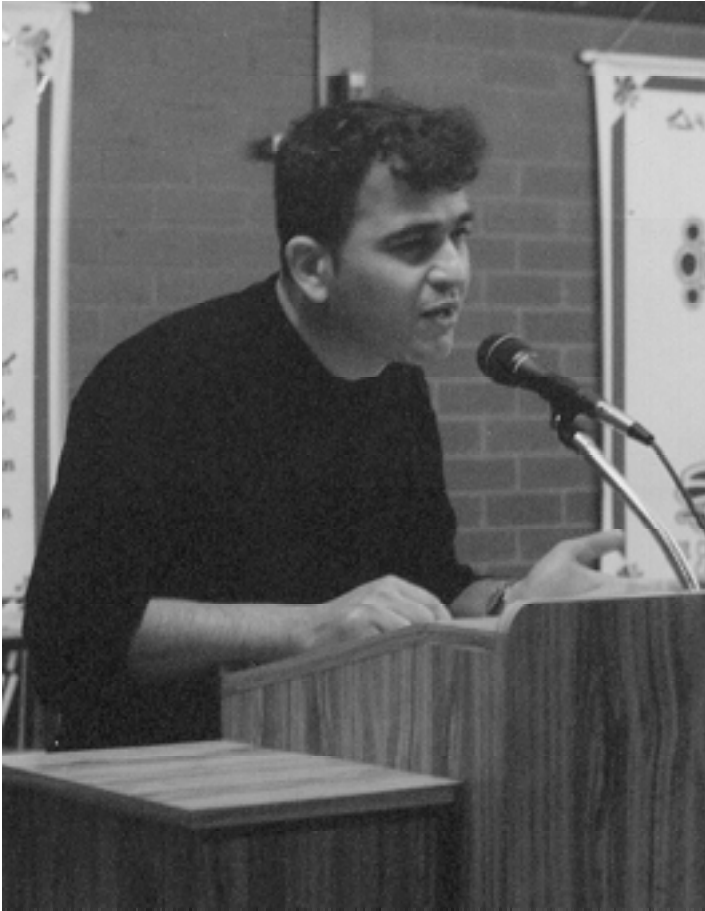


# POETRY



## A GATHERING OF THOUGHTS

The Chaldean Brotherhood held a 'Poetry Night' on Saturday the 25 September, at the "Our Lady Guardian of the Plants" church in Campbellfield. The reading began at around 7pm, and the line up of poets carried it through to the late hours of the night.

Fifteen poets prepared to express themselves on the occasion, and be judged by a panel of three judges, who were told to rate the works according to their style, language, and content. The poets then took to the podium, and began reciting their poems, and works in either one of the Assyrian, Arabic or English languages.

Half time entertainment featured a play performed by the Chaldean Brotherhood. The performance of the main two characters had the crowd on their feet. The play featured the hilarious antics of a doctor and his concussed patient as they attempted to communicate to each other.

The final poets then took to the podium, and had their turn at reading their works to the crowd. One of the most memorable poems on the night was by Rita Yousif who's poem yearned for a direction, as the following quote from her poem will show "...a long and winding road that will take me to my dreams."

*Cont. p3*

## LOOKING FOR MY COUSIN

I am looking for my cousin who's name is Frederick Peteo Issac in either Melbourne, or Sydney. His wife's name is Asmar. They left Kuwait and moved to Australia in 1970.

Thanks for your help,  
Edmund Elia.  
tel 905 331 1626.  
E-mail: (elia @cgocable.net)  
Burlington, Ontario, Canada

# Job Club

[www.atour.com/aygv/activities/jobclub.htm](http://www.atour.com/aygv/activities/jobclub.htm)

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Saturdays from 3 - 6 pm.  
235/237 Sussex St. Nth. Coburg.

## POPE JOHN PAUL II PLEDGES TO VISIT BET-NAHRAIN

(ZNDA: Italy) On Wednesday, September 22, Pope John Paul II gave a firm pledge that he plans to visit the Holy Land and Bet-Nahrain. The trips is planned to begin in early December with a visit to Ur, the Biblical birthplace of Abraham in Iraq. The United States and the Iraqi opposition have expressed misgivings, claiming the trip would be a propaganda coup for Iraqi Saddam Hussein. John Paul insists no political significance should be attached to any of the trips. On September 2, the Assyrian National Congress sent a letter to the Vatican urging the Pope not to proceed with his plans to visit Iraq in December. The ANC outlined in its letter the numerous atrocities committed against the Christians in Iraq. Reliable sources to ZENDA have indicated that other Assyrian political party(ies) are urging the Pope to recognize "Assyrians" in a speech in Baghdad.

