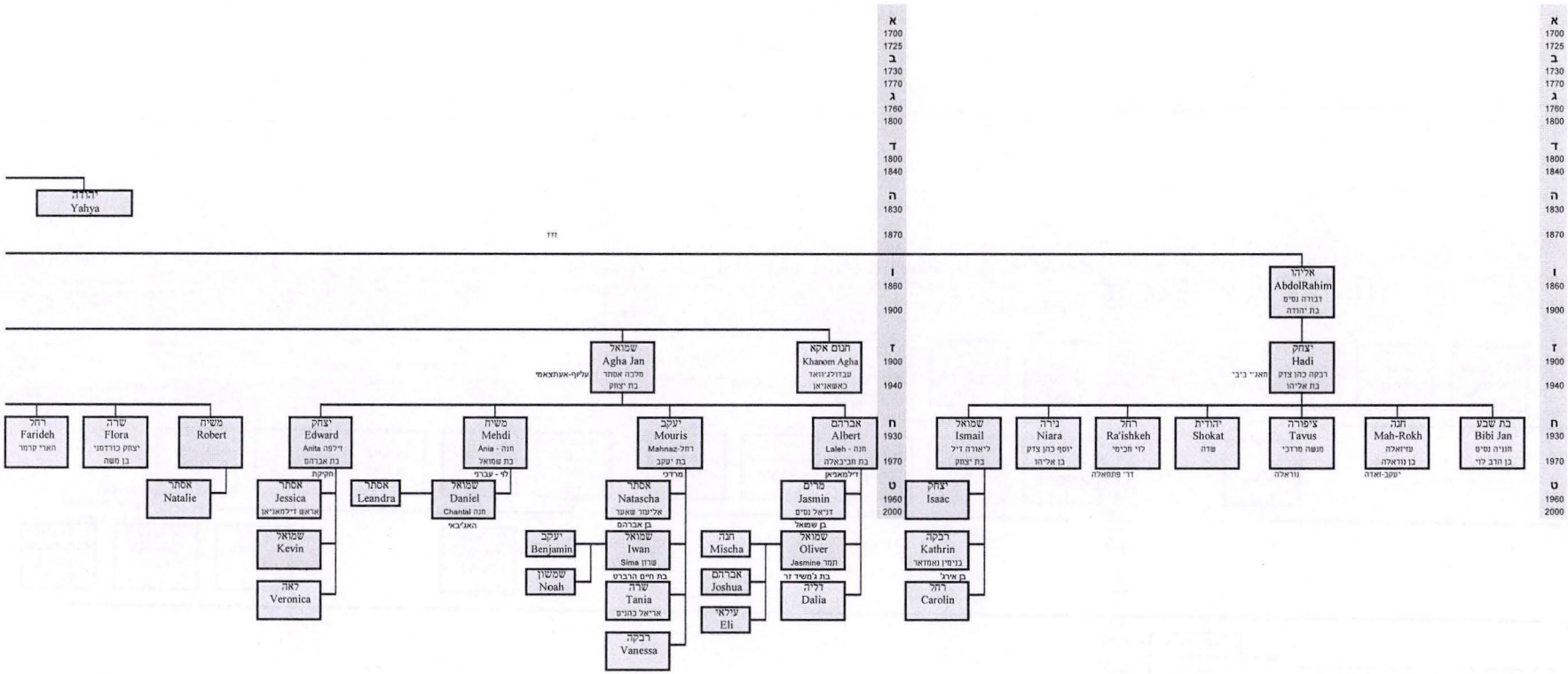
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Khanom Agha
עבדולג'וואד
כאשאניאן
שמואל
Agha Jan
מלכה אסתר
בת יצחק
עליון-אעתצאמי
רחל
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שרה
Flora
יצחק כורדסתני
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Anita דילפה
בת אברהם
חקיקת
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Mehdi
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בת שמואל
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אברהם
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Shokat
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בן נוראלה
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בן הרב לוי
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Jessica
אראש דילמאניאן
אסתר
Leandra
שמואל
Daniel
Chantal חנה
האג'באי
אסתר
Natascha
אליעזר שאער
בן אברהם
מרים
Jasmin
דניאל נסים
בן שמואל
יצחק
Isaac
שמואל
Kevin
יעקב
Benjamin
שמואל
Iwan
Sima שרון
בת חיים הרברט
חנה
Mischa
שמואל
Oliver
Jasmine תמר
בת ג'משיד זר
רבקה
Kathrin
בנימין נאמזאר
בן אירב
לאה
Veronica
שמשון
Noah
שרה
Tania
אריאל כהנים
