

Naby's Assyrians of Iran -
Reunification of a "Millat", p. 4

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*Voice of
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Established 1964

*Dedicated to the
Advancement of Education
of Assyrians*

THIRD QUARTER 1982

VOLUME 5 NO. 3



*Adam Benjamin,
Jr. was the only
Assyrian to become a
member of the U.S.
Congress. His
untimely death will
be a loss to all the
Assyrian people.*

**ADAM BENJAMIN, Jr. — Assyrian Congressman
1935 — 1982**

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NINEVEH

THIRD QUARTER 1982

VOLUME 5

NO. 3

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Porphyry — Assyrian Philosopher

Original Name: Malik

In Mesopotamia and along the northern Euphrates Valley (Edessa, Nisibin, Harran, etc.) a number of ecclesiastical, scientific and philosophic studies were cultivated in the early centuries A.D. Edessa and Nisibin were Assyrian centers of learning — theological, literary, etc. — while Harran was a seat of heathen Assyrians. Antioch was one of the many ancient Greek colonies; so was Alexandria, where Oriental and Occidental philosophies met.

In those Christological controversies which constituted the intellectual preoccupation of clerical scholars, the basic issues were metaphysical and psychological. For the battle of words Orthodox, Arians, Nestorians, Assyrian Church of the East, and Jacobites found in the Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic armory ready ammunition. Polemicists resorted to Greek logic to buttress their argumentation. Especially valuable in this connection were Aristotle's work on metaphysics and Porphyry's *Isagoge*, which to Assyrians became a recognized manual of logic.

Porphyry (232-304 A.D.) ("Clad in royal purple"), a founder of Neo-Platonism was born in the Euphrates Valley. His original name was Malik. He was one of the last defenders of classical paganism against the Sceptics and Christians. He was a disciple and friend of Plotinus, whose writings he edited. He was also an excellent interpreter of Aristotle.

In his objections to Christianity, Porphyry tried to do justice to the views he fought by informing himself as fully as possible about the history and doctrines of his adversaries, and he took a great many pains to refrain from open hostility. His book *Against the Christians* was considered very dangerous by Christian apologists. Porphyry was convinced that truly religious men do not desire formulas, cults, sacrifices or incantations. But, he said, men of pure heart and wise conduct of life being very rare, people need the images of the gods for their moral discipline and spiritual satisfaction.

VEGETARIANISM

He who says that the man who extends the just as far as to brutes, corrupts the just, is ignorant that he does not himself preserve justice, but increases pleasure, which is hostile to justice. By admitting, therefore, that pleasure is the end [of our actions], justice is evidently destroyed. For to whom is it not manifest that justice is increased through abstinence? For he who abstains from everything animated, though he may abstain from such animals as do not contribute to the benefit of society, will be much more careful not to injure those of his own species. For he who loves the genus, will not hate any species of animals; and by how much the greater his love of the genus is, by so much the more will he preserve justice towards a part of the genus, and that to which he is allied. He, therefore, who admits that he is allied to all animals, will not injure any animal. But he who confines justice to man alone, is prepared, like one enclosed in a

narrow space, to hurl from him the prohibition of injustice. So that the Pythagorean is more pleasing than the Socratic banquet. For Socrates said that hunger is the sauce of food; but Pythagoras said that to injure no one, and to be exhilarated with justice, is the sweetest sauce; as the avoidance of animal food, will also be the avoidance of unjust conduct with respect to food. For God has not so constituted things that we cannot preserve ourselves without injuring others; since, if this were the case, he would have connected us with a nature which is the principle of injustice. Do not they, however, appear to be ignorant of the peculiarity of justice, who think that it was introduced from the alliance of men to each other? For this will be nothing more than a certain philanthropy; but justice consists in abstaining from injuring any thing which is not noxious. And our conception of the just man must be formed according to the latter, and not according to the former mode. Hence, therefore, since justice consists in not injuring any thing, it must be extended as far as to every animated nature. On this account, also, the essence of justice consists in the rational ruling over the irrational, and in the irrational being obedient to the rational part. For when reason governs, and the irrational part is obedient to its mandates, it follows, by the greatest necessity, that man will be innoxious towards every thing. For the passions being restrained, and desire and anger wasting away, but reason possessing its proper empire, a similitude to a more excellent nature [and to deity] immediately follows. But the more excellent nature in the universe is entirely innoxious, and, through possessing a power which preserves and benefits all things, is itself not in want of any thing. We, however, through justice [when we exercise it], are innoxious towards all things, but, through being connected with mortality, are indigent of things of a necessary nature. But the assumption of what is necessary does not injure even plants, when we take what they cast off; nor fruits, when we use such of them as are dead; nor sheep, when through shearing we rather benefit than injure them, and by partaking of their milk, we in return afford them every proper attention. Hence, the just man appears to be one who deprives himself of things pertaining to the body; yet he does not [in reality] injure himself. For, by this management of his body, and continence, he increases his inward good, *i.e.* his similitude to God.

New Members

The Assyrian Foundation wishes to welcome the following as new members:

*Mr. & Mrs. Feodor Youkhanna
Mr. Walter Elia
Mr. & Mrs. Aprim Charbahshi*



Donna Sargis recently graduated from San Jose State University where she received the Bachelor of Science degree in Interior Design. Donna is the daughter of Foundation member Florence Sargis of San Francisco. Donna has established a professional interior design office called Inner Phases at 1229 - 20th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122. Congratulations, Donna, and best wishes for a successful career.

Set of 12 Cassette Tapes

A set of 12 cassette tapes has been recorded by the Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Dinkha IV. These contain narrations in Assyrian by the Patriarch from the Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, letters of St. Paul; Jonah and fasting of Ninevehian, prayers of Ninevehian fasting; Marganeeta (pearl) narrations; History of the Church, and songs by the Church choir.

The cost of the complete set of 12, beautifully bound, is \$100 and can be purchased in the San Francisco Bay Area from the Mar Narsai parish of the Church of the East, 3939 Lawton St., San Francisco, Calif. 94122.

The Greek Use of the Word "Assyria" and "Syria"

Peyton Randolph Helm in his Ph.D. thesis at the University of Pennsylvania (1980) studied the historical content within which Greek speakers first encountered the West Asian state of Assur and began to apply its name in the Greek form "Αδδυριη" ("Assyria") to all of Western Asia. Helm further explores the early development of Greek knowledge of Near Eastern geography and assesses the influence of early Ionian literature on Herodotos' use of the toponyms "Syria" and "Assyria." He expounds on the origins of the Semitic divine name and toponym "Assur," its transmission into Greek and the relationship between the two toponyms "Αδδυριη" and "Συριη." An analysis of the earliest uses of these names suggests that the Greeks used these two words interchangeably to designate the Near East down to the time of Herodotos. Herodotos is the earliest writer to provide a comprehensive account of Near Eastern geography. Helm assesses Herodotos' use of the terms "Assyria" and "Syria" and concludes that he is probably the first Greek writer to distinguish between the two toponyms. It is also pointed out that the Old Persian name for Assyria was "Athura."

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The Assyrians of Iran: Reunification of a "Millat," 1906-1914

by Eden Naby

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Assyrians — Syriac-speaking Middle Easterners¹ belonging throughout the medieval period to either of the two branches of Eastern Christianity (Jacobite and Nestorian) — remained a little-known community scattered throughout Ottoman and Persian territory. The Assyrian community examined here was concentrated in Iranian Azerbaijan, mainly around the town of Urumiyah (Rizaiyah). Together with tribal Assyrians, who remained in their ancestral mountain villages on either side of the Perso-Ottoman border, Urumiyan Assyrians formed the nucleus of the Nestorian community until World War I. They were united by the same language, modern Eastern Syriac (henceforth referred to as Assyrian), and owed ecclesiastical allegiance to the Church of the East under the hereditary Patriarch, the Mar Shamun.²

Only a few decades after their discovery by Western scholars and archeologists in the mid-nineteenth century — and by Western Christianity — the internal unity and external relations of the Assyrian community as a whole, and the Urumiyan community in particular, underwent drastic change. They suffered several massacres, left their homelands for the West in large numbers, and finally fled as refugees to southern Iran, the Caucasian regions, and Iraq. These developments depleted their numbers and sealed their fate as a geographically and culturally united community.

