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JUDEO-PERSIAN COMMUNITIES VIII.
JUDEO-PERSIAN LANGUAGE
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JUDEO-PERSIAN COMMUNITIES VIII. JUDEO-PERSIAN LANGUAGE

JUDEO-PERSIAN COMMUNITIES OF IRAN

viii. Judeo-Persian Language

Judeo-Persian language, a term (abbrev.: JP) referring to a group of very similar, usually mutually comprehensible, dialects of Persian, spoken or written by Jews in greater Iran over a period of more than a millennium.

JEWISH LANGUAGES IN GENERAL

Jewish languages and dialects emerged with the exposure of Jews to other cultures. They tended to adopt the foreign language for everyday life, but continued to use Hebrew, mostly as a sacred tongue. Naturally, they incorporated some Hebrew and Aramaic words and calques in their vernacular language. The majority of Jewish languages uses the Hebrew alphabet for writing. In many cases, the Jewish language, segregated from the language of the majority, remains somewhat archaic.

These three generalizations, however, are neither essential nor sufficient for classifying a language as Jewish. The presence and extent of the Hebrew component varies greatly even within dialects of the same Jewish language. In

some cases, Hebrew words entered into the language of the majority population, either through social contact or through study of the holy scriptures. Hebrew words often appear in descriptions of Judaism made by non-Jews (in Iran, see Fischel, 1974 pp. 301-4). Some Jewish languages, including certain Iranian ones, use a local script. The preservation of archaisms is shared by most minority and peripheral dialects around the world, regardless of religion.

The only criterion common to all Jewish languages is social: they are used exclusively by Jews.

JUDEO-PERSIAN IN GENERAL

The Jewish community in Iran, one of the oldest in the world, dates back to the eigth century BCE (see above). While adhering to their religious tenets even under severe persecutions, Iranian Jews have readily adopted Iranian culture and literature, and still regard them as their own.

Iranian Jews speak local dialects invaluable to linguistic research, e.g., Eṣfahāni or Yazdi (see, for example, Yarshater, 1974; Netzer, 1987; Gindin, 2002a and 2005), as well as unique varieties of Persian with dialectical and Hebrew/Aramaic influences. The Hebrew scroll of Esther, as well as the Aramaic “proto-Esther scroll” found in Qumran (see Shaked, 1995), suggest that, already in the Achaemenid period, the language of Iranian Jews included a substantial Persian component. There is some evidence for the existence of Jewish Bible translations in the Sasanian period (see Shapira, 2001; see also s.v. BIBLE). The earliest written documentation of Jewish Persian, however, dates back only to the 8th century CE. Practically all Judeo-Persian documents known to date are varieties of New Persian (see however a Geniza fragment in an unknown Judeo-Iranian dialect, Shaked, 1988)

Speakers of most JP dialects use the Hebrew alphabet, although some 19th- and 20th-century dialects employ an Arabic, Roman, or Cyrillic alphabet. They contain fewer Hebrew words than most Jewish languages, and in some cases none at all. Their degree of archaism varies: some classical JP works reflect a more recent stage of Persian than the writings of contemporary Muslims do. The speakers refer to their language as Fārsi (Early Judeo-Persian perhaps *Pārsi). Non-Jews refer to it as *zidi, judi,* or *jidi*, “Jewish” in a derogatory sense.

HISTORY OF JUDEO-PERSIAN RESEARCH

For centuries, the Hebrew characters used for writing JP prevented the acknowledgement outside the Jewish Persian community of its vast literature (see below). The first JP text to attract the attention of Western scholars was Yaaqub ben Yusof Ṭāvus's translation of the Pentateuch, which was the first JP (and NP) work to be printed. It appeared in the polyglot Pentateuch printed by the Soncino press at Constantinopole in 1546, but only became known in the West in 1657, when Thomas Hyde transliterated it into Arabic script for Bishop Bryan Walton's polyglot Bible. It would take the Western world almost two centuries to realize that this translation continues a long tradition of JP Bible versions. The discovery of other genres of JP literature occurred only in the late 19th century.