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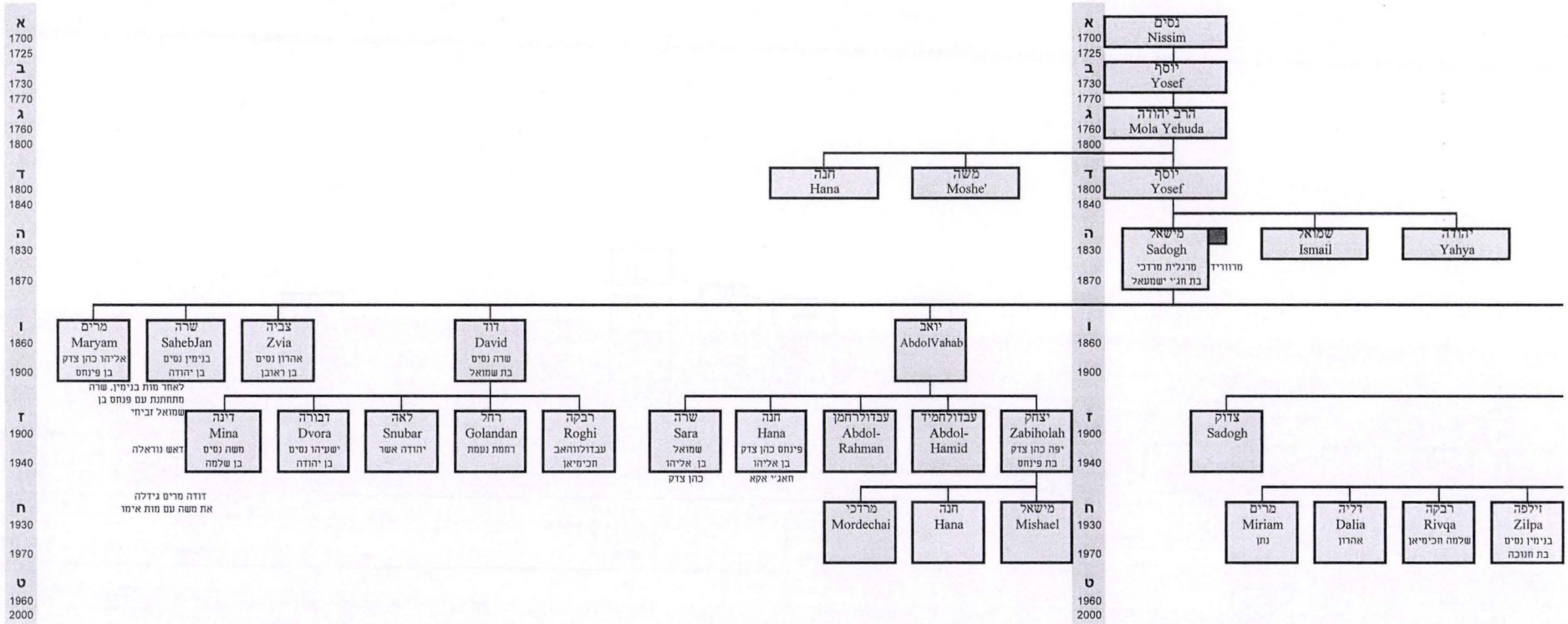
דליה
Dalia
רחל
Carolin
עילאי
Eli
רבקה
Vanessa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Yosef
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בן ראובן
דוד
David
שרה נסים
בת שמואל
יואב
AbdolVahab
לאחר מות בנימין, שרה
מתחתנת עם פנחס בן
שמואל זביחי
דאש נוראלה
דינה
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משה נסים
בן שלמה
דבורה
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בן יהודה
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רחל
Golandan
רחמת נעמת
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Roghi
עבדולזוהאב
תכימיאן
שרה
Sara
שמואל
בן אליהו
כהן צדק
חנה
Hana
פינחס כהן צדק
בן אליהו
חאג'י אקא
עבדולרחמן
Abdol-
Rahman
עבדולחמיד
Abdol-
Hamid
יצחק
Zabiholah
יפה כהן צדק
בת פינחס
צדוק
Sadogh
דודה מרים גידלה
את משה עם מות אימו
מרדכי
Mordechai
חנה
Hana
מישאל
Mishael
מרים
Miriam
נתן
דליה
Dalia
אהרון
רבקה
Rivqa
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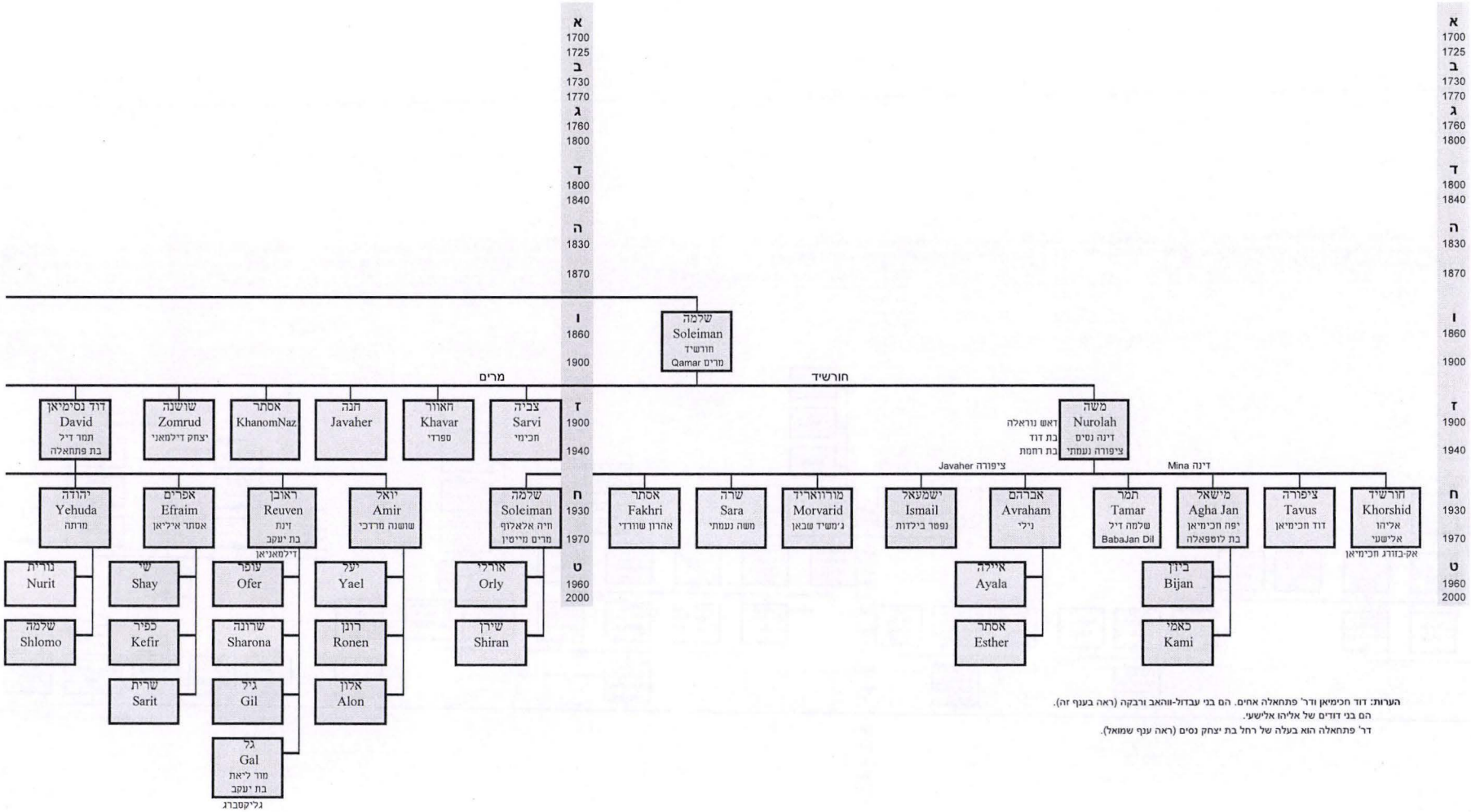
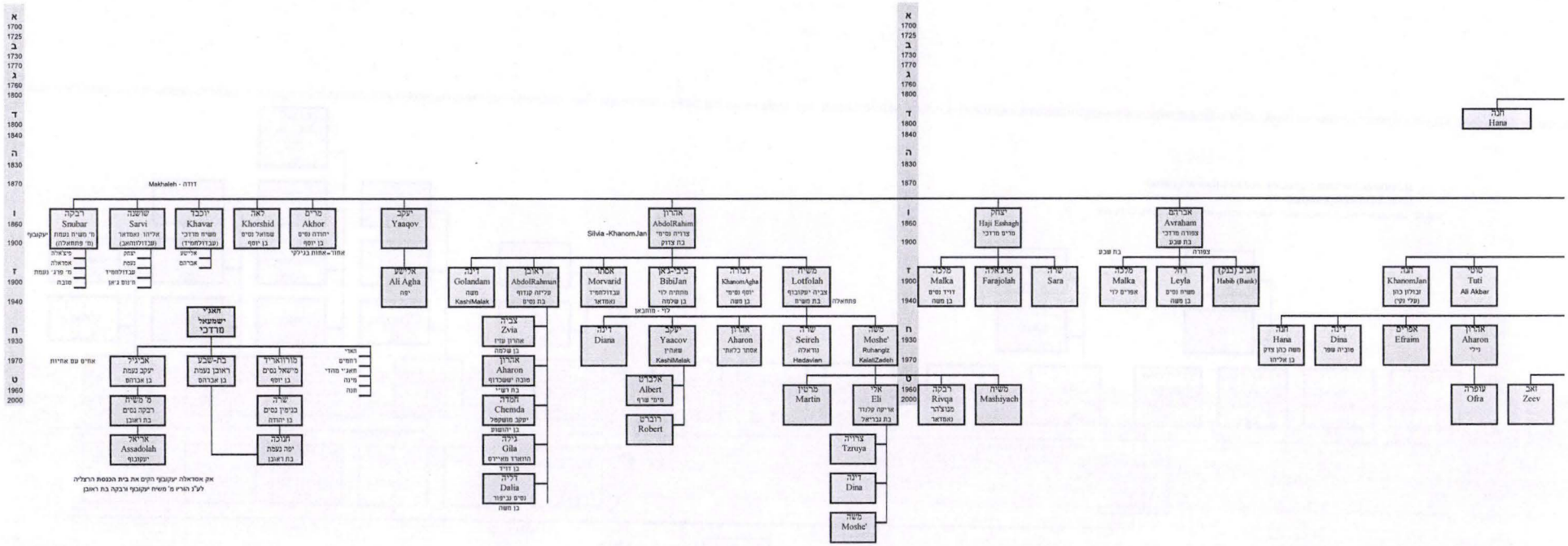
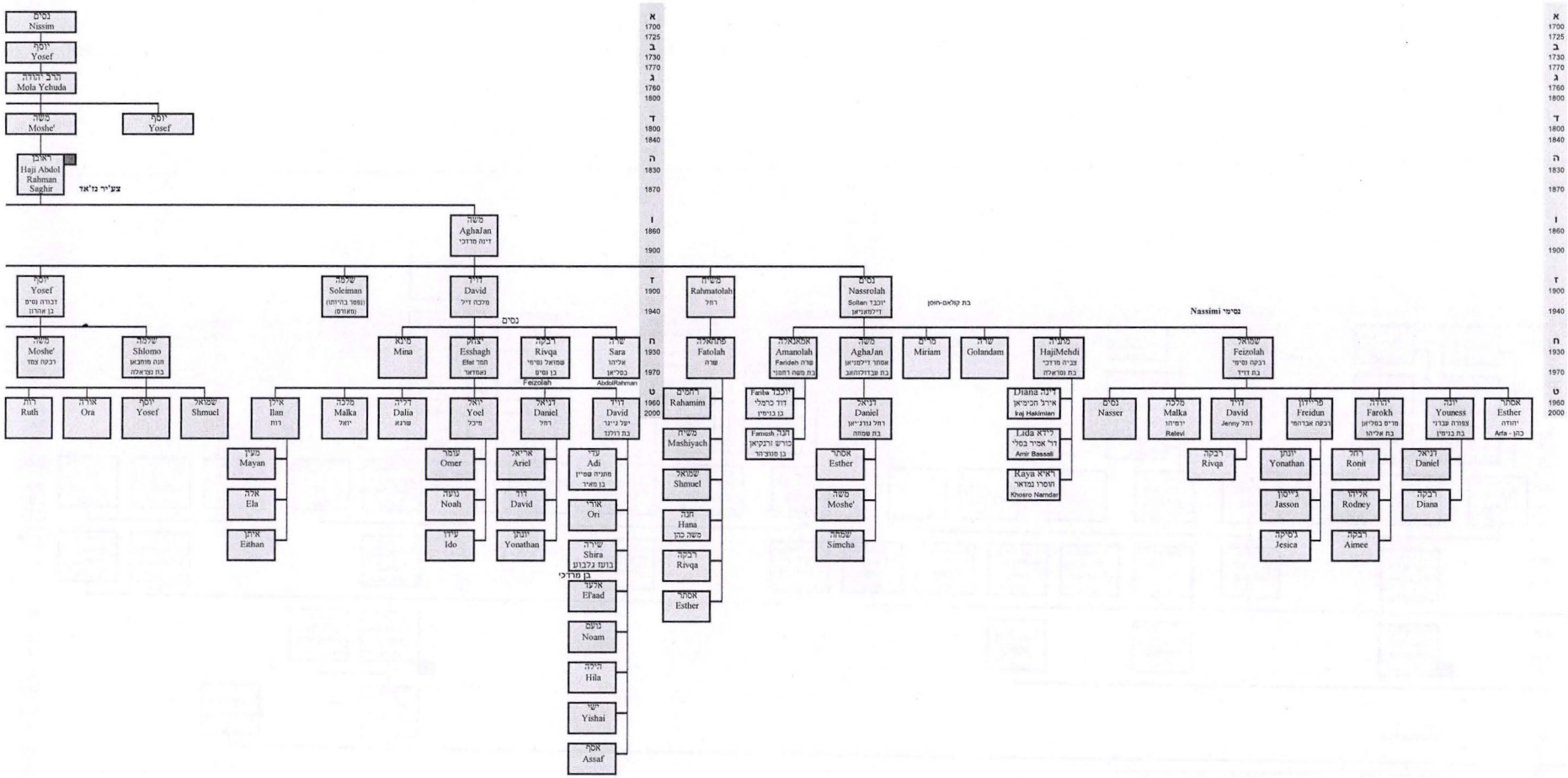
זילפה
Zilpa
בנימין נסים
בת חנוכה