While the recent history of Assyrian problems has been explored from the vantage of the British, Americans, and Soviets, attention has been focused on external relations rather than on the internal community forces in action just preceding the diaspora. Moreover, researchers appear to have overlooked the Assyrian periodical press of the crucial period prior to World War I.³ Yet beginning in the 1890s, the strongest Assyrian cultural and economic revival of modern times occurred, bringing with it a substantial amount of Assyrian language publishing. In E. G. Browne's compilation of periodicals published in Iran (or elsewhere in Persian) up to 1914, there appear no fewer than four Assyrian language periodicals, all emanating from Urumiyah.⁴ The Assyrians of Iran, with an estimated population of from 30,000⁵ to 35,000⁶ published all four periodicals simultaneously in contrast with the Armenians, for example, who with twice the population (estimated at about 70,000⁷), published only six periodicals at different times, according to Browne.⁸

This study is an attempt to utilize the Assyrian-language periodical press to explore more fully the reasons for the dismemberment of the Assyrian community, the efforts made by Assyrians to ward off the disintegration, and the forces that dictated the final outcome. The main source upon which this research effort has relied is the biweekly newspaper *Kukhva* (Star) which ran for nine years from June, 1906 to autumn, 1914. While use of this periodical is partly predicated on its availability, its importance is enhanced by its position as the first and only nonsectarian Assyrian language newspaper in Iran published during the period under discussion.⁹ Its appearance at this critical period of ethnic community convulsions in the Middle East, and of foreign intrigue in Iran, adds to its significance as a source of material for conditions of the period. Furthermore, the history of the rise and eclipse of *Kukhva*, together with the range of issues it covered, speaks to the problems that beset Assyrians as they climbed to positions of relative success only to see that success shattered between 1914 and 1918 as a result of circumstances let loose by the chaos accompanying the first World War I.

It is the thesis of this paper that evidence provided by the local-language press supports the following: that the disintegration of the Assyrian community resulted in great measure from the presence of Western religious, quasi-political Missions, which (1) alienated Assyrians from Persian authority, (2) split the Assyrians along sectarian lines, and (3) increased animosity with their Kurdish and Azeri neighbors. A corollary to this thesis is that the Christian Missions in Urumiyah actively opposed attempts to recreate a unified Assyrian community and that some even tried to impede the community's cultural progress.

Before the arrival of the Carmelite (Roman Catholic) Mission in Salamas in the seventeenth century and the American Mission to the Nestorians in 1835, the Assyrians in the Urumiyah region were closely united with the Hakkari Assyrians of Ottoman Turkey. Community tradition recalls that centuries ago, several mountain Assyrians descended to the Urumiyan plain from the Hakkari region. Records suggest that this may have occurred as early as the twelfth century.¹⁰ The ecclesiastical and temporal leader of the community, the Mar Shamun, resided in the village of Qudshanus in the Hakkari region near the town of Julamerk (Turkish, Cölemerik). In Iran, a hierarchy of bishops and priests headed by the Matran (Metropolitan bishop) residing in Nochea (Persian, Nukchehr), helped maintain ties with the center of the Church. While retaining a loose clan identity, Urumiyan Assyrians appear to have lost tribal affiliation and structure.¹¹ Unlike mountain Assyrians, whose allegiance rested with the tribe and the tribal leader (*malik*), the Urumiyan Assyrians' main identity

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Eden Naby is an Assyrian who was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Columbia University in 1975. She concentrated on Central Asian languages and cultural history.

lay with the village where several clans might reside. Among the leaders of the village were prelates of the Eastern Church. Like those of their Muslim neighbors, the codes and traditions of the Assyrians were contained in a religious work similar to the *Shari'a* called *Sunhadus*.¹² Thus, although scattered over a wide and rough terrain, through the medium of language, tradition, and religion, a sense of identity and unity existed among Assyrians.

The coming of the Christian Missions in effect put an end to Assyrian unity, as they brought Western education, coupled with Western Christian denominational dissension, to the Nestorian Assyrians. Children attending the many schools — American, British, French, Russian, or German — were taught the languages of their mentors as well as Assyrian, and religion, literature, history, and arithmetic. In most schools — especially in the two prestigious American schools, Fiske Seminary and Urumiyah College — the classical Syriac so necessary for links with Assyrian tradition, philosophy, and literature was not taught. In other schools, the Western language was begun at such an early grade level as to endanger the propagation of the Assyrian language.¹³ Having no original works of literature or history in their vernacular tongue available to them, these Assyrians relied on textbooks provided by their Western benefactors, whose knowledge of traditional Assyrian culture was predictably limited to what little could be gleaned from Western sources.¹⁴ Much early publishing consisted of translations from Western sources, or concentrated on denominational religious subjects. Therefore, the important traditions of the *Sunhadus* did not reach the generations of students attending Western schools. Lack of contact with their own past culture together with the disruptive influence of denominationalism estranged those who came to hold eminent positions in the Assyrian community from their own cultural background and religion.

The Carmelite Mission, the first Western Mission in Azerbaijan, was based in Salamas (today Shahpur). It was replaced by the Lazarist Mission in 1862.¹⁵ Its influence was sufficient to establish Salamas as a Catholic, French-oriented base. By the 1890s, the French Roman Catholic Mission was well established in Urumiyah as well.

After sending exploratory parties from Istanbul to evaluate the situation of the Assyrians in Urumiyah and the Hakkari regions, the Americans decided on the Urumiyah Nestorian community as the base of their operations in Iran. In 1835 Reverend Justin Perkins began the first school for boys, to be followed shortly by a school for girls (1838), a press (1840), and a hospital (1880). The original purpose of the American Mission had been to reform the old Nestorian Church and restore its proselytizing strength to that of the early Christian centuries so that it could act as a force in the conversion of Muslims.¹⁶ Both the American and the British Missions began with similar goals in mind. By 1871, however, the American Mission became the exclusive organ of the Presbyterian Church, and rather than

help the old church, the Americans encouraged the establishment of a breakaway, native Presbyterian congregation. Backed by a solid educational system, it was clear by the beginning of this century that the Presbyterian church had effectively pushed Urumiyah Nestorian culture into the background.

From their base in Urumiyah, the Americans made several attempts to expand into Roman Catholic-controlled Salamas and into the British Anglican-backed Hakkari Nestorian regions. Competition with Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Missions continued, but on the whole British and American Missions concerted their efforts. In 1869 they appear to have reached an understanding with regard to Protestant Missions in Iran, whereby northern Iran would fall within the American sphere and southern Iran within the British (under the Church Missionary Society of England).¹⁷

The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 strengthened the position of the Russian Orthodox Church and of Russia in Urumiyah. Assyrians sought Russian political protection and favor through mass conversion to the Russian Orthodox faith. In village after village, the remaining Nestorian Church property was transferred to Russian Orthodox control. The Russians established schools, orphanages, and a press. With larger financial resources at their disposal, they appear to have paid the local clergy at a higher rate, and also provided higher education at less cost to students, than other Missions.

In 1909, hard-pressed by the popularity of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Americans in Urumiyah proposed to unite with the British Anglican Mission, and thereby with the Nestorian Church, which was in communion with the Anglican Church. Such a move would have completely eliminated Anglo-American rivalry in the Hakkari region as well. But the idea was rejected by the American missionary hierarchy for various reasons, among which was a distaste for unification with the "backward" indigenous church.¹⁸

By 1906, the year when *Kukhva* began publication, the three major Western missions had already established their periodical presses. The American periodical, called *Zarira d Bara* (Ray of Light), was the first Assyrian-language newspaper in Urumiyah and very possibly the first periodical, in the modern conception of that term, to be published in Iran.¹⁹ It ran from 1850 to 1914.²⁰ The Roman Catholic periodical, *Qala d Sharara* (Voice of Truth), was founded in 1896.²¹ *Aurmih Artudukyita* (Orthodox Urumiyah), published by the Russian Mission, appeared irregularly in the first part of the century but on a more regular basis in 1911, perhaps as a consequence of the Russian occupation of Urumiyah in that year.²²

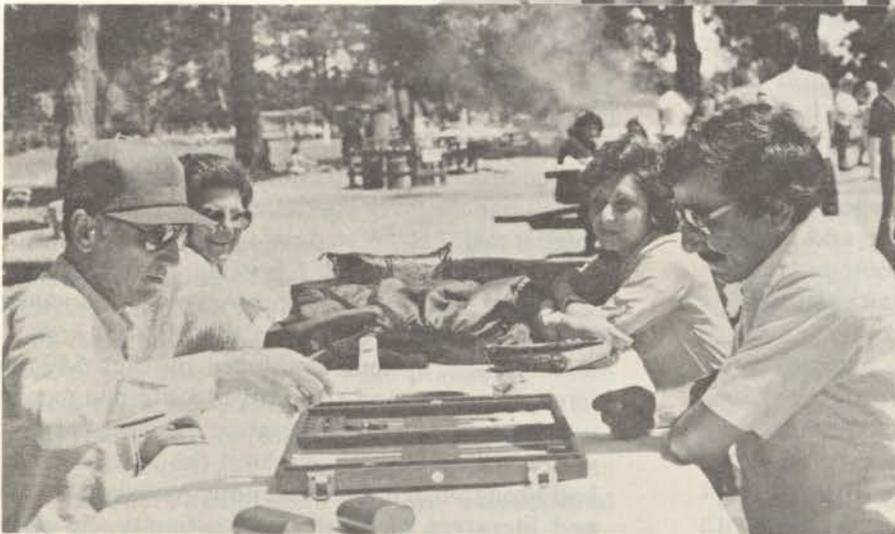
The main objective of the three sectarian periodicals was the dissemination of information about their particular brand of Christianity.²³ In this effort they were uncompromising. Reluctance to coordinate their activities led them to persist in using three different systems of transliterating the vernacular Assyrian language, a factor that discouraged literacy and the exchange of ideas



At The Picnic



At The Picnic



At The Picnic

among members of the small community. The three sectarian newspapers also served to air the personal grievances of local clergy. Abuse and invective, garbed in religious terms, appeared in the Mission newspapers. It is no wonder that in this period one finds Assyrians, either because of political or economic opportunism, or through sheer confusion, shifting frequently from one to yet another Western denomination. Physical fights among native clergy were not unusual as pastors came to be identified at one time or another with as many as three or four different denominations.

