

## SUMMARIES

### HEALERS AND PHYSICIANS IN OTTOMAN ISRAEL

Zohar Amar and Yael Buchman

During the Ottoman Period, various types of physicians were active in the Land of Israel who were categorized by their background and medical training. The first type comprised “distinguished physicians,” who had studied in an accredited institute of learning and who had received their certification from other distinguished physicians, based on their experience and practical studies. The medicine they practiced was a continuation of the Galenic-Arabic school of medicine. Alongside these Oriental physicians were also professionals who had come from Eastern and Western Europe, having acquired their medical education at the universities of Europe and having been awarded a professional diploma that certified its bearer as “Doctor.”

One example of such a “distinguished physician” is R. David de Silva (1684-1740), a native of Jerusalem, and his grandson, the eminent Jerusalem physician R. Refael Mordekhai Malki. R. David de Silva was trained as a physician and received his professional diploma in Europe. He served as a physician in Jerusalem, and treated members of all religious faiths using the techniques of the Galenic school of medicine. At the same time, one may find in his writings echoes of the medical theories that were developing in Europe as well as a consideration of medicinal drugs from the New World.

The second type of physicians are the “healers,” who had never received any institutionalized medical training and who fulfilled a popular need, providing medical care to a population that preferred informal medical treatment. An example of such a healer is R. Hayyim Vital (1543-1620), who was born in Safad and who apparently acquired his medical training through his contacts with physicians and pharmacists, and by his personal studies. As a community leader he was called upon to solve problems that were not necessarily related to Jewish law, and, as he testified of himself in his essay, he occasionally administered practical medical treatment. R. Vital was an expert in the traditional Galenic theory of medicine

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prevalent at the time and, in his practice, he also used folk medicine, making use of charms and amulets as a supplement to scientific medicine.

The two physicians we have chosen to portray were native to the Land of Israel – members of families that had been expelled from Spain and had emigrated to Italy, and from there to the Land of Israel. Both were key Torah scholars in the Jewish community, whose social and cultural milieu was connected closely with the scholars of Europe.

### THE CASE OF AN 'AGUNA MONASTIR (MANASTIR; BITOLA; BITOLJ), A. 1643

Alisa Meyuhas Ginio

The case of an *'aguna* from the Macedonian town of Monastir, in the year 1643, is discussed in a responsum written by Rabbi Haim Shabetay (Salonika, c. 1555-1647). This case is a true reflection of Jewish life in the 17th-century Balkan Peninsula. Ever since the Ottoman onslaught on the Balkans in the 14th century, there had been a slow, yet continuous Jewish immigration from the coastal areas of the Balkans into the hinterland. The Jews expelled from the Spanish Kingdoms in 1492 first settled in the coastal areas, especially in Salonika. Later on, their descendants moved into mainland Macedonia.

The story of the Meyuhas family illustrates this historical process of immigration. During the 16th century, members of the Meyuhas family were living in Salonika, Arta and Ioanina. By the 17th century, Rabbi Ya'acov Meyuhas was living in Monastir. In the year 1643, he presided over the rabbinical tribunal – *Beit Din* – engaged in the case of Esperansa Yoishi, who had become an *'aguna* due to the disappearance of her husband Moshe Yoishi. The rabbinical tribunal of Monastir decided to suspend its ruling on the case, and appealed to Rabbi Haim Shabetay of Salonika, a well-known expert on problems of *'igun*, for counsel and guidance. Salonika had become known as the Jerusalem of the Balkans, and turning to the Salonikan rabbis for guidance was common among the Sephardic congregations of the Mediterranean basin.

Monastir was a center of the hide trade in the 17th century. Jews were engaged in this trade alongside Gentiles. Both Esperansa's missing husband and the Gentile witness, whose testimony regarding the case

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was brought before the rabbinical tribunal, were engaged in the trading of hides.

The proceedings of the rabbinical tribunal of Monastir, as quoted in the above-mentioned responsum, bear witness to the fact that the everyday spoken language of the Jews there was *Judezmo* or *Judeo espaniol*. This language had become the lingua franca of Balkan Jewry throughout the ages.

## A SCANDAL IN ISTANBUL

Yaron Ben-Naeh

In the year 1625 the Commissioners of Transgressions (*memuney averot*) of the Jewish community in Istanbul led a scrupulous investigation into an adultery scandal that had taken place in one of the city's neighborhoods. The appalled investigators found out that the deeds had been going on for a long time, and were known to many people. The transcriptions of the testimonies and the progression of this affair were preserved in two printed responsa.