הערות: דוד חכימיאן ודר' פתחאלה אחים. הם בני עבדול-וואהאב ורבקה (ראה בענף זה).
הם בני דודים של אליהו אלישעי.
דר' פתחאלה הוא בעלה של רחל בת יצחק נסים (ראה ענף שמואל).


Makhaleh - דדה
רבקה Snubar מ' משיח נעמת (מ' פתחאללה) יעקובוף
שושנה Sarvi אליהו נאמדאר (עבדולוהאב)
יוכבד Khavar משיח מרדכי (עבדולחמיד)
לאה Khorshid שמואל נסים בן יוסף
מרים Akhor יהודה נסים בן יוסף אחור-אחות בניליקי
יעקב Yaaqov
אליעש Ali Agha יפה
אהרון AbdolRahim צדוקה נסימי בת צדוק Silvia -KhanomJan
דינה Golandam משה KashiMalak
ראובן AbdolRahman מליחה קנדוף בת נסים
אסתר Morvarid עבדולחמיד (אמדאר
ציבי-באן BibiJan מתתיה לוי בן שלמה
דבורה KhanomAgha יוסף נסימי בן משה
משיח Lotfolah צביה יעקובוף בת משיח פתחאלה
לוי - מוחזאן
צביה Zvia אהרון עזיז בן שלמה
אהרון Aharon מובה ישיכרוף בת רפי
חמדה Chemda יעקב מושפול בן יהושוע
גילה Gila חזאזר מאירים בן דויד
דליה Dalia נסים נעימור בן משה
דינה Diana
יעקב Yaacov שושתין KashiMalak
אלברט Albert מימי פורף
רוברט Robert
אהרון Aharon אסתר כלות
שרה Seireh נדואלה Hadavian
משה Moshe' Ruhangiz KelatiZadeh
מרטין Martin
אלי Eli אוריקה קלנוד בת גבריאל
צרויה Tzruya
דינה Dina
משה Moshe'
רבקה Rivqa מנוצ'הר (אמדאר
משיח Mashiyach
יצחק Haji Eshagh מרים מרדכי
מלכה Malka דויד נסים בן משה
פרג'אלה Farajolah
שרה Sara
אברהם Avraham צפורה בת שבע
מלכה Malka אפרים לוי
רחל Leyla משיח נסים בן משה
חביב (בנק) Habib (Bank)
חנה Hana
KhanomJan זבולון כהן (עלי נקי)
דינה Dina פיביה שפר
אפרים Efraim
טוטי Tuti Ali Akbar
אהרון Aharon נילי
עופרה Ofra
זאב Zeev
חנה Hana
תאגי ישמעאל מרדכי
אביגיל יעקב נעמת בן אברהם
בת-שבע ראובן נעמת בן אברהם
מרוואריד מישאל נסים בן יוסף
שרה בנימין נסים בן יהודה
תעלה יסה נעמת בת ראובן
מי משיח רבקה נסים בת ראובן
אריאל Assadolah יעקובוף
אחים עם אחיות
האחים רחמים חאגי מחדי מינה מנה
אק אסדאלה יעקובוף הקים את בית הכנסת הרצליה
לע"נ הוריו מ' משיח יעקובוף ורבקה בת ראובן