Into this atmosphere poisoned by denominational rivalry stepped a group of national-minded Assyrians, products of the educational systems sponsored by the Missions, who proposed to organize united Assyrian cultural action. Murmurings against sectarian division are recorded as early as 1895. While expressing their gratitude to "those who have come from afar to help us," the Assyrians decried the divisive effect of Mission activity among them. They urged the community to join in a search for ways to reunite themselves and pleaded for a separation of religion and *millat*.²⁴ One obstacle to implementation of the separation principle came from the Old Church where the Mar Shamun claimed both temporal and ecclesiastical leadership.²⁵ With the decline in the prestige of the Nestorian Church, however, the adherents of the separation principle appear to have gained ground.

Impetus for the unification movement also came from several external factors. The movement coincided with the first phase of the Constitutional movement in Iran (1906-1909), the generally liberal atmosphere in the country, the weakening of central authority, and the greater pressure exerted by Britain and Russia on Iran. Despite the weakness of Persian authority, the improved economic and social position of Assyrians, and the strong backing they received from Western powers, nowhere in the press does there occur even a hint that the Assyrians aspired to political autonomy. When the area was under nominal Persian control (up to 1911), the unity movement called only for the unification of the *millat* under Persian rule. Even after the military occupation of Urumiyah by Russia in 1911, Assyrian aspirations did not extend beyond that of a cultural community.

Kukhva served as the organ of the newly emerging local Assyrian leadership. Edited from 1907 by Yukhana Mushi, a well-educated school inspector with a knowledge of Persian, Turkish, Assyrian, and English, *Kukhva* aimed at creating a means of communication among Assyrians living in various Iranian cities such as Tehran, Salamas, Sennah (today Sanandaj), in Ottoman Turkey, Tsarist Russia, and North America. Subscription from outside Urumiyah was encouraged, and special sections were devoted to news of Assyrians living outside the home region. Subscribers even included members of the local Jewish community. In an attempt to confirm its image as a nonsectarian publication with no political allegiance to a foreign power, *Kukhva* carried press reports from *Novoe Vremia* (St. Petersburg)

and other Russian newspapers,²⁶ as well as from the *London Mail*, and other British and French publications.²⁷ A special effort was made to win the good will of Persian administrators, the local Muslim press, and the Kurdish chieftains. *Kukhva* urged Assyrians to consider the laudatory actions of their Muslim neighbors²⁸ and praised the constructive action taken by Muslim leaders.²⁹ Particularly interesting in view of its attitude toward the government is its coverage of the Russian bombardment of the Holy Shrine in Mashhad on March 29, 1912. Although the editor does not state his source for the report, the view expressed is that of the British, particularly with regard to the loss of a part of the shrine treasure and the violation of the inner chamber.³⁰ Perhaps to avoid confrontation with the Russian force occupying Urumiyah, *Kukhva* abstained from its usual practice of expressing editorial opinion.

True to its motto *Khda kukhva zura bnushi bi rqi'a* (A small star alone in the sky), *Kukhva* attempted to keep alive the nonsectarian Assyrian language, literature, and cultural heritage, despite pressure from the Mission presses. One method it adopted was the publishing of patriotic poetry dedicated to Assyrian unity³¹ and to leaders like Mar Tuma Addo and Dr. Lutar Malik.³² Another way was publicizing cultural events such as the publication of Assyrian language works on literature and linguistics,³³ as well as performances of plays.³⁴

During its nine years of existence, *Kukhva* helped to encourage and shape community opinion independent of the Western Missions. It frequently attacked division caused by the Missions — for example, in an article called "The Snake of Sects has Eaten into Nationalism."³⁵ Aside from its constant war against sectarian division, the periodical grasped at any signs of unity among Assyrians. It helped organize the *Mutva d'Udrana* (Aid Society), to raise money for Assyrian projects;³⁶ the Assyrian Literary Society, to develop writing in the national language;³⁷ and an organization to coordinate spelling. *Kukhva* also voiced support for unification efforts outside Urumiyah; the formation of cultural societies in Salamas³⁸ and Tehran,³⁹ a drive to build an interdenominational church for Assyrians in Tiflis,⁴⁰ and a Society for Friendship and Culture formed in 1910 in Tkhumi (Tugub, a village in Hakkari, Turkey), which included among its members Assyrians and Kurds.⁴¹

The organization to coordinate the spelling of modern Syriac deserves special attention because it constituted a major effort to draw together Assyrians divided as a result of Western Christian rivalry. By the first decade of this century, many Assyrian-language publications were emerging from the Mission presses. The orthographic systems employed by each Mission differed, however, and this proved an impediment to the development of a single literature. Because the sole motivation for printing throughout the nineteenth century had been to teach the indigenous Assyrians the religion and literature of Western Christianity, no particular benefit was envisaged from the use of a united orthographic system for the community. Indeed separate ortho-

graphic systems — American, French, and Russian — assured to some extent that the members of one congregation would not fall under the influence of another Mission. With the emergence of a nonsectarian periodical press and literature (histories and linguistic material), the need for employing a uniform orthographic system became evident to community leaders.

In the summer of 1910, a committee headed by Mar Tuma Addo (1852-1918), a Roman Catholic priest and learned Assyrian scholar, and composed of representatives from the four printing-press establishments, met to decide on a uniform spelling system and to draft rules for cooperation among the three sectarian presses.⁴² But the effort ended without agreement. The Roman Catholic group withdrew its support, and although the American, the Orthodox, and the *Kukhva* members continued to meet,⁴³ a unified system of spelling came about only long after the Assyrian community had gone into diaspora.⁴⁴ Thus, sectarian dissent proved an insurmountable obstacle to the effort to develop this basic foundation for literacy and culture.

One of the chief issues involving Assyrian unity and community relations with Persian authority was the election of a representative to the legislature (Dar alshaura). The Persian Constitution of 1906, through its supplement of October 7, 1907, had given the Assyrians ("Chaldeans/Nestorians"), together with the Armenians, Zoroastrians, and Jews, the right to send one delegate each to the legislature.⁴⁵ The center of the Iranian Assyrian community being Urumiyah and its environs, the choice of a delegate rested with the leaders of that community. In the fall of 1910, at a meeting of Urumiyah Assyrians representing the four major denominations (Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox, and Nestorian), it was agreed that a committee of forty men be appointed (ten from each denomination) to decide on the candidates to be placed before the community for election. Archbishop Sergis of the Orthodox Mission vetoed this decision, however, by insisting that the "nation (*millat*) is ours. Most people have converted to Orthodoxy. Therefore, the representative must come from the Russian Orthodox congregation and the selection committee must consist of a Russian Orthodox majority." He also insisted that the choice of whether a representative would be sent to the Iranian capital at all rested with his congregation.⁴⁶ The Russian position created an impasse, provoking a strongly worded plea from the nonsectarian press to all Missions to either cease interfering in Assyrian community affairs or leave. Echoing the thoughts expressed by another Assyrian fifteen years earlier, a *Kukhva* editorial declared that although Assyrians had derived much benefit from the presence of the Missions, they were prepared now to build their own schools and churches and conduct their affairs by themselves. Struggle and hardship are better than being victimized and exploited by "people . . . who sell their nation for a salary or a position." The editorial ended by requesting that the Missions depart and take their "little disciples" with them.⁴⁷

Even those Assyrians residing in the West who saw no merit in Assyrian participation in Iranian political life agreed that a nonsectarian community organization and meeting place were preferable to reliance on foreign Missions.⁴⁸

After some negotiation with Tehran, the Urumiyah Assyrian community — minus the Russian Orthodox group — named three candidates and planned a tentative voting schedule.⁴⁹ Yet by late spring (1911) they had not arrived at a decision.⁵⁰ The second Majlis was dissolved in December 1911. Russian interference in the relationship between the Assyrian community and the Iranian government, through the institution of the Russian Orthodox Mission, had lost the Iranian Assyrians their first opportunity for legitimate participation in government.

The corrosive influence of the foreign Missions manifested itself in another aspect of Assyrian relations with Persian authority. It was the practice of the small *millats* in Urumiyah, as elsewhere in Iran, to deal with the Persian government through the offices of a community leader called *millatbashi* (community head).

Unlike the Armenian and Jewish communities of Urumiyah, by the turn of the century the Assyrians had not one but four *millatbashis* serving Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Russian Orthodox, and Nestorians separately.⁵¹ An effort to reduce this number to one man who would represent the whole community appears to have met with no success, because *Kukhva* reports that elections held in the fall of 1909 resulted in a certain Muqduzi Baba Varda of Ada assuming the post of Presbyterian *millatbashi*.⁵² After December 1911, when the Russian military presence in Urumiyah gave effective control to the Russian consul, Assyrians tended to carry their grievances to him directly.⁵³ Frequently these grievances involved Muslims, both Kurds and local residents. Apparently, upon complaint from Assyrians, the Russian consul would dispatch Cossacks to settle the dispute. While it had been the practice of Missions to redress wrongs against their parishioners through their embassies and consulates, the occupation of Urumiyah by the Russians increased the leverage of Assyrians against Muslims and heightened tensions. By turning to the Missions rather than to local Persian authority through the *millatbashi*, the Assyrians aggravated already hostile feelings toward themselves by gaining a favored status in comparison with other non-Christian and linguistic minorities.