The Iraqi newspapers last week said that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has established a committee including officials from the Presidential Office and the Ministers of al-Awqaf (Islamic Trusts), Culture and Information to begin the restoration of the city of Ur in southern Iraq. Ur was the ancient capital of the Sumerian civilization ca. 3500 B.C.

## U.S./BRITISH PLANES BOMB ASSYRIAN MONASTERY

Courtesy of BBC World Service

(ZNDA: London) The Ministry of Defense in London says it is investigating reports that British or American planes bombed a Christian monastery near Mosul, in Northern Iraq, in August.

The Church of England said it had received a report that the bombing had damaged the tomb of the Fourth century Saint Matthew (Mar Tooma), who founded the monastery.

The British defense ministry confirmed there had been bombing in the area on the day in question; it said it was aimed against Iraqi anti-aircraft positions, and aerial reconnaissance pictures would be checked to see if any bombs fell on the monastery. Iraq said at the time of the attack that the bombing had killed or wounded a number of Arab astronomers camping near the monastery to observe the total eclipse of the sun.

## ASSYRIANS CLOSER TO CONSENSUS

Talks in Chicago from May to July that were attended by various Assyrian political parties focused on agreeing on pressing the Assyrian case in various international forums addressing the future of Iraq. AINA (the Assyrian International News Agency) reported on 2 September that three Assyrian groups—the Assyrian Democratic

Organization, the Assyrian Democratic Movement, and the Assyrian Universal Alliance—have stated that the meetings "targeted our efforts to agree on the selection process to represent us in the new Iraqi opposition group." The delegates selected are to represent Assyrian interests and present the Assyrian proposals. The declaration issued says "this will bring hope of furthering our cause and preserving our identity as a nation, thereby enabling us to pursue our legal and human rights." Similar meetings have been held in Turlock, California, and London with equal success. AINA points out that the agreement between the three political organizations has great significance not only because of the wide range of constituents these organizations represent, but also because it includes all the major religious denominations to which Assyrians belong. The three organizations also represent Assyrians in the diaspora and the Near and Middle East. Most important, "the unified consensus also show that Assyrians will no longer tolerate being divided along religious denominational lines."

Iraq, the right of return of Assyrians, whether they are still within Iraq or abroad, the lifting of UN sanctions against the civilian population of Iraq, and an international investigation into the plundering of ancient Assyrian archeological sites.

## SUMMIT OF ASSYRIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

*September 3-5, 1999 - London, United Kingdom*  
A summit of Assyrian political parties convened in London On September 3-5 1999 to decide on common objectives and a common Assyrian representation within the framework of the Iraqi position groups, especially in the Executive Council and the General Assembly of tile Iraqi National Congress. Invitations for the summit were sent to all Assyrian political groups. Attending delegates represented the following Assyrian groups: Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party, Assyrian Patriotic Party, Assyrian Democratic Party, Ashur Liberation Party, Assyrian Democratic Union, and the Assyrian National Congress (observer). Delegates to the summit held

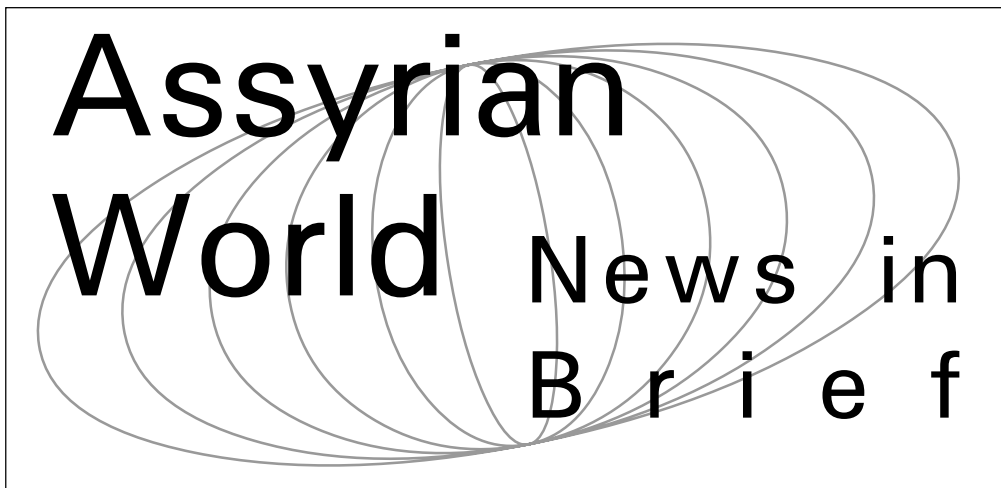
several important meetings with a wide spectrum of Iraqi opposition groups, including those parties associated with the Iraqi National Congress and the Centrist Democratic Movement, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the officials in the political section of the American Embassy in London.