נסים
Nissim
יוסף
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Mola Yehuda
משה
Moshe'
יוסף
Yosef
ראובן
Haji Abdol Rahman Saghir
צע'יר בז'אד
משה
AghaJan
דינה מרדכי
יוסף
Yosef
דבורה נסים בן אהרון
שלמה
Soleiman
(נספר בהיותו (מאוחר
דויד
David
מלכה דיל
נסים
רחמים
Rahamim
פתולה
Fatolah
שרה
נסרולה
Nassrolah
Soltan יוכבד דילמאניאן
בת קולאם-חוסן
Nassimi נסימי
משה
Moshe'
רבקה צמח
שלמה
Shlomo
חנה מוחבאן
בת נפראלה
מינא
Mina
יצחק
Esshagh
Efaei תמר נאמדאר
רבקה
Rivqa
שמואל נסימי
בן נסים
שרה
Sara
אליהו
בסליאן
AbdolRahman
Feizolah
אמנולה
Amanolah
Farideh שרה
בת משה רחמני
משה
AghaJan
אסתר דילמאניאן
אסתר בת עבדולוהאב
מרים
Miriam
שרה
Golandam
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HajiMehdi
צביה מרדכי
בת נפראלה
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David
יעל ג'ינג'ר
בת רחלנו
פניבה יוכבד
דוד כרמלי
בן ברוחין
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Fania
דנאל
Famush חנה
פורש זרבקיאן
בן מנשה
דניאל
Daniel
רחל נוחי ג'יאן
בת שמחה
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אירל חכימיאן
Iraj Hakimian
לידא
Lida
דר' אמיר בסלי
Amir Bassali
ראיא
Kaya
נוסרו נמראי
Khosro Namdar
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Nasser
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David
Jenny רחל
פריידון
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Farokh
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בת אליהו
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צפורה עבדני
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Ela
איתן
Eithan
עומר
Omer
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Ido
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Ariel
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Yonathan
עדי
Adi
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בן מאיר