There is some indication that the Russian consul appreciated the advantage of conciliating the several denominational branches into which the Assyrians were divided. At least some of the disputes brought before him, particularly those involving customary law, such as inheritance, were turned over to the Nestorian church to be settled according to the instructions of the *Sunhadus*.⁵⁴ This is in contrast to the events of 1910, when the Russian Mission refused to cooperate with the rest of the community in the selection of a delegate to the Majlis, and also prevented the formation of an interde-



*Second from Right:
Gardaleas Raymonde (daughter
of Agha Petros)*

At the Picnic



“Every ethnic group in the United States has had to fight its way up the ladder and in a broad context part of the process of assimilation has been the growth of ethnic pride.”

“In an odd sense, before you can expect someone else to take you seriously, you have to take yourself seriously. To put it another way, you cannot permit others to define your identity.”

John P. Roche

“In their day, the Assyrians were the shepherd-dogs of civilization. The great majority of their wars were wars of civilization, either to bring within the range of cultural influences savage tribes or to hold back these savage tribes from destroying the thin line of civilization in the Fertile Crescent.”

A. T. Olmstead

nominal committee, armed by the Persian government, whose purpose would have been to defend Urumiyah and nearby villages against Kurdish marauders.⁵⁵ After gaining military control of Urumiyah, the Russians perhaps understood the advantages of being able to rely on a united Assyrian force against Persian resistance to future Russian annexation of northwest Iran.

One of the main controversies in the Assyrian community before World War I involved immigration to the West. When Russian control of the Transcaucasus brought present-day Armenia and Georgia under the rule of a Christian power, Assyrians began migrating north in search of seasonal or permanent employment. Generally only men made the journey, traveling by foot or cart to Julfa, where they boarded trains for Tiflis and points north. One basic reason for the migration was that, as Christians, Assyrians could not engage in many trades among Muslims, a situation owing not to government restrictions but to the fact that local Muslims would not trade with Christian butchers, bakers, or food merchants.⁵⁶ Most Assyrians who went to Russia returned after a few years with their savings.⁵⁷ After about 1850, when, through contact with Americans, Assyrians discovered employment opportunities in North America, they frequently did not stop in Russia but boarded ship at Libava (Latvia) for Canada and the United States. Many returned to Urumiyah, but a number died en route. Gradually, however, return to Iran decreased as men sent for wives and families thus forming colonies in North American industrial centers.

Many in Assyrian circles advocated remaining in Urumiyah. Others felt that the only political salvation for the community lay in relocation to "Christian" soil.⁵⁸ Western Missions sometimes sent their brighter pupils to study abroad. Yet encouragement to emigrate from Iran came only indirectly from the presence of Missions. Of direct influence was the appeal of better employment opportunities outside the Muslim milieu. The choice of the educated class of men and women to emigrate and become menial laborers abroad rather than remain in Urumiyah impoverished the local Assyrian culture still further.⁵⁹

A loss to the total Urumiyah community was also felt since it had been the Assyrians who, trained by the Missions, had taken the lead in fields like medicine, education, and even foreign trade and banking.⁶⁰

Although it enjoyed a high rate of readership on three continents and usually was able to meet all its expenses through subscription, by the summer of 1913 *Kukhva* had entered a period of decline.⁶¹ It was simply unable to compete with the Western-subsidized sectarian press. It is also likely that the Russian military command in Urumiyah acted to control all the press, particularly the independent *Kukhva*. Throughout its history it had frequently failed to reach its subscribers in Russia owing to the censor's interference in Julfa.⁶² In this later period there is evidence in *Kukhva* reflecting a marked, though cautious and unenthusiastic, Assyrian acceptance of the Russian presence, particularly as it began to appear that

Tsarist annexation of Azerbaijan was inevitable. Yet the embrace of Russia was by no means accepted wholeheartedly by the Assyrians, particularly the intellectuals and members of the Protestant congregations.⁶³

The final blow that closed all four Assyrian language periodicals came in late 1914 and early 1915, as Azerbaijan — and Urumiyah with it — experienced the protracted struggle between Turks and Russians in this easternmost arena of World War I. Although some Assyrians returned to Urumiyah during the early 1920s, after three flights (1914, 1915, 1918), the surviving Assyrian community had become too widely scattered to attempt a unification on the scale of that preceding World War I. Their geographical unity had been destroyed.

In sum, the struggle to maintain Assyrian unity faced formidable opposition in Iran during a period when Assyrians were making great cultural and economic strides. It may be argued that the Assyrian *millat* in Iran would have inevitably disintegrated as a consequence of changes in the pattern of traditional Near Eastern society which had heretofore supported the *millat* system. Rising ethnic demands for equality and the awareness of governments regarding their sovereign power, together with other political and economic changes, certainly affected in differing way minority communities like the Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and Kurds. Within the Assyrian community of Iran, however, the Western Missions not only were largely responsible for transmitting concepts and ideas that helped to alter the pattern of Assyrian society, but also mounted opposition to reunification efforts launched by the Assyrians.

The dedication of the Western Missions to the proselytism of the native Christian church led to sectarian dissent in a *millat* which had persevered as a unit for centuries under Islamic governments. Western Missions openly or indirectly served the purposes of foreign governments which were less interested in Assyrian unity or even progress than in using Assyrians as nuclei for local support. Manipulation of the Assyrian community took various forms: for example, the American Mission expected to use the Assyrians as a religious spearhead for their thrust into the Muslim sphere. The Russians, on the other hand, clearly worked to make the Assyrians political allies, by either wooing them toward dependence on Russian power or hindering their participation and cooperation with the Iranian government.

Progressive Assyrians attempted to neutralize the discord wrought by the Missions through fostering better relations with the Persian authorities, advocating development of Assyrian economic and cultural areas, opening channels of communication among Assyrians divided by sect and separated by geography, and improving conditions in Urumiyah so that migration to the West would not be the sole alternative available to ambitious youth. World and local events conspired to doom the attempt.

Continued on next page

I would like to thank Professor Charles Issawi and Mary Ellen Page for reading and commenting on drafts of this paper. My thanks also to my family and to Assyrian friends whose libraries, recollections, and patient answers to questions helped me to understand the atmosphere of the period.

¹There also exists a community loosely allied to the Assyrians of the Middle East in India, mainly in the state of Kerala; see F. E. Keay, *A History of the Syrian Church of India* (London, 1938).

²For a thorough discussion of the term "Assyrian" applied to either the people or the language, readers should consult John Joseph's study of some years ago, *The Nestorians and Their Muslim Neighbors: A Study of Western Influence on Their Relations* (Princeton, 1961), pp. 3-21.

³Dr. L. Yaure analyzed a poem originally published in the pre-World War I Assyrian press. See his "A Poem in the Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Urmia," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 45, 2 (1957), 73-87.

⁴Edward G. Browne, *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia* (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 39, 100, 124, 126. Browne did not see any of these periodicals himself and he gives only vague and unsubstantiated or incorrect information about them.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 8. In the 1966 census the Assyrian population of Iran was 20,344 with nearly half of them in Tehran (Ferydoon Firoozi, "Tehran: A Demographic and Economic Analysis," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 10, 1 (1974), 64).

⁶William Walker Rockwell, *The Pitiful Flight of the Assyrian Christians in Persia and Kurdistan* (New York, 1916), p. 66.

⁷Francis B. Packard, *The Story of Our Mission in Persia* (New York, 1920), p. 22.

⁸Browne, *Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*, pp. 28, 30, 31, 100, 112, 144. The Armenian periodical press began in Madras (1794-1796) and much came in the nineteenth century from Europe and areas west of Iran. Specific information about the cultural movement among the Armenians of Iran appears to be limited to Armenian language sources unavailable to the writer.

⁹After the return of the Russians to Urumiyah on May 24, 1915, a new periodical was begun by an organization called "The Society of Assyrian Young Men." The periodical was called *Naqusha* (The Bell-Ringer) and was printed on the Russian Mission press. It continued to appear for a brief period on a monthly basis, under the editorship of Benyamin Arsanus (of Digala) (1882-1957).

¹⁰See Joseph, *The Nestorians and Their Muslim Neighbors*, p. 23 for more details.

¹¹Some Urumiyah village clans were the Yadgar, Dooman, Shabas, Khinui, Amrikhas, Davajan. Assyrian tribes include the Baz, Jillu, Tkuma, Tiyari. Descriptions of the tribes appear in many missionary writings as well as in Edward Every's "The Assyrians," *Religion in the Middle East*, ed. A. J. Arberry (Cambridge, 1969), 1, 521.