Another important discovery took place in the early 17th century: that of the Chinese-Jewish colony of Kaifeng. This community originated in Iran, as attested by the JP colophons on some of their books, the JP translation of the Passover Haggadah, the JP rubrics in their prayer books, and more (see Leslie)

The 17th century also marks the beginning of JP manuscript collections in Europe; the Florentine traveler and scholar Giambattista Vechietti collected in Iran JP manuscripts dating from the early 14th century on. These manuscripts, kept in the Vatican Library, contain translations of biblical books and Apocrypha. For some reason, his transcriptions of these texts into Arabic characters did not win recognition. During the 19th century more JP manuscripts found their way to Europe. According to contemporaneous catalogues, European libraries held about 55 JP manuscripts (Fischel, 1949, p. 1182)

In 1896 and 1897, the London traveler and scholar Elkan Nathan Adler bought JP manuscripts in Tehran, Bukhara, and Samarkand. He bought over 100 manuscripts from Genizas (cabinets of discarded sacred Jewish texts) and from private people. The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York purchased Adler's collection in 1923. Wilhelm Bacher (1850-1913) exhaustively studied these manuscripts as well as other collections of JP literature. He also introduced to the West the great classsical JP poets Šāhin and ʿEmrāni. The first of his articles about the historical narratives of Bābāʾi ben Loṭf and Bābāʾi ben Farhād was published one year after M. Seligsohn first introduced them. His comprehensive work, which attracted wide attention to JP language and literature and which is still of great interest, includes numerous catalogues, text editions, descriptions, and studies of JP literature.

The documents recovered from the Cairo Geniza and other sources by Solomon Schechter and other collectors, notably Abraham Firkowicz, towards the end of the 19th century, changed the scholarly perception of the quality and the quantity of the JP literature. They provide an invaluable source of Early Judeo-Persian (EJP), which now counts about 600 pages of texts from various genres: Bible commentary and translation, grammar and lexicography, Jewish law, legal documents, medicine and magic, poetry and liturgy, as well as personal letters, mostly still unpublished (publication is in preparation by Shaul Shaked).

The tradition of manuscript collection by travelers to Iran continued in the 20th century up to the Islamic revolution, with scholars such as Amnon Netzer for the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem (the most recent publication of one of those texts is of fragments of an EJP Psalm translation, Netzer, 2002) and Ezra Spicehandler for the Klau library at the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. (See Netzer, 1985, p. 5; Lazard, 1978, p. 310 for information about other collections of JP manuscript material.)

Around the turn of the 20th century, a group of recent immigrants to Jerusalem started publication of religious and secular JP works. The hard core of the group, headed by Shimʿon Ḥākhām (1843-1910), a renowned author, translator, and editor and the publisher, came from Bukhara. Others were immigrants from Iran, Afghanistan, and Samarkand. Their work also includes translations of non-Jewish literature, such as the *Arabian Nights* and Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, into their Jewish-Persian vernacular.

An article by K. D. Hassler in 1829 marked the beginning of research into JP literature. In 1870, E. W. West introduced the first non-biblical JP text—a trilingual inscription on a copper plate found in Travancore, South India, and dated to the 9th century. It contains, besides Pahlavi and Arabic, four JP signatures by Jewish witnesses, with the formula *hmgwn mn pdyš gwhwm*, " I, , also testify to it." In 1884, Paul de Lagarde presented a JP manuscript of the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and a portion of Ezekiel, and supplied the first linguistic description of Judeo-Persian, stating that "From now on, no one may claim to know the vocabulary of New Persian, unless they have worked through these [Judeo-Persian] translations from beginning to end" (p. 70) His linguistic description was complemented by Th. Nöldeke (1884) and P. Horn (1893).

In 1899, D. S. Margoliouth introduced a longer, non-biblical JP document, the

Ahwaz Law Report from 1020/1 CE. This text was also studied by W. B. Henning (1958, pp. 80-81), J. P. Asmussen (1965), D. N. MacKenzie (1966), and Shaked (1971; 1972, p. 51). This discovery, together with that of other early Judeo-Persian texts, underlines the importance of the study of the early JP material for the history of Persian.

