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NAKOSHIA
ܢܟܘܫܝܐ
Published by the Assyrian Youth Group of Victoria, Australia Inc.



www.atour.com/aygv

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ASSYRIAN
YOUTH GROUP
OF VICTORIA
A Generation Ahead

Language Setup
Activities
Assyria's Letters
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Guest-Book
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Nineveh Gallery
Youth Literature
WHAT'S NEW

The monthly magazine published by:
Assyrian Youth Group of Victoria (Assyria's Youth Group of Victoria)
ܢܟܘܫܝܐ
Free Subscription to Nakosha Magazine

Latest Issue

You will need to install Adobe Reader to view Nakosha Magazine. You can download a free copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader at www.adobe.com.

LANGUAGE SETUP

The site will provide you with the complete set of instructions required to change the fonts that are required for the magazine. You will also find the correct version of the language in Assyria, using the Assyrian Phonetic System (APS), the Assyrian Phonetic System (APS) and the Assyrian Phonetic System (APS).

It has made a number of comebacks, but this one is grander than Arnold Schwarzenegger's comeback in *Terminator 2*. The Assyrian Youth Group of Victoria has launched its new and updated website. The new sleek look fits well with its host, *atour.com*. You can find the site at www.atour.com/aygv. The most notable update is the inclusion of Nakosha in a PDF format. This allows readers anywhere in the world to view, and print the publication in the intended layout, which includes photographs, and illustrations. Three Assyrian fonts are available to download, and simple instructions will help you in setting your PC to view the site in the Assyrian language. The literature link is updated, and you are invited to submit any work you may have done. The site is growing, and it holds many links to other Assyrian sites. A book can be written about it, but it won't be. So visit the site, and see it for yourself.

ASSYRIANS AFTER ASSYRIA

Persecutions & Massacres of
the Syriac Speaking Christians

When:
Sunday 2nd July; starting at 10:30am

Venue:
Merewether Building, City Road,
University of Sydney

Registration:
Closing 7th June

Speakers:
Dr Gabriele Yonan - Germany
Dr Fuat Deniz - Sweden
Professor Abdul Massih-Saadi - USA
Dr Racho Donef - Australia
Panayiotis Diamadis - Australia
"The Assyrians: A Case of Genocide?"
Nicholas Al-Jeloo - Australia

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+61 2 9822 1778; +61 2 0413 854 936

Majidi Ann Warda -
+61 2 0404 124 930

www.atour.com/aygv

Say

...join the discussions, and...

▶▶ Have your say ▶▶

- ▶ Have you, or anyone else you know, ever contemplated suicide?
- ▶ Have you ever experienced depression? If so, why?
- ▶ Do Assyrian cultural values restrict you from exercising your freedom in relationships?

Forward all responses to: nakosha@hotmail.com - Nakosha, P.O.Box 948 Merlynston, Victoria, 3058. Australia

IRAQ MUSEUM RE-OPENS

Courtesy of Associated Press; article written by Leon Barkho. All Rights Reserved.

(ZNP: Baghdad) After 10 years, the Iraq Museum reopened its doors with a display of 10,000 artifacts from ancient Bet-Nahrain dating back to 6000 B.C. The displays included the colossal Assyrian winged-bull



statues. Some 200,000 other pieces remain tucked away in Baghdad warehouses, according to Muayad Saaed, an Iraqi archaeologist. In the next few months, 10,000 more objects are to be added to the display, said Rabie al-Qaysi of the Antiquities Department. At the reopening ceremony, the museum's 21 halls were clean, well lit and air conditioned, as visitors and tourists streamed through.

ASSYRIAN WOMAN INJURED AT DUTCH FACTORY EXPLOSION

(ZND: Holland) On Saturday, a massive explosion in a firework factory brought death and destruction to the Dutch town of Enschede where nearly 8,000 Assyrian-Suryoyo live. According to Zinda's reliable sources, at press time an Assyrian woman was reported to have been slightly injured and minor structural damage to one of the two Assyrian churches, the Syrian-Orthodox Church of Mor Yaqoub d'Srug, was also reported. According to Dutch officials, at least 20 people were killed and about 500 injured.