אורי
Ori
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Shira
בנועז נלבוע
בן מרדכי
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El'aad
נעמ
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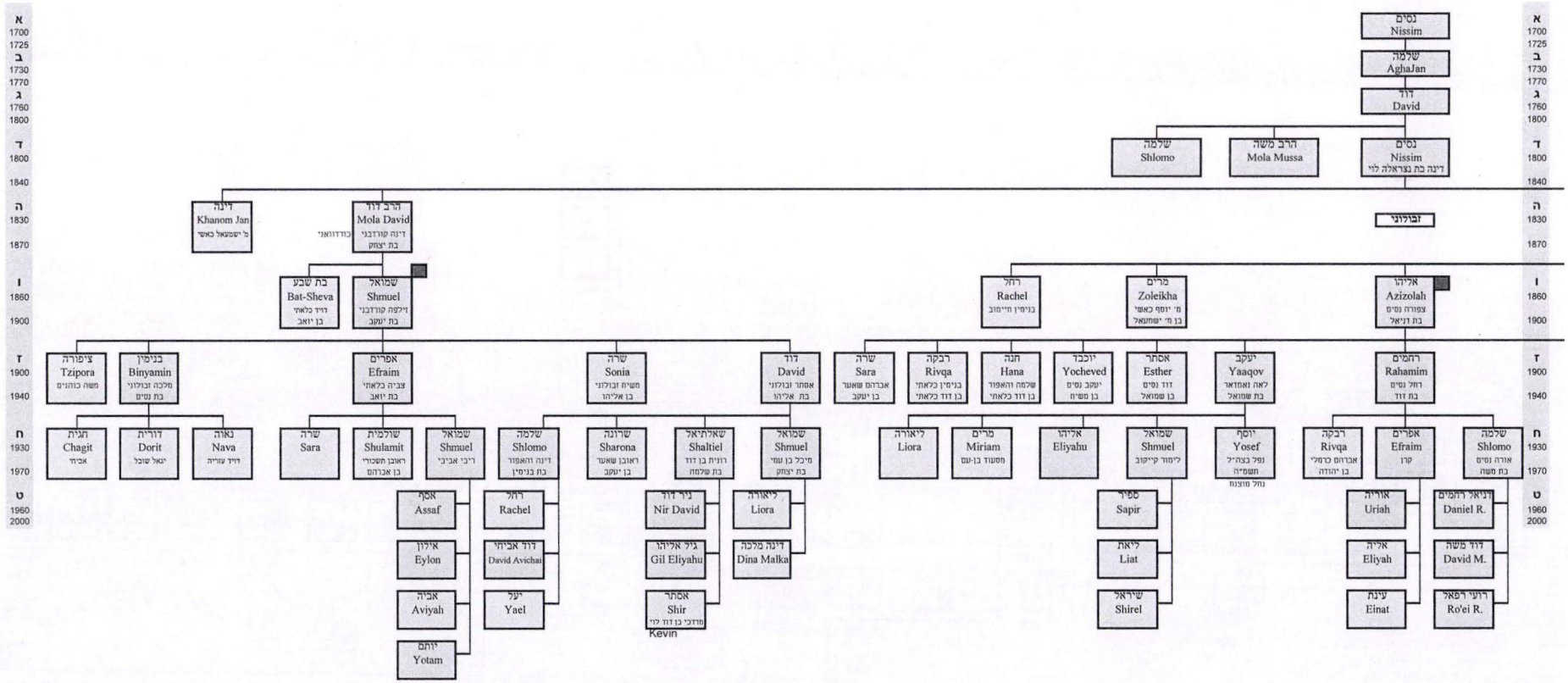
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Nir David
גיל אליהו
Gil Eliyahu
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מרדכי בן דוד לוי
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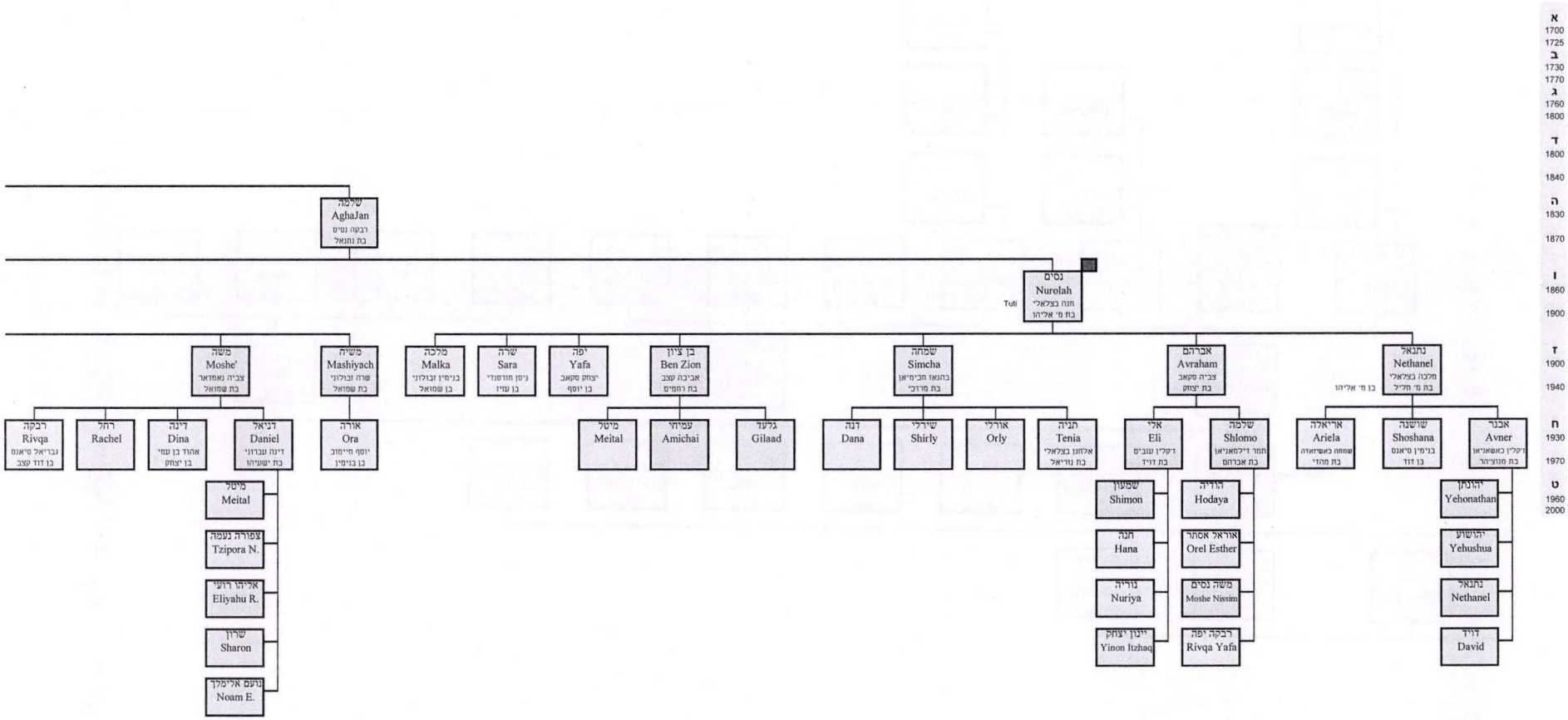
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בן ציון
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Noam E.
שמעון
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Yinon Itzhaq
הודיה
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אוראל אסתר
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משה נסים
Moshe Nissim
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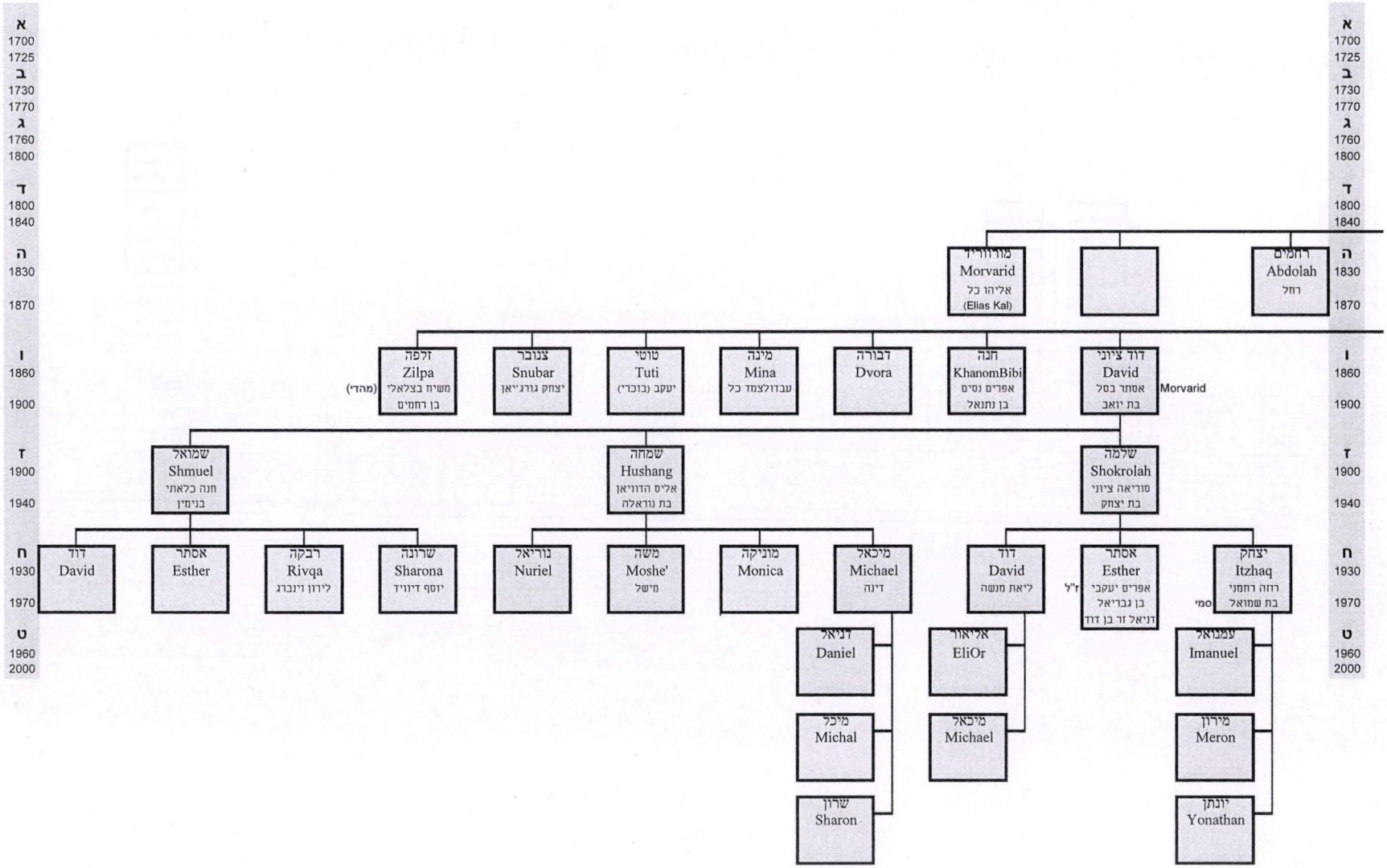
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רחמים
Abdolah
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זלפה
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משיח בצלאלי
בן רחמים
(מהדי)
צנובר
Snubar
יצחק גורג'יאן
טוטי
Tuti
יעקב (בוכרי)
מינה
Mina
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דבורה
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שלמה
Shokrolah
סוריאה ציוני
בת יצחק
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Esther
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לירון וינברג
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Moshe'
מישל
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בן גבריאל
דניאל זר בן דוד
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Itzhaq
רוזה רחמני
בת שמואל
סמי
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מיכל