¹²The work is divided into book, chapter, and verse, and regulates marriage, inheritance, usury, construction, and so forth. See A. J. MacLean and W. H. Browne, *The Catholicos of the East and His People* (London, 1892), pp. 50, 51, 139, 142 ff. A German translation exists.

¹³*Zarira d Bara*, 49, 1 (1898) 1, and *Kukhva*, 4, 7 (1909), 73-74.

¹⁴The early American missionaries had studied Old Syriac but the practice was dropped.

¹⁵The fiftieth anniversary of the Lazarist Mission was celebrated in 1912 (*Kukhva*, 6, 23 [June 24, 1912], 272).

¹⁶Packard, *The Story of our Mission in Persia*, p. 34.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁸Unpublished correspondence dealing with this question may be found at the Presbyterian Historical Society (Philadelphia, Pa.), catalogued as "Correspondence from the Urumia Station with Reference to the Proposed Union with the Old Syrian Church," dated 1909.

¹⁹See Browne, *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*, p. 10, for a discussion of the early press in Iran. Although the existence of an earlier Persian periodical has been ascertained, because that periodical appears to have been an internal court information sheet, Jan Rypka agrees with Browne that 1851 marks the beginning of the Persian periodical press (Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* [Dordrecht-Holland, 1968], pp. 337-38). The commencement of *Zarira d Bara* in 1850 is mentioned by G. V. Arsanus in "Rol' assiriiskikh prosvetitelei i pisatelei v stanovlenii sovremenogo assiriiskogo iazyka," *Semitskie iazyki*, Vyp. 2, c. 2 (Moscow, 1965), p. 700, and confirmed by copies for the year 1895 which bear the volume number 46.

²⁰The authors of *Assiriiskii vo pros vo vremia i posle pervoi mirovoi voyny* (Moscow, 1968), K. P. Matveev and I. I. Mar Lukhanna, mistakenly identify the first year as 1851 (p. 19) as does Iraj Afshar in "Nasturiyan-i Iran: Asuri-ha va kaldani-ha," *Ittila' at-i mahanah*, 4, 40 (1330/1951), 27.

²¹Browne, *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*, p. 124.

²²*Kukhva*, 5, 16 (1911), 188.

²³A survey of two years of *Zarira d Bara*, 1895 and 1898, revealed a concentration on translation of sermons from English to Assyrian, on biographies of Western political and religious leaders, and on moral admonitions against alcohol. Little local news and virtually no national (Iranian) news received coverage. Direct and indirect attacks on Roman Catholicism and Russian Orthodoxy appeared also (*Zarira d Bara*, 46, 2 [1895], 12; 46, 1 [1898], 3; 46, 9 [1898], 65).

²⁴*Ibid.*, 46, 3 (1895), 19.

²⁵This dual claim of the Mar Shumun contributed to the conflict between the Assyrians and the Iraqi government in 1932-1933. See Khaldun S. Husry, "The Assyrian Affair of 1933 (I)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 5, 2 (1974) 172. In 1973 the Mar Shamun, who was elevated to the post in 1920, resigned, in an unprecedented move. It is highly doubtful that the office will be filled on a hereditary basis from now on, if it is filled at all by a single individual. In 1976 a new patriarch was elected under new rules.

²⁶*Kukhva*, 4, 11 (1909), 129; and others.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 6, 2 (1911), 36; and others.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 4, 15 (1910), 172-173.

²⁹One of the leaders much admired by Assyrians was Hazrat-i Ashraf Ijlal-i Mulk, the governor of Urumiyah until 1912 (*ibid.*, 6, 17 [1912], 200; and 5, 21 [1911], 246-247).

³⁰*Ibid.*, 6, 22 (1912), 248-250. Compare with Sir Percy Sykes's account in *A History of Persia*, Vol. II (New York, 1915) pp. 426-427.

³¹*Ibid.*, 6, 3 (1911), 29, 30.

³²*Ibid.*, 6, 7 (1911), 76-78.

³³*Ibid.*, 4, 11 (1909), 124-125.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 5, 2 (1910), 23.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 5, 3 (1910), 25.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 4, 7 (1909), 78.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 6, 21 (1912), 241-242.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 5, 13 (1911), 146-147. Because the by-laws of this society limited membership to "Chaldeans" it was accused of being sectarian. The Society disclaimed such accusations, claiming that all Assyrians in Salamas were in fact known as "Chaldeans."

³⁹*Ibid.*, 5, 17 (1911), 200-202.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 5, 3 (1910), 28.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 6, 2 (1911), 17-18.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 5, 2 (1910), 16; and 6, 14 (1912), 161-162.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 6, 15 (1912), 175.

⁴⁴By 1930, most Assyrian publications had adopted the American system, including the Soviet periodical *Kukhva d Madinkha* published in Tiflis, although this system had been described as "naked and bare" (*Kukhva*, 6, 14 [1912], 162; and *Kukhva d Madinkha*, 1, 10 [1929], 3).

⁴⁵"The Place of Islam in the Persian Constitution," *The Moslem World* (1911), 341-342.

⁴⁶*Kukhva*, 5, 14 (1911), 163-164.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 5, 15 (1911), 167-170.

⁴⁸By 1911 many Assyrians had already settled permanently in American, Canadian, and European cities (*ibid.*, 5, 15 [1911], 170-171).

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 5, 15 (1911), 174.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 6, 3 (1911), 29-30.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 4, 6 (1909), 66-67. It is not clear what channels were available to other denominations, for example, the Lutherans.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 4, 10 (1909), 115. Muqduisi was a title conferred on a man who performed the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Its use conforms with the Muslim practice of using titles like Haji, Mashhadi, or Maqdisi (or Muqaddisi) for men making pilgrimages to Mecca, Mashhad, or Jerusalem.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 6, 20 (1912), 235-236. Whenever the Iranian government proved too weak to take effective action, Assyrians turned to the Russians. See *Kukhva*, 4, 16 (1910), 187-190.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 6, 10 (1911), 115-116.

⁵⁵The *Kukhva* article implies that the Russian Orthodox action aimed at preventing Assyrian cooperation with the Persian government (*Kukhva*, 5, 3 [1910], 29-32).

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 4, 15 (1910), 170-171.

⁵⁷Many Assyrians traveled to Russia and the United States under various religious pretexts — collecting money for nonexistent orphanages, schools, and churches. Others would travel as "holy men," selling bits of wood or soil which they claimed to have brought from Jerusalem, or even from Jesus' grave site. They were labeled with the Armenian term *k'acha gogh* (cross thieves). See pamphlet by Galen B. Royer, *Urumia, Persia: The Nestorians, Great Deceivers "Cross Stealers"* (1910?), a copy of which may be found at the Presbyterian Historical Society. *Kukhva* also discusses this problem but calls them *ponchi* (thief), *Kukhva*, 4, 18 (1910), 210.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 4, 6 (1909), 63; and 5, 2 (1910), 13.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 4, 8 (1909), 90; and 6, 8 (1912), 85-86.

⁶⁰Assyrian educators had opened secular schools for Muslims in Urumiyah along new lines, *tarbiyat khadta* (Per. *usul-i jadid*, new style), where they taught English and Persian as well as the modern sciences. These schools were independent from the mission schools for Muslims (*Kukhva*, 5, 2 [1910], 20). Persian newspapers quoted in *Zarira d Bara*, 61, 1 (1910), 3, complain about Assyrian immigration from Iran.

⁶¹*Kukhva*, 6, 23 (1913), 269-270.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 4, 6 (1909), 72 ff.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 6, 13 (1913), 145-146. The editor warns of the danger to Assyrians when the Russian troops depart. See Joseph, *The Nestorians and Their Muslim Neighbors*, pp. 128-129, for the treatment of Protestants during the Russian occupation.

At the Picnic



ADAM BENJAMIN — Assyrian Congressman

Representative Adam Benjamin, Jr., a Democrat from northwestern Indiana, was found dead in his home on Capitol Hill after he failed to appear for a doctor's appointment. He was 47.

The three-term congressman, who headed the House transportation appropriations subcommittee, died sometime during the Labor Day weekend, apparently of a heart attack, aides said.

Adam Benjamin, Jr. was born in Gary, Indiana on August 6, 1935 to Mr. and Mrs. Adam Benjamin. He married the former Patricia Ann Sullivan of Gary.

He attended the Gary Public Schools and received his preparatory training at Kemper Military School, Boonville, Missouri, where he was named to the Military, Academic and General Honor Societies.

Following high school graduation, and a year of junior college work at Kemper, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps and served in Korea. He was honorably discharged from the Marines in 1954 as a Corporal. He received the United Nations Service, National Defense and Korean Service Ribbons.

Entering the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1954, he served as Chairman and Editor of its bi-weekly magazine. He was graduated in 1958 with a B.S. Degree in Engineering and the Army Times and Pointer Awards.

Following West Point, Benjamin graduated from Airborne, Ranger and Infantry Officers Leadership School. He then joined the 101st Airborne Division where he received his Senior Parachutist Wings and 1st Lt. Bars. Upon discharge in 1961, he taught Physics and Mathematics at Edison High School. In 1962 he was employed as Assistant Electronic Computer Analyst in Chicago.