ASHUR BET-SARGIS CONCERTS IN GERMANY

(ZND: Berlin) The legendary Assyrian singer, Ashur Bet-Sargis, concluded his successful concert tour in Germany where he performed for crowds of enthusiasts in Essen and Berlin. Bet-Sargis' concert in Berlin was organized by the Assyrian Aid Society in Germany and well-attended by the different religious and political factions within the Assyrian community of Berlin. Mor Khuri

Hanna Teber and Qasha Ilas Tozman of the Syrian Orthodox Church were instrumental in publicizing the tour and its objective in raising awareness about the Assyrians in northern Iraq.

The Assyrische Union Berlin, represented by Mr. Jonie Eilo and other members also offered their support. Malfono Murat spoke at the concerts about the

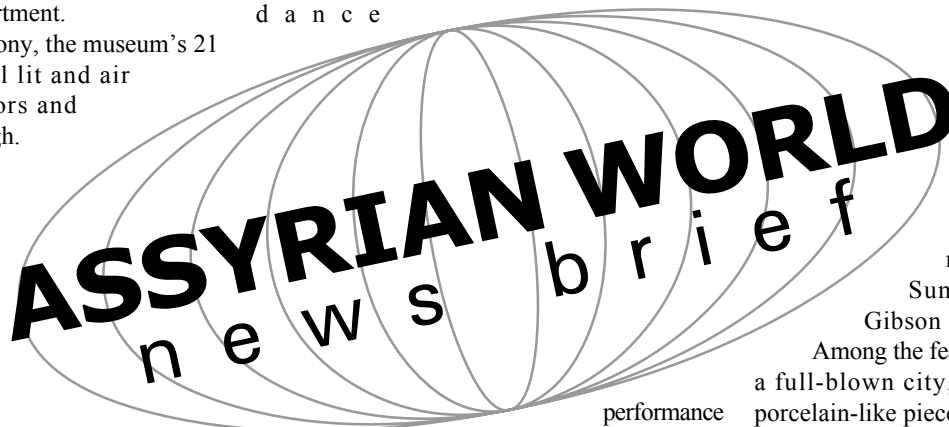
projects underway in northern Iraq. Ms. Adrin Takhsh talked specifically about the AAS projects in Northern Iraq. Many German friends of the Assyrian communities attended these concerts. A special dance

not escaped the Palestinian leadership. On February 24, 2000 Mr. Hassan Abdel Rahman of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in Washington declared the PNA's opposition to the plan. Clearly concerned about the prospects of wedging his refugee civilian population between the Arabizing policies of the central government and the ethnocidal policies of Sorani-Behdanani-Kurmanji tribesmen, Mr. Rahman stated that the "Palestinian Authority was opposed to any form of ethnic cleansing as a basis for the settlement of refugees."

"MOVE OVER SUMER!"; 6000-YEAR-OLD CITY FOUND IN SYRIA

(ZNP: Chicago) Archaeologists from the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute have uncovered the protective wall under a huge mound in Syria's Tell Hamoukar. This wall of a 6,000-year-old city suggests that urban civilization and complex government structure rose earlier than previously believed. The discovery at Hamoukar suggests that ideas behind cities may have predated the Sumerians, said McGuire Gibson of the Oriental Institute.

Among the features indicating the site was a full-blown city, not just a town: thin, porcelain-like pieces of pottery, indicating a sophisticated manufacturing technique, and huge cooking ovens, big enough to feed large numbers of people. There also were stamps to make impressions in wet clay - like primitive hieroglyphics - used to make tokens that served as records for trade transactions. The stamps were in the shapes of animals, including bears, dogs, rabbits, fish and birds. If Hamoukar was developing into a city at the same time as the Sumerians were building cities, it's possible that ideas for urban development came from an even earlier culture, he said. "We need to reconsider our ideas about the beginnings of civilization, pushing the time further back," said Gibson, who plans to present the findings this week in Denmark at the International Conference on the Archaeology of the Ancient Middle East. Gil Stein, a Northwestern University archaeologist who specializes in the same region and time period, said he thinks the find is significant. "Traditionally, scholars had viewed southern Mesopotamia as the area where urbanized states first developed, before spreading to less advanced areas," he said. This summer, the archaeologists will continue to dig in the hopes of finding portions of royal palaces and temples - structures that would confirm that the site is that of a previously unknown early civilization.



performance by an Assyrian-Suyoyo troupe was among the highlights of these concerts. The proceeds from these concerts will be used for the educational needs of the Assyrian students in northern Iraq.