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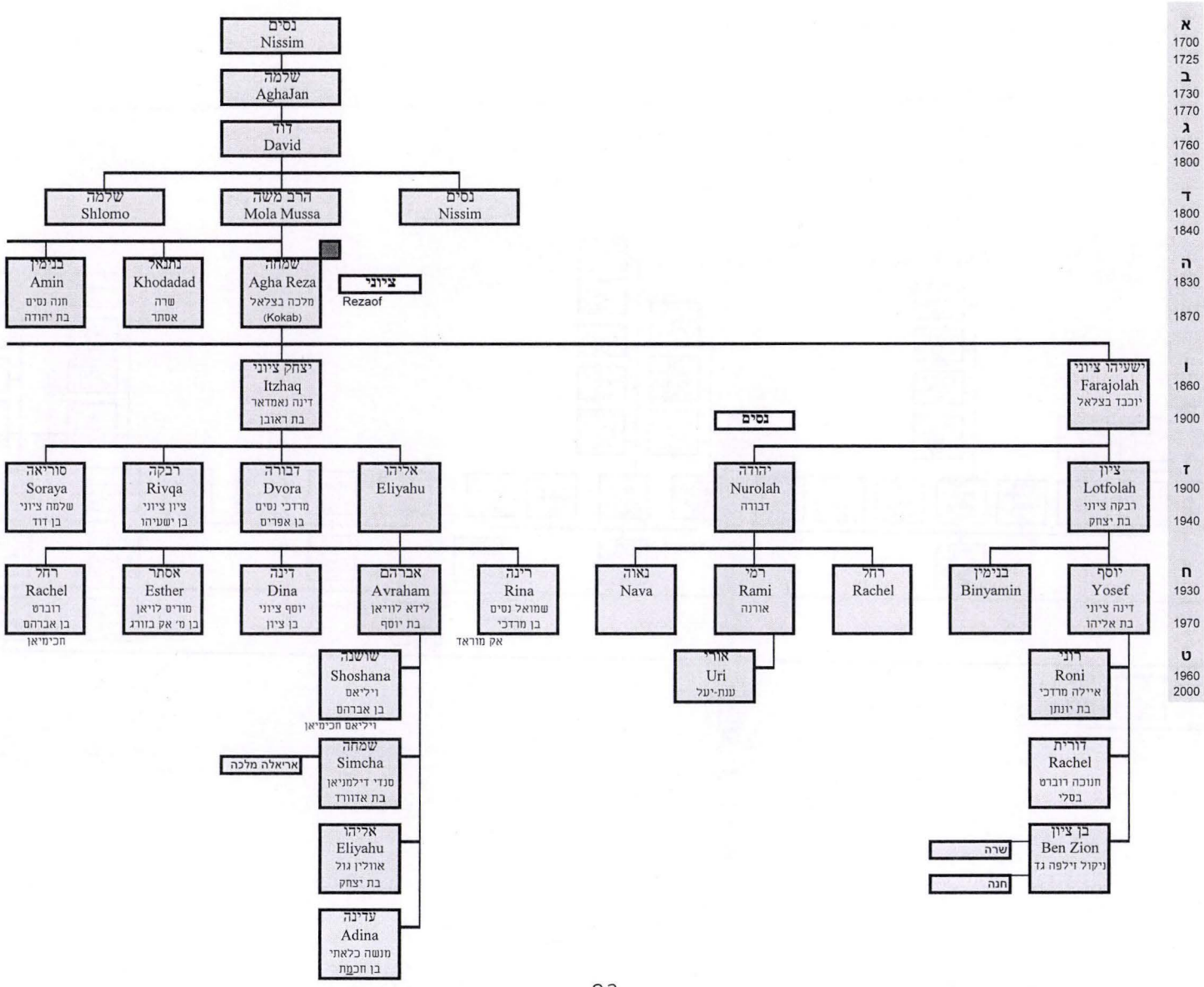
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Agha Reza
מלכה בצלאל
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בן ישעיהו
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בן מ' אק בזורג
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לידא לוריאן
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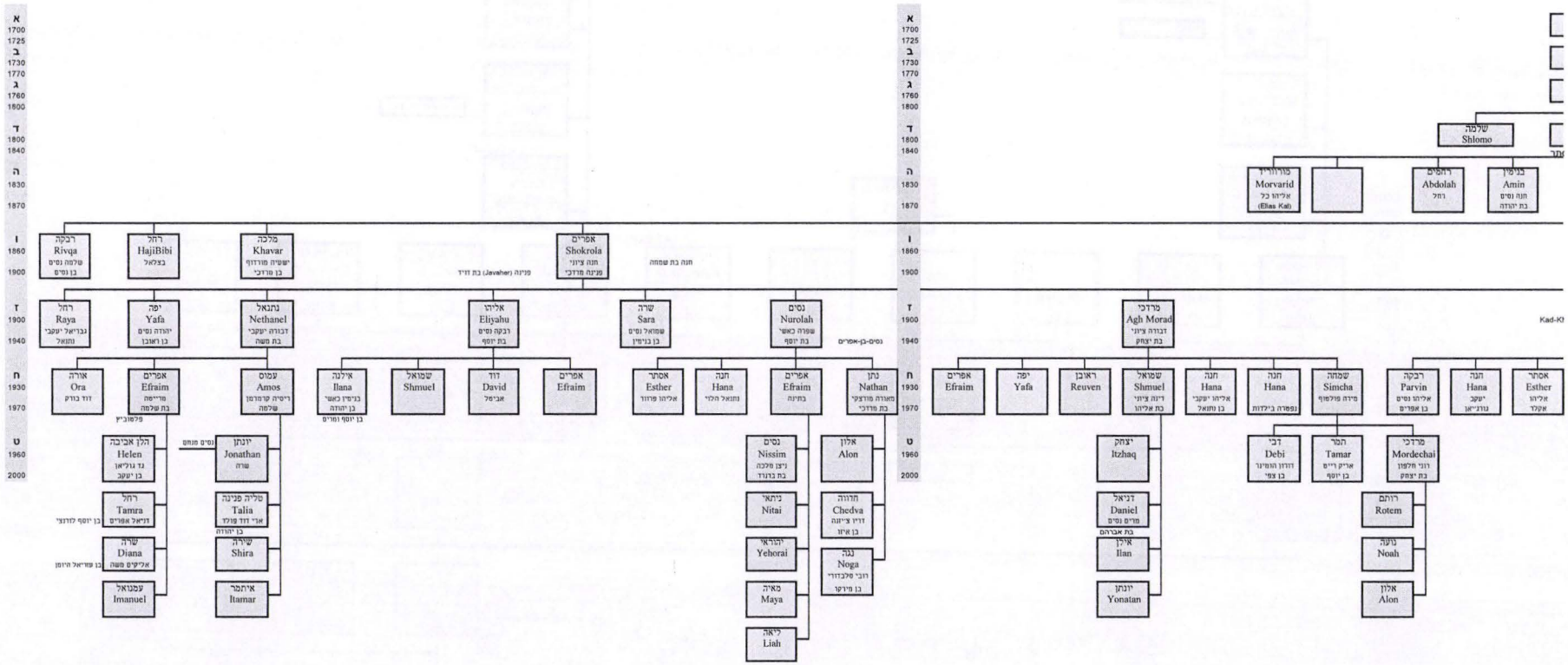
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מרדכי
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בת יצחק
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בת שלמה
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יונתן
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Yehorai
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נגה
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אילן
Ilan
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Yonatan
דבי
Debi
דורון הופיעור
בן צפי
תמר
Tamar
אריק ריים
בן יוסף
מרדכי
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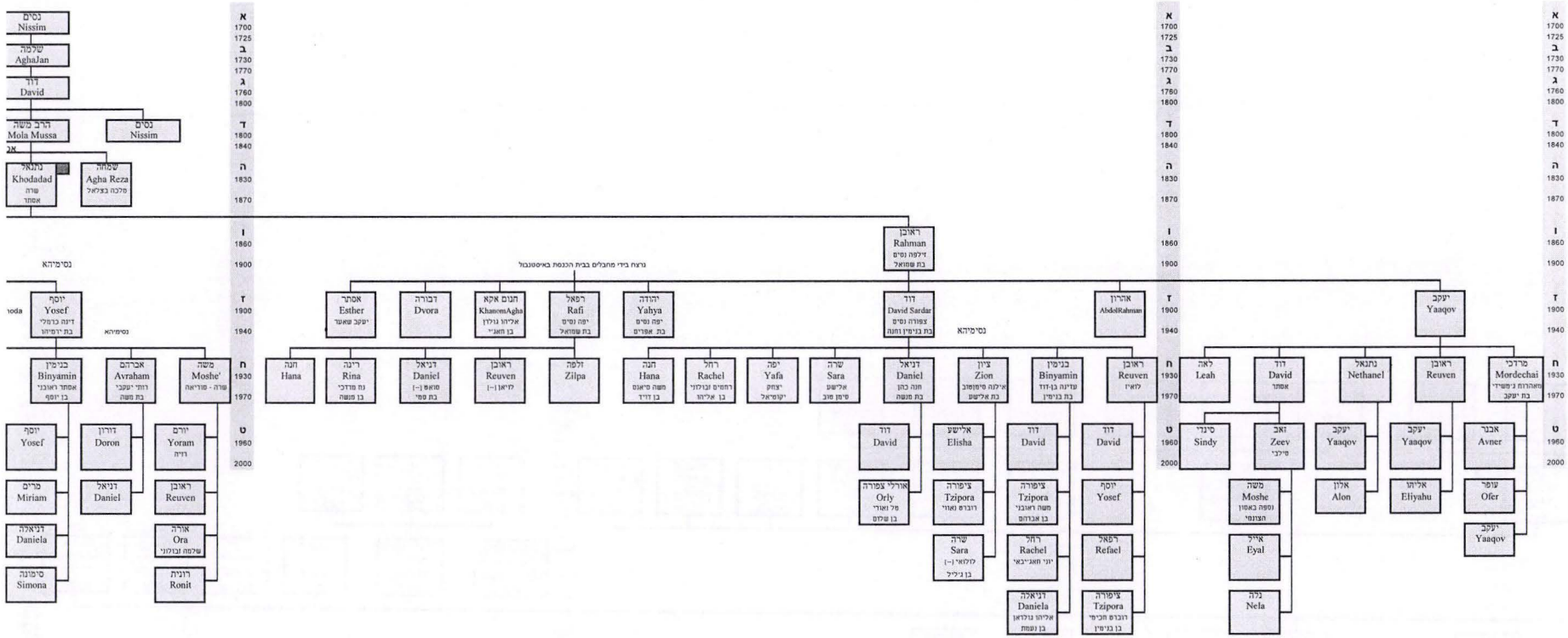
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Khodadad
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Avraham
משה
Moshe'
יוסף
Yosef
מרים
Miriam
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Tzipora
שרה
Sara
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Tzipora
רחל
Rachel
דניאלה
Daniela
יוסף
Yosef
רפאל
Refael
ציפורה
Tzipora
לאה
Leah
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David
נתנאל
Nethanel
ראובן
Reuven
מרדכי
Mordechai
סינדי
Sindy
זאב
Zeev
יעקב
Yaaqov
יעקב
Yaaqov
אבנר
Avner
משה
Moshe
איל
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עופר