The existing discord prevailing among our

political groups has reflected negatively on the Assyrians and their obligations toward the national objectives. In order to overcome this problem and not to give others the opportunity to further usurps our legitimate national rights, the attending delegates of the summit resolved to strive collectively to sow seeds of hope among the Assyrian people, who look forward to the day when Iraq is free, united and democratic.

## ASSYRIAN AID SOCIETY BEGINS NEW IRRIGATION PROJECT IN DUHOK

Mangesh- The development division of the Assyrian Aid Society with the support of the German organization ELBC has recently initiated a new irrigation project in the village of Kon Kosa of the Mangesh District. The project includes widening the irrigation streams for a length of 250 meters to increase river flow as well as building a dam for water storage. The widening of the stream will also require the building of a new bridge for stream crossing. The joint project with ELBC is the second of it s kind similar to that of the Shiuz (Sejy) villages which was started a few months earlier. The Shiuz project is reported to be going on schedule as planned.



## ASSYRIAN AMERICAN NATIONAL FEDERATION ON IRAQ

The Assyrian American National Federation met in Los Angeles from 2-6 September to discuss issues pertaining to Iraq. According to an AINA report of 3 September, the pressing issues include: the recognition of Assyrians by the Iraqi government and the international community as an indigenous people in Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries, and the delineation of an Assyrian safe haven, which would provide protection for Assyrians in Iraq who have been exposed to persecution recently, and also "would entail local autonomy within the framework of a democratic and pluralistic nation." The area set aside for this is centered on Mosul (near the ancient Assyrian capital of Nineveh), and extend north toward the Turkish border, northwest to the Syrian border, and northeast to the Zab River.

Another issue is the return of previously Assyrian lands, villages, and churches. The report adds that "villages and churches destroyed by the government and expropriated by some Kurds need to be returned to their rightful owners or just compensation paid."

The other problems to be discussed at the meeting are an international investigation of the policies of the ethnic cleansing of Assyrians in northern

# POETRY

From p1

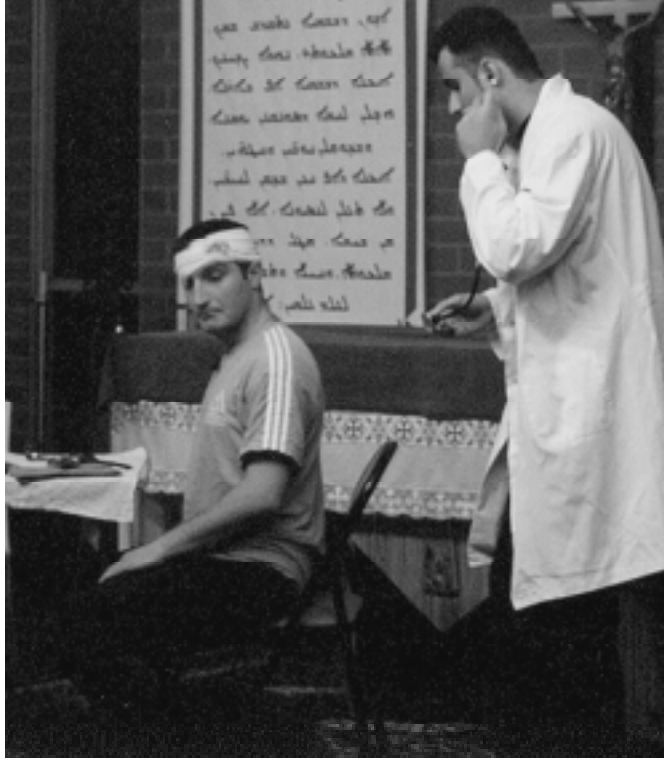
The winners were then announced, and each took to the stage to receive their awards. The winners were :

1. Bahjad Marku.
2. Kamille Kunda.
3. Somer Simon.

Bahjad won the competition for a brilliant recital of a piece he had written to honour his father who had passed away in Iraq. The search for an answer to his dilemma was painfully expressed for all to hear. The pain of his loss and the memory of his father along with a desire for understanding was eloquently expressed before the appreciative audience.