This fascinating source contains important information regarding the character of urban Jewish society in the Ottoman Empire, and enriches our understanding of it. It is used here as a starting point for a discussion about everyday life, intra-familial relations, women's status, social regulation, social values, the consistent gap between the religious and moral ideal, and the dynamics of everyday life in a supposedly traditional and pious society.

## R. TZEDAKA HUZIN'S LEADERSHIP CRISIS IN BAGHDAD

Shaul Regev

The arrival of R. Tzedaka Huzin (1699-1773) in Baghdad was initiated by the president of the Jewish community, Moshe ben R. Mordechai Shenduch, after a terrible plague of locusts in Baghdad in 1742 that reaped many casualties, among them most of the city's Jewish scholars.

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Those who remained were yeshiva students, not accredited rabbis. Only two young men survived from the rabbinical dynasty of the Mizrahi (Adoni) family. R. Tzedaka Huzin, until then a member of the Rabbinical Council, was therefore sent from Aleppo to Baghdad. In a short time, he succeeded in revolutionizing the study of Torah, and wrote several religious edicts that are still in use today. The shift in R. Huzin's status was the outcome, first and foremost, of the change of president. The new president, R. Yitzhak ben David ben Yeshu'a Gabbai, was appointed to the presidency in 1745, and served in this capacity until 1773. He disagreed with one of R. Huzin's rulings that was not to his liking and may have personally offended him. The young students tried to take advantage of and exploit this situation. They were still angry that they hadn't been advanced in the rabbinical hierarchy when their rabbi died, and that a stranger had been summoned from Aleppo instead. They attempted to bring about R. Huzin's dismissal, or, at the very least, to have his status and powers limited.

In fact, the entire tale of R. Huzin's leadership crisis is neither clear nor unequivocal. The only source of information is R. Huzin himself, in one of his responsa, in which he hints at the situation. We do not know the cause of the rift between R. Huzin and the president, nor whether there was any actual disagreement. We do not have a copy of R. Huzin's accreditation, with details of his position, conditions, rights and obligations. The undermining of his leadership was an important turning point in his rabbinical career in Baghdad. It may have been an attempt to restore the rabbinical dynasty of the Mizrahi (Adoni) family by one, or both, of the sons when they reached adulthood and began teaching. Or perhaps it was an unavoidable clash between the rabbi and a stubborn president who was determined to bend the rabbi to his authority.

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### DOCUMENTS DEALING WITH A REQUEST TO MOSES MONTEFIORE, FOR INTERVENTION ON THE BEHALF OF THE WIDOW OF VICTOR DARMON, BEHEADED BY THE SULTAN IN 1844

Eliezer Bashan

Victor Darmon represented Great Britain as consular agent in Casablanca in 1843, and also acted for the commercial interests of Spain, The Netherlands and Sardinia. In addition, he represented Spanish interests in Mazagan, where he was also vice consul of France.

Darmon accidentally shot a Muslim, who later died, for which offense Sultan Abd Erahman II (1822-59) decided to behead him. The consuls in Morocco protested, but the vizier rejected their protest, and explained that Jews had the right to be defended only if they kept to the regular restrictions. Using weapons and killing a Muslim was against the law. He had committed a crime against the Muslim religion, and his fate was justified.

Victor's mother and her brother tried to get compensation in the form of financial assistance from the British authorities. Six letters dealing with this subject can be found in the archives of the British Foreign Office. They asked Moses Montefiore, in a letter dated 26 May 1845, to use his personal contacts and intervene with a view to achieving their goal. He requested the British authorities' assistance, but in vain. According to a letter sent to Montefiore by the British Foreign Office, dated 3 July 1845, the response was negative. Montefiore's involvement in this event is published here for the first time.

### ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR OF MINORITIES; THE CASE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF SALONIKA (1881-1912)

Orly C. Meron

The economic structure of the Jewish minority in Salonika – the critical Jewish population mass of “Greek Macedonia” – during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire developed in a different manner from that

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described in Kuznets' model for migration-generated minorities in general, and Jewish minorities in particular.