Carl Salemann introduced the largest known Early Judeo-Persian text in 1900. This 226-page translation and the commentary (*tafsir*) on the book of Ezekiel (TE) from the Firkowicz collection probably dates to the 11th century. Salemann described some general peculiarities of the text, especially its use of the synthetic passive forms typical of MP. A complete edition of the text, on which he worked at the time, never materialized. It was undertaken again by Shaked in the 1980s. He has given materials over to T. E. Gindin, who is preparing an edition, translation, and grammatical study of the text. Partial studies of the TE have been conducted by Shaked (1986, about an unusual verb form), MacKenzie (2003), Ludwig Paul (2003) and Gindin (2000, 2003). This particular importance of the TE to linguistic research lies in its large scope and in its use of two different contemporaneous dialect.

In January 1901, an archeological expedition headed by Sir M. Aurel Stein found a business letter written in Persian in Hebrew characters among the ruins of Rawaq, near the Buddhist Temple of Dandan Öïliq, in the region of Khotan in Chinese Turkestan (Margoliouth, 1903, pp. 737-38), The paper used for the letter helps in establishing its date, the second half of the 8th century CE (ibid., p. 743). This letter, the oldest known JP document, was studied by Margoliouth (1903), Salemann (1904-05), Henning (1958, pp. 79-80), Utas (1968), Shaked (1971, p. 82), and Lazard (1988).

In 1952 R. N. Frye and R. Ghirshman traveled to the Tang-e Azāo valley in Afghanistan in order to investigate some newly discovered rock inscriptions, which they described as illegible Parthian. Henning (1957) identified these inscriptions as Judeo-Persian, bearing the date 752/3 CE, which makes them contemporary with the Dandān Öïliq letter or slightly earlier. E. Rapp (1967) suggested, unconvincingly, a much later date. The Tang-e Azāo inscriptions and the Dandān Öïliq letter constitute the first specimens of New Persian (see Lazard, 1963, p. 31).

In 1962, French and Italian missions unearthed JP tombstones in a cemetery near Jam in Afghanistan. The inscriptions, dating from the 12th-14th centuries, with only short phrases in JP, are more interesting for the study of Jewish

community structure than for that of JP. They were published by G. Gnoli (1964) and Rapp (1965). (See also Shaked, 1981 and 1999.)

Other EJP documents published to-date include a Karaite legal document from 951 CE (Shaked, 1972), a fragment of a Karaite theological treatise in EJP, possibly of the 11th or 12th century (MacKenzie, 1968), “The Story of Daniel” (Zotenberg, 1869; Darmesteter, 1886; Saleman, 1884-85; Shapira, 1999), three nonconsecutive fragments of a Small Tafsir of Ezekiel (Gindin, 2002), and many more.

Walter Fischel published numerous articles about JP, mostly from the point of view of literary history. In the second half of the history, H. H. Paper, J. P. Asmussen, and E. Mainz published several post-Mongol Judeo-Persian manuscripts of Bible translations and commentaries. Gilbert Lazard’s works may be considered as cornerstones in the study of JP language. In recent decades Israel has become a center of JP study, with contributions by Shaul Shaked on early Judeo-Persian, including texts, overviews. and lists; Amnon Netzer, who takes an interest in the history of Jews in Iran and in classical JP literature and poetry; Michael Zand, who has studied Bukharan Jewry, and more recently David Yeroushalmi, Dan Shapira, and T. E. Gindin. The most recent study of EJP grammar is Ludwig Paul’s comprehensive habilitation thesis (2002).

EARLY JUDEO-PERSIAN

Having most of the characteristics of New Persian while preserving some features of Middle Persian, early Judeo-Persian (EJP) has long been regarded as crucial for understanding the evolution of New Persian. Most published EJP documents probably originate in the southwestern provinces of Fārs and Khuzestan (Lazard, 1968, p. 63); the language of others resembles Tajik and is here designated as Early Judeo-Tajik. The language and the style of the EJP documents reflect some old forms of New Persian (NP), and display a transitional stage between Middle Persian (MP) and NP.