Melbourne's close-knit Chaldean community warmly welcomed everyone who attended and the poets represented all age groups, teenagers and elderly alike. After the competition was over guests and poets gathered around, and shared in some refreshments and friendly conversation.

Poetry appears to be especially important in our austere, and traditional society that continues to enforce its beliefs on a new, and more liberal western social order that is enjoyed by the youth. This clash of cultures



creates enormous tension, and frustration in the youth, as youth are caught between two different cultures. Poetry nights, as such, appear to be a tool used by youth to vent their frustrations as well as express their thoughts and opinions in a forum of their peers. It is hoped that further nights such as this will be held, and that even more freedom of expression is given to the youth to express themselves in this positive way. ■

David Chibo

# FEEDBACK

## On the re-launched AYGV homepage

You guys just made my day. Thank you and keep up the good work.

*Edward B. Ashour*

Well Done to one and all, keep up the good work let's hope we can all learn from the youth of today and keep our heritage and culture going into the next millenium.

*Albert Tamou*

I just would like you to know in the past 2 years I have all of a sudden met several Assyrian people here in California through some church groups and acquaintances. I have become attached and intrigued with the original times of the culture and how it also is so parallel to my own family background elders and religion as well as beliefs that I was raised with. Thanks and keep up the good work.

*Louise C. Bindley*

To all the people running this web page and to each person involved. I am so glad to see fellow youth speaking out! One day, hopefully, we will be able to make an organization and a web page representing the Assyrian youth of the entire world! Once again, great job and much love to all of you.

*Nahira Yadegar*

It is great to see that Assyrian have finally done something. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each individual for their excellent effort in organising this. Good on you guys..... I wish Assyrians in Sydney would do something like this.

*Karolin Odisho*

A job well done. You are our hope. Keep up the good work God bless you all.

*Albert Gabriel*

# editor's note

War broke out on our doorsteps. The East Timor crises became closer than we thought when Australia decided to send Peace-Keeping troops to the troubled region.

It is a promising move, when a number of countries would gather their forces to bring peace to the people of a troubled region. I am supportive of Australia's involvement in the Peace-Keeping forces. This move does put the lives of Australians in danger, but it shows Australia's commitments to humanitarian causes.

War is a senseless part of human existence. I usually wonder about how cheap human life becomes; hundreds of thousands of people die at war, and most of the time for no great cause.

If we look at the number of conflicts that took place in the past century, we see that they achieved nothing. The two World Wars, the Nazi movement, the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf War. Millions of people died. But let us leave the millions, and think about it in another way; let us ask ourselves this question: 'What was so great, that the life of a young child had to be sacrificed, in order to achieve?'

There is nothing that is worth more than a human life. We need to understand that, and change our view of the world. When we hear of people that were killed at war; we need to understand that those people had a personality like ours, they loved, they cried, they had dreams, they had a mother, a wife, a family. They are not just a colorful 2D picture that flickers on our television sets.

The subject of this month's editor's notes was sparked from a discussion on *Good and Evil* that I was involved in. I was questioning the 'rightness' of all the suffering that goes on in the world. The reply to this was that they are an example to us, so we would appreciate what we have. This showed me how ignorant we are to the suffering, feelings, and emotions of others. I really hope for a day when we will see every single person in this world as an equal to ourselves.

On another note, the 3ZZZ Assyrian radio program raised an issue that we had published in Nakosha. I would like to thank the staff of the program for helping to bring the issue to light. But I am just as disappointed as they are for the minimal response that was received from the community. It is as though we are afraid to discuss the issue of premarital relationships among our youth. I don't understand why, but we are. ■

*Sennacherib Warda*

# R.E.S.P.

There has been many times that we have discussed the relationship between parents, and the youth of our community. We have not been able to solve any of the problems as yet, but we have taken the first steps to bringing them to light.