This paper is predicated on a comparative inter-ethnic empirical study based on an official Austrian Report (1915), and is supported by contemporary testimonies. It reconstructs the socioeconomic behavior patterns both of Jewish entrepreneurs and their coreligionist workers in the business sector of the Macedonian metropolis. Empirical research shows that during the semi-colonial era in Macedonia (1881-1912), the Jewish minority became a surrogate for the lack of an Ottoman bourgeoisie. Having a dominant demographic role and performing necessary skills, and also being a politically loyal minority, the Jews were able to fulfill those functions which the Ottoman ruling class (demographically or politically) had been unable or unwilling to perform.

The following patterns emerge: Jewish entrepreneurs exercised great influence over the business sector. The dispersion of Jewish businesses among the various branches of the economy, in contrast to the relative concentration of the Turkish businesses (identified with the ruling class) in specific economic areas, shows that the behavioral patterns of the Jewish minority were similar to those of an urban majority in a modern state.

These entrepreneurs are characterized by their tendency to risk dislike whilst maximizing profit by utilizing their advantageous international connections. Serving as middlemen, Jewish merchants made good use of their favorable relations with their coreligionists in the European states in order to facilitate export to the open world market and the import of luxury goods to the city and its clients in the Macedonian hinterland. Jewish traders also formed a bridge between the Macedonian manufacturers in the hinterland and the European producers. Educated Jewish elites tended to practice lucrative professions linked to the business sector (e.g. lawyers). The Jewish labor force preferred the profitable sectors of the tobacco industry, and marine and transportation services.

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### *IRUSIN* (ENGAGEMENT) AND *SHIDUCHIN* (INTRODUCTION) IN THE REGULATIONS AND RULINGS OF THE SAGES OF MOROCCO FROM THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY ON

Moshe Amar

This article describes, according to halakhic (Jewish law) literature and regulations, the forms of *irusin* (engagement) and *shiduchin* (introduction) as were common in Morocco in the 16th century, at the time of the arrival of the Jews expelled from Spain, until the mid-20th century, when the Jewish communities dwindled, due to the emigration to Israel.

The introduction reviews the developments in the process of *irusin*, its establishment and transition into *shiduchin*. The legal validity of *shiduchin* in halakhic literature is examined, and the enforcement of *shiduchin* in the Jewish communities in the East and West, by mutual agreement, obligating the one who cancels the *shiduchin* to pay compensation. The difference between the Sephardic (Eastern) and Ashkenazic (Diaspora) approach to *shiduchin* is described and explained.

The article deals with the regulations of the expelled Jews in Morocco as regards *kidushin* (matrimony) and *shiduchin*, the age of marriage for men and women, *irusin* through *kidushin* in various communities in Morocco, and regulations regarding marriage due to coercion or malevolence; the *shiduchin* in Morocco and the customs that were common in the communities of Fez, Machnes, Marakesh, Tafilalt and Mazagan, which made it hard to cancel the *shiduchin*, enforcing compensation for shame and emotional damage; the reasons when it was permitted to cancel the *shiduchin*; and, finally, the changes made to the *shiduchin* process in the 20th century as a result of the influence of Western culture, the veering away from tradition, the misuse of the new way of life by unlawful men, and the regulations made by the Rabbinical Council in Morocco to strengthen *shiduchin* and protect the Jewish girls.

The article shows the sensitivity of the Moroccan Sages to the changes in culture and society throughout the generations, the problems these changes caused, and the customs and regulations that were created in order to deal with them.

The article mentions some of the old traditions that were kept in Tafilalt; some are opposed to the Halakhah (Jewish law) as set out by the *Shulchan Aruch*.

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BETWEEN KHARTOUM, CAIRO, ALEXANDRIA  
AND JERUSALEM: THE BORDERS OF AUTONOMY  
OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN SUDAN

Naḥem Ilan

During a time period of eighty-five years, from the 1880s until the late 1960s, there was a Jewish community in Sudan. At its peak, the community comprised one thousand people. The members of this small community considered themselves to be strongly connected to Egypt's main communities – in Cairo and Alexandria. The leaders of these communities also considered Khartoum as a “sister community.” The Khartoum community was also in contact with the communities in Eretz Israel.

