



HA-GE'ULLAH

HA-GE'ULLAH, Judeo-Persian weekly newspaper published in Tehran between 1920 and 1923. *Ha-Ge'ullah* is a Hebrew term meaning redemption and deliverance, and it denotes a well-known concept in Judaism which bears mostly religious connotations regarding the redemption of the Jewish people. It is the opposite of the concept of *Gālūt*, which means exile, dispersions and sufferings met by the Jews in countries other than the Land of Israel — this is why the name *Ha-Ge'ullah* was chosen for this Judeo-Persian weekly newspaper.

As far as we know, *Ha-Ge'ullah* was the second Judeo-Persian newspaper to be published, after *Shalom* (meaning “peace” in Hebrew). The latter was published at the *Maṭḡba'a-ye Kalimiān* in Tehran in 1915 (probably for only one year) by the two brothers, Mordechai ben Avraham (1888-1964) and Asher ben Avraham (1890-1963). *Ha-Ge'ullah* appeared usually in a four (30 cm x 42 cm) page format, and it was written in the Persian language using Hebrew characters.

Ha-Ge'ullah, an official organ of the Zionist Movement in Iran, published its first issue on 9 Ṭevet 5681/31 December 1920 under the editorship of 'Aziz-Allāh Yonah Na'im (1889-1946), and the last one in June 1923. From the beginning of 1922 onwards, Na'im was named as the founder and the registered license-holder of the newspaper, and Soleymān Nāqi and Ḥabib-Allāh Yod'im as the administrator and editor respectively. The Zionist



Movement in Iran was itself founded in 1918, as a branch of the World Zionist Organization. In the course of time, especially from 1922 onwards, it became weakened as a result of internal disputes within the Iranian Jewish community, and it eventually disappeared in 1926, the second year of the reign of Reżā Shah, who was opposed to any organization linked with foreign elements.

The main contents of the first issues were mainly concerned with socio-religious issues and the promotion of Zionist ideas as Jewish nationalism (see *marām wa maslak-e mā*, “Our Aim and Path,” in the first issue). It encouraged the study of the Hebrew language and emigration to Israel, which it conceived as the “national home for the Jewish people,” as had been declared by the British Foreign Minister, Arthur James Balfour, in November 1917. Later on, almost all of the columns of *Ha-Ge'ullah* were filled with articles in support of Dr. Loqmān Nehorāy (1882-1952) against his opponent Shmu'el Yehezqel Ḥaim (1891-1931), both of whom were running as Jewish candidates for the fifth Majles (1923-1926). The bitter dispute between the two candidates divided almost the entire Jewish population of Iran (see especially issues published on 4 February 1921 and 17 March 1922). Following the victory of Shmu'el Yehezqel Ḥaim in June 1923, *Ha-Ge'ullah* was closed down forever and some of the leaders of the Zionist Movement, among them Na'im, left Tehran for Israel and Europe.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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A detailed description and numerous analyses of the contents of *Ha-Ge'ullah* appear in 92 articles published by the present author (Amnon Netzer) in the Jewish Iranian monthly magazine *Shofar*, New York, June 1989-May 1997 (in Persian).