THE FATE OF KARKUK

Recent reports have uncovered a proposal by the Iraqi government to resettle up to a half-million Palestinian refugees from various Middle Eastern countries into the Karkuk area of northern Iraq (AINA 04-01-2000). The probability of placing an already destitute, persecuted and disenfranchised refugee population in the midst of the smoldering cauldron of ethnic strife in northern Iraq has

Profile

Wilson

Younan



Wilson Younan is renown in Australia's Assyrian community, as the head of Sydney's SBS Assyrian radio program. He's in charge of a federal government funded ethnic radio program that hits Sydney's airwaves every Friday night at 8:00pm, to an estimated 15,000 strong Assyrian audience. His one-hour Assyrian radio program provides the latest local and international news and current affairs, which updates the Assyrian community.

After a recent visit to Sydney, Nakosha had the chance to meet with Mr. Younan. We asked him about his background prior to joining SBS radio.

Mr. Younan graduated from the academy of fine arts in Baghdad, after he had spent 3 years in theatre, as well as 2 years in cinematic studies. He then went on to complete a post-graduate journalism course. He gained further experience, which would prove invaluable for his future career in radio, while working for T.V. Baghdad.

Mr. Younan is also an accomplished musician, and many will recall his early days as the head of the 'Wilson band', one of the first Assyrian bands to be formed in Melbourne. The 'Wilson Band' helped revive Assyrian music and dance in Melbourne's newly established Assyrian community.

Not a stranger to Melbourne's Assyrian community, Mr. Younan's Sydney program also broadcasts on Melbourne's airwaves, when called upon to fill in on certain occasions.

Melbourne's Assyrian community will also remember him as the former head of 3ZZZ Assyrian radio.

After his move to Sydney he began to talk once a week on Nineveh radio. A year after arriving in Sydney he applied for the head of SBS Assyrian Radio. He was required to undertake a professional test in which he competed against many other applicants. He was successful in his application and upon initially beginning with SBS, he admitted that he had no set program or song requests.

He spent many months gaining valuable experience and clearly defining his program's aims. He eventually realised the direction in which he wished to take the program. According to Mr. Younan, his program's aim is "To provide a professional news and current affairs program informing the listeners of local, as well as international news, and events that concern the Assyrian community".

When asked about the importance of media, Mr. Younan had the following to share with us, "Media is the most powerful tool in our hands today. We can deliver education, language and civility to the Assyrian community". His love for the Assyrian language was also apparent, "I attempt to filter out all non-Assyrian words and attempt to simplify, and deliver a purely Assyrian program".

As the interview concluded we asked Mr. Younan to sum up his thoughts and feelings for the Assyrian community. He replied with, "I believe that the good should be promoted always, whereas the bad should be avoided". ■

David Chibo

In the past two issues, the subject of homosexuality was mentioned. This seemed to touch a few raw nerves.

The issue is highly neglected in our community. Most of us are surprised when we find out that there are gay Assyrians. Many others try their hardest to avoid discussing the subject. Why are we so homophobic?

There are a number of factors, and beliefs at play. Firstly we see the physical side of a homosexual relationship as unnatural. Also, we can not deny the fact that only fifty years ago, a large percentage of us were still farmers, and had an upbringing in a mostly Macho-Social setting. So our background is that of hardship, and toiling. In such a culture you have to be a "Man/Orza". The female also has her place, and anything outside of her social-role is unacceptable.

We can see a reflection of our current standing on the issue of homosexuality in a novel by Jeanette Winterson; titled *Oranges are not the only fruit*. I will not go into the details of the novel, but it basically deals with the issue of the 'Norm', and the consequences of being outside it. The main character is a female who discovers her homosexuality, but is faced with many problems. I hope you will take the time to read it.