One of the fundamental aspects of any form of relationship is *Respect*. It has a profound affect on the social development of a culture when looked at through the family unit. We need to understand these affects to be able to set a development path for our culture.

Like other social concepts – such as *Love*, and *Friendship* – *Respect* has been blemished by many desires that dwell within ourself. This assertion will become clearer as we look closer at the *Respect* that exists within the Assyrian family, or any other family for that matter.

We have grown up with the assumption that we should respect our parents. But after my involvement with this magazine, I came to meet many Assyrian youth who have many restraints imposed upon them by their parents. Almost every one of those restraints did not have a viable reason. The question that I ask at this stage is “*shouldn't parents earn their children's respect?*”

When an Assyrian female is restricted to a schedule of social activities; only going out for a certain amount of time, and no later than such hour. Or an Assyrian male is almost forcibly pushed to take up a career in medicine, when he has a flair for music. There is a break down of respect, which leaves the children in a state of bewilderment, unable to understand their feelings, and unsure of their own judgements.

There is a major problem that we, as humans, face in our confinement within our self-being. It is very rare that we look at another person, and see them as an equal. I am not speaking of racial discrimination; I am talking about our

ignorance to other's feelings, and emotions. Our ignorance to their rights, needs, and wants. It is very rare that parents are acceptant of their children's feelings of Love. And this becomes very shattering for the children. This concept was clearly demonstrated by William Shakespeare in his play *Romeo, and Juliet*. In the play both families were at war due to unresolved problems that went back to earlier generations. Neither of the two families respected their children's feelings of love, which lead to the tragic ending. We can view the death of Romeo, and Juliet as a death of the self.

Also, and as we are caught up in our own self-being, we strive for power. Control over others seems to be the goal of every individual. Lovers seem to impose their control over their partners, and parents control their children. It is a sad fact, but it is so. We all have our different methods to get things to go our way. As subtle as they may be, they are there, and by using them we hurt our partners, and our children.

The respect that is practiced within a family greatly affects the development of a society. The way parents interact with each other, and with their children echoes through generations to come. There are remnants of parental interaction found in children's actions. The way a father would treat the mother

dictates the son's view on interaction with members of the opposite sex. This in turn affects the way the two genders view each other, and that is why we are experiencing this distant, and opposing stances between our males, and females.

I hope that nobody gets the wrong idea, and conclude that I am proposing that we should disrespect our parents. All I am asking for is mutual respect. I am younger than my parents, and I

have not seen as much from life as they have, but they have to understand that my ways are different to theirs. The world that I live in is different to theirs, and my values are

very different to theirs.

When parents expect their daughter in by such a time, or they want their son to study medicine, they need to give reasons for their wishes. I do understand that parents want the best for their children, but I don't believe that the “best for their children” should be imposed; I believe that it should be explained. As humans we have the faculty of reasoning; parents need to use this faculty to win the respect, and trust of their children; ultimately that would be the best they can do for their children.■

Sennacherib Warda



# GIBRAN KAHLIL GIBRAN, 'THE ASSYRIAN'

## GIBRAN AND THE SYRIAC LANGUAGE

*Gibran is a Lebanese-American Poet, Philosopher, and Mystic most notably renowned in the West for his book, The Prophet. But in the Arabic world he is most famous for other titles such as The Broken Wings and Tears and laughter.*

It certainly becomes evident to the reader upon reading the title that Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931), either spoke the Syriac language, or was himself of Syriac stock; this is certainly a historical fact. Gibran was born into a practicing Maronite family and was himself a practicing Maronite. It must be mentioned at the outset, the Maronite rite, is a Lebanese sect that broke away from the mother Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch in the 900's AD.

Gibran as a child, was taken to church, where his grandfather, a capable priest, served Mass and preached. In the Maronite church, the whole congregation participates, chanting in Syriac. The effect of the Syriac Maronite ceremonies remained with Gibran for the rest of his life; a letter he wrote in later years acknowledged his debt to the church. The religious bent of Gibran's mother, her beautiful voice in church and the religious atmosphere of the family molded Gibran's character. This effect is apparent in Gibran's book, *Jesus, the Son of Man*.

Various sources discuss that up until the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, Syriac was widely spoken in Lebanon, but was overrun by the widespread adoption of Arabic in the Seventh century.