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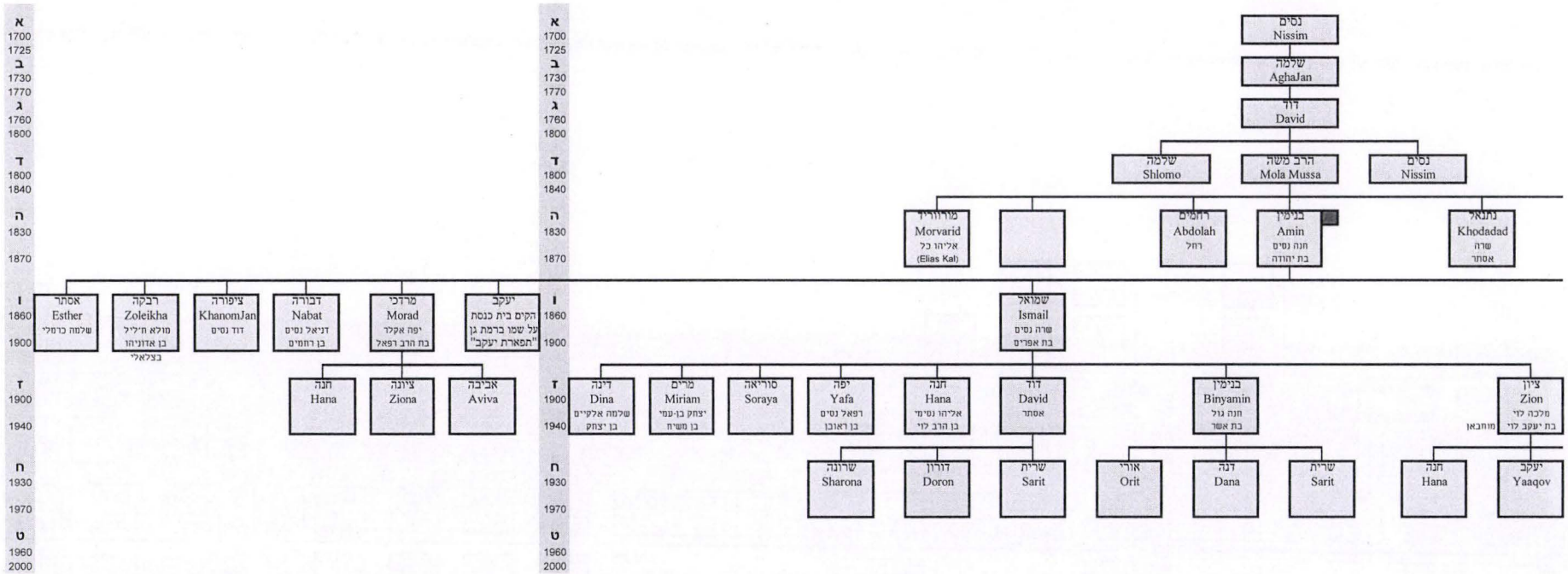
Yaaqov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Morvarid
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(Elias Kal)
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מולא ח'ילייל
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בן רחמים
מרדכי
Morad
יפה אקלר
בת הרב רפאל
יעקב
הקים בית כנסת
על שמו ברמת גן
"תפארת יעקב"
שמואל
Ismail
שרה נסים
בת אפרים
חנה
Hana
ציונה
Ziona
אביבה
Aviva
דינה
Dina
שלמה אלקיים
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Miriam
יצחק בן-עמי
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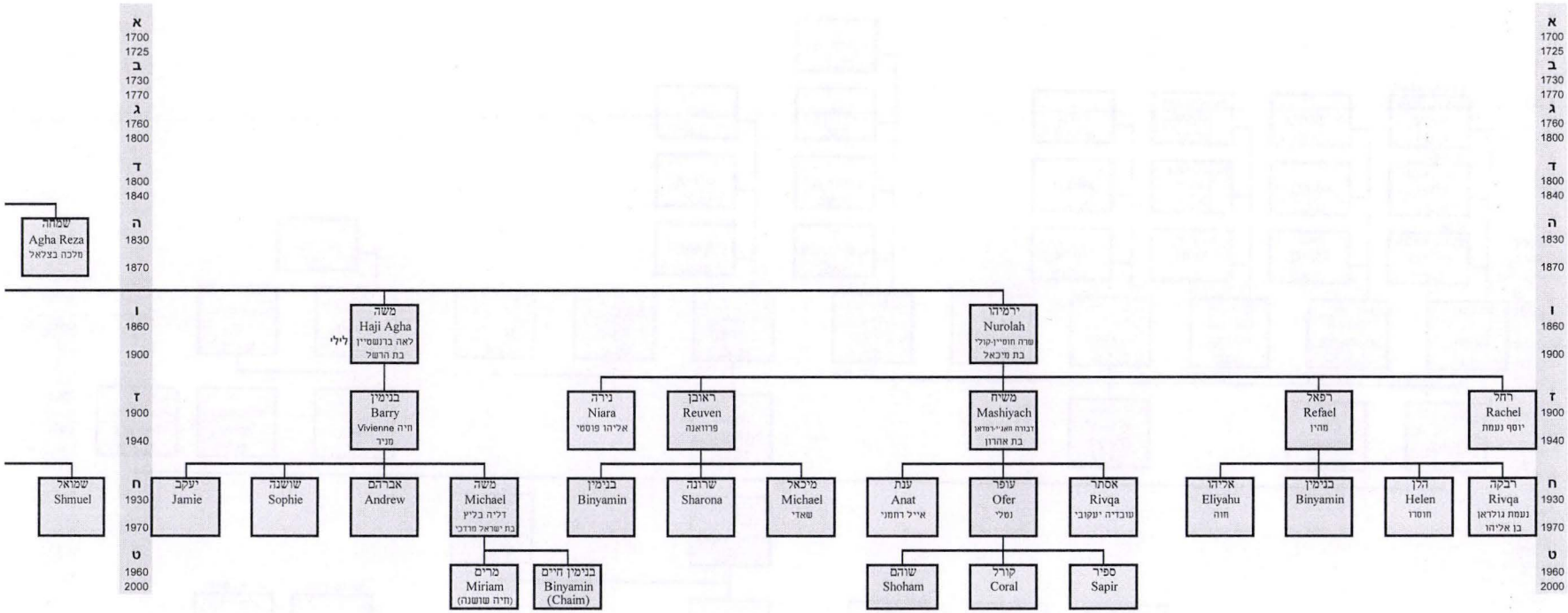
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משה
Haji Agha
לאה ברנשטיין
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לילי
בנימין
Barry
Vivienne חיה
מניר
שמואל
Shmuel
יעקב
Jamie
שושנה
Sophie
אברהם
Andrew
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Michael
דליה בליץ
בת ישראל מרדכי
מרים
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Binyamin
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ירמיהו
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שרה חוסיין-קולי
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בת אהרון
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Shoham
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Coral
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Helen
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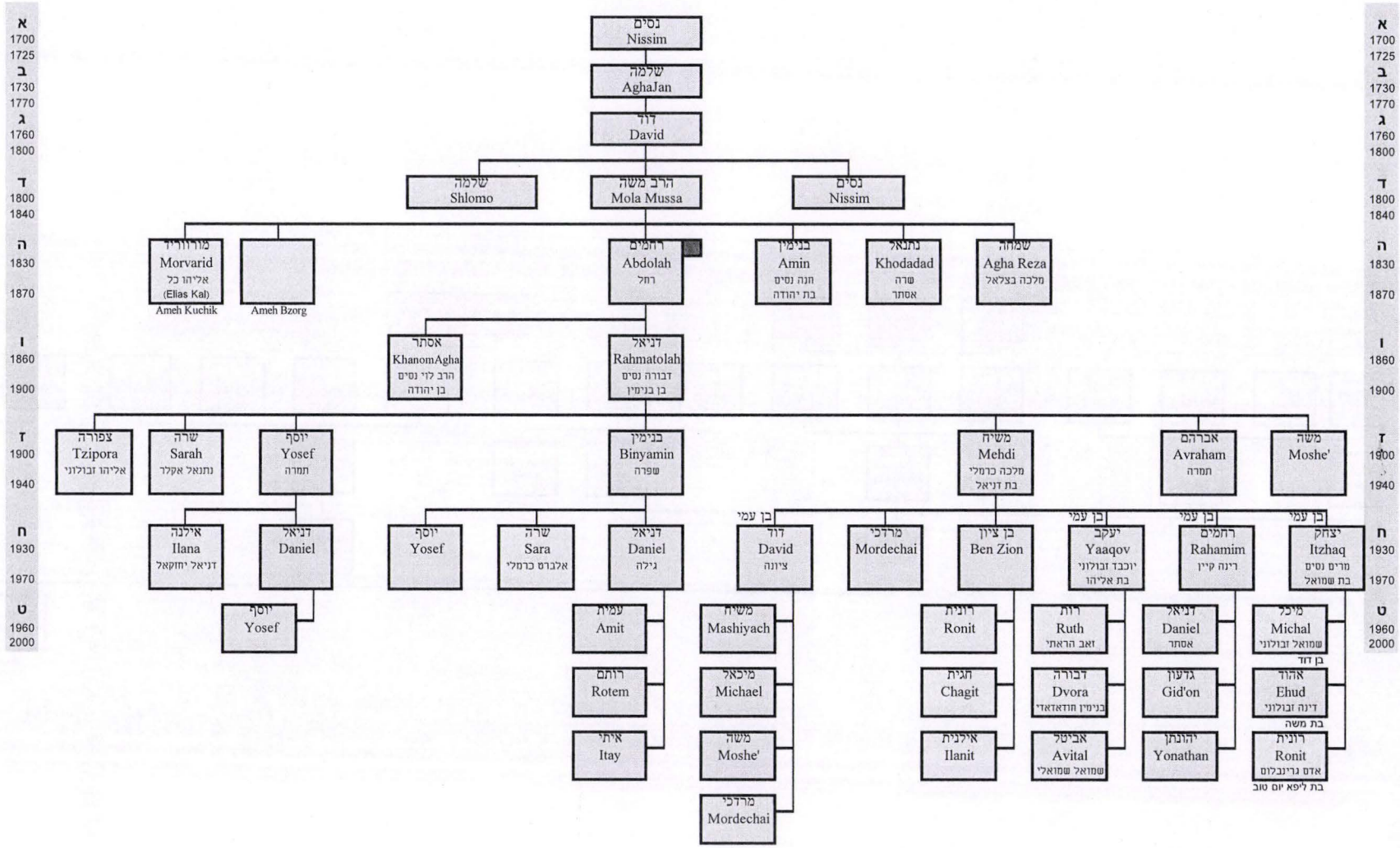
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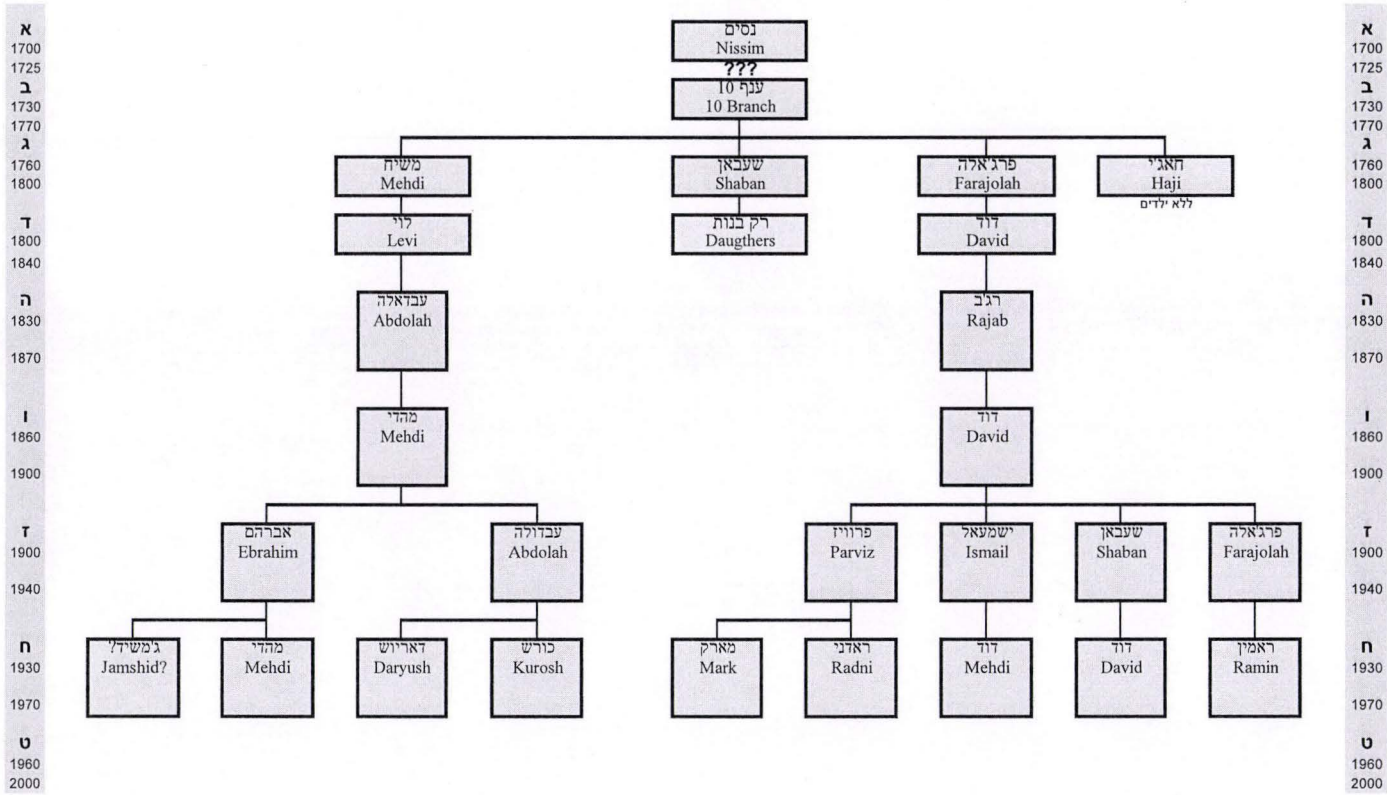
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דאריוש
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כורש
Kurosh
מארק
Mark
ראדני
Radni
דוד
Mehdi
דוד
David
ראמין
Ramin