Also in the last issue, we brought up the subject of suicide. We had many responses to the question, and sadly many answered with a 'Yes'. Many Assyrian youth have contemplated suicide, and we could see their reasons clearly spelled out in their responses.

The one that touched our readers most, was the response from a sixteen-year-old male from Sydney. Some expressed their concern for his well being, while others showed their disappointment at the fact that there are young Assyrians experiencing such abuse.

I am closely acquainted with the young gentleman, but unfortunately my hands are tied, and I can not do anything to better his situation. Even as a community are we able to assist this young man?

His situation touches our very core. We hate what he is experiencing, because we don't want to believe that we are like this. It is truly a demoralising story.

Being a fairly slow month for news, we took the chance to bring you a few stories about a number of individuals in our community. Nisha Kavakcioglu, and Wilson Younan are two Assyrians who have devoted a part of their time to community work. While Jani Sliwo, is a young Assyrian female who has discovered a flair for psychology, which we found to be interesting.

A new section, titled *Girl Friend*, has been introduced to Nakosha. Thanks to the help of Samiramis Ziyeh, we'll finally be able to bring discussions on women's issues through a woman's point of view.

I hope you enjoy our twenty-ninth issue. ■

Sennacherib Warda

ARF

you can assist Assyrians in Iraq via the

Assyrian Relief Fund

Send donations to

PO Box 1032 Valley Plaza, Green Valley, Sydney, NSW 2168, Australia.

Fax:..... 61 2 9755 7571 - E-mail: arfaus@hotmail.com

editor's note

AYFS

The Assyrian Youth Federation of Sweden

....it soon became the institution where I, a 15-year-old Assyrian girl, placed my primary interests. It was where I had my all - my friends, my interests, my people and my life. It always got priority, even before schoolwork, but that was something I, or all the others with me, would never admit to ourselves... or our parents.

Here we were, a group of young people, burning for our nation, burning for our organisation and its activities. No matter what we were up to, if it was a course, a tournament or a seminar. Every weekend was filled with fun, experience and joy.

The big boost, was when we got others interested with us, and that didn't come until the summer of 1996. The AYFS had organised a camp to the homeland, with 20 youth, either born or raised in Sweden, attending. And of course, I was amongst them. The trip was partly funded by the Foundation of Olof Palme, and the main purpose was to give Assyrian boys and girls, who had never been "back home", a feeling, an experience and knowledge of their homeland. The purpose was fulfilled with interest. The trip gave us inspiration and enthusiasm that's hard to put down on paper. Suddenly the AYFS was the center of the events; it was where everyone wanted to be, where everyone desired to work. The activities we already had were too few or too small, so we expanded.

By the time I was 18, I worked with the documentation, with two other girls.

We traveled, interviewed, wrote articles, took pictures and filed. On a few occasions we actually managed to interview famous people, such as the wife of the assassinated Swedish Prime Minister, Lisbeth Palme, and the president of Interpol, Bjorn Eriksson. The main question was always: "What do you know about the Assyrians?"

Later on, after finishing high school and coming home from my first visit to Australia, I started working at AYFS's office as the Federal Secretary. Here I, of course with the help of the board, made important and useful



contacts with authorities and other organisations. I helped to coordinate the activities of the four committees and took care of the administration. I gained a lot from those six months and I am grateful for the opportunity I was given. I left it though, because in the end I found that I did nothing else. My life, professional and social, my time, work or spare-time, was all devoted to the AYFS. It had been better before, when I had the limited spare-time and made the best of it.

That's why I took a "year off" from the responsibilities. But I never stopped attending the activities and recruiting new people for the organisation. I wanted them to get the experience I got, have as much fun as I had, and feel what I felt for my people.

My time with, and in, the AYFS is full of memories and unforgettable moments.

I hope that all Assyrian youth one day in their own lives get the inspiration to start working in an organisation. The time you give and effort you make gives you a thousand-fold back.