De Larouge mentions in passing, that in 1688, he witnessed a large Syriac speaking community in Lebanon, in the region of Bcherii; evidently the birthplace of Gibran, but of course, who no longer do so. This can be attributed to the efforts of a one Bishop, Jermanos Farhat, who in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century campaigned for the adoption of Arabic over the



Syriac.

Maroon Aboud, in his book "The Hawk of Lebanon" mentions, "that the Arabisation of Lebanon can be attributed to the efforts of Bishop, Jermanos Farhat, who catalysed the use of Arabic over the Syriac in the Altar (church), and placed it on right of the High Altar. And this is how the Syriac sun set over Lebanon".

Jermanos was mentioned in one of Gibran's let-

ters to his close friend Ameen Ghareeb, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> March, 1908, "Is Lebanon the same glorious mountain whose beauty was sung and praised by poets like David, Isiah, Farhat, Lamartine, and Haddad?"

Some resources indicate most valuably the profound affect that Syriac Literature, had had on Gibran's psyche, prominently, that of St. Ephraim.

These Syriac settings could not have been strangers to Gibran. In his native village of Bcherri in 'Wadi Qadeesha', which translated from the Syriac means the "Blessed Valley, created a setting for many Monasteries and Churches, and the valley would echo with the chantings of Syriac Hymns.

Moreover, Gibran's own funeral for the most part was conducted in Syriac.

On a personal level, I have been enchanted with this man from a very early age, and had completed reading his works by the age of 17, both in the Arabic and English. In my own registers Gibran is synonymous with the word Genius, and I do not flaunt the word haphazardly; and I often wonder why the Gods would choose for this soul to be born, and given human form. How can such a soul of Grand Majesty be lowered in standing and given mortal existence. Perhaps, I presume, for other mortals to follow in its example. In the example of his values and principles. For if humanity heeded his teachings it would be

a step, or many steps closer, as the case may be to the heavens.

I would encourage all to seek his writings in libraries and bookshops; particularly 'The Broken Wings', as an excellent introduction to the genius that is, Gibran Kahlil Gibran.■

Brian Ibrahim Berro

*Resource; Hujada Magazine.*

# a Challenge

## FOR THE GIRLS

As we know, four boys run AYFM. They are there week in, week out trying to put together a show that would be entertaining, educational, and 'listenable' – that's a new word? LISTENABLE; meaning pleasant to listen to, or light on the ears.

The efforts have been made to make it so, but the voices of the boys have not been soothing enough. Now, and as a final effort, we are looking for a girl to join the team.

If you are interested please call us during the program on 9304 4989; or e-mail us at: ayfm@hotmail.com; or by mail: ayfm, P.O. BOX 948 Merlynston, Victoria, 3058. Australia.

*The AYFM Team*

# THE MELAMMU PROJECT



MELAMMU Logo (King facing Anahita) designed by Ria Berg

When the question of identity is raised, we tend to go with the assumption that we are “Assyrians, of Assyrian descent”. The main reason for this is because our identity, culture, and traditions have been passed down from generation to generation. So we assume that the Assyrians of today have a direct lineage to the ancient Assyrians.

Is this assumption flawed?

Are the modern Assyrians the descendants of the same people who built Nineveh and Babylon?

According to far too many history books, the Assyrian people who had been citizens of the Assyrian empire that fell in 612 BC, simply disappeared off the face of the earth. Two archaeologists, Sir Austin Henry Layard and Hormizd Rassam (an Assyrian) began uncovering the ancient Assyrian palace at Nineveh in the 1850s and with it came the realisation that the ancient Assyrians weren't merely a Biblical myth. This discovery made its way to the Syriac speaking people of the Middle East, then under Ottoman rule, who were still living in the same region that had previously been the Assyrian heartland. Calling themselves *Suraya/Suryoyo* for centuries, these same Syriac (neo-Aramaic) speaking Christians were invigorated with the splendour of these discoveries and the surging nationalism which was, during that time, engulfing the Middle East and soon adopted the English term of Assyrian for their own. They were now calling themselves *Ashuraya/Ashuryoyo*, they had always used the names *Athuraya/Othoroyo* and the obvious connection between the name *Assyrian (Ashuraya)* and their

common self-identification a synonym for the former name of *Suraya/Suryoyo* only confirmed their beliefs. They simply assumed, based on the opinions of a few educated English archaeologists and one Assyrian archaeologist, that they were the children of the ancient Assyrians, and thus they began passing on the Assyrian name from one generation to the next. This assumption had no concrete proof, and the question is still valid today. These discoveries and their own conviction were apparently not enough since their roots are still questioned by scholars and laymen today.

