

Adiabene Was Assyrian, Not Kurdish

By Fred Aprim

I was very disturbed by statements made by Dr. Victor Sharpe M.D. in his article "Who Truly Deserves a State?", published on July 30, 2007. I just wonder, what motivates a medical doctor to indulge with such poisonous fable.

See here: <http://www.infoisrael.net/cgi-local/text.pl?source=4/b/iv/220820072>

I sent an e-mail few weeks back to the web site in question when the article of Dr. Sharpe was brought to my attention. I did not receive any response. Yesterday, October 26, 2007, I addressed a letter to the Chairman of Israel Hasbara Committee, which oversees the web site. What is intriguing is the mission statement of the web site, which encourages the readers to help fight gross falsehoods and distortions of truth. The mission statement states: "The Israel Hasbara Committee will pursue its aims principally through educational means, such as, information over its website on the Internet, lectures, seminars, personal meetings and private correspondence and will challenge the gross lack of knowledge of its many detractors which is the main cause for bias, misinformation and hatred." I hope that the chairmen would accept all truths and rejects all falsehoods that endangers and threatens the history of all peoples, including the Assyrian people and history.

In his article, Dr. Sharpe makes statements that, ironically, are misleading, unequivocally false and depict gross lack of knowledge. For example, Dr. Sharpe states: "The Kurdish royal house of Adiabene and a large segment of the general population accepted the Jewish faith in the 1st century BCE. Indeed, when the Jews rose up against Roman occupation in the 1st century CE, Kurdish Adiabene sent troops and provisions in support of the embattled Jews. By the beginning of the 2nd century CE, Judaism was firmly established in Kurdistan and Kurdish Jews today speak an ancient form of Aramaic in their homes and synagogues. Kurdish and Jewish life became interwoven to such a remarkable degree that many of the Kurdish folk tales are connected with Jews." Unquote.

It is unfortunate that certain writers and self-proclaimed historians blindly copycat corrupted versions of history of Mesopotamia and Assyria written by Kurdish writers and nationalists. They do this without serious efforts to investigate such claims made by the Kurdish nationalists and writers that are constructing a new history for northern Iraq (Assyria), Assyrians and for the Kurdish people.

I invite Dr. Sharpe and the readers to consider the followings:

1. There is not a single reliable source that shows that the royal house of Adiabene (the region of ancient Arbela, modern Arbil in northern Iraq) was Kurdish; in fact it was Assyrian. Only Kurdish writers make the wild claims that Queen Helena and her sons Izates and Monobazus of Adiabene royal house that converted to Judaism were Kurdish, similar to other wild claims. There is no better authority that describes early Jewish history, including the Royal House of Adiabene, than the first century Jewish renowned historian Flavius Josephus. Josephus clearly states that the inhabitants of Adiabene or the Adiabeni were Assyrians (Whinston, William. Translator. The Works of Josephus. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers Inc. 1999). Why refer to what a 21st Century Kurdish nationalist would claim when we have a 1st Century Jewish authority to refer to about a subject?

2. It is well established historically that when the heartland of Assyria was back into focus in early Christianity (during the Parthian era and about six centuries after the fall of the Assyrian Empire), "it was with an Assyrian, not a Persian let alone Greek, self-identification: the temple of Ashur was restored, the city was rebuilt, and an Assyrian successor state that returned in the shape of the client kingdom of Adiabene" (Crone, Patricia & Michael Cook. Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

3. Furthermore, there is no proof whatsoever, archaeological and historical, that proves that modern Kurds inhabited Mesopotamia in ancient times. Unfortunately, some writers tend to politicize history sometimes. The Kurdish history is very vague as we all know and it is well known among many legitimate historians that Kurdish writers scramble to construct a history that never was. So in an effort to cover all bases, Kurdish writers foolishly link their history to all peoples and civilizations of ancient times living in the regions of modern Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria and even parts of Russia. Kurdish writers link their history to the Sumerians, Halaf, Ubaidian, Hurrians, Hittites, Medes, and the list never stops. I have challenged many before and I am challenging Dr. Sharpe here as well to provide one solid source showing an empire, a country, a state, or a kingdom by the name of Kurdistan mentioned at any time and anywhere in history? Would Dr. Sharpe point to couple of artifacts, steles, monuments, or other uncovered archaeological remains that show that Kurds existed in ancient times? There is nothing that supports Kurdish claims archaeologically or historically.

4. Let me emphasize that Judaism indeed flourished in the second century of the Christian era in Adiabene, but Adiabene at the time was and as Gibbon refers to it "primitive Assyria" (Gibbon, Edward. The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. David Womersley, ed. Penguin Books, 2000). Adiabene is never linked to Kurdistan since there never existed a Kurdistan and Kurds were not the inhabitants of northern Iraq (Assyria) during that specified period.

5. There should be no confusion at all about the Jews of northern Iraq. The Aramaic speaking Jews of northern Iraq have no blood relation with the Kurds. The Aramaic speaking Jews of northern Iraq and northwestern Iran for that matter are very clear regarding who they are. The Jews in and around Zakho (northern Iraq) speak Aramaic and know themselves strictly and clearly as Jews for the same reason that the Kurds know themselves as Kurds: because they know themselves to be different from the others. The Jews of northern Iraq do not consider themselves Kurdish Jews, as Dr. Sharpe is referring to them, and the Kurds do not consider themselves as Jews. The Jews did not take a Kurdish language 2,600 years ago; they took the Assyrian-Aramaic language. I just wonder, why would a medical doctor hint a relationship between the Jews that were deported to Assyria and Babylonia some 2,600 years ago to Kurds unless it is a statement made for political reasons!

I expect that Dr. Sharpe would consider the above facts and do further extensive research about northern Iraq (Assyria) and its people and not just rely on what Kurdish writers and politicians claim.

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