The following examples illustrate the archaism and dialectal diversity of EJP in the grammar and lexicon.

The orthography exhibits great variety. The sound *k* and *ḵ* are represented by the letters *qof (q)* and *kaf (k)* respectively in the Dandān Öïliq letter (Tang-e

Azāo has only *q*) and by *kaf* for both in later EJP (sometimes with diacritic modification to distinguish between the plosive and the affricate sounds). Great diversity occurs in the rendering of the *č* and *j* sounds: in some texts both appear as *ṣ*, in others as *g* (with or without diacritic marks); some consistently distinguish between the two sounds, and yet others differentiate *j* only in Arabic words.

Slips and inconsistencies, or their absence, reveal that the cluster *k̲v–* had the same sound in Early Judeo-Tajik as in NP, that is, simple *k̲-*, but retained its bi-consonant pronunciation in the early Khuzestan documents and southwestern tafsirs.

The preposition *pʾ* (multipurpose preposition meaning “to,” “by,” in,” etc.), which is present in all EJP documents, reflects a transitional stage between MP *pad* and NP *be*. MP *d* reappears before a third person suffix *–yš* to create *pdyš* (contrast NP *beheš*), but before the deictic pronouns *in* “this” and *ān* “that,” this *sandhi* does not take place: *pʾyn/pʾyn* and *pʾn/pʾn* (contrast NP *bedin*, *bedān*). This phenomenon comes as a useful reminder to the effect that EJP comprises a group of old dialects, rather than a direct ancestor of JP.

EJP belongs to an early or transitional stage in the rendering of the passive voice. Some texts use, almost exclusively, the MP synthetic passive, that is, create a passive present stem by adding *–(y)h-* to the present stem of the verb (e.g., *gwyhyd* “is said”) with a secondary past stem *–(y)h(y)st–* (e.g., *gwyhyst* “was said”). In others the passive is usually rendered by compounding the past passive participle with an auxiliary *āmadan* “to come” or *būdan* “to be” (cf. NP *šodan*), e.g., *gwptʾ hst*/*gwptʾ* (*h*)*my ʾyyd* “is said,” *gwpth ʾmd* “was said.” (All examples are from the Tafsirs of Ezekiel.)

The rendering and uses of the *eżāfa* exemplify great variation between and within the different EJP texts. It may appear as a separate word (*ʾy*) as in MP, as a single letter, *yod* (*y*), at the end of the first word or at the beginning of the following word, or it may remain completely unmarked. Most writers render the *eżāfa* in more than one way. The uses of the *eżāfa* generally follow those of MP: in addition to being placed between a noun and a modifier (adjective or genitive) and after denominative prepositions, as in NP, it also serves for introducing relative clauses. EJP documents, however, show a gradual transition from the *eżāfa* to *kw/ky* as the introductory particle of a relative clause.

EJP displays a great variety also in the field of lexicography. Hebrew-Aramaic, Arabic, and Iranian make up the main components of the language. Their respective ratios vary from one genre to another and from one writer to another.

The Tang-e Azāo inscriptions supply very little information, due to their brevity and formulaic wording. They do, however, exhibit archaisms such as the word *nywy* for "inscription" (MP *nibig*, used in classical NP only in the sense of holy scriptures) and the preposition *pʾ*.

The Dandān Öïliq letter contains only two Hebrew words, *rby* "Rabbi" and (*h*)*mwr* "donkey." Even the word "God" is rendered by the Persian *yzyd* or *yzyd ḵwdh*. Only one word (*rqybyn* "stirrups") represents the Arabic element, which is frequent in all later EJP documents. The Arabic element rarely exceeds fifteen percent of the words in an EJP text. It does, however, show a high degree of integration into the language. Arabic words often take Persian suffixes to create new words: e.g., *mwṣybtgyn* "afflicted" (Arabic *muṣībat* with the Persian suffix *–gyn*). Persian words sometimes take Arabic suffixes: e.g., *dwryt* "distance" (Persian *dur* + Arabic *–iyat*). This phenomenon is unattested with Hebrew words.