“What happened to the Assyrians between the fall of Nineveh, 612 BC, and the discovery of the Syriac (neo-Aramaic) speaking Christians of the Middle East in the early 1800s?”

Introducing the ‘MELAMMU Project’, otherwise known as the ‘Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project’. The word ‘MELAMMU’ is an Akkadian word borrowed from Sumerian meaning “divine radiance, splendour, nimbus, aura”. It is ideal for this project as the word itself clearly illustrates the transformation, and continuity of a centrally important doctrinal concept from an earlier ideological system to a later one.

The project's primary aim is to systematically document the continuity and transformation of Assyrian culture and ethnic identity in post-empire times until the present day. This long-term project is being initiated by the State Archives of Assyria, Centre of Excellence, of the University of Helsinki. It is under the direct leadership of Dr. Simo

Parpola, also renowned as the director of the prestigious ‘Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project’.

In a presentation, held at the 66th Annual Assyrian National Convention in California last month Dr. Simo Parpola stated, “A central objective of MELAMMU is to create an electronic database bringing together all the relevant evidence, and make it available worldwide on the Internet. The project has an international steering committee and a board of consultants representing several different branches of study, from Assyriology to classical, Iranian and religious studies. With the support of Assyrian institutions in the United States and Sweden, we hope to have the database ready and operational within a few years.”

Finally after generations of assumptions and beliefs, the facts establishing the crucial link between today's modern Assyrian people and their ancient ancestors will be systematically collected and presented to the entire world, settling forever the critical issue of Assyrian identity.

Already the project has begun bearing fruit with the collection of the first pieces of evidence providing the first paving stones to eventually reconstruct the long, winding and eroded road that took the Assyrian people from Imperial Assyria to today's modern Diaspora. Today's Assyrians eagerly await the completion of this Assyrian milestone and cultural super-highway. ■

David Chibo

Special thanks to Raman Mickael from the AAS, for his help in completing this article.

# learn your language

ܠܝܪܢ ܘܘܠܘܥܘܒܝܢܐ

ܠܝܪܢ ܘܘܠܘܥܘܒܝܢܐ

ܟܘܫܬܐ	.....aa-shee-nu-to.....	strength.....	aa-shee-no-ta.....	ܟܘܫܬܐ
ܟܘܫܬܐ	.....aa-thee-r.....	rich.....	aa-tee-ra.....	ܟܘܫܬܐ
ܠܘܫܘܬܐ	.....tu-yo-bo.....	preparation.....	to-ya-wa.....	ܠܘܫܘܬܐ
ܐܘܫܘܬܐ	.....iss-yo.....	ignorance.....	ass-ya.....	ܐܘܫܘܬܐ
ܫܘܫܘܬܐ	.....sar-heb.....	hurry.....	sar-hao-ta.....	ܫܘܫܘܬܐ
ܫܘܫܘܬܐ	.....shay-no.....	peace.....	shay-na.....	ܫܘܫܘܬܐ
ܫܘܫܘܬܐ	.....shal-he-bee-tho.....	flame.....	shal-ho-ee-ta.....	ܫܘܫܘܬܐ
ܢܘܫܘܬܐ	.....no-mo-so.....	Jurisprudence.....	na-mo-sa.....	ܢܘܫܘܬܐ
ܢܘܫܘܬܐ	.....noo-no.....	fish.....	noo-na.....	ܢܘܫܘܬܐ
ܓܘܫܘܬܐ	.....ghaw-no.....	colour.....	ghaw-na.....	ܓܘܫܘܬܐ

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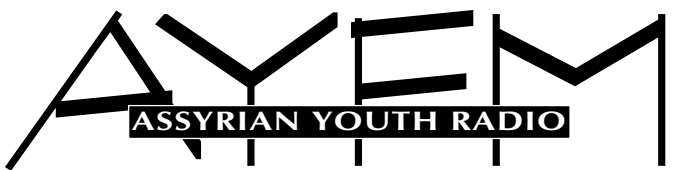
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The Assyrian Youth Group of Victoria is a non-political, non-religious and non-profit organisation. It seeks to promote the Assyrian culture, history and language, as well as the Assyrian name and community, bringing it to the world stage.

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