In 1963 he became Zoning Administrator for the City of Gary and served in that capacity until being named Executive Secretary to the Mayor in 1965.

In 1966 he received his Juris-Doctor Degree in Law from Valparaiso University Law School and was admitted to the Bar. He then resigned his City position and began the practice of law. In November 1966, he was elected State Representative.

He was awarded the Gary Jaycees Good Government Award and the Lake County Young Democrat Collegiate Federation Leadership Award in 1967, as well as the Indiana Broadcasters Outstanding Freshman Legislator's Award based on a vote of the members of the House of Representatives.

Following the 1967 session, Benjamin chaired the Committee on Constitutional Prohibitions which developed a Code of Ethics for Public Officials. Despite his advocacy of this measure, it was not adopted by the 1969 General Assembly. However, it was cited as the best bill introduced during the 1971 General Assembly.

Benjamin won re-election as State Representative in November, 1968, and was again cited by the news media as an outstanding legislator following the 1969 session. Because of his strong stand for governmental reform and anti-crime proposals, he was awarded the Citizen's

Action Award of the Northwest Indiana Crime Commission.

Between the 1967 and 1969 session, Benjamin helped develop the Indiana Rules of Civil Procedure which he had adopted into law in 1969.

In 1970, Benjamin was elected State Senator and again led all candidates in votes in both the primary and general elections as he had in 1968.

In 1971, the writers covering the 1971 session cited Benjamin and Senator Walter Helmke of Fort Wayne as the Outstanding State Senators. Benjamin was also cited for authoring the best bill introduced.

His 1971 legislative achievements were noted by the Lake County Young Democrats who named him "Mr. Democrat" and honored him accordingly in 1972. He also received the East Gary Good Government Award for his 1972 legislative service.

Two of the Constitutional Amendments authored by Benjamin were adopted overwhelmingly by the Indiana voters in 1970 meaning the first reform of the State Judiciary since 1851, and modernization of three state administrative offices.

In 1973, he championed Court Reform in Lake County and succeeded in unifying the Lake Superior Court, expanding its criminal division and removing politics from the Court. He also introduced and had passed a new set of rules of criminal procedure which did much to expedite criminal trials.

In 1974, he also authored and had passed major revisions to the drug laws to increase penalties against narcotic drug pushers.

In 1975, Benjamin again won distinction for his work on the direct primary law, medical malpractice, new system of minor courts and the adoption of the state budget. Because of his primary role in developing Indiana's medical malpractice legislation, Benjamin was invited to many legislative conferences throughout the United States to assist other states. In 1976 he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Benjamin was chairman of the executive committee of the congressional steel caucus, as well as a member of the Budget and Appropriations Committee.

He was running for a fourth term from the First District, which encompasses Gary, Hammond and East Chicago.

Congressman Floyd Fithian, D-Ind., called Benjamin "a legislator's legislator . . . an indefatigable worker. People from both sides of the aisle went to him to make sure their bill was right. He rose more rapidly in the House to a position of real influence than anyone I know of." Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher said, "It was not unusual for Adam to stay late working on legislation when everyone else had gone home."

It is to be noted that Mr. Adam Benjamin was also the Managing Editor of the Assyrian Star, later he became the Editor-in-Chief. He was elected as the President of the Assyrian American National Federation (A.A.N.F.) from 1963 to 1965.

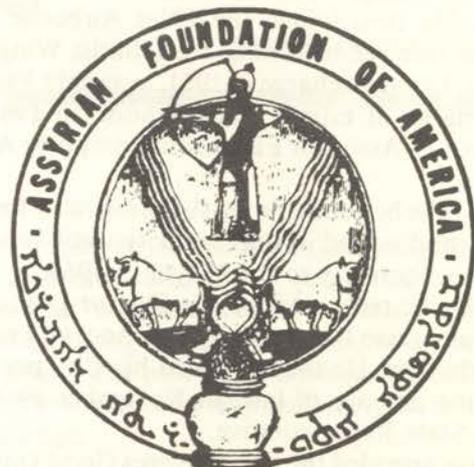


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تلفن (۴۱۵) ۵۴۸-۲۲۱۳



Left to right: His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis of the Assyrian Church of the East, His Grace Mar Delli and His Grace Mar Avraham.

His Grace Mar Avraham Avraham of the Chaldean Catholic Church was elevated to the position of Bishop of the Church in North America. In a testimonial dinner given in his honor in Chicago he said in pure Assyrian: "All of us Assyrians, members of the Church of the East, Chaldeans, Jacobites, Syrianis, are sons of One Nation."

In his press conference held in Detroit Mar Avraham responded to numerous questions concerning church and nation: "We the clergy are solely concerned with religious and spiritual matters. Politics and diplomacy are left to our political organizations."

Neo-Assyria

(Continuation of "Yes, We Are Assyrians")

by William Daniel

This is a continuation of my article which appeared in the Second Quarter, 1982, issue of Nineveh magazine. In my article "Yes, We Are Assyrians" consanguinity (blood relationship) was established between the Assyrians of the pre-Christian era and the people of Neo-Assyria, Awgar's (Abgar) people.

The purpose of this part of the article is to determine the patrilineal kinship between the people of Neo-Assyria and the present day Assyrians. When that has been fulfilled there shall be no more room for any doubt regarding the justifiability of the claim of Assyrians of today — to have descended from the mighty people who enjoyed a glorious existence under such sovereigns as: Sargon, Sennacherib, Banipals, Nassirpals and scores of others; a people whose magnitude was not limited to conquests in battlefields alone but covered many other fields in the realm of culture and humanitarianism as well.

Occasionally an Assyrian of today may say: "We do not have to prove to other people that we are Assyrians, the undeniability of the fact is clear to us, and that is all that matters; it is immaterial to us what others think." To this I shall reply saying: "On the contrary, it is important for those who wield the scales of destinies of smaller nations that they should know who we are, for often the scales may be tipped in their favor. But if the truth is known undeniably, it can ring a sympathetic chord in the heart of the arbiter. We have been dubbed by many surnames. It's time for presentation of well-founded evidence as to our rightful heritage."

Often we hear in speeches, or read articles stating that we are the first Christian nation on Earth. The claim is not unfounded. The second portion of our national history is so closely woven with Christianity that often we have been identified by our religious affiliation rather than by our national name — by the Moslems of the Middle East the name attached to us is 'Nasrani' or 'Nassara,' both of which mean Nazareans — from Nazareth, the village where Jesus grew up. Others call us Nestorians, i.e., confusing religious denomination for national origin. In the latter, while at times the error may be due to ignorance, i.e., the inability to differentiate between the two; at other times the apparent mistake is maliciously pronounced in order to deprive the Assyrians of their national heritage.

It is our intention in this second part of the article to present strong evidence to the claim that Assyrians are not only the first Christian nation on Earth, but also that they are without the shadow of a doubt — the descendants of the people of Neo-Assyria. There is no place or time more suited, more fitting than this and for the presentation of the listing of our Patriarchs from 33 A.D. to the present time.

In accordance with the injunction given by His Holiness the Catholicos Patriarch of the East, the late Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, Qashisha (Priest) Iskhaq Rehana prepared the following list of Patriarchs. His research covered many sources:

TABLE OR TREE OF LIFE OF APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION OF THE CATHOLICOS PATRIARCHS OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST, NAMELY, THOSE WHO SERVED ON THE SEE OF THE CHURCH OF KHUKY, IN SELEUCIA-CTESIPHON, BABYLON

MARAN ESHU M'SHIKHA
(Our Lord Jesus Christ)

Shimun Keepa, who wrote his Catholic Epistle
from Babylon.

I. Peter, 1.1 and 5.13, (addendum p. 116).

	YEAR
Tooma Shlikha, who after establishing Church in Mesopotamia, Persia and their environment, went to India	33- 73
Bar Tulmay	33-
Addai (Taddai) Shlikha	33- 45
Agai, disciple of Mari,	45- 81
Mari, disciple of Addai	48- 81
(both from the seventy disciples)	
Abris, relative of the virgin Mary	90- 107
Oraham I, of Kashkar	130- 152
Yacob I, relative of Yosip the Carpenter	172- 190
Ebid M'shikha	191- 203
Akhu d'Awu	205- 220
Shakhlupa of Kashkar	224- 244
Papa Bar Gaggai	247- 326
Shimun Bar Sabbai	328- 341
Shahdost	345- 347
Bar Bashmin	350- 358
Tumarsa	383- 393
Qaiyuma	393- 399
Eskhaq	399- 411
Akhkhi	411- 415
Yoalaha I	415- 420
Maana	420-
Qarabukht	421-
Dadishu	421- 456
Bawai or Babu	457- 484
Aqaq	484- 496
Bawai	496- 502