My current position, before I left for Melbourne, at the age of 21, was as the Secretary of the federal board. I do not know what the future will bring, whether I will remain in the organisation or not. But the choice will always be mine. ■

Nisha Kavakcioglu

The Assyrian Youth Federation of Sweden was established in the mid 1980's as a youth committee of The Assyrian Federation. The organisation assumed its current name in 1991, where it became a youth organisation in its own right.

The objectives of the AYFS are, to aid Assyrian youth in preserving their culture, heritage, identity and language and to deliver help to Assyrian Youth in any manner necessary, where means permit.

To fulfill its objectives the AYFS hosts various activities in any given year, and they are:

Youth Camps - youth camps are held once or twice a year. These may be for the purpose of history lectures, film screenings, or simply lectures on any given subject e.g.: identity.

Courses - courses are held 4 times a year, and these are usually conducted on a weekend, with a particular theme. Courses conducted may have themes, such as drugs or simply youth between the ages of 13-16.

Courses conducted with an outlook to older youth may include Shawaa b'tabakh or Kha B'neesan. The manner in which these weekend courses would be conducted is that people may be asked to express themselves in any way they wish. This may include people getting together in small groups and organising small theatre productions, singing, poetry writing, or any which way they wish to express themselves to a given theme.

Sports - sports events are held 4 times a year, and these will usually include outings for soccer, volleyball, basketball and various ice sports.

When asked about the youth's response to the various activities hosted by the AYFS, Nisha answered saying that the response is widely varying between each individual and the next, and each individual benefits differently from each activity hosted. She stated that some may come into a camp or course vaguely aware of their identity, for example, and will come out with a strong sense of pride at the end of it. While others will virtually come out none the wiser, and will require more effort to reach out to them.

Others she said come into a camp, or course, meet more Assyrian children of their age and make new friendships.

In addition, she said that many come out of the camps with a great love and pride for their Assyrian heritage and culture, and are spurred on by the activities to work for the advancement and betterment of their community.

The AYFS also hosts a wide variety of other activities; in the past it has hosted, homeland trips, trips to the British Museum, and help organise activities with other European Assyrian organisations.

The AYFS does not exclusively host activities with Assyrians. On many occasions it has hosted activities with Swedish organisations, such as anti-violence lobbies. These activities, Nisha stated, help promote the Assyrian name and culture among non-Assyrians.

The AYFS also has close ties with Swedish government agencies and departments, for example, the Department of Youth Affairs. On many an occasion, I am told, government ministers have attended and given lectures about education and the like. ■

تعلیم و سجاوہ ...



ایس پی سیہ ٹیگور، جو پندرہ سال کی ہیں، نے پندرہ سال کی عمر میں ہی تعلیم کے شعبے میں دلچسپی کا اظہار کیا ہے۔

تعلیم اور سجاوہ کے موضوع پر لکھی جانے والی کتابیں اور مضمونیں ہمیں تعلیم کے حقیقی مفاد اور اس کے ذریعے ہونے والی تبدیلیوں کے بارے میں آگاہ کرتی ہیں۔ تعلیم کے ذریعے ہی ہم اپنے آپ کو بہتر بناسکتے ہیں اور اپنے ماحول کو بہتر بنا سکتے ہیں۔ تعلیم ہمیں زندگی بھر کے لیے سیکھنے کی عادت دیتی ہے اور ہمیں اپنی زندگی میں بہتر فیصلے کرنے کی صلاحیت دیتی ہے۔ تعلیم ہمیں اپنے آپ کو سمجھنے اور دوسروں کو سمجھنے کی صلاحیت دیتی ہے۔ تعلیم ہمیں اپنے آپ کو بہتر بنانے اور دوسروں کو بہتر بنانے کی صلاحیت دیتی ہے۔