This article's objectives are: to describe and analyze the interaction between the Jewish community in Sudan and the ones in Cairo and Alexandria; to examine the twofold connection between these two communities; to comment on the link with the spiritual leadership in Eretz Israel; and to point out the special status of the first chief rabbi of Sudan, Rabbi Shlomo (Salomon) Malka, as reflected in a halakhic response of his, which survived as a manuscript and is published here for the first time.

Rabbi Malka was a significant spiritual leader of the community, serving as the chief rabbi of Sudan from his arrival in 1906 until his sudden death in 1949. The Jewish community's leaders – and especially Rabbi Malka – publicly supported Zionism. The Jewish community in Sudan had enjoyed a successful spiritual leadership thanks to the activity of the chief rabbi of Alexandria, Rabbi Eliyahu Ḥazzan, who had nominated Rabbi Malka, and who was also present at the first elections to the community institutions in January 1908. The connection with Egypt can also be demonstrated in other ways, such as the fact that most of the community's youngsters chose to receive their academic education in Egyptian universities.

The importance of the question posed to Rabbi Malka can be seen on four levels: first of all, up until now there has been no evidence of Rabbi Malka's proficiency in Halakhah, nor any knowledge of other responsa written by him. We therefore now have evidence of his being renowned as

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far as Alexandria. Secondly, the contents of the response indicate Rabbi Malka's opinion on the two main issues concerning the Jewish community at that time – the attitude toward Zionism as an active settlement movement and the status of the Hebrew defensive force. Thirdly, the question itself indicates the high esteem in which the person who asked it regarded Rabbi Malka. Even if it was only a request for a second opinion, it still sheds light on Rabbi Malka's status and image. Fourthly, Rabbi Malka's willingness to reply on that question indicates his conscientiousness and responsibility as an educational and halakhic authority, as well as his self-esteem.

### THE JEWISH ECONOMIC ELITE IN ALEPPO DURING THE OTTOMAN PERIOD (16th-18th CENTURIES)

Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky

The Jews of Aleppo were generally renowned as diligent merchants and agents during the Ottoman period. The local government, the European consuls who lived in the city, and the European agents of the trading companies recognized this economic power of Aleppo's Jews. A small number of Jews also had roles in the administration of the *Vilayet* of Aleppo, mainly as tax collectors, customs officers and *sarrafs* (money-changers, bankers), some earning vast amounts from these positions in addition to their mercantile businesses. For the most part, these Jews were Ottoman citizens while a minority was of European citizenship (known as "Francos," "Le Italiens," and "Espagnols"), and they formed the elite of the Jewish community within the city. We will analyze the nature of this elite and the contribution of its various components to the city of Aleppo as well as to the Jewish community within the city. This will be accomplished using a variety of sources, including Jewish resources, British and French archives, diaries and travelogues written by European personalities who lived within the city for a limited period, as well as modern scholarly research.

We can suppose that approximately ten percent of the city's Jewish households belonged to the elite in the Jewish community. These families married among themselves and consequently intensified their economic

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ties. Their essential contribution was the strengthening of the local Jewish community by means of the large amounts of community taxes they paid, as well as by the fact that many of them had invested their money in administrative positions within the *Vilayet*, thereby making connections with Ottoman bureaucrats. Thanks to initiatives and diligence, as well as their family connections in many instances, the Jewish elite made great economic achievements and exerted political influence within the local government. Various sources inform us of the tense situations in which the elite operated, especially after rivals of other faiths, as well as Jews, attempted to limit their influence, and in some cases to depose them from their high offices. However, it appears that as a result of their links to the Pasha and members of the Muslim elite and the European consuls, a large number of this Jewish elite secured their positions for many years, some even bequeathing their offices to relatives. One should note especially the high percentage of Jews in the city who earned their livelihoods from trade, and, hence, the numerous local merchants who could be aided by their coreligionists in the customs house and by the Francos, who also employed Jews in their mercantile houses.

Throughout the entire duration of the Ottoman Empire, members of the Jewish elite acted on behalf of the Jewish community's interests, and not just for their own personal gains. One of the reasons behind the success of the Jewish elite was the Jewish community's solidarity, which generally withstood changing circumstances. An additional cause was the fact that the majority of Jewish merchants, customs officers and *sarrafs* adjudicated their disputes before a rabbinic court, and complied with the court's decisions. The stability of this elite enabled the Jews of Aleppo to continue trading on a large scale even during periods when the local Ottoman authorities preferred to give the major offices to Muslims or Christians. The involvement of Aleppo's elite in all the economic endeavors of the city, and the relatively large number of its members, facilitated its achieving greater political significance than the majority of other Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, there is much common ground between the Jewish elite of Aleppo and those of Istanbul, Salonika and Izmir.