Intriguingly, in some personal letters from the Cairo Geniza, written in EJP, the Persian text is written in Hebrew characters, while for some Arabic phrases the Arabic alphabet is used. The writers seem to have regarded Persian as a Jewish language, while treating Arabic as a non-Jewish tongue.

The Hebrew component occurs in formulaic expressions accompanying personal names: *zkrw lbrkh* "blessed be his memory," usually abbreviated to *z" l"* (" indicates a stroke over the letter), and *nwḥw ʿdn* "may he rest in paradise" follow the names of the deceased; *bn* "son (of)" or *bt* "daughter (of)" introduce a patronym. *Yt" š"*, short for *yitbārāḵ šemō* "blessed be his name," frequently follows the name of the Lord, which is usually rendered by *y"* or *y* or *yyy*. In some unpublished personal letters, the writer uses Hebrew blessings such as *yḥyym ʾl wyšmrm* "may God keep them alive and guard them" and *ʾlhy yšrʾl ḥn wḥsd ʾbzʾyʾdšʾn* (Persian) *bʿyny ʾlhym wʾdm* "may the God of Israel increase their grace and favor in the eyes of God and man" (both from L5 in Shaked's list, 1998).

Other Hebrew words and expressions relate to religious matters or, in tafsirs, take up words from the Biblical verse. Most of these words take the Hebrew

plural, e.g., *mṣwh ~ mṣwt* “commandment(s),” *ṣdyq ~ ṣdyqym* “righteous (noun and adjective)”; but *rš‘* “wicked (noun and adjective)” has three different plurals: *rš‘ym*, as in Hebrew (most frequently), *rš‘ʾn*, with a Persian plural (rare), and *rš‘ymʾn*, combining the Hebrew and the Persian plural morphemes. The word *gwym*, Hebrew plural “gentiles,” means in JP of all periods “gentile (singular noun and adjective),” pluralized with the Persian morpheme *gwymʾn*.

The Iranian component, basically NP, also includes many words and forms known from MP which were lost or changed in NP, some that reflect a stage of transition from MP to NP (e.g., *pʾ*, discussed above), and dialectical elements. Among the forms known from MP and lost in NP, one may count the present copula with the stem *h-: hwm*, *hy*, *hyst*, *hym*, *hyd*, *h(y)nd* (note the 1st sing. suffix typical of MP); *phryxtn-*, *phryz–* “to warn, to be careful” (NP *parhixtan*); *ʾbʾz* “again, back” (NP *bāz*); *ʾzyr* “under” (NP *zir*), and many more. The imperative of the verb “to hear” in the southwestern tafsirs, *ʾkšyn*, corresponds to the Manichean MP (MMP) present stem. However, the usual present stem (*ʾksn-*) contracts, and the past stem (*ʾksnyd-*) derives secondarily (cf. MMP *ʾkšyd-*). The MMP present stem *nēš- (nyš-)* “to see” serves in suppletion to the regular past stem *dīd-*.

Some words appear in one text in more than one way: the word “king” appears on one and the same page of the Tajik part of the TE both in the later form *pʾdšʾh* and in the more archaic form *pʾdḵšʾh*; *ʾnyz* “also” occasionally occurs as *nyz*, and the verbal prefix *hmy* as *my*. These inconsistencies suggest an incomplete transition, with the more archaic form still retained as “correct,” while the later NP form serves in everyday speech and creeps into the written language.

Some dialectal or previously unattested elements are found: the perfect verbal sufix *gē* (*-gy*) (unmarked for person); *ʾlmwdn*, *ʾlmʾn–* “to show” alongside NP *nmwdn*, *nmʾy-*; *nygwl* “deep” (NP *negun*); *ʾbrʾz* “over, above” and *ʾbrʾzyn* “upper” (probably linked to MP *abrāz* “acclivity”); *ʾbšnwdn* “to pity,” etc. The southwestern tafsirs contribute the present stem *dwn–* “to kindle” (Sanskrit *dhūnóti*), *ʾnwn* (MMP *ʾhnwn*) and *ʾwkwn* “now,” *ʾbznydn* “to hit,” and more.