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Jani Sliwo, 16, year 11 (VCE)
I chose to do Psych as a VCE subject because my cousin is a Psychology teacher at a High School and I've been reading his books and thought that the information and the studies were very interesting, so I chose it. Even now, half way through the year, I am enjoying it. Having just completed my end of semester exam for Psychology and receiving a mark that pleases me, I think that it is a worthwhile subject to do in VCE and since it's interesting, I'm having fun.
Karolin Issavi, 22, Graduate Diploma in Psychology (USyd)
I studied Psych in first year uni, fell in love with it and carried it through my senior years of study in my undergraduate degree. I enjoy learning about the

different ways the mind works and the different approaches to its study.
Apart from my interest in the theory, i also enjoy the practical side of psychology. I enjoy working with people and have picked up counseling as one of my electives.
My research project for the year is neuroscience. I'm looking at the skin conductance response of males and females with hi/low arousal thresholds in association with their orienting response (eg turning of the head and pupil dilation when one detects a novel stimulus).
Majidi Ann Warda, 20, Bachelor of Arts with majors in politics, gender studies and social anthropology
I love to study human history, culture, religion, politics

and language and find out as much as I can about why humans do what they do, and the reasons why the world is the way it is today. It gives me a better understanding about the world, and because my future will be dedicated to helping humans, it gives me grounding not to judge others. Anthropology, through not only studying Europe, but ideas and practices from the entire world, has taught me that culture is inherited, there is very little choice involved, and that one culture (or gender for that matter) cannot claim superiority over another. We are equal as human beings on this earth and we must learn to respect each other!
I believe this stuff should be taught at primary school level!

Have you ever experimented, or contemplated experimenting with Drugs?

M/ 21/Chicago il.

▶▶ No

M/ 24/Canada, Toronto

▶▶ Yes. Just testing it, I know what its like now.

F/34/North American Continent

▶▶ Dear Brethren, Your questions are always as they say "hitting the spot", since each question is a reflect to what we are passing through in our respective societies where we live around the world.

To answer your question, no I have not either experimented nor contemplated using.

However, I believe that those who have passed through that experience and survived it are very lucky, and I'm sure that they recognize that. I also think that we can't blame any one. We are living in a materialistic society that is pushing its people more and more into a state of individualism that is throwing out all the traditions, beliefs, morals and replacing them with a cheap dose of delusion and when that is over the bitter reality stays the same. I feel very



sad and hurt that this poison which is drugs has crawled its way into our society and to the heads of some of our youths and it's stealing from us parts of our existence in the name of freedom. I sincerely hope that those who

are now victims and slaves to drugs will wake up of their deep sleep or rather coma and awaken other youth so that they would not have to go through what their brethren did.

Male/23/Sydney

▶▶ No, and never will.

M/24/Södertälje

▶▶ No, never

F/25/Sydney

▶▶ Yes I have experimented with drugs (for about six months) during this time I was not working nor studying, I guess it gave me a higher look at life. It lifted me up from my depressing state, although now I would never touch the stuff; the stuff being marijuana. I have never tried anything else, although some people may think that's bad enough but I think that marijuana is at least (sometimes), a natural grown plant unlike all the other chemically made drugs like ecstasy, speed and cocaine which I would never allow to enter my body.

girl friends GIRL FRIENDS

On Easter Sunday in a family gathering, I shared delicious food and inspiring conversations with a few young Assyrian women. It was fantastic hearing modern Assyrian women discussing current issues. One of these conversations was with Eve, an attractive young professional. This conversation took me back in time, when I was a younger woman and had difficulty understanding the Assyrian culture. Eve expressed her disappointment with the Assyrian culture, in its treatment of women. She could not understand why young Assyrian women had to wear a scarf while attending the mass. She was very angry and was thinking of no longer attending the Assyrian church. Her anger and resentment reminded me of myself at exactly the same age, when I felt the same way about our culture.

In my early twenties I was living in New York and completing a Fine Arts degree. It was the peak of

the women's liberation movement and New York's academia was in the front lines of this movement. Women were wearing jeans and baggy cloths to reduce attention to their bodies. They did not want to be sex objects. We were fighting for equal rights. At the same time I wanted to maintain my contact with my culture, therefore I attended the Assyrian church. I remember how confused and resentful I would feel every time I came into contact with my own culture. Monday through Saturday I was a liberated modern woman, while on Sundays I felt a second class citizen by wearing the scarf in church. Slowly I reduced my contact with the Assyrian community and the church. I could not cope with this confusing double standard.