B"H

Thanks

For many years I have been trying to fashion in my imagination a full picture of the history of the Mashhadi community, with the Nissimi family in its midst. With that objective in mind, I have read a lot of material, researched documents, and interviewed many people. I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who assisted me in publishing this book.

Thanks to one and all who researched and wrote accounts of the Mashhadi community, and who enriched us with their narration and their viewpoints.

Thanks to each one who agreed to meet with me and devote their valuable time to telling me anecdotes about our history that they were lucky to hear from their parents and grandparents.

Thanks also to my dear wife Hilda who was 'infected' with the Mashhadi virus. Her curiosity led her to finding every single article and book that dealt with this subject, and she accompanied me at my conversations and interviews with the people of the community. Hilda delivered a few scientific publications that highlighted the formation and characteristics of the Mashhadi identity. She presented these topics in numerous international conferences around the world, which helped advance the academic research on the history of Mashhadi Jewry.

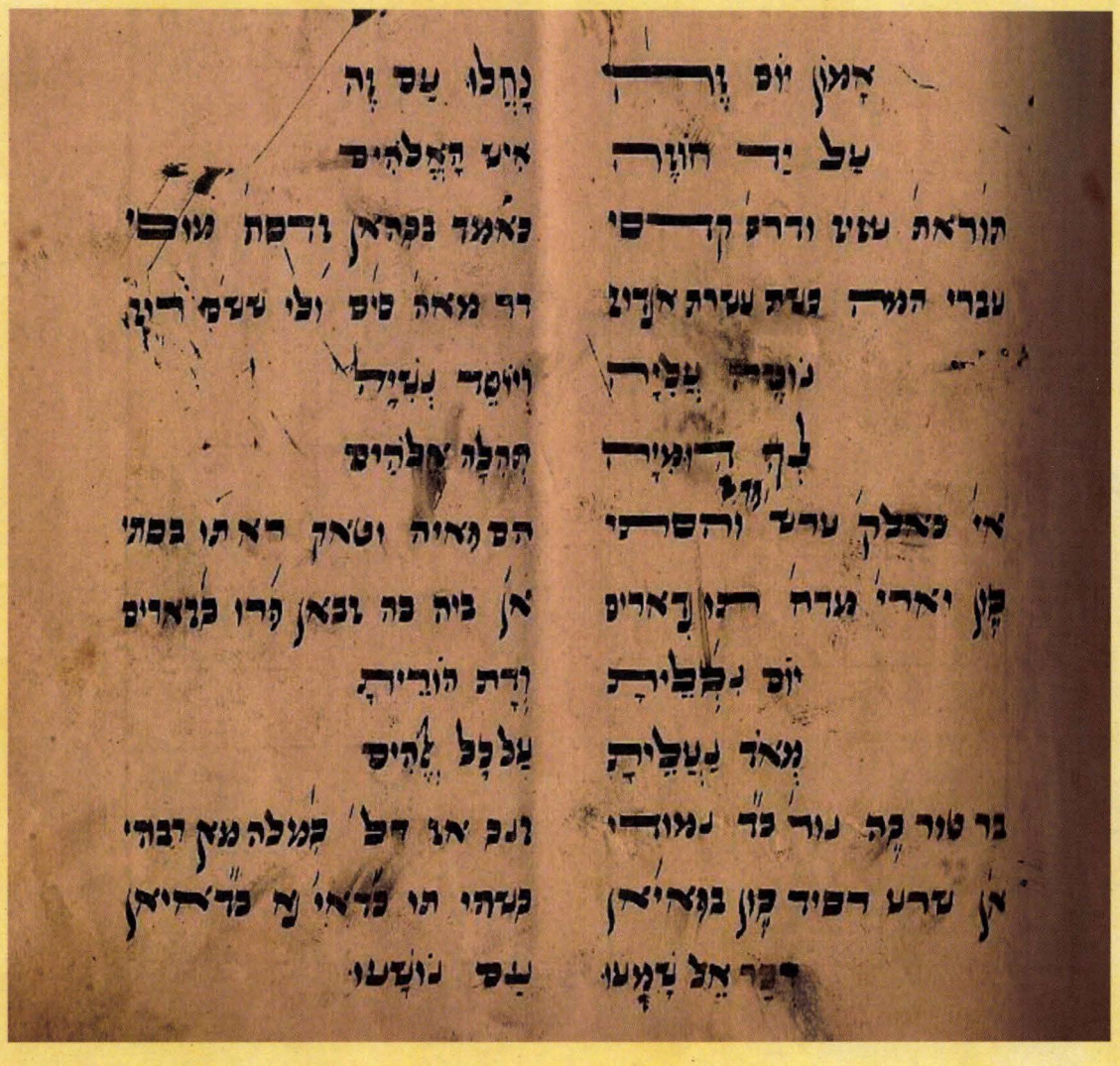
Thanks also to Irma Dothan from Washington, D.C./Kfar Mallal, who fell in love with the Mashhadi story and with great talent and much charm translated my book from Hebrew to English.

Every story can be viewed from different angles. In many cases, the point of view is related to the character and personality of the teller. One version can be exciting, another can be accurate, and a third can be completely boring. I confess that I chose the viewpoint that came from within. I admit, in advance, that I favored a subjective rather than objective viewpoint – thus enabling me to express my feelings and give warmth and actuality to cold, dry data. In parallel, in order to be true to the facts, I made a great effort to cite, in the margin of each and every paragraph, the sources that I used as, in the nature of things, there is no treatise that is free from the writer's interpretation.

I apologize in advance for any mistakes that, even after numerous reviews, crept into this essay. I'll be glad to receive any corrections, comments or clarifications. They will be used to improve future editions.

Reuven Nissimi, Raanana, 2015

"Azharot" translated to Persian - by HaRav Siman Tov
Attached to the "Hagada of Pessach" of HaRav Levi ben Yehuda Nissim



תולדות יהודי משהד ומשפחות הנסימי
The Annals of Mashadi Jews and the Nissimi Family