



## ḤAIM, MOREH ḤAḶĀM

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**ḤAIM, Moreh Ḥaḷām**, eminent Jewish scholar (b. Tehran, 1872; d. Tehran, 1942). Moreh and his younger sister Mandana were the children of Mordechai ben Eliyahu from Shiraz and Rachel (Rāḥel) the daughter of Yādegār from Isfahan. Moreh lost the sight of both eyes at the age of two as the result of a serious illness. When he was just seven his father died, and he was raised mainly in the home of his maternal grandfather, Yādegār ben Shlomo Eṣfahāni, and studied at the Beit Midrash of Rabbi El'azar Melammed of Yazd. In 1898, when the Alliance School (q.v.) was opened in Tehran, he taught Hebrew and religious studies there and learned French. He had three daughters and a son, Abraham, who was active in social activities through the central organization of Tehran Jews.

There is a succinct account of him in a travelogue of a journey to Persia by the famous geographer of Jerusalem, Abraham Jacob Brawer, who visited Tehran in 1935: "The Hebrew studies, i.e., religious lessons, are on a slightly higher level here [Tehran] than in Kermānšāh, Hamadān, and Isfahan, thanks to an excellent teacher by the name of Mulla Ḥaim. Though blind from birth or childhood, this old man is the most outstanding Torah scholar of all of Iran's 60,000 Jews. His translations of the prayers and religious poems have been printed and are recited in the synagogues of Iran. Rabbi Ḥaim spoke to me in fluent Hebrew and encountered difficulties only when I made the mistake of using newly-created words such as *irgun* ("organization"). This blind man teaches very bright children and can "look" proudly on his work, relative to the small number of hours devoted to his subjects in the curriculum" (*mi-*



*Parashat Masa'otay be-Paras*, Jerusalem, 1938, p. 23, in Hebrew; see also Amnon Netzer, "Yādi az Mašāhir-e Yahud-e Irān" [Remembering Jewish notables of Iran] in *Pādyāvand*, ed. Amnon Netzer, Vol. I, Los Angeles, 1996, pp. 261-97).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Published works. (1) *Deirekh Hayim* (the way of life), Tehran, 1921.

Contains some of the principles of Jewish law, biographies of some Jewish prophets, an outline of Jewish history and a general history of the world, and some hymns. (2) *Gedulat Mordechai* (the greatness of Mordechai), Tehran, 1924. Similar in content to the above, but includes more details on Jewish law and prayers, and a calendar for 1924 to 2240. The last pages contain the Jewish national anthem (Ha-Tiqvah) and some Hebrew and Persian poems composed by the author. (3) *Yedei Elyahu* (lit. the hands of Elyahu, i.e. the power of Elyahu), Tehran 1927. Tinged with moral teachings, historical events and legal points are explained in a homiletic way; it includes a prayer wishing Režā Shah a long and healthy life. (4) *Bayānāt-e Mura* (Discourses of Moreh, Tehran 1939; see Mošār, *Fehrest* I, col. 549). It contains a few pages based on his interview with Prince Režā Arfa' (see [DĀNEŠ, REŽĀ ÚKHAN ARFA'](#)). Unlike the other books cited, this work is in Persian script and shows the author's vast knowledge of Judaism and his phenomenal memory.