YEAR

Sheela	505- 523
Narsai	524- 535
Elisha (dual Patriarchate)	524- 538
Polos	539- 540
Yosip	552- 567
Khazqiyil	570- 581
Eshuyow I, Arzunaya	581- 595
Sorishu I Garmaqaya	596- 604
Greghor, Partaya	605- 608
Eshuyow II (Gdalaya or Arab)	628- 644
Mar Immeh	647- 650
Eshuyow III, Kdayawaya	650- 660
Gewargis I	681- 684
Yokhannan I, Bar Marta	684- 692
Khnaishu I	686- 693
Yokhannan II, Garba	693- 694
Sliwazkha	714- 728
Pethyon	731- 740
Awa	741- 751
Surin	752- 754
Yacob II	754- 773
Khnanishu II	774- 778
(The monument in China was erected during his reign)	
Timotheus I	780- 820
Eshu-barnon	820- 824
Gewargis II	825- 832
Soreshu II	832- 836
Oraham II, Margaya	837- 850
Teadasis (or Theodoros)	850- 852
Sargis, Suwaya	860- 872
Annush d'beth Garmay	873- 884
Yokhannan III, Bar Narsay	884- 892
Yokhannan IV, (nephew of Theodoros)	892- 898
Yokhannan V, Bar Ogare	900- 905
Oraham III, Abraza	906- 937
Ammanoel I	937- 949
Esrail Karkhaya	961- 962
Odishu Garmaqaya	963- 986
Mari Aturaya	967-1000
Yokhannan VI (Yoannis)	1001-1012
Yokhannan VII (Bar Nazuk)	1013-1022
Eshuyow IV	1023-1027
Elia I (Terhan)	1028-1049
Yokhannan VIII (Bar Tragala)	1049-1057
Soreshu III (Bar Zanbur)	1057-1072
Odishu II (Bar Ars) Aturaya	1072-1090
Makkikha I (Bar Shlemon)	1092-1109
Elia II (Bar Maqli)	1111-1132
Bar Soma (Of Suwa)	1133-1135
Bar Gabbara	1135-1136
Odishu III (Newpew of Elia II)	1138-1147
Eshuyow V (from Beth Zodai, Baladaya)	1148-1175
Elia III (Abukhalim)	1176-1190
Yoalaha II (Bar Qaiyuma)	1191-1222
Sorishu IV	1222-1226
Sorishu V (from Baghdad)	1226-1256

YEAR

*Makkikha II	1257-1265
Dinkha I (Arbilaya, i.e., from Arbil)	1265-1281
Yoalaha III (Bar Turkaye, i.e. Turkish by race)	1281-1318
*Timotheus II (Arbilaya, i.e., from Arbil)	1318-1328
Dinkha II	1329-1359
Dinkha III	1359-1368
Shimun III	1369-1392
Shimun IV	1403-1407
Elia III	1407-1420
Shimun V	1420-1447
*Shimun VI	1448-1490
Elia V	1491-1504
Shimun VII	1505-1538
Eshuyow Shimun VIII	1538-1551
Dinkha Shimun IX (Bar Mama)	1552-1558
Yoalaha Shimun X	1558-1580
Dinkha Shimun XI	1580-1600
Elia Shimun XII	1600-1653
Eshuyow Shimun XIII	1653-1690
Yoalaha Shimun XIV	1690-1692
Dinkha Shimun XV	1692-1700
Shlemon (Sulaiman) Shimun XVI	1700-1740
Mikhail (Mukhattis) Shimun XVII	1740-1741
Yonan (Yuna) Shimun XVIII	1740-1820
Oraham Shimun XIX	1820-1860
Ruwil Shimun XX	1860-1903
Binyamin Shimun XXI	1903-1918
Polos Shimun XXII	1918-1920
Eshai Shimun XXIII	1920-1975
Dinkha IV	1976-

1. A Historical Account of the Patriarchs of the East, by Amro Bar Mattay, published in Rome 1896.

2. A Historical Account of the Patriarchs of the East, by Qashisha Patros Narsay of Mosul, 1905.

3. A Historical Account of the Patriarchs of the East, by Qashisha Yosip Tupakchi.

4. The History of the Assyrian Church, by Dr. W. A. Wigram, published in London, England.

5. History of the Ancient Nation and the Church of the East, by Shamasha Gewargis David Malik of Supurghan, and published by Qashisha Nestoris Malik, U.S.A., 1910.

6. The Book of Governors, by Mar Tooma of Margy.

7. The Chronology of Bar Eoraya (Bar Hebraeus) translated from Assyriac (Aramaic) original by E. A. Wallis Budge, published by Oxford University Press. Original about 12th century.

8. Chronology, published by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Press, Urmi, Iran, 1907.

Sargis and Salby Hoobyar Family

(First Assyrian-Americans in the Turlock area along with Isaac Adams)



SALBY AND SARGIS HOOBYAR

First Assyrian-Americans
in the Turlock Area.

Sargis Hoobyar came to California in 1910 and established a farm at Quincy and Briar Road, east of Turlock. He then sent for his wife, Salby, and family to join him in their new homeland. The Hoobyars raised six sons, Luther, Arby, David, John, Robert, Pete, and a daughter, Esther, as they helped settle the Turlock area.

"A cultural minority with a proud and ancient heritage is fighting today for its survival, but few seem to notice or to care. The Assyrians . . . living in and around Mosul and other parts of Iraq are keeping alive a special Christian tradition using the very language today that was spoken by Jesus Christ. But the Assyrian heritage goes back much further than that, to the dawn of civilization of the year 3,000 B.C."

Dr. James J. Watkins
Professor of International Law (1981)



Janet Yonan

At the Anniversary & Fashion Show

HERE & THERE

BERKELEY

A joint picnic was held by the Assyrian Foundation of America and the Assyrian Church of the East (San Francisco) on Sunday, August 29, at Robert Crown Park, Alameda. About 150 people attended and had a most enjoyable time in the beautiful sunshine and warm weather. The pictures in this issue were taken at the picnic. Many people worked hard to make the picnic a success and our thanks go to all of them. We also wish to thank Narsai David and Sam David of Narsai's Restaurant for generously donating the delicious rice.

DAVIS

"From Urmia to the Stanislaus. A Cultural-Historical Geography of Assyrian Christians in the Middle East and America." 1981.

This is the title of a Ph.D. thesis by Gary Neil Smith, University of California, Davis, in which he documents Assyrian origins and history in the Middle East while detailing the reasons for Assyrian emigration from the region. Assyrian immigration to the United States and Stanislaus County, California, was studied, with an additional focus on the history and integration of Assyrians in the Stanislaus community. A comparison is also made between the Assyrian communities of Stanislaus County, Chicago and Hartford-New Britain (Conn.). The history and social complexity of these communities were also examined and compared.

MODESTO

During the month of August, 1982, the Modesto Bee newspaper ran a series of extensive articles over a period of four days about the Assyrians in the Turlock and Modesto, Calif. area. Many aspects of the Assyrian community were discussed, including organizations, churches, etc., as well as Assyrian history, culture and traditions.

SAN FRANCISCO

Visiting his cousin Florence Sargis (Foundation member) in San Francisco is Tommy Daniel from London, England. Mr. Daniel graduated this year from the University of Manchester, England, as a mechanical engineer. He is the son of Alexander Daniel of Iran. We wish Tommy a very pleasant stay in the Bay Area.

Visiting the San Francisco Bay Area from Marseille, France is Gardaleas Raymonde, daughter of Agha Petros, accompanied by her son, Herve Georges. We met her at the Foundation picnic in Alameda. Agha Petros has six children living today — two sons, David and Goudeda, and four daughters, Gilli, Kori, Rosette and Gardaleas.

SANTA ANA

Dr. George Lamsa's books and writings are available through the Noohra Foundation. This Foundation was founded twelve years ago by Dr. Rocco A. Errico, who studied and traveled with Dr. Lamsa, the renowned Assyrian Biblical authority. The purpose of the Noohra Foundation is to make known throughout the world the Lamsa English Translation of the ancient Aramaic Bible. The late Dr. Lamsa corrected over 12,000 mistranslations found in all of the traditional English versions of the Holy Bible. The works of Dr. Lamsa can be obtained by writing to the Noohra Foundation at 2720 S. Harbor Blvd., Suite I, Santa Ana, CA 92704.

NEW YORK

The CBS television network presented a documentary film on Juana Davidshvillii, an Assyrian of Russia, who has the ability to heal her patients using bioenergetic methods. CBS reported that the percentage of Juana's success is more than 97%. The documentary was shown on Tuesday, July 6, on the CBS Morning News program.

TIFLIS, RUSSIA

"A Reader of the Modern Assyrian Language with a Dictionary" has been published by the Tiflis University Press in Russia. The book is written by Assyrian Professor Konstantin Tsereteli and consists of more than 300 pages.

Assyrian Recipe

HAREESA

2 lbs. Giluli (unshelled wheat)

4 lbs. chicken (med. cooked and boned)

Wash and soak giluli in water overnight. Place chicken and giluli in 8 qt. saucepan and cover with water. Cook for 5-6 hours, or until well cooked. Be sure the kernels are covered with water during cooking time (usually only boiling water). When cooked (mixture will be quite thick), beat with a wooden spoon.

Serve hot with melted butter. Sprinkle crushed coriander (toli) seed, if desired. (Salt should be added to the Hareesa just before serving).