JP Bible translations of all times, like those in other Jewish languages, adhere to the Hebrew text word by word, abandoning Persian syntax. They tend to avoid Hebrew words that would otherwise serve in the intended meaning. This makes it difficult to study the “real” language, but gives precious information about words that otherwise would have disappeared without a

trace. For example, Early Judeo-Tajik *ʾwstʾh/wstʾhy* and southwestern *bsth/bsthwʾry* translate "safe, confident" and "safety" respectively. *ʾwstʾhy* also appears once in tafsir; these words are evidently related to MP *vistāk̲v-*, NP *gostāk̲*.

CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY JUDEO-PERSIAN

EJP came to an abrupt end by the time of the Mongol conquests in the early 13th century, after which its literary translation fell into oblivion until it was rediscovered in the late 19th century. The Mongol invasion brought about far-reaching cultural and linguistic changes in Iran. JP of the 14th century onwards, which may be termed Classical JP, differs from the general language, Classical Persian and later contemporary Persian, mostly by the presence of Hebrew/Aramaic and occasionally dialectal elements, a smaller Arabic component, and looser orthography. In some cases even these minor differences hardly exist.

Classical JP survives mainly in poems, epics based on the stories of the Bible, and historical stories. Jews also transcribed work of classical Muslim poets in Hebrew character. The main linguistic importance of classical JP poetry lies in its orthography, which reveals pronunciations very similar to today's colloquial Persian. The poets take great freedom in spelling: e.g., on the one and the same page of Bābāʾi ben Farhād's chronicle (18th century), one may find *ʾwn* as well as *ʾn* "that" (NP *ān* or *un*, spelled *ʾn*), *prmwn* alongside *frmʾn* "command" (NP *fermān*, *fermun*, spelled *frmʾn*), and *byrʾn* (a hypercorrection) besides *byrwn* "out" (NP *birun*). *Qrbn* "sacrifice," rhymes with *mlʾwn* "cursed." The loss of *v* from the *k̲v–* cluster reflects in JP spelling: e.g., *k̲ʾhd* "he/she wants" (NP *k̲āhad*, spelled *k̲vʾhd*), *k̲ʾb* "dream" (NP *k̲āb*, spelled *k̲vʾb*). In NP, the Arabic phonemes *z* (*zai*), *ż* (*żā*), *z* (*ẓāẓ*) and *d̲* (*d̲āl*), all pronounced *z*, still keep their original spellings. EJP usually distinguishes between them, but classical JP uses four renditions—*d, z, ṣ* and *ṭ* (mostly *z*)—for each of these letters, e.g., *rʾzy* "satisfied" (NP *rʾẓy*) and *lḥzh* "moment" (NP *lḥżh*). Other phonemes the copyists tend to confuse are *ʾ, h, ḥ,* and *ʿ*, all probably pronounced as *ʾ* (NP: *ʾ* and *ʿ* pronounced as *ʾ*, *h* and *ḥ* as *h*).

The Hebrew component of those poetic works includes mainly religious terms such as *tfylh* "prayer" (but also *nmʾz*), *msyh* "Messiah," *mlʾk̲ym* "angels." The writer's word choice varies according to needs of rhyme and meter, so one may find Arabic *ʾnbyyʾ* besides Hebrew *nßyʾym* "prophets," the names *mwsʾ* and *hʾrwn* beside *mšh* and *ʾhrwn*, Moses and Aaron. The name of Abraham appears

as *ʾbrʾym*, *ʾbrʾhym*, *ʾbrm*, or *ʾbrhm*. Even clearly Muslim terms, such as *ʾlʾh* as a name of the Lord and *bsml krdn* "to say a blessing" (lit. to say *bismi'llah*), occur in these Jewish texts when the verse calls for it.