After a period of boycott, I began to miss my people, and the culture, but still did not like the way women were treated in our culture. So, I would attend the church only on very important occasions such as Christmas and Easter. When doing so, I

would wear a hat, and not a scarf, to maintain a consistency in my beliefs and style.

Slowly years passed by. My niece was born and my interest in our culture was rekindled. At this stage I was in my mid-thirties, working as a designer in New York.

Through the years of living in New York, I came across people from all cultural back- grounds and witnessed their interest in their heritage. I admired the African American and the Jewish people the most for the way they maintained their cultural identity and heritage while moving forward with the times. My observations of other cultures in New York allowed me to realise that modernity and heritage are not necessarily in contradiction. There are times that one needs to observe and maintain certain aspects of one's culture for the sake of survival.

My dear Eve, today I wear a scarf - a very fashionable one - to church. This is a small symbolic gesture in maintaining our tradition. I feel that by wearing our traditional garments on special occasions we do not lose our modernity, we show dedication and strength. Most cultures have garments that are worn for the purpose of symbolism and cultural identity. As a child I admired Indira Gandhi, India's Prime Minister, who wore her traditional garment everyday. She not only was a leader of her country but a cultural symbol. I believe that occasionally, for the sake of our cultural identity, we can wear our cultural symbols. What do you think? ■

Samiramis Ziyeh - Sydney, Australia

Kalu *Till death did they part.* Sullaqa



One of the most important Assyrian holidays that has been lost as a result of today's modern society, is the holiday, Assyrians have known as 'Kalu Sullaqa', or "Kalu d-Sullaqa". In Assyrian this translates to 'Bride of the Ascension', and will this year be commemorated on 1st June. The true origins and significance of this unique holiday help explain, amongst other things, the origins of the Assyrian mountaineers in Hakkari. The history behind this holiday reveals one of the most tragic, and romantic stories ever told.

The story begins with Malik Shalita, who was born in the city of Nineveh, at the height of the



Assyrian missionary enterprise around 1370 A.D. As the governor of Nineveh, he was a peaceful ruler and, unlike other leaders, at the time, he was never trained in warfare. Instead of studying war, he pursued his education, in the Greek language, on the island of Cyprus, where his main field of study was philosophy.

While the young Shalita was in Cyprus, dark clouds of war loomed over the horizon. The year was 1393 A.D. and a Mongolian army, led by Timmurlane, had just destroyed the Christian communities in China, and the East, and was fast approaching Mesopotamia. Upon entering Mesopotamia, Timmurlane continued north plundering and murdering thousands of Christians along the way.

Realising the imminent danger that was about to befall his people, the energetic, Malik Shalita rushed back to Nineveh to organise the city's defense. He organised an army and prepared them for the coming battle. His aim was ambitious, and daring. Using the familiar mountainous regions, of Mesopotamia, Malik Shalita planned on halting the advance of the brutal Mongolian army, in a battlefield of his own choosing.

The Mongolian army engaged the Assyrian freedom fighters in bloody hand-to-hand skirmishes. Realising that defeat would cost them their lives, and the lives of their families, the Assyrian freedom fighters held their ground and blunted the Mongolian advance. As the battle concluded the unthinkable had actually happened. The Assyrians actually managed to inflict a major defeat on Timmurlane and his Mongolian army. Timmurlane himself acknowledged the bravery of the Assyrian fighters. He is recorded to say, "Through all my campaign, no army was capable of slowing, neither defeating my advanced army except those people called the Assyrians".

Years passed by quickly, and in 1401 A.D. Timmurlane's reformed army was on the move again. Meanwhile, in Mesopotamia, the political situation had taken a turn for the worse. The Assyrian camp became divided. The majority were led by the Church of the East's patriarch, Mar Abedesho, who enacted a church edict that forbade the Assyrians from defending themselves. He made the pious claim that Christians should not raise arms to defend

themselves. In his opinion, it is better to mortify their souls, by dying as martyrs for Christ, rather than killing their enemies. Malik Shalita was more realistic and urged his people to defend themselves against the brutal Mongolians. The end result was the loss of the majority of Malik Shalita's army on the eve of Timmurlane's second campaign against Mesopotamia.