Recipe from Betty Elias

Here and There

REDWOOD CITY:

Visiting the San Francisco Bay Area from Santa Ana is Mr. J. Jacob of Goolpatalikhan, Urmia. He is the father of Foundation members, Emmanuel Jacob of Redwood City and Shamiram Hermes of Daly City; and grandfather of Peggie Hernandez (Foundation member).

Mr. Jacob graduated in 1917 from Kalla (American Mission College) in Urmia. He studied under Rabi Pera Amrikhas of Ada, Rabi Isaac Urshan and Kasha Isaac Malik. Together with two other students he was sent to Sardari College for advanced study. In April, 1918, due to the turmoil in Urmia from the war, the college was closed. After the war he was in the exodus of Assyrians from Iran to Iraq.

In Iraq, he was principal of two Assyrian schools: Hanaidi (1924-1938) and Habbanyia (1938-1944). Thousands of Assyrians graduated from his schools and remember him well. Mr. Jacob is proficient in both Assyrian and English and has translated a number of Shakespeare's plays into Assyrian. These plays were acted by Assyrian students in Iraq and were very popular. He has also written numerous plays which were presented by his students. Mr. Jacob emigrated to the United States in 1972 and is presently living with his son, William, and his family in Santa Ana, Calif.

BERKELEY:

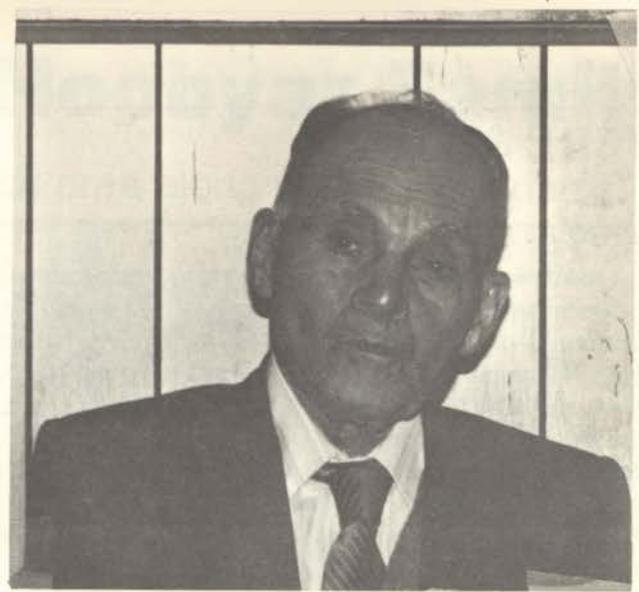
For the 18th anniversary of the Assyrian Foundation a fashion show and dinner party was held at our Cultural Center in Berkeley. The party was well attended and very successful. The beautiful decor of the hall was arranged for this occasion by Mrs. Flora Kingsbury, social chairlady.

The program opened with a disco style dance by Frances Yonan, daughter of Charles and Florence Yonan. This was followed by the Assyrian fashion designer, Mr. Dijla Babilla, who presented his stunning collection of dresses and gowns. Mr. Nathan Blackwell, personal image developer, demonstrated methods of enhancing one's appearance and image, in addition to an exhibition of women's dresses. A very enjoyable dance followed to the accompaniment of the Assyrian Foundation band.

CHICAGO

The Literary Committee of the Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, Chicago, has undertaken the task of producing a quarterly magazine under the title "Voice From the East" "Qala Min Madinkha." Congratulations for a job well done. To communicate or subscribe to the magazine, address your letter to:

Voice From the East
P.O. Box 25264
Chicago, IL 60626



Mr. J. Jacob

TURLOCK

At the 49th annual convention of the Assyrian American National Federation, Mr. Simon Kasha was elected as the new president. The convention was hosted by the Assyrian American Civic Club of Turlock.



Dijla Babilla

At the Anniversary & Fashion Show

CHICAGO

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East was invited by His Holiness the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church to attend a conference held by the Eastern Orthodox churches on June 22-30, 1982 in the city of Kiev. Accompanied by Shamasha (Deacon) Aziz Neesan as his secretary, he flew to London on June 10th on his way to Moscow.

In London he met with the Archbishop of Canterbury. From there he flew to Moscow and at the airport he was met by a bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church. A number of Assyrians visited His Holiness at his Moscow hotel, including Prof. K. P. Mateev, Benyamin Arsanus' two sons and many Assyrians from Urmia, a town in Russia populated by Assyrians. He attended a Russian Orthodox service where about 400 Assyrians came to see him and presented a bouquet of flowers to him. The following day His Holiness went to Kiev to attend a conference where 20 Orthodox rites from 17 countries were gathered. Here he officiated over a Communion Service (Qurbana Kadisha) which was conducted in Assyriac (Aramaic) and met with hundreds of Assyrians. They had a very pleasant visit.

After the conference, Mar Dinkha flew to Australia where he visited the Assyrian communities in Sydney, Fairfield and Melbourne. In August he returned to Turlock, California to officiate over a conference attended by all the priests and officials of the Assyrian Churches in the United States. The purpose of this conference was to implement revisions in the Church's rites.

SAN FRANCISCO

On Saturday, October 2, a dinner was given by Mar Narsai parish, Assyrian Church of the East, San Francisco, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the ordination of Archdeacon Nenos Michael and also honoring the families who helped in building the church 25 years ago. A number of the people who had actually worked on the building 25 years ago were present and were given an honorary letter of appreciation. Archdeacon Nenos Michael was presented with a plaque in appreciation of his dedicated service to the church and the Assyrian community. His Holiness, Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, as the guest of honor, spoke on unity and the importance of preserving the Assyrian language for maintaining the Assyrian identity. At length he talked about his trip to Moscow and Kiev.

It was pointed out that when the church was established 25 years ago a fund-raising dinner was given at which His Holiness the late Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII was the honorary guest.



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His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV



Jackie Yelda escorted by Jacob Malekzadeh

At the Anniversary & Fashion Show

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Shabbas:

My friend William Daniel takes a logical and historical approach to prove our origin (Yes, We Are Assyrians). As usual, he does an excellent job. I wonder, though, how many readers comprehend the message conveyed in the last paragraph of this article. It is not that important for non-Assyrians to know or accept our identity. Let us understand that it is we who have to promote our identity through the retention of the elements that make that identity, i.e., language, culture, history, folklore, etc. If this is not done due to our negligence and indifference, then how others feel about us is totally academic.

Sincerely,

Bailis Y. Shamun
Chicago, IL

Dear Editor:

I truly enjoy "Nineveh." You are all doing a fantastic job. I wish you a continuous success.

I shared Nineveh with my Sunday School class when our lesson was on The Assyrians and Nineveh. It has been very interesting and informative to my teacher, Fred, who is a Radio Missionary and a wonderful teacher. He is impressed by its contents about Christianity in all the issues.

Here is my small contribution toward Nineveh. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Louise Yohannan
San Mateo, CA

Dear Editor:

Thanks for maintaining the high quality of Nineveh magazine. I always look forward to its provocative and informative selections, and the fine way they are presented.

Sincerely,

Francis Sarguis
Santa Barbara, CA

Dear Editor:

I recently read a copy of your magazine and was very impressed with its quality. I would like to subscribe to it. Keep up the good work.

Yours in Assyrianism,

Robert Dekelaita
Des Plaines, IL

Dear Sir:

As an Assyrian I would like to be a member of your association and to subscribe to your Nineveh magazine.

Yours in Assyrianism,

Vladimir Lazari
No. Hollywood, CA

In Appreciation

- *The Assyrian Foundation wishes to thank Narsai David and Sam David for contributing 12 bottles of champagne and a dinner for two at Narsai's Restaurant towards the raffle held at the Foundation's anniversary party.*
- *We also wish to thank Martin Jacob for donating a clock radio for the same purpose.*
- *Our thanks also go to Joseph Bet Khuda Oroumieh of Poonak Supplies, San Bruno for his generous contribution of kitchen supplies.*
- *We extend our thanks and appreciation to Dijla Babilla and Nathan Blackwell for their excellence in fashion show and exhibits.*



Wilma Geevargis

At the Anniversary & Fashion Show

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Mr. Arbel Soleymani	20.00

FOUNDATION'S HALLOWEEN PARTY

The Assyrian Foundation is holding a

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Saturday Evening, October 30

at the Foundation's Cultural Center

1920 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley

*Come with your best Halloween costume
and have a good time!*



Mariana Shabbas and Flora Kingsbury

At the Anniversary & Fashion Show

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10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Sun.

Feasts and Commemorations

Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Narsai Parish
3939 Lawton Street, San Francisco, CA • (415) 753-9502

Archdeacon Nenos S. Michael officiating.

10-17-82	Mar Dinkha's Consecration Day	Service	11:00 a.m.
10-31-82	Mar Gewargis Shara	Qurbana	9:00 a.m.
11-28-82	First Sunday of Advent	Qurbana	9:00 a.m.
12-24-82	Friday Before Christmas	Service	7:00 p.m.
12-25-82	Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Christmas)	Qurbana	9:00 a.m.

Note: All Sundays not mentioned above are the morning service, and begin promptly at 11:00 a.m.

At the Anniversay and Fashion Show



Shamiran Khofri



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כאמור כהנהגה חתום

בשם המנהל

52

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