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CENTER AND PERIPHERY: THE GHEIL COMMUNITY  
AND ITS TIES WITH SAN'A

Aharon Gaimani

The Gheil community is located at a distance of three days on foot northeast from the capital San'a. I have already briefly reviewed the visit to the Gheil community by Hayyim Hibshush, who set out in 1870 to travel around Yemen with the French orientalist Yosef Halevi in search of Sabaeen inscriptions, and I have presented the community life in the first half of the 20th century. New documents are revealed in this present article, some of which are very important from historical and halakhic points of view, insofar as they relate to the problems of the Gheil community, which prompted them to turn to the eminent sages of Yemenite Jewry who presided in the capital of San'a, and who were venerated by all the Yemenite Jewish communities.

The documents published herein shed light on the relations between the peripheral community and the Jewish center in San'a. The subjects of the questions posed by the Gheil community to the center in San'a include, among others, the status of idols found in ruins, emigration to Eretz Yisrael, blessings, family law, ritual slaughter and *trefot*. These questions date from the first half of the 19th century to the mid-20th century, when the community emigrated to Eretz Yisrael in the "On Eagles' Wings" operation.

The main personality emerging from the documents is Rabbi David ben Zacharia Basel. He was engaged as a blacksmith and in the repair of weapons. He also used to go up to San'a from time to time, and maintained close friendly relations with Chief Rabbi Yihye Yishaq Halewi. From the details listed in his will, which was written down by the chief rabbi in San'a, it can be understood that he was well-to-do. From the books listed in his will, we can also learn about the library that was available to a Yemenite scholar living on the periphery.

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*TENU'AT HANO'AR* AND THE “URBAN TRAINING GROUP”  
IN TRIPOLI — PRESERVING TRADITION VERSUS  
SECULARIZATION UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE  
SETTLEMENT STREAMS IN PALESTINE, 1943-48

Yishai Arnon

The article deals with *Tenu'at Hano'ar* and the “Urban Training Group,” which operated in Tripoli between 1943 and 1948, in light of the pioneering settlement trends in Palestine and the conflicts that resulted from them. The initiative for a “Youth Movement,” which developed in a traditional Jewish society, came from emissaries and soldiers from Palestine, all products of secular pioneering settlements with the exception of one Orthodox Jewish emissary from the Religious Kibbutz Movement. Against the background of the traditional Zionist ambience in the Jewish community of Tripoli, this emissary succeeded in establishing a religious Zionist pioneering trend within *Tenu'at Hano'ar*, and the pioneers from Tripoli immigrated to Palestine in the late 1940s and were absorbed by the Religious Kibbutz Movement.

The other emissaries and the soldiers educated the members of *Tenu'at Hano'ar* in the spirit of secular pioneering Zionism. Under their influence, some of the leaders of *Tenu'at Hano'ar* drifted away from religion and sought to realize the Zionist ideal in secular kibbutzim in Palestine. These leaders sought to steer *Tenu'at Hano'ar* according to their own beliefs, but conflicts developed between them and the supporters of religious pioneering Zionism. As a result of these conflicts, the leaders who had abandoned a religious lifestyle were forced to resign from *Tenu'at Hano'ar*.

The leaders who were forced to resign founded the “Urban Training Group,” which trained its members for immigration to Palestine in a secular Socialist cooperative pioneering framework. The members of the Training Farm also took part in organizing the Haganah in Tripoli, and setting up illegal immigration under its auspices. The Training Farm quickly became a focal point for the revolt of Jewish youth against tradition and the general patterns of Jewish existence in Tripoli. Religious Jewish circles opposed the Training Farm and hindered its development. The riots of 1948 in Tripoli put an end to the Training Farm, and most of

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its members immigrated to Israel in the framework of secular settlement. The Training Farm was the first and last organization in Tripoli to focus on secular Zionist values. The idea of a Zionist youth movement, with its secular and religious trends, caught on among traditional Jewish youth in Tripoli and even bore fruit. Nonetheless, the conditions in the traditional Jewish community of Tripoli at the time could not ensure the solid existence of a secular Zionist trend.