JP Bible translations abide by much stricter rules of orthography than poems, thus revealing very little about the true pronunciation of words. Their contribution to the lexicographical study includes words such as *ʾbʾz* "with" (MP *abāg*, EJP *ʾbʾ*, NP *bā*), *bʾstʾk* "security" (cf. above, EJP *bsth*), *ʾšpwxtn* "to kill."

While Persian Jews suffered at times from persecutions, Bukharan Jews enjoyed greater religious and literary freedom (see below). Their dialect, which they call Fārsi, is actually a Jewish form of Tajik. Judeo-Tajik, as reflected by Shimʿon Ḥākhām's language, includes many peculiarities such as the preservation of *ē*, *ō*, *ĭ*, and *ŭ* vowels, the use of the Tajik *gē* suffix for perfect verbs, traceable to EJP, and the comparative suffix *bārīn/vārīn*.

In the 19th century, some Jewish refugees escaping persecution, especially from Mashad, re-established the Jewish community in Afghanistan, which had been lost without a trace after the Mongol conquest. Their language is the same as JP in Iran.

The 20th century marks a turn in the social status of Jews inside Iran. Wealthy members of the community began to settle outside of the *mahale*, the Jewish ghetto, and to speak Persian instead of the local dialects. At first their intonation and accent, as well as the use of vocabulary and expressions unique to local Jews gave them away, e.g., Isfahani *θ* and *δ for s* and *z* respectively, *melī* for "cat" and *berāxā* (Hebrew "blessing") as a numerative for Jews. However, young men of the second generation already speak standard Persian. Persian spoken by Jews who received general Iranian education, rather than a strictly Jewish one, is hardly distinguishable from the common tongue. Even the language of the synagogue sermons became less "Jewish" as more young orators arose who had attended non-Jewish schools and universities, Iranian Jews have adopted Persian to such an extent that even some traditional blessings are now said in Persian instead of Hebrew (Mizrahi, 1980).

The relative relief from persecutions as well as the emergence of Zionism brought about the publication of JP journals, some of them in Arabic characters.

The Hebrew content of contemporary JP is much smaller than that of other Jewish tongues and pertains mostly to the religious life, e.g., *Tūrā* (Tōrāh, the Book of Law), *tefīlīm* (*tfīlīn*, phylacteries), *sīsīt* (*tsītsīt*, ritual fringes), *gūyīm* (*gōyīm*, "gentiles," serves in JP as a singular). Sermons in JP contain more Hebrew and Aramaic words and expressions, mostly in citations.

The above examples demonstrate the Persian pronunciation rules that JP applies to Hebrew words: unaccented *o* becoming *ū,* breaking of initial clusters, and pronouncing *ṣadi* (letter *ṣ*, pronounced in Modern Hebrew as *ts*) as *s*. Some words change meaning, e.g., *berāxā* (quoted above) and *hēxāl*, Hebrew "nave, place, temple," for the synagogue ark.

JP also applies Persian syntax to Hebrew elements. The adjectives (both as modifiers and as predicates) usually appear in JP in their masculine singular form, regardless of gender and number. For example, *yisrāelān ba'al tešūvā šodand* "the Israelites repented (lit. become repentant)," which in Hebrew would read *ba'alēy tšūvā*. Compound verbs are also formed from Hebrew elements, for example, *āvūn kardan* "to sin," *tebīlā kardan* "to immerse."

Some of the 20th-century works by Jews and for Jews are written in Arabic script with hardly any Hebrew elements. Bukharan Jews wrote their language in Latin characters between 1928 and 1940. The mountain Jews in Daghestan and Northern Azarbaijan used the Hebrew alphabet for their variety of Judeo-Iranian, called Judeo-Tat, until 1928, when they switched to Latin script, and subsequently, in 1938, to Cyrillic. Judeo-Tat is a non-Persian Iranian dialect (Lazard, 1978), although some scholars consider it a dialect of Persian (Fischel, 1938, Shapira, 2002).

Young Israelis of Iranian descent speak a variety of Persian best described as "Israeli Persian." It comprises mainly Hebrew vocabulary, with Persian syntax and particles, and occasionally auxiliary verbs.

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