The morale of the remaining Assyrian defenders had been shattered. In an effort to boost morale, Malik Shalita's beautiful wife, organised a group of approximately 10,000 Assyrian women, all dressed in white, who went from house to house and collected food, clothing and provisions for the men who were guarding the frontier.

Meanwhile Mar Abedesho paid a visit to the

enemy camp, in an effort to avert disaster and talk with Timmurlane. Sensing the division in the Assyrian camp, Timmurlane had Mar Abedesho quickly beheaded, and had his head sent to Malik Shalita. Timmurlane then mustered his army and prepared to attack the outnumbered and divided defenders.

Malik Shalita resigned himself to their fate. Leading at the front he prepared for the final battle. Sensing the calamity that was about to befall them, Malik Shalita's wife, and the 10,000 Assyrian women, took up arms, and joined Malik Shalita and his men at the front.

The depleted ranks of the Assyrian army were no match for the Mongolian hordes, and the Assyrian army was defeated. The tragedy drew to a close as Malik Shalita, his wife, the Assyrian men and the majority of the 10,000 strong Assyrian women army were all killed in this final momentous battle.

The survivors and their descendents commemorated the tragedy in a unique way right up to the twentieth century. The event is commemorated on the same day as the Christian holiday known as 'Ascension Day' of Christ. Ascension Day, which occurs 40 days after the Resurrection Festival, commemorates Jesus's ascension into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Mk. 16:19; Lk. 24:51; Acts 1:9). According to Bejamin Arsanous, an Assyrian historian of the first half of this century, the young boys and girls represent the dead young men and women who also ascended to heaven because they had died for the cause of Christianity.

Arsanous states that this holiday was commemorated in Assyrian villages throughout the Middle East. Girls and boys would remember it, by dressing up as brides and grooms. A boy and a girl, dressed as a wedding couple, would go door to door singing and collecting food for the occasion. Traditionally, no money, or candy, was given. Instead the people would give rice, fruits and other raw ingredients. In Hakkari, prior to the First World War, the girls in each village would also gather and choose the prettiest one amongst them to be the 'Bride of the Ascension' (Kalu d-Sullaqa) for that year. They would dress her in a traditional Assyrian wedding costume and would parade through the village singing and asking for walnuts and raisins. After taking up a collection from many houses in the village, the children would go out to the fields. There they'd conduct a picnic, where they'd cook, and then eat what they had collected on the day. ■

David Chibo

References: *History of Assyria*. Menasha Ameri. - *The Catholicos of The East and His People*. A. J. Maclean & W H Browne. - *The Feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost* <http://www.cired.org/faith/feast.html> - Thanks to William Warda, Nicholas Aljeloo, Raman Mickeal and Ashur Y. Malik for help and references used to compile this article.

ملف لغوي

كلمة لغوية

أَزِيزُ	azizotho	energy	azizotha	أَزِيزُوتْ
سَيِّدَا	haylo	power	kheyla	سَيِّدَا
مِرْغَا	shrogo	light	shraga	مِرْغَا
بَهْرُ	bahro	light	bahra	بَهْرُ
نُقْزَا	noqzo	point	nuqza	نُقْزَا
مِرْمُونَا	mrimono	negative	mrimana	مِرْمُونَا
مِسْمُونَا	msimono	positive	msimana	مِسْمُونَا
بُوسَا	bosoyo	research	bosaya	بُوسَا
هُوْلَا	hoolo	material	hoola	هُوْلَا
أَرَاوْثَا	oroaotho	argue	araotha	أَرَاوْثَا

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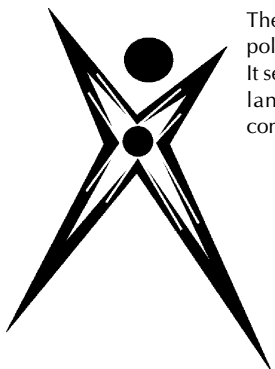
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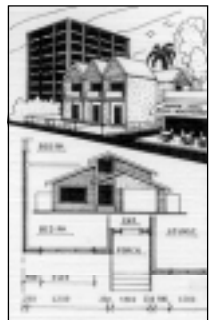
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